From Victoria Brittain

Tens of thousands of official reports, journalists’ articles, books, photographs, films and doctors’ pleas for medicines and equipment, published world-wide in the last decade of Gaza’s siege mean that no European government can fail to know the details of just how dramatically the humanitarian situation is deteriorating for every family in the territory.

But no words can adequately convey the outrage of what is being done to the two million people in Gaza - deliberate man-made de-development - with no moral stand taken from Europe against the flouting of international human rights law.

Who outside that small crowded place can bear to imagine the texture of pain in Gazans' everyday life, virtually without electricity, clean water, sewage facilities, medicines, employment? Or, imagine living for a decade in the rubble of what was once your home, with no hope of it being rebuilt, or looking at your bombed factory where your family’s economic future was destroyed. Or, imagine knowing you are unable to travel, for health care, family weddings or funerals, scholarships or offers of work? Or, imagine parents’ ever present anxiety for their children and youth’s possible sudden death at the hands of heavily armed Israeli soldiers on the borders of the agricultural areas or in the fishing boats which are the economic lifeline for many families.

But, like a message in a bottle dropped in the sea, words and photographs from inside Gaza are launched out every week into the world from Gaza’s Al Aqsa university’s Peace Centre, which show another story: female university students leading play sessions, face painting, story telling, and listening times for kindergarten children traumatised by the three Israeli attacks which have marked their childhood; male students hard at work with farmers clearing land near the seam zone.

Ziad Mehdoukh, professor of french literature at Al Aqsa, and a prize-winning poet in France, is the force behind this initiative which has been going for more than a decade. This is a section of one of his recent poems:

*C’est seulement à Gaza, que les jeunes fréquentent les cafés munis des générateurs pour réviser leurs cours et préparer leurs examens .*

*C’est seulement à Gaza que des personnes se lèvent à n’importe quel moment,  la nuit, quand il y a le courant,  pour donner des nouvelles sur la situation sur place et pour témoigner pour le mouvement de solidarité.*

*C’est seulement à Gaza que la solidarité familiale et l’accueil des étranger se développent  malgré la pauvreté et le manque de ressources.*

*C’est seulement à Gaza, que la population s’accroche à la vie, alors que les voisins plus que  les ennemis veulent qu’elle disparaisse.*

*C’est seulement à Gaza qu’on continue à vivre alors que tous les secteurs vitaux sont paralysés.*

*C’est seulement à Gaza que la population est toujours debout malgré la crise humanitaire et malgré toutes les mesures atroces de l’occupation.*

*C’est seulement à Gaza que le sourire des enfants est un acte de résistance !*

*C’est seulement à Gaza qu’on supporte l’insupportable !*

*C’est seulement à Gaza qu’on réclame dignité avant nourriture !*

*C’est seulement à Gaza qu’on résiste pour vivre, et qu’on vit pour résister !*

*C’est seulement à Gaza qu’on vit l’injustice et le malheur, mais on garde espoir pour l’avenir !*

 Victoria Brittain