

Voice of Women
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Editorial: We can't wait any longer

It is disturbing to see that amidst the brutal attacks launched by the Israeli occupation forces against the Palestinian people, the Palestinian community lacks unity as never before.

It is not an exaggeration to say that the Palestinians are currently experiencing a desperate and terrible situation. There is no doubt that the Israeli occupation is not interested in having a Palestinian government of any type. Our people will certainly not accept the Israeli occupation imposing any type of government on them. The Israelis are postponing any political solution to gain time and try to impose – through their military force, tanks and rockets – their vision of the solution.

What is even worse is that Palestinians are distracted and preoccupied with side issues, dreaming of the “external intervention” we have waited so long for.

Our national and moral responsibility coupled with loyalty to the blood of our martyrs, the suffering of our wounded, the screams of the prisoners and pains of hunger among the poor make it imperative that decision makers forget about their differences and turn to the public for support. Experience has shown that the real achievements accomplished by the Palestinian people were made in times of national solidarity. We must face the challenges without delay. We need a unified leadership that has a real commitment to opposing any Israeli attack that aims to impose new facts on the ground by force of weapons. Time is running out and we cannot wait any longer.

Nomination of female magistrate courts judges in West Bank and Gaza Strip

The decision made by the Supreme Judicial Council to appoint female judges in magistrate courts in the West Bank and Gaza Strip represents an important step in reinforcing the role of women and empowering them in this important authority in order to play a role in implementing the principles of democracy, equality and justice.

The president of the Supreme Judicial Council, Zuheir Alhurani said to *Voice of Women* that the decision was made in order to help Palestinian women attain decision-making positions.

Sa'adah Aldajani, a Supreme Court judge in Gaza, who was the first lady to be appointed as judge in 1970s, commended this appointment as affirming women's status. Aldajani had worked as a lawyer with her father, a prominent lawyer. She also worked in the prosecution before she was appointed to the conciliation court then to the central court until she was nominated to her current position. She is also a member of the judicial training committee that lectures new judges on all issues related to this field.

Amal Alimam held several important positions before she was appointed as judge to the magistrate court. She practiced as a lawyer and worked as a prosecutor for three years until she became a legal advisor to the Ministry of Education for twenty years and chair of the legal committee in the General Union of Palestinian Women and vice-president of the preparatory committee of the same organization. She confirmed that the decision strengthens Palestinian women in this important authority by raising awareness of gender issues.

As for Nirmeen Subh, who was also appointed as a conciliation court judge, she holds a Ph.D. in international trade law from Ein Shams University. She is still in her early thirties. She started her career as a lecturer in Alazhar University for seven years. She said that Palestinian women have been in leading positions since the Islamic era when they held senior positions. Subh confirms that being a judge is no longer a man's position underlining that women have proven excellent caliber and success in strengthening the legal base of the Palestinian society. She also called upon working women to balance work and family because these are two parallel tasks of equal importance.

**Amnesty report: Huda Al Massimi,
whose husband was martyred in her arms**

Huda Mahmoud Almassimi, 38, from Balata Refugee Camp near Nablus, suffered a nervous breakdown when he husband was martyred in her arms. She did not give up, but started working to support her family. She was ill in bed for forty days after Israeli soldiers killed her husband and pursued her eldest son. She says, "I have to be up to the challenges of my work and taking care of my five sons, Eyad, Ahmad, Amer, Muhannad, Hamoud. Eyad's wife and two children are also my responsibility. I decided to turn part of my home into a hairdresser's salon to make a living.

Um Eyad gets up early every day to do her housework before she opens her business at 10.00 am. She had earned certificates from training centers to work as an esthetician and had won awards in her work. She works every day except for Mondays, like other hairdressers in Palestine. However, when there is the wedding of a relative or a friend, she works on Mondays.

She was invited to travel to France and Egypt to take part in international contests and training courses, but she could not accept the invitations because of her health condition.

Remembering her late husband, she says, "Abu Eyad had to face injustice on many occasions. He was fired from his job in Saudi Arabia after 25 years of service due to

the Gulf War. He returned to the West Bank and became ill and incapacitated. He opened a service office in the camp to print applications and permits. Then he was martyred."

Inhabitants of the camp are proud of Um Eyad and her determination to survive. She recalled the death of her husband on 24 February 2003 when the Israeli army raided the camp and arrested some young men, including her son Eyad.

She remembers, "My husband and I were among 25 people forced to sit on the floor. Soldiers entered our houses and started shooting inside. One soldier fired a sound bomb near Abu Eyad. An officer started shouting that we must bring Eyad out or we would die. "I will shoot you!" said the officer. He kicked Abu Eyad and attacked our son Muhannad.

Abu Eyad's was in a critical state. He laid his head on my shoulder. I kept talking to him. We asked the soldiers to allow us get him his medicine from home. They refused. We begged to be able to take him home or at least get him a chair so he could sit down. It was not that easy. Finally, they allowed us to carry him inside and we tried to revive him. He did not respond. A soldier came and did a massage for the heart, but in vain. I took the phone and called an ambulance that arrived late because of the Israeli soldiers' obstacles. An army doctor came to check on him, but it was too late. Abu Eyad had passed away. The soldiers took us out of there and we started shouting for help. The soldiers left quickly once they were sure he was dead."

Um Eyad was interviewed for a documentary prepared by Amnesty International on the suffering of Palestinian people and their ability to adjust and adapt to the situation.

