

# VOICES OF THE LIVING STONES

Stories from the Evangelical  
Lutheran Church in Jordan  
and the Holy Land



## Mais: "I Will Not Leave My Home"

Before dawn on the morning of Wednesday, July 1, soldiers of the Israeli Occupation entered the Fadaiel home in the al-Tirah neighborhood of Ramallah. Mais Fadaiel, a rising 8th grade student at the Lutheran School of Hope in Ramallah, was at home with her mother, Haneen Nassar Fadaiel. The soldiers asked Mais' mother for her identification and cell phone and told her to come with them. She simply asked for five minutes to get dressed.

As Haneen dressed, she comforted Mais, telling her daughter not to cry. The soldiers then bound Haneen and took her away, leaving 14-year-old Mais alone in the house. Desperate to say one last goodbye to her mother and wondering what would happen to her in Israeli detention, Mais followed the soldiers out the street. The soldiers then fired a sound bomb at Mais, but she remained on her feet, refusing to run and hide.

The early morning arrest is not new to Mais and her family, but rather part of a long history of injustice perpetrated by the Israeli Occupation. "I kept thinking of a sentence one of the officers said to me - that history repeats itself," Mais recalled as she described the events of that morning.



Mais' father, Rami Fadaiel, was not present the morning of Haneen's arrest because he is currently a prisoner of the Israeli Occupation, held in administrative detention for the last 20 months. Administrative detention, wherein a person is held without trial or charges on the allegation that the person plans to commit a future offense, is a tactic frequently employed by the Israeli Occupation to hold thousands of Palestinians for lengthy periods of time. In fact, Mais has only spent a cumulative three years with her father, as he's spent most of her life in detention. There are very few pictures of the young family together and the gaps between those photos stretch months or even years, representing the time Rami has been held away from his wife and young daughter.

*"I kept thinking of a sentence one of the officers said to me - that history repeats itself."*

The family's memory of unjust detention stretches back even further, however, with eerie echoes to Mais' situation today. More than 30 years ago, in 1989, Mais' maternal grandparents were arrested from their home in the predawn hours, leaving her mother Haneen and her uncle (then ages five and four, respectively) alone in the house. The children went to live with their grandparents for the 5 years their parents were imprisoned, leaving their family home abandoned. Mais grew up knowing her mother's story, and she refuses today to let history repeat itself by leaving her own family home.

Although she is only 14, Mais shows a remarkable resilience born of this family history of strength in the face of injustice. Mais stays in her family home alone in order to protect her family's dignity and pride, refusing to abandon the house. In doing so, she keeps the spirit of her family alive and clings to the hope that they might soon be reunited.

Mona Fadaiel, Mais' grandmother, believes that the arrest of Haneen was especially painful for Mais, as it left her without any parental care. "Where is the humanity?" she asks of the Israeli Occupation. "Is this not a crime against children for which the Occupation must be held accountable?"



Thankfully, Haneen Nassar Fadaiel was released from Israeli detention on Monday, July 20. After a total of 19 days living in her home alone, Mais was reunited with her mother. Rami Fadaiel remains in administrative detention, separated from his wife and daughter.

*The Fadaiel family is a Palestinian Christian family living in the al-Tirah neighborhood of Ramallah, in the West Bank. Mais Fadaiel, age 14, is a student at the Lutheran School of Hope in Ramallah. She will be in 8th Grade for the 2020-2021 school year. Her mother, Haneen Nassar Fadaiel, is a graduate of the School of Hope and serves on the Parents' Council of the school. Mais' maternal grandmother, Maha Nassar, was also a physics teacher at the school.*



Maha Nassar

Mais Fadaiel

*Unfortunately, the story of the Fadaiel family is not unique. Arbitrary detention and early morning raids are common occurrences in Palestine as a result of the Israeli Occupation. We ask for your continued prayers for the Fadaiel family and that all those held in captivity are reunited with their families.*