

# FREE FISH

أسماك حرة



# FREE FISH

أسماك حرة

## Format

Short Documentary

## Duration (est.)

22:13 minutes

## Completion Date

September 2025

## Production Companies

Tellers Productions (Palestine)

Don't Skip Humanity (Portugal)

**LOGLINE** (≤300 caracteres)

When the sea is militarized and every coastline controlled, two Palestinian brothers in Gaza keep casting their nets amidst displacement, famine, and loss. **Free Fish** is a story of survival and defiance, where fishing becomes both memory and resistance.

**SYNOPSIS** (~95 words)

**Free Fish** portrays life under Gaza's blockade through the story of two brothers bound by the sea but divided by displacement. Mohammad, living in a tent in the South, fishes with his daughters and nephew Rami — who lost his twin in the genocide. Ahmad, trapped in the North, risks his life in militarized waters with no equipment of his own. Once a horizon of freedom, the sea is now occupied and weaponized. Yet fishing remains both survival and defiance, a fragile thread of dignity against erasure.

**SYNOPSIS** (~200 words)

**Free Fish** is an intimate documentary filmed entirely in Gaza during one of the deadliest years in recent history. The film follows two brothers, Mohammad (Abu Nagham) and Ahmad Kaloob, as they struggle to survive under siege through fishing — once a livelihood, now a battlefield. Displaced to Khan Younis with his two daughters, Mohammad fishes from the South, while Ahmad, trapped in the North near the Al-Shate'e refugee camp, risks his life in militarized waters with no equipment of his own.

In Gaza, even the sea has been occupied. Once imagined as a horizon of freedom and connection to the world, it has been turned into a zone of surveillance and violence. Fishing boats are targeted, hunger is imposed as policy, and families are pushed to the edge of survival. Yet the brothers resist — casting their nets and their memories into the water, holding on to dignity and connection across a fractured land. The film also follows Rami, Mohammad's young nephew, who lost his twin brother in the genocide and now fishes to endure and to remember.

Crafted through a radical cross-border collaboration between director Bisan Owda in Gaza and co-director Carolina Pereira overseas, **Free Fish** was sustained across more than 400 days of war, displacement, and blockade. It is both political testimony and poetic cinema — a story of resilience, absence, and the refusal to disappear.

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

The Gaza Sea has been the sole refuge for 4,500 fishermen for many years, but it's also the sole refuge for more than 2 million people under siege since 2007. They suffer from high population density, limited public and recreational facilities, and near-constant power outages. The only place they have access to is the sea, a place to spend some time before returning to the hardships of life caused by the blockade and occupation.

The Gaza Port, built by Gazans to be Gaza's window to the world and its port for trade and travel, is also under siege. Gaza is besieged by land, sea, and air. It has been transformed from a port for commercial and transport vessels, as it was intended at the time of its construction, into a gathering place for fishing boats. Yet, we saw the sea as our only means of communication with the world and with each other. In addition to being the only source of fresh food during the genocide, the beach was also a site of displacement and the tents of displaced Gazans forced from their homes by the occupation. Therefore, our relationship with the sea is strong in our bad days and our worst days.

This film brings together all the above meanings and suffering, starting with displacement and separation from family, when we were displaced from the north of the Gaza Strip, which was besieged by the occupation and prevented from returning to it for 15 months, to the south of Gaza Strip, going to the destruction of fishing equipment, the bombing of the Gaza port and the burning of all fishing boats, then to forced starvation and the scarcity of resources that push fishermen to try to fish with all the primitive methods they can think of, and even to the targeting of fishermen by warships and their killing at sea while trying to obtain food for their families.

This is done by documenting the story of two fishermen brothers who were separated, but whose bonds were united by the sea. This film speaks directly about the fishermen and the suffering they face, but it also indirectly addresses other issues that embody the systematic genocide against Palestinians, which not only began recently but has extended for many years before that.

— **Bisan Owda**

## DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY Bisan Owda

**Bisan Owda** is a Palestinian filmmaker, co-founder of **Tellers Productions**, and journalist from Gaza. She became internationally known for her coverage of Israel's military assaults on Gaza, producing raw frontline reports that mobilized millions worldwide. Her work has been featured in *The Guardian*, *Al Jazeera*, *Democracy Now!*, and other platforms. In 2024, she received the prestigious Peabody Award and the Peace Reporters Prize. She is the founder of Tellers, a Palestinian-led media collective. **Free Fish** is her directorial debut in documentary film.

## EXECUTIVE PRODUCER'S BIOGRAPHY Carolina Pereira

**Carolina Pereira** (b. 1993) is a filmmaker, activist, and founder of **Don't Skip Humanity**, an independent media and production company dedicated to impact storytelling for collective action. She creates documentaries and campaigns that denounce injustice and amplify silenced voices. Most recently, she co-directed **Free Fish** with Palestinian filmmaker Bisan Owda (Peabody Award 2024), and **What We Carried**, an intimate film about three generations of displaced women in Gaza. Her work bridges journalism, cinema, and mobilization, with a poetic and deeply political approach.

## PRODUCER'S BIOGRAPHY

**Tellers** is a Gaza-based media collective founded by **Bisan Owda**. Tellers documents daily life under occupation, amplifies marginalized voices, and supports the creation of independent visual narratives from within Gaza.

**Don't Skip Humanity** is a Lisbon-based production company focused on impact-driven cinema and decolonial storytelling. Founded by filmmaker and creative director **Carolina Pereira**, the company has led campaigns and films with global organizations and works closely with grassroots communities and creators from the Global South, with a strong emphasis on ethical processes and local authorship.

## PRODUCER'S NOTE

**Free Fish** is the result of radical collaboration across borders and blockades. While Bisan Owda directed and filmed the story from inside Gaza, the production process was supported remotely by co-director Carolina Pereira and the team at *Don't Skip Humanity*. Every decision — from safety logistics to visual structure — was made with intention and care.

This film is urgent and cinematic. It offers a rare, internally-authored perspective on one of the most pressing geopolitical realities of our time. We believe **Free Fish** can travel across festivals, platforms, and educational circuits. It holds both political weight and universal emotional depth.

# FREE FISH

أسماك حرة



freefish.film