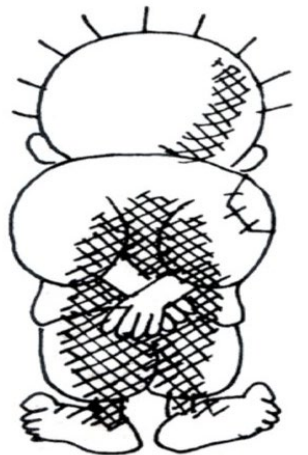


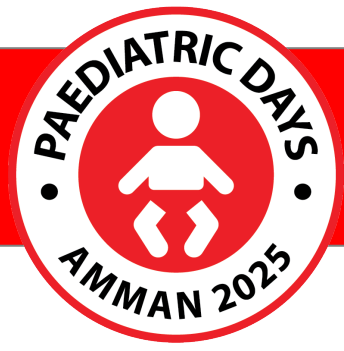


When Names Are Lost: Bearing Witness to Paediatric Trauma in Gaza

Dr Mohammed Ghneim, MD, MSc
Emergency Medicine Registrar _ London
Former EM Doctor _ Alshifa Hospital

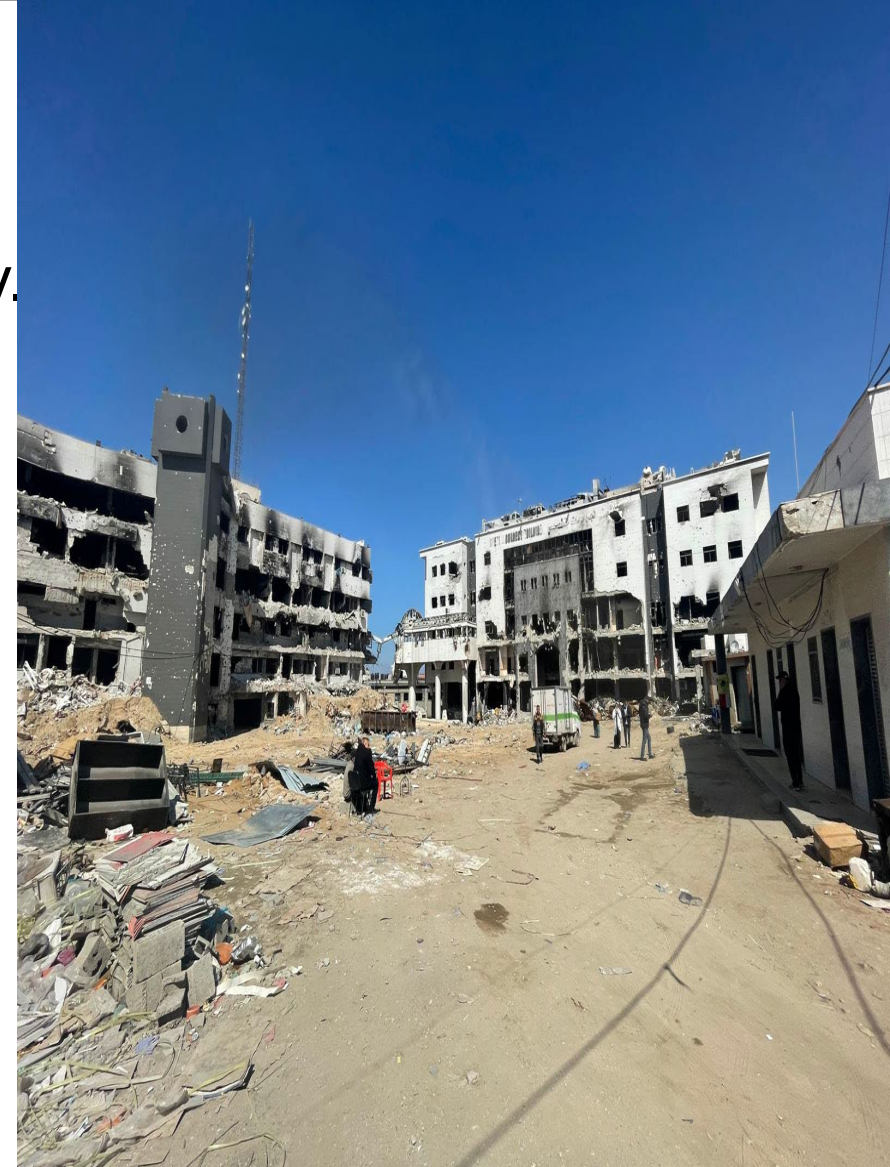
MSF Paediatric Days 2025 – Amman, Jordan

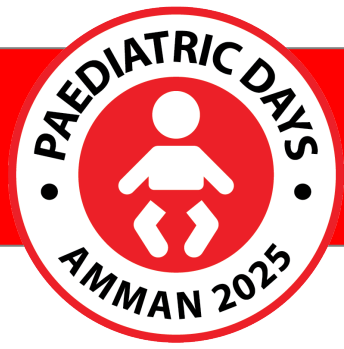




Context

- Gaza, October 2023, attack the largest in recent memory.
- Al-Shifa Hospital served as the main trauma centre.
- Massive influx of casualties within hours.
- Unprecedented proportion of children among the wounded and deceased.

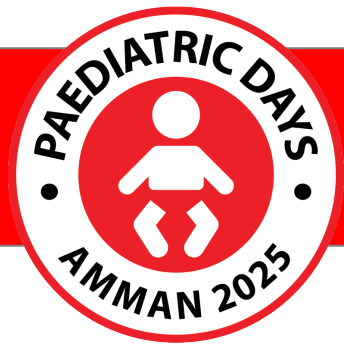




Scale of the Challenge

- Entire families arriving simultaneously.
- Limited staff, supplies, and anaesthetic resources.
- Infrastructure is overwhelmed under constant threat.

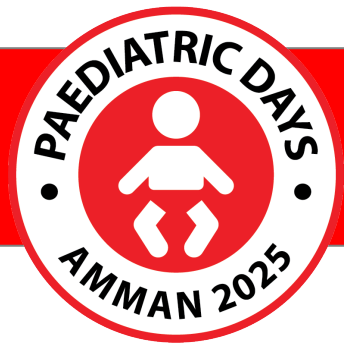




The Unnamed Children

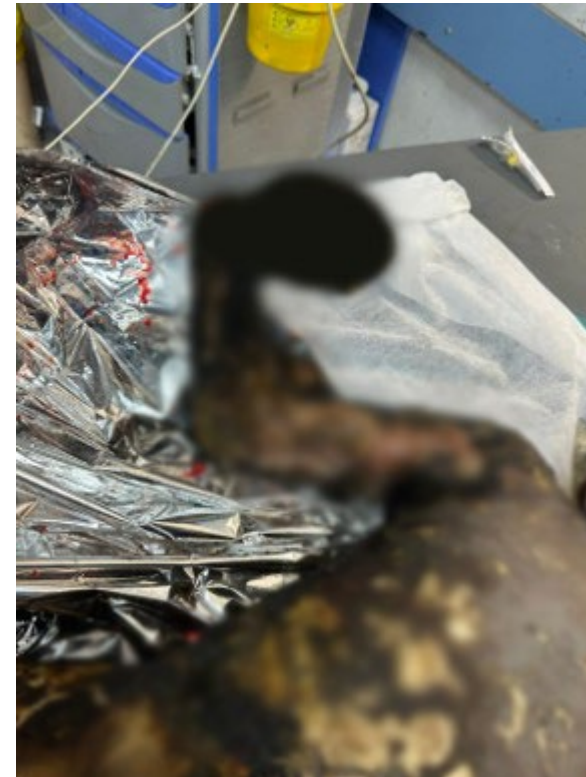
- Many children arrived without identification
- Arriving alone or without surviving relatives.
- I initiated a coding system: date and estimated time of arrival.
- Purpose: enable recognition and family reunification.
- A heartbreaking transformation — 'patients became numbers before they had names.'

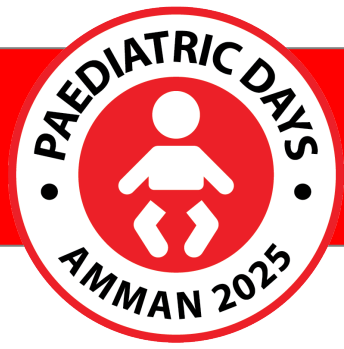




The Nature of Injuries

- Unprecedented fourth-degree burns requiring amputations.
- Explosive injuries: traumatic amputations and eviscerations.
- Children awake and in pain due to lack of anaesthetic.
- Extensive shrapnel wounds to face and eyes.

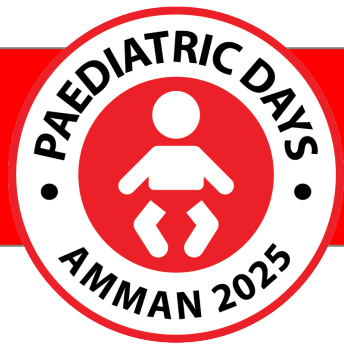




Human Moments Amid the Chaos

- A 9-year-old girl blinded by shrapnel, surrounded by chaos.
- Parents holding dying children with no hope of intervention.
- Medical teams exhausted and emotionally overwhelmed.
- Moral distress: We were doctors, but helpless witnesses too

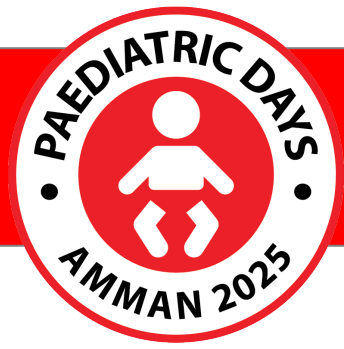




Systemic Gaps and Ethical Dilemmas

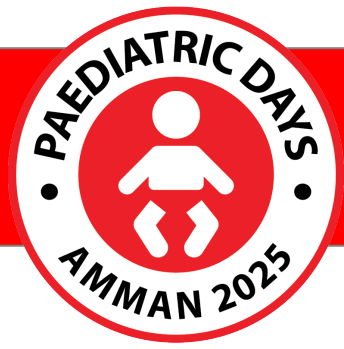
- Collapse of referral and documentation systems.
- Shortage of paediatric-specific trauma supplies.
- Ethical strain in triage and end-of-life decisions.
- No psychological support for survivors or staff.
- Triage of family and friends.





Reflections and Lessons

- Paediatric trauma in conflict requires tailored preparedness.
- Identification systems must be part of emergency protocols.
- Need for paediatric-specific training and supply chains.
- Beyond survival: protecting dignity & humanity.



Closing Message

- "In Gaza, we lost names before we lost lives."
- Each child deserves to be remembered as more than a number.
- Commitment to advocate for paediatric care and humanitarian protection.