The war is over...

The war has ended. That's what we heard from all the news sources. But what's happening to me? Why can't I jump for joy as logic dictates?
Yes, the war that we so desperately wished to end is finally over.
But since this morning, a powerful urge to cry, to scream, to run has overtaken me.
I hold back my tears and sorrow with force, alongside a strange feeling of joy—as if joy itself is a stranger.

Naturally, I should be happy. I hate gloom.
Is this sadness because my daughter, *Umm Wasim*, lost her house just a few days ago? It was completely destroyed in Al-Shati refugee camp.
Since the war officially ended, she hasn't stopped crying over losing her lifelong home.
Or maybe it's because my other daughter, *Umm Nabil*, also cried for the same reason—her beautiful house was leveled to the ground too.

It seems now we're about to begin another battle—to find a place for all of us within our homeland, a place where I and my sons and daughters can live under one roof.

I thank God that my house still has two floors suitable for living.
Maybe we can make it work for me, my sons, my six daughters, and their families—if the house is still standing in Al-Shati camp.
Since we were displaced to Deir al-Balah, we haven't had any confirmation about whether the house is still there.
I *feel* it's still there.
I haven't heard on the news that our neighborhood was bombed.
We are better off than many others—there are hundreds of thousands spending their nights in tents and on the streets.

I believe they're all living the same internal conflict—joy that the war is over, and sorrow for losing their homes.
The big question remains: Where will they go?
Today my friend, Abu Saif, visited me. I asked him, "When will you return to your home?"
He answered, "I won't. I'll stay here in Deir al-Balah. My house is gone, my friend. A lifetime's effort vanished in an instant. Even the apartment my wife inherited from her family in Tel al-Hawa, which we hoped would make up for our loss—was destroyed too a few days ago. We have nowhere to go."

Abu Saif also told me his wife has not stopped crying since the morning, and all his efforts to comfort her failed.
So he found himself walking to my place—which isn't far.

Today the war ended.
Nothing really happened except some celebratory gunfire, which quickly stopped after the official announcement or signing of the ceasefire.
Today, I didn't even follow the news—despite being someone who keeps up with every detail that might hint at the war's end.

Maybe it’s because we’ve been disappointed by so many past ceasefires and truces.
Or maybe we’re no longer sane—no longer know when to feel happy, when to feel sad.
A young man is martyred, and his father buries him in silence—no screams, no tears. Then the next day, he goes to work.

We do insane things without realizing it.
I believe all of us in Gaza desperately need to breathe a different kind of air—air that doesn’t smell like gunpowder.
We need to drink clean water—water that’s not contaminated.

If I had the power, I’d issue a decree for free tourism trips for 10 days for anyone in Gaza who wants to travel and return—just so they can remember what life used to be like in its small and big details.

Yesterday, we had a family conversation.
We started asking the big questions. We started dreaming.
Why not? The war has ended. It’s our right to ask:Will cooking gas return?
Will meat, chicken, and eggs be available again?
Will the famine end, and will we go back to eating like other people?
Will the borders reopen and medicine come in?

I told them: “Throw me in Egypt for a month and I’ll come back like a horse!”

My wife chimed in, “Will we finally rest from the constant search for a lighter, yeast, onions, garlic, and spices?!
Oh, how I dream of turning the gas knob, lighting it up, and resting from the smoke of firewood that choked me!”

Suddenly, my daughter shouted: “Will electricity come back so I can put water in the fridge and make lemon-mint juice?!”

My son replied, “You’re dreaming too big—electricity is still a whole other story.”

And I? I just want to sit in the living room like before, cross my legs, sip coffee, and watch TV.

Everyone replied: “You still remember the TV?!”

The news says the war is over.
But has the war *really* ended?!

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