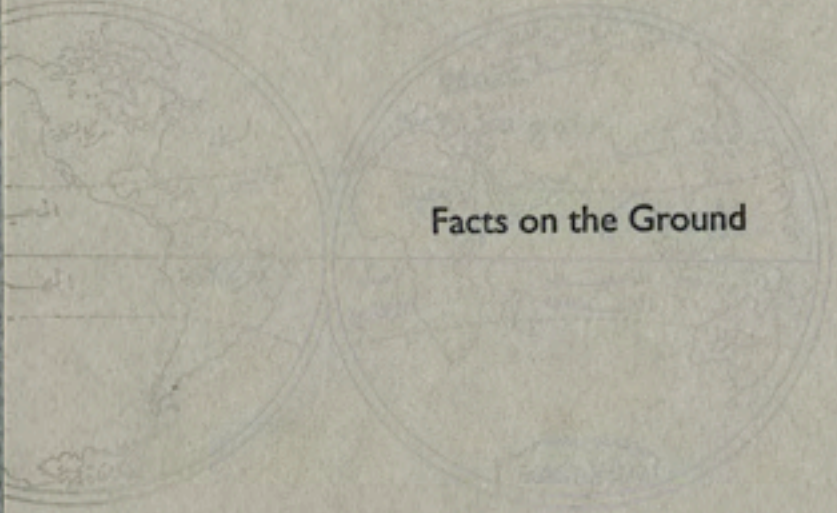
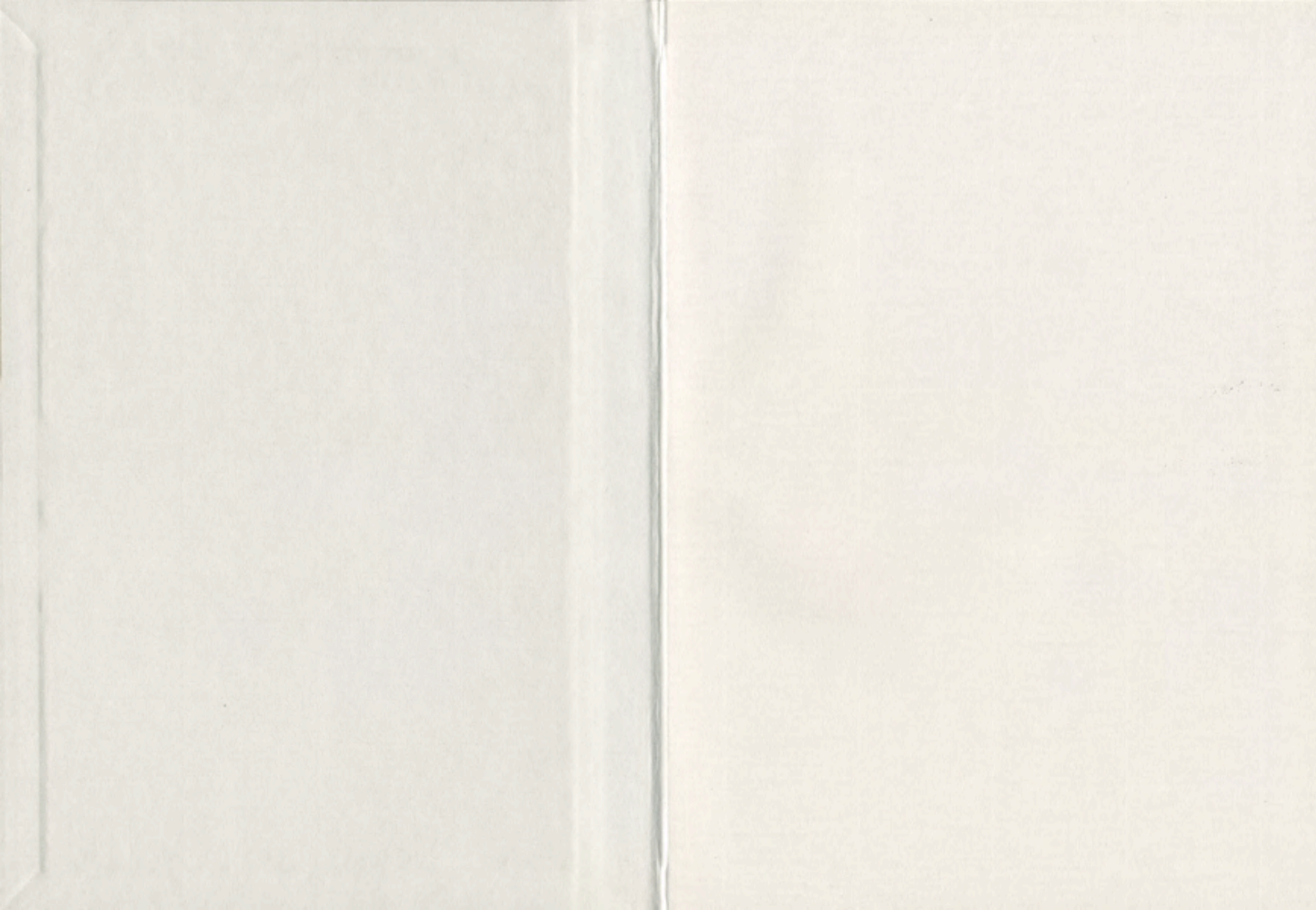


Facts on the Ground



Facts on the Ground



Facts on the Ground

Toby Millman



Palestine

فلسطين

[Filistin]

Hazneh Sama'an (Umm Afif)

The people remained in a state of fear and worry until October. People worried more and more. They took the villages of Kabri and Jeddin and nothing remained but Maliya. Although they worried, the people continued to work. Once, when my mother was drawing water from our well near the granary, a man came on a horse and asked her for water for his horses and a bit of straw. He took flour from the wheat, and my mother told him, "Take from the straw." He told her, "Auntie, you won't eat from this grain. You work but others will eat." And that is what came to be.

In October, we departed from Suhmata. Before us, the residents of Safurriya and Labiya and Hittin had already left. Everyone would pass by our village. We were in the village, life as usual but very afraid. I had a small baby and I sat at home, it was during the olive season. My husband and mother went to pick olives. I was at home, cooking, and suddenly I heard a plane bombing beside the house. Our neighbor had eleven heads of cattle, he made his living from them, prepared milk, *labane samneh*, and lived from that. When the plane bombed, the granary caught fire and the barn burned down and all the cows died. Halil Aboud was eating breakfast. He got up and ran to see to his wife and children who were working in the garden. The plane saw him. It was flying very low. Fired on him and he died. The plane circled over the village. People started to run to the gardens and the olive orchards. My uncle Yusef Abu Awad, my father's brother, was injured. My mother's aunt was killed.

When we saw all of this, we gathered our clothes and people started to run. In Suhmata there were large olive orchards. Like in the orchards of al-Rama, people hid among the olive trees. The plane left.

At night my husband returned to the house to bring bedclothes. My mother told him not to bring the good mattresses (intended for guests) but the simple mattresses. He went and returned with a mattress and blanket. We could hear the bombing around us, and my husband Abu Afif would say to me, "Don't be afraid, it's the rescue army!" They occupied Suhmata without our taking notice. They arrested the young people who were with us and told us to go off. All of the residents of the village went. There was one woman, Mohammed's mother, who was killed by the pool of the monastery. They caught her before she crossed the road and shot her.



'Amqa, 'Arab al-Samniyya, al-Bassa, al-Birwa, al-Damun, Dayr al-Qasi, al-Gabisiyya, Iqrit, Khirbat 'Irbbin, Khirbat Jiddin, al-Kabri, Kafr 'Inan, Kuwaykat, al-Manshiyya, al-Mansura, Mi'ar, al-Nabi Rubin, al-Nahr, al-Ruways, **Suhmata**, al-Sumayriyya, Suruh, al-Tall, Tarbikha, Umm al-Faraj, al-Zib, 'Arab al-'Arida, 'Arab al-Bawati, 'Arab al-Safa, al-Ashrafiyya, al-Bira, Danna, Farwana, al-Fatur, al-Ghazzawiyya, al-Hamidiyya, al-Hamra, Jabbul, Kafra, Kawkab al-Hawa, al-Khunayzir, Masil al-Juzl, al-Murassas, Qumya, al-Sakhina, al-Saminiyya, Sirin, Tall al-Shawk, Khirbat al-Taqa, al-Tira, Umm 'Ajra, Khirbat Umm Sabuna, Yubla, Zab'a, Khirbat al-Zawiya, al-'Imara, al-Jammama, al-Khalasa, 'Arab Suqnr, Barbara, Barqa, al-Batani al-Gharbi, al-Batani al-Sharqi, Bayt 'Affa, Bayt Daras, Bayt Jirja, Bayt Tima, Bi'in, Burayr, Dayr Sunayd, Dimra, al-Faluja, Hamama, Hatta, Hinbya, Huj, Hulayqat, 'Ibdis, 'Iraq al-Manshiyya, 'Iraq Suwaydan, Isdud, al-Jaladiyya, al-Jiyya, Julis, al-Jura, Jusayr, Karatiyya, Kawfakha, Kawkaba, al-Khisas, al-Masmiyya al-Kabira, al-Masmiyya al-Saghira, al-Muharraqa, Najd, Ni'ilya, Qastina, al-Sawafir al-Gharbiyya, al-Sawafir al-Shamaliyya, al-Sawafir al-Sharqiyya, Simsim, Summil, Tall al-Turmus, Yasur, Abu Shusha, Abu Zurayq, 'Arab al-Fuqara, 'Arab al-Nufay'at, 'Arab Zahrat al-Dumayri, 'Atlit, 'Ayn Ghazal, 'Ayn Hawd, Balad al-Shaykh, Barrat Qisarya, Burayka, Khirbat al-Burj, al-Butaymat, Daliyat al-Rawha, Khirbat al-Damun, al-Ghubayya al-Fawqa, al-Ghubayya al-Tahta, Hawsha, Ijzim, Jaba, al-Jalama, Kabara, al-Kafrayn, Kafr Lam, Khirbat al-Kasayir, Khubbayza, Khirbat Lid, Khirbat al-Manara, al-Mansi, Khirbat al-Mansura, al-Mazar, al-Naghnaghiyya, Qannir, Qira, Qisarya, Khirbat Qumbaza, al-Rihaniyya, Sabbarin, al-Sarafand, Khirbat al-Sarkas, Khirbat Sa'sa, al-Sawamir, Khirbat al-Shuna, al-Sindiyyana, al-Tantura, al-Tira, Umm al-Shawf, Umm al-Zinat, Wa'arat al-Sams, Wadi 'Ara, Yajur, 'Ajjur, Barqusa, Bayt Jibrin, Bayt Nattif, al-Dawayima, Dayr al-Dubban, Dayr Nakhkhas, Kudna, Mughallis, al-Qubayba, Ra'na, Tall al-Safi, Khirbat Umm Burj, Zakaniyya, Zayta, Zikrin, al-Abbasiyya, Abu Kishk, Bayt Dajan, Biyar 'Adas, Fajja, al-Haram, Ijlil al-Qibliyya, Ijlil al-Shamaliyya, al-Jammasin al-Gharbi, al-Jammasin al-Sharqi, Jarisha, Kafr 'Ana, al-Khayriyya, al-Mas'udiyya, al-Mirr, al-Muwaylith, Rahtlya, al-Safiriyya, Salama, Saqiya, al-Sawalima, al-Shaykh Muwannis, Yazur, 'Ailar, 'Aqqur, 'Artuf, 'Ayn Karim, Bayt 'Itab, Bayt Mahsir, Bayt Naqquba, Bayt Thul, Bayt Umm al-Mays, al-Burayj, Dayr Aban, Dayr 'Amr, Dayr al-Hawa, Dayr Rafat, Dayr al-Shaykh, Dayr Yasin, Ishwa, 'Isilin, Khirbat Ism Allah, Jarash, al-Jura, Kasla, Khirbat al-Lawz, Lifta, al-Maliha, Nitaf, al-Qabu, Qalunya, al-Qastal, Ras Abu 'Ammar, Sar'a, Saris, Sataf, Suba, Sufia, Khirbat al-Tannur, Khirbat al-'Umur, al-Walaja, 'Ayn al-Mansi, Khirbat al-Jawfa, al-Lajjun, al-Mazar, Nuris, Zir'in, Indur, Ma'lul, al-Mujaydil, Saffuriyya, Abu al-Fadi, Abu Shusha, 'Ajanjul, 'Aqir, Barfiliya, al-Bariyya, Bashshit, Khirbat Bayt Far, Bayt Jiz, Bayt Nabala, Bayt Shanna, Bayt Susin, Bir Ma'in, Bir Salim, al-Burj, Khirbat al-Buwayra, Daniyal, Dayr Abu Salama, Dayr Ayyub, Dayr Muhaysin, Dayr Tarif, Khirbat al-Duhayriyya, al-Haditha, Idnibba, 'Innaba, Jilya, Jimzu, Kharruba, al-Khayma, Khulda, al-Kunayyisa, al-Latrun, al-Maghar, Majdal Yaba, al-Mansura, al-Mukhayzin, al-Muzayri'a, al-Na'ari, al-Nabi Rubin, Qatra, Qazaza, al-Qubab, Qubayba, Qula, Sajad, Salbit, Sarafand al-'Amar, Sarafand al-Kharab, Saydun, Shahma, Shilta, Al-Tina, Al-Tira, Umm Kalkha, Wadi Hunayn, Yibna, Khirbat Zakaniyya, Zamuqa, Abil al-Qamh, al-'Abisiyya, 'Akbara, 'Alma, 'Ammuqa, 'Arab al-Shamalina, 'Arab al-Zubayd, 'Ayn al-Zaytun, Baysamun, Biniyya, al-Butayha, al-Buwayziyya, Dallata, al-Dawwara, Dayshum, al-Dirbashiyya, al-Dirdara, Fara, al-Farradiyya, Fir'im, Ghabbatiyya, Ghuraba, al-Hamra, Harrawi, Hunin, al-Husayniyya, Jahula, al-Ja'una, Jubba Yusuf, Kafr Bir'im, al-Khalisa, Khan al-Duwayr, Khirbat Karraza, al-Khisas, Khyam al-Walid, Kirad al-Baqqara, Kirad al-Ghannama, Lazzaza, Madahil, al-Malikiyya, Mallaha, al-Manshiyya, al-Mansura, Mansurat al-Khayt, Marus, Mirun, al-Muftakhira, Mughr al-Khayt, Khirbat al-Muntar, al-Nabi Yusha, al-Na'ima, Qabba'a, Qadas, Qaddita, Qaytiyya, al-Qudayriyya, al-Ras al-Ahmar, Sabalan, Safsaf, Saliha, al-Salihiyya, al-Sammu'i, al-Sanbariyya, Sa'sa, al-Shawka al-Tahta, al-Shuna, Taytaba, Tulayl, al-'Ulmaniyya, al-'Urayfiyya, al-Wayziyya, Yarda, al-Zahiriyya al-Tahta, al-Zanghariyya, al-Zawiya, al-Zuq al-Fawqani, al-Zuq al-Tahtani, 'Awlam, al-Dalhamiyya, Ghawayr Abu Shusha, Hadatha, al-Hamma, Hittin, Kafr Sabt, Lubya, Ma'dhar, al-Majdal, al-Manara, al-Manshiyya, al-Mansura, Nasir al-Din, Nimrin, al-Nuqayb, Samakh, al-Samakiyya, al-Samra, al-Shajara, al-Tabigha, al-'Ubaydiyya, Wadi al-Hamam, Khirbat al-Wa'ra al-Sawda, Yacqu, Khirbat Bayt Lid, Bayyarat Hannun, Fardisya, Ghabat Kafr Sur, al-Jalama, Kafr Saba, Khirbat al-Majdal, al-Manshiyya, Miska, Qaqun, Rami Zayta, Tabsur, Umm Khalid, Wadi al-Hawarith, Wadi Qabbani, Khirbat al-Zababida, Khirbat Zalafa.



United Nations Security Council Resolution 242 *(excerpt)*
22 November 1967

Affirms that the fulfillment of Charter principles requires the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East which should include [...]

i) Withdrawal of Israel armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict.

Geneva Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War *(excerpt)*
12 August 1949

Article 49: The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies.

Yusef 'Abd al-Muhsan Zaghul Hassan

I live in the farming village Dura al-Qar', which is situated 15 kilometers north of el-Bireh. My father and uncles inherited 120 dunams of land from my grandfather. With all the children, the land is divided among about 100 persons. Our land is located in different sections of the village and has been registered in the Land Registry since the time of Jordanian rule. Since the Bet El settlement was built to the south of the village, on land of villagers from el-Bireh, Dura al-Qar', and Ein Yabrud, they have gnawed away at our land bit by bit.

It began in the late 1970s or early 1980s. We didn't receive any official order, and now this land lies in the center of the Bet El settlement. As far as I know, nothing has been built on it. When my grandfather was alive, we grew wheat on the land. We also had 60 dunams of land along the northern and eastern edges of the settlement. At first, we were afraid to go there because it was close to army training zones. Later they didn't let us enter, even though no official order had been issued. We used to grow wheat and grapes there. Also on the land is a religious site called Mazar or Maqam Sheikh 'Abdullah, which we used to visit when we were small. Alongside it were springs where we played and where I went to hunt birds.

In 2000 or 2001, the Israelis decided to build a road linking the Bet El and Ofra settlements. The road is supposed to run through the north of our village's land. They were supposed to expropriate thirty dunams of my family's land for the road. We objected, and no decision has been made. If they implement the plan, Heaven forbid, we would lose the most important land we still have, with its olive, peach, and almond orchards and its grapevines. Our orchards produce dozens of cans of oil a season, in addition to the fruit. This barely meets our consumption needs, and it's not for commercial purposes.

In al-Hadab, next to the northeast border of the Bet El settlement, we have 5 more dunams, where there are twenty olive trees. From the beginning of the second intifada [in September 2000] to 2004 we were not allowed to go there, for alleged security reasons. The soldiers who guarded the settlement didn't let anyone get close to the area, threatening people with their weapons. Now we can enter without coordination.

In 2004, an acquaintance of ours noticed an announcement, in Hebrew, in an Israeli newspaper that my aunt, Na'imah Zaghul, sold part of the land. My cousin and I checked and found that somebody had forged the inheritance order and my aunt's identity card to sell 40 dunams of our land in al-Mala'b to some Jew. We filed an objection in the Supreme Court in Israel, but the court hasn't made a decision yet. About a month after we filed the objection, we suddenly got a notice that land was being seized in the area. The seized area included the 60 dunams that had been taken in the 1990s without an order, land that included the parcel my aunt supposedly sold. That's how we finally lost these 60 dunams.

Naheel 'Awni 'Abd a-Rahim Abu Rideh

I married Muaiad Abu Rideh two years ago, and had a baby girl, Shadah, a year ago. She was born in my seventh month of pregnancy but is fine now.

Seven months ago, I became pregnant again. Last Thursday [4 September], I had sharp stomach pains and I started to bleed badly. Around 7:00 P.M. I went to Dr. Farhi 'Odeh in Jawarish, because our village doesn't have any specialist physicians. He gave me medication and told me I'd be all right, but I didn't feel any improvement and the pains even got worse.

Around midnight, I couldn't bear the pain any more. I woke my husband and asked him to take me to the hospital. When he saw how much I was suffering, he called to get his brother 'Udai, who lives in the center of the village, to drive us in his car. 'Udai arrived, with my mother-in-law, in a couple of minutes. My husband picked me up and carried me to the car. I was in so much pain, I couldn't walk.

We started on our way to the hospital in Nablus at about 12:50 A.M. At the Za'tara checkpoint, we told the soldiers I was pregnant and had to get to the hospital, and they let us cross without a problem. When we got to the Huwwara checkpoint, the soldiers didn't let us pass. They said we didn't have a permit to cross by car. We told them my brother has a permit to cross the Ma'ale Efraim checkpoint because he works at settlements in the Jordan Valley, but that didn't help.

The pain got worse. I felt as if I was going to give birth any moment. Now and then, the soldiers came over to the car and looked at me lying in the back seat. I was really worried about the fetus, and couldn't stop thinking that I'd have to give birth in the car while the soldiers watched.

I kept screaming and crying and calling for help. I don't know how much time passed, but suddenly I felt the fetus coming out. I shouted to my mother-in-law and to 'Udai, who were outside the car, "I think he's coming out!" I took off my clothes. I was afraid they'd see me naked and that something would happen to the fetus. My mother-in-law shouted, "Yes, here's his head, he's coming out." I asked her to pull him, and she said, "Breathe! Push!" I felt the baby move, as if he was calling for help and asking us to help him come out. My mother-in-law covered me with my clothes. I shouted to my husband, "The baby is out!" He shouted to the soldiers something in Hebrew that I didn't understand.

I don't remember exactly what happened then, but when the medics arrived, they picked me up with the car seat and put me in the ambulance. I didn't feel the baby moving any more and realized he was dead. The medics took away the dead baby and took me to the hospital. My husband and mother-in-law came with me in the ambulance. At the hospital, the doctors operated on me to clean my uterus. They discharged me the next day.

It hurts me a lot when I remember how the baby moved inside me and what happened to him. What did he do wrong? I also gave birth to my daughter in my seventh month, and now she is healthy. This poor baby died because there wasn't anybody to help me deliver him.

Testimony given on 8 September 2008

On Wednesday, 27 January 2010, I left my house in the town of Silat al-Thaher, south of the city of Jenin and walked until I reached an asphalt street, which branches off the Jenin-Nablus Main Street. The branch street leads to what was formerly called the Israeli settlement of Homesh. Having been evacuated by the Israeli occupying authorities, the settlement now does not contain any residential houses and its residents have been evicted. The land on which the settlement was constructed is not vacant. However, a group of extremist Israeli settlers often return to the debris of the settlement and stay in the surrounding area at least once a week. Comprising of 15 to 20 settlers, the group had been residents of the settlement and refused to evacuate it. They often attack residents of the town of Silat al-Thaher who come near the evacuated settlement. Unnoticed, they come to the settlement unaccompanied by any Israeli military forces. Their presence poses a danger to residents' lives because there is no military presence to deter them and stop their attacks on citizens.

At around 10 a.m. on the said day, I walked along the branch road, which leads to the debris of the settlement. My house is located only 100 meters from that road. I was standing in the center of a piece of land next to the street and was collecting some kinds of useful herbs, which were scattered on that land. I was surprised by two settlers who approached me. ... As you see, I am overweight and suffer from a pain in my feet, which prevents me from running and escaping. The two settlers started to beat me and shouted in Hebrew. They beat me with their fists on my stomach, back and face until I fell on the ground.

Then, I was shocked to see approximately 13 more settlers arrive. All the settlers were in civilian clothes. I did not see whether they carried weapons or sticks. They formed a circle with me in the middle and started to turn around and beat me. All settlers took part in beating me with their hands and feet. They were between 30 and 50 years of age and I noticed that one of them was a child no more than 15 years old.

"Homesh, Homesh." They shouted in Hebrew, which I did not understand.

I was beaten for half an hour. I shouted but they did not show any mercy nor did they stop at all. No one else was present in the area, apart from them and I. When they talked to me in Hebrew or English, I said I did not understand what they said. They beat me even more forcefully.

"I am on my land." I shouted.

"Homesh, Homesh." They replied.

I begged them to leave me alone and to stop hitting me. However they continued to beat me, especially on my stomach, back and feet. Later, a settler demanded that I present my ID card, but I said I did not have it. The settlers fixed me to the ground, searched my clothes, and found my ID card as well as a number of papers and money in my possession. I had a sum of at least NIS 200 [Israeli New Shekels], an electricity prepaid meter recharge card, two cigarette packets and some papers containing phone numbers. They tore apart the papers, damaged the electricity recharge card, and took the money and cigarettes. Meanwhile, they laughed and mocked me. At this point, a settler, who was around 50 years of age, approached me after he had taken my ID card from another settler. His features indicated that he was religious because he wore a yarmulke on his head and his hair hung down near his ears in the form of braids.

"This is the ID card. Take it, go and don't come back here." He addressed me in broken Arabic. "This land belongs to Homesh and no one is allowed to come here."

I did not argue with him. I took my ID card and started to walk away towards the Jenin-Nablus Main Street so that I could return to Silat al-Thaher. As I walked, I looked back and saw that the settlers had disappeared and returned to the debris of the settlement of Homesh. I could hardly walk because I had been beaten on my back and feet. ... Fortunately, I did not sustain major injuries, nor was I shot or beaten with sticks by the settlers. ... I thank God they did not drag me towards the evacuated settlement of Homesh and kill me there.





I am a citizen from al-Khas village located 6 kilometers east of Bethlehem. The population of my village is approximately 500 persons. The area of the village lands is 7000 dunums, most of which is agricultural land planted with olive and almond trees. The sufferings of the village began when the Israeli occupying forces started constructing the Separation Wall on the village lands. It separates the village from more than 2000 dunums of its lands (previously declared to be lands inside Jerusalem). At the beginning of 2000, the construction of the Wall and a bypass road connecting the central part of Jerusalem with the settlements in the southern West Bank started on the lands of al-Khas village. Moreover, the Wall and the bypass road intersect on the village lands. In 2003, 500 olive trees were uprooted and tens of dunums were bulldozed for the construction of the Wall and the road. Moreover, the citizens of al-Khas received military orders confiscating 150 dunums of al-Khas lands for the construction of a commercial road linking Jerusalem with the southern West Bank.

Due to the fact that al-Khas and al-Nu'man villages form one cluster (al-Nu'man is only two hundred meters from al-Khas), the inhabitants of the two villages resorted together to an Israeli lawyer named Shlomo Liker to assist them with stopping the construction of the Wall and to move its route away from the lands of the two villages. The Wall cuts off 2000 dunums of al-Khas lands, including the village cemetery, and puts 200 persons from al-Nu'man village with all its lands (5000 dunums) behind the Wall. The 200 persons from al-Nu'man village hold West Bank ID cards, which means that they are exposed to evacuation from their lands at any time, especially since the lands of al-Nu'man village are considered to lie within Jerusalem's borders. After paying 70 thousand shekels for this lawyer, he was only able to stop the construction of the one kilometer of the Separation Wall that had not been constructed yet (between al-Khas and its lands towards al-Nu'man). The lawyer also reached an agreement with the Israeli government to change the route of the Wall in such a way that it goes behind the cemetery. Work on the Wall was stopped until a solution was found for al-Nu'man's inhabitants to either remain behind the Wall or be evacuated. The decision to stop construction of the Wall was in 2004. The lawyer went to the Israeli Supreme court and negotiated with the Israeli government in order to issue a judicial writ.

After the Supreme Court decision in March 2005 which confirmed the route of the Separation Wall as set out in the Israeli government plans, the construction of the Wall resumed, separating al-Khas village from its lands while al-Nu'man village remained behind the Wall (this is the one kilometer that was not completed before). On 18 April 2005, the Israeli bulldozers started bulldozing agricultural lands owned by Muhammad Salem Khamis Hmeidan (70 years old, from al-Khas village) in addition to cutting more than 25 olive trees (30 years old) before uprooting them. Also, 20 olive trees were cut down on the lands of Ahmad Abu-Sitta al-Dar'awi, to be uprooted later on. Another 5 dunum land owned by Muhammad Salem Khamis Hmeidan was bulldozed. Consequently, the village citizens lost all of its lands that now located behind the Wall, which is constructed close to the village homes. For example, it is only 100 meters away from my home.

The impact of this Wall will be tragic on the residents of al-Nu'man village who will be separated from the remaining parts of the West Bank. Moreover, the social relations of these citizens will cease because nobody will be able to enter the village except its residents because of the Israeli soldiers who are present in the area continuously and in great numbers.

Friday, 23 November 2007

Today I was sitting in a sheeshy coffee shop with a friend reading a story she wrote about her chronic encounters with guys, young and old, who can't seem to avoid Israeli prisons no matter how much of an upstanding (non)citizen they try to be. In fact, it seems like the more upstanding one is the more likely it is he'll get a knock at the door one evening. So, as I'm reading her story, I see Mohammad, the roommate of a friend of mine, come in. I said, "Hey, thought you were going to Spain?" I don't know the details but Mohammad was invited by an organization over there to give a speaking tour about the effects of the Wall. Turns out I was right. He should have been in Spain, but the Israelis wouldn't let him out of the "country" (or rather over the bridge that connects the West Bank with Jordan). We all know that West Bankers aren't allowed to use the airport in Tel Aviv, so they use the next one just over the border in Amman. Or maybe not. He told me very matter-of-factly that he's required to have a meeting with an Israeli intelligence officer before he can leave, but when he showed up to his appointment they just made him wait a couple hours before they said come back later.



On 22 September 2009, after returning from a trip to Norway, Mohammad Othman was arrested by Israeli soldiers on the Allenby Bridge Crossing, the border between Jordan and Palestine. He was taken to Huwwara prison, near Nablus.

Update (25 September 2009)

Mohammad was transferred to the Jalameh (Kishon) interrogation center. Addameer is checking to see where the court hearing is going to be held and whether it will be possible for the press to attend.

Update (26 September 2009)

An Addameer lawyer visited Mohammad and reported that he was interrogated today, but mainly about friends and family. No charges have been brought to date. Addameer says that there are two likely options for Mohammad. Either he will be released soon or he will receive an Administrative Detention order of one to six months.

Update (28 September 2009)

Mohammad's hearing was held today. The military court has extended his detention for 10 days.

Update (8 October 2009)

Mohammad's detention has been extended again for another 12 days.

Update (12 October 2009)

The judge rescheduled the date for the hearing for Wednesday, 14 October. The hearing is due to take place at the Military Court of Appeals in Ofer.

Update (14 October 2009)

The judge decided that the Court will not grant the lawyer's appeal and Mohammad must remain in jail for the 12 days that was initially ruled by the Court last Thursday. His next court date will be on Monday, 19 October.

Update (19 October 2009)

At the court hearing this morning, the judge extended Mohammad's detention for 12 days.

Update (27 October 2009)

Yesterday it was decided that the court hearing would be held today instead of Thursday. The judge ordered that Mohammad's detention be extended for another 12 days.

Update (11 November 2009)

Two appeal hearings are scheduled tomorrow for Mohammad. The first appeal will be heard at the High Court regarding the ban on visits from his lawyers. The second appeal, to be held at Ofer Military Court, has been filed by Addameer attorneys against the extension of the interrogation period until November 18. Mohammad is not permitted to attend these hearings.

Update (20 November 2009)

On Sunday, the ban on lawyers' visits for Mohammad was lifted. On Monday, 16 November, a court hearing at Jalameh interrogation center extended Mohammad's detention period for another 8 days.

Update (24 November 2009)

On 23 November 2009, after 61 days of detention for the purpose of interrogation by Israeli Security Agency officers, Mohammad Othman received his first Administrative Detention order. The Administrative Detention order is set for a three-month period, during which time Mohammad will be held without charge or trial. The judicial review of the order is scheduled to take place on 22 November at the Military Court of Administrative Detainees in Ofer Military Base, near Ramallah.

Update (27 November 2009)

The judge of the judicial review hearing has upheld the Administrative Detention order but has decided that the two months Mohammad has already been imprisoned for interrogation will be taken into account. The Administrative Detention order will expire on December 22.

Update (22 December 2009)

Mohammad's Administrative Detention order expired today, however, the judge decided to extend the order to 22 January 2010.

Update (9 January 2010)

On 6 January 2010, military judge Rafad Yamini ordered Mohammad's detention order to be shortened until 12 January 2010.

Update (13 January 2010)

Mohammad is released from prison.



In my dream, we were at my parents' house in Miami or it was supposed to be my parents' house, but it was actually some strange house. I was out of the room, and when I came back Mohammad was starting to light up a nargileh and I had to tell him that no, in the US it's not really ok to smoke indoors and could he at least put it by the window. Then, my dad tried to come in and I was trying to avoid making introductions before Mohammad would recognize his accent. And then he left. And then I left. When I came back, Mohammad was in my parents' room, on their bed, flipping through the TV channels. And so I told him that it was kind of weird to be in my parents' room and we should just get out of the house. So he asked me if I could take him to JC Penney. I told him that there was no way we were going to JC Penney. He was pretty cool about it and agreed that we could do something else. So we just went outside and took a walk. And that's all I remember.

Jerusalem

القدس

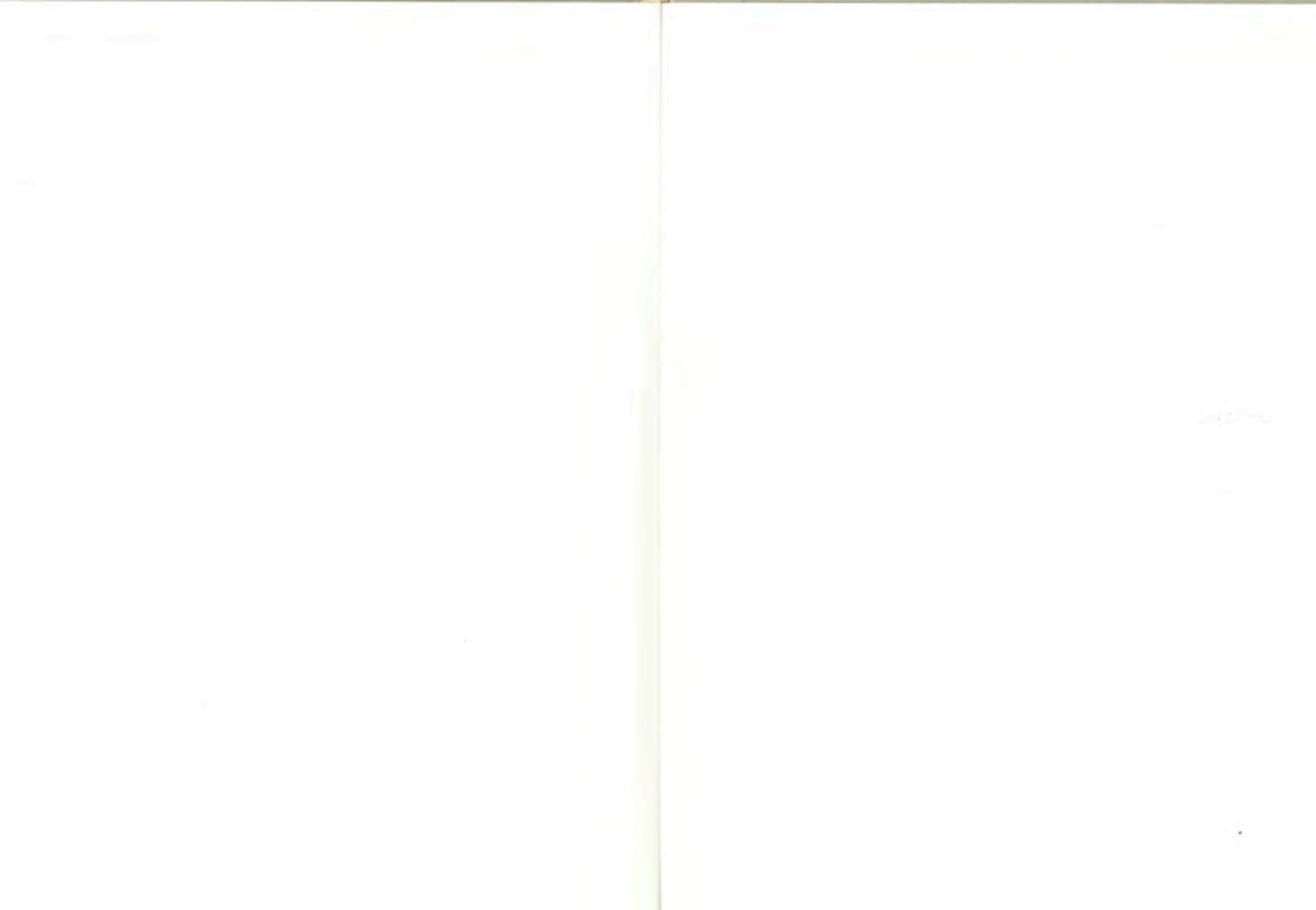
[Al Quds]

I purchased a map of Jerusalem at a chain bookstore in Tel Aviv before heading out to begin my class at Al Quds University. In search of Nablus Road, I followed the map in the general direction of East Jerusalem, the Palestinian neighborhood of the city which was occupied after the 1967 war. Despite knowing that Nablus Road was a major street, I couldn't locate it on the map. When I asked people around Damascus Gate where it was, I was directed right across the gate's arch. As I moved closer, I saw that this road had two names, both of which were posted on the façade of a corner building. In Hebrew I was able to read "Shchem" which was labeled on my map, in Arabic I was able to read "Nablus" which wasn't.



 Old City







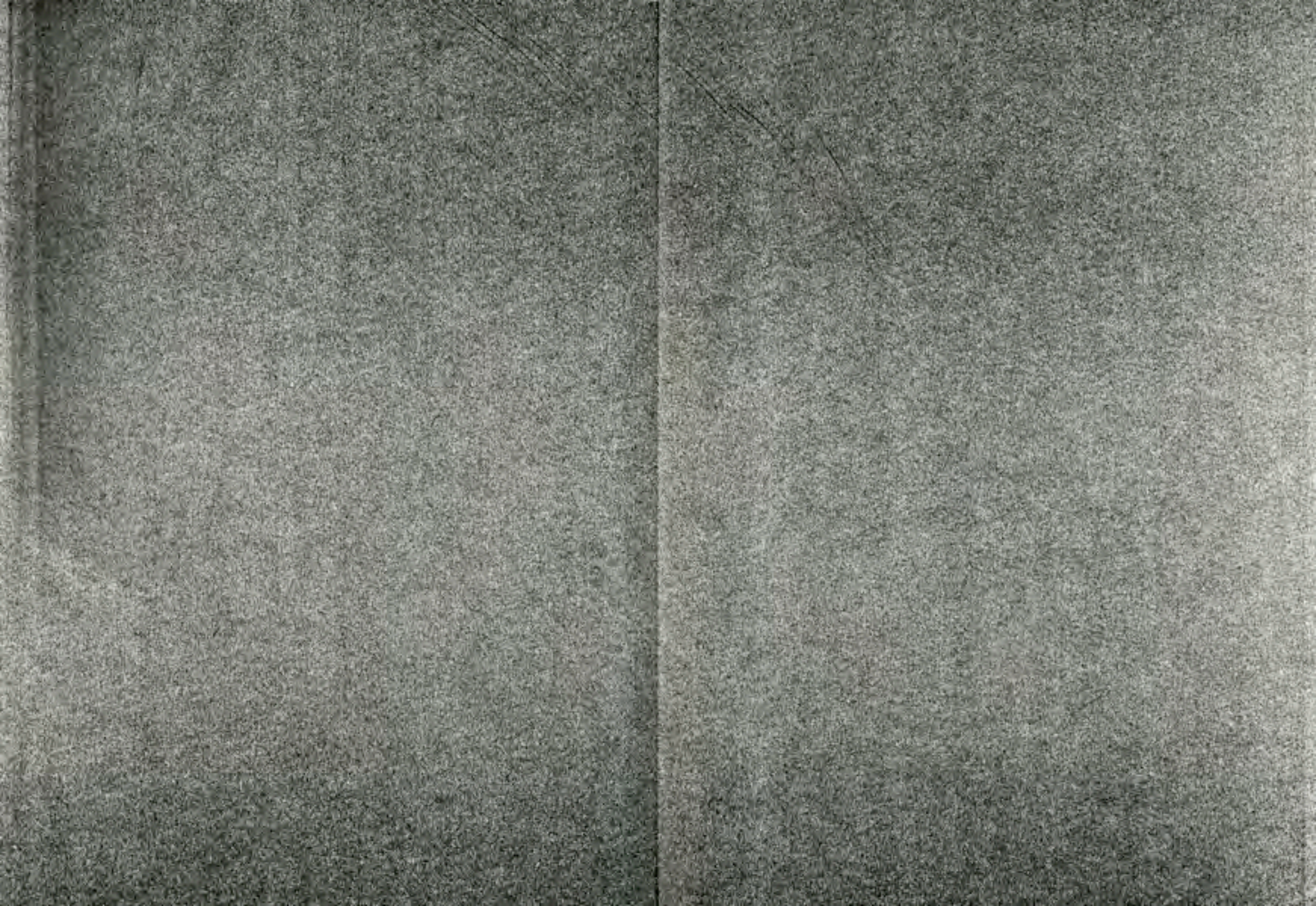
I was sitting in Elia's office when our conversation was interrupted by his cell phone. I was used to this already so I just sat back while he took the call. When he hung up, he told me that the person who just called was an old friend of his from when he was young. They went to university together and now he lived in Gaza. He was telling him that Israeli planes were flying really low overhead and creating sonic booms that were scaring his kids and everyone else.

On 4 January 2009, the bombardment reportedly increased as Israeli troops moved into and took control of al-Aratra neighbourhood. The Abu Halima family was sheltering in the home of Muhammad Sa'ad Abu Halima and Sabah Abu Halima in Sifaya village. The house has two floors; the ground floor is used for storage and the living quarters are on the upper floor. According to Sabah Abu Halima, 16 members of her immediate family were sheltering on the upper floor.

In the afternoon, after hearing that a shell had hit the adjacent house of Sabah Abu Halima's brother-in-law, most of the family moved from the bedroom into a hallway in the middle of the upper floor, where they thought they would be better protected. At around 4:30 p.m., a white phosphorous shell came through the ceiling into the room where they were sheltering.

According to family members who survived, there was intense fire and white smoke in the room, the walls of which were glowing red. Five members of the family died immediately or within a short period: Muhammad Sa'ad Abu Halima (aged 45) and four of his children, sons Abd al-Rahim Sa'ad (aged 14), Zaid (aged 12) and Hamza (aged 8), and daughter Shahid (aged 18 months). Muhammad Sa'ad and Abd al-Rahim Sa'ad were decapitated, the others burnt to death. Five members of the family escaped and suffered various degrees of burns: Sabah Abu Halima, her sons Youssef (aged 16) and Ali (aged 4), daughter-in-law Ghada (aged 21), and Ghada's daughter Farah (aged 2).

Testimony by Sabah Abu Halima, Muhammad Sa'ad Abu Halima and Omar Sa'ad Abu Halima given on 15 June 2009



As Omar tells it, the night that he experienced the best 15 minutes of his life began when he met some guy at a party. They were both drunk and one of them got the idea to go to Yaffa. The guy had yellow plates on his car so they just went. Driving really slow, they were waved through Hizmah checkpoint and crossed over to the other side. When they got to the beach, Omar remembers closing his eyes, and as he took a deep breath, he felt new spaces open up within his lungs (probably ones that were always there, just obscured by the tar left from his pack-a-day habit, roughly one cigarette per waking hour plus a few left in reserve for insomniac moments in the night). But within 15 minutes, he got arrested. Apparently, he made the mistake of making eye contact with a police officer. The other guy ran. As he tells the story, Omar was questioned: first – handcuffed in the back of the police car (though his initial responses consisted mostly of singing Arabic songs loudly to himself) and later – for four hours at the police station. Once dawn broke and the officers realized he was just a romantic Palestinian who, in an alcohol-induced moment of clarity, somehow infiltrated forbidden territory in order to see the sea (either that, or their shift at the station was over) they drove him to some random spot over the Green Line and dropped him off along the side of the road where, despite the dirty looks he received from a few early-risers on their way to Ramadan prayers, he lit a cigarette and started walking in the general direction of Ramallah.



We went to the village of Fassuta. About forty people remained in Suhmata. Elderly people and also young people. They worked in the olive harvest and received 12 *grush* a day for picking their own olives. They stayed about until Christmas. That night the army surrounded the village, the Jews brought two open trucks. It was raining heavily. They put them on the trucks and drove them away. Among the expelled was Zakhiya Hamada who was sick. On the way she was thirsty and asked for water. My mother gathered the rainwater in her hands and let her drink. After a few minutes, she asked them to light a candle because she could not see anything. My mother put her hand on her face, which was cold as ice, because she died.

The trucks reached Bir'im. They took the people off and shot at them and they ran to Lebanon. My mother and another two women refused to go before they buried Zakhiya Mahmud Ali Hamada who died on the journey. They wanted to bury her but they couldn't find a hoe or a scythe or any other tool. They saw a pile of twigs. They covered her over in twigs, placed her in the middle of the heap, and piled the twigs around the body.

They buried her and went to Ramish (Lebanon), where Kamel al-Nahas, my father's cousin, was. My uncle and my mother went to him. They changed their wet clothes, ate breakfast and lunch. A man came named Shafik Matri from Bakiya, who was at his brother's in Beirut and passed by my father's cousin carrying two mattresses. They asked him where he was going, he said to Bakiya. My mother had a sister in Bakiya. They asked if they could come with him. He told them to carry his mattresses, so each one carried one mattress and they went with him from Ramish to Hurfeish through the thickets and hills until they reached Bakiya. They arrived sick, and they stayed about a month in Bakiya. Later my husband went to bring my mother back to us.

I always dream that we have returned to Suhmata. There is no doubt we will return, if not us, our children or grandchildren.

Testimony by Hazneh Sama'an given on 29 October 2005



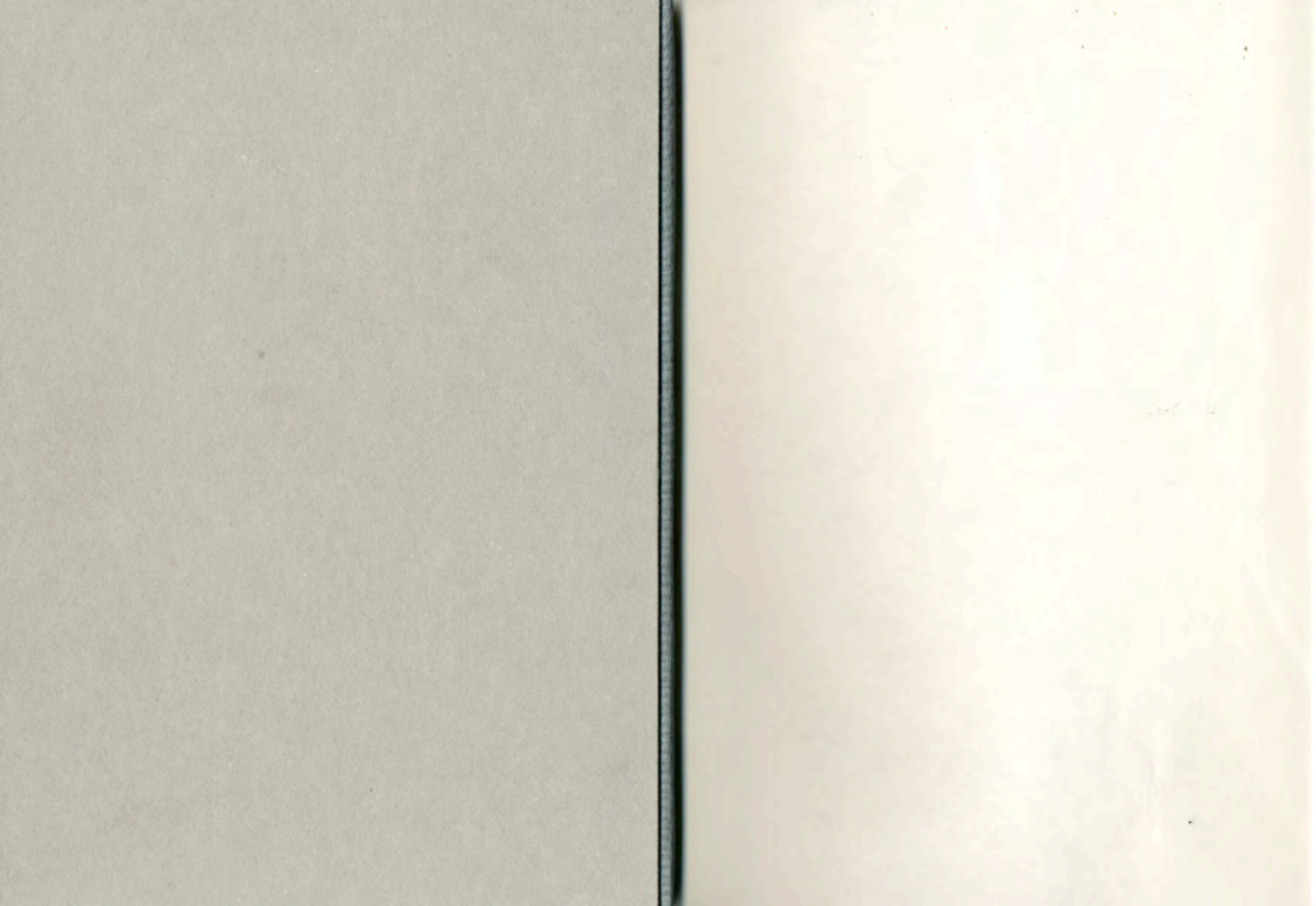
The majority of the maps used for this book were drawn from those produced by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the occupied Palestinian territory (OCHA oPt) between 2003 and 2011. The exceptions include the map accompanying the testimony by the Abu Halima family which was produced by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and Operational Satellite Applications Program (UNOSAT) in 2009, and the map accompanying Yusif Hassan's testimony, which was produced by the United States Central Intelligence Agency in 1985. Testimonies and affidavits were gathered by the United Nations Human Rights Council's Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict, BTsleem, The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, Al-Haq, and Zochrot.* Testimonies and affidavits were reproduced largely unedited with only minor changes in spelling and punctuation. The list of villages following the first page of Hazzeih Sama'an's testimony is from the book *All That Remains: The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948*, by Walid Khalidi. Updates on Mohammad Othman's arrest are from the Free Mohammad Othman campaign.

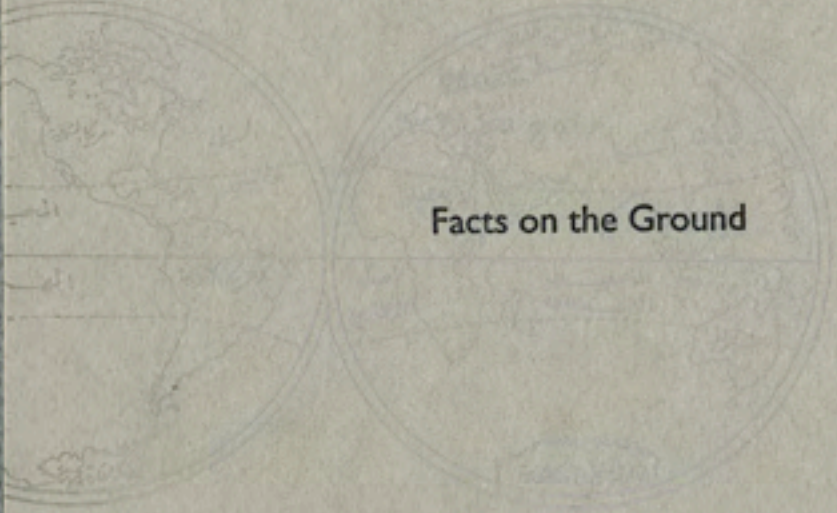
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- Hazzeih Sama'an: Zochrot
Yusef Abd al-Muhsan Zoghbi Hassan: BTsleem
Yusef Zoghbi: Al-Haq
Nahel Awni Abd al-Rahim Abu Ridwan: BTsleem
Ziyad Hmeidan: Al-Haq
Abu Halima family members: UN Human Rights Council, Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict

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