



Dear R4T Colleagues and Friends,

This newsletter is another large one. We cover first, lessons from our partners from a Digital Mentoring session last week and updates from Gaza and our Palestine Partners. We next share some perspectives on how to maintain work in a context of crisis (and what that means). We feature some news and media coverage, as well as reflections on our role and the role of research in these challenging times.

To aid in navigating these digital pages, our Mini TOC features hyperlinked sections that will guide you to the topics that resonate most.



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### [1. Editorial Overview: Crisis as a Lens for Protection](#)

The Rights for Time network was tasked, when it was awarded funding, with demonstrating why crisis is the wrong framework for protection. We set out to demonstrate that taking a longer view on harm ultimately protects more people, better. This last month has been a devastating reminder that our work is essential, that our evidence is sound, and that our message is critical. It has also been devastating to see how our work, and others making similar calls for a broader view, have gone unheeded.

The world we are living in is not the one we want to tell our children about. We reiterate our call for justice, freedom, and equality. We understand that the journey towards these ideals is not linear nor simple, and it is this understanding that shapes our mission.

[\*\*Click to read R4T's official statement on the situation in Palestine and Israel\*\*](#)

## [2. Digital Mentoring Highlights: Partners' Perspectives in Times of Crisis](#)

Last week we dedicated a Digital Mentoring session to an open discussion about what is happening in Palestine, and made space for partners to reflect on our role within crisis and beyond.



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### Digital Mentoring Sessions

The "Digital Mentoring Sessions" section is a gateway to gaining comprehensive insights into our network's conceptual underpinnings and ways of working. These presentations and conversations illustrate how we commission and conduct research, emphasising best practices for investigating humanitarian protection issues. Whether you are a member or an observer, these sessions offer valuable knowledge that can enhance your understanding of our work and the rigour that underpins it. This is the place to access a wealth of expert advice and direction on a range of topics related to humanitarian protection research and the functioning of the R4T network.

## LESSONS FROM PARTNERS

*In a context of acute crisis, our partners [the Tamer Institute](#), which have an office in Gaza, are carrying out needs assessment and disseminating this information across their support networks. Their staff, who continued to carry out writing workshops with kids even in shelters amid displacement, found that this work was impossible. Workshops were constantly interrupted by strikes and urgent searches for the necessities of life. Our partners [the Palestine Trauma Center](#) are, as they can, updating social media with advice on managing mental health in acute crisis. This focuses largely on the protection of children. The center was also able to source some food, which it distributed near its damaged offices on the outskirts of Gaza City.*

***In acute crisis,  
the priorities are  
to document,  
disseminate, and  
protect life.***

*Our partners [the Palestine Writing Workshop](#) and the Tamer Institute's West Bank staff remain in a context of protracted crisis. Roads are blocked, movement is restricted. There is a context of fear (of Israeli arrest or detention, of a broader escalation of violence, fear of having permits revoked, of losing access to homes, schools and businesses). Many projects are on hold as staff cannot access their workplaces, schools are open intermittently and many youth programs are suspended as parents prefer to keep children home.*

***In a context of closure, protracted crisis, and fear, the work of healing and analysis is also often suspended.***

*The priority at this time is safety – helping staff and communities feel safe. For the Tamer Institute this has been public calls for support and notes from their many international partners. They have issued a call for friends to share the positive experiences they have had with the children’s literature and the children of the Institute over the years. This activates international ties and puts emphasis on connection, on children, on the need for safety.*

***International support can contribute to a feeling of safety***

*This sense of safety and of action are also essential, Partners explained, for what might be the most important element of crisis: endurance. The PTC and Tamer staff must survive, and the Tamer West Bank and Palestine Writing Workshop must maintain belief in their work and its long-term importance.*

***Sustaining practice as an essential component of crisis response***

*What helps in this truth, as Dinayen Bimela from The Forest Creative Loft in Cameroon noted, and the belief that the truths we work within will prevail. What is essential, all of our present partners agreed, is that we must not give up.*

## Where We Work



### [3. Ground Realities: Updates from the Tamer Institute and the Palestine Trauma Center](#)

It is within this context, of the importance of documentation, that we share the following updates from our partners. We also highlight their ongoing work and reflections, emphasizing that beyond preserving life we must sustain it and its long-term capacities.

#### **Tamer Institute's Gaza Office**

Last week the Tamer Institute lost Eman Abu Saeid who worked with the organization's Family Centers. In her last email to colleagues, Eman described an activity she was planning.



It involved seashells, going out with families and digging on the beach, cleaning them, talking about how they were being used in construction—because of the limitations to cement imports—and how the sea was such a big part of Gaza's histories. They would take the shells back to the center, clean them off, and make decorations, while sharing stories of the sea. The decorations were a chance to talk, to spend time with family, to voice frustration about the siege, and the many many ways it made families unsafe, even before 7 October.

Eman was killed with 22 members of her extended family, including her two children, Ziad and Judy.

You can read the Tamer Institute's tribute to Eman [here](#)

## Palestine Trauma Center



Since last week the situation in Gaza has deteriorated. PTC Director Mohamed Altawil has not managed to contact all of the staff, so we do not know if they are safe, or simply unreachable. Most are displaced.

The team that he has spoken with is worried for their lives from one hour to the next.

Some of the team was able to gather near the center and distribute food. PTC has received support from some small UK organisations including the [13 Rivers Trust](#), this includes funds for food distribution. Center staff still in the area gathered supplies for distribution to the most needy. The trust has committed to help raise funds for the center's reconstruction.

Some PTC staffers have managed to speak with clients over the phone when connection was restored briefly, offering ongoing support for those mental health, whose ability to support themselves and their families, has suffered along with the material conditions.



On Friday, Mohamed spoke with his brother, who wasn't sure what his children would eat that day. They have been using dry wood to make sure that the food they can source stretches out to feed the family.

Fida, who leads the Friday of Joy, remains in intensive care. His wife and two children were killed. He does not know yet.

### **Ahlam, writer with the Tamer Institute project**

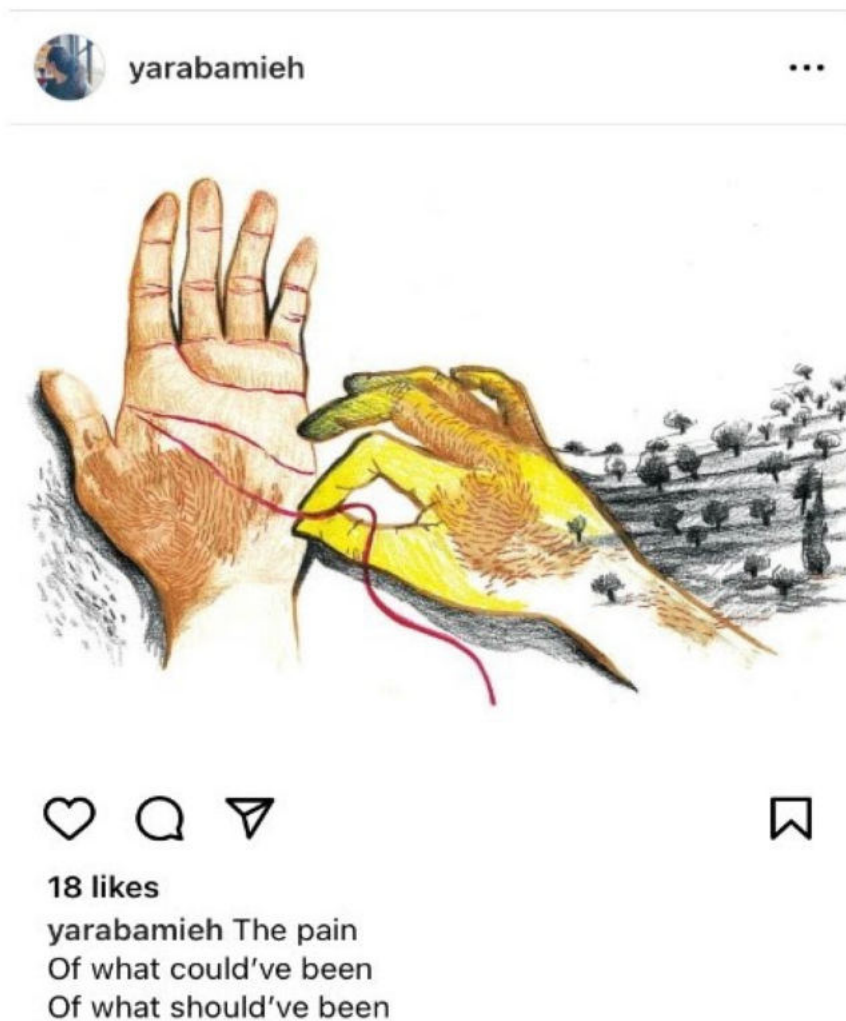
*I haven't saved a single child since the beginning of the war on Gaza. It's the 29th day of the war, 3826 children have been martyred, and I haven't saved a single one of them. Not even Raghad Fruwana, was killed with her grandfather, Dr. Omar Fruwana, and his other grandchildren. I couldn't save her! I met Raghad last year in Gaza, and taught her to write memoirs about the previous wars she was born and raised in. The words we played with did not protect her small body from the large missile that killed her.*

*My words haven't saved a single child of the 3826 children martyred. This will haunt my future, and all the stories I write for children in it.*

Ahlam Bsharat is an award winning author of adult and YA fiction. Her work has been translated as [Trees for Absentees](#), and [Code Name Butterfly](#). She has teamed up with the Tamer Institute to help document and express the experience of Palestinian children who

have been subject to arrest by the Israeli military, border guards, and police.

## Yara, illustrator with the Palestine Writing Workshop via [Instagram](#)



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### [4. Outreach and Media: Coverage and Conversations](#)

Professor Heather Flowe has been reaching out to the BBC highlighting our work and the devastating experiences of our partners. She has spent the week briefing our funder UKRI, and the leads on several other large Networks.

Dr Mohamed Altawil was invited to speak to MP Daisy Cooper (St Albans). He shared the loss of his family, the damage to the center, the devastation of the communities that the center works with. He stressed the need for an immediate ceasefire.





Rights for Time spoke with *Research Professional* last week. Ahmed Ashour, the director of Tamer's Gaza, was featured prominently.

The article, behind a paywall, is distributed to major university Administration leaders globally. It aimed to draw out the impact of what is happening on research.

"The air strikes maybe you hear right now? Very close to where I am," says Ahmad Ashour from the Gaza office of the Tamer Institute for Community Education. Moments earlier the call was interrupted by an explosion and the sound of crying children.

Ashour moved his family to Deir al Balah in the middle of the Gaza Strip after the Israel Defence Forces gave the order to evacuate Gaza City on 13 October. Since the attack on Israel by Hamas on 7 October, Gaza has been under near constant bombardment by the IDF. Airstrikes have not been limited to Gaza City. "No place is safe, actually, in Gaza," Ashour says.

The Tamer Institute is a non-profit focused on supporting education for children and young adults in Palestine. It is a partner in a research network led by the University of Birmingham, which commissions research on humanitarian protection.

All the staff of the institute's office in Gaza City have been displaced. One of Ashour's colleagues, Mohammed Sami, was killed in the destruction of the al-Ahli Arab Hospital on 17 October, which caused international outrage, with both sides in the conflict blaming each other.

The reporter also picked up on something Nora Parr (Co-Investigator at UoB and co-lead on the Palestine Case Study) mentioned. This is something that the network is grappling with, and speaking with our funders about.

The network is publicly funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, and Parr says some Palestinian partners have pointed out to her that the UK has sent military assets to support Israel. Parr says the UK government is effectively providing funding for a mental health centre in Gaza via the network while "supporting a project that has demolished it".



"That puts us in a very strange position," she says. Her research network has awarded grants to the centre in question and trained 13 of its staff members in qualitative data collection. The Palestine Trauma Centre was damaged on the second day of the Israeli bombardment.

In the chaos of the bombardments it took nearly two weeks for the centre director to establish that most of his staff were safe. Parr says 35 members of the centre director's own family have been killed.

"I've been working with Palestine for the last 25 years and this is the worst I've seen it. Everyone is terrified," she says. "We are trying to preserve and protect the information that they've entrusted with us, to try and let the world know a little bit of what's happening with them, because they largely cannot."

She says the staff of the Palestine Trauma Centre will find a way to rebuild, if they can, while UK partners will "find ways to help the centre reconstitute itself so that that knowledge isn't lost".

While we are proud of being able to highlight the work and experiences of our network, we were upset, though not surprised, to see that the article—like so much of the news—never looks beyond Oct 7. This is where their timeline starts, this is the 'conflict' that they see as worthy of coverage.

We will reach out to our contact at the publication in the coming days, to suggest a follow up that better reflects the legacy of the work, and what it says about understanding crisis in broader contexts. The ugliness of this last month did not begin on 7 October, as our partners can attest, the crisis has been an ongoing one for generations.

You can access the article [here](#), or email us for a PDF.



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### [5. Reflections and Resilience: Voices from the Field](#)

The events of the past month and the global ‘response’ has been difficult to watch, and even more difficult to challenge. As researchers, whose governments make decisions that go against evidence produced by Rights for Time and other nationally funded research groups, we face difficult questions. How can we be part of the solution when our government is part of the problem? And even broader, how can we advocate for better policy when the very pillars of our systems: justice, accountability, freedom, do not seem to be part of the equation?

One of Rights for Time’s Lebanon Fellows, [Stella Peisch](#), put these concerns succinctly in a reflection she sent earlier this week:

*I don’t know how to continue knowing that the system I was raised in and was skeptical of, but ultimately believed in, of a value-based system that prioritized human rights and the Middle East. I see friends from the region sharing messages along the lines of never believing again the narrative the West put forward of valuing diversity of opinion and experience, of countering oppression, of a rights based approach to the world.*

For now, we focus on, according to our partners, documentation, creating spaces of safety and support, trusting in the truth, speaking that truth to the powers we can, and reminding all of our partners how important the work they do is. For those in acute, protracted, long

term, or generational crisis, we continue to believe that it is only in long-term action that we can find justice and make the systems work.

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As we draw this issue of Palestine Updates to a close, we hope the stories and insights shared within these pages ignite a deeper understanding of the realities faced in Palestine. The narratives of resilience, the critical analyses, and the unfiltered truths presented are a testament to the courage of our partners and the communities they serve. 🌍🕒

With gratitude and solidarity,  
The Rights for Time Team

