



January 22 2006 - This story concerns a young child suffering from kidney failure in Gaza. It shows the importance of ending the closure on Gaza so that sick people, especially children like Samer, can leave to obtain life saving medical treatment.

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Suffering from Kidney Failure

Who will rescue the child Samer at the brink of death under siege and blockade?



Samer Harara in Gaza – January 21 2008. (Photo: Caritas Jerusalem)

“Gaza – Al Quds Special Correspondent – How difficult it is for a small child not exceeding the age of nine to replace his thoughts of playing like many of his peers, racing on his way to school and eating sweets to other more serious and distant thoughts. Today, little Samer is thinking a lot that death is stalking him from the front and the back and he does not think of anything else but death because he is suffering from kidney failure and is in dire need to travel out of Gaza to receive treatment. The thought of death is constantly preoccupying him after his relative Bassam Harara (who died of kidney failure on November 6 2007) became another of the increasing number of

victims of the siege of Gaza and was suffering from the same illness as Samer.

The Siege

“Do not make the siege kill me as it killed Bassam... I am still young, I want to live and play with my friends... I want treatment... I want my life to be done with illness... I don't want to die...” begs little Samer Harara who pleads to everyone who could rescue his childhood from death due to the unavailability of treatment [in Gaza]. [Note: Samer needs a kidney transplant.]

The life of little Samer has been transformed to a wave of fear and thoughts of death since he saw his relative Bassam Harara buried in front of his eyes after the siege claimed him from his compatriots to be the next victim from Gaza.

Bassam died as a victim of the siege, but Samer is now realizing following the death of his relative that the siege shows no mercy on anyone and that he will follow his relative at any moment.

Samer's mother said: “Bassam had asked me to watch over Samer, and he used to come always to visit him but since Bassam's untimely and cruel death I cannot sleep at night”.

She added with tearful eyes of sadness that “since that time, I stay up at night to check on my son since I imagine that he will depart from life at any moment since he needs to leave the Gaza Strip to undertake a kidney transplant operation, but I feel that there is no more hope in opening the crossings as we have grown tired of the occupation’s waverings, the neglect of our leaders and the world of us.

The Death List

The danger of death is threatening a long list of patients suffering from dangerous and chronic diseases because of the unavailability of treatment for them due to the lack of medicine and their ban from leaving Gaza due to the strict Israeli closure.

The National Committee for Confronting the Siege has warned that “there are increasing numbers of people dying in Gaza”, emphasizing that some health indicators have begun pointing to “an enormous medical catastrophe”.

Palestinian health sources mentioned that the medical situation in the Gaza Strip “is undergoing its worst condition due to the strict siege on Gaza since last June, and the number of patients’ deaths will dramatically rise in the coming days”.

Along this same line, it is noteworthy that there are 450 cancer patients in the Gaza Strip and 400 suffering from kidney failure and 450 with heart problems, exposed to a genuine threat on their lives due to the lack of medicine and adequate equipment to follow-up on their cases, in addition to the ban on their travel.

The same sources have indicated that between 600-700 cases in Gaza require monthly travel for treatment and 250-300 medical cases require urgent treatment, in addition to the cancer patients and those suffering from kidney failure which amount to 900 patients.

Everyday little Samer dies a thousand times watching the patients of Gaza dying in masses in front of a world which is without action or any mercy. The absence of medicine and his waiting for the crossings to open made him despaired and he started imagining himself being put in a hole like the one Bassam was put in front of his eyes.

This is the situation of Samer and many other children. They are waiting: waiting to die or waiting for the crossings to open so they can leave Gaza for treatment.” (article from Al Quds ends here)

Caritas Jerusalem draws concern to the situation facing many Palestinians, including children, who are suffering from very serious illnesses. This very sobering article reminds us of the importance of access to medical care as it does the need for assisting catastrophic medical cases – something which Caritas Jerusalem has been doing for over 40 years.

We will continue to work to help the sick access medical treatment. Maybe in this regard you can help. Send a note to your elected officials letting them know about Samer and letting them know that you think the current situation in Gaza is not conducive to peace. Little innocent children like Samer deserve to have a chance to live. Thank you, Caritas Jerusalem