

## Operation Cast Lead: Brother and sister killed in their home as nearby water tank repeatedly bombed



Left to right: Oyoun an-Nasleh' (15) and her baby brother Almoe'z an-Nasleh (2)

As the an-Nasleh' family sat listening to the news at 3:00pm on 1 January 2009, in their 4th-floor apartment in Beit Hanoun, a huge explosion shook their home and smashed their windows. It had hit the concrete water-tank, stationed on a hill, 30 metres opposite. Jihad picked up his son Almoe'z (2) while his wife and other children Oyoun (15), Huda (12), Almoatasem Bellah (8) and Zaid (5) scrambled to get out. Another missile was fired, Jihad believes, at the water tank again. A third

explosion sent him flying three metres out of the flat; Almoe'z was blown out of his arms. As he lay there stunned, he felt a fourth explosion. He got up to rescue his children. The door of his flat was hanging off and Oyoun was lying behind it, with her brain spilled. Almoe'z was lying face down, not moving. When the children were taken to hospital, Oyoun and Almoe'z were pronounced dead immediately. Huda had slight bruising. When Jihad spoke to DCI in July he was worried for his surviving children. They are terrified of loud noises and refuse to go back to their flat. For this reason, and due to the extensive damage caused by the bombing, Jihad is renting a flat in Jabalia.

The following information is based on an affidavit taken by DCI-Palestine, from the children's father, Jihad an-Nasleh, on 2 July 2009:

Oyoun an-Nasleh (15) sat with her baby brother Almoe'z Ledeenillah (2) and their parents listening to the 3 o'clock news on 1 January 2009. Her father, Jihad (42) had heard of the [bombing of the Rayyan house](#) three kilometres away from where they lived in an-Nada Towers, Beit Hanoun. He was listening for news updates. Oyoun's siblings, Huda (12), Almoatasem Bellah (8) and Zaid (5) sat with them in their fourth-floor apartment. The room where they sat had a view the water-tower, stationed on a hill, 30 metres from their house.

At around 3:15pm, a huge explosion rocked their house, breaking windows and sending glass flying everywhere. Jihad believes it was caused by an Israeli F16 due to the force of the blast. It seems they were targeting the water tower. Jihad grabbed the baby, Almoe'z, and made for the door; the other children and his wife also running to the door. When they got out to the corridor, another missile was fired. It seems the water tank was being bombed: *"I assume it hit the same place; the water tank, because of the thick smoke that was rising from it."*

Running towards the door, surrounded by his wife and children, and still holding onto Almoe'z, he asked Huda to open the door: *"Once she opened it, a third huge explosion took place. It was more terrifying than the first two explosions."* He felt himself flying through the air and then slammed onto the ground; he realized that he had been thrown three metres outside the apartment; and that his son was no longer in his arms. Before he had even a

chance to stand up, another missile was fired. He calculates that these four missiles were fired within the space of one minute.

He stood up to go back inside his flat and search for his children: *“When I reached the door, I found it broken. It was hanging off the wall. Looking directly behind the door, I saw my daughter, Oyoun, lying on the floor and her head was bleeding. Her brain was hanging out of her head. Zaid was crying and his face was pale. My other son, Almoatasem, and my wife were screaming. Huda was on the floor and her back was bleeding but not much. Then, I saw Almoe'z who was lying face down on the floor on his face. He wasn't moving, but I didn't see any blood on him.”*

It appeared that Oyoun was the most critically injured, so he picked her up and ran downstairs with her. At this stage, most of the residents had come out of their apartments; he handed her over and returned upstairs to the rest of his children: *“I entered the flat, picked up Almoe'z and went back downstairs, as some neighbours entered the flat and took my other children.”*

He was fortunate not to have to wait long for an ambulance: *“Once I reached the front door of the tower, an ambulance took my children and I to Kamal Odwan hospital”* There Oyoun's death was confirmed by the doctors. He couldn't believe it when he learned that Almoe'z had been also killed in the multiple missile attacks. *“I was shocked when they pronounced Almoe'z dead because I hadn't seen any blood on him. I thought he was only unconscious.”* The doctors explained that the force of the blast had knocked his heart out of place, killing him instantly.

When Jihad talked to DCI in July he explains that Huda only suffered light bruising. The children however, are deeply scarred and refuse to go back to their destroyed apartment to start over: *“My children are terrified any time they hear a loud sound. They refuse to go back to our flat in al-Nada towers because they are scared of what happened. I now live in a rented house on Dardouneh Street in Jabalia; leaving behind my severely damaged flat; with most of its windows and doors broken.”*

DCI-Palestine, 20 March 2010