

## For Mothers Who Have Lost Children in War

There followed a great multitude of people, and of women who wept and lamented.  
But Jesus turned to them and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me,  
but weep for yourselves and for your children."  
Luke 23:27-28

Lord, you were born of woman, and you know how your own mother suffered at your death.  
We hold up to you all mothers who have lost children in the violence of war.  
We weep with them as we see the emotional devastation of losing a beloved son or daughter.  
We pray with them for peace and an end to conflicts.

We pray for all mothers who have lost children in the wars our country has fought from it beginning.  
We pray for those living mothers in our nation who lost children  
in the Korean conflict, in the Vietnam War, in the first Gulf War, and now in Iraq.

We pray for living mothers around the world who have lost children in a host of other conflicts,  
including Bosnia, Rwanda, Congo, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Colombia, Haiti, Israel/Palestine, and many more.

### Let us hear the voices of woman today who are mourning their children:

My son, Lance Cpl. Nickolas D. Schiavoni, 26, was serving in his second deployment in Iraq when he was killed on November 15, 2005. A device exploded right by his Humvee and he bled to death somewhere outside of Falluja or near the Syrian border: the military continues to give us conflicting stories. My son was the type of friend who would quite literally give you the coat off his back. He was the type of son who did not want his Mom or Dad to worry about him. The cost of this war is too high because we are paying for it with far too much of our children's blood, including my child's precious life. How am I to make sense of his death?

Stephanie Kern, March, 2006

My four children, my husband and myself were in our home in the northern part of Bagdad (Iraq) at breakfast, when we heard the horrible sound of bombing, quite close to our home. In panic, I said to my husband, "We must leave right now," and I picked up my youngest child, while my husband hurried our three other children. They were right in back of me as I ran out to the street. Suddenly, I heard bursts of gunfire, and ran faster to hide behind a wall. As I looked back, I saw the bodies of my three children, 5, 8 and 11 years old, dead on the ground with my husband. [U.S. troops mistakenly fired on them.] My heart and soul were broken with that glance; that sight is with me every day.

Vivian Salim Marti, April, 2002

Sources for case studies: Amnesty International; Mothers Against the War; Save the Children; African Faith and Justice Network; BBC News



My daughter, Iman, was 13 when she was shot. She was walking to school with some other Palestinian children. She had her book bag with her school books in it. They were on a road near a forbidden zone when Israeli soldiers began to approach them, to see if bombs were in their bags. My daughter, who frightened easily, panicked and starting running, right into the off-limits zone. One soldier yelled at her to stop but she was in a panic. He shot at her legs and brought her down. Soldiers ran over to her and shot 17 bullets into her body. I know this because it was caught on tape and shown widely. I will never stop weeping, not just for her loss, but also because she died so frightened and in such a horrible manner.

Nadjia Al-Hams, October, 2004

I am a Jew who lives in Tel Aviv. My son, David, was a bright 19-year-old student serving in the Israeli army reserves when he was killed by a Palestinian sniper. As I mourn my beloved son, I have joined efforts with other grieving parents to bring peace, reconciliation and understanding to both Palestinians and Israelis. Nobody has a monopoly on pain, and there is no competition for who has suffered more. Side-taking distorts the picture. There will be no end (to the conflict) if there will not be reconciliation. But I tell you, all mothers are the same. We all go to bed with the same pain and the same grief.

Robi Damelin, October 2004

My son, Kalami, was 10 when he was taken by a rebel group and forced to become a child soldier. He was taught to kill, and his spirit was wounded deeply. I found out that he himself was killed at 15. I don't know exactly when or how he died. He was my child. He was my oldest son. He was my pride. I have cried so many tears for him. Why is there such cruelty? Why do men not stop killing, killing? There is too much blood on our soil.

Amaya M., Democratic Republic of the Congo, December, 2004

My 24 year old son was an innocent bystander who died on a London bus by a terrorist bomb. My son Anthony was my first son, my only son, the head of my family. In African society, we hold on to sons. What can senseless slaughter provide? Death and destruction of young people in their prime as well as old and helpless can never be the foundations for building society. Anthony was a Nigerian, born in London. Here today we have Christians, Muslims, Jews, Sikhs, Hindus. Hatred begets only hatred. It is time to stop this vicious cycle of killing. We must all stand together, for our common humanity. I say this as a memorial for my son.

Marie Fatayi-Williams, July 2005

**Lord, we listen to these mothers and know their tears echo the weeping of so many other mothers.**

**In their name, we pray for peace as we celebrate Mother's Day.**

**In their name, we commit to work for peace so no more children will be violently slain in wars and conflicts.**

**In their name, we will nurture our children and teach them the ways of peace.**

**Mary, who suffered as you saw your only son dying on the cross, please ask your Son to comfort all mothers who suffered the death of a child through violence. Mother us all into a deeper compassion and a firmer resolve to hasten true peace in this world. Let us hasten the day when the world is safe for every mother's child. Amen.**