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Life as a Student in Gaza Under Siege

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Amid Gaza's sorrow, a small light still fights to shine among the ruins. Here, in the heart of suffering, we live under siege, hunger, displacement, and death that strikes without warning. Pain grows every minute, but the people who have endured here – and resisted injustice – cannot be silenced.

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## Life as a Student in Gaza Under Siege

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Maryam Sharif Abed

We, the students of Gaza, face countless difficulties, yet giving up has never been an option. We search for opportunities to learn and make our voices heard. We strive to prove ourselves and, most importantly, to continue our education despite every obstacle.

Our challenges are many:

Weak internet access means walking long distances just to find a stable connection to attend classes – a struggle for both students and teachers.

Electricity cuts interrupt our learning. If a student's phone – now the main tool for education – breaks, it can end their studies, as replacing it is too expensive.

Displacement forces us to leave our homes, or even tents that were never truly safe, moving into the unknown without the belongings or memories that shaped our lives.

We live surrounded by danger, both visible and unseen. These struggles weigh heavily on our mental health. Yet, even in the uncertainty, a small light of hope remains. It may flicker, but it never goes out.

In Gaza, we have learned to turn every setback into a step forward. We build dreams out of hardship because surrender is not in our nature.

### The Deeper Pain: Losing the People We Love

There is something far more painful than the daily hardships – losing those dearest to us. No heartbreak is greater than being forced to leave your home full of childhood memories, except losing someone you love. Here in Gaza, we live in constant fear – not only of dying ourselves, but of losing the people who give meaning to our lives. Many of us would rather face death than see our loved ones taken away.

At the beginning of the war, I lost my city. Soon after, our house and neighbourhood – the places holding every memory of my childhood – were destroyed. Losing our home left us scattered, with no space to bring us together.

But the deepest wound came when I lost my brother, Abdulrahman. He was more than a sibling; he was my strength, my comfort, with a kind heart and a smile that lit up every room.



*Abdulrahman. Photo courtesy of the author.*

That was when the pain became real – the kind of pain that time cannot silence.

Just days ago, I lost my close friend Dima Awad. She was like a sister to me – a talented young writer with so much ahead of her. Many others have been killed too. They are not numbers; they are stories, dreams, and lives that mattered. Their absence has left deep scars on our hearts.



*Dima Awad. Photo courtesy of the author.*

## **Holding On to Memory and Hope**

Even with all the difficulties, we keep moving forward, carrying the memories of our loved ones. Abdulrahman and Dima – you will never be forgotten. You are not just numbers; you are pieces of my heart and soul.

I hope the world listens to our voices and never forgets our story.

We ask you to hear us, share our words, and help us keep our dreams alive – so our struggles and hopes are not lost to silence.

## Biography

**Maryam Sharif Abed** is a third-year English Literature student at Al-Aqsa University. She is 20 years old, and is originally from Rafah. Maryam is currently displaced in Al-Zawaida, due to the ongoing war in Gaza. Maryam has a deep passion for writing and reading, especially novels by Dostoevsky and poetry by Mahmoud Darwish and Al-Mutanabbi. In her own words, "...writing is not just a hobby – it's my voice, my way of expressing, and my dream".