



مركز الميزان لحقوق الإنسان
AL MEZAN CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

9-Year-Old Ahmad Abu Reida Dies Due to Malnutrition and Lack of Healthcare in Al-Mawasi Tent Camp

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Khan Younis, 13 June 2024—Al Mezan has documented the death of nine-year-old Ahmad Abu Reida, who died from malnutrition and lack of access to adequate healthcare on 3 June 2024 in the tent sheltering his displaced family in Al-Mawasi, Khan Younis. His health condition was further exacerbated by repeated forced displacements and

the harsh living conditions in shelters and tent camps. This is the [third such case](#) recorded by Al Mezan in recent weeks in areas south of Wadi Gaza.

Ahmad Rami Sameer Abu Reida, born on 1 September 2014, suffered from cerebral palsy since birth, for which he underwent treatment at Al-Makassed Hospital in occupied East Jerusalem before the beginning of Israel's genocidal military offensive against Gaza. He lived with his family in Khuza'a, in the Khan Younis Governorate, in a house located 1,500 meters from the separation fence between Gaza and Israel. Lama Abu Reida, Ahmad's mother, told Al Mezan: "I tried to provide the necessities for Ahmad's treatment, including food supplements and vitamins, but over time medications became unavailable. My husband has lost his source of income since the beginning of the aggression, prices have skyrocketed and it has become extremely difficult to secure basic necessities for my children, including food and treatment."



Ahmad Abu Reida on 22 May 2023. Credit: Abu Reida Family/Al Mezan.

Over the past eight months, the Abu Reida family has been forcibly displaced multiple times. They first left their home in Khuza'a on 8 October 2023 citing safety concerns, particularly due to Ahmad's need for special care. Initially, they sought shelter in UNRWA's Mustafa Hafez School in Khan Younis, near Nasser Hospital, joining dozens of displaced families also seeking refuge there. On 4 January 2024, as the Israeli ground invasion of Khan Younis advanced, the Abu Reida family was forced to relocate again, this time to Rafah's Tal Al-Sultan. There, they resided in a tent under harsh and difficult conditions, facing significant challenges in accessing clean drinking water, food, and other basic life necessities. In Rafah, "Ahmad's condition worsened

day by day”, his mother told Al Mezan. She further added:

“I faced difficulties in transportation and reaching hospitals, often walking long distances with Ahmad. Life in the tent was hard due to the intense heat during the day, the spread of insects and flies, and the cold at night, compounded by the lack of clean toilets— which increased my daily struggles as I watched my son's health deteriorate, unable to help him. While in Rafah, an explosion occurred near us, in Tal Al-Sultan. In an attempt to flee the area, I was carrying Ahmad and out of fear I dropped him, not realizing that he had a broken leg. Later, it was confirmed that the explosion was due to an Israeli strike in the area, and it was discovered that Ahmad had a broken leg and was suffering from osteoporosis. He received treatment at the Gaza European Hospital for 15 days. Due to the harsh conditions in the tents, we decided to return to our home in Khuza'a after the [Israeli] occupation forces withdrew from Khan Younis, despite the damage to our home and the lack of basic services there. Three days after our return to Khuza'a, the town was heavily targeted by the [Israeli] occupation forces, forcing us to flee again to the west of Khan Younis, with only a small tent. My family and I endured extremely harsh conditions, struggling to provide the simplest necessities like food, water, and treatment. Ahmad's condition deteriorated, showing signs of malnutrition and persistent high fever. I had difficulty getting water to lower his fever, and transportation to any hospital was difficult due to severe congestion and lack of transportation.”

In Al-Mawasi, Ahmad's condition significantly worsened. His parents took him to Nasser Hospital

multiple times—sometimes on foot—to monitor his condition, but on 31 May 2024, he slipped into a coma. Lama Abu Reida, also known as Umm Ahmad, said to Al Mezan:

“We took him to a nearby medical point, but due to the lack of resources, they advised us to transfer him to another hospital. His father took him to Nasser Hospital, where doctors stated he needed urgent care and nutritional supplements and required treatment abroad. After returning to the camp, I tried feeding him with a syringe, but he would vomit. He had a high fever. We took him back to Nasser Hospital on Sunday morning, but the doctors could not treat him due to lack of equipment, as the [Israeli] occupation forces had destroyed many medical equipment at Nasser Hospital. At around 6:45 am the following day, Monday, 3 June 2024, while I was next to Ahmad in the tent preparing milk to try to feed him and monitoring his temperature, I realized he had passed away, watching him take his last breaths. I lost my composure, crying and screaming, feeling the pain of my inability to help and care for him. To this day, I feel like I've lost a part of my soul and my life, that I've lost everything.”

Ahmad was the oldest of four children. His three-year-old sister, Naya, also has serious medical conditions that require regular monitoring and treatment. She also shows clear signs of malnutrition. Lama Abu Reida said: “I began to notice that my daughter Naya's health is also deteriorating, showing signs of emaciation and hunger. I fear she will go through the same experience and die in front of my eyes while I am powerless to help and treat her.” Al Mezan had already documented the deaths of two other children from malnutrition and lack of healthcare in central

Gaza: nearly 6-month-old Fayez Ataya and 13-year-old Abdulqader Al-Serhi. We warned that if Israel continues to maintain control over and keep the Rafah crossing closed, and if it continues to deny patients access to urgent medical care outside Gaza, the deaths of Fayez and Abdulqader would only be the foreshadowing of more deaths. Tragically, this prediction has come true.



Naya Abu Reida and her older sister. Credit: Abu Reida Family/Al Mezan.

"The suffering of Gaza's residents worsens day by day because of Israel's ongoing genocide," remarked Khaled Abu Isbetan, Al Mezan's field researcher. "Ahmad Abu Reida is one of thousands of victims of the crime of genocide and the policy of

collective punishment being inflicted by Israel on the Palestinian population in Gaza. Abu Reida's death came after more than eight months of genocide, during which his frail body endured deprivation of medical care, water, and food, while confronting severe living conditions inside a tent and multiple forced displacements. The Abu Reida family continues to grapple with the circumstances surrounding their child's death, feeling helpless, hopeless, and deeply saddened. Their fears for their daughter's life have increased as she is starting to show symptoms of malnutrition and her health is deteriorating. Hundreds of Palestinian children and patients have died in utter silence amid deteriorating humanitarian conditions and the ongoing genocide.”

Al Mezan emphasizes that Israel, as the occupying power, bears legal obligations to guarantee the delivery of humanitarian and medical aid to the protected civilian population in Gaza. Additionally, Israel must also grant patients requiring critical medical treatment unavailable within Gaza due to the deliberate destruction of the local healthcare system access to hospitals outside of the Strip. This includes hospitals located in the occupied Palestinian territory (OPT) and Israel.

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