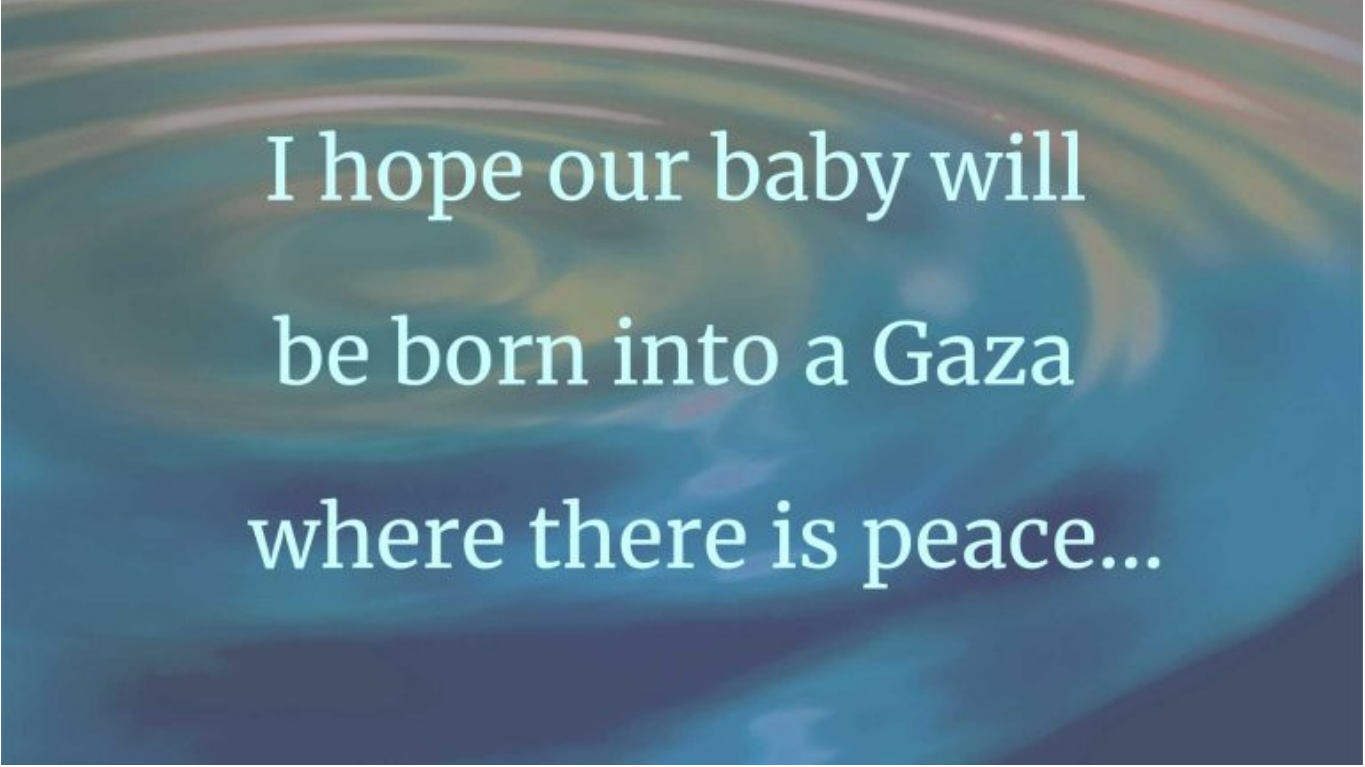


Report From Gaza: Seeing Patients Among the Bombs

Category: Stories

written by Sami Mahmoud Magharie | August 12, 2025



I hope our baby will
be born into a Gaza
where there is peace...

I am twenty-six years old, and in June 2023 I graduated from Al-Azhar University-Gaza (AUG) Faculty of Medicine, in Northern Gaza. Two months into my internship at Al-Aqsa Hospital in Deir al-Balah, the Gaza War started.

I was assigned to the emergency department for fifteen months, serving as a junior surgeon to treat patients injured by bombs—shrapnel wounds in the hips, back and head; crushed arms and legs; burns everywhere; difficulty breathing; internal bleeding.

I tried to block out the shouts, crying and moaning and focus on the task and the patient in front of me—while, in the background, bombs were exploding. Neither the flood of patients needing help nor the explosions ever seemed to quit, and I felt that I just couldn't continue.

After completing my fifteen months of duty, I transferred to the polio-vaccinations ward for a month, then switched to managing nutrition for the International Medical Corps. Several months later, I learned of the Family Doctor Initiative, a program run by Dr. Salam Khashan in the middle strip of Gaza. There, I felt I would be able to use more of my doctoring skills.

Finding this post was a tremendous relief. The pace was less hectic, and I could take more time with patients. For the past ten months, I've worked in one of three tents. Each tent has a doctor working alongside a nurse, a pharmacist and other staff. My tent has four rooms: the exam room, where I

assess patients; the procedure room, where we dress wounds and give nebulizer treatments and injections; the breast-feeding room, staffed by a lactation consultant; and the pharmacy.

I work Saturday through Thursday, caring for twenty to fifty patients a day. Patients come in with chronic health problems like high blood pressure, diabetes and thyroid conditions, and they also often come with gastroenteritis or other digestive complaints, because food is scarce, and people eat anything that is, or was, edible.

Water is precious. Due to the scarcity of water and the poor living conditions, bathing is difficult, and lice and skin rashes are common.

Despite these difficulties, I've been relieved to find that I can still help my patients. A few months back, I saw Mohammed, an eighteen-month-old boy with beautiful eyes framed by long, black lashes. His asthma improved when I prescribed a nebulization, but unfortunately, his mother Leila couldn't afford the drug I'd recommended, and when she brought Mohammed back a week later, he was worse.

This time, I told them to go to the hospital—but just days later, they were back.

"We couldn't reach the hospital," said Leila. "We don't have money to hire a taxi, and I couldn't find anyone to take us."

This time our driver took Mohammed to the hospital, and the hospital staff admitted him—a welcome validation of our efforts. Two weeks later, when Leila came in to be treated for her own leg wound, she told us that he was doing better.

When a seventy-one-year-old gentleman named Sharif came in with a swollen foot, I thought at first that it was a skin infection—that he'd stepped on something. However, his whole leg was swollen, and his blood pressure was elevated. When I treated him with hydrochlorothiazide (a diuretic), his blood pressure came down, and so did the swelling. It was very rewarding to see Sharif's health improve under my care, and I've seen him twice more since.

Medications have been limited; for example, I couldn't give patients more than four acetaminophen (Tylenol) tablets at a time. And we've run out of glucose strips, so I can no longer check my patients' blood sugars.

Over the past month it has grown much worse, and we've run out of every type of drug, so I have no medications to give my patients. I still do what I can to comfort them.

It takes thirty minutes to travel by car from my house to the family-medicine tent. When I'm at work, I worry that our house might be bombed. Thankfully, so far our house and those around have not been attacked, and my wife and extended family have not had to evacuate. My biggest challenge in getting to work is finding the money to pay for gas for the car; it's very expensive.

At this point in my medical training, I need to take the medical-license

exams—but I cannot, because I don't have the money to pay my tuition fees. I owe the university 4,500 Jordanian dinars (US \$6,000) for my education, and I can't take the exam until I pay my school fees. When I have enough money to pay the fees and take the exam, I'll become a fully licensed physician.

Meanwhile, it is summer, and inside the tents it's very hot. The wind blows clouds of dust everywhere.

The Israeli Defense Forces have been given a new mission, so the bombs fall day and night. Food is even harder to find and nearly impossible to afford on my salary. I search for food for my elderly parents and for my wife, who is pregnant, due in January 2026.

I hope our baby will be born into a Gaza where there is peace. ☐☐It is very difficult. We hope for peace. And we keep going—because we must.