

"The situation is indescribable. We have no option but to try and survive."

8 March 2024



Women are being disproportionately and devastatingly impacted by Israel's indiscriminate bombardment and total siege of Gaza. The majority of those injured or killed are women and children, and dire living conditions are exacerbating the risk of malnutrition, diseases, and maternal and newborn mortality.

This International Women's Day, Amal Zaqout, Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP)'s Community Programme Officer in Gaza, shares the unimaginable challenges she's faced over the last five months, as well as her hopes for the future.

My name is Amal Zaqout, and I work at MAP as a Community Programme Officer in Gaza.

I'm a single mother with two sons, and I used to live a decent life with my family, friends and loved ones. Even though life was extremely hard under the 16 years of Israel's blockade, it was completely different compared to life with this war.

Now, every day I wake up in fear of losing someone. This is injustice.

When I began working with MAP, I wanted to focus on improving the lives of women and children in Gaza. I know firsthand the kind of challenges that they face in accessing healthcare due to Israel's blockade. It wasn't easy – but this was nothing compared to what we're living through now, where they have absolutely no access to healthcare.

"Life has become unbearably hard, but I still consider myself lucky"

Since 7 October 2023, life has become unbearably hard. No one can imagine what we are going through, and as someone who has a family to look after, I am suffering greatly.

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But I still consider myself lucky. I've 'only' been displaced three times – but I know people who've been displaced seven times. I also live in a house, while many live in tents. I've seen the suffering of people living in shelters like those when I was in Rafah. There is no privacy, no protection, and I saw disease everywhere.

As a single mother, it's up to me to provide the basic necessities for my family – food, water, gas, flour, everything. But these things are so hard to find, and when you do, they're very expensive.

It can take days to find clean drinking water, and water for cooking and washing.

"Please don't forget us. Please be our voice"

It's difficult to endure. Israel's total siege and the continuous bombardment on Gaza is severely affecting my life and making it harder and harder. Even talking to my friends is hard, because each one has their own horrible story of what they are going through.

We lose people every day. People are starving. The situation in Rafah, in the Middle Area, in the North, is indescribable. But we have no option than to survive in Gaza. This is my homeland.

We need the international community to not look away, to keep up pressure on the politicians and to help end this now. Please, try and make this end soon, because there is just so much suffering. Please don't forget us. Please be our voice.

I hope this ends soon. I hope the world and the international community fight for justice and an immediate ceasefire now for us.

How you can help

This International Women's Day [your gift](#) could help provide women in Gaza with essential medical and humanitarian supplies, including drugs, vaccines, plus food to aid our malnutrition project, which is helping one in 10 children in Gaza who are suffering from malnourishment.

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