

INSIDE GAZA

BY PATRICK CRAPPIE



Rafah
Egypt-Gaza
crossing
Jan. 24
2009

A few days after the cease-fire, I got a chance to sneak into this battered border. Reader, I won't try to tell you you started this in the first place. I left the war of words behind, I came to see by myself. Of course, this is just one side of the story. But it's the one I'm interested in: the side of ordinary people. Of civilians.



Going up the 40 km of the Gaza strip, a silly thought crossed my mind: Why, there are still a lot of masses of people.



In Gaza City, you see the picture: a police station, a ministry, obliterated with precision. In Israel, this was Hamas' terror infrastructure.

Giving East, after passing the Jabalya refugee camp, one of the most densely populated areas in the world, you can't miss the road to Israel: just follow the destruction. The street has been furrowed into sand by the tanks. Following the path, you'll run into this unforgettable scene: as far as I can see, everything has been flattened. This used to be a neighborhood.

THIS IS THE
AREA IN STRAID
ON TUESDAY - THURSDAY
THE TANKS CAME
TO THE ROAD

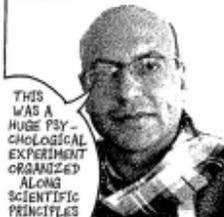


HOUSE OF SULEIMAN
ABU HANAN
RIGHTS SAY
SULEIMAN HAD
TWO SONS
AND 2 AM BROTHER
AND 2 AM BROTHER
SHARE A 100% OF
THIS HOUSE

Mohammed Saad Hanna:
THE FIRST TANK CAME
TOWARD MY HOUSE.
THE SECOND BOY OF THE HOUSE
BOB SHOT AND KILLED
THE TWO DAUGHTERS. WE
FLEW WITH OUR FATHER
AND HIS FAMILY NOW LIVES IN
THE PALESTINE REFUGEE
CAMP. HAD TO LIVE
PREVIOUSLY IN GAZA.

Safaa Abu Hanan, 10 years old:
AS I WAS SCARED THEY FIRST HIT
MY 3 ROOM ON THE RECREATION
THEY WERE TRYING TO GET OUT
MY MOTHER CRYING. THERE WAS BLOOD ON
THE ROAD. BOTH FATHER, IT WAS HORRIBLE. IN
HER mother:
JUST THE FLAMES BOMBARDED. THEN CAME
THE TANKS. AFTER WE FLEW, THEY SCAM
THE HOUSES. WE'RE NOT WITH THE TERRORISM
WE'RE ALL POOR PEOPLE HERE.

Ahmed Tawana, director of a mental health program, has studied the impact of the conflict on civilians.



THIS WAS A
HUGE PSY-
CHOLOGICAL
EXPERIMENT
ORGANIZED
ALONG
SCIENTIFIC
PRINCIPLES

His institute was shaken by a blast when an F-16 blew up a trailer manned by 3 policemen on the beach across the street. The missile was probably worth 1,000 camper vans.



THERE WAS NO PLACE WHERE YOU COULD FEEL SAFE. THE TRAUMA WAS MASSIVE AND EVERYWHERE. THEY WANTED THE PEOPLE TO FEEL POWERLESS SUBMISSIVE.

Isn't Hamas, which hides among civilians to launch its rockets, secretly responsible for all this? The argument infuriates Juma Ging, the head of UNRWA. His warehouse was struck by Israeli shells in January 05.



IN THE CIVILIZED WORLD, WE DON'T SHOOT THE HOSTAGES TO GET TO THE HOSTAGE TAKERS!



UN



Leaving through Rafah, on January 26, I recognized a Turkish doctor I had met three days earlier. He was still trying to get in.

A 3-year old child, admitted here one day after the cease-fire, seemed to be sleeping.



In his brain, the bullet of a sniper. The boy was clinically dead.

In just three weeks, 450 children are said to have been killed. In that large bed, in Swiss hospital, I saw him. The 450th child.

Continued
PAGE 2 (THIS SIDE)