

## **Special field report of the martyr child: Haitham Ahmed Maa'rouf**

Name: Haitham Ahmed Mustafa Maa'rouf.

Date of Birth: 19 January 1998.

Identity Card Number: 403666605.

Address: Ghabon Neighborhood, Beit Lahiya town - near Al Baraka mosque - North Gaza Strip.

Place of Injury: agricultural land rented by his father, located to the west of Al-Shaimaa' school, northwest of Beit Lahiya, North Gaza Strip.

Date of Injury: Sunday morning, 21 August 2011 at 11:20 pm.

Date of Death: 29 August 2011, at Schneider Hospital for Children in Tel Aviv.

Type Injury: back and limbs (the left side of the body).

### **Summary of the incident:**

On Sunday, 21 August 2011, at about 11:20 am, an Israeli exploration plane fired a missile towards **Haitham Ahmed Mustafa Maa'rouf, a child of 13 years old**, while he was opening water sprays on his father's agricultural rented land. The child was helping his family collecting crops and taking care of the vegetables on their rented land, which is located to the west of Al Shaimaa School, to the northwest of Beit Lahiya, North Gaza governorate. The child was seriously injured, and remained for three days in the intensive care unit (of) Al Shifa Hospital, before being transferred to Schneider Hospital for Children in Israel, where he died on Monday morning, 29 August 2011.

### **Details of the incident:**

On Sunday morning 21 August 2011 at about 5:30 am, the child Haitham went out with his family (his father, mother and brothers) to work on their agricultural land that his father rented from his uncle, a man named Mustafa Maa'rouf. The size of the land is about three dunums and is planted with vegetables (peppers - eggplants – kidney beans) and is located to the west of Al-Shaimaa' School, to the northwest of Beit Lahiya, North Gaza governorate which is approximately three kilometres away from the Israeli border.

After several hours of work collecting kidney beans, the child's father and brothers went to the market to sell the crops, while Haitham and his mother, named Hiyam Ahmed Maa'rouf (35 years old) stayed on the land in order to water and spray the vegetables.

At about 10:50 am, the child Haitham headed to his home near their agricultural land to open the water sprays for irrigation, while his mother was still working on the land. At that moment, she saw some members of the Palestinian resistance movement (Palestinian fighters) firing rockets from their own lands towards Israel, at a distance of about 50 metres from where she was situated. The mother was afraid that Israeli aircrafts might bomb their land. Palestinian citizens are accustomed to leaving areas after such an attack because of the fear of Israeli responses to firing rockets, which is usually immediate and targets the whole area where the rockets have been fired from, without taking into account the presence of civilians. Therefore, Haitham's mother, Hiyam went to hide in one of her neighbour's house, which belongs to the family of the

prisoner Talal Maa'rouf; in the meanwhile, her son Haitham had returned to the land and began to open the water sprays on the land.

At about 11:20 am, Hiyam left her neighbour's house and started hearing the sound of the Israeli drones flying in the sky nearby. It is important to note that, this type of aircraft does not leave skies of the Gaza Strip.

Hiyam saw her son Haitham opening the water sprays, and noticed that there was no one in the area other than her and her son, (It should be noted here that there was about half an hour between the time of the firing of rockets by elements of the Palestinian resistance and the Israeli response). Suddenly, an Israeli plane fired a missile targeting Haitham, who was seriously wounded in the attack. His mother rushed immediately to his side which was full of dust and smoke, and tried to carry him, but could not move him due to his serious injuries.

At that time, one of the neighbours called Saeed Dawood Ghaban came to us after hearing the sound of the explosion, and carried the wounded child Haitham on a cart pulled by a motorcycle "Toktok" to Kamal Odwan Hospital in Beit Lahiya, where he was given first aid care. Then he was transferred to Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza due to the seriousness of his injuries.

Haitham remained in the intensive care unit of the hospital for three days. In the afternoon of Wednesday 24 August 2011 he was transferred to Schneider Hospital for Children in Tel Aviv, where he stayed for several days, until he died on the morning of Monday 29 August 2011. His body reached Gaza through the Erez Crossing, and was then buried in the cemetery of Beit Lahiya, northern Gaza.

**Attachments (available upon request):**

- Martyr Form
- Affidavit of the child's mother (Hiyam Maa'rouf)
- Medical report
- Identity card of the father
- Birth certificate.

Field Researcher-Gaza

Monday 5 September 2011