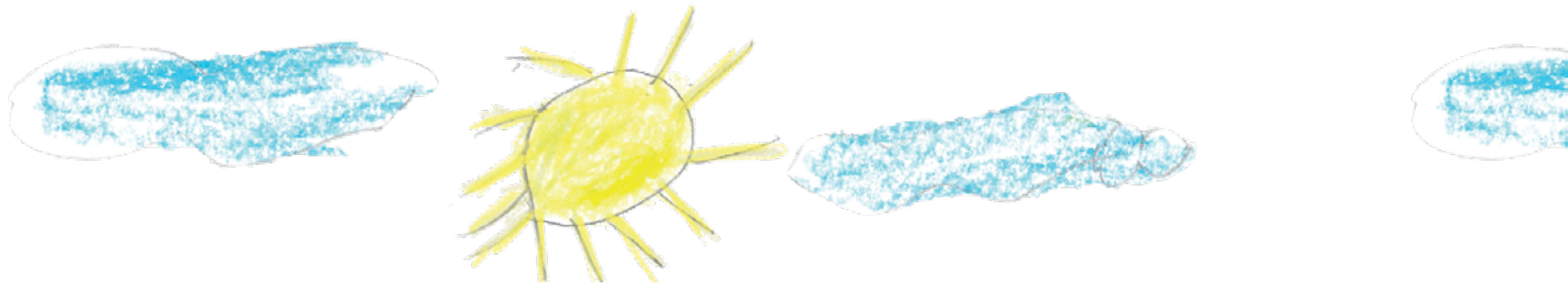


# Drawing for Better Dreams

An animation of drawings by Palestinian children experiencing nightmares, drawn in a psycho-educational program for children exposed to violent conflict







# Drawing for Better Dreams







# Why these images?

## An Overview of the Humanitarian Situation in the Gaza Strip and Hebron

Palestine of the 1967 borders is physically separated into two areas - the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and the Gaza Strip. Both have been under Israeli military occupation and control for almost 48 years and are surrounded by separation walls and fences and a series of Israeli military checkpoints, which severely restrict movement. There are over 2 million children under the age of 18 in the occupied Palestinian territory. They constitute 47.1 percent of the total population: 45.0 percent in West Bank and 50.6 percent in Gaza Strip.

### **The Gaza Strip:**

**Last year, the children of Gaza witnessed their third war in only six years.**

The Gaza Strip is home to a population of over 1.8 million people, including more than 1.2 million Palestinian refugees from the 1948 conflict. Over half a million of these refugees live in the eight recognized Palestinian refugee camps, which have some of the highest population densities in the world. The Israeli Blockade of Gaza is now in its eighth year. It is composed of a total naval blockade and a land closure preventing almost any entry or exit, along with Egypt's near absolute closure of its border crossing with Gaza. These restrictions have had a drastic impact on the people of Gaza. The Blockade has severely restricted the import and export of goods – including humanitarian assistance – and prevented Palestinians from leaving. The closure has resulted in a humanitarian crisis, with 80% of the population of Gaza now dependent on international assistance.

The humanitarian crisis has been further compounded by several large scale military escalations since 2008. During these operations, all the borders were closed and Palestinian civilians had no place to flee. They were left unprotected and, along with their children, were exposed to heavy aerial, naval and artillery bombardments, witnessing severe destruction and numerous deaths. In the 2008-09 military escalation, over 1,300 civilians were killed, including 350 children. Over 14,000 homes, 200 schools, 48% of health facilities, 68 government buildings, 53 UN installations and 31 non-governmental organizations were damaged or destroyed. The 2012 military escalation resulted in the death of 158 Palestinians, including 103 civilians, at least 33 of whom were children. Two hundred and eight-six schools sustained damage. The most recent Israeli military operation in 2014 saw a marked increase in violence, causing more fatalities than both the previous conflicts combined. It left more than 500 children dead, more than 3,300 injured and nearly 400,000 distressed.

by traumatic experiences. Over 140,000 homes were either destroyed or damaged. Taken together, more than 3,000 Palestinian civilians have been killed from the last three rounds of military conflict, including over 700 children. During the same period, Palestinian rocket attacks killed more than a dozen Israeli civilians including children. Those attacks also resulted in psychological trauma and disruption of daily life among the Israeli population.

Along with the loss of life, the Israeli military operation in the summer of 2014 also resulted in significant damage to schools, hospitals, and water & sanitation infrastructure. Over 100,000 Palestinians have been displaced, many of whom are children. Humanitarian assistance and reconstruction efforts continue to be severely hampered by Israeli restrictions on the import of building materials into Gaza. Six months after the ceasefire, some repairs are underway, but to date no new permanent shelters have been built and displacement remains a major concern. If the closure and Blockade of Gaza are not lifted, it is expected that the situation will deteriorate further and there may well be a return to active hostilities. Children will be the first victims of the failure to find a solution to Gaza.

### **Hebron, West Bank:**

#### **Violence and harassment by the Israeli army and settlers- routine of life for many of Hebron's children**

Since 1997, Hebron city – the largest urban center in the occupied southern West Bank – has been divided into two parts as part of the Oslo peace process; areas H1 and H2. The Palestinian Authority maintains civilian responsibilities in H1 and the area has only a small Israeli military presence with no Israeli settlements. H2 is the central part of Hebron where 40,000 Palestinians reside with several hundred Israeli settlers in their midst. This makes Hebron the only Palestinian city in the occupied West Bank, aside from East Jerusalem, to contain Israeli settlements in its historic Old City. There are an estimated 800 Israeli settlers and yeshiva students living in H2 these Israeli settlements, which are illegal under international law. The settlers are supported by a large Israeli military presence.

The combination of Israeli settlers and the large military presence in the heart of a Palestinian city, has resulted in a very difficult living situation for the Palestinians. According to the United Nations, the Israeli army has erected over 120 movement obstacles and checkpoints in H2, including 18 permanently staffed Israeli military checkpoints on roads and streets. It has closed several main streets and the main market, prohibiting Palestinian vehicular and pedestrian movement while facilitating free access for Israeli settlers. Palestinians walking in H2 – including school children – are not only subject to the Israeli checkpoints, but also to frequent military patrols, random ID checks, and are at times detained from anywhere between several minutes to a few hours. Israel justifies all these measures as protection for the small community of Israeli settlers in H2.

In addition, Palestinians residing in H2 suffer from almost daily incidents of violence and harassment by Israeli security forces and Israeli settlers. According to UN OCHA, “between 2012 and 2013, approximately 700 Palestinians were injured by Israeli forces or Israeli settlers



in Hebron city, and 44 Israelis were injured by Palestinians." UN OCHA has found that "the violence and harassment has had the effect of pushing Palestinian families out of H2 or away from the areas closest to the Israeli settlements." A survey by an Israeli human rights group found that more than 1,000 Palestinian homes in H2 (over 40% of the area's residences) had been abandoned leading to serious displacement concerns. Settler attacks have included physical assaults, such as beatings with clubs, stone throwing, hurling of refuse, water, chlorine, empty bottles and other objects, occasionally using sharp objects, destruction of shops and doors, shattering of windows, theft, cutting of fruit trees, destruction of merchants' stands, and verbal insults.

This daily situation has had a direct impact on Palestinian children. To reach one of the main Palestinian schools located in H2, children have to pass at least one of the three Israeli military checkpoints around the school. According to Hasan Eamar, the headmaster of the Ibrahimiyya School (one of the Better Learning Program's schools) located in H2, "the school is not able to operate like other schools. The children have to leave school early so they don't meet the Israeli settler schoolchildren on the street. During the many annual Jewish holidays, most of the Palestinian schoolchildren cannot get to the school due to the access restrictions and in the past even curfews. During these periods, Palestinian teachers cannot reach the school or have to walk through houses and yards to reach the school."

On 10 December 2014, several Palestinian school children suffered from excessive gas inhalation after Israeli troops fired tear gas near the Ibrahimiyya School during school hours. One child was rushed to the hospital, while other children and staff members, including the headmaster, were treated in the school by the Palestinian Red Crescent. The school then closed out of fear for the safety of the children. The Israeli military stated that there had been a "minor" riot at the intersection near the school. "This is not the first incident in this school. In the last two months, more than twelve incidents happened. This is part of our daily life here," said the headmaster. One of NRC's education officers described the situation for school children: "On our way to meet the children in the school, we saw Israeli soldiers arresting an eight-year old child, claiming that he was throwing stones. Our work with the schools in the area is a big challenge but it is badly needed." Mr. Eamar, summed up the situation for his pupils: "The children's grades are not promising, but one can understand why. It's not easy being stopped at a military checkpoint before an exam, or concentrating in a classroom when tear gas is fired near the school."



## **NRC's Better Learning Programme in Palestine: September 2012 – May 2014**

The Better Learning Programme (BLP) is a classroom/school-based intervention combining psychosocial-specific trauma-focused and educational approaches. The intervention is designed as a partly manualized, multi-level approach to help teachers, educational psychologists and parents cope with behavioural difficulties of children who have experienced trauma, while at the same time empowering schoolchildren with strategies for calming and self-regulation. The goal is not only to promote behavioural change in the classroom, but also to regain lost learning capacity and strengthen resilience, concentration and learning in the school community.

Since 2007 Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), in cooperation with the Institute of Education, University of Tromsø in Norway and the Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies (NKVTS) have collaborated in improving learning conditions for adolescents exposed to traumatic stress due to war and conflict. Based on research, a pilot intervention was developed which included having the children draw their nightmares, to reduce them and increase their general well-being. The intervention was tested out in Northern Uganda in 2010 and 2011 by local teachers and school counselors who had been trained.

NRC embarked on its first intervention in Palestine 2012 targeting eight UNRWA schools in Gaza. The team found that about 20% of Palestinian students in these schools suffered from consistent trauma-induced nightmares or other symptoms of traumatic stress to such a degree that their ability to function in school was severely affected. The pilot Gaza intervention resulted in a significant reduction in nightmares. Two-thirds of children reported reduced nightmares from an average of 4 to 5 nightmares per week to 0 or 1. The remaining third, also reported significant reduction. Learners with reduced frequency of nightmares showed increased concentration in class, increased motivation for school work and a decrease in conflict and negative behavior at school. Teachers and educational psychologists reported to be more pro-active and effective when teaching crisis-affected pupils.

The positive results-based evidence led to an expansion of BLP to 10 MoEHE schools in 2012 and to a massive scale up in 2014 to 209 UNRWA schools in Gaza and other schools in Hebron. A first pool of UNRWA master trainers was created in Gaza within the school system to strengthen the local capacity and sustainability. Lately, the Palestinian Ministry of Education has been encouraged to train a second pool of master trainers in the West Bank to apply BLP in ten schools in Hebron and East Jerusalem.

The need for this type of program in Palestine remains high. As stated in the 2015 Strategic Response Plan for Palestine, continuous conflict and military occupation has compromised access to quality education in a safe, child-friendly environment for almost one million Palestinian children and youth. Palestinian children face numerous violations of their rights, including the right to education, arrest and detentions by Israeli security forces, disruption of schooling, restrictions on movement affecting access to education and displacement with the resultant psycho-social effects including excessive stress, trauma and fear.

**For more information on the Better Learning Program in Palestine, please contact the NRC Palestine office at: +972 (0)2-627-5556**





From Gaza Strip

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

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From Hebron City

قبل أن يسيئ الله  
المستوطنين ويرمي  
القصف

Before the  
settler  
came and  
threw the  
bomb



بعد أن أتى المستوطن  
ورمى القصف

After the  
settler  
came and  
threw the  
bomb





From Gaza Strip





# From Gaza Strip

Expressing  
the war

التعبير عن الحرب

كنّا جالسين في البيت فقالوا بدهم يقصفوها  
حقيقصفوها ولكن لم يقصفوها

Our house

بيتنا

The neighbour's house

بيت الجيران

We were sitting in our house. They Israeli forces said that they will bomb our neighbour's house. We all then fled to my GrandParents house. They Israeli forces were about to bomb it, but in the end they didn't





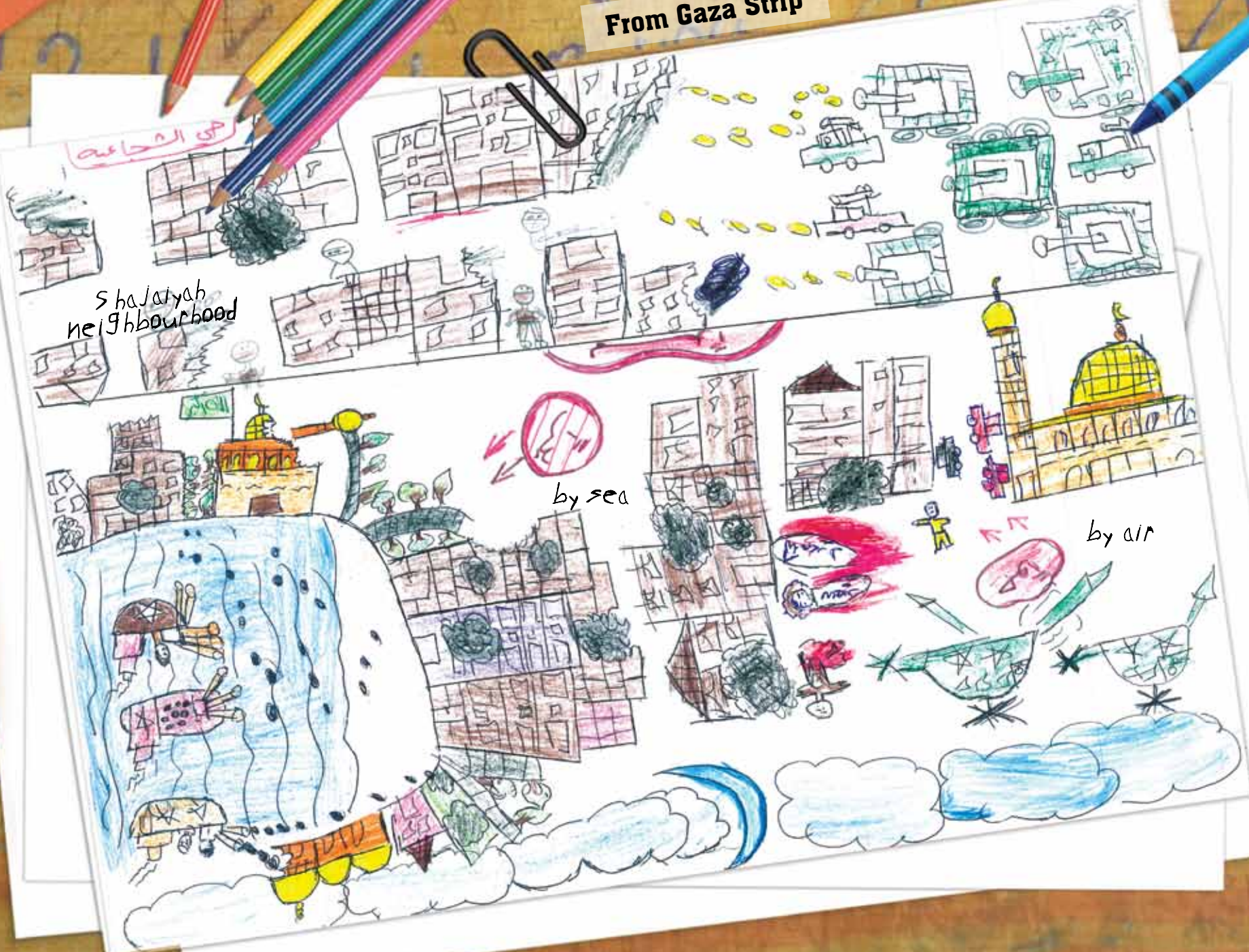
From Gaza Strip

حي الشجاعية

Shajaiyah  
neighbourhood

by sea

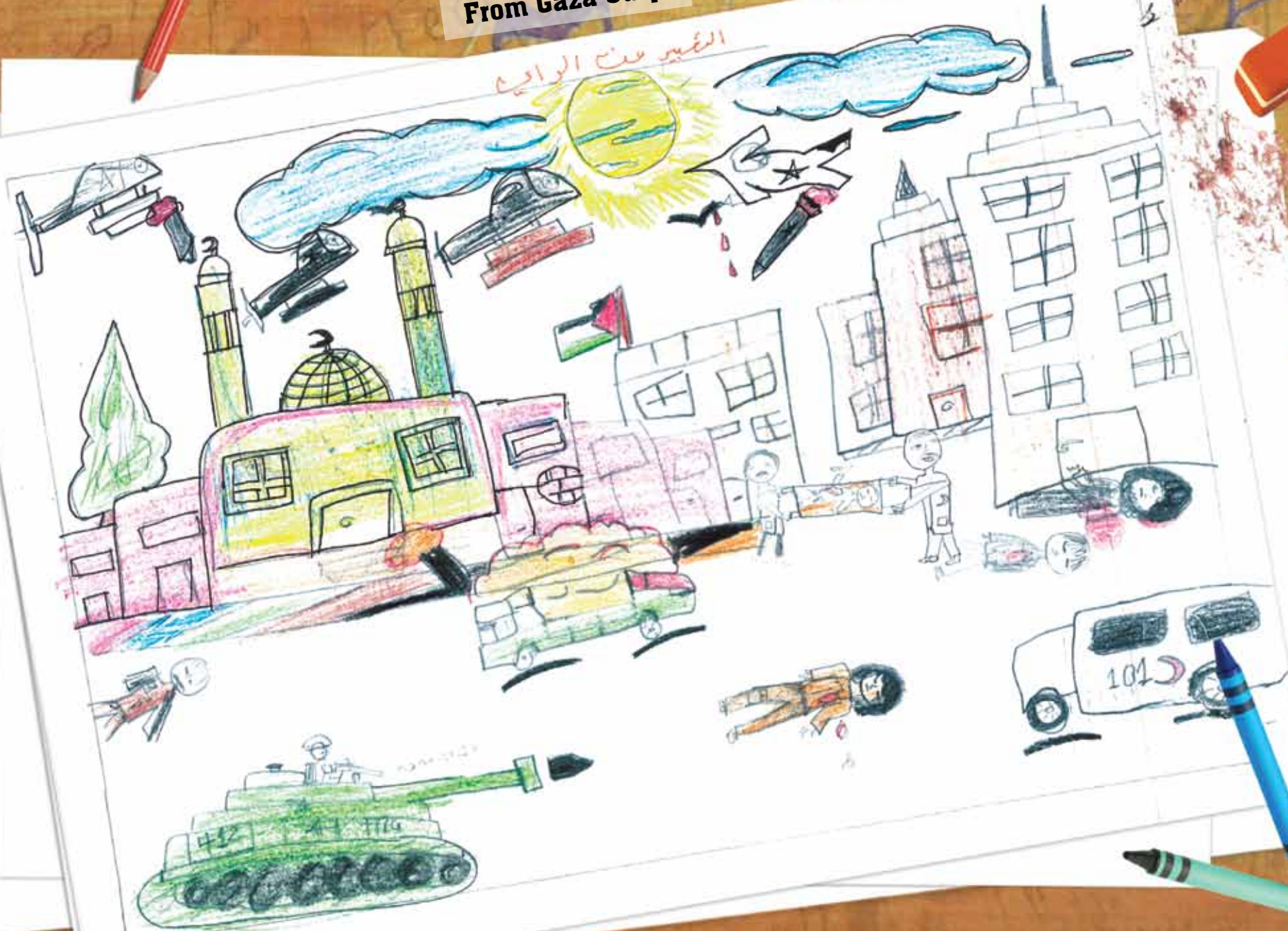
by air





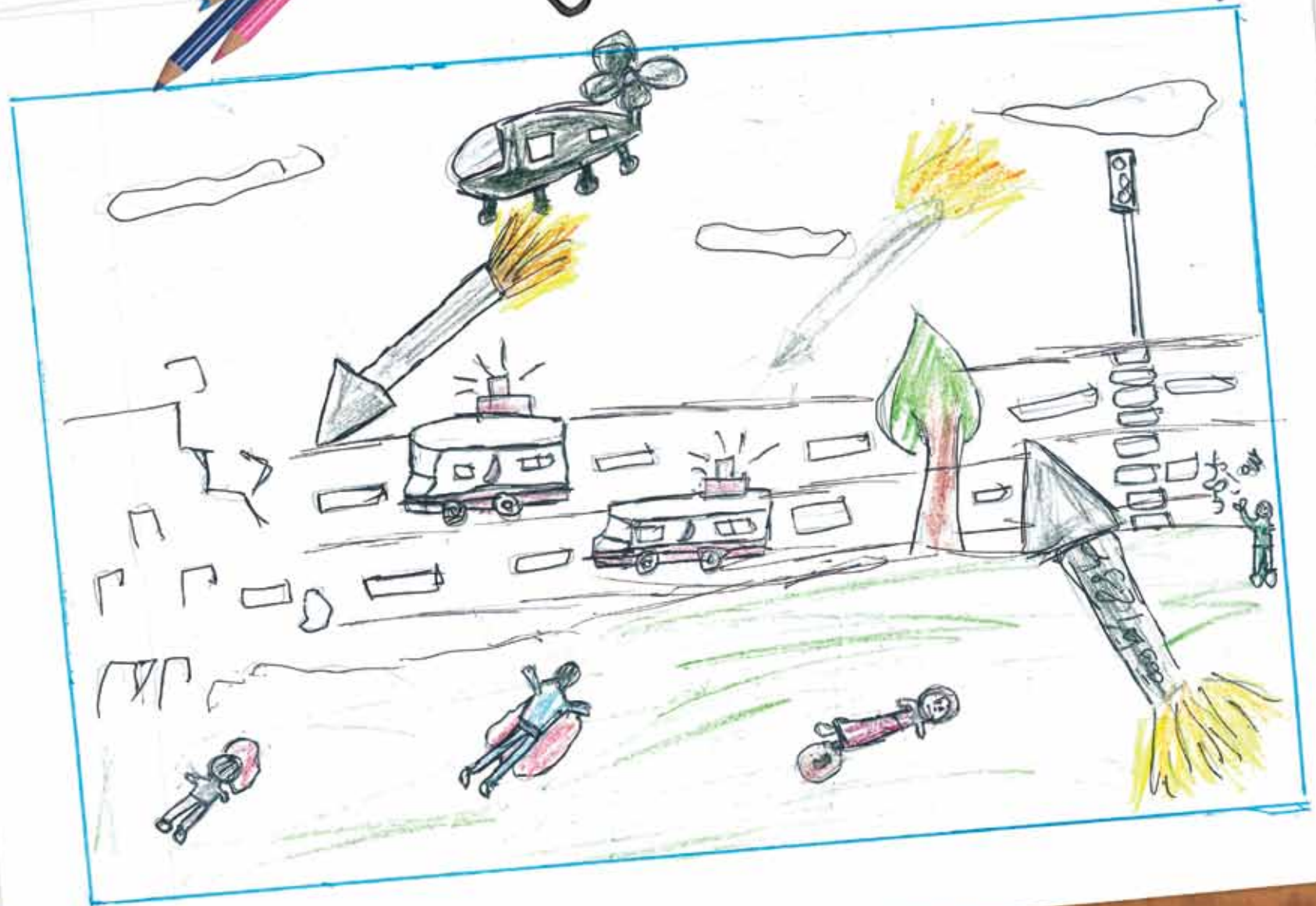
From Gaza Strip

الشهيد من الرايح



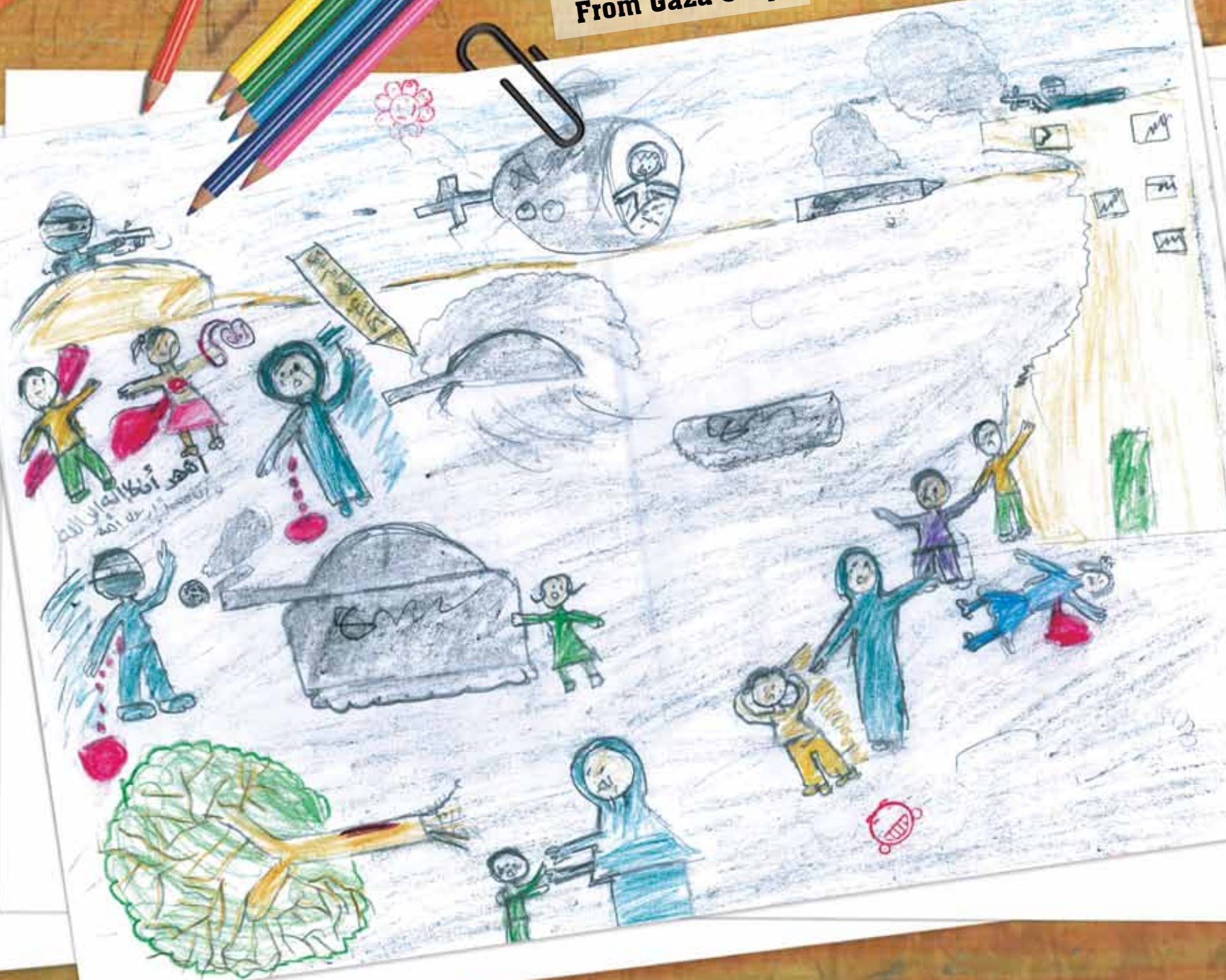


From Gaza Strip





From Gaza Strip





From Hebron City

The scary place and dreaming  
of the Painted-face soldier  
One day I was sleeping.  
Suddenly I went to the  
bathroom. I opened the  
bathroom door and the soldier  
shouted to me loudly. I was  
afraid and ran to the room  
and slept. I felt a very  
scary voice. I remembered  
the soldier's face and it was  
scary and terrifying. His  
face was painted and masked

المكان المخيف والقطع الجري  
المدغم



يوم من الأيام كنت نائم فسمعت صوت  
الحمام وبهرت ففتحت باب الحمام فوجدت

على بصر عالٍ وفتحت ووجدت على البقرة  
منصت وشعرت بعقبة مخيف جداً

وتذكرت وجهه <sup>البندي</sup> وكان مخيف ومرعب  
وكان مدغم ومثلج .



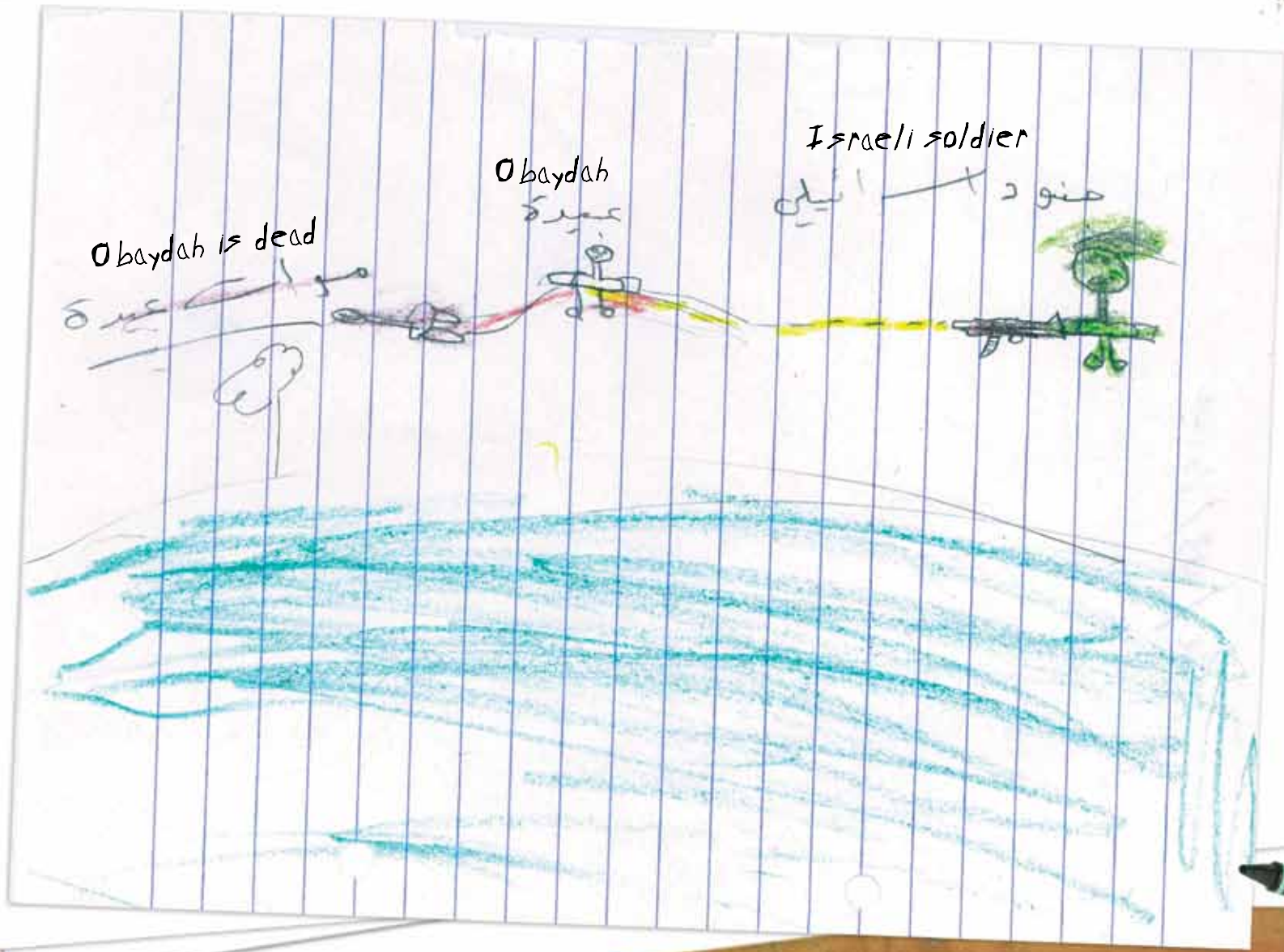
From Hebron City

O baydah is dead

O baydah

Israeli soldier

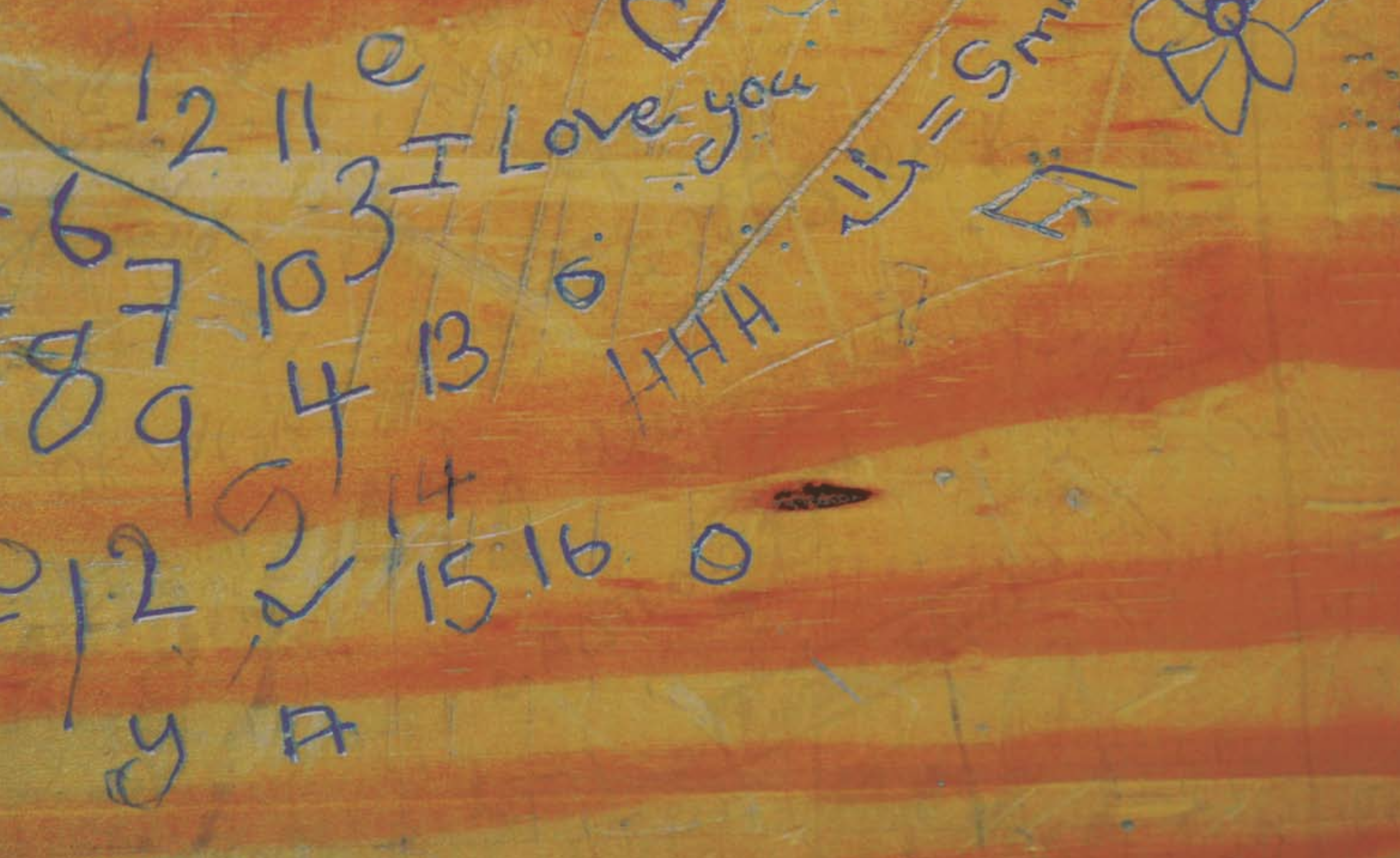
حنود البيل











NORWEGIAN  
REFUGEE COUNCIL  
المجلس النرويجي للاجئين

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from the British people