

# THE STORY IN DEPTH

**In the broken town of Bethlehem today, hope is in short supply.**

Right across Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories many children, caught in the literal and emotional crossfire of the conflict, have lived a childhood of pain and fear. Rockets, military attacks, suicide bombers and blockades – wherever they come from – all lead to injury, bereavement and poverty.

For Palestinian children living in impoverished, occupied areas, the struggle can be extreme. Christian Aid's partner the YMCA works in Bethlehem and provides help to those affected by injury and trauma across the West Bank. Fatin Al Shoppi works for them. She says, 'There are no children here who have not seen or heard about violence as a daily fact of life.'

## Noor Rabia's struggle

Noor Rabia is one of these young people and his family are very poor. His mother says he is a 'brave and kind boy' who does a lot to help his family.

Three years ago he picked up an unusual looking object in the narrow lanes of the refugee camp where he lives. It turned out to be an abandoned explosive



Christian Aid/Abbie Trayler-Smith

device. Noor's body was hit by shrapnel and he lost his right hand.

This incident had a devastating effect. He dropped out of school, didn't want to see his friends and retreated into himself. He felt ashamed and depressed. His family were too poor to get him physical or emotional help. He says, 'I had lost all hope in life. I hated this life.'

## The long journey back to hope

Noor and his family were offered help by Christian Aid's partner organisation the YMCA.

Fatin Al Shoppi has been Noor's counsellor for three years, helping him to process the trauma, imagine a different future, and to purchase a prosthetic hand. She says, 'When he got his new hand, it changed his life. Now he can even fix electronic things with his good hand, using the fake right hand to help.' He is studying hard now so that he can work with computers, as his injury means he can't work on the land.

Noor's mother, Sara, is really grateful for the work of the YMCA. 'Noor has returned to school, goes out with his friends more and is more peaceful.'

For Noor, everything has changed. 'Fatin made me see that I have more life to live – more hope.'

## Our hope this Christmas

Fatin says that each year she personally works with around 40 children like Noor. 'There are so many children in this situation, and so much more we could do if we had the resources.'

Christian Aid's partners throughout Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories are working tirelessly with children, and adults, who are struggling to overcome the poverty caused by the conflict. Christian Aid advocates that a viable and sustainable peace is essential to bring the security that both Israelis and Palestinians so desperately need.

This Christmas, we must take a journey back to hope. Many people have been tempted to give up on Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories as too complicated. But Christian Aid does not believe giving up is an option anywhere where people are affected by injustice. We believe that poverty can and must end - everywhere - and your generous support for our partners in Bethlehem, and around the world, will enable us to keep going until it does.