



15 April 2018 – Yousef is a 19-year-old reading Media Studies and Public Relations at Al Azhar University in Gaza.

He works as a part-time journalist, and on 30 March he decided to cover the Great Return March from east of Al Bureij refugee camp in the Middle Area of the Gaza Strip, where he grew up. Yousef's family is originally from Al-Faluja, a village 30 kilometres east of Gaza.

“I went to the barrier to take footage of the demonstrations, and I managed to take videos and photographs for 45 minutes. I stayed further than 300 metres from the barrier, because the Israeli army had dropped leaflets from the air before the protests telling us to stay more than 300 metres from the barrier. I also wore a jacket marking me out as ‘PRESS’. I was just packing up – about 800 metres from the barrier – and I was shot in my left leg. I tried to use my tripod at that point to stand up, but I was shot again – this time in the right leg. I fell to the ground again and a friend who is also a journalist who was covering the protest ran over to help me. He was shot in the leg as well. Another friend – again a journalist – then ran over and was shot as well. The paramedics arrived to take us to the ambulance, and at that point I remember they shot tear gas at us and the air was thick with it. It even went into the ambulance. I'm told that I needed more than 30 units of blood and that I'm really lucky to be alive.”

Yousef had bullet wounds to both legs. The vascular surgeons operated successfully on Yousef's right leg at Shifa Hospital, but they were unable to save his left leg and on 9 April he had an above-knee amputation. Yousef was referred on 1 April for specialist vascular care and follow up outside Gaza, but his application to exit was denied by Israeli authorities. Now Yousef is hoping to leave Gaza via Rafah terminal to Egypt, if this is opened in the coming days or weeks. He hopes to receive a limb prosthesis and rehabilitation services in Egypt, and travel to Egypt to receive this treatment would be expensive for his family. Yousef aims to continue his studies at the university. He is a keen photographer and at the end of the interview he admires the camera we are using:

“It’s nice! Mine is a Canon 5D Mark IV, but it’s a used one – not new like yours!”

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