

SAWA - Annual Report 2009

وحبوب سنبله تموت
ستملاً الوادي سنابل



كل النساء معاً اليوم وغداً
Sawa-All the Women Together Today
and Tomorrow



Supported in part by a grant from Foundation Open Society Institute

With New Technology, Sawa is Ready to Take on the Future

In the year 2009, Sawa truly entered the 21st century. We began to use the best available technology, including a database to document phone counseling cases, and a voice-over IP system. This database, a collection of anonymous caller information, constitutes a rich and valuable source of information on the situation of women and children in Palestine.

This year we faced the war in Gaza, one of the biggest challenges for Sawa in the history of the organization. The new technologies adopted were in part a result of our efforts to make our services to Gazans more efficient. We needed to decide how best to support the people of Gaza without physically being there. We promoted our 121 Helpline as a resource for them, in order to be with them, to counsel them on how to preserve their mental and social health during this violent crisis. Volunteers and employees, unified in their commitment to stand by the people of Gaza, sacrificed significant time and energy to ensure the Helpline was properly staffed at all hours. Though we hope it will never again be necessary, we are confident in our ability to respond to any future emergency.



Sawa has also made a continuous investment this year in the professional skills and knowledge of our employees and volunteers. Throughout the year, staff and volunteers attended two seminars on international human rights and a seminar on the use of art therapy and other creative alternative therapies. Sawa staff themselves took part in Project Clothesline, in which participants produce T-shirts expressing the effects of violence against women on their lives. Ongoing development of human and technological resources ensures Sawa's sustainability and help us to keep up with a rapidly changing world. In the coming year, we will continue to help our volunteers and staff to build their capacity to assist victims of violence and educate the public on this issue, and we will continue to pursue technological improvements to our call center system in order to offer the most efficient possible service to the largest possible number of people.

It is important to mention two very important anniversaries which took place this year—the 30th year since the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which received special mention at Sawa's annual Conference two days before the anniversary, and the 20th year since the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Sawa marked the CRC anniversary with a festival for children supported by PIA.

We are grateful to all 2009's partners and supporters. Thank you for helping us to provide vital support to the most vulnerable groups in Palestine, and vital education for our entire society.

Ohaila Shomar

General Director, Sawa—All the Women Together, Today and Tomorrow

About Sawa

Sawa – All the Women Together Today and Tomorrow was established in 1998 as an independent non-profit NGO by a group of Palestinian female volunteers active in the field of women's rights. Sawa is a non-profit, non-governmental Palestinian feminist organization that was originally formed to provide a much-needed response to the phenomenon of sexual violence within Palestinian society. We aim at combating violence against women and children in all its forms and levels through service provision and community awareness. We seek to develop ways to effectively tackle this problem in view of the gargantuan social and cultural taboos that smother all issues related to sex, even sexual violence. Sawa today provides counseling, referral, and accompaniment (to hospitals or the police) services to all who seek them, especially children, youth and women. Further, we seek to educate Palestinian society as a whole against gender-based violence. We currently operate from two offices, one located in Jerusalem, and one in Ramallah.

Our mission/vision

We work on changing the prevailing culture of violence and promoting a culture of peace and security, which serves human and community development in order to achieve a democratic society based on the principles of equality and social justice and on human rights.

Objectives

1. To contribute to eliminating sexual, physical and psychological violence against women and children
2. To provide victims of violence with the opportunity to access safe support and protection
3. To raise community awareness and bring out the issue of violence from household domain to the community sphere
4. To promote the spirit and values of voluntarism and mobilize community resources and support in addressing the issue of violence against women and children

Our programs

1. **Women's Support Hotline Program:** Provides primary counseling, psychological support and escorting services to women victims of sexual, physical and psychological violence. The Hotline is operated by female volunteers trained on the provision of psychological support and counseling.
2. **Palestinian Child Protection Helpline 121 Program:** This is a national toll-free line aimed at providing assistance, counseling and support to children and adolescents experiencing any form of abuse and neglect.
3. **Educational Program:** Publishes brochures and awareness raising materials, conducts workshops and lectures and trains professionals to increase awareness and combat all forms of violence, abuse and neglect against women and children.

4. **Volunteers Program:** Aims at recruiting and training both male and female volunteers in order to be qualified to provide counseling and education through Sawa's programs.

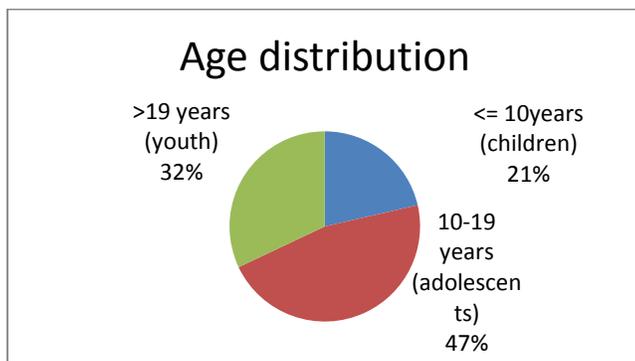
Total Annual Budget: 2,206,033 NIS (\$584,380)

Notable Achievements in 2009

❖ *Gaza: We Were There by Their Side*

The devastating attack on Gaza, with its harsh psychological effects on the population, was a severe test of the commitment and professionalism of Child Protection Helpline staff and volunteers. The sheer number of calls and the acute distress of the children and parents calling for emotional support and guidance prompted Sawa to declare a state of emergency. Staff and volunteers showed unity and resolve as they came together to keep the Child Protection Helpline functioning around the clock--24 hours, 7 days a week. They counseled children who had seen friends and family injured or killed or family homes destroyed. They advised parents on how to help their children, as well as to cope with their own fears and frustrations in a healthy way. Staff members frequently went without sleep, and volunteers significantly increased their working hours. Telephone counselors struggled to cope with their own emotional reactions to the Gazan Helpline cases. The 121 Helpline's emergency hours were advertised heavily on television and radio stations. Sawa's strong and concerted effort to support the people of Gaza during this brutal time garnered a large volume of positive recognition in news media locally and around the world. Articles appeared in *Hadith An-Nas*, *Wafa*, and *Al-Ayaam*.

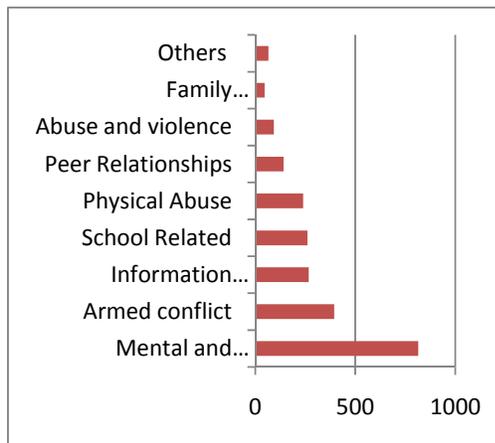
The following charts provide a basic picture of the types of cases addressed during the Gaza war:



More than half of the calls came in January 2009 (55%) at the beginning of Gaza War whereas about one quarter (26%) of the calls came during the next month in February, and 19% of the calls came during March.

Table 1: Types of psychosocial problems identified by Sawa

Reason for contact	No.	%
Mental and Physical Health	815	35.0
Armed conflict	395	17.0
Information Requested	268	11.5
School Related	261	11.2
Physical Abuse	239	10.3
Peer Relationships	142	6.1
Abuse and violence	93	4.0
Family Relationships	47	2.0
Others	66	2.9
Total	2326	100.0



❖ *The First Report on Trafficking and Forced Prostitution in Palestine*

With support from UNIFEM, Sawa conducted and published a report on the trafficking and forced prostitution of women and girls within and between Palestine and Israel. This phenomenon had never before been addressed by a Palestinian organization, and there was little to no previous literature on the subject. The report offers profiles of trafficking victims, who are often young women and girls who have been abused by their family members or husbands in the past. They may be well-educated or come from economically stable backgrounds, but for the majority, the family is far from a safe haven. Prostitution may seem to women in these situations to be a way to earn money and escape an abusive family. Other women are tricked, forced, or sold into prostitution by family members. Profiles of those who manage brothels and arrange the trafficking of women reveal that pimps are often former prostitutes themselves, and that they often run legitimate “front” businesses, such as hotels or cleaning services. Most prostitution rings are small-scale and may have arrangements with taxi drivers who transport clients, or corrupt police officers who ignore the illegal activity. Clients include Israeli and Palestinian men from all walks of life. In spite of the silence around the subject of trafficking, intimidation, threats, and difficulties finding willing informants, Sawa has succeeded in bringing a serious human rights abuse to the public eye.

The report suggests that trafficking should be considered violence against women. It recommends viewing trafficked women as victims rather than perpetrators, emphasizing that an abusive or unsafe family situation often forces a woman or girl into sex work, and that deception, force, and threats are common. The report urges government bodies and civil society to conduct further research, to work to increase public awareness of trafficking and forced prostitution, and to help trafficked women recover from their experiences and resume a normal life. The report also notes that the current situation of occupation and conflict complicates meaningful action against trafficking, as Israeli and Palestinian law enforcement do not cooperate on the matter, and Palestinian authorities have incomplete sovereignty and may be prevented from moving freely within and between the West Bank and Gaza.

Trafficking and Forced Prostitution of Palestinian Women and Girls: Forms of Modern-Day Slavery was published on December 9. Local and international media reaction was widespread and positive.

❖ *Sawa's Fifth Annual Conference*

Sawa held our Annual Conference on December 16, 2009, at the Red Crescent Society in Ramallah. The conference focused on the lasting psychological effects of the war on the people of Gaza, and how we may help them to cope with their horrifying situation. Representatives from local NGO's, international and foreign organizations, government ministries, universities, and community centers attended the event. The event was also linked by videoconference to Gaza.



Audience members listen to a speaker at Sawa's 2009 Annual Conference

2009 News by Program

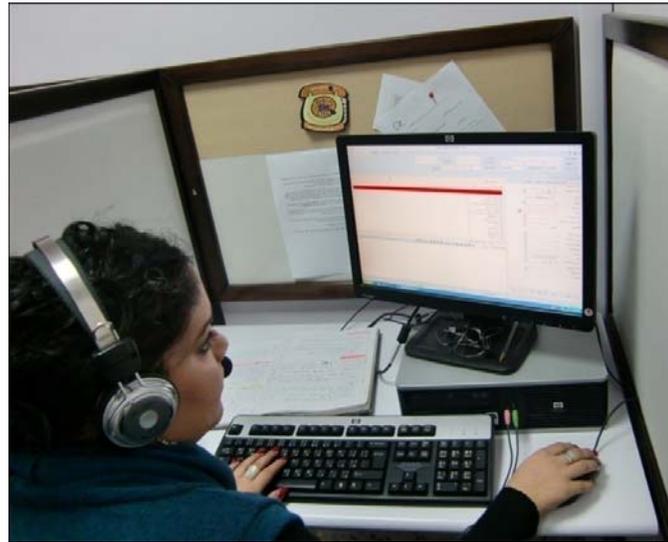
❖ *Phone Counseling Services*

Sawa's telephone counseling services for women and children continue to assist victims of violence, especially sexual violence, and those in need of psychological support all over Palestine. Callers who seek medical treatment or legal assistance can also take advantage of Sawa's accompaniment service.

The Child Protection Helpline (121) offers counseling services to children and youth. Our popularity as a community resource has grown considerably in the aftermath of the Gaza emergency. To increase efficiency, Sawa has adopted voice-over IP technology which makes it possible for volunteers to answer calls even when outside the office. This system is linked with a caller information database, which records basic information about callers such as age, location, and reason for calling. To cope with increased demand for Helpline services, Sawa has partnered with Palestinian Telecommunications (Pal-Tel), who provide two additional toll-free 121 lines, for a total of three functioning lines. Cellular phone company Jawwal now allows its customers to call the 121 Helpline for free. The three lines are available 16 hours a day, every day, offering a total of 336 hours of free, confidential support for children and youth. The new voice over IP (VOIP) and database system was covered in Child Helpline International's November-December newsletter, and Sawa presented on the system at CHI's third regional conference in Morocco on November 3-5.

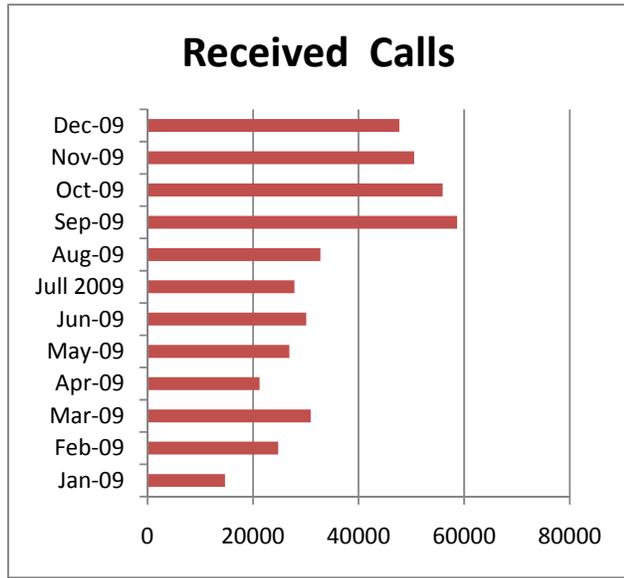
The Women's Hotline (02-582-2211), toll-free in Jerusalem, offers support for women facing all types of sexual and domestic violence, as well as advice on a variety of women's and other health issues. Because of the burden on Sawa's resources during the Gaza war, many women's calls during that time were handled by the Children's Helpline staff in Ramallah. Currently, calls can be easily transferred from the Hotline center in Jerusalem to the Helpline in Ramallah, allowing women to receive help 16 hours a day, 7 days a week. Some calls are also referred to the Hotline from the Helpline during Jerusalem office working hours (9am-5pm). Women who need more intensive counseling are offered face-to-face sessions with Sawa's Counseling Officer.

Helpline counselor working at Sawa's Ramallah office.



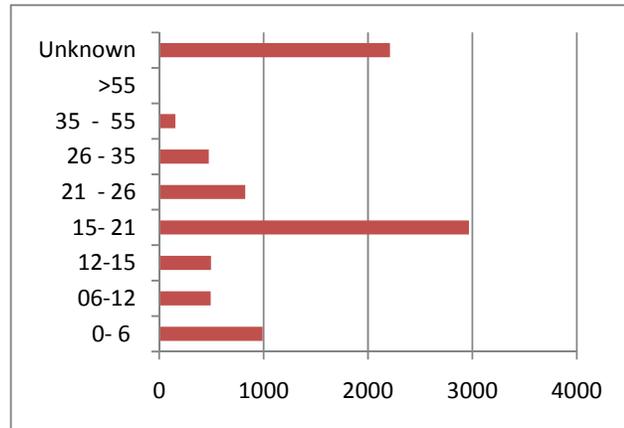
The following tables show Sawa’s received calls during each month of 2009

Month	Received Calls
Jan-09	14672
Feb-09	24784
Mar-09	30920
Apr-09	21240
May-09	26869
Jun-09	30099
Jul 2009	27854
Aug-09	32758
Sep-09	58658
Oct-09	55925
Nov-09	50530
Dec-09	47720



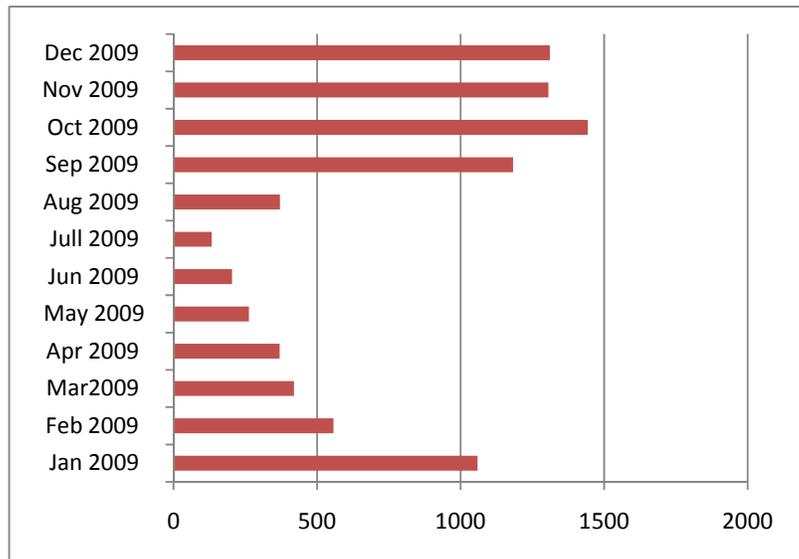
The following tables show Sawa’s documented Calls during 2009 by Age

Caller Age	Grand Total
0- 6	990
06-12	493
12-15	496
15- 21	2967
21 - 26	823
26 – 35	475
35 - 55	154
>55	11
Unknown	2211
Grand Total	8620



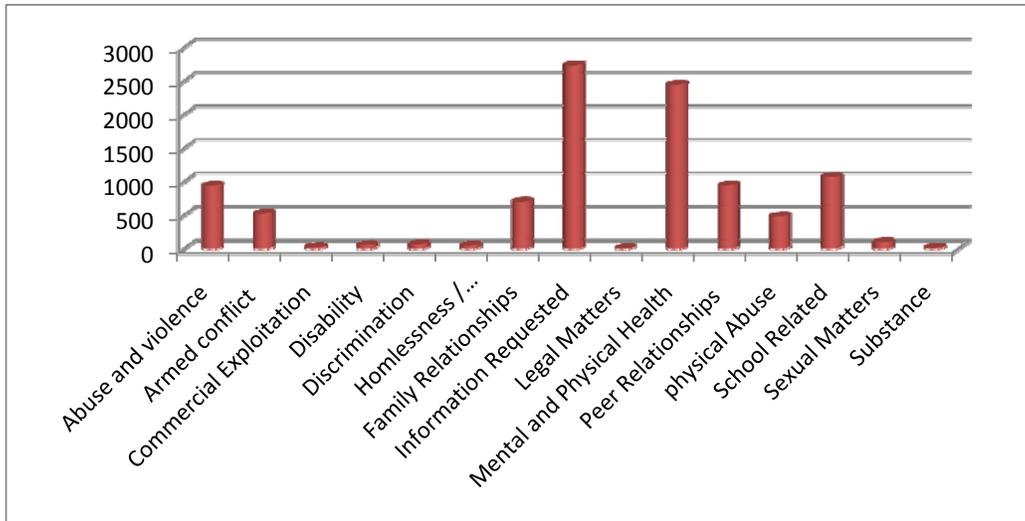
The following tables show Sawa’s documented calls during each month of 2009.

Month	# of calls
Jan 2009	1059
Feb 2009	557
Mar2009	420
Apr 2009	370
May 2009	263
Jun 2009	204
Jul 2009	133
Aug 2009	371
Sep 2009	1183
Oct 2009	1443
Nov 2009	1306
Dec 2009	1311
Total	8620



The following table shows Sawa’s documented cases by reason of contact during 2009:

Call Type	# of Respond
Abuse and violence	943
Armed conflict	525
Commercial Exploitation	26
Disability	56
Discrimination	68
Homelessness / Runaway/Basic Needs	51
Family Relationships	705
Information Requested	2735
Legal Matters	5
Mental and Physical Health	2448
Peer Relationships	945
physical Abuse	483
School Related	1071
Sexual Matters	101
Substance	15
Total	10177



❖ *Training and Capacity Building for Volunteers*

Five volunteer training courses were held this year, one for the hotline, two for the helpline, and two were trained for the outreach education program. Courses include an average of 15 volunteers. Training for each program comprises three stages, the personal, the conceptual, and the practical. During the first stage, participants discuss their different backgrounds and come to know and trust one another. Preconceptions and stereotypes about gender, sex, and violence are discussed and challenged. The second stage features discussion of the different types of violence (physical, sexual, psychological) and examination of case studies. The third consists of hands-on training in either telephone counseling or outreach workshop facilitation. Trainees eventually begin to “shadow” experienced volunteers as they work on the helpline/hotline or facilitate workshops. Training courses took place throughout the year at our facilities in Jerusalem and Ramallah. Most volunteers are students at universities such as Bir Zeit University, Al-Quds University, Hebrew University, and Al-Quds Open University. The contribution of our volunteers in terms of human resources was equivalent to 26.5 NIS per hour per volunteer this year. Volunteerism is the backbone of Sawa’s services and the commitment of our volunteers is a meaningful demonstration of community support for Sawa’s efforts.



Participants at a volunteer training course in Jerusalem.

❖ *Psychological Supervision of Volunteers*

Volunteers meet regularly with Sawa’s Counseling Officer, both individually and in mandatory group sessions. She advises on how to cope with unusual Helpline or Hotline cases, stress, or memories of past trauma triggered by sensitive subject matter. Her mission is to give volunteers the necessary support, skills, and resources to do their job effectively, and to prevent attrition and build teamwork by keeping volunteers motivated and enthusiastic about their work.

❖ *Outreach, Advocacy, and Education*

Educational Outreach Workshops on gender and violence took place at schools and community centers throughout Palestine. Workshops were held at 215 venues, targeting 4061 students of various ages. Because of the sensitivity of the topics addressed, workshops were facilitated by male volunteers for boys and by female volunteers for girls. Workshops emphasized the availability of help for children and youth facing violence, through Sawa’s Helpline and other organizations.



Girls and boys participate in educational workshops for school children.

❖ *Enhancing Professional Capacity*

Sawa continued a program begun in 2007 which provides training courses on gender-based violence for police officers and legal prosecutors. Four courses were conducted for a total of 82 police officers participating in the ongoing program, and one training course for 15 prosecutors. The course helps these professionals to view domestic and sexual violence as serious public problems, rather than private issues, and trains them on how to approach investigation and treat victims appropriately.

Sawa also trained some professionals outside the legal/law enforcement field. We held 3 training courses for 40 social workers.



Participants at the police officers' training course.

❖ *Awareness and Empowerment Workshops for Women*

During 2009, 15 awareness-raising workshops were held in East Jerusalem and Bethlehem, targeting 128 women. Thirty sessions of the longer and more intensive Women's Empowerment Workshops also took place in and around East Jerusalem and Bethlehem, reaching 49 participants. Participants discussed their preconceptions on gender and violence, their families, and their body images, before delving into the different forms of violence, trauma and post-trauma, and an examination of gender-based violence case studies. These workshops aim to increase women's awareness of their rights, to educate them regarding sexuality, sexual health, domestic violence and gender role stereotypes, and to help them learn creative ways to cope with their lives as women, wives, and mothers.



Participants at a Sawa Women’s Workshop, and during Project Clothesline activities.

Outreach Through Mass Media

Sawa makes continual effort to publicize our services. We regularly place advertisements for our telephone counseling services in national newspapers such as Al-Quds and Al-Ayaam, as well as distributing stickers and brochures. We also advertise regularly on the radio and on television. Most notably, a number of local stations heavily advertised the 121 Child Helpline during the Gaza war. Between November and December, a special animated spot on the subject of domestic violence was broadcast during peak hours on Palestine National Television.

Networking and Cooperation

Sawa maintains productive links with many other organizations working in the areas of women’s and children’s rights and protection. We represent the MENA region for Child Helpline International. We are a long-time member of Al-Muntada, a coalition of Palestinian organizations with the goal of combating gender-based violence. We are also a member of ISPCAN--International Congress on Child Abuse and Neglect, PNGO The Palestinian NGO Network, PFCCAN--Palestinian Forum for Combating Child Abuse And Neglect, CPWG--Child Protection Working Group, Safe Abortions, and Palestinian Coalition for a Safe Education and Learning Environment.

Sawa in the Media

Sawa's programs and projects received a great deal of positive press coverage in 2009. Our professional and concerted response to the war in Gaza and our groundbreaking report on trafficking, in particular, garnered much media attention at home and abroad. Newspapers and news agencies in Palestine, the Arab World, the United States, Spain, Germany, and other European countries reported on Sawa's activities this year. Television news programs such as Palestinian National TV, Al-An TV, Al-Hurra, CNN, Al-Jazira, and the BBC covered Sawa as well.

وزير الداخلية يفتتح دورة تدريب وتأهيل
الفوج الرابع من كوادر الأجهزة الأمنية

وكالة الأنباء مركز سوا يختتم دورة تدريبية حول حقوق الطفل وحقوق المرأة

NZZ Online Angst vor dem Kühlschrank

Human Rights Tribune Hotlines support Gaza residents

IslamOnline.net Hotline 121 Guides Gaza's Children and Parents Safe
إسلام أون لاين 25/01/2009 02:52:00 PM GMT

ISRAEL-OPT: Hotlines support Gaza residents

121 خط ساخن في رام الله ينقل معاناة أطفال غزة

يتلقى أكثر من 1250 اتصالاً يومياً

رام الله : الخط الساخن 121 في سوا . .
كل مكالمة تحمل قصة ألم ورعب من غزة

من أهوال العدوان على غزة:
طفل بالسابعة يرعى شقيقه
الصغيرين طيلة يومين تحت القصف

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Thanks to 2009's Supporters and Partners:

