

Remembering Gaza's Victims

By [Anne Paq](#)

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [History](#), [Military](#), [WMD](#)

In-depth Report: [PALESTINE](#)

Image: A shoe belonging to Hala Bassam Madi, 3, lies in the ruins of her home in Rafah, southern Gaza, on 19 November 2014. The girl died in an Israeli air strike on 1 August 2014 that also killed her father Bassam, her mother Eman and her 2-year-old sister Jana. Her 3-year-old cousin Yousef was also killed, and a great-uncle later died of his wounds. Today, many of the ruins of destroyed homes have not been cleared and personal belongings remain scattered in the ruins.

Documenting Israel's military assault on Gaza last summer, I witnessed what can only be called atrocities: hospitals and morgues, overwhelmed by the constant flow of casualties; nights of terror under widespread and indiscriminate bombing; attacks on hospitals, ambulances and United Nations schools used as shelters; entire neighborhoods destroyed.

Of all the horrifying statistics, one is particularly shocking: [142 families lost three members or more in single Israeli strikes](#). I started the project #ObliteratedFamilies — now available for [download](#) and exhibiting all over the world — to [document such loss](#). It began as a project about the victims, but soon became also a project about the survivors. How can one cope with loss on this scale?

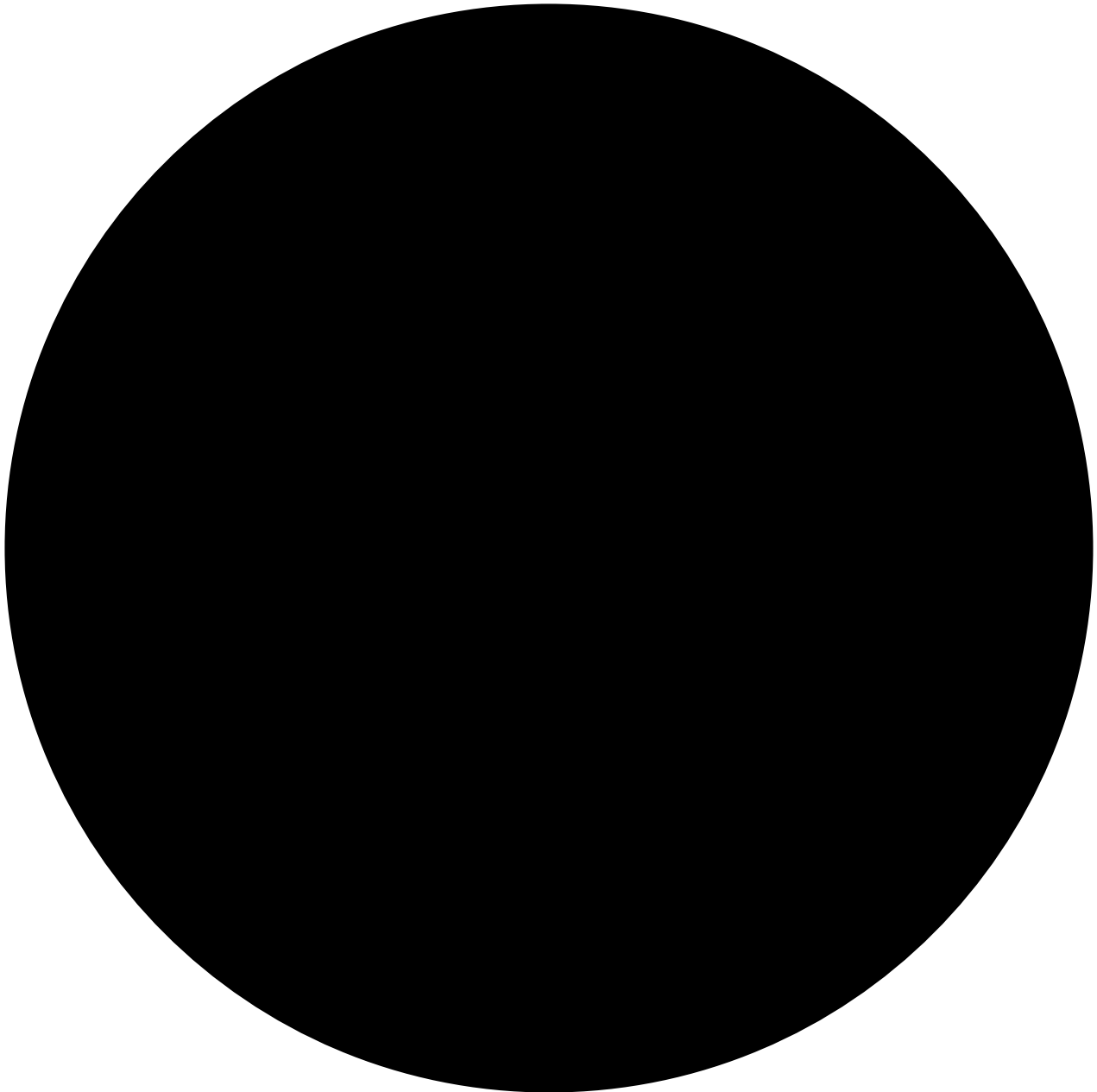
With the support of the Gaza-based human rights group Al Mezan, I met more than 50 families profoundly affected by Israel's deadly attacks. I have never been exposed to such pain. Months after the end of the attacks, many Palestinians I met were still traumatized and in deep grief. Many also expressed their doubt of any prospect for justice for the crimes committed against their loved ones.

Some broke down and cried during our interview, others expressed their anger or were still in shock and unable to comprehend what had happened to them.

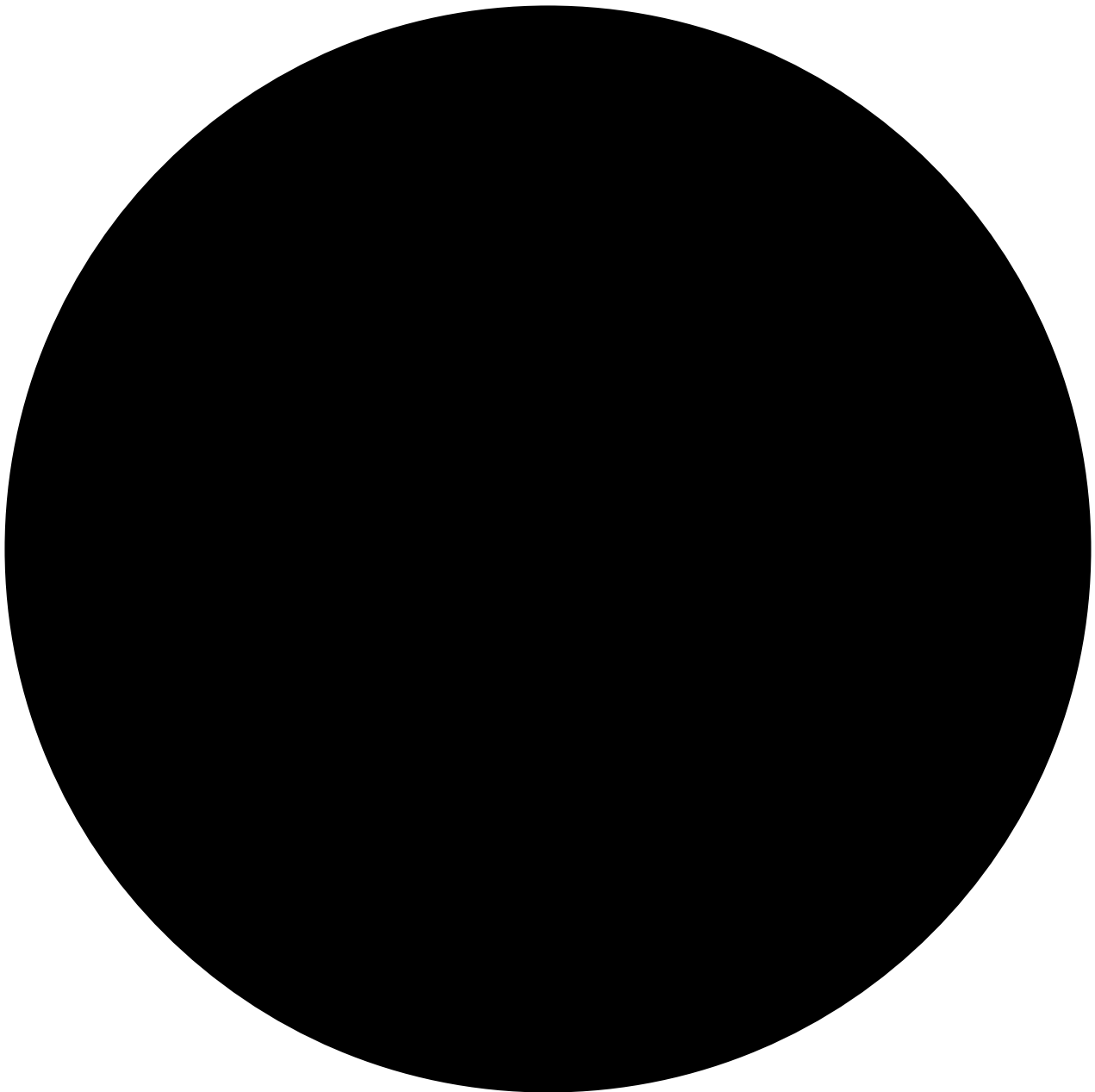
When I visited the homes of these mourning families, the memory of their lost kin was always present, though in varying ways. In some homes, their photos were displayed atop TV sets or on the walls. Sometimes, the victims' clothes and belongings were as they left them, months after their death, as if they would soon return. In other homes, family members constantly looked at photos and videos of their loved ones on their mobile phones.

This collection of photographs contributes to the effort to remember Gaza's victims, and to promote the calls for justice of the survivors.

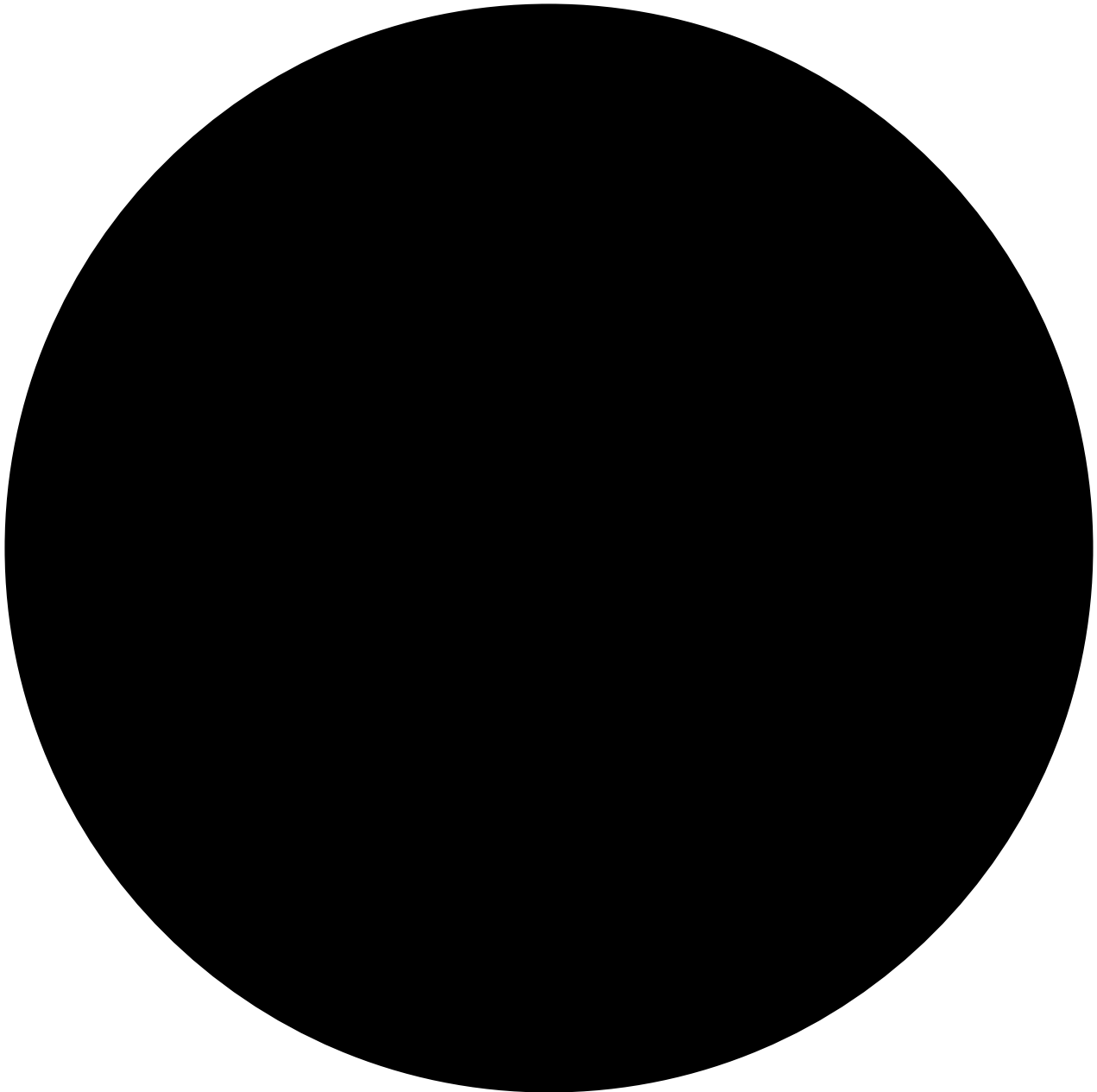
Anne Paq is a French freelance photographer and member of the photography collective [ActiveStills](#).



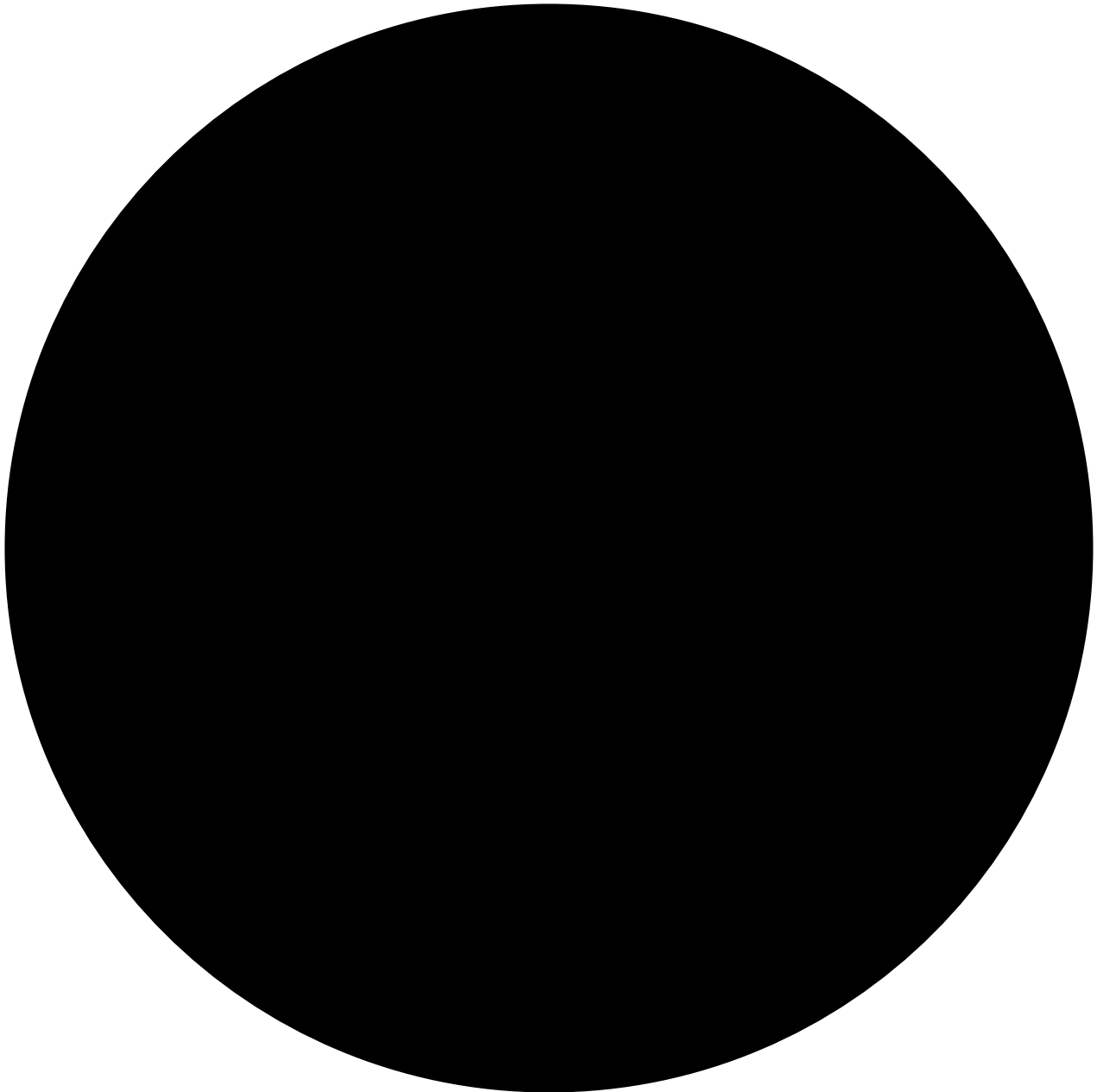
A poster honors the memory of Abbas Helmi Abu Rijeila, 20, seen in the street of Khuzaa, southern Gaza, on 16 November 2014. The business student was killed along with his father and sister in an Israeli missile attack on their home on 27 July 2014. Abbas was killed immediately; his sister Nehad was evacuated on a donkey cart as the ambulance could not reach them. She died a few day later in an Egyptian hospital.



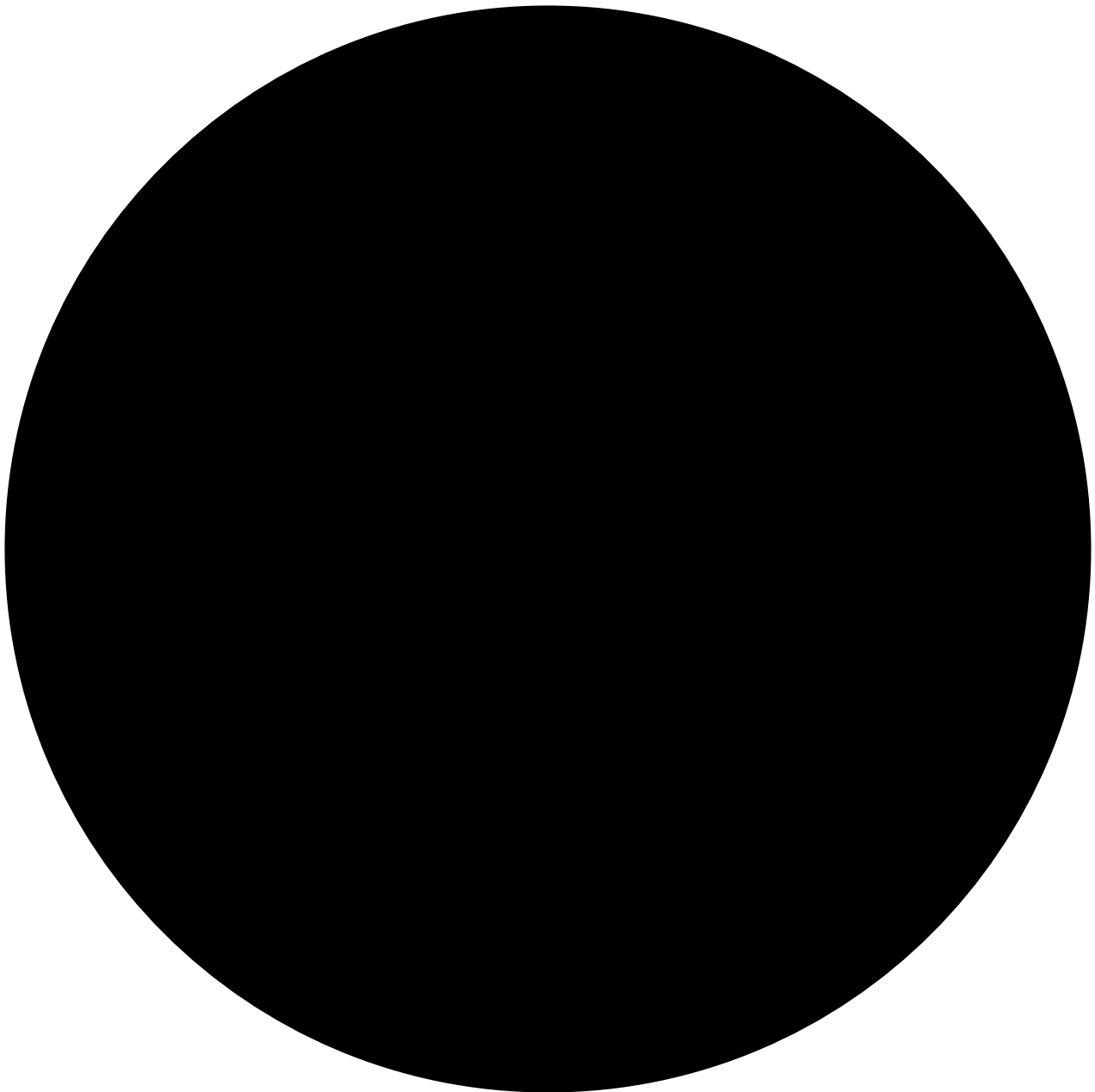
A photo of Afnan Wesam Shuhaibar, 8, in her Gaza City room on 17 November 2014. Afnan was killed together with two of her cousins, aged 8 and 11, when they were feeding the pigeons on the roof on 17 July 2014. Wesam, her father, says that she was an excellent pupil.



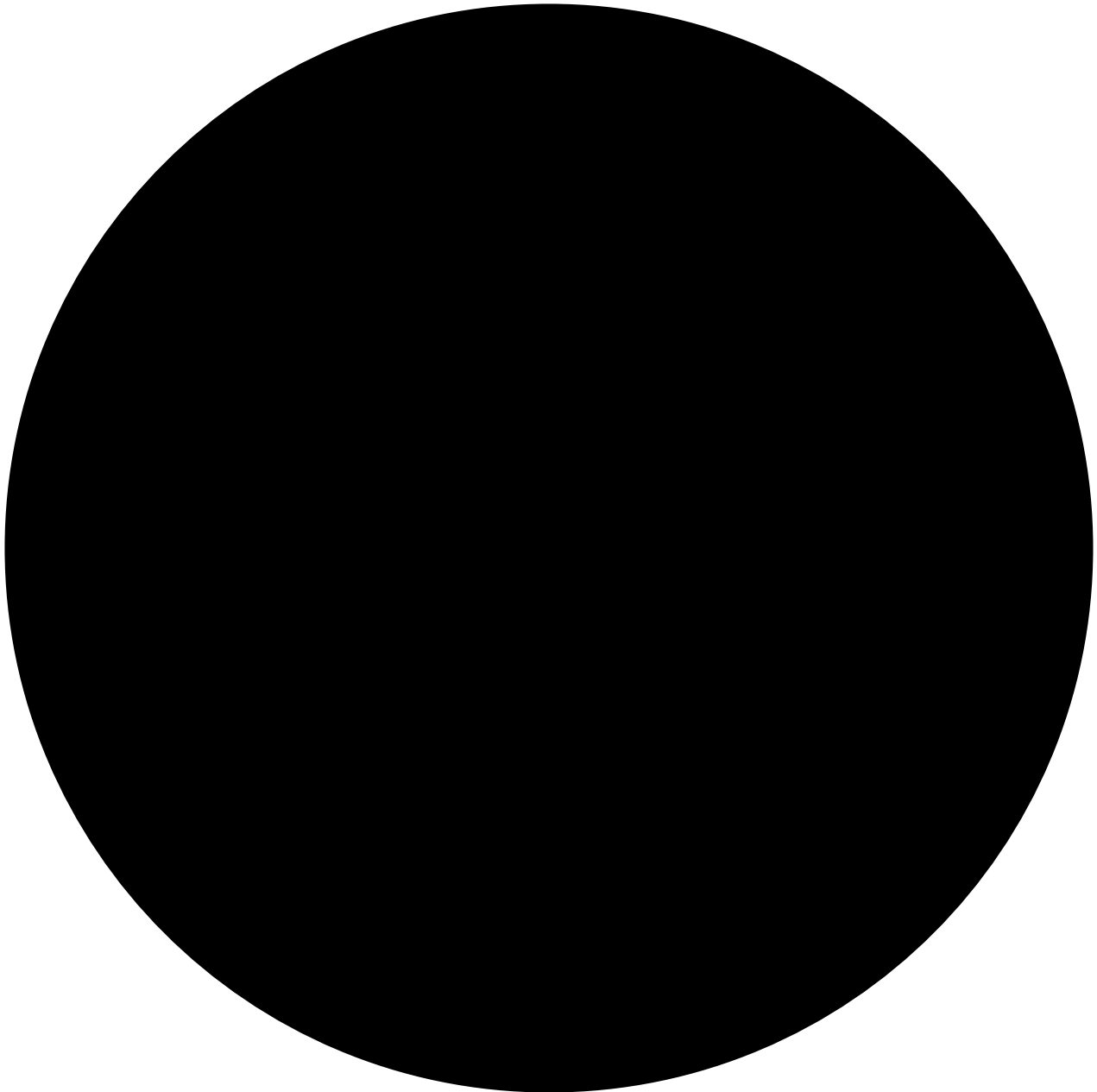
A photo stored on a mobile phone shows members of the al-Najjar family in the Bani Suheila, Khan Yunis, southern Gaza Strip, on 19 November 2014. Nineteen members of the family, including 10 children, were killed in an Israeli attack on the night of 26 July 2014.



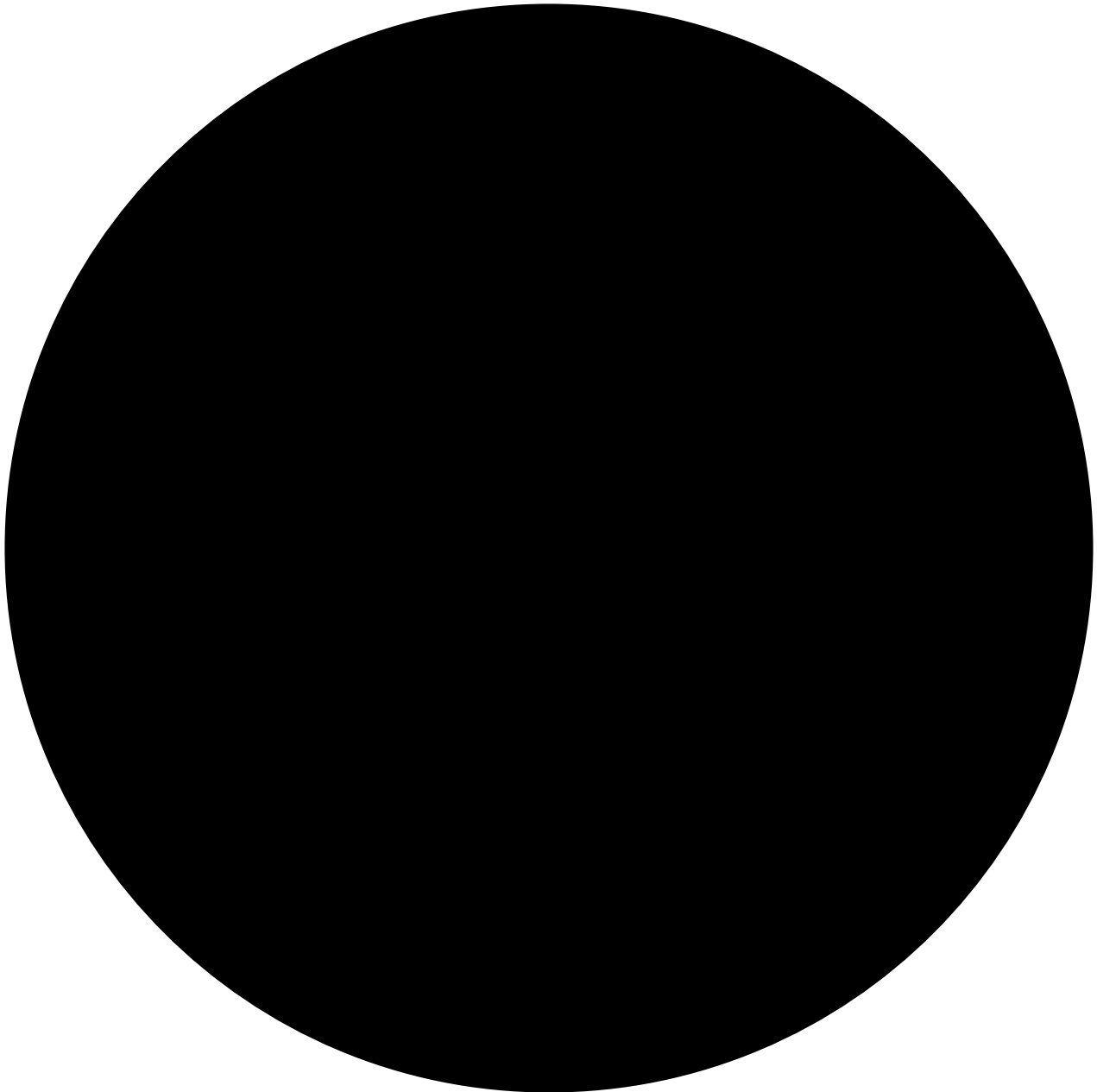
The office of Ibrahim Deeb Kilani in his home in Beit Lahiya, northern Gaza, on 19 November 2014. Ibrahim, his wife Taghrid and their five young children were killed in a single Israeli air strike on a Gaza City residential tower on 21 July 2014. They had fled their home after Israel dropped leaflets on Beit Lahiya warning residents to evacuate and go to Gaza City. Ibrahim was an architect who had lived in Germany for more 20 years and some of his buildings can be found in Köln. He and his children held German passports. As of November 2014, their home remained untouched with all their belongings inside.



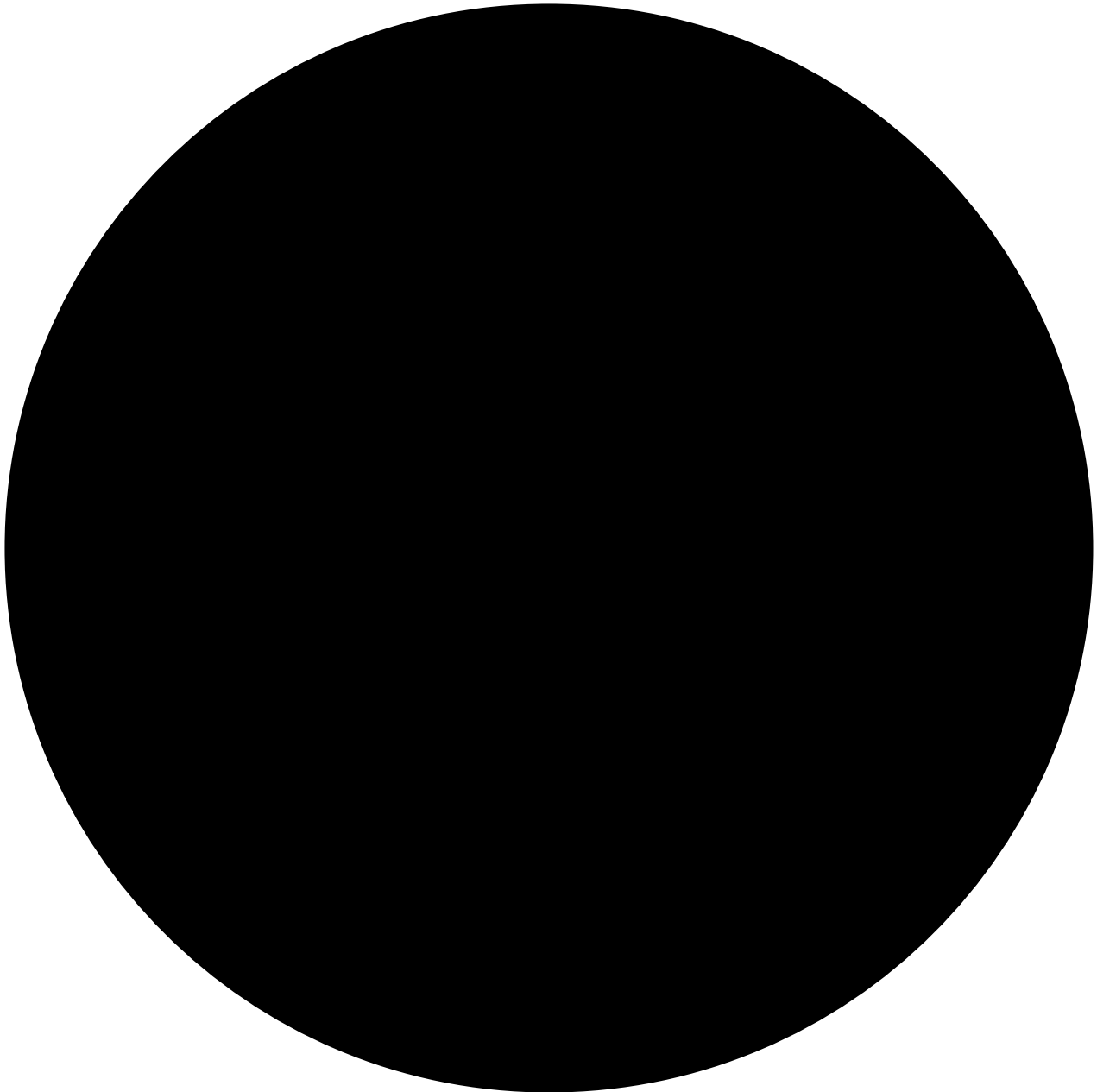
Delo, the nickname of Hadeel Abd al-Kareem Balata, 17, is seen written on the wall of her room which was destroyed during an Israeli strike on 29 July 2014 which killed the girl and 10 other members of the family in the Jabaliya refugee camp, northern Gaza, 14 September 2014. According to her surviving father, Hadeel was really gifted at school and wanted to be a doctor.



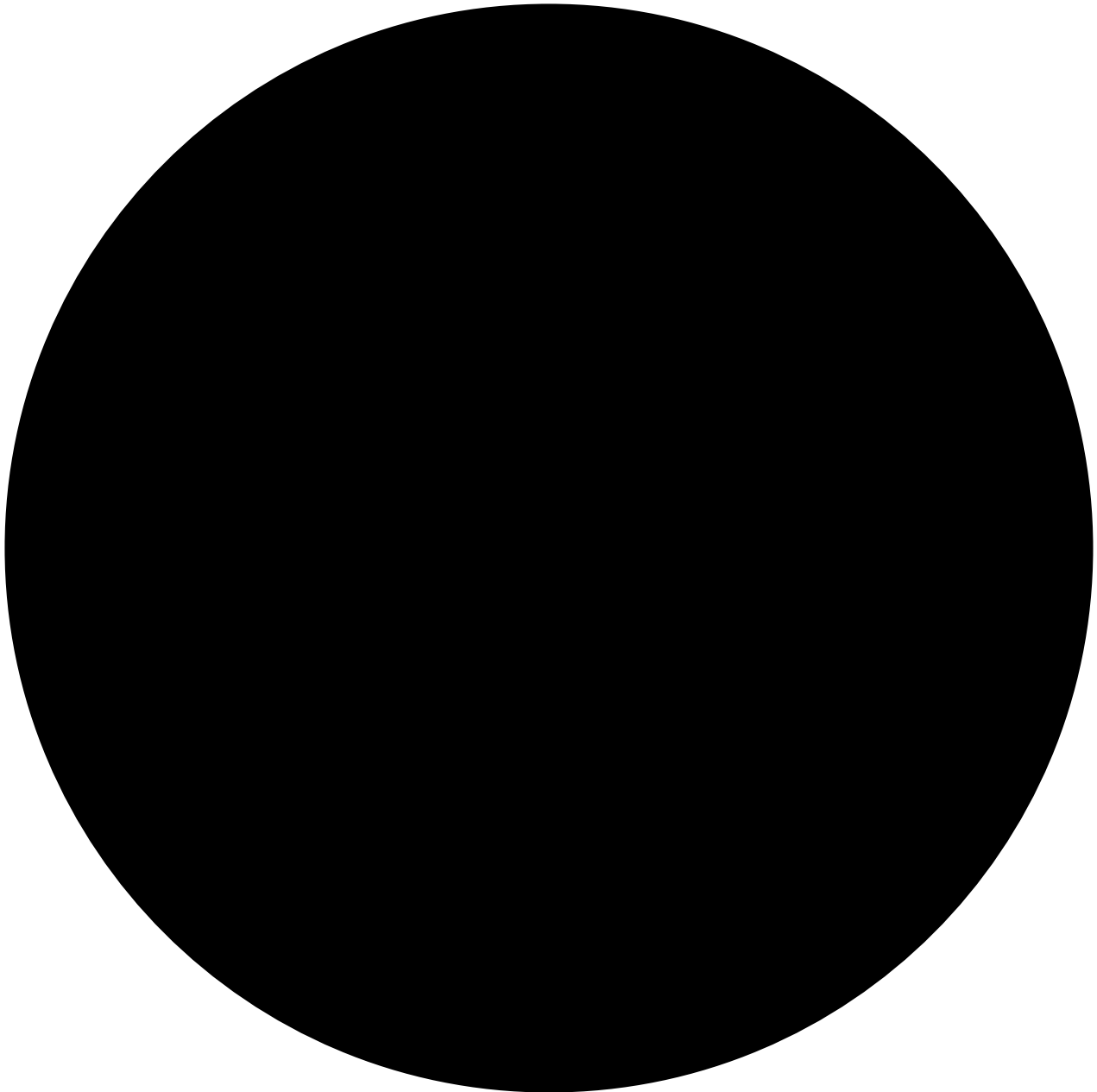
Sharifa Mustafa Baker clings to a shirt belonging to her son, 10-year-old Zakaria Ahed Baker, in her home in al-Shati refugee camp on 19 July 2014. Zakaria was killed along with with three of his cousins by a missile fired by the Israeli navy as they were playing on a Gaza City beach on 16 July 2014. The attack was caught on video as it occurred near the hotels where many foreign journalists were staying. The Israeli military exonerated itself of responsibility for the children's deaths this June.



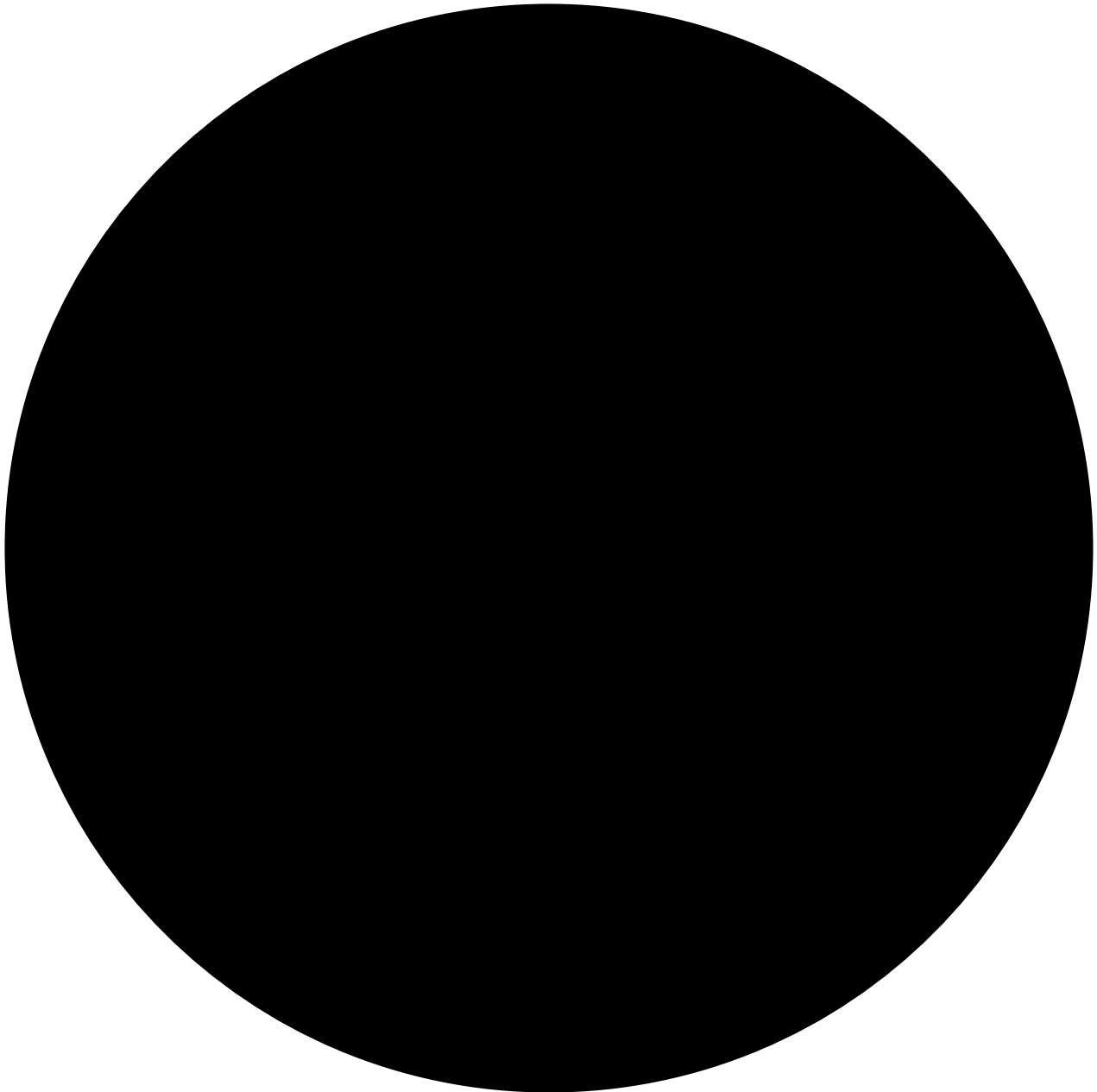
A photo of Issam Khalil Ammar, 4, is seen on the television in his parents' Gaza City apartment, 25 February 2015. Issam was killed with his sister, Eman (9) and brother Ibrahim (13) during an attack on a residential building on 20 July 2014. Eleven persons were killed in the building, including six members from the Hallaq family. The Ammar family still lives in the same building and their flat is full of the photos of the three children who were killed there.



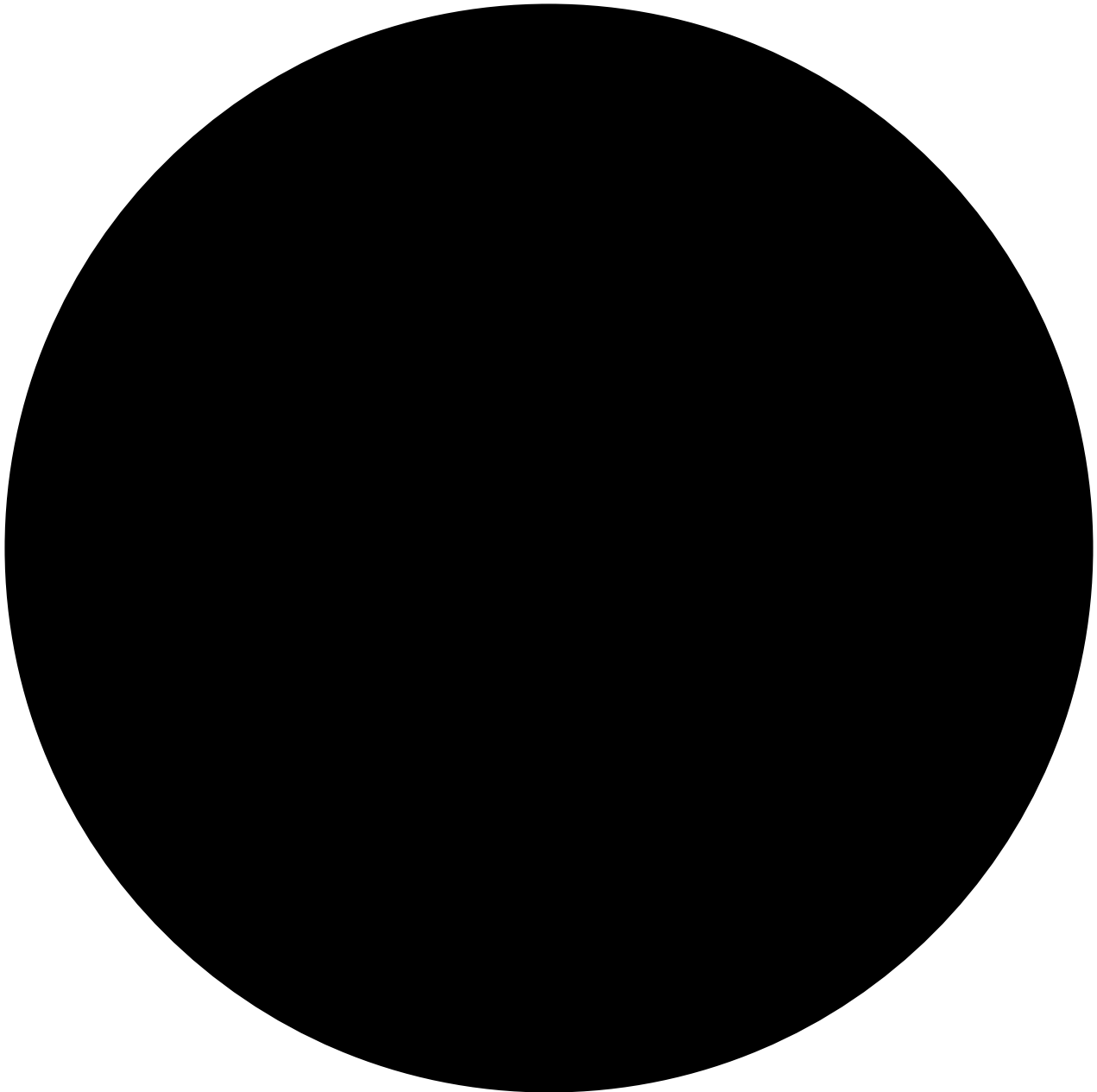
Mahmoud Ashraf al-Khalili's Gaza City bedroom, 12 November 2014. The 7-year-old boy survived the 30 July 2014 attack on his family's home was conscious when he arrived at the hospital. But he fell into a coma and died a few days later. His father Ashraf, his mother Nida and his siblings Dima (4) and Ziyad (4) were killed. His uncle was also killed along with his wife and 4-year-old daughter. The extended family was sitting in front of the home and waiting to be evacuated when the attack occurred. The surviving family members still live in the same home. A factory belonging to the family was destroyed in the fire caused by the strike.



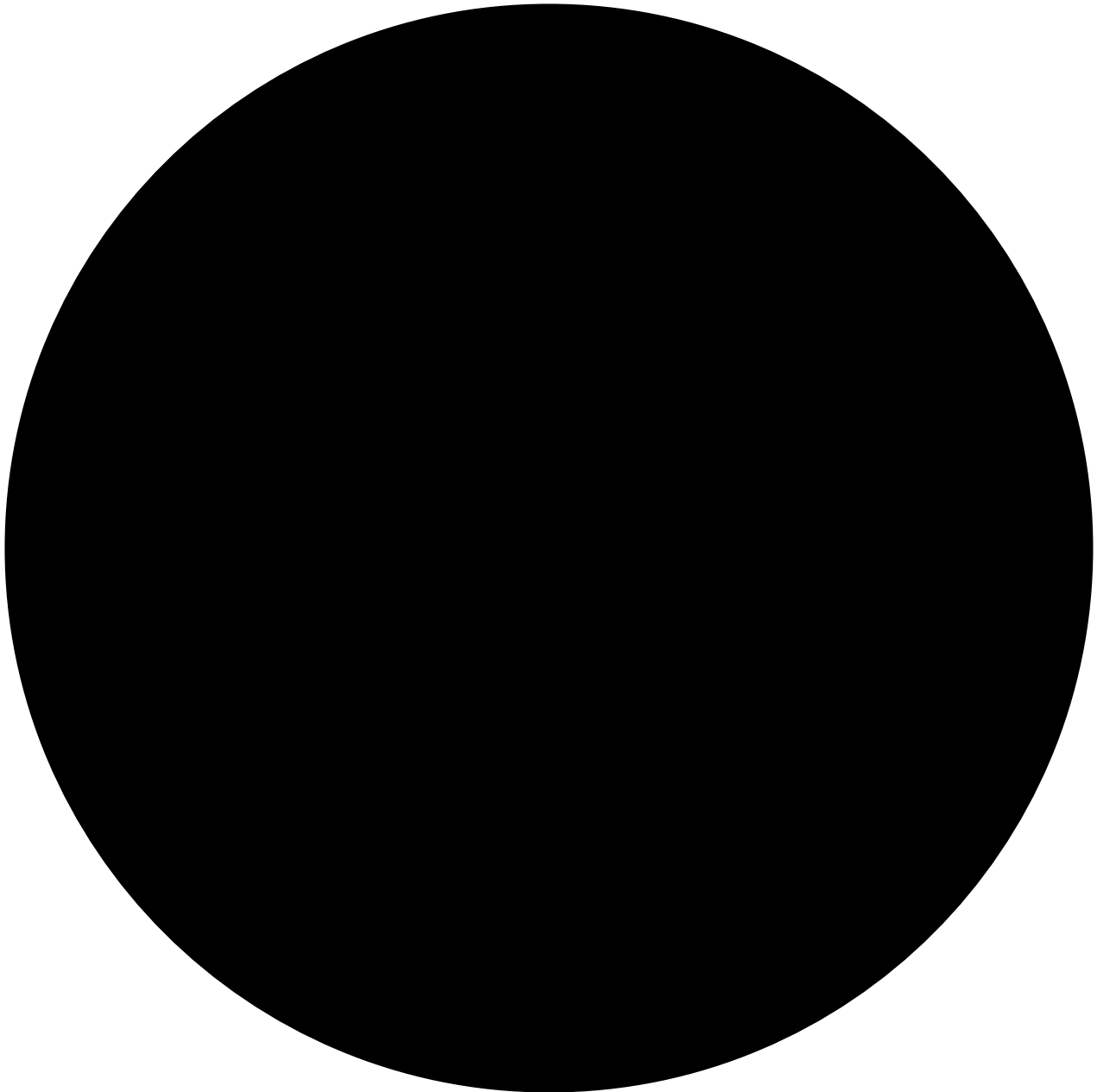
A portrait of Yousef Nasser Hussein Kullab, 15, drawn by one of his friends, is shown on a mobile phone in Rafah, southern Gaza, on 25 March 2015. Yousef was killed along with three members of his family, including two other children, in an Israeli attack on his home on 21 August 2014.



Wafa al-Louh holds a photo of her daughter Eman and her secondary school examination certificate in her home in the central Gaza town of Deir al-Balah on 16 September 2014. Eman was killed in an airstrike on her uncle's nearby home; she was struck in the head by a block of concrete while she was praying next to her bed. Her uncle Mustafa's home, 100 meters from her own, was attacked on 20 August 2014. Eight family members were killed.



A letter written by 16-year-old Shireen Abu Madi mourning her father on the occasion of Eid al-Fitr, the holiday at the end of Ramadan, is glued to a poster commemorating the six members of her family killed in an Israeli attack in al-Nuseirat refugee camp, central Gaza Strip, 17 March 2015. Shireen lost her father and three brothers in the 2 August 2014 attack, as well as a 6-year-old nephew and 2-week-old niece.



Kites made by 13-year-old Muhammad Amjad Abd al-Aziz Uwaida rest on his bed in Rafah, southern Gaza, 17 February 2015. The boy was killed along with his 5-year-old sister Amal on 5 August 2014 when they were on the roof to feed their pigeons. According to their mother, Tahrir, Muhammad was skilled at making things with his own hands and his parents keep the objects that he made, including the kites.

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