

PTC-UK meeting

29 June 2024

PTC team members:

From the UK: Dr Mohamed (translated for Bayan, Tariq, Eman and Alaa)

From Gaza: Ahmed, Ahmed, Dr Omar, Bayan, Tariq, Eman, Alaa

From Turkey: Niveen (evacuated to Istanbul)

A good number of PTC-UK committee members and supporters joined from the UK.

News from Gaza:

Dr Omar: escalations 3 days ago especially in Gaza City, Rafah, Middle Area – bombardments, high violence, high civilian deaths including children. Many houses destroyed, many people under rubble. Checkpoints are all closed, nothing is getting in and injured patients can't get out for medical care. The health situation is very bad – hospitals can't provide a good health service, minimum level pf emergency service only. Many things are absent from the market especially in the North area, where there is great hunger.

Eman: 6/7 months in a refugee camp (Al-Shati?). Very hard to get internet – can't get it in the house. (*Eman joined us from the streets where she could pick up internet.*) The smell of death is everywhere. Waiting for bad things to happen to myself and my family. Bombardment and destruction is everywhere. My message: you may not be able to stop the war but let our voices be heard and get our messages out there. Everything is difficult here. For example for months on end I couldn't find a tomato, I finally found one and it was too expensive I couldn't afford it. We are exhausted, we are tired. My daughter is injured, it has not been easy to find medication.

David: Thank you Eman for your work with children in the area. We wish your daughter a full recovery.

Eman: She is 90% recovered. It has been very slow because we have not been able to get good food or milk for months. We managed to get antibiotics. I have been using my own money to buy food for the children we support. Some areas are like sand; there is nothing left. We can't identify buildings, streets.

Alaa: (was displaced from Khan Yunis, moved to Rafah for a few months and has now returned to Khan Yunis.) I am back in my house, but it is burnt (*we could see the black in the background*), but this is better than staying in a tent.

Dr Omar: Most people are trying to go back to their houses, even if they have been destroyed, staying in a house is better than a tent no matter the condition.

Alaa: The situation and circumstances are very difficult; we never expected this. We are not fine, but we need to survive for our children. Escaping from area to area. We hope this genocide will stop soon.

David: Thank you, Alaa, for organising facepainting for children under these conditions. We are all grateful and proud of you.

Ahmed Altawil: (*Ahmed's two daughters were with him, lovingly clambering all over him for much of the call*) It is very hot in Gaza right now. Nuseirat camp is being attacked from the sea and land. On 8 June, the massacre was just 100m from my house, when the hostages were released and hundreds were massacred. I can't describe it, the air strike, the special forces in my street, everyone in the street was killed. I saw 80 Palestinians killed in the street. I saw it with my eyes. I look in the eyes of my

children and can't do anything. Two days ago, a battleship from the sea attacked my building. A child was killed and two injured. I wasn't home at the time. My wife called me and I rushed back. I saw the 14 year old killed and children injured. I have had no electricity in my home for two months. I look for new water every day. We live in crisis. I hope it ends soon. I haven't seen this lamp switched on for two months. My children were playing in the street, the same street. Can you imagine if they'd been there at the time of the operation? There is no safe place in Gaza.

Bayan: in the mid-zone of the Gaza, we are still living in crisis. There is so much suffering. My dad went to Egypt. We evacuated to Rafah, but we are now back in Nuseirat. We are still terrified especially after the massacre where nearly 300 were killed in a couple of hours and 800 were injured.

David: Thank you, Bayan, for your *Days of Joy* work with Jaber.

Bayan: I was injured 7 months ago in November. I have fractures in my shoulder. I am still seeking physiotherapy. I took strong pain killers, but a physio is sometimes not available. The pain was very bad, but it is getting less.

Niveen: Even though I am in Istanbul it is very difficult as my heart and mind is in Gaza. I am following the news 24 hours a day. I live in hope, but I am losing hope. I am feeling frustrated, looking and waiting for good news. (*Niveen broken down as she spoke*) Please stop the war. I am worried about my family on my mum's side. Some of them were killed in the recent escalation. 20 have now been killed on my mum's side. I worry about losing more in the escalation.

Tariq: (*David informed us that Tariq is the guy we see in photos juggling on stilts. He was injured and has two bullet wounds in his leg. Still he goes out and does these activities with children*). I love the activities and what I do. 5 months ago I was injured and the bullet is still in my leg. I live in North Gaza. I was too exhausted to evacuate and leave my home to go to a school or a tent. What will happen will happen. I am still doing activities with the children and getting great pleasure from these activities. I am alone. Yesterday I was asked to go to west of Gaza city to do activities. The families said to please come back. I really enjoy making the children smile. I get a very good reaction from the children. They really need these activities. The problem is, I leave then the area is bombarded. This is frustrating. Children are killed in the area after I leave.

Dr Omar: (*when asked how much the team communicate*) We had very bad connection for 6 months. The last two months the situation has improved so we have been able to contact each other on the phone, but this is very limited.

Eman: It is very difficult to communicate with the team. I didn't know for 6 months, are they in Rafah? Are they in Gaza? It wasn't easy.

At this point someone from the UK remarked on the importance of Tariq's work – of giving children hope and joy in that moment – joy as resistance – and the precious last moments Tariq may have created for them if they are devastatingly killed.

Dr Omar: (*at 5.10pm BST*) I can hear bombardment in the east of my city, about 2km from here.

Dr Mohamed: There is a strong sense of if we are going to die, it is better to die in our homes.

Dr Omar: There is nowhere to go, we can't do anything for 9 months. We are just trying to live. That is all.

Eman: I have to go. It is getting dark and it is not safe in the street. This is my son – he is 2.5 (*showed us his son on camera*). He had no milk, no nappies, no flour. It has been very hard to raise him in this situation, but I am doing my best. He is still here.

Bayan: Displaced people are living in the school shelters. Sometimes there are more than 5000 in one school with only 3, 4, or 6 bathrooms and toilets. Diseases are spreading. There are amputees. People can't find food. The suffering is too much. We are trying to do activities, but the suffering is too much. Life is a misery especially for children.



Younis

Tariq in Gaza City

Alaa in Khan



Eman with David in the ruins of her home. 2015