

Horror stories emerge from Gaza rubble

Sat, 2021-05-22 21:18

GAZA CITY: Hala, Yara and Rola. The three sisters, accompanied by their father, Muhammad Al-Kulak, died under the rubble of their house, which, along with several others on Al-Wehda Street in Gaza City, was hit by Israeli airstrikes, leaving at least 42 killed and more than 50 wounded.

The mother of the three daughters, Dalal, and her only son, Abdullah, aged just 2, survived.

Hala, 12, Yara, 9, and Rola, 6, were among the 11 children killed in the first week of the eruption of violence. Abdullah and Dalal have been in a deep shock since according to Dalal's father, Ahmed Al-Maghrabi.

Al-Maghrabi has a lot of concern for his daughter, who is being given sedatives so that she does not lose control. Sometimes she doesn't believe that she lost her husband and daughters, while at other times she repeatedly asks "why they killed them."

"Dalal was very attached to her daughters. She gave them a lot of attention that helped them in school," Al-Maghrabi told Arab News.

The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) said in a statement that the three sisters and eight other children out of the 60 who lost their lives in the first week of the war were participating in its psychological and social program aimed at helping them deal with trauma.

The children, aged 5 to 15, were killed in their homes in densely populated areas along with countless relatives, according to the council.

"We were shocked to learn that eight children we were helping were bombed while they were at home and thought they were safe ... They are now gone, killed with their families, buried with their dreams and the nightmares that haunt them," said NRC Secretary-General Jan Egeland.

Hudhaifa Al-Yaziji, director of the NRC in Gaza, said the organization works with 118 schools in the Gaza Strip, and that their psychological and social services reach more than 75,000 students as part of the Better Learning Program.

Al-Yaziji believes that the war will increase the number of children and students who need psychological and social interventions.

He told Arab News that Al-Kulak's children and others who were killed were receiving the council's services to deal with previous traumas they suffered as a result violence endured in Gaza. Al-Yaziji said that the most prominent symptom that requires treatment is nightmares.

Sumaya Habib, a doctor at the Ministry of Health, and a team of specialists are busy treating children traumatized from previous Israeli wars and rounds of violence.

Habib told Arab News that the current war has been "extremely harsh" and will have negative effects on the majority of the children in Palestine.

She believes that children like Abdullah Al-Kulak, who escaped with his mother from under the rubble, will have more severe traumas.

According to Habib, the mental scars that will affect children have many forms, most notably the loss of sense of safety and security, panic attacks and aggression. For females, they will lose, in varying degrees, a "part of their femininity" and display violent characteristics and practices.

The council said 80 percent of Gazan students had a positive outlook for the future in 2019, but by September 2020, that had dropped to just 29 percent. "The war will make more children lose their positive outlook on the future, as they see death with every raid and with every explosion," Habib said.



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Egyptian mediators hold talks to firm up Israel-Hamas truce
Key Palestine questions stay unresolved as Israel-Hamas fighting in Gaza ends

[Egypt looking to restore tourism from Spain](#)

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Sat, 2021-05-22 16:36

CAIRO: Egypt is looking to restore tourism from Spain, with officials from both countries meeting on Saturday to discuss cooperation.

Ahmed Youssef, CEO of the Egyptian Tourism Promotion Board (ETPB), and Miguel Sanz Castedo, head of the Spanish Tourism Authority, met on the sidelines of the International Exhibition for Tourism and Travel, which is being held in Madrid until May 23.

Egypt is being represented at the event by the ETPB, which is taking part on behalf of the country's Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities.

Youssef met representatives of major tour operators, tourism and aviation companies, and hotels in the Spanish market, according to an official statement.

He reviewed the most important developments in Egypt's tourism sector and explained the steps that were being taken by the government to mitigate the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

He emphasized the precautionary measures and safety controls in hotels, resorts, restaurants, cafes, museums and archaeological sites to ensure the protection of workers, citizens and visitors.

He said the government was launching massive projects to boost tourism that were in line with international standards. There were also plans for making tourism more sustainable and helping the sector to become more resilient and better placed to deal with any crises that may occur.

There were discussions on strengthening cooperation and promoting Egypt's tourist and archaeological attractions in foreign markets through marketing campaigns and international partnerships.

Youssef said an integrated action plan for tourism promotion was being prepared in cooperation with the private sector and tourism unions for the summer season this year.

He said the ministry was looking at organizing tourist groups, introductory trips and workshops in several markets.



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Egypt, UAE begin Zayed 3 joint military exercise
Egypt to locally produce 2m doses of China's Sinovac jab

[Tributes pour in for Egyptian comedy icon Samir Ghanem](#)

Author:

Sat, 2021-05-22 16:08

CAIRO: One of Egypt's best-known comedians, Samir Ghanem, 84, died on Thursday in hospital from coronavirus (COVID-19).

Ghanem wore many hats – he was an actor, entertainer and most importantly a comedian.

His career spanned six decades, and his many roles made him a household name.

He will be remembered above all for his role as the beloved Fatota, a short man in a bright green oversized suit and large yellow shoes who hosted Ramadan riddles (Fawazeer) for the first time in 1982.

Ghanem first gained popularity in the 1960s as a member of the standup comedy trio Tholathy Adwa'a El-Masrah (Stage Lights Trio) with comedians George Sidhom and El Deif Ahmed.

One of Ghanem's most notable roles was playing Masoud in the Hassan Abd Al-Salam-directed 1978 drama "Al-Motazawegoon" (The Married Couples) alongside fellow Stage Lights Trio member Sidhom.

He also played the lead role in "Goha Yahkom Al-Madina" (Goha Rules the City), in 1985, and in "Bahlool Fi Istanbul" (Bahlool in Istanbul), in 1995, alongside actress Elham Shahin.

"Samir Ghanem was an unparalleled distinguished comedian, who I worked with on the series 'Hekayet Mizo,' which was the reason behind my success," said Sami Fahmy, Ghanem's co-star in the 1977 TV show "Hekayet Mizo" (The Story of Mizo).

"Samir was a person with a high degree of humility and my days working with him were among the happiest days of my life," Fahmy told local news outlets.

“Today I lost a friend and a wonderful comedian who will never be replaced. The world will never forget Samir Ghanem.”

Many celebrities took to their social media accounts to mourn the death of Ghanem.

Actor Adel Emam shared two pictures with Ghanem on his Instagram account, one of them from the age of black and white TV and another recent picture of them with the caption: “Goodbye Samir ... Goodbye my love ... I will miss you so much.”

Egyptian Minister of Culture Ines Abdel-Dayem said the Arab world had lost an icon who created works full of joy and comedy. She said that his distinctive style attracted the public for decades.

Ghanem was born on January 15, 1937, and graduated from the Faculty of Agriculture, Alexandria University. After meeting Sidhom and Ahmed they formed the famous trio, a comedy singing group that participated in several successful films and plays.

His performances earned him a number of awards, including the Faten Hamama Honorary and Excellence Award in 2017 for his contribution to Egyptian cinema at the Cairo International Film Festival.

Ghanem’s wife, actress Dalal Abdel Aziz, is also hospitalized after being infected with COVID-19.

His two daughters Donia and Amy will carry on his legacy of making Egyptians laugh through their performances.



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[Samir Ghanem](#)

Famous Egyptian comedian Samir Ghanem dies aged 84 while battling COVID-19 Arab comedians Adel Imam, Samir Ghanem to co star in a new comedy

[Gaza media building owner complains to ICC: lawyer](#)

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Fri, 2021-05-21 21:19

THE HAGUE: The owner of a Gaza building housing international media that was destroyed in an Israeli airstrike is lodging a complaint with the International Criminal Court, his lawyer said.

The complaint by Jawad Mehdi says that the attack on May 15 which flattened Jala Tower, housing the offices of US news agency Associated Press and Al

Jazeera television, was a "war crime."

The filing, a copy of which was seen by AFP, comes after the chief prosecutor of the ICC said last week that "crimes" may have been committed during the recent violence between Israel and the Palestinians.

"The owner of this building, who is a Palestinian, has mandated his lawyers to file a war crime complaint with the International Criminal Court," lawyer Gilles Devers said in a statement.

Devers told AFP outside the court, where around 10 pro-Palestinian protesters were gathered, that Israel could show "no military objective" for the attack. "We hear a lot that this tower could have been destroyed because there was equipment or an armed resistance team. This is something that we totally deny after studying the case," Devers said.

"International law is that you can only harm civilian property if it is used for military purposes, and that was not the case. So we say it today in front this court and in this complaint."

Devers said the complaint would be formally sent to the court by email later Friday.

Israel claimed that Hamas military intelligence units were in the building. Mehdi said at the time that an Israeli intelligence officer warned him he had one hour to ensure the building was evacuated before a missile slammed into the 13-story building.

The ICC has no obligation to consider complaints filed to its prosecutor, who can decide independently what cases to submit to judges at the court.

The ICC had already opened an investigation in March into possible war crimes in the Palestinian Territories by both Israeli forces and Palestinian armed groups since 2014.

The move infuriated Israel which is not a member of the court, while Palestine has been a state party to the ICC since 2015.

Prosecutor Bensouda said last week that she noted with "great concern the escalation of violence" in the West Bank and Gaza "and the possible commission of crimes under the Rome Statute," which founded the ICC.



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[war crime](#)

Israel destroys media building in Gaza as conflict rages on, death toll rises
Israel destroys tower block, kills Hamas commander as Gaza civilian death toll mounts

[‘Proud’ Gazans see ‘victory’ in ceasefire](#)

Fri, 2021-05-21 20:55

GAZA CITY: In the early hours of Friday morning, life began to return to normal in the Gaza Strip as a ceasefire agreed by Israel and Hamas came into effect at 2 a.m.

Many Gazans took to the streets to express their joy at the end of the war. Some celebrated it as a victory for the Palestinians in their support for Jerusalem and the defeat of Israel.

Thousands took part in spontaneous marches and parades, on foot and in cars,

chanting religious slogans. Mosques broadcast Eid calls as if the day was a festival.

"We deserve joy, despite the number of martyrs and the destruction in the city," said Samir Daban, a resident of Gaza, who had attached a Palestinian flag to his motorbike.

After 11 days of fighting, Israel and Hamas agreed a ceasefire during negotiations brokered by Egypt. An Egyptian security delegation arrived in the Gaza Strip at noon on Friday and met the Hamas leadership. It left a few hours later without disclosing any details of the meeting.

More bodies were pulled from the rubble of damaged or destroyed buildings on Friday morning. The Palestinian Ministry of Health in Gaza said 243 Palestinians were killed during the war, including 66 children, 39 women and 17 elderly people, and more than 1,900 were injured.

As he swept away debris and broken glass from around his shop in Omar Al-Mukhtar Street, in the center of Gaza City, Saeed Al-Haddad said he plans to reopen the store on Saturday.

"My shop was not affected much as a result of the bombing of (nearby) Al-Shorouk Tower," he told Arab News. "But even if the shop was damaged, I would still feel proud that I am from Gaza, and that Gaza achieved victory for the first time. We can say that money did not buy us.

"I went out of my house during the war, and saw some neighboring houses were damaged. My three children were afraid, so I preferred to go to my father's house and I stayed with him throughout the days of the war."

The street on which Al-Haddad's shop stands, which is the city's main market area, experienced intensive bombing during the conflict. In the hours after the ceasefire took effect it was jammed with traffic. Some motorists flew Palestinian flags from their vehicles, others took photographs of the destruction. Ahlam Al-Madhoun, 43, came with her three daughters.

"I did not expect to see this scene in this street but we are proud of our resistance and in its ability," she told Arab News. "I feel great sadness for the people who lost their homes, for the families who lost their children, and for the shopkeepers who lost their trade – but the sacrifice must be made for the sake of Jerusalem.

"We could not sleep during the days of the war and since last night we could not sleep either. We wanted to prove to ourselves that we have survived the war and that the war is over. I hope that the coming days will be better."



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EU welcomes Gaza cease-fire, urges 'political solution' Israel defense minister Lieberman resigns over Gaza ceasefire