

جسور

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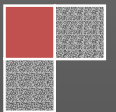
## Jesoor *for* Trauma Recovery

*We think universally and evolve locally*

### Jesoor Annual Report 2009



JESOOR,AL JALAH SQ,AZROUB BULDING ,GAZA CITY  
P.O.Box 1341  
Telefax + 9728 2884172  
Email: [info@jesoor.org](mailto:info@jesoor.org)  
Website: [www.jesoor.org](http://www.jesoor.org)



*Forward by Jesoor Team*

## **Stop radicalization of our children**

The Gaza Strip is a narrow piece of land, forty-five Kilometers long and only eight Kilometers wide lying along the South east corner of the Mediterranean Sea. It covers around 360 Square Km. It is a massively overcrowded and under-serviced place where approximately 1.5 million Palestinians live, more than half of them are children. The average population density of 3.300 per square Km makes the Gaza Strip one of the most densely populated areas in the world.

Children quality of life in the Gaza Strip is stumpy, and their daily lives are constantly threatened by daily traumatic events. Children are exposed, re-traumatized and forced to witness violence such as killing of their parents, house demolition, torture of their family members and are held in prison without trial (no juvenile courts). Furthermore, the closure of the only two crossing in and out the Gaza Strip makes it the biggest a prison-like atmosphere in history. The devastating and catastrophic situation in the Gaza Strip including destruction of the infrastructure such as health services, pharmaceuticals, water supply, electricity, agriculture and fishers has excluded no one including children for physical and psychological sufferings.

Disintegration of the family fabrics: fathers are in prison or killed, tortured humiliated, fathers are living under siege and violence different from different sources Israeli Army, political groups, and direct influence of poverty, chronic stress. The masculinity of the father is jeopardized and shackled. It lead to the erosion of the fathers' position as power figure and as a major sources of social, psychological, financial and moral support. Children are subjected or testifying violence, seeing dead bodies, exposed to different forms of violence. Children are in prison without and no juvenile courts. Killing, torturing parents in front of their children is a form of installing guilt, fear and strengthening feeling of revenge. The pain and psychological wound installed on children make them feel the lost and disoriented. all of these images may press on the conscience and fixed into the collective psyche of Palestinian children the Gaza Strip. Their basic aspect of life and love is threatened. The mutual feeling of guilt between parents and children. Parents are not able to defend their children and

children feel guilty for not being able to protect their love to their fathers. Involvement in political violence could be explained as a demonstration of love and revenge for their killed, abuse, tortured and beatings of their parents. It also leads to identification with the aggressors which indeed aggravates the cycle of violence.

Anger and aggression is displaced on children and women. More violence in schools. Education system under pressure, lack of teaching equipments and facilities, doors and windows are destroyed no possibilities for reparation. Violence in streets, road blocks, difficulties to arrive and go to school on time. More aggressive teachers. Dropouts from school and fail down of the results of children and low marks to a lower level. No safe play areas, punishment and shooting in schools and lack of teaching and supervision for teachers. The risks of radicalization of Palestinian youth to becoming more violent because of the desperate situation and the historical fact that they live in a continuum of violence since they born are very high. Transmission of traumatization and violence influence children behavior.

The war against Palestinians, the strict siege imposed on the whole people of Gaza, which is another cycle of violence leads to ideas of no solution except violence. The war has idealized power as the only solution for contracted problems, has strengthened powerlessness and the feeling of no safety. All these factors are great contributing factors to develop radicalization.

Jesoor Board of Directors



**Abstract,**

***Torture Journal 19(2) 2009***

***Weeping in silence: the secret sham of torture among Palestinian children***

“I saw the Israeli soldier standing next to the shop. I looked for my mum and then he shot me. One bullet on my hand and another one went through my back and out through my stomach”  
S. a young girl was recovered from her wounds at a Gaza hospital.

The torture of children is one of the world's secrete and embarrassing scandals pleading for actions to be enforced at the national and international levels. Most of tortured children suffer in silence, scared to tell their stories and their perpetrators the same institutions that are expected to protect them and promote their safety and wellbeing. Despite the absolute prohibition of torture under any circumstances, torture among children has become visible in almost every continent. This is a horrific and gloomy future for many children in different parts of the world. From the nasty detention places in India, to street children in Brazil, Chile and Argentina; from Guatemala, the Philippines, Nepal, Congo, and Iraq to Palestine, children are deliberately targeted, interrogated, and detained by military services.

It is really unfortunate that most countries where children are tortured have signed the international conventions of children's rights. Different international and national organizations across the globe have drawn attention of policy makers, mental health professionals and government officials to torture practices committed against children world wide, including Palestinian children. As indicated in Amnesty International report 2000, children are tortured for various reasons. Some are deliberately tortured in police stations, detention camps and the armed forces. They are targeted for various reasons such as political activism or alleged participation in political struggle, social marginalization, identity and belief and other unjustified reasons.

The main objective of this paper is not to analyze torture and its individual, family and community consequences, nor to emphasize the devastating political and inhuman situations surrounding the Palestinians in general and Palestinian children in particular. The aim of this paper is to highlight the tip of the iceberg around torture and its negative consequences encountered by Palestinian children born and living in protracted political violence, witnessing indiscriminate killings, torture, house demolition, and atrocities committed against themselves, their own family and peers. The impact of these events has affected every aspect of Palestinian life and leaves traces and deep scars in the social and economic fabric, in the political and family structures, and also at the individual level. Torture practiced against Palestinian children has raised questions about the injustice and unfair application of International Conventions of Child's rights and UN Conventions Against Torture in the Palestinian context.

Abdel Hamid Afana, PhD  
President of the IRCT  
Chairperson of the Jesoor Board

## ***Jesoor Philosophy and activities***

In Arabic language “**Jesoor**” means “bridges”. Jesoor is a bridge between biology of trauma and social and cultural representation of it; it is a bridge between victims and their communities; between health and human rights; between peace, dignity and health. Jesoor is a Palestinian non-governmental, non-profit organization. The organization aimed at strengthening the link between health and human rights, prevention of torture and human rights abuse through research, advocacy, community assistance and the training of health professionals. We seek to build bridges to health and peace in our community by engaging the social, economic, political and environmental contexts in all aspects of our work, and to contribute creatively to the global right to health movement.

Jesoor is deals with the consequences of human rights violations and offers holistic rehabilitative services for trauma victims and their families. Jesoor runs by a high potential multidisciplinary mental health team composed from mental health professionals with postgraduate studies in different specialties. They are equipped with knowledge, skills and experiences in the field of rehabilitation. The team utilizes various therapeutic approaches, such as supportive therapy, counseling, family counseling and home visits.

Jesoor administration believes in the importance of our role in the civil society as an organisation which promotes through its public awareness activities respect for human rights and which protects the victims of violations of human rights.

In order to explore further the effects of trauma and torture on its victims and on the community as a whole the team is going to study the social representation of traumatic experiences and cultural validity of PTSD among Palestinian community in addition to new methods of torture used and the various method of coping styles used by trauma and torture survivors.

The team members participated in the various local workshops, conferences and other educational circles. In addition to case presentations, the team runs journal clubs activities as methods of in-service education and knowledge sharing.



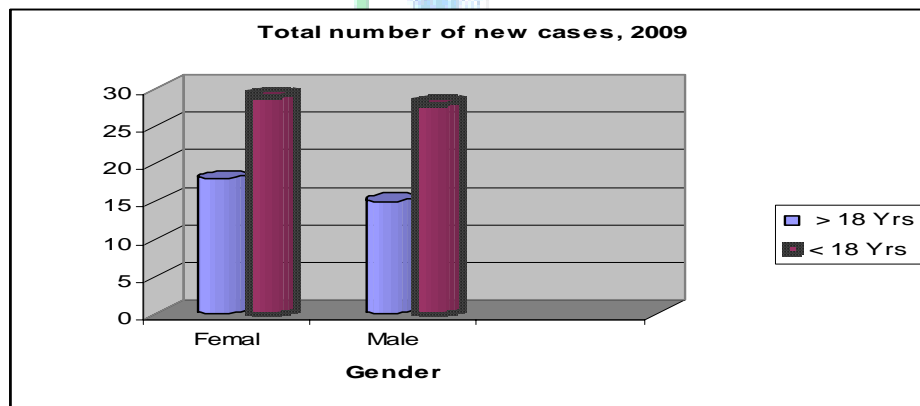
## Psychosocial Support for traumatized People in Gaza

### Therapeutic interventions

Jessor team adopts community based approach to tackle mental ill-health conditions provides a comprehensive activities for people who have been exposed to traumatic experience, torture survivors in most deprived areas of the Gaza strip. They deprived basic mental health services and continuously exposed to political violence and trauma.

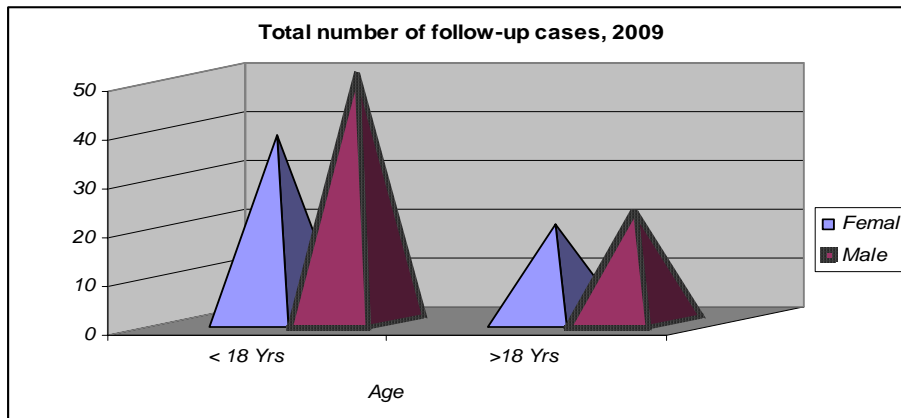
Supportive and counselling therapy at the individual level, family counselling are services offered to traumatized and tortured people and their families. Through out Psychosocial Support programs for traumatized people particularly children and their families in the Gaza Strip, the team contribute to creation of culture of peace and respects where children would be raised and bring in a healthy child-parent relationships and feelings of security and self-esteem.

The number of new cases distributed according to both gender and age are illustrated below.



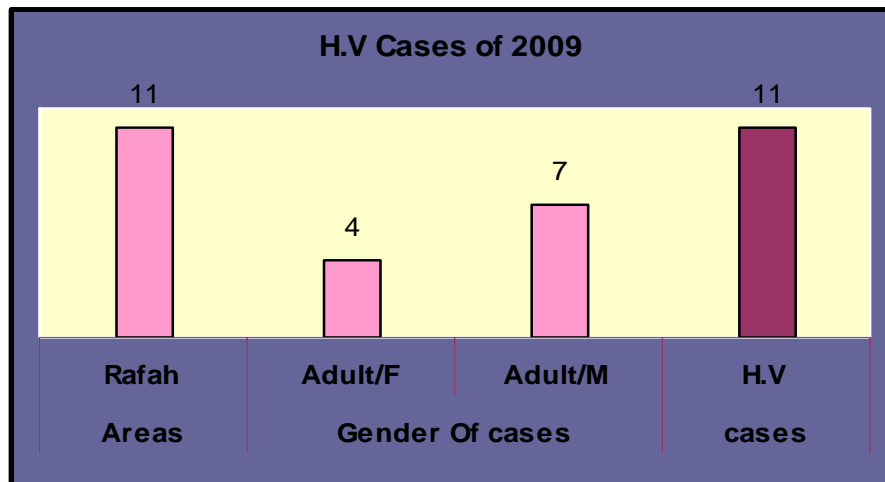
## Follow up cases

The team is following up cases seen in different locations. The numbers of follow up cases are described in the table below. The cases followed are both family members, children and there parents. Family counseling sessions, relaxation techniques, cognitive – behavioral therapy, behavioral therapy by drawing and psychoeducation are the intervention techniques used with these cases



## Home Visits Cases

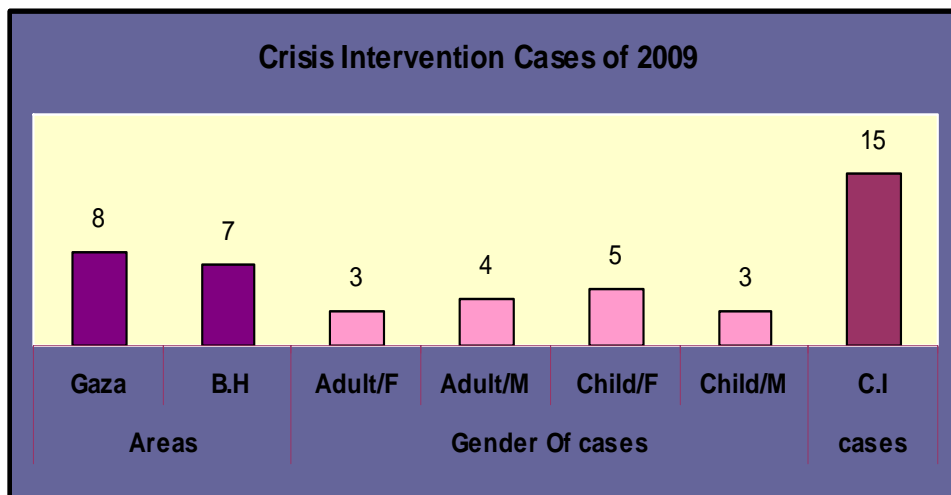
The aim of the home visits is to make assessment for the family situation, communication between family members and to provide family counseling and psycho education. Not all our clients prefer to be visited at home. That was obvious because of stigma attached to mental disorders. A permission for family visit was asked by the therapist before any home visit is conducted. For those who refused home visits their request is respected.





### Crisis Intervention Cases

Crisis intervention cases are cases that are seen either at home, hospital, clinic and other places where clients are seen. They need interventions but not like to open files in the organization. The table below describes the number of cases seen.





## Preventive Activities

In response to the rising phenomenon of violence and the increase in trauma cases among children, and in an attempt to reduce the negative impacts of these experience, and equipping participants with the basic knowledge about trauma and its psychological consequences. Series of workshops were conducted in different places in the Gaza Strip, particularly in Rafah city and Gaza city



In cooperation with the Cultural Committee of the of Ibn Sina primary School, in Rafha city. Jesoor team organized a workshop about **"trauma and Enursis among children"** which aimed to raising awareness of the families about their children problem, presented by Jesoor Medical Team Wesam Abo. Zead and Soha Keshta. More than 25 participant "parents and Teachers" participated in the workshop. At the end of the workshop the participants showed high interest in this meeting they were very good and cooperative and they asked to conduct another workshop.

Jointly with Haneen Organization in Gaza city, Jesoor team organized a workshop about **"Adolescence and violence"** aimed to raising the community awareness about different stages that adolescent pass through and the influence of these stages on mental health. The role that environmental factors, violence against adolescents, and traumatic experiences play on healthy development of adolescents. More than 25 women representing various ages participated in the workshop.

### On June 26, the day against torture

“We are all against torture”, on the occasion of the day of international day of fighting torture (26 June), Jesoor team organized a public meeting invited parents and children to celebrate that day. It was a special day for both participants and jesoor team. Guests from collaborating organizations were invited to give talks about the torture and its negative psychosocial and family effects. At the end of the day, children were given gifts (small food basket) collected locally from the community donated. Children and their families have enjoyed the day that was called “Kulunaa dud el taatheeb”. More than 35 women and children participated in the day against torture. The Arabic meaning of the word “torture” was explained and discussed by children and their mothers. As the end of the day, participants both mother and children asked for more frequent discussions related to issues such as torture and difference between torture and domestic violence.



In coordination with Zaharet Al Madaean Kindergarten, jessor conducted a public meeting for mothers and young couples with about **“the negative impact of stress”**. The aim of the meeting was to rising public awareness about psychosocial and environmental factors that contribute to stress and its negative impact on health. More than 25 women and young couples participated in the public meeting.

As part of Jesoor's philosophy of sharing experiences and in-service training activities, Jesoor team participated in the Training in Crisis intervention with Dr. Rawya Albornw and Dr. Mahmoud Saeed in coordination with Emergency and Trauma Center at the Ministry of Health, and followed many cases in different Areas. The training was fruitful and helpful where some idea were considered for future interventions.

Jesoor team participated in a Training with European delegation "Italy" about "**Family Therapy**" for two days at Training manpower development department of the Ministry of Health, also with follow up to many cases. Jesoor representative shared her experience and challenges the team faces in addition to family intervention activities that Jesoor team apply in community interventions.



## Thanks and appreciations

Jesoor board of Directors and Jesoor team extends its gratitude for those who contributed to its activities and mad all these activities real. Thanks for all organizations, individuals and who contribute to help Palestinian victims of torture, trauma and human rights violations. Thanks goes to KinderUS, International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT) and Oak Rousing Trust for their generous contributions to Jesoor programs. Thanks and appreciation goes to those who survived trauma, torture and other human rights violations and to their families.

### Occasion Jesoor Partners

