

# Palestinian Al-Musaharati keeps age-old tradition alive in Gaza

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GAZA CITY: Nizar Al-Dabbas, 51, has found fame in the role of Al-Musaharati in the city of Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip where he has lived for 22 years.

Al-Musaharati is a person who volunteers to wake up Muslims in the middle of the night during Ramadan for sahoor.

Al-Dabbas dons a traditional galabiya, the famous black and white Palestinian keffiyeh, and wraps a red tarbush on his head, one of the signs of men's elegance, before going out.

During Ramadan, every day at 2:00 a.m. Al-Dabbas walks the streets of Gaza beating his drum, singing folkloric songs and chanting poetry, which he learned as a child in Syria.

For him, there is no joy in Ramadan without Al-Musaharati: "It is a profession or voluntary work from the ancient Arab-Islamic heritage."

Al-Dabbas is pleased that children carrying lanterns wait for him in front of their house or in the streets and alleys where he roams daily, to accompany him on his tour and chant songs with him.

Technological advancement has been a major reason for the decline of Al-Musaharati in recent years as people rely on mobile phones or alarm clocks to wake them up. Al-Dabbas feels the profession may die out in the future.

However, when he gets support from people and the children participate alongside him with drums and flutes, it motivates him to voluntarily take up the role of Al-Musaharati each year.

Al-Dabbas loves the profession, which he describes as "beautiful and earns its owner the great reward from God."

When the children accompany him, it makes Al-Dabbas nostalgic about his childhood in Syria. "When I was of the same age, I would wait for my Syrian Al-Musaharati everyday and accompany him on his tour ... and since then I inherited the love of this beautiful volunteer work associated with the most beautiful month of the year."

Al-Dabbas was born in Syria and lived there with his family for about 29 years. Al-Dabbas said that while growing up there he decided with one of his brothers to work together as Al-Muasharati during Ramadan.

In 2000, Al-Dabbas came

for a visit to Gaza with his family of 10, and decided to settle in the Qaizan Al-Najjar neighborhood in Khan Younis after spending many years in the Yarmouk refugee camp – the largest Palestinian refugee camp in Syria.

He worked in Syria as a Al-Musaharati for 15 years before coming to Gaza and still wears the same dress and uses the same instruments as he did before.

Al-Dabbas learnt the art of Al-Musaharati from a Syrian friend and memorized

many of the phrases and songs from him.  
Historical sources trace the first appearance of this profession to the era of the Abbasid state during the era of Caliph Al-Muntasir Billah.



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## [Houthis crack down on women who walk without male chaperons](#)

Author:

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Sat, 2022-04-30 23:50

AL-MUKALLA: Houthi moral policewomen have removed dozens of women from the streets of the northern city of Saada, the movement's heartland, for shopping without a male guardian, also known as a mahram, residents and local media reports said.

The Iran-backed Houthis have banned women from shopping without a mahram, asking women to stick to the Islamic dress codes and only allowing women to shop in limited places in the city.

To enforce the ban, residents told Arab News, dozens of all-female morality police officers were seen roaming Saada during Ramadan, when streets are teeming with shoppers, searching for violators.

Al-Masdar Online, a Yemeni news site, reported that the Houthis broadcast the ban through loudspeakers fixed on cars that circulated the streets, asking women not to go out with mahram and naming markets where women could shop for Ramadan and Eid.

Houthi police briefly detained dozens of unescorted women, later releasing them after they had signed a written pledge.

The ban on women walking about without a mahram comes as the Yemeni militia intensifies its morality campaigns in areas under its control.

The Houthis have arrested dozens of women for violating Islamic dress codes, banned singing at weddings and arrested singers and artists who challenged the ban.

Since earlier last year, the Houthis have been holding Entesar Al-Hammadi, a Yemeni actress and model, after removing her from a street in Sanaa for allegedly "trading in drugs and ... prostitution."

The latest report by the UN Panel of Experts accused the Houthis of sexually assaulting women, subjecting them to different forms of physical and psychological torture and denying them birth control.

"The Houthis simply want women to be annexed to men and to serve as baby-making machines to produce fighters," Nadwa Al-Dawsari, a Yemeni conflict analyst, told Arab News.

Ali Al-Fakih, editor of Al-Masdar Online, said the Houthis have turned Saada into a testing site for their harsh rules, as they see the city as completely loyal to them. "They consider Saada as a pure place for their doctrine and followers. Thus, they can implement any decision easily," Al-Fakih said.

Unlike other Yemeni areas under their control, the Houthis have turned Saada into the most secretive place in Yemen, where even visitors to the city must inform the militia at checkpoints about their reasons for visiting and how long they would be staying there.

"People cannot breathe in Saada. I think we will later see the Houthi ban on women from going about without a mahram imposed in other areas," Al-Fakih said.



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## [Two rockets target coalition troops in Iraq, no casualties](#)

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Sat, 2022-04-30 20:02

FALLUJAH: Two rockets targeting a base in western Iraq hosting US-led coalition troops on Saturday crashed near the complex without causing casualties or damage, security sources said.

"Two rockets fell outside the Iraqi base of Ain Al-Asad," a security forces

statement said, adding there were no “losses.”

The base, controlled by Iraq, is located in the desert in the western Anbar province and hosts foreign troops from the coalition fighting the Daesh group.

A coalition official told AFP there was “no impact on the installation reported” and “no coalition personnel injuries reported.”

A previously unknown group calling itself “International Resistance” claimed the attack on a pro-Iran channel of messaging app Telegram.

Rockets and drones frequently target the Ain Al-Asad base.

On April 8, the coalition said it shot down an armed drone targeting the facility, reporting no casualties or damage.

Dozens of rocket and armed drone attacks have targeted US troops and interests in Iraq in recent months.

Western officials have blamed hard-line pro-Iran factions for the attacks, most of which go unclaimed.

The coalition ended its combat mission in Iraq in December, four years after the Baghdad government declared victory over the jihadists.

But roughly 2,500 American soldiers and 1,000 coalition soldiers remain deployed in three Iraqi-controlled bases across the country, including Ain Al-Asad, to offer training, advice and assistance to national forces.



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# Iraq seizes more than 6 million captagon pills in drug bust

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Sat, 2022-04-30 19:40

BAGHDAD: Iraqi security forces said Saturday they had broken up a drug trafficking ring and seized more than six million pills of the amphetamine-type stimulant captagon, making several arrests.

Iraq's northwestern neighbor Syria is the Middle East's main captagon producer.

Iraqi forces seized "around 6.2 million pills" from a warehouse in the southwest of the capital, the national security agency said in a statement, adding that the drugs were set for distribution "in areas of Baghdad and other provinces."

Three Iraqis and four suspects from other Arab countries were arrested in connection with the trafficking network, it added.

The statement said security forces broke up a second drug ring after an Arab national was arrested "in possession of six kilos (13 pounds) of hashish," while two accomplices were also detained.

All 10 accused "admitted to links with international drug trafficking networks," it said.

Drug trafficking convictions can be punishable by the death penalty in Iraq. Trade in captagon in the Middle East grew exponentially in 2021 to top \$5 billion, posing an increasing health and security risk to the region, a report said earlier this month.

Captagon was the trade name of a drug initially patented in Germany in the early 1960s that contained an amphetamine-type stimulant called fenethylamine used to treat attention deficit and narcolepsy among other conditions.

It was later banned and became an illicit drug almost exclusively produced and consumed in the Middle East.

Captagon is now a brand name, with its trademark logo sporting two interlocked "Cs," or crescents, embossed on each tablet, for a drug that often contains little or no fenethylamine and is close to what is known in other countries as "speed."

The sale and use of drugs in Iraq has soared in recent years. Security forces have stepped up operations and make almost daily announcements of seizures or arrests.

In the first three months of this year, Iraqi security forces detained 18 suspected drug traffickers in the largely desert province of Anbar, which shares a long border with Syria, according to an official source.

More than three million captagon pills were seized in the same period.



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Saudi authorities foil attempt by Umrah pilgrims to smuggle Captagon  
trade spirals to top \$5 billion in 2021: report

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## [In Gaza, families enjoy iftar on the beach with cool breeze and fantastic view](#)

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Fri, 2022-04-29 23:53

GAZA CITY: Many families in Gaza gather on the beach for iftar meals during Ramadan, where they can breathe in the fresh air, enjoy the sound of the waves and watch the sunset.

Situated on the Mediterranean coast, the Gaza Strip has a population of about 2 million people. In recent years, cafeterias have started to appear close to the shore, where families can bring their own food and pay a small charge to use a table and chairs as they enjoy their meals with a sea view.

Muhammad Aidya, 45, and his family of seven sit at a table near the beach, waiting for the sun to set and the Maghrib prayer before breaking their fast. "This year, Ramadan came during relatively cold weather but in previous years, the weather was much warmer," he told Arab News.

"I came for iftar here by the sea at least 10 times during the month ... the air is fresh and my family is happy, my children play, and (we enjoy) delicious food that we bring from home."

At a nearby table, a young couple with a three-year-old child are setting out their meal in anticipation of breaking their fast.

"It's nice weather today so we decided to eat outside," said Rawiya Tafesh, 25, a housewife. "We bought a takeaway from a restaurant and we brought it here to eat together, while our son plays around."

The Tafesh family cannot afford to dine in luxury restaurants, so they opted to get more affordable takeaway food and eat it in the scenic seashore surroundings.

"Our monthly income is limited," Tafesh said. "We don't deny ourselves the enjoyment but we can't pay big money for food ... we don't eat in those fancy restaurants; we enjoy it here more than there."

Restaurants in the Gaza Strip, especially those at the luxury end of the scale, organize daily iftar buffets but for the most part they are affordable only to the rich and some middle-class residents.

Hamdi Al-Owaini, 39, owns a cafeteria on the beach in Gaza.

"During Ramadan, we rent tables and chairs on the beach for iftar," he said.

"There is less demand this year than last year because of the cold weather.

"The cost is low here; the family pays about 10 to 20 shekels (\$3 to \$6), depending on their number. They can bring their food and all their belongings and sit until dawn if they want, and this is available and possible for most of the residents of the Gaza Strip."

Some families organize feasts for many of their relatives at the beach, renting a place to eat and bringing food from home so that they can spend some quality time together.

"My wife and I decided to invite my brothers and sisters during Ramadan and as a result of the large number of people, we decided to organize the feast outside instead at home," said Abdullah Al-Saadi, 47.

"This is an opportunity to enjoy a family atmosphere in an open space.

Children can play in this place and there is less noise compared with being inside the house with (so many people), and the women enjoy talking to each other and also walking on the beach in a nice atmosphere.

"Ramadan is an opportunity to meet loved ones, in addition to doing good deeds. During Ramadan, members of a large family meet each other, eat food, sweets and do other Ramadan activities, which we cannot do except in Ramadan."



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