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IN THE BEGINNING THERE WAS THE WORD

GAZA STRIP



PHOTOGRAPHS AND TEXTS BY DANI LAGARTOFERNÁNDEZ



TAHANY AL-ABED AL-BREAM

WORK

Tahany is a mother of four daughters and three sons. Before the blockade, her husband used to work in Israel's farming industry. When the blockade began, he was forced to stay home and the problems began: both life together and financial hardships. So Tahany got in contact with the Beit Almostuqbul Association, an organisation that is locally active in areas such as gender, infancy and family. She proudly explains how the association supplied her with one sheep, which she has managed to transform into the nine sheep she owns now. The association also provided her with a solar oven to dry species in, and currently she sells these species on the market. Like other women in Gaza, today Tahani is the one who brings home the money, while she yearns for the blockade to end, so that the men can go back to work and begin feeling useful to their families once more.

The photograph was taken in her garden patch, with her sons and daughters, and she is wearing the typical Palestinian apparel.

"Because I adore Palestine, because it is my country and I carry it in my heart".



IBTISAM OMRAAM EL-ZAANIN

HOPE

Ibtisam ran for the 2007 municipal elections as an independent candidate not aligned with any party and she was elected. Yet she had to resign when Hamas came into power in Gaza. Hamas tried to take advantage of her being a woman in order to profit from more economic aids and give the impression of being an organization striving to improve women's lot. Besides her political experience, she is co-founder and director of the Al-Ataa Benefit Association. During Israel's invasion of 2009, they were able to channel to the North of Gaza City the humanitarian aid arriving at her city, Hanoun.

“During the moment of direst needs, when all the people around us were all suffering from shortages and we could not decide our destiny or our future... we continued to hope [...] We cannot live without hope. I try to help people because I have hope . When I close my eyes, when I look up at the sky, I can see and feel the enormity of the hope surrounding me.”

The photograph was taken on the roof of her house; the only place no one can say does not belong to her. Behind her and defining the horizon, is visible the wall that separates Gaza from Israel, on the Eretz frontier.



AMAL TAWFIQ HAMAD

FREEDOM

is one of the Fatah leaders in the Gaza Strip, a woman known and renowned in Palestine and also internationally. For 10 years she was General Director of Palestine's Legislative Council in Gaza before its dissolution. Currently she is under house arrest by order of Hamás.

Amal vindicates her condition as a woman, as a human being with human rights, with the right to hold an opinion and to express it; with the right to be able to decide where she goes, what she says and what she does; with the right to be able to work, to be safe and to have a dignified life. And she has nothing of the sort at the moment.

The photograph was taken at her door, which marks the end of her world today, the end of her freedom.



ITAF RUJAILAH

PATIENCE

Itaf works for Oxfam GB as a financial assistant. Very few people in Gaza have a job opportunity like hers. She has become aware that Western societies have many wrong opinions about Arab women. In the Gaza Strip, she explains, women have rights and opportunities; they have the right to work equally to men, to go where they please and interact with whoever they please. She wishes international experts would get to know their society in a deeper way before passing judgements about its inequalities.

As far as the hijab that she wears is concerned, Itaf asserts it is a religious choice. Women who wear the hijab believe in their religion, and in Gaza they are a majority.

The photograph was taken at the beach in the City of Gaza. Itaf believes the Mediterranean is a window to the world that is unfolding from the prison that is the Strip at present.