



A Documentary Report
About:

**The Suffering of Persons with Disabilities From The Violations Of Israeli
Occupation Forces During the Operation Protective Edge**
(From July 7 until August 26, 2014) 



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**As a part of the Initiative for Advocating the Rights of People with Disabilities
in the Gaza Strip during the Israeli aggression on Gaza (July-August 2014)**

**Carried Out By:
Members of the Disability Representative Bodies Network**



The Disability Representative Bodies Network

This network is formed by a body of organizations and self-help groups which represent persons with disabilities that seek to partner for the sake of defending the rights of persons with disabilities and advocating their cause and to let them become a part of a society. The members of this network are:

- **Amal Association for People with Cochlear Implants:** A civil non-profit organization that provides services for people with hearing impairment and calls for their reintegration into society. Joined the network in 2013.
- **The Visually Impaired Graduates Association:** A civil non-profit organization founded in 1996. Serves persons with disabilities and defends the rights of persons with visual impairments. Joined the network February 2013
- **(SPHP Society of physically Handicapped People) :** A civil non-profit organization founded in 1992 that adopts various rehabilitation programs, most importantly in Health, Education and Recreation. Mission: To rehabilitate and provide services for people with disabilities and working towards achieving equal opportunities for them, based on the organizations vision that persons with disabilities can contribute to the building and elevation of society. Joined the network September 2014.
- **Advocacy of Development and Growth Association:** A civil non-profit organization founded in 2013 that works in defending the issues of persons with disabilities and in reaching a complete society. Joined the network September 2014
- **The Women With Disabilities Group:** A self-help group for women with disabilities founded in 2011 that works towards helping woman with disabilities and protecting their rights and reaching a complete society. Joined the network February 2013
- **Basmat Amal Group:** A self-help group that consists of families of persons with disabilities that works toward reaching the rights of their loved ones and becoming an integral part of society. Joined the network February 2014
- **The Sun Youth Group:** A self-help group that consists of persons with disabilities founded in 2011. It works in defending the rights of persons with disabilities and strives towards a complete society. Joined the network May 2014.
- **Sahwt Dameer Group for Hearing Disability:** A self-help group founded in 2013. It works in defending persons with hearing impairment and towards a complete society. Joined the network February 2014.
- **Al Himam Youth Center:** The first youth institute that takes concern of the reality of youth with disabilities and strives in raising them and defending their rights. Joined the network June 2014.
- **The Peace Sports Club for People with Disabilities:** Founded in 2004, the first and only sports club in Gaza that specializes in sports for people with disabilities. Led by a group of young athletes with disabilities so that they have a real launch into the world of sports, the sport club is a non-profit NGO that works to care for people of various disabilities in sports, culture and society. Joined the network February 2013.



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Dedication

This report is dedicated to all the organizations of civil society that work in the field of persons with disabilities in general as well as the organizations that represent persons with disabilities in particular. We also dedicate this to all those who work for the rights of others and the institutes that work for human rights whose first concern is revealing the truth and seeking justice. We are also honored to dedicate this report to all those with disabilities that have suffered from the Israeli violations against them during the last aggression upon Gaza from July to August 2014. We wish that our report will be the first step in monitoring and documenting the Israeli violations against those with disabilities and their organizations, and that this be the beginning of revealing and investigating all the violations and crimes that people with disabilities suffered from during the July/August 2014 aggression.

Introduction

The 3rd of the December is considered the World Day for People with Disabilities, in recognition of the inherent dignity within them and in equality and rights that are inseparable for all human beings and that enable people with disabilities to enjoy these rights like all humans. And it has been approved by the International Convention of Human Rights, with the rights of persons with disabilities at the forefront in 2006, which raised the standard in dealing with persons with disabilities and addressed these rights by enforcing them in followed law. This agreement acknowledges the importance of the principles of equal opportunities for people with disabilities, improving their living conditions and allowing them to be self-reliant, promoting freedom of choice.

These rights depend foundationally on the general principles of human rights of equal opportunity and non-discrimination between people regardless of their kind. It is upon these principles that people with disabilities have the right to enjoy their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights like any citizen as dictated by the International Convention. And so it falls upon countries and governments the responsibility to create suitable social and environmental conditions to ensure the rights of persons with disabilities are practiced like all members of society on the basis equality and non-discrimination in all fields, be they political, economic, social, cultural or civil. This includes facilitating proper and reasonable arrangements that are necessary and appropriate to

ensure that a person with disabilities is on an equal basis to others in practicing all human rights and fundamental freedom.¹

Recent statistics indicate that there are more than one billion people in the world who suffer from disabilities, making up (15.6%) of the world population, a percentage higher than the estimates of the WHO in the seventies in the previous century by 10%.

Thereby the number of people with disabilities in the world: seven hundred and eighty-five million individuals aged 15 and above. In Palestine 7% of the population are recorded to have disabilities,² with their numbers reaching 113,000 in the West Bank and Gaza, 75,000 in the West Bank and 38,000 in the Gaza Strip.³

During the Israeli aggression against the Gaza Strip from 7/7/2014 to 26/8/2014, continuous suffering was endured by people with disabilities, from having their homes demolished upon them and their families, enduring severe difficulties of forced evacuations from their residences, dealing with daily life in general or during their visits to the hospital or to their doctors for review. The aggression no doubt raised the number of people with disabilities; number of PwDs from new injuries is estimated to be (1000), "who received medical treatment foreign hospitals. Or suffer physical (amputation, deformation) or sensory (from injury to the nervous system) disabilities. Some may develop more disabilities in the future due to the nature of their wounds."⁴

The aggression also doubled the suffering of those with disabilities who are dependents that lost their guardians, and these are mostly children and women. Or those with disabilities who have lost their livelihoods from the Occupation's destruction of shops, factories, public and private foundations, and in particular the public institutes that provided services to the handicapped.

It is important and vital to monitor these violations against persons with disabilities and to collect documented information and the facts surrounding them in order to expose these crimes, so as to stop or limit them. Ethical and clear limits should be placed to protect and defend people with disabilities.

¹ United Nations, empowerment, development and human rights for all, <http://www.un.org/arabic/disabilities/default.asp?id=1131>, retrieval date: 20/09/2014.

² Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics and the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Palestinian Disability Survey, report published 2011.

³ The Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Palestinian Society, a special report issued by the Qadir Institution, a project monitoring violations of the rights of persons with disabilities, Ramallah 2011.

⁴ Documented field data that was collected from Palestinian human rights organizations and institutions for people with with disabilities for the purpose of supporting this report, dated 12/10/2014.

Report Summary

This report reviews the violations of the rights of persons with disabilities during the aggression known as “Operation Protective Edge”. The report begins with the methods of reporting and the most important basic definitions within the report, and covers in general the subject of people with disabilities in Palestine. Importance is given to mentioning the international norms and conventions of this vulnerable group. Focus is placed on the International Convention for persons with disabilities and the stance of international humanitarian law in regards to Palestinian civilians and those with disabilities. The report then reviews the humanitarian situation endured by Palestinians, civilian and those with disabilities, during the days of the Israeli aggression in Operation Protective Edge, supported by statistics from concerned organizations monitoring the results and outcomes of the war.

The report cites specific violations against persons with disabilities during the aggression as well as the number of victims from this group, supported by statements from the victims themselves. The report then covers the violations of targeting homes and the forced evacuation and displacement of people, including persons with disabilities, who were denied access to centers for treatment and rehabilitation and limited in free movement. Also addressed are the specific targeting by Israeli Forces of four institutes that work with people with disabilities and the losses of this attack. Afterwards ten stories and witness accounts of people with disabilities and the violations they endured will be included.

The end of the report covers the general results and summarizes the overall violations against persons with disabilities. Recommendations and solutions to end these violations and lessen the number of victims are offered with important end points in the conclusion.

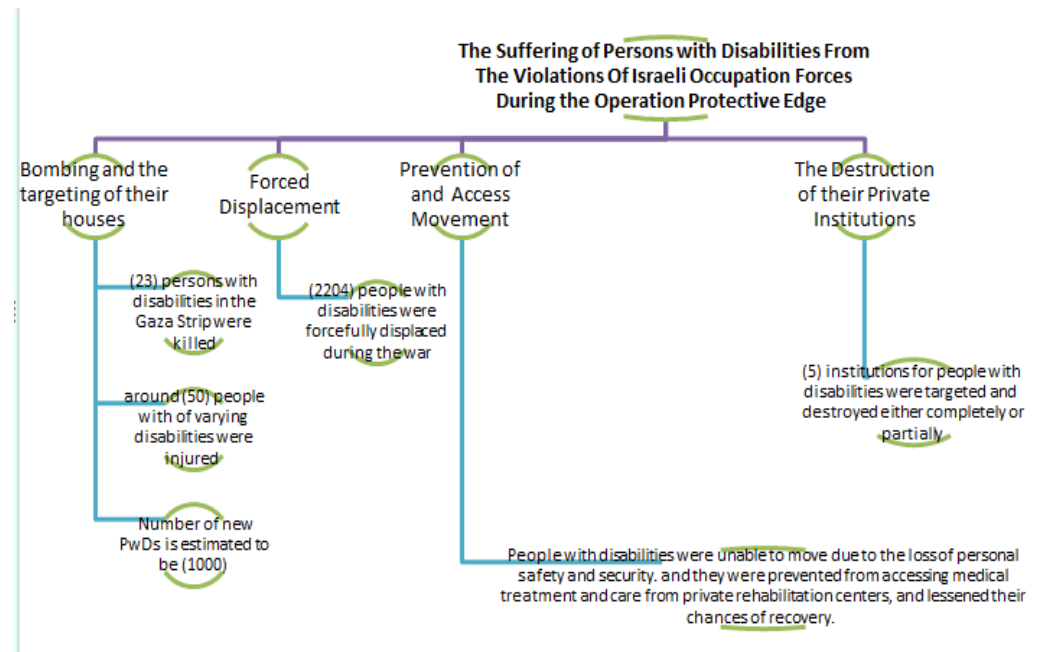
Fact Sheet

The Suffering of Persons with Disabilities From The Violations Of Israeli Occupation Forces During the Operation Protective Edge

(From July 7 until August 26, 2014)

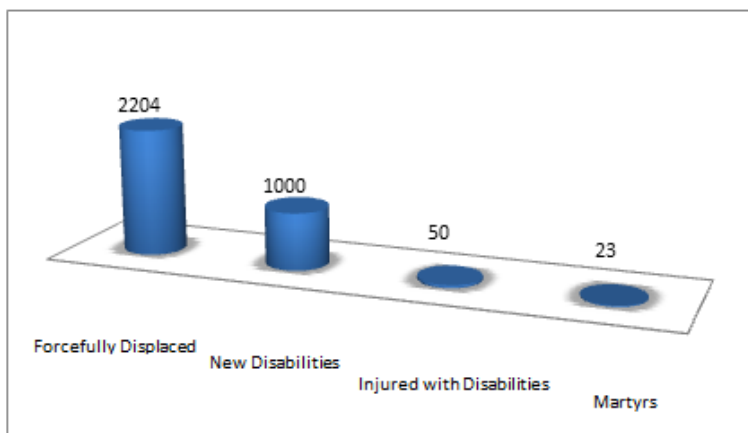
Israeli occupation forces committed many systematic and gross violations by not respecting international human rights law and the rights of persons with disabilities during the aggression. It violated the

- right to life
- right to suitable housing – by bombing and destroying PwDs houses
- right to education – by bombing and destroying many from their schools and learning centers
- right to health – by targeting or completely destroying hospitals and medical centers that provide critical medical services
- right to employment,
- the right to participation
- and the right to free movement.



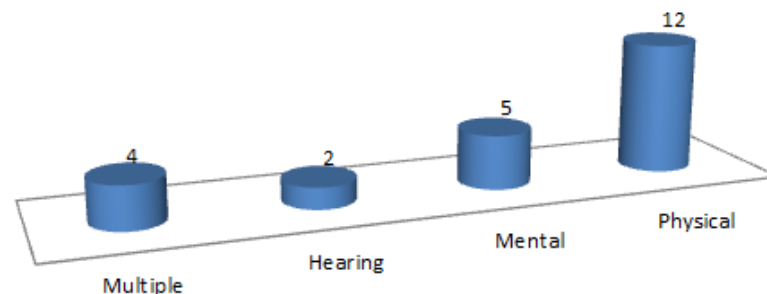
The occupation was responsible for the death and injury of people with disabilities and forcefully displaced them from their homes. It denied them from access to places of work and rehabilitation centers that provide critical services for them

The Distribution of the Martyrs, Wounded and Forcibly displaced with Disabilities and those with disabilities as a result of the Israeli Aggression



Numbers of Martyrs with Disabilities and Their Classification

Type of Disability				Women	Children	Martyrs	Province	
Multiple	Hearing	Mental	Physical					
0	1	0	2	3	0	3	Rafah	1
1	1	1	1	2	0	4	Khan Yunis	2
0	0	3	0	0	0	3	Dair Al-Balah	3
1	0	0	5	1	1	6	Gaza City	4
2	0	1	4	2	0	7	North Gaza	5
4	2	5	12	8	1	23	Total	



The report documented ten stories of people with disabilities that expose the violations of the Israeli occupation forces against them during its aggression in “Operation Protective Edge” on the Gaza Strip. The selected samples are: (4) with physical disabilities, (1) with hearing disabilities, (1) who are visually impaired, and (4) with multiple disabilities. Divided into 5 males and 5 females, among them were (2) children. (9) of the selected sample were Muslims and (1) the Christian. Among them were (2) killed during the offensive, and (4) were injured. (7) Who had their residential homes destroyed and (4) who had family members martyred.

The Basic Definitions of the Study

- **The Child:** Is every human being below the age of eighteen, according to the Palestinian law.
- **Human Rights⁵:** Are the rights inherent to all human beings, whatever their nationality, place of residence, gender, ethnicity, national origin, race, color, religion, language or any other status. We have all the right to our human rights based on equality and without discrimination. These inherent rights are all connected and inseparable. There is often discussion on universal human rights, which is ensured by law, in the form of conventions, customary international law, general principles or other sources of international law. International human rights enforces upon governments to act in compliance and to refrain from certain other acts, so as to promote and defend the basic human rights freedom of individuals or groups.
- **Universal Declaration of Human Rights:** Is the document that represents the declaration adopted by the United Nations on December 10, 1948, at the Palais de Chaillot in Paris. The declaration expresses the opinion of the United Nations on protected human rights for all. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights consists of 30 articles and outlines the opinion by the General Assembly on human rights of all people. The Declaration was made in 1948 consisting of international human rights documents identified by the UN, and received an important status in international law, along with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966 and the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966. The three documents together are what is known as the “list of international rights”, ratified by a sufficient number of nations in 1976 and supported by international law.⁶
- **Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR):** Adopted signed and ratified by the General Assembly of the UN resolution 2200 A (-21) of 16 December, 1966. Enforced on January 3, 1976, in accordance with Article 27 and guaranteed the following rights: The right to decide for the future - the right for every country to spend its state wealth and natural resources freely - no discrimination based on ethnicity, color, gender, language, religion, opinion or political or non-political, national or social origin, property, birth or heritage - equality between males and females to enjoy of all economic and social rights and cultural systems and the right to employment with fair and satisfactory working conditions – the right to form unions – the right to social security – the protection and help of families – providing special protection for mothers - special protection and assistance measures for the

⁵ United Nations Human Rights Council, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, <http://www.ohchr.org/AR/Issues/Pages/WhatAreHumanRights.aspx>

⁶ Wikipedia

http://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B9%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%86_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%8A_%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%82%D9%88%D9%82_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D9%86%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%86 Retrieval date: 20/12/2013

- benefit of all children and adolescents - right of everyone to adequate standards of living for themselves and their family - freedom from hunger and secure distribution of food – the right to the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health – the right to education - participation in cultural life.⁷
- **Covenant on Civil and Political Rights:** Adopted signed and ratified by the General Assembly of the UN resolution 2200 A (-21) of 16 December, 1966. Enforced on January 23, 1976, in accordance with Article 49 and guaranteed the following rights: the right to decide for the future – equality – the right to life – lack of torture or inhuman treatment – banning of enslavement – personal liberty and security - respect for human dignity - freedom of personal movement and transportation - personal law - respect for personal freedoms - freedom of thought, freedom of opinion and being – freedom of expression – banning of hate, racism, and fascism – right to peaceful gatherings – right to form organizations – right to marriage and a family – protection of children without discrimination – the right to elections, voting and candidacy in managing general affairs – equality in front of the law.⁸
 - **International Bill of Human Rights:** The name given to the international human rights law which includes the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Covenants and Protocols as well as other conventions in the same field, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the rights of women.
 - **International Humanitarian Law:** Is a group of international laws that includes treaties and customs in particular to solve humanitarian issues as a result of direct armed conflicts international or otherwise and which states, for humanitarian purposes, that it is the right for the conflicting sides to resort to their choice of method or means to fight, and to protect people and property (according to the definition of the International Committee of the Red Cross), which is a branch of public international law, a set of international rules, customary and written, which aim to protect combatants and civilians during armed conflict, on humanitarian grounds, and to protect the funds that do not have direct connections to military operations. It aims to protect people who are suffering from the scourge of war.⁹
 - **Violation:** Is an act that impacts the internationally recognized human rights or the prevention of an act that protects human rights or a legislation of prejudice to human rights.
 - **Human Rights Issues:** Is the gross and systematic violation of human rights, which is discussed and mentioned frequently in the media and by human rights organizations.
 - **The Right to Life:** The human has the fundamental right to life and in particular that the person has the right not to be killed at the hands of another human being. The principle of the right to life is one of the most controversial principles, especially with regard to the topics of government retribution, execution, self-

⁷ International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, an international document, referenced above.

⁸ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, an international document, referenced above.

⁹ Hanna Issa, International Humanitarian Law, Protection of Civilians on Humanitarian Grounds, a newspaper article published by The Quds Net News Agency on 9/2/2014. Retrieved from <http://qudsnet.com/news/View/265358/-/-/>, on 27/9/2014.

defense, war, etc. The text of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations states in paragraph 3 as follows: "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person."¹⁰

- **Discrimination and Racism:** is the belief that there are differences and elements inherited in people and / or that their abilities or heritage or their affiliation to a group or race – regardless of the definition of race –is valid justification for the individuals belonging to this group to be treated differently, socially and legally. The term is also used to refer to the practice by which the treatment of a certain group of people differently is justified based upon generalizations or stereotypes or by resorting to scientific fabrications. And despite the fact that racist discrimination is based most often upon the physical differences between groups, anyone may be a target to racism based on ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Racism may also take a more complex form through the hidden racism that forms unconsciously in people who declare their commitment to the values of tolerance and equality. According to the United Nations Declaration, there is no difference between racial and ethnic discrimination.¹¹
- **The Right to Adequate Housing:** is one of the most fundamental pillars of human life and feeling of inherent dignity. It is a fundamental human right, and an important tool for the realization of other human rights, civil or political as well as economic, social and cultural. Thus, the right to adequate housing goes beyond simply buildings, but includes the human's relationship with the community in which he lives. It is different and has multiple dimensions and connections that are unquantifiable, such as employment, access to services, levels of health, security, personal identification and self-respect. International conventions on Human Rights have paid great attention to the right to adequate housing as an essential part of human rights. We will try in this report to review the concept and legal protection for this right, in accordance to the convention and international standards on the basis of the general comments issued by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, especially General Comment No. (4) and General Comment No. (7).¹²
- **The Right to Education:** Education is central in the field of human rights and is considered a guarantee to other human rights. Education promotes an individual's freedom and capabilities and returns with important benefits in development. However there are millions of children and adults who are still deprived of proper education, many due to poverty. The documents of the United Nations and UNESCO specify international legal obligations regarding the right to education. These documents promote the right of every person to benefit from education of good quality, without discrimination or exclusion. These documents show the great involvement of the Member States and the international community in working to

¹⁰ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, an international document, referenced above.

¹¹ Liberty Encyclopedia, Wikipedia, op. Cit.,

[Http://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D8%B9%D9%86%D8%B5%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9](http://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D8%B9%D9%86%D8%B5%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9), Retrieval date: 20/12/2013.

¹² Palestinian Center for Human Rights, The Right to Adequate Housing in International Human Rights Instruments, <http://www.pchrgaza.org/arabic/studies/houses.htm>, Retrieval date: 12/20/2013.

- normalize the right to education. Governments must meet the legal and political obligations both in terms of providing education of good quality, and to have educational strategies implemented and monitored more effectively. Education is a powerful tool that allows adults and underprivileged children socially and economically to recover from poverty so that they can participate fully as citizens.¹³
- **The Right to Health:** This means that it is an obligation upon governments to create suitable conditions for every individual to enjoy the highest levels of health. Such conditions range between providing health services and ensuring healthy and safe conditions for work and sufficient housing and nutritious food. And the right to health does not mean the right to enjoy good health. It is worth mentioning that the right to health has been included in many international and regional human rights treaties, as well as in a number of national constitutions around the world. Examples of human rights treaties are the United Nations International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.¹⁴
 - **Disability:** Results due to the interaction between individuals with a disability and the barriers faced in situations and environments that hinder their full and complete participation in society on an equal basis with others.¹⁵
 - **Persons with Disabilities:** are persons who suffer from long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which may hinder interaction in various situations to participate fully and effectively in society on an equal basis with others.¹⁶
 - **Rehabilitation:** It is the process of enabling a person with disabilities to attain and maintain optimal function on the physical, mental, emotional and social level as to provide them with the necessary tools to change their lives and raise their level of independence. Rehabilitation may be aimed to enable performance of function or recover lost function, or to compensate for lost function and maintain and prevent more loss. Rehabilitation does not cover primary health care and rather ranges from a variety of different activities, beginning with primary and general rehabilitation and ending with activities directed towards a particular goal. A clear example is occupational rehabilitation.¹⁷

¹³ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), <http://www.unesco.org/new/ar/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/right-to-education/>, Retrieval date: 20/12/2013.

¹⁴ World Health Organization, The Media Center, <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs323/ar/index.html>, Retrieval date: 12/20/2013.

¹⁵ Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, The Preamble, Item (e).

¹⁶ Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article No. (1).

¹⁷ Standard Rules for The Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, the decision adopted by the General Assembly, in its forty-eighth session, December 20 / December 1993. <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/dissrar.htm>, Retrieval date: 17 / 9/2014.

Persons with Disabilities and the Violations of the Israeli Occupation Forces during the Aggression of “Operation Protective Edge”

Persons with disabilities suffered like other Palestinian citizens from the gross systematic and continued violations of the Israeli occupation forces and their brutal tactics which have killed, injured, forcefully displaced and limited transportation to medical and rehabilitation treatment, destroyed homes and institutes private and public involved in serving people with disabilities as well as damaged facilities and civilian property.

The report points out these violations each with its own statistics as was gathered by the team that prepared the report. This team worked hard to collect information from private organizations that work with persons with disabilities and impairments of all kinds, as well as from human rights organizations and other concerned private and government institutes.

Of course people with disabilities are an integral part of the Palestinian people, they are affected by what affects them and suffer their pains. However people with disabilities have special needs that increase the attention directed towards them, so that they can live with dignity and safety like other human beings.

The Report portrays the numbers and statistics resulting from the aggression in general, in accordance with professional institutes:

The overall results of the violations of the Israeli Occupation forces during the war known as “Operation Protective Edge”, which extended from July 7 until August 26 of 2014, are according to Human Rights institutes that have been monitoring the aggression on the ground with a field team. The first estimates of the number of Palestinian victims according to documented facts taken during the war¹⁸ - and after the checking of all the names of the martyrs – is **(2177)** martyrs, **(521)** of them children, **(297)** women. The number of civilian victims is **(1666)**, **(999)** of them killed in their homes, of them **(329)** children and **(212)** women. **(223)** were killed at the entrance of their homes while evacuating. The distribution of martyrs by province is: **(354)** North Gaza, **(483)** Gaza City, **(295)** Central Province, **(599)** Khan Yunis and **(439)** in Rafah.¹⁹

¹⁸ Disclaimer: This information has not been finalized as government institutions did not yet conduct a thorough investigation of the occupying forces' violations in operation “Protective Edge” as of this report.

¹⁹ It is worth mentioning that these damage and loss assessments are the result of the initial monitoring and documentation processes carried out by the Al Mezan Center for Human Rights, in areas that are accessible, the actual numbers are expected to be significantly larger. Press release, published on 26/8/2014, http://www.mezan.org/ar/details.php?id=19470&ddname=IOF&id_dept=9&id2=9&p=center, Retrieval date: 10/05/2014.

The number of injured according to the Ministry of Health is **(10918)** injured, **(3312)** of them children and **(2120)** women. The number of houses targeted directly are **(1082)** of them three apartment buildings that consist of over a hundred units, leaving the number of houses demolished completely **(2853)**. It should be noted that these numbers are preliminary because the number of homes demolished in Al-Shujayia and Beit Hanoun have not yet been counted completely, leaving the real estimate to be double. The number of homes partially demolished is **(8067)**, in addition to the thousands of homes that were subject to minor damages such as glass and window shattering.²⁰

Israeli Occupation forces destroyed in the aggression around **(98)** schools, **(161)** Mosques and **(8)** hospitals, including **(6)** hospitals closed, and they are Balsam Military Hospital, Beit Hanoun Hospital, Al-Wafaa Hospital, the Algerian Military Hospital, Al-Durra Hospital and Abu-Yusuf Al-Najjar Hospital. In addition to **(46)** civil institutes, **(50)** fishing boats, the targeting of the Gaza City and Khan Yunis fish market and the Gaza City Port. Also **(244)** vehicles were damaged.²¹

The Humanitarian Situation During and After Operation Protective Edge

Israeli Occupation forces escalated the committing of clear and obvious war crimes and deliberately targeted civilians without discrimination between child and elderly, woman or man. Also it deliberately terrorized and forcibly displaced large areas of the Gaza Strip with these violations in the following context:

- The Israeli Occupation forces continued in their demand that large densely populated areas evacuate their homes and residences or else they will be in danger, such as in the neighborhoods: Al-Zaytoon and Al-Tuffah east of Gaza City, and areas in Beit Hanoun, Bait Lahiya ,Tel Al-Zatar, Jabalia, Al-Balad Al-Kamil, and into the middle of Gaza City. In Rafah, Khan Yunis and the Central Province, Israeli forces ordered residents near the shore and in the east to leave their homes, and then continued to bomb homes and buildings in the downtown areas.
- Artillery fire was increased and targeted the shore and in-town areas.
- The sound of bombing spread throughout with the blackout of electricity leaving the civilian population truly in fear and with no way of evacuating their homes.
- Israeli occupation forces continued targeting the vicinities close to the International Relief Agency shelters to intimidate the thousands inside, as was seen in what took place in the Bahrain school, where many of those displaced were injured.
- The targeting and bombing of the power plant fuel tanks, which was the only source of power depended upon after external power lines were cut. This led to a crises in

²⁰ Al Mezan Center for Human Rights, referenced above.

²¹ Al Mezan Center for Human Rights, referenced on previous page.

all the provinces of the Gaza Strip, especially affected were hospitals, bakeries, water availability, and sewage plants.²²

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported that the destruction or damage affected more than 17200 residential homes during the war at the hands of the Israeli Air Force. As a result of heavy bombing, more than 475,000 people were displaced, 280,000 who moved into UNRWA schools, while another large number arrived at the main Al-Shifa government hospital, causing a great burden on doctors and nurses. Around 13 thousand people whose homes were destroyed were displaced and moved in with relatives and neighbors.²³

OCHA states that during the war no place was safe and people did not know where to go. The people of Gaza have been living under siege for years, in an area of 400 km superscript. The Israeli Army declared 44% of this area a "buffer zone". The violations that took place only increased the suffering of a people already in a humanitarian crisis. Before the last war, already 80% of the population depended on humanitarian aid.²⁴

As for water and sanitation issues, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs states that there is about 180,000 people at least who receive very limited amounts of water, not to mention the lack of electricity and fuel that has negatively impacted the quality and amount of water that can be obtained. The UN and other organizations have expressed worry of the spreading of disease due to the lack of clean water. Many now live in very dense areas such as schools and refugee homes. This situation, with a lack of water and proper disposal of sewage is a fertile ground for the spread of disease.²⁵

As for health and nutrition, OCHA contends that the severe shortage of medicine and medical tools hinders health services, especially in emergency situations and within the operational and intensive care units. (29) Hospitals operate on emergency generators that require fuel. (15) Hospitals and (16) medical centers have been destroyed and are in need of reconstruction. Gaza is in dire need of many (71) types of essential medicine and (20) types of consumables. The lack of specialized surgeons reduces the possibility of providing medical assistance to many of those wounded.²⁶

In light of these violations committed by the Israeli occupation forces, OCHA draws attention to that (373 000) children at least are in need of care and psychosocial support, to alleviate their suffering as a result of the death or injury within their families or losing their homes. There are also many unexploded ordnances still in areas that have been bombed.

²² Al Mezan Center for Human Rights, press release, published on 29/7/2014, http://www.mezan.org/ar/details.php?id=19282&ddname=IOF&id_dept=9&id2=9&p=center Retrieval date 5/10/2014.

²³ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, OCHA, Special Report, 27/8/2014, http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_sitrep_27_08_2014.pdf Retrieval date: 10/05/2014

²⁴ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, referenced above.

²⁵ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, referenced above.

²⁶ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, referenced above.

This poses a real danger to children, farmers and people who provide humanitarian aid to displaced people and individuals who will return to their homes.²⁷

As for violations of the Israeli occupation forces against the education sector, OCHA states in its report issued on 27/08/2014, that it was expected that the new school year begins on August 24, 2014, however that was not possible. UNRWA announced the postponement of the start of the school year for a full month, and this may extend in the event of continued aggression. (25) Schools have been seriously damaged and (230) schools sustained various types of damage and may still contain unexploded ordnances.²⁸

Palestinian Center for Human Rights says that the Israeli occupation forces killed 15 people working in the health sector and civil defense while carrying out their duties in aiding and evacuating the wounded and dead. (82) People working in the health sector and civil defense were wounded while performing their duties. Also targeted were health facilities, fixed and mobile installations, ambulances and firefighting vehicles. The workers of these facilities and sectors were put under great risk. Many patients, dead, wounded, and hundreds of civilians were denied from receiving medical services. Israeli forces destroyed (8) hospitals, including two hospitals which were heavily damaged and ceased to work fully during a certain period of the aggression, namely: Al Wafa hospital for rehabilitation, and Beit Hanoun government hospital, as well as caused dangerous conditions in other hospitals that led to their closing or partial work, examples being: the Algerian Military Hospital, Al-Durra Hospital and Abu-Yusuf Al-Najjar Hospital. Israeli warplanes also targeted four other hospitals leading to partial or complete damage. As a result of the aggression (15) ambulances were severely damaged, (11) of them completely destroyed.²⁹

People with Disabilities during Operation Protective Edge:

People with disabilities, like other citizens, endured the suffering of forceful displacement, injury and death. Trying to escape from death, their difficulties were far worse than others and each has his or her own story to tell.

Many Palestinian Civilians, of which are those with disabilities, fell and were martyred. Hundreds of those with disabilities were forcefully deported from their homes and their centers targeted. Their helping tools were damaged and



²⁷ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, referenced above.

²⁸ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, OCHA, Special Report, 27/8/2014, http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_sitrep_27_08_2014.pdf Retrieval date: 10/05/2014

²⁹ The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, a report on the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip, issued on 25/8/2014, http://www.pchrgaza.org/files/2014/human_report_25-08.pdf Retrieval date: 7 / 10/2014.

they were prevented from reaching treatment and rehabilitation centers and denied their education and freedom of movement. Considering the magnitude of the crimes committed by Israeli forces against civilians, it is worsened when directed against people with disabilities who are especially protected under international humanitarian and human rights laws and agreements.

The Series of grave abuses and violations committed by the Israeli occupation forces during the aggression of “Operation Protective Edge”, which extended from July 7 until August 26, 2014, are summarized in the following:

Bombing and the targeting of houses:

Israeli occupation forces targeted thousands of homes in various parts of Gaza during its aggression, whether by warplanes or artillery shells or missiles fired by the battleships stationed at sea. Thirteen thousand persons with disabilities with motor, visual, sensory and mental impairments in Gaza³⁰ lived difficult and terrifying times and no doubt felt powerless and felt the barriers due to their disabilities. The Israeli occupation forces claimed that they had warned the civilian population in accordance with international humanitarian law. However, the warnings to vacate do not reach people with disabilities as they do people with no disabilities. Whether the warning was by phone or by pamphlets spread by plane or even the warnings of an unmanned aerial vehicle, they do not reach all persons with disability. Even so the Israeli claim is refuted by their random and deliberate bombing, as they did with their artillery strikes into populated areas, or the complete destruction of entire neighborhoods and entire apartment buildings by plane strikes, as took place in Al-Shujayia and elsewhere.

The targeting of the occupation forces of Palestinian civilians without distinction or military necessity, whether in their homes or in public places, made people with disabilities especially vulnerable. Considering the various kinds of disabilities and impairments, it is no doubt more difficult for these individuals to act in comparison with people who have no disabilities. This puts the Israeli occupation forces accountable by criminal law, and those responsible should be tried for executing and giving criminal orders that led to the death of civilians with and without disabilities.

With the targeting of homes came a major crisis for many, including those with disabilities, whose homes are their usually their own world, where many have adapted to their special environments, often with their personal instruments that help them cope with

³⁰ The Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Palestinian Society, a special report issued by the Qadir Institution, a project monitoring violations of the rights of persons with disabilities, Ramallah 2011.

their daily lives. Many people with disabilities became victims of the Israeli bombing, some killed while in their homes, others as they were evacuating.³¹

According to information documented by the research team, (23) persons with disabilities in the Gaza Strip were killed during the aggression Operation Protective Edge. (12) Of them were physically disabled, (5) with intellectual disabilities, (2) with hearing disabilities, and (4) suffer from multiple disabilities. Distribution by province: (7) from the northern Gaza province, (6) in Gaza province, (3) in Deir Al-Balah, (4) in Khan Younis and (3) in the Rafah province.³²

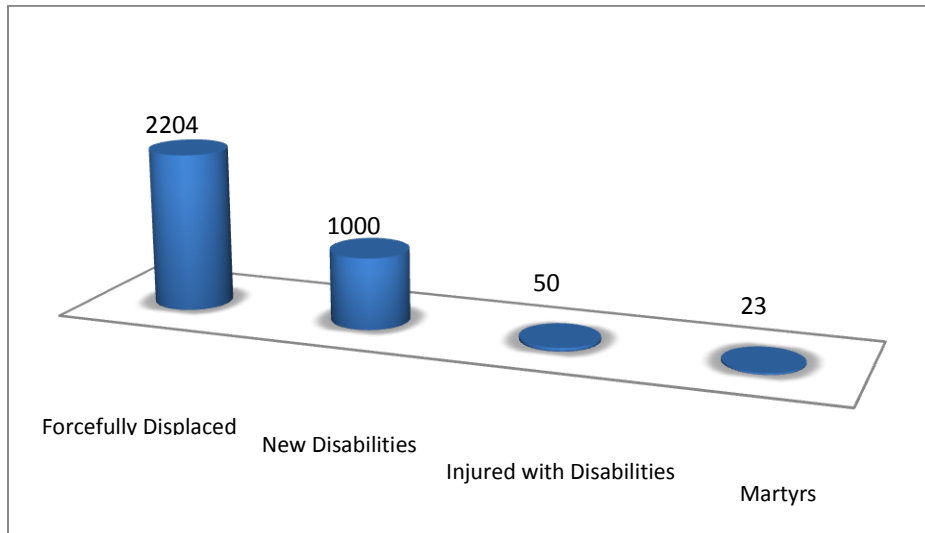
³¹ Disclaimer: At the time of this report institutions did not yet finish documenting abuses against civilians or those with disabilities did not issue a final report yet, so the research team worked hard in documenting violations with disabilities, or the collection of information in the initial image.

³² Field data collected and documented from Palestinian human rights organizations by the supervisor of this report: Hussein Hammad, via communication with officials of the institutions for the purpose of this report on 5/10/2014.

Table (1)
Numbers of Martyrs with Disabilities and Their Classification

Type of Disability				Women	Children	Martyrs	Province	
Multiple	Hearing	Mental	Physical					
0	1	0	2	3	0	3	Rafah	1
1	1	1	1	2	0	4	Khan Yunis	2
0	0	3	0	0	0	3	Dair Al-Balah	3
1	0	0	5	1	1	6	Gaza City	4
2	0	1	4	2	0	7	North Gaza	5
4	2	5	12	8	1	23	Total	

Graph No. (1)
The Distribution of the Martyrs, Wounded and Forcibly displaced with Disabilities and those with disabilities as a result of the Israeli Aggression



In regards to the injured with disabilities according to information documented by the research team: around (50) people with of varying disabilities were subject to light,

medium and critical injuries.³³ The report documents (4) cases of those injured including ten documented humanitarian stories at the end of the report. The number of PwDs from new injuries is estimated to be (1000), "who received medical treatment foreign hospitals. Or suffer physical (amputation, deformation) or sensory (from injury to the nervous system) disabilities. Some may develop more disabilities in the future due to the nature of their wounds."³⁴

Forced Displacement:

People with disabilities, like many others, were forced to leave their homes involuntarily and endure hardships that were overwhelming even for people who did not have to cope with disabilities. Adapting to a new environment in such a short time and in such insecure conditions is difficult for anyone, and far more so for someone with disabilities.

The Israeli occupation forces forced those with disabilities and others to leave their homes, become displaced and move in with neighbors and relatives or to UNRWA shelters that were densely populated and lacked the basic elements for a normal life for a person without a disability. UN school classrooms were overflowing and crowded, restrooms were in need of cleaning and were not designed for thousands of people. Clearly, life was particularly difficult for persons with disabilities. The research team documented that (2204) people with disabilities were forcefully displaced during the war.³⁵

³³ The research team faced great difficulty in obtaining precise numbers of those with disabilities wounded in the aggression in the Gaza Strip for several reasons. These include a lack of interest by the Ministry of Health in identifying those with disabilities in its database and a lack of cooperation by the institutions concerned with providing for and aiding people with disabilities in providing a number of their members that were wounded.

³⁴ Documented field data that was collected from Palestinian human rights organizations and institutions for people with disabilities for the purpose of supporting this report, dated 12/10/2014.

³⁵ Field data collected from Handicap International Foundation in the Gaza Strip for this report.

Eye Witness Accounts and Stories

The research team documented report several dozens of cases in which people with disabilities forcefully displaced in the Gaza Strip give their story and eye-witness account of the circumstances:³⁶

My residential area was heavily bombed at the beginning of the aggression on 07/07/2014. Shelling intensified in my area and its surroundings after ground incursions led by Israeli forces north and east of Beit Hanoun on 07/18/2014. On 07/24/2014 I left my house under the bombardment of missiles and fled to the nearest shelter opened by the International Relief Agency in Beit Hanoun which is a school known as the West Well. The school there could not accommodate the number of displaced people, but it was the only place to seek refuge in Beit Hanoun and so I had to try and live under these harsh conditions. However, circumstances did not allow for me to. Israeli ground forces bombed the Beit Hanoun school on the evening of Thursday, 24/07/2014, with several shells which resulted in the death of (17) refugees, among them my relatives. I went through a state of hysteria during this difficult time. I would scream and run where I could in the room and outside from the scenes of blood that I saw without being able to hear anything. My mother would hug me close to her and my father managed to get us out through one of the ambulances to go to Kamal Odwan Hospital. From there we moved with the help of a friend of my parents to rent an apartment in the town of Jabaliya. Things calmed down a bit until fear and panic came back once again after Israeli occupation forces bombed our new residence on 30/07/2014, near the Omari Mosque area in the middle of Jabaliya town. I saw the explosions and fire and smelt the smell of death. After sunrise we moved to the Center for International Relief Agency in Jebalia Camp in the Ayyubid School near the Camp Market. All the while I tried to be patient in this terrible situation, and my father would try to console me because of my fear and difficulty in adapting to what was happening around me. On the announcement of the truce, we headed back to Beit Hanoun. I lived through this period of my life full of dread, fear and fatigue. I was sad and pale most of the time, and when I returned to my home, we found that it had been destroyed completely. I through a state of hysteria once again and cried bitterly. My temperature rose and I became sick. Afterwards my family moved to a small rented commercial storehouse belonging to my mother's father near Al-Zira'a School.³⁷

Maysam Amjad Al-Masri (aged 11) with hearing impairment, from Beit Hanoun, North Gaza

I lived very difficult days during the aggression since its beginning. My family and I stayed in our house near the Al-Derawi Mosque and the al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir al-Balah. On Sunday 27/07/2014, at about 2:00 in the morning, we went out together under the weight of artillery and aerial bombardment, after the Israeli forces contacted my aunt and told her to vacate the house. We headed to my grandmother's house in Deir Al-Balah and stayed there waiting for the news of what happened to our home. In the morning, my father went back and came with the news. I was shocked when he told me that our home was completely destroyed and for a time I couldn't bear the situation. Later on my father rented a place nearby where I live now. It has been very hard for me to adapt and many times I trip and fall, our old home had everything I was used to. (*After this violation Sabreen*

³⁶ Testimonies documented by the research team from victims of the aggression with disabilities, through visits to their homes during the compilation of this report.

³⁷ Field data collected by the research team during a meeting with Maysim Al Masri, a person with disabilities, using a form that was given to her to fill out for the purpose of this report on 28/09/2014.

became a nervous person who did not like to socialize, cries a lot, lost weight and regressed in terms of health in general.)³⁸

Sabreen Mazin Abd al-Qadir Abu Samak, (aged 33), visually impaired, from Deir Al-Balah, Central Province

Intensive artillery shelling of my residential area took place on 20/07/2014. The shelling was continuous and very close to my family home which is near Abu Bakr Al- Siddiq Mosque in al-Amal neighborhood (Burah). Occupation ground forces north of Beit Hanoun began progressing towards us so we had to evacuate. We left under heavy artillery fire, with my father and brothers carrying me with great difficulty. We reached Al-Jabaliya Camp and moved into an International Relief Agency school-turned refugee camp where we stayed until the end of the aggression. *(during their stay at the shelter center, Nada endured a lot of suffering because of overcrowding, lack of space, and general insufficiency in materials. She was in a nervous state and her behavior was affected. She suffered many seizures, cried frequently, became isolated and anti-social, and was without her treatment throughout this ordeal. Upon returning to Beit Hanoun she and her family saw their home completely destroyed, which caused her state to deteriorate further.)³⁹*

Nada Hassan Abdullah Abu Odeh (aged 21) - with physical and mental disabilities - Beit Hanoun North Gaza

During the aggression by Israeli forces my residential area was hit with heavy bombing. They targeted imaginary military bases around our area as well as several Palestinian organizations nearby with many missiles. Shrapnel was falling all over my house; I truly felt my life threatened. I was forced to leave my home and stay with some relatives of mine. I had to reach the seventh floor of the apartment building, crawling up the stairs, and the place I stayed in was unsuitable for my needs. I then went to shelters opened by the United Nations Relief Agency and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees at Abu Ausi School in the Shati refugee camp. There I faced many problems, most notably the restroom - where the bathrooms were not adapted for my physical disability/ I asked the administration to give me the key to one of the more suitable bathrooms, but they refused! I was also unable to find any suitable treatment for my disability and liver disease, and everyone would stay away from me because of my disability and disease.⁴⁰

Taghreed Ibrahim Abu Hatib (aged 45) - with a physical disability - Shati Refugee Camp in Gaza City

We evacuated our house located in Dumra Street in Beit Hanoun on 07/11/2014 due to heavy artillery shelling in our region since the beginning of the aggression. We went to Beit Hanoun Joint School (west side) for being the only school in Beit Hanoun which was turned into a shelter by the International Relief Agency to house the forcefully displaced. The place was very over-crowded and difficult to live in. I suffered when dealing with others because I can only express my feelings

³⁸ Field data collected by the research team during a meeting with Sabrine Abu Samak, a person with disabilities, and her relatives through a form that was given to her to fill out for the purpose of this report on 5/10/2014.

³⁹ Field data collected by the research team during a meeting with Nada Abu `Ouda, a person with disabilities, and her relatives through a form that was given to her to fill out for the purpose of this report on 9/10/2014.

⁴⁰ Field data collected by the research team during a meeting with Taghreed Abu Hatab, a person with disabilities, through a form that was given to her to fill out for the purpose of this report on 5/10/2014.

through sign language, which is not understood by many. On 24/7/2014 Israeli forces which had moved into the Gaza Strip bombed the street nearby the school with artillery fire. I watched as people ran and the wounded fell in front of my eyes. Like them I ran around in search of my family. Due to the panic and crowdedness, I could not find them. Then I saw my brother who is 15 years old fall injured, and as I ran towards him, I felt something hit my head and legs and so I also fell. Blood poured profusely out of my right thigh and I realized my head was also bleeding. I started to scream and one person carried me and took me to the ambulance that had just arrived and I was taken to the hospital – which I knew later to be Kamal Odwan Hospital – and there the doctors began to treat my wounds until my father came. He was weeping, and I knew from his signs that my brother Muhammad had been martyred, my friend and helper. Of course I wept and became very depressed. My treatment at the hospital continued for a week, and then I left without the shrapnel removed from my body even until now. My family and I moved to a refugee shelter in Al-Jabaliya Camp near the Jabaliya marketplace where days went by as if they were years. I suffered greatly and would weep over my brother every time I remembered him. After the end of the war we returned home to find that it had been badly damaged due to the bombardments. *(Ahmed has no control over urinating since his injury, as well as fear whenever the power goes out which leads to severe insomnia. He has become very attached to his parents, irritable, sometimes violent in dealing with others. He is continuing his treatment with doctors and waiting for a surgical operation on his 19/10/2014 to extract the shrapnel from his body)*⁴¹

**Ahmed Akram Abdul Aziz Kafarneh (aged 10) - with a hearing impairment –
Resident of Beit Hanoun, North Gaza**



⁴¹ Field data collected by the research team during a meeting with Ahmad Al Kafarnah, a person with disabilities, through a form that was given to him to fill out for the purpose of this report on 5/10/2014.

Prevention of Access and Movement:

Israeli occupation forces continuously bombed and shelled various provinces of the Gaza Strip which caused a broad state of fear and terror in the civilian population, particularly in persons with disabilities. Amidst the rise in the number of martyrs and thousands injured, people with disabilities were trapped in their homes in the less targeted areas while others were forced to vacate their residences. In both cases the aggression left normal life paralyzed. People with disabilities were unable to move about, as was the case for the people in general, due to the loss of personal safety and security. As such the aggression prevented people with disabilities from accessing medical treatment and care from private rehabilitation centers, and lessened their chances of recovery. Rather their medical situations became worse and their suffering increased, making re-integration into society ever more difficult.

The Destruction of Private Institutions Involved with People With Disabilities:

The Israeli occupation forces targeted during the aggression of “ Operation Protective Edge” on the Gaza Strip all that is forbidden and committed what is criminal. It threw the international agreements and charters at the wall and did not adhere to the principles of international humanitarian law (the laws of war), destroying houses and property, including institutions that provide help and treatment for people with disabilities. Some of these institutes were completely destroyed or damaged, depriving thousands of people with disabilities from their services.

According to the documentation of the research team, the Israeli occupation forces have targeted (5) institutions for people with disabilities in the Gaza Strip, destroying them either completely or partially, causing their work to be halted. These affected institutes were educational, rehabilitative and therapeutic service providers listed as follows:

1. *Charity Care Association for Palestine:*

An association that is active in the field of care for people with complex disabilities (physical and mental), located near the Al-Quds Open University headquarters in Beit Lahia in the Northern Gaza province, offering shelter and therapeutic services (medicine- physical therapy- psychiatric therapy) for people with complex disabilities. It now shelters (19) persons within its headquarters. On Saturday, 12/07/2014, Israeli warplanes bombed the association's headquarters at 4:42 pm at dawn. There were (5) people with complex disabilities accompanied by their guardians inside, while (14) of them were out because of the weekend (Friday holiday), causing the deaths of two persons with disabilities: **Suha Misbah Ahmed Abu Sa'da (aged 38)** and **Ulaa Hasan Muhammad Washaahi (aged 31)**. (4)

people were injured, three with disabilities and one guardian: Ahmad Kamil Al-Aawar (aged 24), May Nahid Nimr Hamaada (aged 31), Sally Naiim Saqr (aged 19) and the guardian Salwa Darwish Ahmad Abu Qimsaan (aged 53). All were struck with shrapnel throughout their bodies, stated by Kamal Odwan and Al-Shifa Hospital as severe injuries. The headquarters was destroyed completely.⁴² What is worth mentioning is that the association was working regularly despite the bombing of nearby farmland and open spaces. The Israeli forces struck the building with a missile from an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) in preparation for the main and more devastating strike minutes later. However the guardian thought that it was like the other bombings nearby and did not expect that the association would be directly bombed. Two innocent lives were lost at the hands of the occupation at a time when they were in a center for treatment of their disabilities. The association ended its humanitarian work as all its equipment and materials were entirely destroyed⁴³

2. **Association of Physical Disabilities:** An association involved with people with disabilities founded in 1992, with its headquarters near Ali Bin Abi Talib Mosque in the Zaytoon neighborhood of Gaza City. They have activities ranging from health, education, skills and recreation and provide services to approximately (16,600) people with physical disabilities from various parts of Gaza. The association consists of several buildings: Shams Al-Amal School, which provides educational services to (160) students with severe and moderate disabilities in kindergarten and primary school.⁴⁴ And a medical rehabilitation center that serves around (4500) with disabilities, providing them with medical services from specialized health clinics, lab tests, radiograph and medicines from a pharmacy as well as a playground for children. During the aggression launched by the Israeli occupation forces in Gaza, the Association was providing health, rehabilitation and relief services to about 600 with disabilities who were visiting the headquarters during the hours of the humanitarian declarations of a truce.⁴⁵ On Tuesday, 26/08/2014 at around 3:00 am dawn, an Israeli aircraft bombed the association directly,⁴⁶ causing the destruction and damage of multiple building (the school was entirely destroyed and the western sector of the rehabilitation center was destroyed completely with damage to the eastern sector, as well as damages to the management building and playground). Heavy damage to the interiors and utilities such as wheelchairs, medicines, therapeutic devices and recreational toys. This completely hindered workers from

⁴² Al Mezan Center for Human Rights, press release, issued on 12/7/2014, http://www.mezan.org/ar/details.php?id=19218&ddname=IOF&id_dept=9&id2=9&p=center Retrieval date: 3/10 /2014.

⁴³ Field data collected by the research team through a meeting with the management of the Palestine Care Association orphanage on 09/27/2014.

⁴⁴ From the Facebook page of Shams Al Amal School for Persons with Physical Disabilities, <https://ar.facebook.com/Alamal.for.orphans> Retrieval date: 08/10/2014.

⁴⁵ From the Facebook page of Society for Persons with Physical Disabilities, <https://www.facebook.com/physicallydisabled> Retrieval date: 08/10/2014.

⁴⁶ Al Mezan Center for Human Rights, news report published on 26/8/2014, http://www.mezan.org/ar/details.php?id=19470&ddname=IOF&id_dept=9&id2=9&p=center Retrieval date: 05/10/2014.

- providing services to beneficiaries and deprived the children of their school to learn and play in the playground. Their rights to education and interaction were violated, and this hinders their ability to integrate into society.⁴⁷
3. ***The Right to Life Society***: Founded in 1999 and located in Karama Street, in Al-Shujayia neighborhood of Gaza City,⁴⁸ it was the first and only Palestinian organization that offered rehabilitation to people with Down syndrome and autism. On Wednesday, 16/07/2014, management received a phone call from the Israeli occupation army at around 23:00 am asking them to vacate the office in preparation for a bombing. Despite the administration's attempt to emphasize the humanitarian work of the organization, they insisted on bombing the building. After the administration vacated the building the roof was struck by a missile from a UAV. On 18/07/2014 after a ground incursion by occupation forces near the east of the society's headquarters, the organization was subjected to artillery and missile fire, causing heavy damages. The building and its internal and external area were damaged, along with the skills workshops and buses of the organization.⁴⁹
 4. ***Al-Basma Club for People with Disabilities (North Gaza branch)***: An organization founded in 2005 for people with disabilities due to the remarkable increase in number that resulted from the conflict with the Israeli occupation. Founded upon caring and helping people with disabilities, it tries to meet their needs in sports, culture and proper re-integration into society to ensure their effective community participation.⁵⁰ On Saturday 07/12/2014, Israeli warplanes targeted a plantation and open land adjacent to the club's headquarters. The building was partially damaged, with windows shattered, walls cracked and some of the tables and chairs damaged, including the wooden shack in the external grounds. This impacted the work of the club during and after the aggression.⁵¹
 5. ***Al-Wafaa Medical Rehabilitation and Surgery Specialist Hospital***: The hospital was established in 1996 to meet the needs of the Palestinian community in the Gaza Strip. It has a clinical capacity of 75 beds, and is located far east of Al-Shujaiya neighborhood a distance of one kilometer from the eastern boundary of the buffer zone. It is the first center to specialize in rehabilitation for people with physical and mental disabilities, providing services for 2000 individuals every year. The hospital was successful in treating many people with disabilities. The hospital was violated by Israeli occupation forces more than once over the years 2005, 2008, 2012 and during the last aggression of 2014. During this war Israeli forces bombed the hospital premises with artillery and missile fire, trying to force the medical staff

⁴⁷ Documented information obtained by the research team from the Department of the Society for the Physically Handicapped represented by Mr. Mustafa Abdel-Wahab, through communication with him, for the purpose of supporting this report, dated 10/10/2014.

⁴⁸ Guide for Charities, The Right to Life Association, http://insanonline.net/charity_detail.php?id=382 Retrieval date: 10/10/2014.

⁴⁹ The official Facebook page of The Right to Life Association, retrieval date: 10/10/2014.

⁵⁰ The official website for A Smile for Those with Disabilities, <http://basma-club.ps/ExtraPage.aspx?id=10> Retrieval date: 08/10/2014.

⁵¹ Information documented by the research team through communication with the club manager of Holiday Shaqoura in Northern Gaza, on 09/10/2014, for the purpose of this report.

within to evacuate. This was from the beginning of the aggression on 7/7/2014 to around 10 days into the war. The administration received a call from the Israeli army telling them to vacate the hospital. The artillery shelling was then intensified, resulting in the destruction of some of the hospital's buildings and an electric outage. Thick dust had filled the hallways and covered medical papers within, and the hospital became dark because of all the dust. The efforts of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the World Health Organization and foreign peace activists could not persuade the occupation to desist from bombing the hospital and forcing its staff to evacuate. On Thursday 17/07/2014, in the face of these developments and extreme danger to the lives of patients and medical personnel, and given the state of fear and panic that they have experienced, the hospital administration decided to evacuate the premises entirely at 22:00 at night under artillery fire. On 07/23/2014 Israeli warplanes bombed and destroyed all three buildings of the hospital complex **entirely**. Even the therapeutic garden equipped with various types of medical rehabilitation, specialist and surgical equipment was lost. It was built on a land area of 8,000 square meters and the three buildings were comprised of an area of 17,500 square meters, the damages amounted due to this brutal assault was (13.5) million dollars, with (220) staff and personnel who have lost their jobs and sense of a secure employment due to this destruction.⁵²

General Results

The report documented the abuses on persons with disabilities through the aggression of “Operation Protective Edge” which extended from July 7 to August 26 of 2014 in the Gaza Strip, as shown in the following results:

1. Israeli occupation forces killed during Operation Protective Edge (23) Palestinians with disabilities. By province: (3) of Rafah, (4) of Khan Yunis, (3) of Deir al-Balah, (6) from Gaza City, (7) from North Gaza. (12) of them were physically disabled, (5) with intellectual disabilities, (2) with hearing disabilities, and (4) with multiple disabilities.
2. Israeli occupation forces caused the injury of (50) Palestinians with disabilities from various areas of the Gaza Strip during “Operation Protective Edge”.
3. Israeli occupation forces committed during the aggression many systematic and gross violations by not respecting international human rights law and the rights of persons with disabilities. It violated the right to life, the right to suitable housing – by bombing and destroying houses – the right to education – by bombing and destroying many schools and learning centers – the right to health – by targeting or

⁵² Press release on the repercussions of the destruction of buildings belonging to Wafa Hospital for Medical Rehabilitation and Complex Specialized Surgeries, the official website of Al Wafa Hospital, <http://www.elwafa.ps/elwafa-hospital/elwafa-news/3530.html> posted on: 15/09/2014.

- completely destroying hospitals and medical centers that provide critical medical services – the right to employment, the right to participation and the right to free movement. The occupation was responsible for the death and injury of people with disabilities and caused (2204) to be forcefully displaced from their homes. It denied access to places of work and rehabilitation centers that provide help and therapy to people with disabilities.
4. The report documented ten stories of people with disabilities that expose the violations of the Israeli occupation forces against them during its aggression in “Operation Protective Edge” on the Gaza Strip. The selected samples are: (4) with physical disabilities, (1) with hearing disabilities, (1) who are visually impaired, and (4) with multiple disabilities. Divided into 5 males and 5 females, among them were (2) children. (9) of the selected sample were Muslims and (1) the Christian. Among them were (2) killed during the offensive, and (4) were injured. (7) Who had their residential homes destroyed and (4) who had family members martyred.
 5. Israeli occupation forces extended their crimes during the aggression of “Operation Protective Edge” in the same context as in their previous behavior in dealing with the civilian population of the Gaza Strip. This is due to the failure of the international community and governing organizations to hold the occupation and its leaders accountable for the crimes committed. That would stop the continuation of violations or limit them.
 6. Protection and safety was denied to people with disabilities during the aggressive operations of the Israeli forces despite their advanced level of military technology that allows them to differentiate. Due to their excessive use of lethal force without discrimination or military necessity, persons with disabilities were killed.
 7. The effort of institutions involved in providing services to people with disabilities- whether governmental, civil or private - in documenting abuses against this category of people is still singular and not united. The research team realizes that the bureaucracy of these institutions dictate their work. However it is in public interest that they unify or coordinate their efforts, as that would guarantee service for the people with disabilities in Gaza.

General Recommendations

The report concludes the documentation of the violations carried out against people with disabilities by the Israeli occupation during “Operation Protective Edge” with a number of important recommendations:

1. The Palestinian National Authority and Palestinian Civil Society organizations must unify efforts to put pressure on the international community to force the occupation to put an end to its systematic and gross violations committed against Palestinian civilians, including persons with disabilities, and pressure them to reach an end to their occupation of Palestinian territories. Also serious work is needed in lifting the imposed siege on Gaza that violates the human rights of its entire people, at the forefront of which are persons with disabilities.
2. It is vital to pressure international organizations, the UN, and to go to the Geneva Conventions in order to compel the occupation to respect international humanitarian law in its dealings with Palestinian civilians and to provide protection for people with disabilities during its operations which are continuous and overly aggressive.
3. The international community, particularly Arab and Islamic countries, must immediately intervene to put an end to the suffering of people with disabilities caused by the Israeli occupation forces during the aggression of “Operation Protective Edge”. They must hold the occupation to bear responsibility for the results of its actions by compensating victims, treating injured and ending the suffering of those whose homes were destroyed partially or completely. Also by allowing the rebuilding of humanitarian organizations that were targeted and bombed and now no longer provide health and rehabilitation services.
4. The Palestinian National Authority must make a positive move towards holding Israeli soldiers and leaders of the occupation accountable for the crimes they have committed and provide compensation for Palestinian victims through the signing of the Treaty of Rome and joining the International Criminal Court. This will be an effort to stop the ongoing violations and protect Palestinian civilians.
5. It is vital to focus on monitoring and documenting violations committed against persons with disabilities in the Palestinian territories, and issue periodic reports to that expose these violations through concerned institutions.
6. The efforts of institutes involved in providing services to people with disabilities, whether governmental, civil or private, must be unified in monitoring and documenting the violations against people with disabilities. This can be done with a unified network of member organizations that work and coordinate together to achieve the ambitions of people with disabilities and to live up to their expectations. And it is in the public’s interest to stay away from bureaucracy and individualism with regards to this matter.
7. Activating the role of government institutions in being responsible for people with disabilities by finding core solutions to the problems they face. And activating the

- role of non-governmental organizations to research the problems faced by people with disabilities within centers of care and rehabilitation, and to improve the development and standards of care and services provided. Also elevating the methods and quality of services provided to Palestinians with disabilities so that it may deal with their increase in number and diversity of their needs.
8. The formation of a team of lawyers to open an investigation into the violations carried out against people with disabilities.
 9. The Palestinian Authority must be active on an international level and depend on the International Convention for Persons with Disabilities
 10. Pressure from human rights organizations and groups representing people with disabilities to open an investigation and strive towards providing a safe environment during periods of war.
 11. Prepare an emergency plan for times of conflict and war to protect people with disabilities, within specific means.
 12. Promoting the participation of organizations representing people with disabilities to monitor the violations carried out against people with disabilities.
 13. The pursuit of making a suitable environment consisting of homes and public facilities during the rebuilding after the Israeli aggression on Gaza.

Documented Stories

Of the violations of the Israeli forces against people with disabilities during the aggression Operation Protective Edge

The report addresses ten stories of people with disabilities that were exposed to violations from the Israeli occupation forces during the aggression of “Operation Protective Edge” on the Gaza Strip. The selected samples are: (4) with physical disabilities, (1) with hearing disabilities, (1) who are visually impaired, and (4) with multiple disabilities. Divided into 5 males and 5 females, among them were (2) children.⁵³ (9) of the selected sample were Muslims and (1) the Christian. Among them were (2) killed during the offensive, and (4) were injured. (7) Had their of residential homes destroyed, and (4) who had family members injured or killed.

Each story describes the suffering endured by people with disabilities beginning with general information about the person and how their disability affects their lives as well as how they and their family cope. The report then addressed the violations⁵⁴ that they, their families and homes were subjected to:

• The First Story: Ahmed Yusuf Dalloul

Ahmed Dalloul was seriously wounded in the year 2000 during a traffic accident. This caused him to become physically impaired with weakness in the muscles of the left lower limb and difficulty in normal walking. A herniated disc in the lumbar spine made him unable to perform work which requires great physical effort.

Ahmed received follow-up treatment for a full year at Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City until he was able to walk with crutches. During another year of physical therapy, Ahmed was not working and was not able to practice normal daily life. After therapy was over, he was not intimidated nor weakened by his impairment.

He greatly struggled to strive during life. With the help and support of his family he was able to open a small shop (known as a minimarket). He then bought a car and began working as a driver. He would play and practice sports in the Islamic Gathering Club. Through his time at the club he began to work as a guard. Afterwards he became the driver of the Ministry of Youth and Sports where he would play

Martyr: Ahmed Yusuf Ismail Dalloul.
Date of Birth: 07/12/1965.
ID number: 927 252 262.
Address: Gaza province, Zaytoon.
Religion: Muslim.
Gender: Male.
Marital Status: Married.
Occupation: Employee in the Ministry of Youth and Sports.
Family Members: 6 members.
Type of disability: Physical.

⁵³ According to Palestinian law, anyone under 18 years of age is considered a child.

⁵⁴ The stories in this report are from field data gathered by the research team specifically for this report using a special form designed for this purpose and carefully chosen cases based on a religious background, gender, and geographic basis.

sports like a person without a disability. He was not hindered by his disability, on the contrary, with the help of crutches and a wheelchair he was able to progress and find success in life.

Ahmed would shine at the Islamic Gathering Club and became one of its administration staffs and was active in the Palestinian Paralympic Committee for the Olympic Sports of Persons with Disabilities. He then became a member of the Board of Directors of the Sports Cooperation Club.

During the aggression of “Operation Protective Edge”, Ahmed’s residential area was targeted and bombed. He gathered and embraced his family and children and tried to ease their fears as he was known to be brave and unhindered by obstacles, especially in those times of panic that most people of Gaza have had to live through. Despite his disability and with great strength and confidence, he would practice playing sports in the times of truce. On Saturday 07/12/2014 at about 17:30 Ahmed was visiting the Sports Cooperation Club near Al-Salam Mosque in the Zaytoon neighborhood when an Israeli missile from a UAV struck him and tore through his body entirely. And so ended the life of a sportsman who lived a life of challenges and overcoming obstacles, to be killed for committing no crime.⁵⁵

Ahmed Dalloul, the sportsman with a disability, has gone, leaving behind his children, wife, family and friends as well as the sports that he so much loved. He left his work that he excelled in so well, and his wheelchair and crutches, all from an Israeli missile that did not recognize he was a civilian with a disability. He left behind his dreams and ambitions, as well as his grievances and pains.

• The Second Story: Abdul Jalil Jihad Abdel Dayem

On 2/11/2009 Abd Al-Jaleel was struck with a bullet fired by Israeli occupation forces in the chest, affecting the functioning of his heart. It caused him to suffer imbalance when walking, forcing him to walk slowly. The surgical operation he underwent was unsuccessful and so he developed some disabilities. Abdul Jalil and his family live in a house located near the border area. Many of his family members were martyred, including his cousin who was a medic: Arafa Hani Arafat Abdel Dayem, martyred during the aggression Operation Cast Lead in 2009.

Abdul Jalil left school early during middle school and became isolated from society. He did not like to participate with those around him and so he had no friends. He would sit by himself and often cry. His family tried to help and brought him more than

Martyr: Abdul Jalil Jihad Abdel Dayem
Date of Birth: 22/05/1993.
ID number: 803 723 859
Address: North Gaza, Beit Lahiya, Shaimaa.
Religion: Muslim.
Gender: Male.
Marital Status: Single.
Disability: Physical

⁵⁵ Field data, collected by the research team during a meeting with the relatives of the martyr Ahmed Dalloul, using special forms for the purpose of this report, dated 10/10/2014.

one psychiatrist but he did not improve. He enrolled in a private education program for handworks and pursued the profession of glass and ceramics. His mood started to change for the better.

During the aggression Operation Protective Edge, Abdul Jalil's neighborhood was bombarded and his home was partially damaged. His brother was injured in the eye and Abud Jalil also had a breathing crisis due to the intense smoke emitted from the projectiles. His family was forced to leave their home and seek refuge in one of the shelters available. They went to Jabaliya Camp and took shelter in Abu Hussein School, which was not made for living in and did not have the basic necessities of life. Their room was on the ground floor, and life was bitter for Abdul Jalil and his family.

On Wednesday 30/07/2014 at around 5:00 am, the Israeli occupation forces shelled and bombed the school. A projectile directly hit the room Abdul Jalil and his family was in, and Abdul Jalil was immediately killed with his body no longer recognizable. His father Jihad Arafat Abdul Dayem (aged 48) was also martyred. His mother and sister (Samia, aged 15) suffered medium injuries while his older brother (Ibrahim, aged 24) suffered injuries that caused the amputation of both his legs. Also killed in the attack were (19) displaced persons, 2 of them children, and (153) with varying degrees of injury, (69 children and 38 women).⁵⁶

Abdul Jalil has is now gone as a result of the Israeli occupation's projectiles of death that do not discriminate between a civilian with a disability or otherwise. He posed no threat to them. He has left behind his dreams and ambitions as well as his grievances and pains, to what we hope is a better place.

• The Third Story: May Nahid Hamada

May lives in the orphanage operated by the Charity Care Association for Palestine, located tentatively near the Nizar Rayyan School in Beit Lahia. May suffers from cerebral palsy and was placed in the orphanage by her guardians so that she may receive the necessary and appropriate care for her condition that would be difficult to provide at home.

May has suffered since birth from cerebral palsy and from the inclination of the spinal cord towards the abdomen (scoliosis). She suffers from multiple birth defects and has a good level of intelligence. However she is unable to use any auxiliary utilities.

Name: May Nahid Hamada
Date of Birth: 09/04/1984.
Address: North Gaza, Beit Lahia, Charity Care Association for Palestine
Religion: Muslim.
Gender: Female.
Marital Status: Single
Disability: Multiple

⁵⁶ Field data, collected by the research team during a meeting with the relatives and neighbors of the martyr Abdul Jalil Abdel Dayem, using special forms for the purpose of this report, dated 27/09/2014.

Since birth May lived a difficult life. She needs someone to help her in all her daily requirements. Her condition has made it impossible for her to learn and seek an education. She could not continue to live with her family because they did not know how to deal with someone with her condition. Due to her condition she cannot live with her family, get married, have a social life or move freely. This is her life in short. Her family has tried to provide for her needs by bringing her to the association's orphanage and paying for the proper care.

During the aggression of "Operation Protective Edge", May lived in an atmosphere of fear and terror and was affected greatly by the continuous sounds of explosions around the orphanage at the association's headquarters near Al-Quds Open University in Beit Lahia. Every time she heard an explosion she would cling to her caregiver, and they would spend long hours during the aggression in fear.⁵⁷ On Saturday, 12/07/2014 at about 4:42 am Israeli aircraft bombed the headquarters of the association during the presence of May and four others with disabilities with her inside the orphanage along with their caregivers. The strike resulted in two deaths: Saha Misbaah Ahmed Abu Sa'da (aged 38) and Ulaa Hasan Muhammad Washaahi (aged 31). May was inflicted with injuries and burns all throughout her body. Those with disabilities also injured were Ahmed Kamil Al-Awar (aged 26) and Sally Naim Saqr (aged 19) along with their caregiver Salwa Darwish Ahmed Abu Qimsaan (aged 53), all struck with shrapnel throughout their bodies. Al-Shifa and Kamal Odwan Hospitals stated their injuries as serious. The headquarters of the association were destroyed entirely.⁵⁸

May was treated for her burns at Al-Shifa Hospital in the burns department on 12/07/2014 and stayed under intensive care until the date 22/07/2014. She then returned to be treated at Kamal Odwan Hospital on 06/08/2014 to the date 16/08/2014 after which she returned to the moved and momentary headquarters of the association at the Saftawi Workers Union and then to the official reopening located near the Rayyaan School in Beit Lahia. Since 22/8/2014 she has been receiving intensive care from Doctors Without Borders until now along with the help of the management team at Charity Care Association for Palestine.⁵⁹

After what May had suffered from injury and after the aggression, she feels deeply distressed. She often has violent episodes of anger and suffers from deteriorating health. The marks of the burns still show and the shrapnel hasn't been removed from her body. What crime was committed by this girl for her to deserve being bombed?

⁵⁷ Field data collected by the research team through a meeting with the management of the Palestine Care Association orphanage on 09/27/2014.

⁵⁸ Al Mezan Center for Human Rights, press release issued on 12/7/2014, http://www.mezan.org/ar/details.php?id=19218&ddname=IOF&id_dept=9&id2=9&p=center Retrieval date: 3/10/2014

⁵⁹ Field data collected by the research team through a meeting with the director of the Palestine Care Association orphanage: Jameela Aliwa, on 09/27/2014.

• The Fourth Story: Uday Imad Abdullah Ali

Uday, who suffers from complex disabilities, lives with his family in a home that consists of five rooms, a kitchen, and a living room. They are at the center of a citrus farm that they work in as well as a sheep and cattle farm that they own, all located on the Court St. in Jabalia, North Gaza.

Uday suffers from hearing and mental disabilities as well as problems in behavior. He suffers from deafness and muteness, chronic epilepsy and spasms. His family says that his conditions did not allow him to continue his education. Considering the rarity of his disorder many organizations that are involved with caring for people with disabilities have refused to take him in. Rehabilitation would be difficult due to the chronic spasms. Being unable to work anywhere else, Uday began working at the family farm. His family knows how to take care of him physically and emotionally. However Uday is isolated completely from everyone else and does not speak to anyone save his closest relatives. He does not go out for visits and stays only at home. His family takes care of his affairs and pay for his treatment and seizure medication, hoping one day that he will get better. He works energetically as long as he doesn't get a seizure attack, whereby he would rest and comfort. His family are doing all they can to support him but he is still in need of a specialized institute to take care of his health condition.

During the aggression of "Operation Protective Edge", Uday lived through some very difficult times. His home area was considered to be one of the more dangerous areas to be in. His family's farm was bombed more than once, often with multiple missiles. Each time Uday would have nervous fits and suffer extreme fear, yet despite this Uday would try to control himself and continue normally. On Thursday, 10/07/2014, at approximately 12:00 midnight while Uday was providing fodder for the cows, an Israeli fighter jet bombed the center of the farm with an F-16 missile. Uday was sent flying due to the blast, screaming to his father for help. His father tried to calm him down and immediately called for an ambulance, which arrived quickly due to the Red Crescent Society headquarters being meters away from their home. Uday was taken to Kamal Odwan Hospital screaming and crying with bleeding in multiple areas of his body. The doctors said that he was struck with shrapnel on his back and upper body with a shattered bone in his spinal cord. He was transferred to Al-Shifa Hospital but due to the complexity of his injuries he was then taken to the charity Al-Maqasid Hospital in the occupied territories in Al-Quds. He underwent a surgical operation and within days he was returned to Gaza. However, Uday now suffered from a new disability in addition to his previous ones. He became paralyzed as a result of his injuries.

After returning from Al-Quds was in tears the whole time. He returned home to find it had been affected drastically and the farm in which he worked in and spent most of his

Name: Uday Imad Abdullah Ali.
Date of Birth: 07/24/1994.
ID Number: 400078168
Address: the northern Gaza Strip, Jabalia.
Religion: Muslim.
Gender: Male.
Marital Status: Single.
Occupation: farmer.
Number of family members: 10
Type of disability: multiple.

time was destroyed completely. Whenever he would turn his eyes and see the wreckage of the farm he would cry hysterically and have an epilepsy attack. He would wake up at night screaming from nightmares. Uday had become mentally ill and was in need of auxiliary equipment, such as a wheelchair, to help him. Uday went from someone trying to cope and recover to a person overwhelmed with disabilities due to one missile. Even as this report is being prepared he is in Turkey, awaiting the mercy of his Lord.⁶⁰

• The Fifth Story: Abeer Ulwa Alharkali

Abeer lives in a home of two floors made up of five rooms, a kitchen and a living room. Her house is in the middle of a garden of trees of fruit and flowers, near Al-Mutasim Mosque in Mansoura St. Al-Shujayia in Gaza City.

Abeer has difficulty moving due to bent curvature in the spine that resulted in paralysis in movement. She uses auxiliary instruments such as electronic wheelchairs and scooters to overcome her disability.

Abeer overcame her disability by making it a motivator for her in life. She suffered since she was young but she overcame her difficulties with determination and perseverance through helping instruments. She became a member of clubs and associations involved with people with disabilities and expressed her talents through poetry, stories and articles. She also participated in sports competitions, excelling in javelin throwing as well as other sports for people with disabilities and has won numerous awards and medals. She participated in acting and theater in national and local events as well as showed her solidarity with prisoners in Israeli jails. She was an exemplary representative of people with disabilities.

A reason for Abeer's exceptionality was her family's motivational and financial support for her. She finished her high school and enrolled in the Gaza Community College to continue her education. Her family also contacted institutes involved with people with disabilities to provide the moral and material support needed.

During the aggression Operation Protective Edge, Abeer's residential area was targeted with vicious bombing. The Israeli forces targeted a resistance base and empty farmland, both nearby her home, multiple times. After the indiscriminate bombing of her neighborhood, things got even more dangerous on Sunday morning, 20/07/2014 at 6:30 am. The International Committee of the Red Cross and ambulances could not reach her area through a safe route, and therefore Abeer's family decided to evacuate their house fearing

Name: Abeer Ulwa Salih Alharkali.
Date of Birth: 19/01/1993.
ID number: 803 843 713.
Address: Gaza province, Al-Shujayia, Mansoura St.
Religion: Muslim.
Gender: Female.
Marital Status: Single.
Education: enrolled in Gaza Community College
Number of family members: 12.
Type of disability: Physical.

⁶⁰ Field data collected by the research team during a meeting with the wounded Uday Ali, a person with disabilities, through a form that was given to him to fill out for the purpose of this report on 06/10/2014.

for their lives. Her elderly parents were unable to carry her, so Abeer persevered with her wheelchair and went out into the street. She saw death all around her. She heard the screams and cries of women and children with projectiles falling from the sky randomly but she clung onto life. She tried to use trees for cover however the mortars of death do not distinguish between someone with a disability or another. A projectile fell near her wheelchair and she was thrown to the ground. She lay there, unable to move, with people running around her for their lives. She looked upon her ruined wheelchair and then discovered that she had been hit in her right leg. Her father called for her, screaming for her and asking if she was still alive. She could hear him but could not see him due to the intensity of the smoke and dust. She despaired and lost consciousness for only moments. When she regained her conscience and looked around her she saw the torn bodies of her relatives and neighbors scattered around her. She was shocked due to the horrific nature of such a sight. She saw a child next to her lying on the ground and she screamed for her father to save the child. Her father who was nearby came and upon carrying the boy realized that his head was gone due to the bombing. It was truly a massacre in Al-Shujayia. Her father was unable to carry her and farther down the road an ambulance tried to reach them but was stopped in its tracks when a mortar shell struck the road. A young man of the neighborhood saw Abeer and her father and quickly came to help. He carried her and ran away from the scene towards the nearest ambulance. She was taken to Al-Shifa Hospital and her father soon caught up.

Abeer says she saw hundreds of injured and killed in Al-Shifa Hospital. The doctors told her that her injuries were not critical and that the hospital cannot accommodate her due to the sheer number of injured and killed. Her father took her to one of the shelters opened by UNRWA International in Tel Al-Hawa near Al-Quds Hospital (Al-Zaytoon School). The place was in disorder and not suitable for living, especially for one with Abeer's special needs. Basic necessities of life were scarce. Not long after arriving Abeer began to feel increasing pain. Her father took her to Al-Quds Hospital nearby and after inspection the doctors informed her that she had burns and shrapnel in her right leg and that she needed treatment. She continued treatment until the end of the aggression when she returned to a damaged home.⁶¹

"After I had lost my wheelchair I really felt the suffering. I felt that now I was truly a person with a disability. I could not find another suitable wheelchair and my family already had paid so much for my sakes. With no scooter I was forced to depend on cars to move from place to place. Due to my problems and wounds I had to postpone my education at college. Reaching the college campus was too difficult and because of the rising cost of treatment my family could not afford to pay the fees. I stayed home and have only now really become someone with a disability."

After the aggression Abeer began to feel that she was a burden upon her family and community. She started to feel ashamed of her disability and began to have nightmares. She

⁶¹ Field data collected by the research team during a meeting with the wounded Abeer Al Hirkali, a person with disabilities, through a form that was given to her to fill out for the purpose of this report on 28/09/2014.

experiences flashbacks the horrors of what she saw that day, causing her great pain. Her disability has begun to cause her feel stressed and pressured, and no longer motivates her. Abeer who is a writer and sportswoman has become a person in need of help.

• The Sixth Story: Sihaam Mazen Habib

Sihaam Habib lives with her husband Hazim Habib on the third floor in a home roofed with asbestos. The building is owned by her husband's family and is three floors. Her home consists of three rooms with a kitchen and living room. It is located in the middle of Al-Janeena neighborhood near the East road (near the buffer zone) in Al-Shujayia, Gaza City.

Sihaam suffered from runny ears as a child which resulted in a hearing impairment. She now uses hearing aids. Sihaam practiced life normally and had overcome her impairment. She continued her education and then married and became a family with one child. The use of her hearing aids was normal thanks to her family's attention and care, they had taken her to the Our Children for Deafness Society. Her family provided for her all her emotional and material needs and interacted with her normally to the degree that she wanted a long engagement period to get used to her fiancé. After marriage her husband supported her and provided for all her necessities and so they together raised their child.

During the aggression of "Operation Protective Edge", Sihaam's neighborhood in Al-Shujayia was heavily bombarded and she lived through a very nerve-wracking and distressful time. Since the first day of the aggression on 7/7/2014 their area was violently attacked by Israeli planes and tanks. She stayed with her husband and tried to hide her fears within herself. In the late hours of the night the roof of their home was struck by a missile, prompting them to go to the ground floor where it would be safer and stay with their relatives. The attack was frightening and she feared for her family's life. She stayed with her in-laws until 4:30am in the morning when a second missile struck the building.

Faced with this situation, the family decided to evacuate and leave the building. Sihaam put on her hearing aids and in the street began to hear the screams of people as the bombardment increased. Those difficult moments were rife with fear, tension and death. She screamed and cried clinging to her husband and child while seeing the bodies of the fallen all around her. The bodies were scattered in the streets and blood was everywhere. They ran towards the first ambulances to arrive at the scene, one of them being for the International Committee of the Red Cross. They took her and her family away from danger and along the way she would see a rush of ambulances passing by. They were taken to Al-Shifa Hospital. It was there she saw a scene she will never forget: a young child reached the

Name: Sihaam Mazen Mohammed Habib.
Date of Birth: 12/04/1993.
ID number: 804 499 556.
Address: Gaza City, Al-Shujayia
Religion: Muslim.
Gender: Female.
Marital Status: Married.
Education: High School.
Number of family members: 4
Type of disability: Hearing Impairment.

hospital without his head. Sihaam could not control herself and lost consciousness. She felt that she and her family were unsafe and feared for her unborn baby. Sihaam was late in her pregnancy.

After waking up in the hospital her husband tried to console her and reassure her of herself and children. They left to move in with friends of the family in Al-Nasr neighborhood. Soon afterwards they moved in with relatives in Al-Sabra. After they settling down for a bit there, she found it very difficult to communicate with her child. She had remembered that her hearing aids were lost.

The situation was still worrying and they did not know what had happened to their home. On 8/8/2014 she began to feel the pain of childbirth and did not know what to do. The situation was dangerous and the hospitals were full of those martyred and injured. With her husband she was taken to the hospital. The scenes of her last visit were still vivid in her memory, making her labor even more difficult. It was destined that in these conditions she would give birth to her daughter Malak. She moved in with relatives and lived in fear that what had happened to their neighborhood would happen to them again there. She did not feel at ease until the end of the aggression was finally declared. She then relaxed but found out that their three-floor home was demolished completely. She moved in with relatives until her husband rented an apartment in Al-Saada building on the 20th of September. She is now at ease however what she saw during the war she will never forget.⁶²

Sihaam sometimes feels worried and unsafe, causing her anxiety. This is especially so due to losing her hearing aids. The occupation caused her great pain and suffering, forcefully displaced her and her family, forced her to give birth in such difficult conditions and completely destroyed her home.

• The Seventh Story: Wadi' Seribion Al-Turk

*Wadi' Al-Turk lives with his family in a home 225 square meters consisting of three rooms, a kitchen and a living room. His home is located on Izz Al-Din Al-Qassam St. opposite the UNRWA schools in a neighborhood known as the Christian Camp, Alrimal, Gaza City.*⁶³

Wadi' suffers from a double disability, neural and visual, due to head trauma that caused internal bleeding in the brain and loss of function in some parts within. He was paralyzed longitudinally on the right side and suffers from excessive bleeding (known as hemophilia due

Name: Wadi' Seribiann Wadih Al-Turk.
Date of Birth: 23/04/1960.
ID number: 97,613,614.
Address: Gaza City, Al-Qassam St.
Religion: Christian.
Refugees: from Yafa.
Gender: Male.
Marital Status: Married.
Education: Elementary School
Occupation: Unemployed.
Family Members: 6
Type of disability: Physical and visual

⁶² Field data collected by the research team during a meeting with Siham Habib, a person with disabilities, through a form that was given to her to fill out for the purpose of this report on 01/10/2014.

⁶³ Field data collected by the research team during a meeting with Wadi Al Turk, a person with disabilities, at his home in Al Remal Neighborhood through a form that was given to him to fill out for the purpose of this report on 27/09/2014.

to a lack of coagulation factor number 8). He suffers from atrophy and weakness in the muscles of the upper limbs and in lower limbs on the right side of the body which caused him difficulty in movement. His condition requires a medical splint to help him walk and constant follow-up as well as social care.

His disability prevented him from finishing elementary school due to continued therapy and rehabilitation sessions causing it to become difficult for him to attend. This affected his ability in getting employed. However his family helped and took care of him in all aspects and provided auxiliary devices to help him.

During the aggression of “Operation Protective Edge”, Wadi’s neighborhood was bombed like the rest of the Gaza Strip. On Tuesday 29/07/2014 at approximately 2:00 am Israeli forces threatened to bomb a neighboring house. Israeli forces also called Wadi’s wife: Intisaar Al-Turk and told her to warn her neighbor Mr. Gharib Abu Hassan to vacate his house because they are going to bomb it. She informed her neighbor immediately and began to get ready to leave with her and her husband. Wadi’ went with his wife and family to the Young Nuns and Sisters of Jesus church, forced to leave their home due to the danger. Wadi’ was negatively affected psychologically.

After the aggression Wadi’ suffered from nervousness and anxiety and a change in his normal behavior. He suffered from insomnia and headaches. His doctor informed them that his headaches were a result of increased blood flow. He grew to dislike socializing and preferred isolation. As for their neighbors home, it was not bombed, the call being a part of the psychological warfare upon the Palestinian people, including those with disabilities.⁶⁴

• The Eighth Story: Malak Ismail Abu Zaid

Malak Abu Zaid lives in an asbestos-roofed house with an area of about 90 square meters on the third floor of her family’s three-floor building. Her home consists of two rooms and a kitchen. Surrounding them are homes and open land in Al-Janeena area, Rafah province.

Malak suffers from multiple disabilities (mental, physical and in hearing) including difficulty in vision. Doctors confirmed to her mother in the first stages of pregnancy that she would have deformities and most likely die soon after birth. When she was born she had a very rare deformity in which the brain is externally located. Directly after birth Malak was taken to the surgical operations room to have her brain placed back into place. After intensive care

Name: Malak Ismail Abdullah Abu Zaid
Date of Birth: 11/10/2009.
ID number: 429 119 191.
Address: Rafah, Brazil neighborhood.
Religion: Muslim.
Refugee: from Ramle.
Gender: Female.
Number of family members: 5
Type of disability: multiple.

⁶⁴ =Field data collected by the research team from neighbors and acquaintances of Malak Ismail Abu Zaid, a person with disabilities, on 27/09/2014.

at the European Gaza Hospital and follow-up, Malak was saved. She lived on with multiple disabilities however she coped with her reality.

Malak's disability made her different than her peers, affecting her chances of being accepted at elementary school. She was continuously taken for follow-ups by her doctors and family and was in need of daily treatment and therapy. She also had a rehabilitation specialist to learn sign language so as to integrate into society.

Malak is one of the beneficiaries of a program from the Hope Rehabilitation Association, whereby her mother and family were trained in the ways of rehabilitation care for their daughter. They supported her greatly, cared for her and her mother tried to practice with her how to use different instruments made for her kinds of disabilities. They focused on getting her to socialize more and become more independent with regards to personal hygiene and brought her whatever she needed. Her mother took her to the most famous doctors specializing in her condition and many operations took place at the family's private expense. Malak then joined rehabilitation centers and was taken care so as to reach a good level in getting better.

During the aggression of "Operation Protective Edge" and since its beginning, the empty and open land around their house was bombed violently by mortars, tanks and warplanes. Malak's family went to the ground floor where her grandmother lives because it would be safer. The family lived through a terrifying ordeal and tried to calm their frightened children. Many days passed under these harsh conditions. Every time Malak's mother would see the news of children and civilians killed she would hug her and her brothers and sisters and try to console them.

On Monday, 28/07/2014 at about 23:45 the family was shocked to suddenly see the damage done to their building. The windows and roofing were completely shattered. They did not realize that the building was hit directly. The occupants all gathered on the ground floor. There was much screaming and crying especially amongst the children and Malak's father tried to calm them down. He said that the house next to them was the one that was hit. It was not until they calmed down a little when Israeli warplanes targeted and bombed the house completely upon its inhabitants. The family was divided into martyred and injured. Malak crawled to the nearest opening in the wall as a result of the strike, and with difficulty, she was able to crawl out. She screamed and cried and called for her mother but to no avail. Neighbors and ambulances tried to come close to the scene but the intensity of the artillery shelling did not allow them to get any nearer. On 29/7/2014, at around 1:00 in the morning, ambulances were able to reach the demolished home and began to evacuate the wounded and lift the dead. Malak was taken to Abu Yusuf Al-Najjar Hospital, unaware that her mother was killed in the bombing along with her grandmother, her young cousin and three wives of her uncles. A total of **(8)** people from the house were martyred and **(13)** injured, among them Malak, with medium and critical injuries as stated by the hospital. The martyrs were: Falastine Muhammad Abu Zaid (her mother), Widaad Ahmed Salama Abu Zaid (her grandmother), Ahmed Abdullah Hassan Abu Zaid, Shamma Wa'il Abu Zaid,

Maryam Marzooq Abu Zaid and the children: Abdullah Nidal Abu Zaid and Baysan Iyad Abu Zaid and the elderly: Abdullah Abu Zaid.

After the attack Malak knew the truth of what had happened. She had lost her mother and grandmother and most of her family. She had lost her safety and source of tender care. She could not describe what had happened to her after she was treated. Her father and uncles rented a place near the Rafah Zoo and her father tried to do his best in filling the role of his wife. However Malak disliked interacting with anyone and would cry most of the time. With the power outages lasting for hours Malak would sit in the darkness frightened. She would wake suddenly at night in fits and have bouts of insomnia. Her father and uncles stood powerless in easing her sorrows and pains. Her health grew worse and she suffered from sudden seizures.⁶⁵ The occupation was not satisfied with only her initial disabilities but rather added above that sudden seizures. These are the overall violations inflicted upon the innocent body of a five year old child.

• The Ninth Story: Rana Riyad Shbat

Rana lives in a four-room house with a kitchen that is owned by her family. They are located in a neighborhood inhabited mostly by her family. Around her home are factories and workshops for home appliances, paint and cars. Near them lies Al-Wadoud Mosque and the Al-Yazji drinks factory which produces "Seven Up" in Al-Tuffah, Gaza City.

Rana suffers from difficulty in her vision and doctors have described her condition as such: strength of the right eye is in seeing hand movement, strength in the left eye in seeing light but both eyes together are physically normal. By law she is considered blind.

Due to her disability Rana was dependent upon her family for going through daily life. Her visual impairment developed at the age of seventeen while performing high school exams in 2003. At the time she was exposed to shock and began to have problems with her vision causing her to be unable to finish her exams.

With the help and motivation of her parents and with her perseverance and determination she learned Braille (which is a special type of writing system specifically for people with visual impairments) and learned how to read with it and began to listen to

Name: Rana Riyad Shaaban Shbat.

Date of Birth: 12/31/1985.

ID number: 801 473 937.

Address: Gaza City, Al-Tuffah, east of the ship factory.

Religion: Muslim.

Gender: Female.

Marital Status: Single.

Education: college, community rehabilitation.

Occupation: unemployed.

Number of family members: 11

Type of disability: visual.

⁶⁵ Field data collected by the research team during a meeting with Taghreed Abu Hatab, a person with disabilities, and her neighbors through a form that was given to them to fill out for the purpose of this report on 27/09/2014.

lectures in order to learn. Rana reemerged a new person and retook her high school exams in 2010. As a home schooled student she passed her exams with average grades.

She continued to persevere and enrolled in the College of Applied Sciences, majoring in Social Rehabilitation she finished her diploma with an average grade percentage of 82%. Rana now deals with her disability in a normal and scientific manner as though it was not there. Her determination and patience allowed her to overcome her disability, and with the help of special instruments she achieved her ambitions. Her family also supported her and motivated her which helped Rana overcome her disability and barriers.

During the aggression of “Operation Protective Edge” the Shbat area was bombed heavily. Israeli forces targeted Jabal Al-Rayyis and Al-Sowrani, both near her home. After many missile strikes the situation was worsening and becoming more frightening. At first Rana refused to leave her home, a home she memorized all the details and corners of. How could she go to a place unknown that would be unsuitable for her and her family, a new place with new people? She would lose her calm in such a case, and Rana became very distressed and angry.

On Monday 21/07/2014 with intense fear under bombardment, Rana and her family evacuated their home. They were forced to leave from the home that sheltered Rana and moved in with in-laws of the family. She lived in a house full of relatives. She was not used to such an environment and could not memorize any details or corners. On Thursday, 24/7/2014 news came of her brother Muhammad’s death (Aged 23) after an Israeli missile tore his body to shreds while he was near a Mosque in their area. Rana lived a miserable and difficult time afterwards and cried much. She isolated herself completely. Her father then rented a storehouse in Al-Daraj neighborhood which was small and cramped but had given them some independence. Rana was affected by what happened to her and her family from forced evacuation to the death of her brother. Her family tried to reach their home during the war and during the ceasefires. Upon returning finally after the aggression Rana was back to the personal environment she knew so well, but without her close brother Muhammad, and with psychological disturbances that have greatly affected her character.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Field data collected by the research team during a meeting with Rana Shabit, a person with disabilities, and her neighbors through a form that was given to them to fill out for the purpose of this report on 27/09/2014.

• The Tenth Story: Muhammad Rafiq Kafarnah

The child Muhammad Kafarnah (two years old) and his family of seven live in a home that is around 125 meters squared consisting of three rooms and a living room. It is located on Kafarnah St. near Al-Ajmi Mosque in Bait Hanoun, North Gaza.⁶⁷

Muhammad suffers from a complex set of difficulties (physical, visual and atrophy in the brain) accompanied with other health issues. Doctors have diagnosed his case as mucopolysaccharidosis, which is a disease that causes the poor storage of needed material in the liver and spleen as well as in the lungs, esophagus and tongue. It is associated with difficulty in breathing and Muhammad sometimes suffers from suffocation especially during the night and while asleep. He also suffers from retardation mentally and physically. Doctors say that the disease is likely genetically inherited due to inter-marriage, with more than one person suffering from the same disease in the family. These medical conditions caused problems in the kidney and heart, resulting in an inability to walk. His condition is considered a mutant one, with his growth limited unlike other children. Muhammad's disease affects his entire life as he is unable to practice what other children can in these early stages. His movements are very limited and he is in need of continuous medical follow-up and treatment. He is also in need of social and psychological care and special food and milk for his condition as well as diapers.

During the aggression of "Operation Protective Edge", Muhammad's home area was targeted. Since the beginning of the war on 7/7/2014 his family's home was bombarded with artillery fire, causing heavy damage. Muhammad and his family were forced to evacuate their home under this constant bombardment and they were displaced to the shelters opened by the International Relief Agency in the Beit Hanoun joint school known as the Western Well. The school could not accommodate the number of those displaced and so was overcrowded with people practically above one another. A class room that could not fit forty students would be filled with nearly a hundred of those displaced. Muhammad's family suffered while there and feared for the life of their child. They did not have the means for providing him with the special food, medication and care that he had back in his home. However there was no other choice. They were patient and tried what they could to help their son in any way possible. Muhammad's checkup appointment in one of the Israeli hospitals had arrived on 16/7/2014. His mother went as his guardian; however the Israeli guards at the Beit Hanoun Crossing (known as Erez Crossing) did not allow her to go with him but only agreed for his grandmother to accompany Muhammad. They went to the

Name: Muhammed Rafiq Abdul Aziz Kafarnah.

Date of Birth: 28/1/2012.

ID number: 4,332,246,445.

Address: the northern Gaza Strip, Beit Hanoun.

Religion: Muslim.

Gender: Male.

Family Members: 7 members.

Type of disability: multiple.

⁶⁷ Field data collected by the research team during a meeting with the relatives of Mohammed Kafarnah, a person with disabilities, at his home in Beit Hanoun through a form that was given to him to fill out for the purpose of this report on 27/09/2014.

Israeli Hospital and there the doctors told her that Muhammad's body could not withstand an operation, and they returned without any gain.

They returned to the death and destruction once again and to find that Bait Hanoun only increased in its suffering. The situation escalated due to the Israeli incursion on 18/7/2014 of tanks into the border area a kilometer north from where Muhammad lives. The school that his family was in was now in danger due to its closeness to the Israeli ground forces. Israeli forces targeted the school more than once and now Muhammad and his family were in real danger. On Thursday 24/7/2014 at around 14:55 afternoon Israeli ground troops fired multiple projectiles at the school resulting in the death of (13) displaced persons of them relatives of Muhammad. His relative Ahmed Akram AbdulAziz Kafarneh (aged 10) was injured with shrapnel in his two legs. Muhammad and his family witnessed death very close to them and all around them that day. His mother and father held him in turns as they ran for their lives and eventually escaped the area and reached Kamal Odwan Hospital in Beit Lahia. They then moved to a shelter opened by the International Relief Agency in Al-Jabalial Camp where the situation was calmer and settled in the Ayubbid School near the main market.⁶⁸

Yes the family was able to escape with their life and the life of their child, but they were not able to provide for Muhammad's needs in the school-shelter. The war was ongoing, the situation was critical and the family was displaced with no expenses to buy the special treatment needed for their son. It was a very difficult time for them considering that neither the shelter center nor the organizations involved in helping people with disabilities were able to provide for Muhammad's special needs. The situation was dire with no solution in sight and the child's health was worsening day after day. This continued throughout the aggression, and they appealed to everyone but everyone only stood powerless, unable to help.

Muhammad, a child of two years and a half, witnessed all this with his expressive eyes. He became very frightened and clung onto his mother and became much attached to her to the degree he would not accept anyone to hold him except for her. Tears never left his innocent eyes. His condition became worse and he was taken to the doctor repeatedly. Muhammad soon developed epilepsy and his family felt that he may die at any moment. They returned to their home to find that it and its contents had been destroyed completely, making things even more complicated. Their problems increased: Muhammad condition worsened. Their home was completely destroyed. What can they do? They still appeal and call out for the sake of saving their son Muhammad's life.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Information obtained and documented by the research team from the human rights organizations operating in the Gaza Strip (Al Mezan Center for Human Rights - Palestinian Center for Human Rights), through press releases that covered the days of aggression.

⁶⁹ Field data collected by the research team from neighbors and acquaintances of Muhammad Kafarneh, a person with disabilities, on 27/09/2014.

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45. The stories in this report are from field data gathered by the research team specifically for this report using a special form designed for this purpose and carefully chosen cases based on a religious background, gender, and geographic basis.
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59. Field data collected by the research team from neighbors and acquaintances of Muhammad Kafarneh, a person with disabilities, on 27/09/2014.

Annexes

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