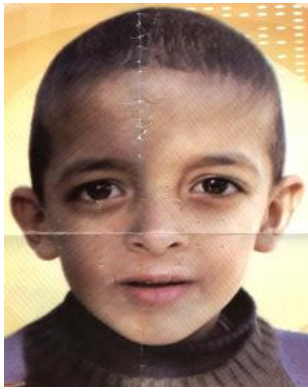


Operation Cast Lead: Boy (4) killed while riding his bicycle outside his house

“I looked three metres away from my husband and saw Moaz's bicycle on the ground, but I didn't see Moaz on it”



Moaz Abu Tair (6)

At 2:30 on 29 December 2008 Moaz Abu Tair was riding his bicycle outside his house in 'Abasan, Khan Yunis. His father Yaser sat nearby, chatting and drinking tea with neighbours and relatives. Moaz's mother Ibtehal (29) was in the kitchen, his three siblings were inside. When Ibtehal felt a huge explosion shaking their house at 2:30 she thought it was in the farmlands nearby in Khan Yunis. Hearing her daughter, Zeinab, screaming she rushed out of the kitchen to comfort her and found the house filling with black smoke. When she stepped outside she saw the white plastic chairs the children had brought out for their father and the guests, broken and scattered among the bodies of the men blown to pieces on the ground. Moaz lay two metres from his bicycle covered in blood.

The following information is based on an affidavit taken by DCI-Palestine from Ibtehal on 14 September 2009:

Two days after Operation Cast Lead started Moaz Abu Tair (6) was outside riding his bicycle when a missile hit his father, Yaser, uncle Zeyad (33), neighbour Mohammad (21), and his father's cousins, Fadel (28) and Mohammad (21) as they sat outside the house chatting.

Moaz lived with his mother Ibtehal (29), father Yaser, and three siblings in the village of 'Abasan, Khan Yunis. His mother describes the situation: *“The area was calm but Israeli drone planes had been circling in the sky for two days, starting on 27 December 2008 as part of 'Operation Cast Lead' that was launched by the Israeli army on the Gaza Strip.”*

At 2:00pm on 29 December 2008 the family were sitting at home when Yaser's brother Zeyad, his neighbour, Mohammad, and his cousins, Fadel and Mohammad knocked on the door. As the children and men carried plastic chairs outside for the visitors, Ibtehal went to prepare some tea and Moaz struggled to pull his bicycle out from under the stairs. Half an hour later, as the men sat chatting and Moaz cycled around them, the house shook with a deafening explosion. Ibtehal thought it had been in the nearby farmlands and when her daughter started screaming from the room next door, she rushed out of the kitchen to comfort her: *“As soon as I left the kitchen, I saw thick smoke pouring into the house and I realized that the explosion had been very close to the house. I came out to see Zeinab screaming in fear but there was nothing wrong with her. Once I reached the front door, I saw my husband lying on the ground. His brother, cousins and neighbour were lying beside him. They were all blown to pieces and bleeding. The white plastic chairs were all broken and thrown beside them because of the explosion.”* As all this sunk in, Ibtehal started screaming, but then noticed her six-year-old son, Moaz, lying two metres away from his bike, covered in blood.

“At that moment, my in-laws and neighbours rushed to the scene to bring my husband, my brother-in-law and my son to hospital. [...] They immediately took them to Naser Hospital in Khan Yunis, where doctors pronounced the death of my husband, my son, my brother-in law Zeyad, Mohammad Abu Tair, and Mohammad al-Qarra.”

Ibtehal told DCI in September: *“I now live in the house with my children Maisara, Zahra' and Zeinab after losing my husband, Yaser, and my son, Moaz.”*

DCI-Palestine, 29 March 2010