

Gaza Writes Back

Short Stories from Young Writers in Gaza, Palestine

Edited by Refaat Alareer • Foreword by Ali Abunimah

Gaza Writes Back is a compelling anthology of short stories from fifteen young writers in Gaza, members of a generation that has suffered immensely under Israel's siege and blockade. Their experiences, especially during and following Israel's 2008–2009 offensive known as "Operation Cast Lead," have fundamentally impacted their lives and their writing. Their words take us into the homes and hearts of moms, dads, students, children, and elders striving to live lives of dignity, compassion, and meaning in one of the world's most embattled communities. Readers will be moved by the struggles big and small that emerge from the well-crafted writing by these young people, and by the hope and courage that radiate from the authors' biographies.

These stories are acts of resistance and defiance, proclaiming the endurance of Palestinians and the continuing resilience and creativity of their culture in the face of ongoing obstacles and attempts to silence them.

Whether tackling the tragedy that surrounds missile strikes and home raids, or the everyday indignities encountered by Palestinian refugees, *Gaza Writes Back* brings to life the real issues that the people of Gaza face. One prominent theme in many of the stories is the value placed on the wisdom of parents and grandparents. A sense of longing pervades the book, as the characters in the stories reveal desires ranging from the mundane to the complex—including, in several of the stories, a strong yearning to return to the characters' long-cherished family homes and properties after many decades in exile from them. Social differences within Gaza are also sensitively explored. A few stories are especially difficult—but critical—to digest, for the vividness with which they depict the experiences of victims of Israeli military strikes and confront the legacy of violence and occupation, particularly on young people.

In early December 2023, the Israeli military assassinated professor Alareer sending shockwaves of horror among all who loved and respected him around the world. The Memorial Edition of the collection is produced in loving memory of his life and work. It contains a new foreword by Ali Abunimah of the Electronic Intifada. And in the backmatter, where the story contributors had a chance to introduce themselves in their own words in the first edition, now we include updated self-descriptions from all those whom we could contact, whereas the fate of many of those other talented young people remains unknown.

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

Refaat Alareer was the coeditor of *Gaza Unsilenced*, editor of *Gaza Writes Back*, and author of *If I Must Die*. A native of Gaza City, he received his M.A. in Comparative Literature from the University College of London (UK) and his Ph.D. in English Literature at the Universiti Putra Malaysia. He taught world literature, comparative literature, and creative writing (fiction and non-fiction) at the Islamic University of Gaza and cofounded the organization We Are Not Numbers. He was killed on December 6, 2023, by an Israeli airstrike in northern Gaza.

Ali Abunimah, a Palestinian American leader in the campaign for Palestinian rights, is the founding director of the Electronic Intifada website and the author of *One Country: A Bold Proposal to End the Israeli-Palestinian Impasse*. He gained his B.A. from Princeton University and an M.A. from the University of Chicago. His commentaries have been widely published on many platforms.

ACCOLADES

"In a land where hope is the most precious commodity passed down through the generations, these stories provide a tangible platform for silenced voices to be heard and means towards gaining some dignity for a wounded nation."

—Ramzy Baroud, author of *My Father was a Freedom Fighter: Gaza's Untold Story*



Refaat Alareer, PhD, Editor
Foreword by Ali Abunimah

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