

**Voice of Women**  
**Issue no. 120**  
**May 31, 2001**

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**Editorial: We will never surrender!**

The 53<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the Palestinian catastrophe, or Al-Nakba, arrived this year at a time when the Palestinian nation and land is being subjected to ongoing injury and suffering. Although it is the 53<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of Al-Nakba, if we quickly review the past century it becomes apparent that the 1948 disaster of the Palestinians was one of many catastrophes experienced by the Palestinians, which still continue today. The 1929, 1936-1939 revolutions, the 1948, 1956, 1967, 1982 wars, and the 1987, 1996 and finally the 2000 uprisings are manifestations of the suffering and agony endured by Palestinians, not only in the occupied land, but also in the many refugee camps scattered throughout Arab countries.

However, over the past hundred years Palestinians have always demonstrated perseverance, determination and the will to survive and achieve self-determination. This is a fact that persists despite brutal and inhuman Israeli policies and the silence of the international community, the UN and the Security Council, who were supposedly created to address violations of human rights world-wide and protect civilians under military occupation. The cold silence of these parties has rendered their credibility bankrupt and cost them their legitimacy.

Therefore, we demand the following:

- That the Palestinian Authority develop a clear strategy at local, regional and international levels in order to achieve the interests of the nation
- That political parties and unions throughout the Arab world strengthen their cooperation without depending on or cooperating with their governments, whose support and assistance has always been directed in favor of the United States and Israel.
- To refuse any compromise regarding UN Resolutions 242, 338 and 149.

We, Palestinian women, acknowledge the great difficulty of the situation and that achieving our demands and goals will require massive efforts and long years. Yet, history has taught us that nations can be defeated, but will never surrender.

**Israeli forces take over homes at gunpoint  
I'tidal Qneita and Munir Abu-Ras, Al-Jeel Lil-Sahafeh, Gaza**

The home of Muhammad Abu-Khousa was turned into an Israeli military barricade on the 20<sup>th</sup> of December 2000, leaving him and his family members hostages within their own home. They are traumatized by the fact that they have to share a home with enemy soldiers, who shoot at every moving shadow and are willing to kill on the pretext of feeling "insecure." The Abu-Khousa family are now living in their kitchen. They cannot leave their home to go to for school or work for fear of being shot at or forbidden from returning home again. They are prohibited from using electricity at night. They are harassed constant by Israeli soldiers residing on the roof, who shout and laugh loudly, and shoot randomly.

Seven Palestinian homes within Area A, which is supposed to be under full control by the Palestinian Authority, have been transformed into Israeli military posts. In some cases their owners were expelled, in other cases they have managed to stay, fearing that if they leave they will not be able to come back.

Where is the justice in traumatizing, terrorizing and expelling innocent Palestinian civilians for the sake of protecting Israeli settlers who are living on Palestinian land taken by force, destroying the security of the inhabitants of the area? Isn't this just an attempt to provoke new hostilities by raising the Israeli flag on the rooves of Palestinian homes?

**Mother of two child martyrs brings an audience to tears  
'Itaf Yousef, Ramallah**

In a press conference held in Al-Bireh on the 10<sup>th</sup> of May 2001, organized by the Women's Movement, the following victims of Israeli aggression spoke about their terrible experiences:

1. *'Abeer Barakat: Mother of two child martyrs, Shahid and Malak, who were killed by an explosive planted by Israel in their house in Ramallah with the intention of killing a Fateh political leader.*

'Abeer spoke about the last moments spent with her children, the last words they spoke and the last wishes they had. It was after nine o'clock at night when her husband decided to go buy some ice cream and falafel for his children. He took the youngest son and left, returning in half an hour finding that his life had collapsed, his

family had been murdered and innocent children killed. 'Abeer had been doing laundry on the balcony. Her youngest daughter, Wa'd, was with her. Shahid and Malak were playing in their bedroom with a new toy Shahid had been given as a reward for his good grades at school. She suddenly heard a loud explosion and felt the whole house falling down on her head. The last word she heard from her children was "Mama!" Wa'd called desperately for help but 'Abeer was buried under tons of baton and iron bars, with the water from the washing machine almost drowning her. She called for Shahid and Malak, but to no avail; their voices were never heard again.

2. *Mother of Ubai Darraj, an eight-year-old boy killed by Israeli bullets while playing on his bed in Al-Bireh.*

"Ubai was a very loving child, who enjoyed his toys very much. He never threw a stone, nor harmed any Israeli, yet was brutally killed with a 500mm bullet shot from the Israeli illegal settlement of Psagot, which is built on Al-Bireh land," his mother said with tears flowing from her swollen eyes. The bullet entered his chest and exited from his back killing him instantly.

3. *Muhammad Nu'man: A 12-year-old boy whose mother, 'Aida Fteiha, was murdered by an Israeli bullet shot from the Psagot Settlement in Al-Bireh.*

Muhammad spoke about his pain and catastrophic loss. "She was coming back from the market with bags full of presents and new clothes for the feast when she was shot in the back suddenly and killed on the spot. She was the source of my happiness and laughter. Till this day, her image sticks in my mind. I can never forget her, nor understand why she was killed. She never carried machine guns and was of no threat to the security of Israel. Why...just why did they kill my loving mother?" he said, speaking with great sorrow.

Hearing these words from family members of the victims, the audience was deeply affected and many wept; some raised the eternal question of why Israel continually murders innocent Palestinian children, women and men.

### **Al-Dawaymeh Massacre: Memories engraved on the mind of Mahmud Sa'adeh Widad Al-Barghuti**

Mahmud Sa'adeh is one of the few survivors of Al-Dawaymeh massacre that took place on the 29<sup>th</sup> of October 1948. Mahmud was only eighteen years old, and his wife seventeen, when they were forced out of their village as a result of brutal Israeli attacks. "On that day everyone was out on the streets, the atmosphere was charged with emotion, wondering what might happen to us having seen our neighboring villagers being executed and massacred remorselessly by Israeli groups. Many villagers from the surrounding area had come to Al-Dawaymeh for refuge, believing it to be a safe haven. Yet everyone's fears were fulfilled that day. Almost all the villagers were massacred in a cave known as the "Tur Al-Zagh," where they had gone to hide. All were killed except for a month-old baby, who was found in the lap of his murdered mother. The image of scattered bodies has become a common scene.

Mahmud Sa'adeh continues to recount his memories, which he insists will never be erased no matter how old he becomes. "I remember finding a baby child, his mouth full of dust, left by the side of the road crying. It turned out that his mother had put him down for a minute to chase after a runaway cow, thinking it would only take a moment. But the Israeli attack came at that moment, and those who were not killed fled. Mahmud grabbed the child and fled the area with his wife and some relatives. They kept walking until they reached a group of villagers, where they asked if anyone had lost a child. A woman came out of the crowd who had seen the mother and heard her terrible story; she promised to take the child and find his mother.

Such tragedy and suffering has occurred extensively during the period of expulsion. Some grabbed pillows thinking they were their sleeping babies, others panicked and left their homes with nothing in their hands thinking they will be soon coming back, and all became permanent refugees, left homeless and scattered throughout the Diaspora. Hundreds were killed in cold blood, victims of the merciless and inhumane Israeli ideology and policies.

**While Returning from Birzeit University:  
Ibrahim Al-Qawasmy Loses his Eye after being Shot by Israeli Soldier  
Widad Al-Barghuti**

On his way back from Birzeit University Ibrahim Al-Qawasmi lost his right eye. When the taxi he was in reached the town of Surda, to the north of Ramallah, soldiers at an Israeli checkpoint stopped them and ordered all passengers to get out of the car. As they did, Ibrahim turned his back and walked towards another taxi nearby, hoping to find another way to reach his destination. Suddenly, however, Ibrahim heard one of the soldiers screaming at him, ordering him to stop walking. Ibrahim turned to see what was happening, and found with astonishment that the soldier was pointing his machine gun at him. He won't shoot, Ibrahim thought. But in a moment he found himself thrown on the ground and in great pain. A friend of his, Firas, who ran to his rescue, was also shot with two bullets in his back. Both lay in the middle of the road, helpless.

Isn't this criminal, brutal and inhuman? How could this in any way be considered legitimate? Or is power an asset legitimizing the act of killing?

**2000 Palestinian women arrested since the beginning of the Israeli occupation  
Amin Abu-Wardeh, Nablus**

An initiative to document all relevant information about Palestinian women political prisoners was launched three months ago, in an attempt to highlight and demonstrate the important role of women throughout the struggle for independence since the early years of Israeli occupation.

The first step was to gather information about the overall number of women prisoners that have been detained in Israeli jails. This was done through contacting the Red Cross, the Palestinian Detainees Club, International Solidarity Organization for Human Rights, and direct sources such as the prisoners themselves. Consequently, it was found that the Israeli occupying forces have arrested approximately 2000 Palestinian women political prisoners. A prisoner is any person who is either held under administrative detention without being sentenced for a certain period of time, who has been given a specific prison sentence, held under house or city arrest, or interrogated.

The mechanisms for implementation followed by the Documentation Department at the Ministry of Detainees is to gather information, prepare archives and finally document the outcomes. Unfortunately, the process of gathering information encountered obstacles due to the Israeli-imposed closure around Palestinian areas, which led to difficulty in reaching liberated prisoners.

Following is a list illustrating the focus of the Department in information gathering:

- Social status
- Academic achievements
- Political affiliation
- Place and date of arrest
- Imprisonment conditions
- Number of times arrested
- Cultural publications
- Post-liberation professions
- Health status
- Suffering
- Expectations of the Department of Prisoners' Rehabilitation

Ultimately, the Ministry of Detainees and the Department of Prisoners' Rehabilitation stressed the important role of the women's movement, in this regard. The information and documentation that is gathered will be published and ultimately will be included in the school curriculum in order to educate children, and society generally, about the courageous role that has been played by Palestinian women.

### **Volunteers in the fight against thalassemia** ***Voice of Women, Ramallah***

Four percent of Palestinians are carriers of the genetic trait of Thalassemia, constituting 100,000 Palestinian citizens. Dozens of young men and women, most of them school and college students, serve as volunteers at the Friends of Thalassemia Society, Amal. Their primary responsibility is to distribute educational brochures and stickers to educate the public about the danger of this sickness, its symptoms and how to avoid it. They go door

to door to people's homes, approach businesspersons for donations and support the victims of Thalasemia with the hope of bringing them encouragement.

Some activities have been implemented by the Society, in cooperation with the Women's Affairs Technical Committee, and the Working Women Society. The Friends of Thalasemia Society intends to cooperate with the Ministry of Health to work to limit the spread of the disease through encouraging medical examinations before marriage.

It is worth mentioning that while medical costs per patient run at US \$ 15,000 per year, the budget of the Ministry of Health does not exceed US \$ 500 per year per capita.