

ومازلنا نكتب AND STILL WE WRITE



*Recent work by Palestinian poets & actions you can take
to stop genocide now*

INTRODUCTION



*Inas Abou Maamar cradles the body of her 5-year-old niece.
Photo: Mohammed Salem for Reuters*

It has been more than a year of this genocidal siege on Gaza, with Israeli forces now expanding their attacks on people, homes, and hospitals to the West Bank and Lebanon. The loss, the suffering, and the violence are unrelenting. At every turn, we hear of entire family lines erased from the civil registry; that Gaza's rubble could take ten or fifteen years to clear; that it could require three and a half centuries to rebuild; that every school and university has been destroyed. And then there's the incalculable loss of adults, children, and babies: gone.

Sometimes, in the face of all this, it feels as though nothing can be said. And yet Palestinians in Gaza continue to write, even in

the most difficult of circumstances. And they continue to imagine a different world.

Here, we bring together Palestinian writers in and from Gaza to imagine a future. Recollections of this past year, reflections on where they are now, and thoughts about where they might be tomorrow all come together in this small chapbook.

We begin with a moment of silence. In his poem "Amjad," translated by Wiam El-Tamami, Nasser Rabah writes about trying to find someone to listen to his grief about losing his closest friend: "Who will listen to me tell the story of Amjad? / Who will give me their heart—and a moment of silence?"

After our shared silence, Nasser tells us about where he now writes, in his bombed-out home. “Only two rooms on the ground floor remain: this is where my entire family lives now. In a corner of one of the rooms, I curl up and write.”

The poet Batool Abu Akleen echoes what many have said about how they must go on writing, despite everything. She has been displaced, and she describes writing among the tents: “You’re sitting and everyone around you is just sitting and watching what you’re doing. It doesn’t feel good at all, but I’m doing it, because poetry is what keeps me alive.

It’s what protects me from going insane.”

In her poem “A Miracle,” Asmaa Dwaima imagines not a future so much as a wonderment: “A miracle that allows us to start over. / The hand of God wipes away a year, / And takes us one year back. / A miracle: / That’s all I want.”

In this collection, we also remember the many journalists who were targeted and killed by Israeli forces. Poet Heba Al-Agha commemorates two of them in her poem “For Ismail Al-Ghoul and Rami Al-Rifi.” The pair were killed on July 31, 2024 while, according to Reporters Without Borders, they

were in an isolated white car in the middle of an empty street, both wearing press vests.

We include one work by a writer who is not from Gaza: Palestinian poet Samer Abu Hawwash. The final poem in this collection is his “We Will Lose This War,” translated by Huda Fakhreddine, because it speaks so urgently to both loss and futurity. As he writes, “When our killers look into mirrors, / they will not see their faces, / but ours, many of us, in the mist. / They will finally realize that they have become nothing / but memories of ghosts in the great abyss. / They will never understand how they annihilated us / then annihilated us,

/ then annihilated us, / and yet could not erase from their mirrors / our shining image.”

These poems and reflections do not exist separately from their authors, nor from the place and time in which they were composed. They are not here for passive reading. And so, at the end of this collection, we leave you with suggested actions. As poet Rasha Abdulhadi has written:

**“Wherever you are, whatever sand
you can throw on the gears of genocide,
do it now.”**

AMJAD

By Nasser Rabah

Translated by Wiam El-Tamami

Grief is cheap;
death a worn-out mule;
the hospitals heaving with the calls of the drowned.

Who will listen to me tell the story of Amjad?
Who will give me their heart—and a moment of silence?

I tried to tell the driver. He pulled photos of a stream of tears out of his shirt pocket. The limbs and remains of his loved ones went flying. Oh no—he chased after them—*Hamada's legs, Suad's dreams...*

I tried to tell the hawkers. *We're just selling things—they replied—exchanging people's sorrows for fake papers and poisoned tales. The market is full of slaughtered birds walking around, just like you.*

I headed back to my neighbor. He has a brother working in television, and his brother has one son. Both were pronounced dead on the evening news. Ashamed, I left without asking him.

I went to see Mounir, who works at the bakery. I found his home full of neighbors, pouring coffee at his memorial: Mounir the baker is dead.

I hurried over to Mazen, the history teacher. I heaved a sigh of relief when I found him. *Oh, thank God, you're alive. Have you lost any loved ones?* He said no, but Huda's feet have been amputated, Nahil needs urgent treatment abroad, and Mahmoud has been missing for months. *What about you—what's wrong?* he asked. *Nothing*, I replied. *There's just no history without geography.*

Grief is cheap;
death a worn-out mule;
the hospitals heaving with the calls of the drowned.

Who will listen to me tell the story of Amjad?
Who will give me their heart—and a moment of silence?

Who will listen to me say: He was my closest friend.
When I look into the mirror, I see you laughing.
Amjad? Which one of us was closer to the other?

You would visit one house after another, passing around sweet dates of joy.
You would come back to leave your tears in the palm of my hand.

What's wrong?
Nothing. Just tired.

In every place you left behind, your palm trees are growing, rising, reaching out for God.

For ten years you were the closest one to me; I was the closest one to you.
And I never asked you: *What's that scar on your forehead?*
And you never asked me: *What's that wound on your neck?*

We passed over all the wounds of a lifetime without a word.

It was enough for us to walk together, Amjad, and to keep walking.

We were like a victory sign held up in the face of exhaustion. What has become of it now?

Grief is cheap;
death a worn-out mule;
the hospitals heaving with the calls of the drowned.



WHERE I WRITE NOW

By Nasser Rabah

Translated by Wiam El-Tamami

The nights are dark: it's now been a whole year without electricity in Gaza. But I can still write, if I manage to charge my cellphone using the solar-powered battery. My cellphone has become my office, my library, my television, my friends, the café. It's everything now—I take care of it like it is one of my children.

I write in the hours when the sound of bombardment has stilled around my home—my home that has itself been bombed and destroyed. Only two rooms on the ground floor remain: this is where my entire family lives now. In a corner of one of the rooms, I curl up and write. I write with a heart shattered by everything it has seen that day, everything it has heard: screaming, crying, the endless anguish of a people who are being subjected to genocide, forced displacement, and starvation. I write in order not to lose my mind, in order to stay balanced in the midst of all this horror, this endless war.

GAZA

*By Maryam Al Khateeb
Translated by Omar Ibrahim*

This is the first time I have tried to answer the question, “How do you imagine Gaza in the future?”

It feels as if this question has come from the scream of a child in a deep pit. Often, what draws my attention the quickest, and what cuts me the deepest, are children’s screams.

These screams transform all this pain into a faint sound that echoes all through the universe: “What comes after all this?”

My little brain, which grew used to the camp’s alleys, to al-Bahr Street in Gaza, to hearing the voice of Reem al-Banna, almost exploded from imagining a future Gaza. I’ve often drawn my age in the sand at the beach and between the tall tower-block buildings in Gaza (and by “tall,” I mean ten floors at most). I thought we didn’t need much to climb up into the sky; perhaps a small bullet would transport you, without too much trouble. I saw my future between the wrinkles of the vendors’ hands—the ones who stood near the front gate at my university—and the small bodies of people walking along the beach. I saw myself, too, as a small dot, a small wing, a tiny body that would grow. I was always skilled at playing with the city’s memory, and I was always afraid of defeating my ancestors; that is, I feared a single drop of memory that would not remember my grandfather. So, every day, I would run in the streets of Gaza to train them to remember me.

I was very normal: studying, raving about poetry and music, loving the rainbow, which I couldn’t see. I dreamed of a clinic with books and a view of the sea in the Gaza Strip, and the smell of coffee mixed with the sunset and grilled sweet potatoes on the beach. Those images, which did not come to pass, were the future I predicted for Gaza. . . the Gaza that left its dream and departed, wearing clothes of Death, and went to lean on a far corner of the universe, counting the victims and telling me about them each evening. I had loved when my mother told me that I was attached to the place, not the people, because this occasionally reassured me that I would neither cry from the betrayals of friends nor from the experiences of love. But I was tested with the harshest departure: the departure of the place.

The place was Gaza, the memory was Gaza, the sound was Gaza, the struggle was Gaza, the lover was Gaza, the friend was Gaza, the past, present, and future was Gaza.

I always imagined myself walking with a limp after March 6, the date I left Gaza. I had walked and leaned on the walls of cities, and they kicked me to the ground, a limping city inside me that I walked in. Now, I hate the idea of belonging, especially to places. Now, I just stay home, keeping pictures of the city far away from me as I wait for it. I don’t want to see anything else. The girls here often look at me strangely.

How can I not share love stories with them? And comfort them?

I tell them that my city left me.

They fall silent, then burst out laughing.

Probably none of them has heard the sound of a heart breaking, or the sound of a missile falling on a house in the city, turning it to rubble. None of them has heard a child screaming from under the rubble. None of them has heard the phrase, “No return to northern Gaza.”

Gaza closed the doors of love in my heart.

Silence was my only solace.

I wonder, how could a homeland become unfamiliar?

When we return, will our homeland no longer be ours?

I think Gaza borrowed a flame from hell, then left with its braid for the top.

And left us here.



WHERE I WRITE NOW

By Maryam Al Khateeb

Translated by Wiam El-Tamami

In the room where I sleep, I've created a portal to the sky Every night, I prepare the moon, the stars I arrange the branches of the olive tree around my window so I can sleep

This, my beloved window I would sit in front of it to gaze at the composition of the sky the moon the olive branches as they slip into my room then run away

My window of magic On a moonlit night I decided to put my pillow under the window and sleep on the moon

I gazed at it it gazed at me My mother always found it strange, that I sleep this way

Across from the window upside down where a pillow should be I put my books, papers, pens, and sleep

This is the last image I have of my window before the sky stole its face I trusted that my window would never turn the color of the sky to the color of missiles and blood I woke up surrounded by hellfire, the olive branches wilting before my eyes Everything changed

I leave my papers behind and run

Since that morning, I've been waiting for the sky every day

The windows have changed Every morning I wake up in terror Where am I? Where is the sky?

The war machine reached my home in the first moments, and I left My window was broken my room morphed into an abandoned place eaten by dust I left my pens behind
Now I write on the walls of houses along the road of my displacement and I know that they will wilt, I mean, turn into rubble

After some time, I return to the room I turn it into a place of displacement for a family with ten children Their mother is afraid for them to sleep under the window

Every day I ask the oldest child for permission to come into my room to wipe the dust off my pens and take one

I take it and alone together we sit under the sky on the roof of our half-destroyed home

I write to the sound of the drones and missiles training my mind to imagine testing its ability to deny everything it sees

I turn the missile-ridden sky into a home filled with stars and soft lights

I turn graves into chairs for those who have become tired of the road

and the airplane into an olive branch slipping in and out of my room

I turn my mother's voice warning me about the shrapnel flying around the roof of our home dangerous for me into the sound of her voice calling me to cook with her my favorite dish the sumagiyya

I turn my pen into a magic wand transforming all this devastation into something else

Something that breathes life

I left the pen, the rooftop of our home, the window of my room, the ten children, the city

And now I'm in a city where everything is real and does not need my pen to transform it And now I'm afraid to sleep next to the window with pens under my head

Every day I wake up to the sounds of the radio, my father heaving a sigh about the awful state of things, the frying pan in the kitchen as my mother prepares breakfast from the leftovers of war, my little sister conspiring to burn my pens so that we can eat bread, the noise of the airplanes, the screaming coming from our neighbors' home under threat of bombardment, the smell of gunpowder, and a sky not blue but red

Every day I see only that I am a stranger here even in death



FREE POEMS IN THE AUTUMN

By Heba Al-Agha

Translated by Julia Choucair Vizoso

How will my poems be free this fall
when memory can't shed its heartbreak, how will I check on my balcony rose
when I haven't watered it in
one year
our clothes in the washing machine, unwashed and unhung.

How will I take new pictures of my tree-lined street
when someone recommends I take one from right there,
the spot where he was martyred.

How will she look at me, the Poinciana tree that shaded the barbershop next door
and now pines for the boys on their way to school and the mothers who nagged at them
to prune their frizzy heads, as she asks of me:
What took you so long!

How will my poems be free in the fall, when it's time to shake off
the exhaustion of summer, to plan
a boat trip, a breakfast at the Marina or somewhere new that Gaza invents,
a morning walk to coffee, the indulgence of a croissant from Mazaj.

How will my poems be free when I am in waiting
for Saturday, for a long break, for my mother's lap to throw myself into
for a visit to our farm where I'll walk around like a tourist picking all the buds, a yellow date,
a guava
for my gluttonous eyes as I ask my mother, when will the olives be harvested?
for returning home with colossal jars of dates and lime.

In this fall that is free
of homecomings and goings and visits to my mother, Saturdays and streets and Poinciana trees,
children and homes and olives, and a single guava fruit.

September 13, 2024



WHERE I WRITE NOW

By Batool Abu Akleen

Now, I'm living in a refugee camp, in a tent. This is why you hear a lot of noise in my recordings. My house has been bombed, so we can say that I've lost everything, I'm homeless now, and I've been evacuated from the north of Gaza to the south, and now I'm in Deir al-Balah. My office actually is the corridor between the tents, and in front of my tent's door. I sit on the ground, where I try to write and translate and edit.

Sometimes, I've got my headphones on, and I listen to something so it might distract me from all this noise around me. It doesn't always work, but I still try. There is no regular internet connection. I have to go from one mobile phone place to another, searching for a good network so I can send messages and emails and be in contact with people, like you. So it's not easy at all, sending messages or emails. But I'm still trying. And I'll keep working, and I'll keep writing, even if my office is just a corridor between the tents—we can almost say a street. You're sitting and everyone around you is just sitting and watching what you're doing. It doesn't feel good at all, but I'm doing it, because poetry is what keeps me alive. It's what protects me from going insane.



MIRACLE

By Asmaa Dwaima

Translated by Asmaa Dwaima and Nour Nemer

All I want: a miracle

The hand of God extends over Gaza,

pats us on our heads,

retrieves the remains of the martyrs,

and puts the mark of martyr on their foreheads.

The hand of God wipes away the tears of mothers,

and widows,

and men.

The hand of God draws two hands for a child who has lost his hands,

heals the deep burns on an infant's body,

creates two firm legs for the torso of a man,

and returns the soul to a fetus killed in his mother's womb.

A miracle:

The hand of God reconstructs the destroyed buildings,

shakes off the dust of pain, so that things are colorful again.

The hand of God makes the rubble of mosques resound with the azan.

The streets are filled with their people.

The shops are graced with the beautiful girls of Gaza,

as they buy the most beautiful clothes;

the cafés are crowded with businessmen glued to their devices;

the restaurants are filled with the laughter of friends as they gather around tables full of delicious food;

the beach kiosks are lit up at night;

two lovers stand hand-in-hand on the seafront,

a man in his thirties is jogging,

and a song blares at top volume.

A miracle:

That's all I want.

A miracle in which we can replay the cassette of daily routine through the radio of life,

a miracle that allows us to start over.

The hand of God wipes away a year,

And takes us one year back.

A miracle:

That's all I want.

WHERE I WRITE NOW

By Asmaa Dwaima

Translated by Asmaa Dwaima and Nour Nemer

After a long wait, I finally got my mobile phone, which had made a perilous journey through various charging points and scattered street kiosks. After each day of war, evening comes, and the messages start jumping into my chat window, repeating in a dull echo: “How are you?” “How are you?” I reply, as I have been for a year now: “We’re still breathing.”

In a cramped room crowded with bedding and family members huddled together like a single body, I write. A faint LED light glows from the corner of the room, a light that barely shines due to a weak battery that lasts only a few hours. The sun didn’t help us today; a light rain blocked the solar panels, our only source of electricity, from doing their job. As light rain drizzles to the ground, the fabric of the tent sinks into the mud. With it, our spirits also sink into a deep mire of sorrow.

I hold the phone and try to document what my eyes have seen—a missile falling on a crowded building—, and what my ears heard—the terrified screams of women and children that followed a call, warning them of an imminent airstrike. I write about the bitterness of life, about sudden displacement, about the rings of fire that sweep over us without warning, about the fear that has become our constant companion.

I try to describe what can’t be captured in a picture or video: like how we feel when the great eraser of life wipes out our entire existence—our homes, families, friends, memories. How the mother of a martyr died from a scream of loss. How, by some miracle, our ‘dead’ hearts still beat and overflow. How our bloodied hands produce beautiful literary texts. How our mouths still move and form a smile. How we manage to hold onto happy bubbles in our memories. And how the war leaves its mark and scars on our skin, carving extra years into our lives, aging us ten years in just one.

I write in a narrow corner that barely fits my thin mattress and mobile phone, on nights when only the moon lights up as the LED flickers out. I write so that words don’t escape us and slip through our fingers like everything else. I write because writing is our only way to survive. I write because we, the survivors so far, must tell the truth to the world and not allow lies to seep in. I write because my reservoir of words is overflowing, and I let the faucet of writing pour a little out in the form of a poetic text, a literary piece, or a short story.

THE FUTURE OF GAZA

By Basman Eldirawi



While I write this poem,
the future of Gaza lies in a coma
in Al Aqsa hospital's ICU
after shrapnel flew into his neck.

The future of Gaza is sitting in Al Mawasi
watching the sunset at the door to his tent.
He closes his eyes for a moment,
imagining that he is back in his old room,
his toys all around him.
He feels the air drive deep into his lungs
After a nearby explosion.

The future of Gaza stops for a moment
to check her bare feet.
The feet have mixed with her blood and the dust of long roads.
The feet that miss their old shoes.
She remembers walking to school wearing new shoes.
Tears fall from her eyes
And there is a nearby explosion.

The future of Gaza lays in her bed
with her new twins.
She cradles them beside her,
smells their fresh newborn skin.
Two birds appear out of nowhere and perch at her window, singing
despite the buzz of drones,
waking the hope that her twins will grow.
And a nearby explosion happens.

The future of Gaza stares at the beach:
above him are only drones, warplanes, and black sky.
An echo of an old memory with friends, running
into the water, laughing and singing, resisting the roar of warplanes
inside his ear.
A nearby explosion happens.

The future of Gaza crosses her legs
on the sand at a corner near the displacement camp.
She is breathing heavily after a long day of documenting
her home, her people, her own death.
The weight of the PRESS vest lays heavy on her chest.
Her hand extends to the old photos of her old life,
to the memory of her camera.

A nearby explosion happens.

The future of Gaza drives the ambulance so fast
after news of a massacre in Deir Al Balah.
He can't stop thinking of his children.
He can't erase the image inside his head
that he will return and find them waiting for him by the door.
A nearby explosion happens.

The future of Gaza is every boy
is every girl
is every new mother.
is every newborn baby.
is every young man.
is every journalist.
is every medic.
is every dream.
Before a nearby explosion happens.



FOR ISMAIL AL-GHOUL AND RAMI AL-RIFI

By Heba Al-Agha

Translated by Julia Choucair Vizoso

No grief to bear in this city
no wall to weep on

no helmet
no armor to carry us
All, too heavy for our bodies

no friendly ally
to panic to: see how quickly people die here

nothing keeps us from death
but death itself.

Editor's note: Ismail Al-Ghoul (journalist) and Rami Al-Rifi (photographer) were out on assignment on July 31 in the north of Gaza; shortly after they reported live from al-Shati Refugee Camp, an Israeli air strike hit their car, killing them both. According to Reporters Without Borders, they were in an isolated white car in the middle of an empty street, and they were both wearing press vests. More than 130 Palestinian journalists have been killed in Gaza in the year since October 7, 2023.



WHERE I WRITE NOW

By Doha Kahlout

Translated by Wiam El-Tamami

A kindergarten—a place created for learning, singing, playing—has turned into a space rife with suffering. There, among twenty children and more than thirty men and women, I look for time to myself, for a place where my mind can rest. I try to write in this space where I have been displaced, and when I despair, I write among them, heavy with questions, surrounded by waiting. Their eyes scan the screen of my computer, looking for any news, thinking that I might have a hand in creating them. While I, with my cold hands and frail and frightened body, am trying to write about them and about myself, about the patience that has grown out of our bodies as they waste away, about our tears that have not stopped falling.

I work as a volunteer Arabic teacher in the displacement tents. In my work, in my daily immersion with the people here in the camp, I feel that the life forced upon us is on the brink of exploding within me a whole new language to talk about this life of tents. But I find myself caught in a bottomless spiral of tears every time I try to write. I recall how difficult it is to work, to move, the threat of death always staring us squarely in the face, the impossibility of finding a moment to just sit by oneself—and when I start to write about all this, I am hounded by the question of whether there is any point to anything we write after a year of genocide and relentless fear.



THE FUTURE

By Mahmoud Alshaer

It has now been more than a year that I've survived the Gaza genocide. It is not easy for me to cope with the traumas I face, which have forced me to make decisions I regret as I write you this message. I ask myself how the future of this war can be understood and how the plans being executed against me can be read. But how can I attempt to look toward the future when I cannot guarantee the next few minutes of my life?

It pains me to envision the future and work toward building paths for it. It feels as though I am acknowledging an amputation. This genocide has not only robbed me of those who have been killed but also of the possibility of meeting again with all those who have fled abroad to escape this annihilation. My entire family has left. My mother is with my son Majd in Turkey, where they are both receiving treatment. My brother and his family are in Egypt, along with all my uncles and their children and grandchildren. I lose them every time I try to imagine the future and engage in exercises to build any action that could save me from this void. It pains me to envision this helplessness built on being trapped in the future.

Silence consumes me, and memories of the past constantly resurface. It pains me to realize that everything I see in my photos has been completely destroyed. This awareness hurts, but I can't stop myself from looking at what the war has not yet taken from me. Despite the harshness of realizing what has already been lost, I still believe that I can rise again if I survive this war and that these losses haven't demolished my ability to engage in cultural production. I believe that nearly two decades of life under siege have trained me well in resilience.

I want this war to stop. I urge myself—and everyone who has the means—to help get me and my family out of this hell.

It pains me to anticipate the future, to foresee the practices, actions, and exercises that lead to cultural or artistic production. I wonder: How will we move past the mourning and grief for everything the war machine and genocide have erased? How will I survive?



WHERE I WRITE NOW

By Esam Hajjaj

Translated by Wiam El-Tamami

I'm lying on my mattress in the tent, holding my cell phone, trying to capture the scenes unfolding around me. This tent is the only place where I feel close to home because my family is here. Sometimes ideas sneak up on me when I'm in a car, and I pull out my phone quickly before they fly out of my head. My fingers are tired of writing on my phone for an entire year. I lost my laptop when our house was bombed. I lost everything that I'd written since 2014, except for my poetry collection, which is yet to be published. Every time I write, I'm afraid. I'm afraid that a missile will, at any moment, pierce through my body, and my story will remain forever trapped in my head, incomplete.



WHERE I WRITE NOW

By Mohammad al-Ṣaqqūq

Translated by Wiam El-Tamami

I remember—a distant childhood memory—a time when we were at the beach. It was one of the few times that we were allowed to actually go into the water. I remember that we approached the sea with fear and apprehension, and that, every time a wave came, my grandmother would dip our heads into the water. That strange ritual, known as “the seven waves,” seemed to me imbued with wonder, with the secrets of the sea. My grandmother would dip our heads into every wave, for seven consecutive waves. This repeated immersion in the waves is believed to help release anguish and distress, to melt away any clouds of sorrow trapped in the body. The waves ebb and flow, each one carrying away some of the sadness and pain, some of the dark sediment that has built up in the soul. Wave after wave, the darkness begins to dissolve, to be carried far away into the vastness of the sea.

Now, as I stood watching people, young and old, dipping their heads into the waves, I wondered: what sea can melt away all this sorrow? The war was raging with full force; death was knocking down doors and breaking into every home. We were drowning in the ocean of our loss, in an unprecedented path of bereavement and mutilation. What sea can possibly swallow up all of these moans, all of this pain, all of these atrocities?

As I watched people appearing and disappearing among the waves, a desire grew in me to immerse my body in the sea. My body that had become saturated with fear, contorted with tension, after long nights of terror—nights trapped in the darkness of this moment that has made the lines of life and death converge in this insane circle of war.

I walked toward the sea, the wind pushing against my face, my forehead. As soon as the water touched my feet, a chill rippled through my body. And then, in a second, I threw this exhausted body into the salty water. A body that had become heavy, weighed down with burdens, was now being made lighter by the water. Pushed up, carried, with eyes closed and ears receiving the sound of the sea. As the water held me, lifted me, I gazed up at a sky that was blue and empty of airplanes, and a long silence fell—as though it was not just a sea.



WE WILL LOSE THIS WAR

By Samer Abu Hawwash

Translated by Huda Fakhreddine

We won't cut down a tree.
We won't burn a field.
We won't kill a man or a woman,
an elder or a child.
We won't disturb the sleep of an unborn baby
still swimming, unaware,
in the bliss of first waters.
We won't startle a bird flitting aimlessly
from branch to branch,
or hold back a mare trotting dreamily toward sunset.
We won't distract a cloud passing over villages,
reminding them of their original names.
We will lose this war.
We will lose it
with our spilled blood.
We will lose it
with our severed limbs,
our gouged eyes,
our wounded hearts.
We will lose the war
with our bereft howls,
with a sorrow that refuses to leave us,
a grief we've been tending for so long
it has become our twin, our loyal shadow.
We will lose this war
and then lose it again.
We will lose this war,
the way we lost every war before it
and every war after it.
We will lose the war
when we remember everything that happened,
when we forget everything that happened
and when we neither remember nor forget.
And finally as mere dust in the wind,
a wandering echo in the wilderness,
we will lose the war,
once again.
But

لن نَقْطَعُ شَجَرَةً
 لن نُحْرِقَ حَقْلاً
 لن نَقْتُلَ رجلاً ولا امرأة
 شيخاً ولا طفلاً
 لن نُقَلِّقَ نَوْمَ جنين
 ما زالَ يَسِيحُ، غافلاً،
 في نعيم مياحه الأولى
 لن نُجْفَلَ عصفوراً يَحُلُّقُ ساهماً
 بين غصنين
 لن نُقَاطِعَ فرساً في جريانها الحالم
 نحو الغروب
 لن نُشَتَّتَ انتباهَ غيمةٍ تعبرُ القرى
 لتَذْكُرَها بأسمائها الأولى
 سوف نخسرُ هذه الحرب
 سوف نخسرُ هذه الحرب
 بدمائنا المسفوكِ
 سوف نخسرُ هذه الحرب
 بأطرافنا المبتورة
 سوف نخسرُ هذه الحرب
 بعيوننا المثلومة
 وقلوبنا المكلومة
 وأناتنا المفجوعة
 بالحزن الذي يابى أن يفارقنا
 والأسى الذي رعيناه طويلاً
 حتى صار توأمانا وظلنا الدائم
 سوف نخسرُ
 ثم سوف نخسرُ هذه الحرب
 سوف نخسرُ هذه الحرب
 مثلما خسروا كلَّ حربٍ جاءت قبلها
 وكلَّ حربٍ ستأتي بعدها
 سوف نخسرُ الحرب
 حين نتذكرُ كلَّ ما جرى
 وحين ننسى كلَّ ما جرى
 وحين لا نتذكرُ ولا ننسى
 وحين نصيرُ محضَ هباءٍ في الرِّيحِ
 وصدى هائماً في الفلاةِ
 سوف نخسرُ الحربَ
 مرةً أخرى
 لكننا
 ...
 وتلك الابتسامة الناصعة.

...
 وقبل أن نخسرَ الحربَ
 وبعد أن نخسرَ الحربَ
 سنظلُّ نُحْدِقُ في عيون قاتلنا
 سننشُبُ نظراتنا في روحه
 سنقيمُ في كوابيسه
 سننامُ في سريرهِ
 سنجلسُ إلى مائدته
 سنكونُ قهوته في الصباح
 ونبيذهُ في المساءِ
 وحين يقفُ خلفَ النافذةِ
 لن يراه الطائرُ
 لأنه سيكونُ منكباً على جَمْعِ شتاتنا
 في الهواءِ
 وحين يخرجُ إلى الحديقةِ
 لن تراه الشجرةُ
 لأنها ستكونُ مشغولةً بحراسةِ أرواحنا الهائمةِ
 وحين ينظرُ إلى وجهه في المرآةِ
 لن يرى وجههُ
 بل سيرانا كثيراً في الضباب
 وسيعرفُ أخيراً أنه لم يَعدْ سوى ذكري شبحٍ
 في التيه العظيم
 ولن يفهمَ يوماً: كيف أنه أبادنا
 ثم أبادنا
 ثم أبادنا
 ولم يستطعْ أن يمحوَ من مرآتهِ
 صورتنا الساطعةِ
 ولا أن يمحوَ من وجوهنا
 ذلك الضوء الذاهل
 ...
 وتلك الابتسامة الناصعة.

before we lose the war,
 and after we lose the war,
 we will continue to stare into our killers' eyes.
 We will anchor our gaze in their souls.
 We will inhabit their nightmares.
 We will sleep in their beds.
 We will sit at their tables.
 We will be their morning coffee
 and their evening wine.
 When they look out of windows,
 the birds will not see them.
 The birds, too devoted to gathering our remains
 scattered in the air, will not see them.
 When they step into gardens,
 the trees will not see them either,
 too busy guarding our wandering souls.
 When our killers look into mirrors,
 they will not see their faces,
 but ours, many of us, in the mist.
 They will finally realize that they have become nothing
 but memories of ghosts in the great abyss.
 They will never understand how they annihilated us
 then annihilated us,
 then annihilated us,
 and yet could not erase from their mirrors
 our shining image
 nor could they erase from our faces
 that hazy, oblivious light,
 that pure, radiant smile.

ON FURTHER ACTION

Palestinian Life, Memory, & Culture



Since its inception, Israel has targeted and murdered Palestinian intellectuals, memory-keepers, journalists, media workers, poets, students, and artists, from Ghassan Kanafani in 1972, to Hiba Abu Nada, Refaat Al-Areer, and the thousands killed in attacks on Gaza and the West Bank, Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen since October 7, 2023. Israel has destroyed historic Palestinian libraries, attacked cultural events in East Jerusalem, ransacked Ramallah's Sakakini Cultural Centre, and carried out the genocidal destruction of schools, universities, archives, libraries, bookstores, publishing houses, historic mosques, hospitals, churches, and homes in Gaza. Despite such horrific violence, Palestine's life, memory, culture, and vision for liberation—whether in the areas of '48, the West Bank and Gaza, or in the diaspora—remains powerful, courageous, and deeply imaginative in its resistance, with Palestinian artists, intellectuals, writers, journalists, and daily memory-keepers refusing to be intimidated, silenced, or destroyed.

Hasbara, 'Brand Israel,' & Art-Washing

"I do not differentiate between hasbara and culture" (Israeli official, 2005). Israel has invested billions of dollars to construct a sophisticated and strategic cultural apparatus of journalism, education, literature, film, music, tourism, and social media to justify settler-colonialism, occupation, and its genocidal destruction of Palestine and the Levant. Israel's artists, academics, writers, publishers, arts organizations, and universities, whether through silence or active participation, are complicit in Israel's normalizing and 'art-washing' of occupation, settler-colonialism, apartheid, and genocide. Since October 2023, Israel has exerted increasing influence on Western governments, international law and media, education, and the arts to silence and censor popular protest, analysis, and criticism of its genocidal actions.

BDS | Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions

Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) was launched in 2005 by 170 Palestinian organizations including unions, refugee networks, women's organizations, professional associations, popular resistance committees, and other civil society organizations. Inspired by South Africa's successful anti-apartheid movement, BDS is now a vibrant global movement made up of unions, academic associations, churches, and active grassroots movements across the world.

BDS effectively challenges international support for Israeli apartheid and settler-colonialism by putting pressure on selected international companies, institutions, and governments to change their policies and stop collaborations with Israel until it complies with these three demands, as stipulated by International Law and the Universal Principles of Human Rights:

1. Ending Israel's occupation and colonization of all Arab lands and dismantling the Wall.
2. Recognizing the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality.
3. Respecting, protecting, and promoting the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN resolution 194.

For more information, please visit:

BDS-Economic Boycott: bdsmovement.net/economic-boycott

PACBI | The Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel

The Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI) was initiated in 2004 to contribute to the struggle for Palestinian freedom, justice, and equality. PACBI is a founding member of the Palestinian BDS National Committee (BNC), and is tasked with overseeing the academic and cultural boycott aspects of PACBI, the cultural arm of BDS. It advocates boycotting the vast majority of Israeli academic and cultural institutions for their deep and persistent complicity in Israel's denial of Palestinian rights.

For more information, please visit:

BDS-PACBI: <https://bdsmovement.net/pacbi>

BDS-Cultural Boycott: bdsmovement.net/cultural-boycott

BDS-Academic Boycott: bdsmovement.net/academic-boycott

WAWOG on BDS-PACBI: <https://www.writersagainstthewarongaza.com/pacbi>

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Agitate and Advocate

- Be in the streets; attend demonstrations, rallies, and other Palestinian solidarity events.
- Write to and call your representatives in government to tell them that you demand they place pressures on Israel to end the killing, end the occupation, and allow the Palestinian people their rights and freedoms. Let them know that you need action and policy changes, not just words.
- Amplify Palestinians, and Palestinians in Gaza especially, through online platforms, and engage as much as possible with their content in order to boost visibility.
- Join a solidarity group related to your field of work within academic, literary, music, or other arts sectors.
- Show your solidarity with Palestinians wherever you are and in whatever you can.
- Jam the settler-colonial cogs every chance you get.
- Join a local Palestine solidarity action group or start one.

Sign a Statement to Pledge Your Support for BDS/PACBI

- Sign a Statement of Support and join a solidarity group related to your work within academic, literary, music, or arts sectors (see list at end of this section).
- Sign up for BDS's newsletter and support its urgent boycott demands to end this genocide and plan for the future of a free Palestine.

Refuse Complicity

- Refuse any collaboration with Israeli academic or arts institutions, including those that normalize occupation through “both sides” inclusion of Israelis and Palestinians.
- Boycott state-funded Israeli products, including books, music, and media.
- Boycott and/or work towards the cancellation of events, activities, agreements, or projects involving Israel, its lobby groups, or its cultural institutions, or that otherwise promote the normalization of Israel in the global cultural sphere.
- Refuse funding from any Israeli government or related source.

Support Palestinian Voices

- Study with Palestinian professors, read Palestinian authors, watch Palestinian films, listen to Palestinian music, and support Palestinian artists.
- Invite Palestinians to speak at and attend your events, write for your publications, and collaborate with your artistic and scholarly endeavors.



NOTE

For further information and guidance, please visit the BDS National Committee's website at **bdsmovement.net** and follow **@bdsmovement** and **@PACBI**. For questions that you don't find answered in the PACBI guidelines at **bdsmovement.net/pacbi/cultural-boycott-guidelines** contact PACBI: **pacbi@pacbi.org**

CONTRIBUTORS

Batool Abu Akleen is an award-winning Palestinian poet and painter. One of the top students at IUG in Gaza, she was displaced in October 2023, but continues writing and sharing her work. She was recently named *Modern Poetry in Translation's* “poet in residence.”

Samer Abu Hawwash (@samerabuhawwash) is a Palestinian writer and translator.

Heba Al-Agha is a mother, amateur writer, and creative writing educator at the A.M. Qattan Foundation in Gaza City. She does not belong to any writers' unions and has not published any literary books, but works with an army of writers, training them in freedom and the power of writing. She writes at t.me/hebalaghatalkwar and <https://gazastory.com/archives/author/hebaaga>.

Mahmoud Alshaer is an editor, curator, and poet who, until October 2023, was deeply involved in cultural work in Gaza, leading initiatives such as *Majalla 28* and Gallery 28 and coordinating the cultural program at Al Ghussein Cultural House in Gaza's old city.

Julia Choucair Vizoso is an independent scholar and seasonal translator. She hopes Heba Al-Agha's words move you to refuse and resist the Israel-US genocide of the Palestinian people and destruction of Lebanon, wherever and however you can.

Asmaa Dwaima is a Palestinian writer, poet, artist, and dentist. After being displaced multiple times since October 2023, she currently shelters with her family in southern Gaza. Her creative work delves into themes of loss, resilience, and identity, capturing the enduring strength of the Palestinian people. She is committed to preserving their stories and humanity amid ongoing conflict.

Basman Eldirawi (also published as Basman Derawi) is a physiotherapist and a graduate of Al-Azhar University in Gaza in 2010. Inspired by an interest in music, movies, and people with special needs, he contributes dozens of stories to the online platform We Are Not Numbers.

Huda Fakhreddine is a translator and Associate Professor of Arabic Literature at the University of Pennsylvania.

Esam Hajjaj is an inspiring soul from Gaza who illuminates lives with his strong spirit and profound wisdom about love, life, and resistance. In light of the current assault on Gaza, Esam and his family have lost their home, joining many others who have been affected by the ongoing aggression on the Gaza Strip and have become displaced. He writes at <https://witness-from-gaza.com/>

Omar Ibrahim is an Egyptian literary translator, poet and essayist. He translated Mahmoud Morsi's poetry collection *It's Time I Confess* into English, and his Arabic translation of H. P. Lovecraft's novella *The Whisper in Darkness* was on the best seller lists of many bookstores. He has also published his own poetry collection, titled *Fragments of My Mind*, and two upcoming translations.

Doha Kahlout is a poet, and teacher from Gaza. Her first collection of poems, *Ashbah* (“Similarities”), was published in 2018. She was selected for a residency at Reid Hall in Paris as part of the Displaced Artists Initiative, co-sponsored by the Columbia Global Center and the Institute for Ideas and Imagination, but has not been able to take up her place since the Israeli invasion of Rafah and the closure of its border crossing in May 2024.

Mariam Mohammed Al Khateeb is a dentistry student, poet, oud player, translator, and community activist in her local community. She was a participant in the Hult Prize, an annual competition for ideas addressing pressing social issues, such as food security, water access, energy, and education. She works as a writer and makes videos, producing content about Palestine.

Husam Maarouf is a poet from Gaza. He has published two poetry collections, *Death Smells Like Glass* and *The Barber Loyal To His Dead Clients*, as well as the novel *Ram's Chisel*.

Nasser Rabah is a poet and novelist from Gaza. He has published five poetry collections and two novels. In English, his

work has been featured in publications such as *The New Yorker*, *Words Without Borders*, *Literary Hub*, *ArabLit*, *Michigan Quarterly Review*, *O Bod*, and *Poetry International*. A new collection of his selected poetry will be published as an English translation by City Lights in Spring 2025, along with two collections in Spanish. He is a 2024 Jean-Jacques Rousseau fellow at the Akademie Schloss Solitude, Germany.

Nour Nemer is a Palestinian literary translator and former student of Dr. Refaat Alareer. Passionate about storytelling, she dedicates her work to bridging languages and cultures, powerfully sharing the story of the Palestinian people with the world.

Wiam El-Tamami (wiameltamami.com) is an Egyptian writer, translator, editor, and wanderer. Her writing and translation work has been featured in publications such as Granta, Ploughshares, Freeman's, AGNI, CRAFT, ArabLit, and Jadaliyya, and is forthcoming in The Massachusetts Review and The Common. It has also been published in several anthologies. She won the 2011 Harvill Secker Translation Prize, was a finalist for the 2023 Disquiet International Prize, and was shortlisted for the 2024 First Pages Prize. Her work has also received a Pushcart Prize nomination in 2024. She is currently based in Berlin.

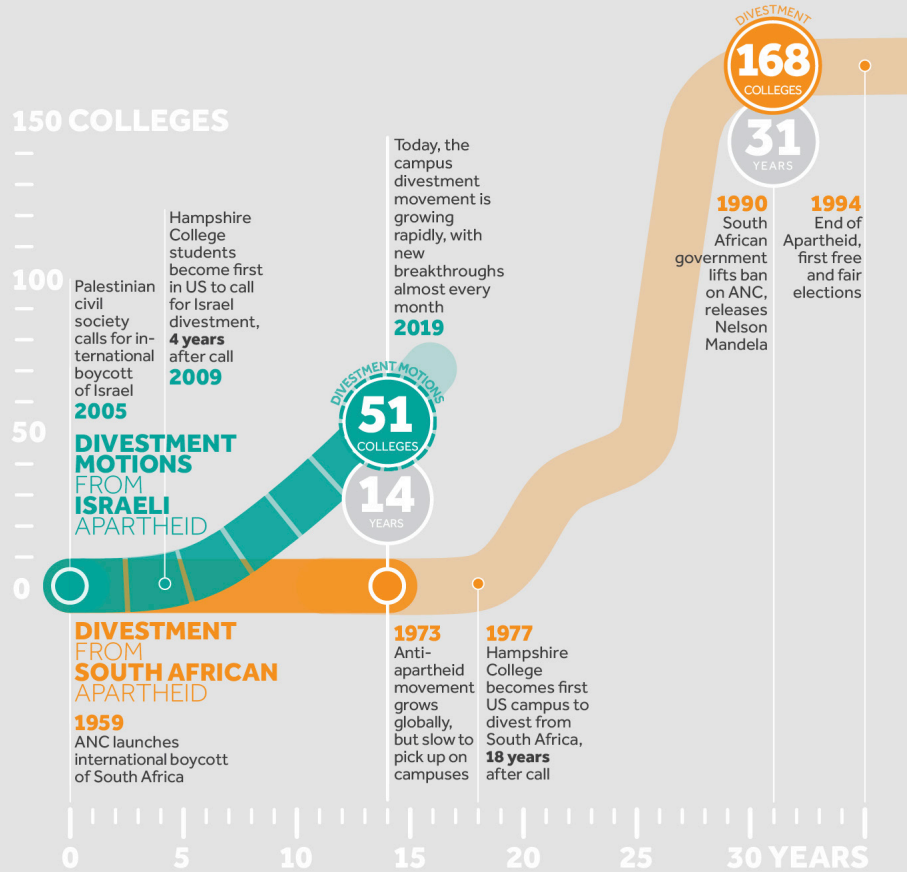
Mohammad al-Zaqzouq is a writer, researcher, and editor, born in Khan Younis in 1990. He studied Arabic language and literature at Al-Aqsa University and is a contributor to various Palestinian and Arab platforms. Mohammed is an active member in literary and cultural organizations shaping Gaza's cultural landscape and the former general coordinator of the “Utopia for Knowledge” assembly. Currently, he coordinates community library and youth teams at the Tamer Foundation for Community Education. His poetry collection *The Soothsayers of Khanun* won the Khalili Poetry Award at the First Palestinian Cultural Forum for Creative Writers in 2018.

DIVESTING FOR JUSTICE

COLLEGE DIVESTMENTS AND DIVESTMENT MOTIONS FROM SOUTH AFRICA AND ISRAEL

Boycotts and divestments have long been recognized as a legitimate and effective means to protest injustice. This visual contrasts some of the major milestones in

the history of North American campus divestment from South African apartheid with the growing movement to divest from Israeli Apartheid.



VISUALIZING PALESTINE

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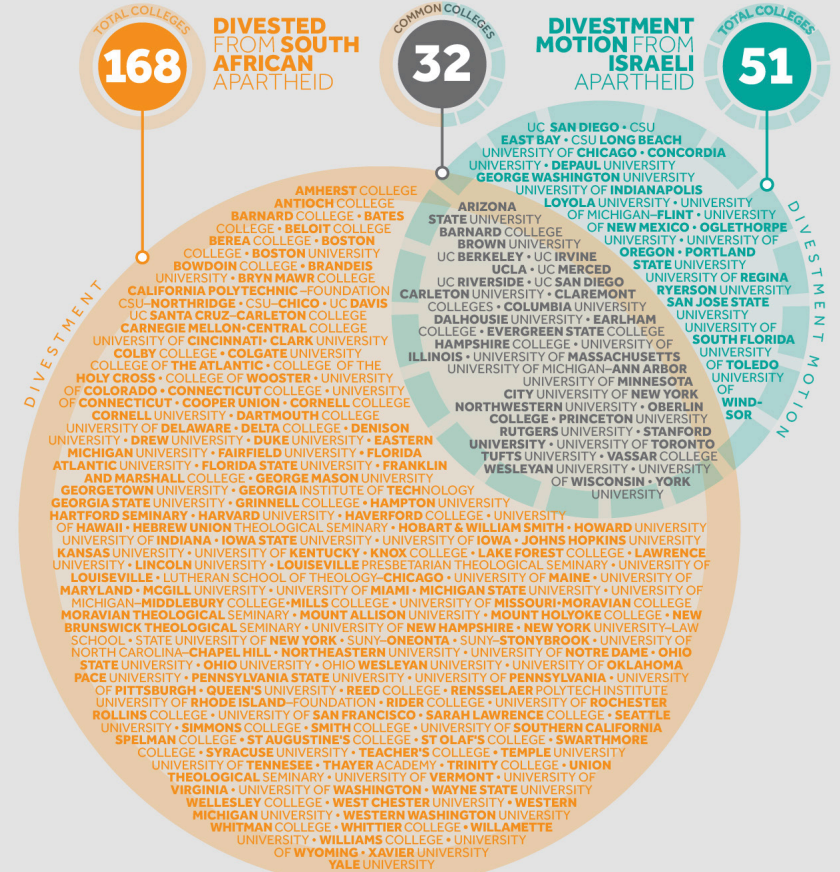
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DIVESTING FOR JUSTICE

COLLEGE DIVESTMENTS AND DIVESTMENT MOTIONS FROM SOUTH AFRICA AND ISRAEL

Boycotts and divestments have long been recognized as a legitimate and effective means to protest injustice. Today, many of the same North American colleges that

boycotted South African apartheid have had official student bodies pass motions to divest from Israeli apartheid, highlighting the power of precedence.



VISUALIZING PALESTINE

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