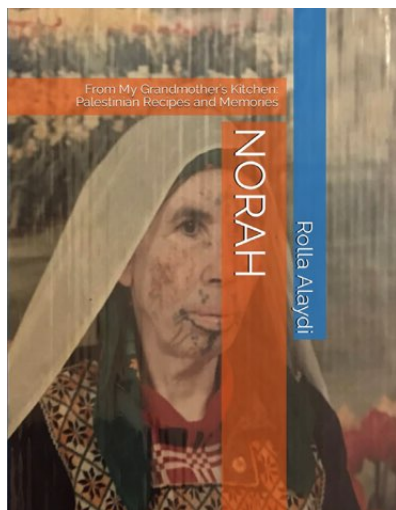


To Save a Life: Help Rolla Rescue Her Family from Gaza

By Dianne Monroe

Photos with this story and on the cover were taken by Salem Medhat, Rolla's nephew.



Norah: From My Grandmother's Kitchen: Palestinian Recipes and Memories by Rolla Alaydi was largely completed in San Antonio

Rolla Alaydi feels like she's carrying the weight of the world on her shoulders. And, in a sense, that's because she is.

Rolla, who lived in San Antonio from 2001 to 2017, is originally from Gaza. Now she is desperately trying to get her family – 21 people including 13 children – out of Gaza.

She's started a GoFundMe to help her do this.

bit.ly/gofundme-rolla

It's a huge undertaking – and every little bit helps. So please contribute as

generously and share this information as widely as you feel able to do.

There's a sense of urgency – with the lack of food, clean water, medical care and the ongoing actions of the Israeli army putting the family's lives in constant peril.

Rolla and I became friends when we were both living in San Antonio. It's a friendship story that was forged within in the multicultural tapestry of San Antonio.

At the time I was a writer working with Jump-Start Performance Company, and one of only a few Jewish people in San Antonio willing to speak out publicly in support of justice for Palestine. Rolla had just arrived from Gaza as a young graduate student and went on to earn a PhD in Education from University of Incarnate Word.

Rolla was finding her own way to live as a Palestinian in the US. I was curious to learn all I could about her and her family's experience living under Israeli occupation.

Now, about twenty years later, with each of us living in a different part of California, our friendship continues as Rolla tries to save her family and I offer my help.

Last November, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) bombed Rolla's brothers' home in Gaza City. Since then, her brothers, along with their wives and children, have been forced to flee several times. The family is now split up in vary-

ing locations across Rafah – a gruesome decision meant to limit casualties when Israel launches attacks around Rafah. One of her brothers has diabetes and has not been able to get insulin. Another brother has cancer and has not had treatments since the start of the war. The children have seen dead bodies of their young cousins and tell their parents that they do not want to die.

Yet somehow this family, along with so many others in Gaza, continues on with incredible, unimaginable resilience.

When we were both living in San Antonio, Rolla came to me with an idea she had for a book combining Palestinian recipes with stories about her grandmother and the life lessons her grandmother taught her – that we can all learn from. I showed Rolla some things I knew about writing a memoir – and even wrote the book's introduction.

The book, *Norah: From My Grandmother's Kitchen: Palestinian Recipes and Memories* was largely completed in San Antonio but not published until after Rolla is in Gaza. Here's the link: <https://amzn.to/3ID1Zpy>

It is said in Jewish religious tradition that **to save one life is to save the entire world.**

Rolla is trying to save 21 lives. I am trying to help her. I invite you to join with us.

BIO: Dianne Monroe is a writer, photographer and experiential educator. She lived in San Antonio and was a member of Jump-Start Performance Co. from 1997 to 2011. She now lives in Sonoma County, California.

Note: At the time of this writing, there is hope for a ceasefire. Yet that does not change the immense needs of this family that has already been through so much.

**My Family is Trapped in Gaza.
Help Me Get Them Out**
<https://amzn.to/3ID1Zpy>



Rolla Alaydi and her nieces.