



***HER VOICE:
DIARIES OF GAZA'S
WOMEN AND GIRLS
THROUGH WAR***

OCTOBER 2023 - JANUARY 2025



Women and girls are among the most affected by the war on Gaza. Over 48,200 people were killed and more than 111,600 injured, with 70% of the casualties being women and children. Forced from their homes, living in overcrowded shelters, and subjected to constant violence, their basic needs like food, water, and hygiene were often out of reach. The psychological toll was devastating, with many experiencing severe trauma, anxiety, and depression. This booklet shares diary entries and paintings from women and adolescent girls in Gaza, offering a raw, unfiltered view of their emotional struggles and resilience after the war. Their stories are a powerful testament to their strength in the face of unimaginable suffering.

This booklet is dedicated to the women and girls of Gaza, whose courage and resilience shine through their stories and art.

UNFPA has been actively supporting women and adolescent girls in Gaza, working alongside local partners like Save Youth Future Society (SYFS), the Sharek Youth Forum, Maan Development Center, and the Social Development Forum (SDF). As part of our comprehensive life education programmes in out-of-school settings, we provide vital psychosocial support and counselling, helping girls process trauma and begin their journey towards healing. UNFPA also works with volunteers to create temporary educational and life skills spaces, distribute adolescent hygiene kits, raise awareness, and offer recreational and sports programmes. While these efforts have been crucial, urgent needs remain, and much more must be done to support the long-term recovery and well-being of women and girls in Gaza.

The content in this booklet reflects the personal experiences and artistic expressions of women and adolescent girls in Gaza. The views and opinions expressed are those of the individuals and do not necessarily represent the official position of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) or its partners. UNFPA is committed to protecting the privacy and confidentiality of the individuals featured.

ASMAA, 23

Painting reignited my passion for life, broke the barrier of fear, and gave me the chance to express the injustice and pain we live, while allowing me to connect with friends despite the harshness of the war.



SHAIMA, 15

THE NIGHT I CARRIED MY LIFE IN A BAG

On a long, cold winter night, I fell asleep quickly, wrapped in the warmth of my bed, surrounded by nothing but darkness in my dreams. I didn't need an alarm, but something else woke me up—a deafening, unfamiliar sound of metal scraping the ground before shooting up into the sky. Suddenly, I was in my family's arms, all of us asking, "What's happening?"

We were told to evacuate—the next apartment building would be bombed. I don't remember how I packed so fast, but somehow my bag became a small version of my life. As I stepped outside, I realized I wasn't just saying goodbye to my room and warm bed—I was saying goodbye to a part of myself.

I held my little sister's hand tightly and smiled at her. "Don't be afraid, we'll be okay," I whispered. She squeezed my hand back and, with her childlike innocence, said, "Then I won't be afraid."



BALSAM, 21

Painting became my refuge from depression and the war, bringing me back to a world of colour and creativity, and offering a way to express what's inside through a painting filled with my passion.



RAGHAD, 16

A BIRTHDAY MARKED BY SURVIVAL

The explosion was so loud that, for a moment, it felt like the end. But the war had already shown us more than we thought we could endure. Despite everything, I decided to treat my birthday like any other day—maybe as a quiet act of defiance. I promised myself to hold on to patience, to make this day stand out as a rare moment of resilience in the middle of the chaos.

I called my sister, trying to find a moment of normalcy amid the weight of it all, but she didn't answer. I tried again—nothing. Then, my cousin's voice broke the silence with news of a strike. As he described the location, a terrifying realization hit—it was my sister's home. I can't remember how I reacted, only that I wasn't okay. My mother took charge, rushing to find answers. She arrived to find the house engulfed in flames—the very home we had left just the night before, now reduced to rubble. A paramedic reassured her that three people had been rescued and taken to one of the few functioning hospitals. My sister was safe. And in that moment, that was enough.

My birthday, once overshadowed by fear, became something else—a memory of survival. A reminder that, even in war, not every day has to be a tragedy.



WAFI', 23

Painting brought me inner peace, a sense of belonging and solidarity, and showed me how powerful art can be for communication and healing.



RIMAS, 14

A WEDDING IN SCHOOL AMID WAR

During the war, we faced unimaginable things—displacement, hunger, the loss of privacy, and a disrupted education. Yet, through all this suffering, I never thought I would witness a wedding.

The school where my family and I had sought refuge had become a place for many things: food aid distributions, makeshift classes, writing workshops, and even a few recreational activities. But a full wedding ceremony inside the school? That was beyond anything we could have expected.

Let me share the moment when, despite everything, life found a way to remind us of its resilience. One morning, we woke up to yet another day of fear and uncertainty. As my family gathered around our modest breakfast, talking about life before the war, my uncle suddenly announced, “I have a surprise for you!”

We were curious, asking what it was. With a wide grin, he declared, “I’m going to arrange a marriage for my son!” We laughed, thinking he was joking, but he insisted, “I’m serious! Jaafar is getting married!”

In that moment, amid all the chaos, we were reminded that even in the darkest times, life doesn’t stop. It persists, defies, and somehow finds ways to celebrate itself—even in the middle of a war zone.



SHAHD, 23

Painting gave me a beautiful way to express our feelings despite the harsh realities of war. Through my art, I represented the resilience and beauty of women, using the guitar as a symbol of patience and creativity.



SONDOS, 15

I THOUGHT IT'S THE END

More than 200 bombs were dropped on Jabalia out of nowhere. It scared everyone, and we all knew it was a sign that a ground invasion was coming. A small group of men tried to calm us down, saying it was just a way to pressure us into fleeing south, and that Jabalia wouldn't be invaded. Because of that, we stayed in our homes, since it was impossible to leave in the middle of all that chaos. For some reason, that made us feel a little better because we had no idea what was going to happen next.

The next day, early in the morning, my dad and brother came to get me, saying things were about to get worse. But then, Jabalia was invaded from the east. Shells, bullets, soldiers, and tanks surrounded us from every direction. We were trapped. We couldn't move. We didn't know what to do or what was going on... 'Why?' That was all we could think about.



WESAL, 20

I've been through many experiences, but nothing has been as enjoyable and meaningful as painting. I feel like I've found myself again.



SOMAIYA, 18

EDUCATION THROUGH WAR AND DISPLACEMENT

I'm a high school student trying to hold on to my education in the middle of a war. Just two days after the fighting started, we had to flee our home in Al-Shuja'iyya. I wanted to take my books with me, but my mom reassured me, saying, "We'll come back for them. This will be over in two days."

But two days turned into a year. While we were sheltering in another area, we got the heartbreaking news—our home had been bombed. When the ceasefire finally let us return, there was nothing left but rubble. My books, my memories, everything I had was gone.

Displacement became a constant cycle. We had to start over every time. Life was draining—crowded shelters, sleepless nights, and the constant fear that came with it all. Still, I refused to let the war take my education too. I searched for makeshift classes, but it was almost impossible to learn—overcrowded rooms, no supplies, and a mind weighed down by the need to survive.

But I made a promise to myself: I will study. No matter how tough it gets, I won't give up. I don't know what the future holds, but I know I'll keep fighting for mine.



ASIL, 19



Painting had a profound impact on me, bringing back the inner calm I lost since the beginning of the war. They pulled me out of the war and repression, awakening my passion to practice my talent like I used to.



AYA, 14

A STORY OF BREAD AND FREEDOM

I survived Gaza, where every day felt harder than the last—hunger, constant struggles, and moving from place to place. Things like vegetables and fruits were rare, and we mostly ate meals made of white flour, wheat, and legumes. We depended on charity kitchens that only gave us food once a week. Hunger, loss, and division took over our lives—until one day, my dad walked into the room, smiling, and said, “We’re leaving for Dubai.”

At first, we thought he was joking, but he told us he was serious. We were filled with excitement as we got ready for the journey. A week later, we crossed the border, went through Cairo, and finally boarded a plane. Three hours later, we landed in Dubai—it felt like stepping into a whole new world. Our relatives welcomed us, and for the first time in a long time, we felt comfort, saw greenery, and had some stability.

We spent a week settling in, buying clothes, eating meals we had only dreamed about, and setting up a new home. Soon, my siblings and I decided to get back to school. I enrolled in eighth grade, the year I had missed in Gaza, determined to make up for lost time and build a future.

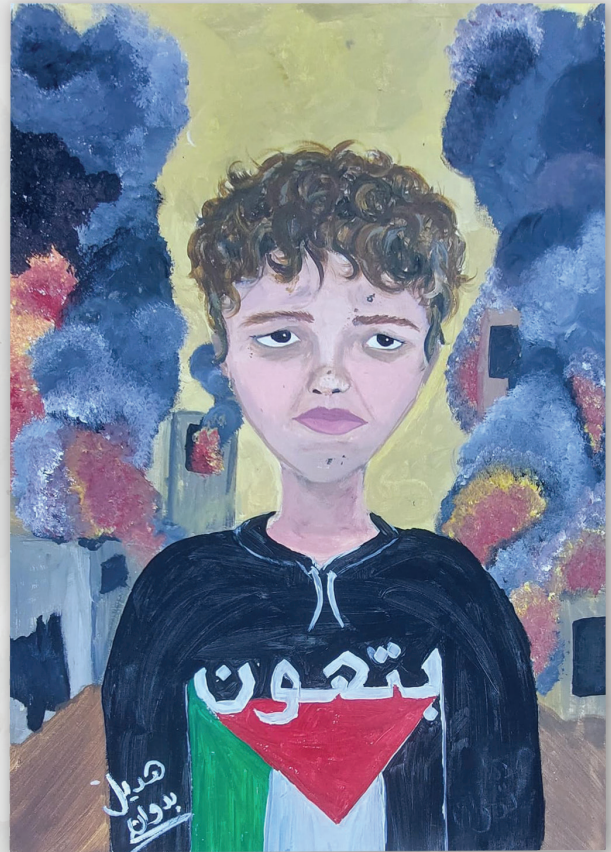
One evening, my friend from Gaza called. Her voice was full of despair as she talked about the worsening famine. After the call, I felt a deep sadness for her and asked my dad if we could help. He agreed. That night, as I sat writing in my journal, memories of Gaza flooded my mind.

I looked at my mom and said, “I will never return to Gaza unless the war ends.”



HADEEL, 22

Acrylic paints were my window to the world. Through colors, I turned our suffering into a message of hope and achievement.



SHAIMA, 20

WHISPERS TO MY FUTURE SELF

Everything that used to bother me in my past life—I would apologize to it and beg it to come back, just so I could feel that annoyance again. I long to meet my younger self, to hug her, kiss her cheeks, and whisper in her ear, 'It's okay, everything will pass,' just like this year, full of adventures, experiences, and so much pain, has passed.

One day, I'll have stories to tell my children and grandchildren—stories of how I was a patient girl who took risks to reclaim the pieces of her shattered dreams and rebuild the person she once was. The girl who was lost on that warm bed, waiting to wake up from the loud, dark nightmare.



SAJA, 20



This experience gave me the space to face the pain of war honestly and transform it into art, leading to a deeper understanding and a beautiful longing for the days before it all began.



SONDOS, 18

A JOURNEY OF HOPE AND HEALING

After surviving more than 400 days of destruction, I've finally found stability in the UK, chasing my dream of studying medicine. Every day after university, I treat myself to little things I couldn't have in Gaza—a warm cup of Nescafé, a slice of fruitcake, and laughs with my new friends.

Each night, I call my mom to share what I've been up to, careful not to mention food, knowing they're still struggling. She tells me things are slowly getting better, and though I wish I could send money to help them, all I can offer for now is my love, respect, and one promise: one day, when I'm able, I will give them everything without hesitation.

The one thing I'm sure of is earning my medical degree. No matter what, I will return to Gaza—to embrace my mom, see my family and friends, and help those in need. Even if there are no job opportunities, I'll volunteer, determined to save as many lives as I can.

For now, I'll make the most of every moment—exploring Britain, experiencing everything I once dreamed of, and capturing it all in a photo album as a reminder of resilience, hope, and survival.



Voices of Life and War in Gaza

Scan the QR code to visit the virtual exhibition

