

# ***Palestine Trauma Centre (UK)***

## **REPORT FOR 2022**



2022 was yet another lethal year for Palestinians. 231 were killed in all; 53 in Gaza, 49 of whom were killed during *Operation Breaking Dawn* in August. 17 children were killed in Gaza then and many suffered psychological and physical injuries. They had not had time to recover from the trauma produced by the horrific bombardment in May the previous year. Below is a response to the three-day bombardment. It is from Saeed Mohamed Al-Kahot, a Gaza author who is a therapist

working with the PTC(UK) team:

*"Life has returned to normal in Gaza," says the presenter in the newscast.*

*Witnesses deny what the news bulletin said. Residents still panic whenever a child knocks on the door. An emergency bag next to the entrance still stares at the family. A child still looks for her cat under the rubble. Parents have not yet opened the doors of consolation. There is still a child who thinks that his martyred father was asleep at the moment of farewell and that he will return.*

*Tell news anchors that life in Gaza was not normal before the war and nothing has changed here except the accumulation of more pain in the corners of a dark scene. Peace be upon this sad country that walks alone on roads of pain and does not reach an ending.*

Saeed Mohamed Al-Kahlot

The people of Gaza are trapped in a situation they have no power to change. The therapy work, however, supports them in actively resisting the situation changing them for the worse. One family provides a microcosm of this struggle for dignity and normal functioning. Like so many, this family has been affected by long-term unemployment that is one serious consequence of the siege. The father sits at home, isolated from his family. His two daughters have many bruises resulting from his violent outbursts. He sits, ashamed, but helpless. The children blame the mother for not protecting them. They all conspire to keep this

overwhelming family suffering secret. The therapy team treat the daughters and the mother separately and become a part of the dynamic of the family. A series of therapy sessions rebuilds self-esteem through graded targets, Focusing activities and exercises in empathy. Gradually, the situation lacks the power to control them. The father is a more difficult case. He has to come to terms with his actions and see them mainly as a consequence of his frustration. He has to learn that he projects his shame about feeling weak onto his daughters and that his violence, once understood, can be prevented. Since his role as family breadwinner has been taken away, he has no self-worth, no purpose, no dignity. His violence towards his family has a social context. One could argue that he has internalised the colonial repression of the siege itself and projected it onto those he should be caring for. He will have to be encouraged to actively resist the sloth and apathy that have been imposed on him. The therapy will support him in counteracting “learned helplessness”.

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PTC(UK) itself expanded its work during 2022 and reinforced links with institutions outside. *Rights 4 Time* at Birmingham University set up a social research training programme for PTC(UK) staff in the collection and interpretation of qualitative data in the Focusing project. This participation with international academic research links us with projects investigating psychological “protection” in Kenya, Uganda, Pakistan, Rwanda and

Cameroon – all co-ordinated at Birmingham University.

#### 14 trainees on the Gaza team learned how to:

- Understand the general concepts of social research
- Apply these concepts during the field work of the team
- Measure the effectiveness of the interventions provided by the Focusing program.

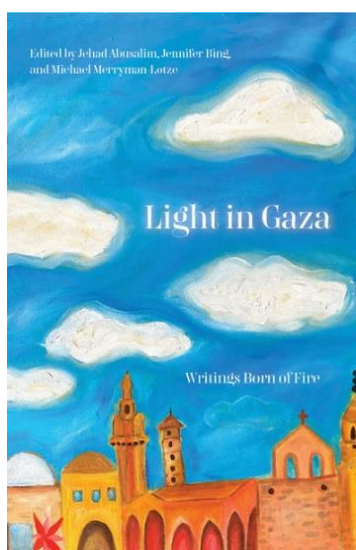
#### On the staff level, training achieved the following goals:

- Refine motivational interviewing skills
- Refine the construction and development of research tools
- Refine quantitative information analysis skills
- Refine the skills of preparing the final research project.

One exciting moment for the *Days of Joy* team was the visit by two of its clowns to a training event and conference in Italy. This was the first time they had been out of Gaza and travelled on a plane.



Our webinars, *Talk to Gaza*, restarted with a well-attended online meeting at Ramadan and another based on a recent publication, *Light in Gaza*, in which the editor and Palestinian contributors led a discussion on Gaza’s future.



Another public-directed project we have started is an online exhibition made up of photographs taken by some of our PTC(UK) Gaza team. This will be developed in 2023.

### PROJECTS AND FUNDING

We have a main funder for our basic projects, Muntada Aid, which has also provided food parcels and recreational psychological support activities for the various Eid occasions throughout the year. We are also most grateful to 13 Rivers Trust for its continued support and to the Palestine support groups in North Herts, Norwich, St Albans and Crouch End. There have also been generous donations from trusts and legacies. A spectacularly successful fundraising event in 2022 was organised by Brent Friends of Palestine.

Muslim Community Association supported poor and marginalised families in the Gaza Strip in the winter season by providing families with woollen blankets, food parcels and winter clothing for children. Winter can be very cold in Gaza and there can be flash floods as well as electricity blackouts. PTC(UK) was happy to help support families in a practical way delivering the items funded by MCA.



**The total number of the beneficiaries from MUNTADA Aid and HAHAR grants for all programmes implemented by the centre in Nusairat, Gaza from Jan. to Dec. 2022 is 30,840, including children, divided as follows:**

- 100 children between the ages of 8-18 were targeted in the support and psychotherapy sessions within the Family Therapy programme
- 20 children their ages between 10-13 benefited from the twelve Focusing therapy sessions
- 68 children their ages between 10-16 years were targeted from the Sand programme
- 90 children between the ages of 10-18 years were targeted through psycho-sports support sessions
- 29,585 children aged 1-18 years were targeted through recreational activities in *Days of Joy* programme
- About 50 educational meetings were implemented in cooperation with partner institutions in the various governorates of the Gaza Strip, benefiting 750 mothers, fathers, teachers and school students.
- Food parcels were distributed to 60 beneficiaries with special needs.



*فريق أيام الفرح Days of Joy*

**Days of Joy Initiative:** Muntada Aid and NAHAR donated entertainment activities implemented by Days of Joy Initiative, which aimed to alleviate suffering and bring the community together to support orphans, injured old people and people with special needs. 36 activities were carried out from July to Dec. 2022 in the marginalized areas in all different governorates in the Gaza Strip and in cooperation with schools and kindergartens, benefiting about 17,664 children between the ages of 1-18 years and parents of these children. In addition a special activity was provided in Al-Wafa Hospital for elderly people in October.



## Psychological Sports Counselling:



Muntada Aid and NAHAR funded the Sports Psychological Support programme, which includes kung fu for kids, and psychological support activities for 50 children and youth who were selected from the Nusairat camp in the middle of

Gaza Strip. In cooperation with the School of Prophet Mohammed, may God bless him, these young people are trained to increase their self-confidence and improve the overall flexibility of their bodies. Also a football league was set up during July 2022 in coordination with the Palestine Football Academy, where 12 teams of young players from Nusairat camp, aged 12-14 years, participated, and each team consisted of 8 players. At the end of the league the players were honored and gifts were distributed on them. Finally, training began for 10 young people with special needs who were affected by the repeated wars on Gaza, where a workshop identified their needs and then started training them to cope with their difficulties.



## **Education and an electronic awareness unit**

Psychological education contributes significantly to the psychological services provided. On the one hand, it normalizes the experience of psychotherapy and thus attracts those in need of psychological services. On the other hand, it works in conjunction with the psychiatric therapy sessions offered by the team, as well as preventing relapse after the completion of psychotherapy.

Palestine Trauma Centre-UK aims to disseminate professional knowledge free of charge, especially in light of the crises the region that have created an urgent need for therapeutic interventions at both the beginner and specialized levels. The centre launched its professional

platform in January 2021, taking advantage of the spread of the Zoom application and the ease of dealing with it. The programme promotes the principle of sustainability, uploading materials on the YouTube channel, the quality of life. The total number of online sessions so far is 45, equivalent to 130 training hours.

Specialized workshops for professionals and those interested in mental health and psychotherapy reached several countries in the Arab world. To ensure continuity and ease of communication, training and development groups were launched. There were 20 groups with an average of 485 members per group and a total of 9573 members.

- **Implemented activities**

Activity	Facebook publications	YouTube posting	Workshops	Campaigns	Days and events	Short films	Hope window
<b>Total</b>	460	37	26	24	35	3	11

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Here in the UK we welcomed Abdul Jalil the director of our delivery partner in Nusierat, central Gaza on his visit to London to raise funds for his school, Nour el-Marifa where our team are based. We discussed our mutual future plans and celebrated our partnership.



PTC(UK) also welcomes our continued association with the UK-Palestine Mental Health Network. This serves to reinforce our efforts in advocacy for all those affected by the occupation and the violence it produces. We cannot separate individual suffering from

collective suffering or delink the individual from the community. By joining support groups across geographical locations, we can further the cause of trauma relief and build hope.



### COMMENTS FROM BENEFICIARIES.

**Girl child Samah-Nusairat (14 yrs) said:** “After the sessions with Palestine Trauma Centre, I felt better and my relations became better with society, my academic level improved and I became one of the top students. My relationship with my friends is better than before... I do not know how I can thank you all”.

**Boy child Mustafa-Nusairat (13 yrs) said:** “Children whose fathers were martyred like me, need someone to help them to be better. The teddy bear session within your Focusing programme, reminded me of my father and I was very comfortable and I felt that my father was sitting next to me and telling me that I am fine and the world is still fine. Thank you so much for your help”.

**Enaam-Nusairat camp (51 yrs) said:** “This Family Therapy session gave me the way to deal with my family and others and helped to alleviate the hard pressure I suffered from especially during this holy month, thank you”.

**Em Mohamed-Nusairat camp (43 yrs) said:** “Really, thank you to you all for the sessions that I benefited from after suffering from many problems during the past period. I will certainly continue attending these sessions”.

**YouTube link to see the Day of Arab Family video:**

**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FN5T2hejWcY>**