

**Voice of Women**  
**Issue no. 137**  
**24 January 2002**

**In this issue:**

**Editorial: To the Arabs and the Nations of the World!**

**Destruction in Rafah: Two generations united by a tent**

**Arab Women and the Intifada:**

**Is the Palestinian women's movement responsible for their lack of participation?**

**Occupation threatens relationships within the Palestinian nuclear family**

**Israeli blockades force Palestinian students to leave home**

**Samia Khateeb: The Palestinian women's movement within Israel is elitist**

**Shireen Abu 'Aqleh: Al-Jazeera Correspondent: Women can prove themselves in journalism**

**33 women martyred during 2001!**

**Editorial: To the Arabs and the Nations of the World!**

The *Voice of Women* news supplement continues its publication despite a fourth Israeli invasion into the northern part of Ramallah where WATC's office is located. We will continue to produce *Voice of Women* despite the daily atrocities committed against the Palestinian nation, the killing of Palestinian civilians and the destruction of Palestinian institutions such as the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, Gaza International Airport, and the Palestinian Television and Radio Broadcasting Corporation.

We, the women of Palestine, call upon the Arab World to stop playing the role of passive observers. We stress the need for meaningful assistance and support for the Palestinian people in order to be able to build an independent Palestinian state. We also highlight the importance of putting an end to America's biased standpoint and the need to pressure Israel to comply with UN Resolutions 242, 338 and 149. The Israeli closure around our villages, towns, refugee camps and cities will never undermine the Palestinian will and right to freedom. The siege we are under only strengthens the endurance and increases the perseverance of our nation.

**Destruction in Rafah: Two generations united by a tent**  
**Juthoor Lis-Sahafah, Gaza**

Since the beginning of the Intifada sixteen months ago, 3213 Palestinian citizens have become victims of Israeli aggression in Rafah, Gaza Strip, out of which 1638 have been made completely homeless, without shelter. Um Ashraf Ghneim, 65, a refugee since 1948, has told the story many times of her experiences of homelessness and life in a tent, having to endure freezing winters and hot summers. Um

Ashraf is one of 221 Palestinians who lost their homes when Israeli occupying forces completely demolished them and leveled the area in which they were living. After having finally managed to secure a small shelter for herself and her family instead of the frail tent they had lived in, Um Ashraf found herself once again a refugee living in a tent. She sits every day on the wreckage of her home, demanding the world to open its eyes, to protect her, her family, and all Palestinians from the constant harassment and aggression by Israeli with the intent to destroy Palestinian life and property. "Is this the same tent you always described in your stories?" her nephew, Muhammad, asked her. "I've told them my experiences of homelessness as a refugee so many times, and now he has come to experience homelessness himself!" she said.

Sameera Abu Libdeh, 39, had never actually been homeless herself, but has always heard about the experiences of neighbors and relatives surrounding her. "We were living peacefully, we were happy, then Israeli bulldozers and tanks came and destroyed all that we owned. They deprived us of shelter and turned vast residential areas into wreckage and destruction," said Sameera. She added, "Many international visitors and advocates have visited the destroyed areas of Rafah, including Peter Hansen, UNRWA's High Commissioner. However, none of them have succeeded in helping us to put an end to our misery and suffering. All they offer us is a nod!"

**Arab Women and the Intifada:  
Is the Palestinian women's movement responsible for their lack of participation?  
Laila Abu Khdeir, Gaza**

There has been a lack of participation in the current Intifada by women in the Arab world. This reality has been discussed by Palestinian women leaders such as Dr. Mariam Abu Daqa (PFLP Political Fraction member), Nadia Abu Nahleh (WATC's Director in Gaza), Mariam Al-Atrash (member of the General Union of Palestinian Women) and Hanan Siam (Field Educator at the Palestinian Working Women Society for Development). They believe that this is a result of failure by Palestinian women to network with women in the Arab world in order to offer them encouragement and guidance. They added that many women, from various Arab countries have shown some support by organizing exhibitions, offering medicine to Palestinian hospitals and giving financial support to Palestinian women university students and to injured women. However, if better coordination existed and the role of the media was more effective in reflecting the needs of Palestinian women and nation, much more could have been done. Below is a list of suggestions:

1. Document all violations committed against Palestinian women and children.
2. Providing social, psychological, economic and media support. For instance, Arab women's societies and organizations can adopt poor Palestinian families or initiate small income-generating projects.
3. Hold Arab and international conferences and dialogue sessions to facilitate discussion of Palestinian women's issues among women in order to develop effective strategies for Arab women to pressure their respective governments.
4. Conduct a broad social campaign in Arab countries in support of the Palestinian Intifada, to generate pressure on their respective governments to offer political and financial support to the Palestinian nation.
5. Write to local Arab newspapers and magazines about the role of Palestinian women in the Intifada.

6. Adopt the children of martyrs and the injured, especially those with permanent disabilities.
7. Support Palestinian women university students, and provide scholarships for them at Arab universities through the General Union of Palestinian Women.
8. Assist the income-generating project run by the General Union of Palestinian Women.
9. Employ Palestinian laborers in the Arab labor market, through providing job opportunities for qualified and educated Palestinians.
10. Network with international women and human rights' unions demanding their support in assisting Palestinian women.

Are Arab women ready to change their role? Will their agendas regarding the support of Palestinians change, or will they simply maintain the same rhetoric of condemnation, just as their respective governments have been doing all along?

### **Occupation threatens relationships within the Palestinian nuclear family** *Voice of Women, Gaza*

Abu Ahmad Hassouneh, 34, from Gaza, suffers like hundreds of other Palestinians the effects of forced separation from his wife and children. His family traveled to Egypt one month after the outbreak of the Palestinian Intifada in late 2000 to visit family members there, and have not been allowed to return to Gaza to be with Abu Ahmad. Israel is forbidding all Palestinians who do not have the identity card granting them eligibility to live in Gaza from entering its borders unless a visitor permit is issued. Many Palestinian women married to Palestinian men from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip don't have identity cards due to their displacement in 1967, making it impossible for them to return or to obtain an identity card. Israel rarely grants visitor permits to anybody, making life miserable for Palestinian families, damaging family ties and preventing daily contact between fathers and children, husbands and wives. It is almost impossible for Abu Ahmad to go to Egypt in order to be with his family, because the only way out of the Gaza Strip is through Rafah Checkpoint, at which Israel routinely demeans and humiliates Palestinian travelers. Many people avoid traveling through this checkpoint in order to avoid the humiliation. Abu Ahmad misses his family deeply, especially his newborn son, whom he has not seen yet. "What danger does my wife and children present to Israel? Why aren't they allowed to come back to live with me?" Abu Ahmad said with desperation.

### **Israeli blockades force Palestinian students to leave home** **Ahlam Hammad, Gaza**

Israeli military blockades erected on the roads between the districts of the Gaza Strip have forced hundreds of Palestinian students and workers to move out of their homes in the southern parts of the Gaza Strip in order to be able to pursue their education and work in Gaza City. After suffering for long hours at the Israeli blockades and having to endure the daily humiliation, many women students have managed to convince their families of their need to move to Gaza City to finish their university education. Many men and women students now live in apartments in Gaza and are unable to visit their families because of the long ordeal it has become and the risk involved. 'Ala' Nashwan, 25, has been away from his hometown, Khan Younis, for more than six months, then had to return to help his sick

mother when she had surgery. 'Ala' was shot three times during the first Intifada, and still his daily suffering under Israeli occupation and its ongoing policies of degradation and destruction has not ended. "What right does Israel have to prevent me and hundreds of other Palestinians from seeing our families and friends? What crime have we committed that we have to live such miserable and humiliating lives?" he asked.

**Samia Khateeb: The Palestinian women's movement within Israel is elitist**  
**Ahmad Saleem, Ramallah**

Samia Khateeb, a member of the executive committee of Da'm Organization and Chief Editor of Al-Sabbar Magazine in Nazareth, states that the lives of Palestinian women in Israel are controlled by the traditional patriarchal mentality which regards women's role as domestic and confined to the kitchen. She concentrates on the high rate of unemployment among Palestinians living in Israel, saying that if men are not able to exercise their own rights, how will they be able to grant women their rights? Twenty percent of the women's labor force is employed in food and textile companies as well as some administrative positions. Women workers are paid less than men for the same work. Most women's organizations and even Arab political parties have a tendency toward elitism and fail to adequately represent the needs of ordinary people.

Da'm, the Democratic Work Organization, has been offering training courses and facilitating income-generating projects for Palestinian women in Israel since its establishment eight years ago. Its work has helped to empower women with confidence in their abilities. Da'm is leftist in its views and believes in the right of Palestinians to self-determination, to resist Israeli occupation and the right of refugees to return. Samia Khateeb calls upon Palestinian women to emancipate themselves and to understand their rights and work for them, in order to be able to raise the next generation with greater awareness.

**Shireen Abu 'Aqleh: Al-Jazeera Correspondent: Women can prove themselves in journalism**  
**'Azezeh Nofal, Palestinian Women Journalist Office, Ramallah**

Shireen Abu 'Aqleh, a Palestinian woman journalist, was born in Jerusalem and studied Media and Journalism at Al-Yarmuk University. After finishing her education she returned to Palestine and has worked with various media and other institutions, beginning at UNRWA and later working for Palestine Radio Station, Amman Satellite Channel, Miftah Organization and finally as a correspondent for Al-Jazeera Satellite TV Channel.

She has proven herself in journalism, through the accuracy and integrity of her reporting. She said that the most difficult moments for her are when she meets the families of martyrs or participates in martyrs' funerals. However, she said that those moments are difficult for every journalist, regardless of his/her sex. Being a woman journalist in the Palestinian society involves many obstacles due to the limited role society grants women journalists in comparison to that given to men. Men are given more freedom of movement, working hours and job opportunities in journalism. No matter how much women journalists prove their abilities, they are almost never appointed to high ranking positions. Shireen, however, pointed out that her own family has been very supportive of the role she has played as a journalist, which has given her the motivation and strength to succeed at her job. As far as her own

ambitions are concerned, Shireen would like to return to radio broadcasting instead of working for television channels, because she feels that the radio allows more direct engagement and confrontation with the public. On the personal level, she notes that if she gets married and starts a family, she will do her best to maintain balance between her family and her job despite the heavy work load required by journalists. She hopes that her future husband will support her in this.

Shireen added that, "Any educated woman who loves journalism and media work should not be fearful or hesitant in their work. A woman is capable of competing with a man successfully and achieving the same accomplishments. As far as the risks involved in journalism, she pointed out that every Palestinian person in the current circumstances faces risks wherever she/he is. Therefore journalists simply face the same dangers as normal citizens. Journalism is an important arena in which women can prove themselves".

### **33 women martyred during 2001! Amin Abu Wardeh, Nablus**

Palestinian women have been direct victims of the political struggle since the 1930s. Not only have they been the mothers of martyrs, the injured or the prisoners, but they have also been martyred, injured, imprisoned and deported themselves. According to statistics published by the Human Rights International Support Organization, 22 Palestinian women were killed directly by Israeli occupying forces and 11 died as a result of being denied passage to hospitals at the Israeli blockades, during the year 2001. Israeli bullets do not differentiate between men and women. They have killed men as well as women while at home or on the streets, children while at school, and even babies while in the arms of their parents. The following table indicates the names, ages, addresses and dates of death of the 33 women martyrs killed by Israeli occupying forces during the year 2001:

**Names of Palestinian women martyrs directly killed by Israeli occupying forces**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Date Killed</b>
1	Areej Saber Sa'eed Al-Jabaly	19	Hebron	5/1/2001
2	Fatima Jamal Jalal Abu Jeish	19	Nablus, Beit Dajan	7/1/2001
3	Bara' Kamal Abu Samra Qalalula	22 months	Ramallah/Al-Bireh	10/2/2001
4	'Ayda Dahoud Musa Fteiha	46	Ramallah/Al-Bireh	3/3/2001
5	Malak Jamal Barakat	3	Ramallah/Ein Misbah	30/4/2001
6	Iman Muhammad Hijo	4 months	Gaza/Khan Younis Refugee Camp	7/5/2001
7	Hikmat 'Atallah Al-Malalha	17	Gaza/Al-Mighraqa	9/6/2001
8	Saleemeh 'Omar Al-Malalha	37	Gaza/Al-Mighraqa	9/6/2001
9	Nasra Salem Al-Malalha	65	Gaza/Al-Mighraqa	9/6/2001
10	Fatima 'Alayan Abu-Khurda	70	Qalqilia	19/6/2001
11	Rasmiyah Jawdat Al-Jabbareen	40	Hebron/Al-Dahiriyyeh	11/7/2001
12	Sabreen Abdulkareem Abu-Sneineh	10	Hebron	12/8/2001
13	Enas Sameer Abu-Zeid	7	Gaza/Rafah	19/8/2001
14	Balqeas Ahmad Al-'Ardah	14	Jenin/ 'Arabeh	12/9/2001
15	Raja' Saleh Freihat	24	Jenin	13/9/2001
16	Sa'diyeh Al-Bakri	70	Ramallah/Um Al-Sharayet	16/9/2001
17	Riham Nabeel Ward	10	Jenin	18/10/2001

18	Mariam Suleiman Sbeih	28	Bethlehem/Al-Khader	19/10/2001
19	Rania Elias Nasri Kharufeh	23	Beit Jala	20/10/2001
20	'Aisha 'Abdulqader Abu 'Odeh	48	Bethlehem/'Aida Refugee Camp	20/10/2001
21	Ghada Mahmud 'Omar Issa	18	Jenin/Sanour	21/10/2001
22	Nujud Muhammad Ghneim	26	Bethlehem/Al-Khader	29/12/2001

**Names of Palestinian women martyrs, died when denied passage through Israeli blockades**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Date Died</b>
1	'Aisha 'Abdulkarim Nassar	29	Ramallah/Al-Janiyeh	23/1/2001
2	Husun Suleiman Daraghme	66	Nablus/Al-Lubban Al-Sharqiyeh	28/1/2001
3	Khadra Raja' Ishneiwi	65	Qalqilia/Kufur Qaddoum	5/2/2001
4	Nada 'Abed As'ad Hanani	45	Nablus/Beit Foreik	26/2/2001
5	Ameera Nasr Naser Abu Seif	48	Jenin/Faqu'a	14/3/2001
6	Fatima Hasan Al-'Abd Al-Shrafi	64	Gaza/Jabalia Refugee Camp	30/6/2001
7	Mariam Ibrahim Al-Tamimi	55	Ramallah/Al-Nabi Saleh	2/7/2001
8	Jameeleh Salem Abu Shhab	39	Qalqilia	2/7/2001
9	Azhar Sa'eed Shalalfeh	2	Gaza/Mawasi Rafah	11/8/2001
10	Umaya Hamadallah 'Umran	25	Qalqeelia/'Azzoun	24/9/2001
11	Rihab Nofal	30	Bethlehem/Husan	19/10/2001