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An exhibit by the Lebanese photographer Rin Mahfouth was recently opened in Stuttgart, Germany. The theme of the exhibit is the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. Dozens of Arabs living in Germany visited the exhibit. The exhibit was organized by Madar Institute for Cultural Exchange and included paintings and photographs picturing the development of the life of Palestinian refugees in Beirut and in the refugee camps, especially in Rashidiyeh, Sour and Al Bass. The exhibit continued until May 27th.

Rin titled her exhibit *There is a Song in the Mind* (Fi Il Bali Aughniah), which is actually the title of a poem by the famous Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish. Her aim is to educate the German public about the life of Palestinian refugees in the refugee camps and the hardships they suffer. She said that the exhibit contributes to the preservation of the memory of the Nakba and it documents the refugee camps' streets and houses as well as women's work. She also indicated that the exhibition was attended by a good number of Germans and Arabs. She added: "I focus on the Palestinian camps in Lebanon because I want to inform the audience about Palestinian life in the refugee camps and how wars have affected them." She also said that the policy of the Lebanese government restricting Palestinians from 74 forms of employment is unfair and that Palestinian refugees have the right to live a normal life.

Ms. Mahfouth criticized the United States' silence regarding the massacres committed by the Israeli forces in the occupied Palestinian territories while it is conducting a war against the Iraqi people based on the claim that the Iraqi government refuses to abide by international regulations. On the other hand, she said, Israel has failed to abide by the hundreds of the International Security Council decisions that confirm the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. She said that the siege has exhausted the Iraqi people and led to the deaths of a million and a half people in the past twelve years. As a result, starvation and deprivation have become widespread. She added: "We support the Iraqis and the Palestinians in resisting the attacks they are facing. In addition, the crisis our nation is going through requires active solidarity with the two peoples. It also requires a high degree of awareness and caution due to the possible outcomes of this brutal war which could endanger the whole region."

Mr. Yousef Hjaz, director of Madar Institute for Cultural Exchange, which organized the exhibit, said that there is a large German audience interested in Ms. Mahfouth's work. He added that the exhibit doesn't deal with the issue in an overtly political way. The aim of the institute is to emphasize the humanitarian reality of the sufferings of the Palestinians in the refugee camps in Lebanon. Hjaz added: "Our focus with the exhibit is the cultural and humanitarian dimensions in order to inform the Germans about our sufferings and how these refugees live inside their homes."

**Murdering women and children:
The way dialogue is conducted in Palestine and Iraq**

Amal Hussein

When we lose our trust in our feelings; when everything changes; when the abnormal becomes normal: insecurity overwhelms our emotions. We live with this, get used to it and organize our lives around it. And when a day comes and we don't hear shelling or the sound of a military aircraft, we wonder what's wrong. If we read the newspaper and don't see pictures of martyrs and names of injured people, we also get surprised. This is the situation that has developed: tension, anxiety and insecurity are the criteria by which we measure everything. If we were to survey the extent of people's security and insecurity, we would discover that a large percentage of us, especially women at home, have adapted to these conditions and begun to organize our lives accordingly.

During the day we hear loudspeakers moving through the streets, announcing funerals, calling for strikes or issuing warnings. At night, the noise of aircraft is constant. After few minutes, bombing, missilery and shooting are heard. Suddenly, the phone rings: a friend or a relative is calling to tell you that a confrontation is happening near to them -- in Shija'iyah, Azzaytoun, Jabalyah, Beit Hanoun, Shekh Ijleen or Tal El Hawa. The area around Nitsareem, an Israeli settlement near Gaza City, has become a battlefield. Incursions, homes demolitions, assassinations, arrests and shelling are constant. Destruction is everywhere. This is the Israelis' language of dialogue. The letters of their alphabet are bullets; their words are tanks; their terminology is bombs and mines. The Apache rockets are their logic which they force on others and with which they change the geography. They can make you change the rooms your children sleep in and stop using all the rooms in your house that have windows on the streets. You make your children sleep in the sitting room or in the visitors' room regardless of the coldness of the winter or the hot summer weather -- this is the last thing on your mind at this point. Turning the lights off at the end of day is what matters to you, rather than any plans you might have had for the evening. The Israelis have cancelled all your plans and decided on a program for you to follow and you shouldn't complain. You might start looking for programs which treat psychological and mental disturbances in children. You may seek a therapist to help your children with their increasing difficulties with fear, tension, involuntary urination, nail biting, aggression, stealing, lying and fantasizing. All of these disorders are caused either directly or indirectly by Israel; as the shelling continues, they grow inside our children. When the Israelis talk about Palestinians, they say that we send our children off to die, not because they do not know the truth, but because they refuse to admit it.

When a Palestinian child faces a tank, she wants to confront it as a bringer of death. She wants to stop it from destroying, demolishing and killing. So she faces this tank to stop the machinery of destruction and to prevent it from removing life from the earth. Every Palestinian child, woman, youth would stand in the face of death to bar it from creeping into the heart of our life and destroying us. All of us longs to prevent this monster from corrupting the images of beauty that we hold dear. It is not that we are suicidal or want to die; rather, we are trying to defend life and existence by confronting the threat of death. It is our belief – an idea that runs through all religions – that the one who gives his life for others deserves special honour.

Death is no respecter of persons. Iraqi children, like Palestinian children, are suffering. The death machines of the American are daily destroying many parts of the Arab world: Iraq, Palestine, Sudan, Somalia -- and the list is still to be continued. Their excuse is that they are fighting terrorism and terrorists. Was the Iraqi child whose head they tore off the one who planned the attacks against Washington and New York? Were the woman and her six children who were all murdered members of a terrorist cell posing a threat America and its allies? When we saw the bloody strikes against Baghdad and the murder of a large number of civilians, especially women and children, we saw that Palestinians are not the only people listed on the agenda of ethnocide.

Is there a winner in the war?

Talal Oukal

I don't think there is any other people in the world that was affected by the brutal British-American war against Iraq like the Palestinians were. This is because the Palestinian people know the meanings of injustice and occupation more than any other people.

Since the beginning of the war, the Palestinians have been concerned with the national question in general and the Iraqi problem in particular as if it were their own cause. They have followed every detail of the events and set aside their own troubles caused by the daily shelling, assassinations and invasions by Israel.

The rapid and unexpected collapse of the Iraqi regime came as a huge shock, even though it was clear that Washington did not go to Iraq to be defeated. The Iraqi regime collapsed and many couldn't believe what they saw on TV; some tried to convince themselves that the defeat was not real and the apparent collapse was just a tactic planned by the Iraqi administration.

While Iraqi leadership has collapsed, Iraq will continue to survive as it always has since the beginning of its history, protecting the deep stores of their civilization and adding to them. What are even harder than the stages of war are its outcomes. The occupiers invaded the Iraqi schools, hospitals, museums, scientific centers, universities, streets and homes.

Under the watch of the Marines forces, mobs started to destroy everything while the American forces were busy guarding the oils wells and economic interests. Mobs can be found everywhere in the world, even in the United States, which has the highest rate of crime. In every country there is at least one disadvantaged group which would be willing to turn against the regime and welcome the invaders.

We, as Palestinians, know what we have lost because of this war, but do the Americans and British understand what they have lost? We admit that the American forces achieved a military victory and now controls Iraq's oil and resources. They are trying to shape the future of Iraq in a way that suits American interests. However, the United States has lost prestige as a superpower and would have lost more had it not been for the sudden collapse of the Iraqi regime, the reasons for which are still not clear. It has also lost the respect of other nations because of its flagrant disregard for international agreements.

The collapse of the Iraqi regime is paralleled by the collapse of American values. What kind of a free Iraq does America want? One with an American military ruler and American police? A destroyed Iraq which Americans can rebuild with Iraqi money? Is this free Iraq going to be the eastern gate that guards the security and interests of the Arab countries, or is it an Iraq that will be forced to normalize relations with Israel? Or is it the gate leading to the American and Israeli occupation of the rest of the Arab countries? This is what America and its biggest ally, Britain, want. Finally, what lies beneath comes to the surface.

However, we should not feel defeated nor lose our faith in our just cause as Palestinians and as Arabs, nor our belief in the Arab people, alienated from the decisions of their governments. We should not give up. We should not even dream of American support in achieving our national goals. The United States managed to overthrow the Iraqi regime but now it is trapped, sinking in the Iraqi mud.

Iman Khousa: How Prison Became Good News Women's Voice, Gaza

“When I saw her, I felt a chill pass through body. I couldn't believe it was my daughter I was looking at behind prison bars. Was this really Iman, the girl who was always so full of fun? I reached for her fingers through the narrow slits of the windows, trying to give her some comfort.”

Suffered too much:

These are the words of Im Adel, 65, from Jabalya Camp, about her daughter Iman who is in an Israeli prison. It took a long time to reach the prison and the visit didn't last more than forty minutes. Sometimes, the journey takes all day. Im Adel is the only family member permitted by Israel to visit Iman. Then a news broadcast announced that Israeli soldiers had murdered a Palestinian woman who had tried to carry out a military operation inside the Israeli settlement Rafah Yam. Iman's name was announced on the Radio and TV. Her father and brothers called the authorities and human rights institutions in an attempt to retrieve her body.

After five days, two Arab members of the Israeli Knesset, Talab Essani' and Ahmad Ettibi, called and told us that Iman is still alive but she's in a hospital in Ashkelon because she was injured. The family kept trying to visit Iman in the hospital but it was four months before they were permitted to. “I was the only one allowed to visit her after she was moved from Al Majdal prison, where she was interrogated, to the segregation unit at Trista in Ramlah,” Im Adel said. After almost seven months in detention, Iman

was sentenced to two years. However the Israeli military authorities appealed the judge's decision and she was sentenced instead to three and a half years.

Im Adel said that Iman is going through a difficult time psychologically because Israel prevents her father from visiting her. Despite his age, Iman's father has not lost hope for seeing her again. He says that if he can only see her again, he can die in peace. He worries about her constant, especially since she's the only female prisoner from Gaza Strip and she's still young.

Her brother, who is one year older than Iman, couldn't retrain himself from saying, "The Israeli forces have planted hatred by committing the most brutal acts of aggression and humiliation and massacring children, old people and women." He continued, "They don't even allow Iman to take the monthly injection which she needs for a chronic throat infection."