

# Meet the Lebanese rescuers being targeted by Israel

In a bracing report from Southern Lebanon, The Grayzone's Wyatt Reed met with members of Nabatiyeh Rescue, who were repeatedly targeted by Israeli drone strikes as they attempted to rescue the victims of Israel's ongoing military assault. Wyatt spoke to crew's chief, Captain Muhammad Sulaiman, who watched as his 16-year-old son, Joud, was killed by Israeli forces while attempting to deliver food to civilians in the war zone just two months prior. ||| The Grayzone ||| Find more reporting at <https://thegrayzone.com> Support our original journalism at Patreon: <https://patreon.com/grayzone> Facebook: <https://facebook.com/thegrayzone> Twitter: <https://twitter.com/thegrayzonenews> Instagram: <https://instagram.com/thegrayzonenews> Minds: <https://minds.com/thegrayzone> Mastodon: <https://mastodon.social/@thegrayzone> #TheGrayzone

## #Wyatt Reed

We're here in Nabatieh at the headquarters of the three civil defense organizations, the rescue crews that jump into action whenever Israel strikes villages in the surrounding areas. Overhead you can hear an Israeli drone right now. You cannot see it. It's a constant reminder that Israel is always watching. We're going to speak to some of the rescue workers who survived a triple-tap strike that attacked three ambulances consecutively just a few weeks ago here in Nabatieh.

## #Wyatt Reed

Let's go take a look. We were greeted by the head of Nabatieh Rescue, Captain Mohammed Suleiman, who agreed to show us around their new makeshift headquarters.

## #Wyatt Reed

Captain Hamad, thank you very much for having us. Tell us a little bit about where we are and what's going on here.

## #Speaker 1

We rented this house from his friends because this house is not ours. So here we have this kitchen that is not the main one. We can do anything for the young people—breakfast and dinner—but the main food is cooked in the main kitchen in the Husseinia. So this is just for small logistical services, not the main ones. This room is the bedroom and the operating room because we take care of all the operations here. From here, we can explore the whole area together. The young people sleep here, and these are all the bedrooms at night. During the day, we put them together and they

become the operating rooms and living rooms and everything. We have the main balcony, which is outside. Our operations are all from this point. This point has revealed to us that this whole area was made up of Kfar Rouman, Kfar Tibnit, Kfar Nabatieh al-Fawqa, and all the surrounding villages of Nabatieh, in addition to Kfar Jaws and Kfar Haboush.

## **#Speaker 1**

What's this down here?

## **#Speaker 1**

This is a funeral for the owner of the house, not for us. This is a flower, a tree, an olive tree, a cedar tree—everything. Now we are eating from it.

## **#Wyatt Reed**

Captain Mohammed received us warmly, but despite his friendly demeanor, he was in tremendous pain. Less than two months before, he'd suffered every parent's worst nightmare. On March 24th, he was standing on the balcony overlooking the town below when Israel killed his 16-year-old son, Jude, before his very eyes. Abbas Fakih, one of the last two remaining journalists based in the area full-time, explained what happened that day.

## **#Speaker 2**

Mohammed was standing on the balcony where you just did the interview, and he was looking at this road when an airstrike from an Israeli drone hit a motorcycle on the road. What happened is that Jude was on that motorcycle. There were two medics, Ali and Jude. So Mohammed saw what happened. He didn't know at first. There was a French media outlet here doing an interview with him when it happened. They went with them to the road, and he found that his son was martyred in a deliberate airstrike. They were targeted directly in their bodies, not even on the motorcycle. The motorcycle was not scratched a lot, but they were targeted in their bodies. The motorcycle was an ambulance motorcycle.

It's not a regular one. There are the lights, the stickers, everything to recognize that this is an ambulance motorcycle. And they were following another ambulance, going to the kitchen to prepare food for the people who stayed in this city, to distribute it to them. The father of Ali is also a medic in a different institution. They are stationed at the hospital close to here. So he also saw his son. There were two fathers who saw their children martyred in front of them, who were medics wearing their vests, wearing their casks. They were known to be medics. But the Israeli army, the most moral army in the world, said that they were fighters.

## **#Wyatt Reed**

A few days later, the rescuers came to Jude's newly dug grave site to say their goodbyes.

### **#Speaker 3**

We came to visit you, Jude.

### **#Speaker 1**

We came to greet you. We came to visit you, Jude. We came to visit you, Jude. We came to visit you, Jude.

### **#Speaker 4**

Behind the smoke, Joud. I told you I would bring you smoke, Abu Abed. I told you I would bring you smoke.

### **#Speaker 1**

All of them came out and gave me smoke behind me, Jude, and I have nothing to do with it.

### **#Speaker 4**

I told them to go, go, go, Abu Abed, and then I will give you. I was everyone's friend, Jude.

### **#Speaker 1**

I was their little friend.

### **#Wyatt Reed**

It wouldn't be the last time Israel killed a member of Nabatea Rescue. A few weeks later, on April 15th, Madi Abu Zaid was cut down when Israel followed up an attack on an ambulance with a series of consecutive strikes on the rescuers who came to help them. In all, Israeli drones attacked the rescue crews four times. Footage from Nabatea Rescue's GoPros shows the moment of the final strike. I spoke to the surviving rescuers, who recounted the horrifying moment their colleagues suffered a fatal wound by their side.

### **#Speaker 5**

Where's the other car? Where's the other car? Where's the other car? Where's the other car?

### **#Wyatt Reed**

Could you tell us what happened on April 15th?

### **#Speaker 6**

Okay, so we knew there were strikes happening, but we did not know the details. Then they told us that another team got struck while they were getting a wounded person. They didn't let them approach, so they struck them. Accordingly, another team from them and another from Bressala went, and they got struck. Then another team from Haia went, and he managed to extract them. He didn't go to the battlefield; it was before. So he managed to take them, and while he was doing so, he got struck. Then we got the call, and they told us the situation. So those were our colleagues. In daily life, they are our friends, and they are like us, volunteers. So we went. We met them on the way. He was driving his car away while he was wounded. When we arrived, he told us what happened to him. He was badly wounded, and we took everyone from his car.

They were stacked, and we put them in two cars. When we finished, it was a downhill road. So one car was down, the other one managed to reroute, heading upward, and the other one was about to take the turn and go up. So we finished, we moved up about five meters, seven meters, and a strike happened. We went back a little to see. I thought they were all killed, just like them. We went back a little. I looked at the car. The back of the car, the glass was shattered. But they waved to us. They were okay. And the driver moved. I told the driver in our ambulance, "They are okay, they are making the turn, move," because I thought we were the next target. And we had injured people in our car, so we moved quickly. We then knew what happened with them when they came. They said that Mahdi, he was the driver, when the strike happened, he got hurt.

### **#Speaker 3**

The driver is the last one to close the door and get out of the car.

### **#Speaker 3**

Mahdi was injured, and I didn't know what to do. We were on the ground for about 15 minutes. We didn't know where to move. There was a brother who was a martyr and a brother who was injured. The injured person was in very serious condition. They were giving him oxygen, and we started to bandage him. He said, if he gets injured with me, I'll put a third one on him. The third guy was injured, and he was injured again. So when he was injured again, I started working on him. While I was working on him, I found someone from the Lebanese Civil Defense. He pulled me out, and they started asking me if I needed anything. Right away, I was surprised to see Mahdi, that he was injured.

I took him with the guys, and the guys went with the Civil Defense. We were on the ground with the martyrs and the wounded. We had a car with us for the Civil Defense. We had a car for the health service. The health service was removing the wounded. We removed the wounded first, then the

car, and finally the martyr. Our car was all... I can't... all of them were disabled. What happened in the strike is that she was hit three times, and she lost five people. That's it. We always go to the same area, the same area. The area is for three people. The first one is for two. So the area, she was walking, we were following her. Mahdi passed away at the door of the hospital.

### **#Speaker 6**

Have the Israelis said anything about why they carried out this horrible act?

### **#Speaker 6**

The French TV, they were here, and they did an extensive...

### **#Speaker 6**

Deep in details of what happened with us. And she told us that their editor, she wasn't here, and she told us that she made a TV report about it. And she showed her conversation with the Israelis. And she told them, "Why did you do this?" And no reply. You know, it was not an artillery strike because we have seen all kinds of strikes. We have been in this war from the beginning. We also went through the first war before that, a year ago. We know the sound. We know what happens when a strike happens.

If it's an airplane, if it's artillery, if it's a drone, we know the impact and we know the sound. We are familiar with it. And if it was artillery, the car would be devastated, destroyed, and pushed down. But if you went down and saw the car, it's more fragments—tiny, small fragments. You need a tiny one to kill. You need a tiny one to kill a person. So it was a tiny one. Although he was wearing a vest and everything, but... yeah, routine. So a small fragment came from the empty side of his vest, came inside here, and reached his heart. He didn't survive. So that was it.

### **#Wyatt Reed**

Well, as you can see, as you can hear, the Israeli strikes have not stopped. They are a daily occurrence for the people of South Lebanon. Triple-tap strikes, quadruple-tap strikes. This is what it's like to live under Israeli assault. And normal life is just almost impossible. So, on behalf of our audience and our viewers, I want to thank you for taking the time. Thank you.

### **#Speaker 6**

Thank you for making our voice reach a bigger audience. Maybe, maybe someone tried to stop them. It's cruelty. Four strikes on personnel who are unarmed. Their cars are not armed. We filmed

it. We showed them. Every member in our team, in our organization, has a GoPro with him all the time. So we document everything that happens for training purposes. But it helped us in another way because what we filmed showed that the cars didn't have guns.

### **#Speaker 5**

The Israelis said, "You have guns."

### **#Speaker 6**

They made it on their media. It was not true. We filmed it, we showed it, and we posted it. None had guns. It's all paramedic teams. There were four people killed, two people injured. So maybe people see—I know they have seen what happened in Gaza—so maybe they don't repeat it here. Thank you. Thank you.

### **#Wyatt Reed**

As our interview was interrupted by the sound of incoming Israeli rocket fire, I couldn't help but be impressed by the resolve of the rescue workers, 108 of whom have been killed by Israel since March 2nd. Since I filmed this interview on May 10th, Israeli forces have killed another two rescuers in Nabatea. Nevertheless, they continue to venture out into the areas Israel is seeking to ethnically cleanse, never knowing which day might be their last.

### **#Wyatt Reed**

We've seen that Israel is willing to target medical workers, rescue workers, basically any type of civilian. They don't really seem to have any limits. Are you concerned that they might strike this building?

### **#Speaker 3**

No, everything is green. There is nothing that prevents it. At the same time, there is nothing that relieves it. But at the same time, you can't think like that. You have to think that there are people who need you. They need you. So you can't keep thinking that they can attack us now or later. I have a duty that I want to do. I help people. They always need me. Other than that, why not? Why wouldn't I want to be there? If people want to see me, I want to be there. They can target us, they can't. But I can't think that way. If I do, I don't do my duty. We are here to help people.

### **#Wyatt Reed**

You know, for medical workers, rescue workers, we're often told that they have to maintain a professional distance between their own personal feelings and the kind of work that they're doing. You, having lost your son in this, what keeps you going?

## **#Speaker 1**

This is our message, that we are giving without limits, giving without competition. This is what we have been raised on, and Jood has been raised on. This is a message that we deliver to our families, to our people, that we are going to give, and we are not waiting for anything in return. This is from our faith, from Imam Hussain and Zainab, and this is what we have been raised on. This is a message that we have been raised on, and we have raised our children on. This was the message of Ali, Jood, and Mahdi, that we are going to give, and we are not waiting for anything, even if it costs us, that we are going to give ourselves, and we are going to give our lives in order to help the people who are present here. So we are walking this way. So we are enough for this journey and enough for this gift.