

Student Voices from Gaza

Hana

My name is Hana. I'm a 12-year-old Palestinian in the 7th grade. I enjoy reading, writing stories, photography, and learning new languages. My favorite sports are soccer and volleyball. I want to be a translator when I grow up.

In my spare time I play board games with my sister. Sometimes we do crafts together to decorate our rooms, we learn Italian language through the Internet, and we enjoy visiting our grandmother who lives next door.

My life was normal before the war started. My mother and I planned to do many things this summer. We planned to travel to see our family, to swim in our pool. We simply wanted to enjoy the summer, not to live in fear.

I can't remember the first night very well, but the bombings were lighter than that the second and third night of war. I knew that Israel was bombing Gaza and the situation might get worse soon. My family did not have to explain anything to me, because this was my third experience of war. I remember the first war when I was in 1st grade and the second war when I was in the 4th grade.

When we hear the bombings, we feel very scared for our family and beloved ones, that anyone could die any moment! My sister and I see the TV images of injured and dead children and we get very scared. We try to keep busy by playing or reading all the time. This makes us feel that the time passes quickly and we forget a little bit about the war. In Gaza there is no safe place. Even in your own bedroom you do not feel safe. I stay with my sister all the time even at bed time and when we are scared we hug each other.

I want other kids to appreciate their lives because life in Gaza is very hard. We can't watch our favorite TV show because the electricity cuts off over 15 hours a day. We can't travel out for vacations or even to see our family abroad because Gaza borders are always closed. There is a complete blockade.

Gaza has been under Israeli blockade for many years now, there is a shortage of drinking water and no freedom of movement. It is very hard to live a normal life like other children in the world.

Ahmad

I am a 14-year-old kid living in Gaza (grade 9 student), and the thing I like in school is science. I was planning to study chemistry, because I like to study the periodic table and the elements.

I mostly have fun when I play video games with my friends. Also, playing soccer is another way to have fun. On the first night I felt sad, mad, and unhappy, because my plans for vacation didn't work as I wanted. My parents explained to me, "It's dangerous to go out with your friends and it's a start of a war." They convinced me to stay home to be safe, but I didn't like to stay home. I was planning for many things!

I want every kid my age know that many kids here in Gaza died in war. Believe me, living in Gaza isn't easy for a kid my age.

I want everyone in the world to know that we are not terrorists. We defend our country. We, here in Gaza, we are humans, we live, we learn, we teach, we play, and we have fun. We have the right to live.