

Aseel Safadi

16.5 y/o, Haifa

Aseel was hit on her eye with a rock by settlers and Zionists on the third protest in Haifa Ben Gurion street, on Tuesday, May 11th and this is her story, told by her:

" it happened on Tuesday, May 11th, there were protests on Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, I went to all of them, the last protest was the most dangerous one, at some point I was left alone there, they started throwing bombs and the horses were running, it was a mess; I slowly began to feel unsafe so I went to the Garden restaurant where I know the staff, I stayed there for about 30 minutes, I even smoked a cigarette; the situation got calmer until the settlers and Zionists came along with the protection of the police meanwhile they were throwing rocks and bombs at and no is protecting us.

I was standing near a waiter very close, then all of a sudden I see flying rocks in the air and in a fraction of a second I felt a rock coming towards me and hit my eye, it came from the settlers side that were coming towards us with the protection of the police, the arabs were only yelling and protesting, they weren't harming anyone.

After the rock hit me I started screaming, my hands, , my face were all covered in blood and I can hear them in the background celebrating and yelling " yay we hit her ", hearing that I immediately stopped screaming, it was very dangerous, after they hit the rock at me it drew the police's attention and they threw a bomb near me as well, we were obviously target, specially for wearing a Kuffiya; its not normal nor rational to do that only to impose control on civilians which in this case it was only the arabs.

I didn't know where to go, my eye is gone, I cant see; I covered it with my hand and asked a person's help, he asked me to take my hand off but I didn't want him to get stressed and stress me out either, cause I was feeling my eye, it was very swollen.

he called the ambulance meanwhile I was beginning to slowly faint and lose sight, my vision became blurred, they carried me out in the middle of the streets of ben Gurion, laid me down, I couldn't feel anything, I was only focusing on how my breath was getting heavier and harder to breathe and I was sweating and sweating and sweating

...

I saw the paramedic coming over, I felt safe and calm once I saw him because he was my friend, he took care of me and went straight to the hospital.

It's important for me to first mention that I was hospitalized for 8 days while I was supposed to stay longer, I couldn't sleep there at all, my left eye turned black, couldn't eat nor drink, I lost almost 2-3 kilos, I was in so much pain, I was drugged, given strong medications and etc ... yet, I still felt so much pain.

The atmosphere in the hospital wasn't clear, specially with the nurses, I felt so much racism towards me, every time when I didn't feel good and couldn't help but to scream from pain, they told me " shut up " "respect yourself " they didn't consider me as a patient; meanwhile there was an autistic girl with me in the room, she screams out of control and of course I truly understand, but when it came to me, the girl with Kuffiya on her bed, screaming from pain, they told me " shut up there are people around you here " " consider others " and it was always me who had to consider others, but what about me ? for gods' sake !

On the 8th day, they couldn't handle me, I was too much for them so they wrote me a release letter, she called the security on me although I didn't do anything, I was feeling very tired and in pain, I told the nurse I don't want to talk right now, I wasn't feeling okay at all, I tried to explain to them although they should get it by themselves.

The nurse was crossing her limits, the space between us was getting smaller and I wanted to maintain that distance so I backed off and started screaming at her to leave me alone, to let me have a moment with myself; I started crying then I lift my head up and see the security with the release letter, my sociologist came to pick me up and we head back home."

Aseel was a girl that grew up by herself, her parents didn't play a big role in her life, it was always her, alone, independent.

She's still a student in a special school, does her Bagrut exams now.

She likes to sing, play the drums and bass; she's a girl with a lot of potential and dreams, she wants to study psychology or music or therapy through music.

Aseel is only 16.5, she lost her right eye, forever, she can't see with it, it's gone
All because of reckless behavior, of racism, of violence.

Aseel's story made me more powerful, more resistant, more humane.

Looking at a 16 years old girl after 2 months of losing her right eye with her strength made me realize how small my problems are and how grateful I should be for everything.

Maisa Abd Elhadi

36 y/o, Nazareth

Maisa is a Palestinian actress from Nazareth, she was hit with a bomb in her leg by the military on Sunday, May 9th, this is Maisa's story told by herself:

" I was at the first protest, Sunday May 9th, in Haifa, we went knowing that its going to be peaceful, to just protest and march.

I went to protests before and the maximum that happened was for me to get beaten and manage to run away; we started chanting and after an hour or so they started throwing bombs, everyone began to scream and run to the sideways and hide in the alleys of ben Gurion streets, then gather again in middle.

For about 10 minutes the bombing stopped and we continued chanting then they again threw bombs, I was far away from the demonstration, about 200 meters, my back was facing the soldiers and I was taking a video of the flags with the baha'ai gardens in the background, it felt very nice emotionally wise; I was kind of hidden on the side in the prisoners square - wizo's backyard - .

When I heard that they started bombing on the other side, I said okay, now mi heading to the car, so I started walking all of a sudden I hear a loud noise near me, for a second I stopped and felt the fabric of my jeans flew with my skin, in my mind I said its okay, its probably only fragments from the bomb, yet I tried to run away but I couldn't walk nor run, it was an extreme pain, I was alone in the area with maybe 3 other guys that were approximately 15 meters away, one of them saw me, I asked him for help and he immediately came, and called the ambulance, till now I didn't feel anything, only hearing people say " blood, blood "I was terrified, I look at the wound, I didn't understand what I saw, I started screaming.

There was a paramedic who covered my leg with a kuffiya and tightened it with a piece of wood, the second he tightened it, I felt the pain and screamed loud.

The ambulance arrive but the police didn't let them get in, it took them 25 minutes until the guy carried me outside to the ambulance.

I stayed in the hospital for 4-5 days, for a whole month I wasn't allowed to sit, I must always lift my legs up, I wasn't allowed to stand, only walk and after a month they removed the stitches and now I do physiotherapy.

I can walk but I limp a little as you saw, but it will get better.

And to be honest im lucky that it wasn't worse, I never in my life imagined something like this would happen to me. "

Mai Jabareen

Mai works in theaters and movie sets, she was hit with a bomb on her leg with by the soldiers and this is her story with her own words:

" after checking that my parents are well and safely hiding, I tried to check on my friends who I came with..

The brutality of the police/ military, the chaos they created and the way they cornered us, made me change my mind; I decided to go back to where my parents are hiding and leave!

While hiding from the bombs they were throwing, I tried to take a look and see if the way is safe for me to go..

A soldier saw me
And threw a bomb
Right between my legs: "



Mahameed's Family

Mahameed's family live in Halissa Haifa, they have a family business in building elevators, they were attacked on the last day of Ramadan in their own house by 7 soldiers and been accused with many lies by the police, this is their story, told by the father himself :

" on Eids eve we went to pray in the mosque just like we do every year, around 10pm me and my kids got home; as you can see, we live on the 5th floor and near the entrance on the ground floor, there my son lives with his wife and my daughter.

Around 11:30pm we heard something behind our building, the sound of car glasses breaking, we had our cars there, me and my son went to the balcony to check and my other two kids went down the elevator and went to see what's happening.

We have a religious Jewish school near us for over 30 years our relations were perfectly okay, thankfully.

They claim that a group of youngsters came and threw rocks on their cars and that they ran after one of them and wanted to hit him.

So they called the police meanwhile I told my kids go back home and I stayed downstairs with the neighbors talking, all of a sudden I hear my wife screaming

" come quick they smashed the door on our daughter's apartment "

Me and my 4 kids immediately went down with the elevator to the ground floor, the second the door opened they already kicked the door of the house down and were inside, they didn't knock nor asked nor talked to us, they immediately got in and started hitting us with their sticks.

My 3 kids were getting beaten protecting their sister his wife and daughter, to not let them get in there, my daughter is religious and she wasn't wearing her hijab so she hid in the room and secretly filmed a video that went viral.

They kept hitting us and hitting us on our heads, hands, they didn't have mercy, I was trying to talk them, to calm them down and to tell me what they want, we can talk, this while violence isn't necessary, meanwhile im still getting beaten while talking.

I saw that this was going no where so I told my kids to stop everything and sit on the ground maybe they will come down, one of the soldiers came and sprayed pepper spray in my son's face and continued hitting me and my other kid, his wife was screaming that

he was diabetic and he cant get injured they ran after her and wanted to hit her as well, they took all our phones away, they don't want her to take a video.

They came thirsty for violence and blood.

We are only 4 guys, and these are policemen you cant do anything to them, they took us to the police station although we were all badly injured they weren't allowed to get a treatment until few hours after.

They kept us there in their yard until the terrorist, the extremist, an Arab policeman his name was Hadi Ghanem until he wrote down the reports the way he wanted; 9 police cars, each car can write a report, but instead he wrote them all by himself in his own way until he finished writing then they took us in the station until the second day we went to the investigation and got accused that we of course have nothing to do with.

The first accusation was that we were in the street below ours standing near the gas station and chanting racist chants " death to Jews " 2nd was that we threw rocks at cars 3rd was attacking people.

The accusation was given to the 4 of us, so I told them is it possible for the 5 of us to do that? Maybe its just one or two of the kid, but all of us ?

Then the police said yes you all were together the 4 of you.

But I didn't say anything, I have cameras all around the building that prove wrong to all the accusation that were given to us.

The fourth accusation was that we were the one hitting the police and not them and that we locked them down in a room.

We were jailed after for 5 days although the judge watched a video that shows we were beaten and harassed but she didn't care anyways.

We filed a complaint to the court and the lawyers handed evidence that we were the one harassed they also didn't care and kept us in prison then my daughter spoke to a good lawyer; the lawyer told the judge im not moving from here until you see it all, when the judge saw it, he immediately released us and opened a file against the Mahash - department of internal police investigation - because he saw the truth and even wrote down that all of the accusations were lies according to the videos.

And this way we spent the whole Eid in prison and now we are waiting for the court results

I picked " **photography changes how cultural history is told** "

*reading the whole text mostly explains everything I worked on *

In the past couple months I began working with a group of people mainly from Jordan, a project called " archive Palestine " to archive every single picture and footage that was taken in protests all over the country, everything was backed up in 3 different countries to make sure nothing gets stolen or hacked, and at the same time me and other few photographers started an Instagram platform that talks about the story of people from Gaza, people who were arrested, beaten, accused, injured by the military.

It was very very important for me to immediately start documenting everything that was happening, from protests, strikes and people's stories.

Its important to have this footage and archive to look back at after 10-20 years or even after 80 years when im already dead, stories are important, it can be used for educational purposes in museums and schools, it can teach a whole new generation a lot about the history of this time and culture !