



# LIVE FROM *Palestine*

TESTIMONIES FROM  
THE NONVIOLENT  
RESISTANCE

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT NORTHERN CALIFORNIA SUPPORT GROUP

VOLUME 1

NO. 2

APRIL 2003

## We Must Break the Silence About Israeli Human Rights Violations

*More than 947 houses in  
Gaza have been  
completely demolished  
since September 29,  
2000, leaving thousands  
of Palestinians homeless.*

*(Photo:  
www.rafah.vze.com)*

**F**or members of the International Solidarity Movement, the news of the death of Rachel Corrie and the shootings of Tom Hurdall and Brian Avery has been devastating. Even if we did not know them personally, we each feel as though Rachel, Tom and Brian were our close friends. They were fellow members of ISM who worked with us in Palestine and we shared the deep bond of our commitment to peace and justice in Palestine through non-violence.

While we mourn these attacks on unarmed internationals who were risking their lives to help stop the violence and human rights violations against Palestinians, we also deeply mourn the more than 2000 Palestinians who have been killed by the Israeli military, whose names and faces are not shown in the media around the world.

According to the Palestine Center on Human Rights, 2,016 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli occupying forces and settlers from Sept. 29, 2000 through April 2, 2003. The vast majority of these were unarmed civilians,

On March 2, 2003, **Nuha Sabri al-Maqadma**, a 40 year old woman who was 9 months pregnant, was killed when her house collapsed during the demolition of the house next door to hers in the al-Boreij Refugee Camp in Gaza. Ambulances and rescue teams



were unable to reach the house due to the presence of the Israeli forces, which opened fire in all directions. Nuha bled to death under the rubble. In addition, her husband and 4 of her 10 children were also injured.

***This year alone, over 236 Palestinians have been killed, including 56 children, an average of 4 children a week.***

while 392 (19.4%) were children under age 18. Some 22,000 Palestinians have been injured.

**Ali Taleb Ghuraiz**, an eight year old boy, was shot and killed by an Israeli tank in Rafah on Sunday, 26 January 2003. Ali and his brother were shot by Israeli soldiers while playing near their house. Ali died from a bullet wound to his head and his five year old brother was wounded by shrapnel in his abdomen and hands.

On April 19, **Nazeh Darwazi**, 42, a Palestinian a journalist for both Palestinian television and the Associated Press, was killed by Israeli gunfire as he filmed Israeli troops firing on stone-throwing youths in central Nablus. According to eyewitnesses, Nazeh was shot in cold blood from a distance of 20 meters. Darwazi was with four other journalists and was wearing a bullet-proof vest marked "Press." ■

### CONTENTS

**ISM Mourns the  
Death of Rachel  
Corrie**

**British Peace  
Activist Tom  
Hurdall Critically  
Wounded**

**Letter From Gaza  
by Rachel Corrie**

**ISM Activist Brian  
Avery Shot in Face  
By Israeli Forces**

**Israeli Human  
Rights Violations**

**Your Presence is  
Urgently Needed in  
Palestine**

# ISM Mourns the Death of Rachel Corrie

ISM, MARCH 15, 2003 In Rafah, Gaza Strip today Rachel Corrie, a 23-year old American woman from Olympia, Washington, who was a volunteer with the International Solidarity Movement, was killed by the Israeli Army. Rachel was standing in the path of the bulldozer as it advanced towards her. When the bulldozer refused to stop or turn aside she climbed up onto the mound of dirt and rubble being gathered in front of it wearing a fluorescent jacket to look directly at the driver who kept on



*Rachel Corrie, age 23, from Olympia, Washington*

*Above Right, Rachel Corrie confronts bulldozer attempting to demolish Palestinian homes in Rafah. March 15, 2003.*

advancing. The bulldozer continued to advance so that she was pulled under the pile of dirt and rubble. After she had disappeared from view the driver kept advancing until the bulldozer was completely on top of her. The driver did not lift the bulldozer blade and so she was crushed beneath it. Then the driver backed up—effectively running over her again. The seven other ISM activists taking part in the action rushed to dig out her body. An ambulance rushed her to Al-Najar Hospital where she died.

The Israeli Army consistently bulldozes Palestinian homes, particularly in Rafah, where over

100 homes have been demolished in the last two years. The International Solidarity Movement—both Palestinian and international citizens—calls upon the international community to break the silence around Israel's grotesque human rights abuses. International civilians are in the Occupied Palestinian Territories attempting to protect Palestinian human rights and lives precisely because formal international bodies have refused to take action to do so. Dozens of Palestinian civilians are being systematically murdered weekly, and today, a beautiful, conscientious American defender of human rights was killed trying to protect the home of a Palestinian family.

This murder, along with Israel's continued destruction of Palestinian homes must be strongly condemned by the United States and the United Nations and they must insist that Israel abide by international law and UN Resolutions. The International Solidarity Movement also calls upon the United States government to conduct its own independent

investigation into this incident and to take responsibility for the manner in which the Israeli government is using the \$2.2 billion in military aid that we grant to Israel per year. This money and US-made weaponry is daily being used by the Israeli military to harm innocent civilians. The bulldozer that killed



Rachel Corrie was an American-made Caterpillar D-9 bulldozer.

The murder of Rachel Corrie was clearly NOT an accident. Eyewitnesses report that the bulldozer driver was able to see Rachel, and that they were shouting to the driver to stop. The Israeli government and army continue to blame the victims of violence carried out by the Israeli Army for their own suffering. Israel must be accountable for this criminal act and all criminal acts it is carrying out on a daily basis in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

The International Solidarity Movement greatly mourns the loss of Rachel Corrie and extends its heartfelt condolences to her family and friends. We pledge to continue actively working for the ideals of freedom and justice that Rachel died for.

For photos and additional articles, including eyewitness accounts of the incident, please visit [www.palsolidarity.org](http://www.palsolidarity.org).

## ASK CONGRESS TO DEMAND AN INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION

Please write or call your congressperson to support H. Con Resolution 111 calling on the US government to undertake a full, fair and expeditious investigation into the death of Rachel Corrie.

Call U.S. Congressional Switchboard and ask to be connected to your representative and senators) phone: 202-224-3121

Or use this link:  
[http://www.cflweb.org/congress\\_merge\\_.htm](http://www.cflweb.org/congress_merge_.htm)

Also call the State Department and demand action: 202-647-5150. ■

# British Peace Activist Tom Hurndall Critically Wounded

APRIL 20, 2003 *As we go to press, Tom's condition remains critical. His friends and family are with him at the hospital. He is in a coma and has been declared brain dead. Our prayers are with him and his family.*



## ISM TEAM IN RAFAH— STATEMENT ON THE SHOOTING OF TOM HURNDALL

RAFAH, APRIL 11, 2003 On 11 April 2003, ten members of the International Solidarity Movement in Rafah, Gaza Strip, Palestine, were planning to set up a tent in an area that an Israeli tank often uses to shoot into the houses and streets of a refugee camp called Yibna. Several Palestinian community members had initiated the project, gathered the supplies, and accompanied us to the area at around 4:30PM. When we arrived to the area, the tank was already there and had been shooting into the street. A nearby Israeli security tower had also joined in and was firing repeated, single, sniper shots.

An American international was accompanied by two Palestinians to go closer and get a better look at the area, and was wearing our trademarked fluorescent orange jacket with reflective stripes.

The tank and tower fired live rounds at the ground and buildings on both sides of her, making her movement difficult. She quickly returned to the rest of the group, that was positioned behind a large roadblock, but in view of the security tower. We made a consensus decision to call off the action, and return the next day as the

Palestinians were uncomfortable with the gunfire.

At about 4:45PM, Shots began to hit the buildings and street around us, and we became concerned for some children who were playing on the roadblock near us. Many had scattered, but a few were left. Thomas Hurndall, a 21 year old activist from London, UK noticed that one small boy was still on the mound and under fire. He quickly lifted the boy and moved him behind the roadblock. Tom was about to leave, when he noticed two small girls still in front of the roadblock and in the line of fire. He was moving to help them when an Israeli soldier in the tower, about 300 meters in front of him shot a high calibre sniper bullet directly into his head. He was wearing an orange fluorescent jacket with reflective stripes, and was in full body view of the tower.

The British Embassy had been informed of his presence, who had in turn informed the Israeli Military. Palestinians lifted his body and moved him to the pavement about 5 meters behind the roadblock. Two trained medics administered first-responder medical treatment, and used safety pads to try and stop the bleeding. Palestinians then lifted him into a nearby taxi and rushed him to Al N'gar Hospital. On the way, they took care to try and stop the bleeding.

At around 5:15PM, he was transferred in an ambulance to Europa Hospital in Khanunis. It takes about 30 minutes for an ambulance to get there as there is an Israeli

road block on the main road. Without this obstruction it would only take 7 minutes. After much negotiation with the British Embassy and the Israeli military, Tom was taken to a nearby Israeli settlement from which he was taken by helicopter to Saroka Hospital in B'er Sheva, Israel. He is currently on full life support and in a head cast. Several of his friends have joined his bedside, and his parents are on the way. ■



Above, Tom Hurndall, age 21, from Manchester, UK

Right, Israeli military tower in Rafah from which Tom Hurndall was shot by Israeli sniper.

# Letter from Gaza

by Rachel Corrie

*Excerpts from an e-mail from Rachel Corrie to her family on February 7, 2003.*

***“I returned from the hospital, and found our house destroyed, and my wife crying and searching for our children. We lost everything. I collected some rubble to make this “cave” where we now have to stay.”***

***—Talal Abu Lebda***

Above right, Talal Abu Lebda and his family live in a makeshift shelter on the street after his home was demolished by Israeli forces in Rafah. (Photo: [www.rafaah.vze.com](http://www.rafaah.vze.com))



Family members searching for remains in the rubble in Rafah (Photo: [www.rafaah.vze.com](http://www.rafaah.vze.com))

I have been in Palestine for two weeks and one hour now, and I still have very few words to describe what I see. It is most difficult for me to think about what's going on here when I sit down to write back to the United States—something about the virtual portal into luxury. I don't know if many of the children here have ever existed without tank-shell holes in their walls and the towers of an occupying army surveying them constantly from the near horizons. I think, although I'm not entirely sure, that even the smallest of these children understand that life is not like this everywhere. An eight-year-old was shot and killed by an Israeli tank two days before I got here, and many of the children murmur his name to me, “Ali”—or point at the posters of him on the walls. The children also love to get

me to practice my limited Arabic by asking me “Kaif Sharon?” “Kaif Bush?” (How is Sharon? How is Bush?) and they laugh when I say “Bush Majnoon” “Sharon Majnoon” (Bush is crazy. Sharon is crazy.) There are eight-year-olds here much more aware of the workings of the global power structure than I was just a few years ago—at least regarding Israel.

I think about the fact that no amount of reading, attendance at conferences, documentary viewing and word of mouth could have prepared me for the reality of the situation here. You just can't imagine it unless you see it, and even then you are always well aware that your experience is not at all the reality: what with the difficulties the Israeli Army would face if they shot an unarmed US citizen, and with the fact that I have money to buy water when the army destroys wells, and, of course, the fact that I have the option of leaving. Nobody in my



family has been shot, driving in their car, by a rocket launcher from a tower at the end of a major street in my hometown. I have a home. I am allowed to go see the ocean. Ostensibly it is still quite difficult for me to be held for months or years on end without a trial (this because I am a white US citizen, as opposed to so many others). When I leave for school or work I can be relatively certain that there will not be a heavily armed soldier waiting half way between Mud Bay and downtown Olympia at a checkpoint—a soldier with the power to decide whether I can go about my business, and whether I can get home again when I'm done. So, if I feel outrage at arriving and entering briefly and incompletely into the world in which these children exist, I wonder conversely about how it would be for them to arrive in my world.

They know that children in the United States don't usually have their parents shot and they know they sometimes get to see the ocean. But once you have seen the ocean and lived in a silent place, where water is taken for granted and not stolen in the night by bulldozers, and once you have spent an evening when you haven't wondered if the walls of your home might suddenly fall inward waking you from your sleep, and once you've met people who have never lost anyone—once you have experienced the reality of a world that isn't surrounded by murderous towers, tanks, armed “settlements” and now a giant metal wall, I wonder if you can forgive the world for all the years of your childhood spent existing—just existing—in resistance to the constant stranglehold of the world's fourth largest military—backed by the world's only superpower—in its attempt to erase you from your home. That is something I wonder about these children. I wonder what would happen if they really knew.

As an afterthought to all this rambling, I am in Rafah, a city of about 140,000 people, approximately 60 percent of whom are

refugees—many of whom are twice or three times refugees. Rafah existed prior to 1948, but most of the people here are themselves or are descendants of people who were relocated here from their homes in historic Palestine—now Israel. Rafah was split in half when the Sinai returned to Egypt. Currently, the Israeli army is building a fourteen-meter-high wall between Rafah in Palestine and the border, carving a no-mans land from the houses along the border. Six hundred and two homes have been completely bulldozed according to the Rafah Popular Refugee Committee. The number of homes that have been partially destroyed is greater.

Today as I walked on top of the rubble where homes once stood, Egyptian soldiers called to me from the other side of the border, “Go! Go!” because a tank was coming. Followed by waving and “what’s your name?”. There is something disturbing about this friendly curiosity. It reminded me of how much, to some degree, we are all kids curious about other kids: Egyptian kids shouting at strange women wandering into the path of tanks. Palestinian kids shot from the tanks when they peak out from behind walls to see what’s going on. International kids standing in front of tanks with banners. Israeli kids in the tanks anonymously, occasionally shouting—and also occasionally waving—many forced to be here, many just aggressive, shooting into the houses as we wander away.

In addition to the constant presence of tanks along the border and in the western region between Rafah and settlements along the coast, there are more IDF towers here than



I can count—along the horizon, at the end of streets. Some just army green metal. Others these strange spiral staircases draped in some kind of netting to make the activity within anonymous. Some hidden, just beneath the horizon of buildings. A new one went up the other day in the time it took us to do laundry

and to cross town twice to hang banners. Despite the fact that some of the areas nearest the border are the original Rafah with families who have lived on this land for at least a century, only the 1948 camps in the center of the city are Palestinian controlled areas under Oslo. But as far as I can tell, there are few if any places that are not within the sights of some tower or another. Certainly there is no place invulnerable to apache helicopters or to the cameras of invisible drones we hear buzzing over the city for hours at a time.

I’ve been having trouble accessing news about the outside world here, but I hear an escalation of war on Iraq is inevitable. There is a great deal of concern here about the “reoccupation of Gaza.” Gaza is reoccupied every day to various extents, but I think the fear is that the tanks will enter all the streets and remain here, instead of entering some of the streets and then withdrawing after some hours or days to observe and shoot from the edges of the communities. If people aren’t already thinking about the consequences of this war for the people of the entire region then I hope they will start.

I also hope you’ll come here. We’ve been wavering between five and six internationals. The neighborhoods that have asked us for some form of presence are Yibna, Tel El Sultan, Hi Salam, Brazil, Block J, Zorob, and Block O. There is also need for constant night-time presence at a well on the outskirts of Rafah since the Israeli army destroyed the two largest wells. According to the municipal water office the wells destroyed last week provided half of Rafah’s water supply. Many of the communities have requested internationals to be present at night to attempt to shield houses from further demolition. After about ten p.m. it is very difficult to move at night because the Israeli army treats anyone in the streets as resistance and shoots at them. So clearly we are too few. ■



*Above, The 3-story house owned by the al-Sa’afin family was destroyed during the Israeli incursion into Nusseirat refugee camp on 17 March 2003. The body of Mohammed Rajab al-Sa’afin was found under the ruins. (Photo: Palestine Center for Human Rights)*

*Left, UNRWA or the Red Crescent provide those made homeless by Israeli shelling and house demolitions with a tent, some blankets, a camping stove, some pots and spoons. (Photo: www.rafaah.vze.com)*

# ISM Activist Brian Avery Shot in Face by Israeli Forces

APRIL 19, 2003 *Brian Avery is currently in a stable condition at the Rambam Hospital in Haifa, Israel. He is conscious, has suffered no brain injuries and is able to communicate through sign language and writing. In spite of his injuries, his friends report that Brian's naturally cheerful character remains unaffected and he is in good spirits.*

ISM, JENIN, APRIL 5, 2003

Today at about 6.30 pm Brian Avery, 24, of New Mexico was shot in the face by a burst of machine gun fire from an Israeli Armored



*ISM activist Brian Avery, age 24, from New Mexico*

Personnel Carrier. The circumstances surrounding his injury are as follows:

Today the Israeli army of occupation operating in the Jenin area imposed its second day of curfew on the people of the city. Groups of young men and boys continued their resistance to the curfew by venturing out onto the streets to throw stones at tanks and other military vehicles.

At about 6.30 pm Brian and another ISM activist were at the ISM's Jenin headquarters when they heard the sound of gunfire coming from the center of the city, about two blocks away. They left the apartment to investigate and had traveled about a hundred meters when they arrived at a major crossroad and saw two armored personnel carriers advancing towards them at low speed. There were no Palestinians on the streets in the area, armed or otherwise.

At the sight of the armored vehicles both activists stood still and raised their hands above their heads. Brian was wearing a fluorescent red vest with a reflective white cross on its back and front.

When the first armored personnel carrier was 50

meters from them it fired a burst of machine gun fire (an estimated 15 rounds) at the ground in front of them so that they were sprayed by a shower of broken bullets and stones. Tobias, Brian's companion, leapt aside. He had fled about three steps when he looked back to see Brian lying face down on the road in a pool of blood.

Tobias and Brian were then joined by four other ISM activists who had arrived at the scene of the shooting by a different route. All six of them rushed to help him as the two armored vehicles rolled past without stopping. He was conscious but when he raised himself from the ground they saw that his left cheek has been almost totally shot off.

The activists then performed first aid on him and phoned for an ambulance which took him to the Doctor Khalil Suleiman Hospital in Jenin where he was treated for shrapnel wounds to his face including bone fractures below the eyes, lacerations of the tongue and lacerations of his left cheek. A specialist was called in to examine his injuries and recommended that he be transferred immediately to a hospital in Afula in Israel but his departure was delayed because the Israeli military refused to grant his ambulance safe passage for more than an hour. From Afula Brian was transported to a hospital in Haifa by helicopter.

For further information, please visit: [www.palsolidarity.org](http://www.palsolidarity.org) ■

## **BRIAN AVERY MEDICAL FUND**

Donations to the Brian Avery Medical Fund may be sent to:

MECA (Brian Avery Medical Fund)  
405 Vista Heights Rd.  
El Cerrito, CA 94530

*Donations to this fund are tax-deductible.*

## **Visit with Brian**

**by Starhawk**

APRIL 11, 2003 I spent Thursday visiting Brian Avery, who a week ago was shot in the face by the heavy mounted gun from an Israeli Armored Personnel Carrier. Brian and I had done checkpoint watch together in Nablus. He is a gardener, an organic farmer, a musician, presently facing a year of major operations to restore a shattered nose and jaw and cheeks and a split tongue. Brian's face is currently a grotesque and painful mask, but he has one. He is the lucky one, he will survive, brain intact, eyes and senses functional. He will even be able to speak.

# Israeli Human Rights Violations Since September 29, 2000

- 2,016 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli occupying forces and settlers; the vast majority of these were unarmed civilians. 392 (19.4%) were children under age 18. 22,000 Palestinians have been injured.
- 17 medical workers have been killed by the Israeli army; 206 have been injured
- At least 43 Palestinians have died due to delayed or obstructed access to medical care at Israeli checkpoints. Over a dozen women have been forced to give birth at checkpoints, resulting in at least 5 stillbirths.
- More than 947 houses in the Gaza strip have been completely demolished by Israeli occupying forces rendering thousands of Palestinians homeless.
- 17.5 million square meters of land in the Gaza strip, most of it agricultural, has been razed by the Israelis. This represents at least 10% of the total arable land base of the Gaza strip, much of which has been seized for use by Israeli settlers.
- Approximately 300 businesses, factories, or schools have been destroyed or damaged in the Gaza strip.
- According to B'Tselem some 85% of Palestinian detainees have been tortured during interrogation.



*Palestine Center for Human Rights*

## Speakers Available

ISM volunteers who have recently returned from Palestine are available to make presentations to high school and college campuses, churches, organizations and house parties.

### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The Northern California ISM Support Group needs volunteers to help with local organizing activities. For more information, call 510-236-4250 or email [info@norcalism.org](mailto:info@norcalism.org)

*Source: Palestinian Center for Human Rights [www.pchr.org](http://www.pchr.org)*



## The Rachel Corrie Memorial Fund

**The Rachel Corrie Memorial Fund** is one of several funds established in her name to carry on her work.

The proceeds will be used exclusively to provide travel grants to ISM volunteers who might otherwise be unable to participate. The fund derives its nonprofit status from the Middle East Children's Alliance. To contribute, please send donations to:

MECA (Rachel Corrie Fund)  
405 Vista Heights Rd.  
El Cerrito, CA 94530

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
STREET \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_



## Your Presence is Urgently Needed in Palestine

**V**olunteers are urgently needed to come to the Occupied Territories to stand with Palestinians against attacks on their very existence. The Israeli government continues to step up its brutal war on the Palestinian people. The *International Solidarity Movement* wants to make sure **the world is watching**.

ISM is a Palestinian-led movement of Palestinian and international activists working to raise awareness of the struggle for Palestinian freedom and an end to Israeli occupation. We utilize nonviolent, direct-action methods of resistance to confront and challenge illegal Israeli occupation forces and policies.

The first ISM campaign took place in August 2001. During the invasion of West Bank cities by the Israeli military in April 2002, international volunteers came from around the world to deliver food, accompany ambulances, and provide protection for the Palestinian people. ISM activists were the first to start documenting human rights abuses perpetrated by the Israeli military during the April 2002 invasion.

Since April 2002, hundreds of ISM volunteers from Europe, North and South America, Asia and the Pacific Islands and Africa have come to participate in ongoing ISM campaigns in Palestine. Come join us in the Occupied Territories and support the Palestinian people's struggle for freedom, truth and justice. ■



*ISM activists demonstrate in Rafah. Rachel Corrie is standing to the right of the banner.*

***For more information or to register: [www.palsolidarity.org](http://www.palsolidarity.org)***

## NORCAL ISM Support Group

405 Vista Heights Rd.  
El Cerrito, CA 94530

[www.norcalism.org](http://www.norcalism.org)  
[info@norcalism.org](mailto:info@norcalism.org)  
510 - 236 - 4250

