

Rafeef Ziadah

"We teach life, sir"

Today, my body was a TV'd massacre.

Today, my body was a TV'd massacre that had to fit into sound-bites and word limits.

Today, my body was a TV'd massacre that had to fit into sound-bites and word limits filled enough with statistics to counter measured response.

And I perfected my English and I learned my UN resolutions.

But still, he asked me, Ms. Ziadah, don't you think that everything would be resolved if you would just stop teaching so much hatred to your children?

Pause.

I look inside of me for strength to be patient but patience is not at the tip of my tongue as the bombs drop over Gaza.

Patience has just escaped me.

Pause. Smile.

We teach life, sir.

Rafeef, remember to smile.

Pause.

We teach life, sir.

We Palestinians teach life after they have occupied the last sky.

We teach life after they have built their settlements and apartheid walls, after the last skies.

We teach life, sir.

But today, my body was a TV'd massacre made to fit into sound-bites and word limits.

And just give us a story, a human story.

You see, this is not political.

We just want to tell people about you and your people so give us a human story.

Don't mention that word "apartheid" and "occupation".

This is not political.

You have to help me as a journalist to help you tell your story which is not a political story.

Today, my body was a TV'd massacre.

How about you give us a story of a woman in Gaza who needs medication?

How about you?

Do you have enough bone-broken limbs to cover the sun?

Hand me over your dead and give me the list of their names in one thousand two hundred word limits.

Today, my body was a TV'd massacre that had to fit into sound-bites and word limits and move those that are desensitized to terrorist blood.

But they felt sorry.

They felt sorry for the cattle over Gaza.

So, I give them UN resolutions and statistics and we condemn and we deplore and we reject.

And these are not two equal sides: occupier and occupied.

And a hundred dead, two hundred dead, and a thousand dead.

And between that, war crime and massacre, I vent out words and smile "not exotic", "not terrorist".

And I recount, I recount a hundred dead, a thousand dead.

Is anyone out there?

Will anyone listen?

I wish I could wail over their bodies.

I wish I could just run barefoot in every refugee camp and hold every child, cover their ears so they wouldn't have to hear the sound of bombing for the rest of their life the way I do.

Today, my body was a TV'd massacre

And let me just tell you, there's nothing your UN resolutions have ever done about this.

And no sound-bite, no sound-bite I come up with, no matter how good my English gets, no sound-bite, no sound-bite, no sound-bite, no sound-bite will bring them back to life.

No sound-bite will fix this.

We teach life, sir.

We teach life, sir.

We Palestinians wake up every morning to teach the rest of the world life, sir.