



Fatima Jadallah (10)

Operation Cast Lead: Child dies from fear as F16 bombs neighbour's home.

"There was only ever a pause of five to 15 minutes between each shelling."

Fatima Jadallah's (10) last days of life were filled with terror. She lived in the Borat Dabbour area of Tal az-Za'tar neighbourhood in Jabalia Camp, with her father, Raed, mother, Basheera, and four siblings. During Operation Cast Lead her neighbourhood was subjected to constant bombardment. When the nearby neighbourhood of Izbet Abed Rabbo and al-Kashef Mountain was invaded on 3 January the shelling and bombing intensified. All the children were terrified but Fatima the most, refusing to sleep anywhere but in her father's arms. At 12:45am on 9 January, they were woken up by a huge explosion. Raed heard an F16 flying on low altitude overhead. Fatima was shivering violently and had a high temperature. Only 15 minutes later, there was another enormous explosion shaking the house. Fatima's temperature rose and she started turning blue; her teeth chattering constantly, she was incapable of speech. Her condition deteriorated throughout the night. By 3:00am, she was completely blue. At 5:00am, her parents brought her to hospital; at this stage she was unconscious. Raed could not believe the doctor when he said Fatima was dead. She had died from heart failure. Speaking to DCI in February 2010, Raed reported that they miss Fatima very much; her sister cries over her every day.

The following information is based on an affidavit taken by DCI from Fatima's father, Raed Zaki Ibrahim Jadallah, on 10 February 2010.

Ten-year-old Fatima Jadallah lived in the Borat Dabbour part of Tal az-Za'tar, Jabalia Camp, with her father, Raed (36), mother, Basheera (34), and four siblings. Theirs was a two-storey concrete house; they lived on the second floor. Fatima's grandparents, cousins, aunt and uncle lived on the first. They lived only 800 metres from the civil administration building, a building affiliated to Hamas which was bombed repeatedly from the opening stages of Operation Cast Lead. The children were frightened by the bombing; however on 3 January life took a turn for the worse: *"Israeli tanks invaded Izbet Abed Rabbo and al-Kashef Mountain, one and a half kilometres southeast of my house."*

From then on, things got really dangerous: *"The Israeli artillery fired its shells at night on the lands near my house. More than 20 shells landed on Borat Dabbour each night and the explosions would shake the foundations of the house. I presumed the shells were fired from either the Israeli artillery stationed in Izbet Abed Rabbo and al-Kashef Mountain or the Israeli artillery stationed across the eastern border east of Jabalia Camp. I was able to hear the sound of the shells as if they were flying above my head and landing in Borat Dabbour, causing huge explosions and shaking the four corners of my house."*

The relentless shelling of the farmlands of Borat Dabbour made their lives a living hell; *"The situation had become very difficult and unbearable and I didn't know where to go with my children, who kept screaming all night because the number of shells fired would increase from 6:00pm and continue for long hours. There was only ever a pause of five to 15 minutes between each shelling."*

Fatima was utterly terrorized: *“My daughter Fatima was the most scared and terrified of my children. She started sleeping in my arms. All my children started sleeping in the same room where I was sleeping, but Fatima was the most scared.”* She lived like this for the next six days, until 9 January, when her heart could not take any more F16’s.

Raed remembers: *“On Friday, 9 January 2009, 12:45am, my children and I were sleeping in the house. I woke up to the sound of a huge explosion which I assumed was caused by an Israeli drone plane. All my children woke up including Fatima, who started crying when she heard this huge explosion. I tried to calm her down. Five minutes later, I heard an Israeli F16 circling in the sky and flying on very low altitude.”*

Fatima started shivering uncontrollably, although her body was very warm. Within fifteen minutes the F16 attacked: *“Suddenly at around 1:00am, there was another huge explosion, caused by the Israeli F16 and I felt the house moving with the force of the blast. This really terrified the life out of me; the children started screaming, the windows smashed.”* He went to check on his parents but they weren’t in their room; he found them on the other side of the house, looking out at their neighbours destroyed home. *“They told me that the bombing had targeted our neighbour Wael’s house.”*

Raed heard his wife calling him; Fatima’s temperature was rising and her shivering increased. Raed didn’t know what to do, his mother tried to bring the temperature down by applying cold compresses but to no avail. Their area was being so heavily targeted that it was impossible to step outside the house to bring her to hospital. Fatima’s condition deteriorated: *“Fatima didn’t get any better the entire night, in fact her condition worsened. Blue spots started appearing on her body. She didn’t talk and kept shivering; her teeth chattering. Two hours later at around 3:00am her entire body went blue.”*

At 5:00am, in the morning light, they ventured outside to bring Fatima to hospital. A neighbour phoned for an ambulance as Raed’s reception was too weak to call. *“The lady called an ambulance while my wife, my daughter and I sat inside her house. Fatima was sleeping at that moment. She had stopped shivering.”* Ten minutes later the ambulance arrived and brought them to Kamal Odwan Hospital in Beit Lahiya. Raed didn’t realize Fatima had died; he thought she was sleeping still. When the doctors informed him that his daughter had died, he couldn’t believe it and tried to wake her up. The grief was too much for him and Basheera: *“My wife and I completely collapsed.”* Fatima was buried later that day.

Speaking to DCI in January 2010, Raed reports that the family still grieve for Fatima and the children are completely traumatized from those terror filled days: *“My children, especially Jihad and Amal, suffer from bedwetting problems because of the fear they experienced. I miss Fatima very much. Her sister Rasmiya sits down and cries over her and remembers her all the time.”*

DCI-Palestine, 15 May, 2010.