



The Miktab Limited
Notting Hill
London W11
miktab@reemkelani.com
www.reemkelani.com

Release of the single “If I Must Die”

UNRWA’s establishment in 1949 was the international community’s response to the mass displacement of the indigenous Palestinian population following the conquest of Palestine by the Zionist paramilitary forces in 1948. Originally a relief operation, UNRWA’s services have since grown to encompass health and education.

UNRWA operates in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, as well as in the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan.

In the Occupied Territories, UNRWA is the administrative backbone of Palestinian society. It is independent of Israel, the occupying power, and the Palestinian Authority.

Some 6 million Palestinians are eligible for UNRWA’s services. All 2 million Palestinians struggling to stay alive in the Gaza Strip are looking right now to UNRWA to provide emergency relief; there is no other agency on the ground with anything like UNRWA’s capability.

That anyone should want to undermine UNRWA, the very institution on which so many Palestinians depend for so much, is unconscionable. We stand with UNRWA in support of its vital work on behalf of those Palestinians and their descendants whose lives were forever changed by Israel’s creation.

With perhaps as many as 300 Palestinians being killed every day since 7 October 2023, there are some deaths which stand out, which I can neither forget nor forgive. Refaat Alareer’s killing is one of those.

A writer and a poet, Refaat was a professor of English literature at the Islamic University of Gaza. With his intellectual challenge and his refusal to bow down to his oppressor, Refaat had long been a thorn in Israel’s side.

Refaat was targeted and killed in an Israeli strike on 6 December 2023, along with his brother, sister and four of his nephews. To me and countless other Palestinians, his death was a body blow.

Less than a month earlier, Refaat had published what was to be his final poem: "If I must die". It concludes with the words: "If I must die, let it bring hope, let it be a tale." Sadly, it was to be his epitaph.

On 26 April 2024, an Israeli airstrike killed his eldest daughter Shymaa and her husband and his new-born grandson. An even more painful twist is that Refaat actually wrote "If I Must Die" for Shymaa.

I struggled with the composition initially, then all of a sudden the melody came to me. An organic arrangement of vocals and piano seemed most appropriate. My long-term musical partner, the exceptional pianist Bruno Heinen, and I recorded it at the Crowe's Nest Studios in Stoke Newington in late February.

Steve Lowe, my faithful production engineer responsible for all my previous albums, edited and mixed the recording.

This song is dedicated to Refaat's memory and to the people of Gaza.

Credits

Poetry

Refaat Alareer
(1979-2023)

Music & vocals

Reem Kelani

Piano

Bruno Heinen

Production engineer

Steve Lowe

Recording engineer

Sam Crowe, Crowe's Nest Studios

Mastering engineer

Nick Taylor, Porcupine Studios

Mixing

Steve Lowe & Reem Kelani
The Miktab Ltd., Notting Hill

Cover design & animation

Leena Zaher

Reem Kelani appears courtesy of Fuse Records

With special thanks to Leon Rosselson

All proceeds will go to support UNRWA

(The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East). No production costs will be deducted from your donation

Executive producer

Chris Somes-Charlton

Producer

Reem Kelani

For press interviews & further information

Chris Somes-Charlton
miktab@reemkelani.com