

Do Israel pilots feel happy killing innocent women and children?

A Palestinian in Gaza chronicles life under Israeli bombardment

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Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#)

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Saturday 27 December

I go to visit friends in the Block J neighbourhood in Rafah in the south of the Gaza Strip. While I am in a friend's house, my phone rings. It's a friend from Gaza City, calling for a chat. Suddenly I hear the sound of an explosion at his end. At the same time I hear an explosion in Rafah too. Just outside, somewhere near. My friend says: "Fida, they are attacking nearby." I say: "They are attacking here too."

I run into the street and everybody is running, children and grown-ups, all looking to see if their relatives and friends are alive. It is the time for children to go to school for the second shift, after the first shift finishes at 11.30am. Naama is aged 13. This is what she tells me: "I was sitting in the classroom with my friends when the attack happened. We were scared and we ran out of our school. Our headmaster asked us to go home. We saw fire everywhere."

People are looking at the remains of a police station. There are still bodies under the wreckage. It is scary because the attack isn't over, and from where we are we can see an Israeli airplane attacking another police station.

At the hospital, I speak to a wounded police officer, aged 39. "We were at the police station," he said. "The Israeli planes came and suddenly the building collapsed on us. I saw four dead bodies near me. They were in pieces. Outside there were more bodies. Everyone was shouting. I lost consciousness and then found myself in hospital."

Later I am at home with my family. We've just received a phone call on our land line. It's the Israeli defence ministry, and they say that any house that has guns or weapons will be targeted next, without warning and without any announcement. Just to let you know, we don't have any weapons in our house. If we die please defend my family.

Sunday 28 December

I wake up at 7am after an Israeli F-16 attack. Our house is shaking. We all try to imagine what has happened, but we want to at least know where the attack was. It is so scary. We try to open the main door to our flat, but it's stuck shut after the attack. I have to climb out of the window to leave the house. I am shocked when I find out our neighbour's pharmacy was the target. It is just 60 metres from our house. They targeted a pharmacy. I still can't believe it.

Om Mohammed says: "They [Israeli forces] attack everywhere. They have gone crazy. The Gaza Strip is just going to die ... it's going to die. We were sleeping. Suddenly we heard a bomb. We woke up and we didn't know where to go. We couldn't see through the dust. We called to each other. We thought our house had been hit, not the street. What can I say? You saw it with your own eyes. What is our guilt? Are we terrorists? I don't carry a gun, neither does my girl.

"There's no medicine. No drinks, no water, no gas. We are suffering from hunger. They attack us. What does Israel want? Can it be worse than this? I don't think so. Would they accept this for themselves?

"Look at the children. What are they guilty of? They were sleeping at 7am. All the night they didn't sleep. This child was traumatised during the attack. Do they have rockets to attack with?"

Monday 29 December

The Israeli army is destroying the tunnels that go from Rafah into Egypt. For the past year and a half the Israeli government has intensified the economic blockade of Gaza by closing all the border crossings that allow aid and essential supplies to reach Palestinians in Gaza. This forced Palestinians to dig tunnels to Egypt to survive. >From our house we can hear the explosions and the house is shaking. At night we can't go out. No one goes out. If you go out you will risk your life. You don't know where the bombs will fall. My mother is so sad. She watches me writing my reports and says: "Fida, will it make any difference?"

Before the attack started we got some food aid from the EU. It's not much, but it's enough, we're not starving. But some of our friends have nothing. My mum warns me: "Fida, don't leave the house, it's too dangerous outside." Then she goes out to share our food with the neighbours who have nothing.

Wednesday 31 December

11.40pm: a powerful air strike somewhere nearby. I was sleeping but the blast wakes me up. I see my mum looking from the window. She points at one of the refugee camps. "The attack was there," she said.

I went back to sleep - not because I don't care, but because I can't deal with it. If the attack was really aimed at one of the camps that means hundreds are going to be injured or even killed, the houses destroyed. I really can't imagine it.

Thursday 1 January

In the morning I get up early and call a friend who lives in Alshabara camp. He confirms the attack had hit there and I go to meet him.

It looks like an earthquake. Many houses have been damaged, and many people have been wounded. The people who had escaped injury were trying to clean the place up - they have nowhere else to go. But the biggest shock is when I ask about the target. It was the children's playground.

"We heard a strong explosion happen, but with all the smoke and the dust we couldn't see

well, and the electricity was off," I am told by a small child.

"We saw everything fall down – the window broke on us. We went downstairs, and people were saying that the playground's been targeted. This park is not a member of Hamas, it's a park for playing. It's for civilians – so why did they attack it?," asks one 12-year-old girl who lives nearby.

The target was a civilian area – but there was no warning, not one phone call from the Israeli army to tell civilians to beware.

I visit the main hospital in Rafah. There are so many injured people, most of them children. In one ward, I meet four children aged five or six. They are in deep shock. They can't speak, they just look at you.

Only one child could say his name: "Abdel Rahman". That's all he can say. Otherwise, he just stares. He's five. His ear was wounded by shrapnel, his head is covered by bandages.

There is a 16-year-old girl also suffering from shrapnel injuries. Three of her brothers were killed; all her family were injured. She looks like a zombie and says nothing at all. Her mother is dying in the intensive care unit.

The hospital manger, Abu Youssef Alnajar, gives the statistics for 1 January: two dead – a young man aged 22 and a woman aged 33; 59 injured – 16 children, 18 women and the rest old people. Most of them had been sleeping when the bombs dropped.

I go back home and the first thing I do is take a shower. I feel really upset after what I have seen. As always I am trying to cope with the situation but sometimes it is too much to deal with.

A short message to the pilots in the Israeli F-16s: does it make you feel happy to kill Palestinian children and women? Do you feel it's your duty? Killing every child and woman, man and teenager in Gaza? I don't know what exactly you feel, what exactly you think, but please think of your mother and sister, your son and daughter.

Friday 2 January

I am in the hospital again. An ambulance crew has been called out to help an injured man somewhere near the ruins of the old Gaza airport. He's a civilian, one of the bedouin who tend their sheep in that area. Four shepherds saw an explosion and went to investigate – when they arrived at the scene there was a second bomb and they were injured. An ambulance managed to rescue three of the men. But one of their friends is still there, bleeding.

The ambulance crew are afraid to go back for him. The wounded man is just 50 metres away from the green line so they are afraid the Israeli soldiers will target them. Outside there are still planes in the air. I have just heard a big explosion on the border area.

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