

## Operation Cast Lead: Two children killed playing outside their home in Jabalia Camp

*"I don't want to die, I'm going to die"*



Left to right: Basem an-Nabi (11) and Qasem an-Nabi (6)

On 13 January 2009, brothers Basem (11) and Qasem (6) an-Nabi were killed as they ran towards their uncle Saddam outside their house in al-Falouja, Jabalia Camp. They wanted him to stop their brother Ali' climbing a tree. Saddam was leaving the house, having just told his mother Seddeeqa that he was going to visit his sister Hana' to check on her. According to his mother, Saddam worked with the resistance fighters. Seddeeqa watched the children call their uncle and run after him. He was 50 metres away from the house talking on his

phone. Satisfied there was no danger she turned away. When she heard the explosion she ran to the site with the children's mother Sumaya, and older brother Iyad. They found Saddam lying covered in blood beside a hole in the ground; Qasem was blown to pieces. Basem had multiple body injuries. They were brought to hospital. All three died.

Around 4:45 pm on 13 January 2009, Basem (11) and Qasem (6) an-Nabi were running to their uncle Saddam (19) to tell tales on their brother when the missile struck. Ali had climbed uncle Saddam's tree and refused to get down. Their grandmother, Seddeeqa an-Nabi (53) looked out the window from the second floor and laughed at the scene: *"Qasem and Basem had a problem with Ali because he had climbed a tree that was planted by my son Saddam. I stood at the door of my flat on the second floor and looked at them out the window of the staircase and started laughing. I saw Ali climbing the tree, while Qasem and Basem were running to call their uncle Saddam, about 50 metres away."*

Confined to playing outside their house in al-Falouja, Jabalia Camp due to the constant shelling and bombing of the area around them, Basem and his brothers Qasem and Ali' (10) said goodbye to their uncle as he left to visit his sister Hana' (22) and her husband in their house in Abu Sharkh. Saddam was concerned about his sister *"He was worried because of the ongoing Israeli bombing from planes and tanks during the war on Gaza Strip."* In turn, his mother, Seddeeqa, was very worried about him as he was a resistance fighter: *"My son Saddam left the house. I was very scared for him because he worked with the fighters in resisting the occupying army forces."*

When, despite all their shouts and screams, Ali' (10) refused to get down from the tree, they decided it was time to call in the adults and ran after Saddam to ask him to intervene. Seddeeqa watched Saddam, who was talking on his phone as he walked, and noticed he was about 50 metres away when he heard the children calling him and turned to see them running towards him. Their grandmother, not seeing any danger, turned away. She estimates that it was about 4:45 at this stage.

From inside the house, Seddeeqa heard the missile strike her son and grandchildren. *"Suddenly, I heard a huge explosion and became terrified. I looked directly at where Saddam was standing and saw thick smoke. I heard Sumaya, Qasem and Basem's mother, screaming 'The children are gone!' and running down the stairs. I looked out the window, but couldn't*

*see anything because of the thick smoke. I ran after her towards Saddam and my grandchildren as fast as I could. Everyone came out of the house. My grandchildren Iyad (17); the boys' brother, reached them before I did."*

On reaching the site of the explosion she saw her son Saddam lying covered in blood beside a crater in the ground. Her grandson Basem was critically injured, his brother Qasem was blown to pieces. Seddeeqa heard the drone plane overhead and presumed that this had been the source of the explosion.

She heard a small, weak voice: *"I don't want to die, I'm going to die"*. It was Basem. His mother grabbed him and started running towards the house. Iyad took his little brother Qasem while their uncle Tal'at and some neighbours carried Saddam. As Seddeeqa ran after them, the shock was too much for her and she passed out.

*"I woke up and found myself at Kamal Odwan Hospital. I couldn't believe what I had seen. My son Tal'at told me that both Saddam and Qasem died, whereas Basem was in surgery."*

The next day the news was not good: *"On the following morning, Basem died and joined his brother and his uncle."*

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