Gaza’s Horrors

written by Rachel Eborall | February 9, 2026

We are told that to change the future, we need to understand the past. *In Witness to the Hellfire of Genocide: A Testimony from Gaza,* Wasim Said compels us to witness, feel, and understand the present to change the now. This is not a retrospective account written by historians or anthropologists; it is written from the epicenter of an unfolding genocide. It demands that we confront the present in all its brutality. Wasim Said writes not for posterity but for survival, and in doing so he transforms memoir into a weapon of truth. Wasim Said, a 24-year-old physics student, was forced to replace his ambitions “of being an explorer of the universe with the dream of securing a sack of flour.” Wasim Said describes writing as an exploration in the meaning of life, and this testimony is his way to be remembered. The desired to be remembered in the face of death and the dying feels essential, a way of knowing that you made a mark on the world. This desire is even more poignant as the writer is aware that there may be no friends or family to remember him as the genocide intensifies. This book is more than a personal testimony; however, it documents the collective endeavor of the Palestinian people to survive and as such demands that we redouble our efforts to ensure that Palestine is free.

Most literature on genocide is written after the atrocities have ended. Said writes from within the inferno, his words shaped by the roar of F-16s overhead and the knowledge that bombs are falling as he writes. His vulnerability is palpable. He describes a world where conventions are reversed: light, once a symbol of hope, now signals death as flares illuminate burning homes.

What makes Wasim’s narrative all the more heart-wrenching is his portrayal of the stark contrast between human vulnerability and the monstrous machinery of war. The vulnerability of the Palestinian people is described in sharp contrast to weapons that have horrific qualities. The deafening roar of fighter jets, the buzzing of the drones, the monstrous size of a battleship, shells randomly falling from the sky, the tanks that circle and retreat, of course these monsters of war are accompanied by the army of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF). The vile elements of the Israeli state are compared to the very human qualities of the Palestinians who are haunted by the specters that accompany: war, hunger, fear, and cold.

This is not a sanitized account. Wasim Said does not shy away from the moral compromises and desperate acts that genocide and war breed. Wasim Said describes ordinary Palestinians engaging with war profiteers, clashing with criminal gangs, arming themselves to protect flour, and even longing for death as a merciful escape. The honesty is harrowing, but necessary. It also hit a raw nerve as I realized that I had become desensitized to the images of war. Reading the accounts was an emotional experience unlike seeing constant images in which I am passive consumer. This book necessitates reflection and reignites the shock and anger of the injustices faced by the Palestinian people.

This is more than a memoir; the book insists that we bear witness to the present in its totality—the humanity, the injustice, and the pain. It is a memoir of heroism and vulnerability, but also a challenge to the world beyond Gaza: to redouble our efforts to stop the genocide and then to never stop until Palestine is free.