



Abed al-Rahman Ghaben (15)

Operation Cast Lead: Child killed when shelled near his home.

The last time Adel Ghaben (52) saw his nephew, Abed al-Rahman (15), was around 2:00pm on 11 January. Adel had been returning to his house to pick up some clothes, food and essential provisions for his family sheltering in the UNRWA school in Jabalia Camp. On his way, he saw Abed al-Rahman (15) walking ahead. He was going to see the place where one of his relatives had been killed two days before. Adel left him and went on to collect his stuff. That evening he heard reports of a child being killed by a shell in al-Amal. From the description, Adel knew it was Abed al-Rahman. First thing the next morning he returned to al-Amal to look for his nephew but came under heavy fire as he approached the area. Eventually, he found Abed's body parts. He collected what he could to bring them to hospital and then to be buried. Speaking to DCI

in February 2010, Adel reports that when the family returned to their houses they found pieces of Abed's body stuck to the walls of the house where their relative had been killed before. Their houses were ransacked and destroyed, and empty cans of food with Hebrew writing were left behind.

The following information is based on an affidavit taken by DCI from Abed al-Rahman's uncle, Adel Yousif Ibrahim Ghaben, on 13 February 2010.

Abed al-Rahman Ghaben (15) was blown to pieces by an artillery shell outside his relative's house on 11 January 2010. His uncle, Adel Ghaben, last saw him when he returned to his house in al-Amal, during ceasefire hours, to collect some essential supplies for his family sheltering in an UNRWA run school in Jabalia Camp. Adel asked his nephew what he was doing there. He said he had come to see the place where their relative Enjoud had been killed two days before.

Most of the Adel's family, and neighbourhood, had been sheltering in the UNRWA run al-Fakhoura School in Jabalia Camp since 4 January 2010. They fled their neighbourhood of al-Amal in Beit Lahiya after a night of shelling and bombing, in which their neighbour's house was hit, as well as a mosque 100 metres away, by artillery shells. Conditions in the school were tough. Due to overcrowding there was not enough food, blankets or mattresses for everyone.

Despite being a UN building, it was not safe from attack. On Tuesday afternoon, 6 January 2009, several shells landed in front of the main gate of the school, killing many people who were taking shelter in the school, or from those living near the school, and injuring others. *"The incident absolutely terrified me, but we had to stay in the school even though it wasn't safe..."*

Three days after this attack, they received bad news. Adel's cousin, Enjoud Rajab (30) had been killed in her home. She was also staying at the school and had returned to collect some essential items to survive the grim conditions they were living in. As she gathered her family's possessions an artillery shell hit her house.

On 11 January, Adel decided to take advantage of the ceasefire hours to return home and pick up some things for his family in the school. He set off about 2:00pm and on his way he saw his

nephew: *“I saw my sister Dalal’s son, Abed al-Rahman (15), walking in the same road but in front of me. He was about 200 metres away from me.”* He caught up with him outside Enjoud’s house and asked him what he was doing there. Abed answered that he had come to see the place where Enjoud had died. Adel continued his journey home and collected what he needed. As he left, around 3:15pm, he kept an eye out for Abed as he walked back to the school, but couldn’t see him. He presumed he had already returned.

At 5:00pm, Abed still hadn’t returned. Some residents from Beit Lahiya arrived with news: *“some residents from Beit Lahiya came to the school and started talking about seeing a 15-year-old boy being targeted near Enjoud’s house, an hour earlier. They said he was wearing blue jeans and a blue shirt and was killed instantly when a shell landed directly on him.”* From the description, Adel guessed it was Abed al-Rahman. It was too late to go look for him as the ceasefire had ended and it was too dangerous. Adel waited anxiously for morning light to go and search for his nephew. *“On Monday, 12 January 2009, at around 6:00am, I immediately headed to al-Amal neighbourhood and when I was about 150 metres away from Enjoud’s house, I came under fire and gunshots hit the walls of the house.”* The firing was coming from the invaded areas of as-Salatin and al-‘Atatra and the bullets blew away some of the stones off the wall behind Adel.

He decided to take shelter in a friend’s house near Abbas al-Kilani Roundabout for a while, but was determined not to give up. At 7:30am, he tried again: *“Then, I returned to al-Amal neighbourhood even though I became more scared with every step I made towards Enjoud’s house. I kept reciting some verses from the Holy Qura’n while I was walking, but I was shot at again when I was about 50 metres away from her house.”* He crawled towards an empty house and went inside to take cover. There, he searched for something to carry his nephew’s body parts in: *“I started looking for a big sack to carry Abed al-Rahman in because the people from al-Adham family said that Abed al-Rahman had been blown to pieces by the shell. I found a mattress cover that was closed on three sides and open on the upper side. I gathered my courage and vowed not to go back without Abed al-Rahman.”*

He ran towards Enjoud’s house 20 metres away, taking cover behind the walls of the houses: *“Then, I saw a leg 20 metres north of the house, and then the other leg, two arms and the neck ten metres south of the house. I looked for the head but I couldn’t find it.”* Slowly, he collected the body parts and brought them to his friend’s house, who called an ambulance to bring them to hospital.

Speaking to DCI in February 2010, Adel reports that they returned to their houses after the war and found tiny pieces of Abed al-Rahman’s flesh and bones stuck to the outside walls of Enjoud’s house. It was obvious their houses had been invaded by the soldiers: *“Our houses, including my sister’s house, were damaged and all of its contents were ransacked. We found some food cans with Hebrew words on them in our house and I realized that the Israeli army had used our houses as military barracks especially when I found some sacks filled with sand inside the house. That wasn’t enough for them. They even damaged the walls and destroyed the furniture.”*

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