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| <p><b>Palestinian Women and Resistance</b></p>   |    | <p><b>Sociology</b></p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> Palestinian women, culture, resistance, occupation.</p> |
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| <p><b>Abstract</b></p> <p>The study aimed at identifying Palestinian women and resistance. The study approached the literature as a multi-dimensional phenomenon, which addressed both theoretical and applied research. The significance of this recent study is the first, which dealt with this theme, based on the authors' knowledge. This, however, in turn encourages other researchers to work on further research on this important question. The findings revealed that the Palestinian woman has realized the importance and effectiveness of the role of national struggle in the liberation of Palestine; she was able to employ different forms of the struggle in harmony with her own physical, mental, psychological, and spiritual capacities. Palestinian women have actively participated in the national struggle across Palestinian history; she was the mother, the captive, the civilian activist, the fighter, and the suicide martyr (Istishhadiya).</p> |  |   |

## Introduction

Although the Palestinian history of the conflict with Israel has long been dominated by men, there have been several high-profile women figures, often fighters and activists, and occasionally politicians and leaders. The woman who was regarded as the first female Palestinian guerrilla fighter is named Fatima Barnawi. However, in October 1967, she planted a bomb in a Jerusalem cinema that left dozens of Israelis injured. She was 28 years of age and was a member of Fateh Movement (Abu Ali, 1974; Khalili, 1977; Hanson, 2006).

Perhaps, the most iconic Palestinian women were the hijacker, Leila Khaled. In 1969, she took part in the hijacking of a TWA plane, flying it to Damascus before blowing it up. She had cosmetic surgery to disguise her looks and the next year made a failed attempt to hijack another plane as part of a wave of hijacks planned by the leftwing Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (Hanson, 2006; Nieves, 2006).

Nearly a decade later, on the morning of 11 March 1978, Dalal Mughrabi and her Palestinian Militants (Fedayeen) unit of eleven members, including one other woman, landed on an Israeli beach, killed an American photographer, and seized a bus filled with passengers. After a gun battle with Israeli soldiers, she blew up the bus, killing 36 people on board. Mughrabi and her fighters were also killed (Khalili, 1977; Alqam, 2005; Hanson, 2006; Naaman, 2007).

In 2002, new generations of Palestinian women are taking part. When the late president Yasser Arafat called on Palestinian women -his "Army of Roses"- to join in the struggle against Israeli occupation, he was surprised by their swift and devastating response. Later that same day, Wafa Idris became the first Palestinian female suicide martyr (Istishhadiya) on January 27,

2002 when she detonated a martyrdom operation in Jerusalem killing an Israeli and injuring 150 others (Beyler, 2003; Victor, 2003; Hanson, 2006; McCarthy, 2006; Naaman, 2007).

### **Palestinian Women Involvement in Resistance**

The Palestinian woman has realized the importance and effectiveness of the national struggle, and she was able to employ the different forms of the struggle in harmony with her own physical, mental, psychological, and spiritual capacities in a distinctive manner which was characterized by depth, accountability, national belonging, and ethical commitment along the historical march of the Palestinian national resistance. The level of this noticeable involvement has gone higher with the increase in the number of youth, old, women and children suicide martyrs (Istishhadiyin) who paid with their lives since September 2000 for the liberation, freedom, and dignity of the outbreak of Al-Aqsa Intifada to this present day. The Palestinian woman is above all a patient mother who brought to this country outstanding models of heroes who painted with their blood the main features of freedom and national liberation. The involvement of Palestinian women in the martyrdom operations surprised the Israeli security circles which gave them the awareness that they are facing a phenomenon in which all the Palestinian people, both young men and women, are looking for individuals who will be willing to carry out such operations (Abu Ali, 1974; Khalili, 1977; Alqam, 2005).

The martyrdom operation carried out by Wafa Idris on 27 January 2002 was not the first martyrdom operation of its kind carried out by a Palestinian woman; however, there were many other Palestinian girls who tried to carry out such operations.

It is possible to indicate that the first attempt at the level of martyrdom operations was in the year 1986 through what used to be called “Saraya Jihad Islami”. It was decided that Itaf Ilyan would drive a bobby-trapped car from Bethlehem District; however the operation was discovered on 17 December 1992. In another attempt, Iman Ghazawi carried out an abortive operation in August 2001 during the Aqsa Intifada and she was caught in the central station in Tel Aviv carrying 5 kilos of explosives hidden inside a washing powder (Qasim, 2003; Sawahil, 2003; Victor, 2003; Hanson, 2006; McCarthy, 2006).

In an interview with Itaf Ilyan, based on the study of Qasim (2003) and Sawahil (2003), the first attempt suicide martyr (Istishhadiya) woman stated; “I was a member in Islamic Jihad Movement when I was 17 year old. Since 1988, I started asking the leadership to allow me carry out a martyrdom operation; I volunteered to carry out the first operation following the success of the Lebanese experience in this kind of operations according to the Zionist enemy; I received approval and started preparations to attack Israeli governmental buildings in Jerusalem with a bobby trapped car; however, I was arrested and sentenced 15 years until the day I was released in 1997”. Ilyan adds, “Necessity knows no boundaries”. There is a holy tradition by Prophet Mohammed, May God’s Peace and Prayer Be Upon Him, saying; “If an enemy enters into the

house of Islam, the wife would leave without the permission of her husband and the slave without the permission of his master”.

Consequently, what follows is a brief review of the main martyrdom operations carried out by Palestinian female suicide martyrs (Istishhadiyat) (Palestinian women martyrs against the Israeli occupation, 2007).

WafaIdris was a nurse in Red Crescent Society, the Palestinian version of the Red Cross. On 27 January 2002, the 28 year old nurse walked into a shopping district on Jerusalem's Jaffa Road and carried out a martyrdom operation killing herself, an Israeli, and injuring 150 others. Red Crescent Society officials said that, “Idris had been on the front line of clashes between Palestinian demonstrators and Israeli troops, tending to the wounded”. About two weeks before her martyrdom operation, he said that, “She cradled a 15 year old boy, Samir Kosbeh, who was hit in the head by a bullet fired by Israelis soldiers”. The clash took place just outside the West Bank headquarters of the Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat. The boy lapsed into a coma for a week, and then died two days before Idris detonated her bomb. She lived at Amari Refugee Camp near Ramallah.

The second martyrdom operation by a Palestinian woman freedom fighter occurred on 27 February 2002. Darene Abu Aisha, 22 year old, detonated a bomb at *Maccabim settlement* checkpoint in West Ramallah (West Bank), wounding four Israelis. She was a student at AnNajah National University in Nablus, and came from the village of BeitWazan, in the West Bank. She left a videotape, which was broadcast by the Arab satellite channel ANN, saying that, “She decided to be the second female– after WafaIdris– to carry out a martyrdom operation and to take revenge for the blood of the martyrs and the desecration of the sanctity of Al-Aqsa Mosque”. Darene highlighted the crucial role of Palestinian women in the resistance and said; “Let Sharon the coward know that every Palestinian woman will give birth to an army of martyrs, and her role will not only be confined to weeping over a son, brother or husband; instead she herself will become a martyr”.

Ayat Al-Akhras, 18 year old, was the youngest Palestinian female suicide martyr. On 29 March 2002, she detonated a martyrdom operation inside a supermarket in KyriatHayoval area of Jerusalem killing two Israelis and injuring 28 others. Two days before she detonated the operation, Ayat sat with her fiancée, Shadi Abu Laban, and talked about graduating from high school and getting married in the summer; the couple dreams made them agree on the name of the first baby born “Adi”. Her operation came in response to the Israeli killing of the Palestinian, IssaFaraj, following a rocket shelling of his house adjacent to Ayat’s house. She was the one who found him drowning in his blood and rushed him to hospital; she saw his two year old daughter playing in her father’s blood. In her will, she said; “What is the use of life if death chases us from all directions? We will go to it before it comes to us and revenge for our selves before we die”. Ayat came from Dehaisha Refugee Camp, near Bethlehem, which is the camp of uproot and homelessness in which the residents are suffering from tragic conditions.

On 12 April 2002, Andaleeb Taqatqa, a 20 year old girl from Beit Fajjar village near Bethlehem, detonated a belt full of explosives at a Jerusalem bus stop, killing 6 Israelis, and injuring 104 others. The scene really shook souls when she stood reading her will and holding the Quran, saying; “I will make out of my body a gun powder barrel which utters what Arab leaders could not utter that this is a perished life that has no taste or value”. She adds; “When you want to carry out such an operation, whether you are a man or a woman, you don’t think about the explosive belt or about your body being ripped into pieces. We are suffering. We are dying while we are still alive”.

Nineteen year old Hiba Daraghmeh detonated a belt filled with explosives that was strapped to her waist killing herself, three Israelis, and injuring 93 others on 19 May 2003 outside the Amakim Shopping Mall in Afula, northern part of Israel. This was after she had seen the destruction and devastation which had happened to the camp of Jenin at the hands of the Israeli occupation troops. However, the camp was completely destroyed. The shy 19 year old student of English Literature never spoke to men and avoided drinking coffee or tea at the cafeteria of Al-Quds Open University in her home town of Tubas in the West Bank. All of her friends were girls. Even her cousin, Murad Daraghmeh, 20 year old, who was in the same university said: “I never saw her face. I never talked to her. I never shook hands with her. The first time the world saw her young face unveiled was in an Islamic Jihad poster released after her martyrdom”.

On October 4, 2003, Hanadi Jaradat, a 29 year old attorney from Jenin detonated a martyrdom operation at Maxim restaurant in Haifa, killing herself, 21 Israelis, and injuring 50 others. Hanadi wrapped her waist with explosives and fought her way past a security guard at the restaurant. Hanadi was a single woman whose younger brother, Fadi, 25 year old, and an older cousin, Salah, 34 year old, were killed by Israeli forces in Jenin on 12 June 2003. She said in her will: “By God’s force and determination, I have decided to be the sixth Istishhadiya who would make out of her body separate explosive fragments to kill the Zionists and destroy every settler and Zionist since it is not us alone who have to pay the price and harvest the price for their crimes”. Therefore, Hanadi was called “The Bride of Haifa”.

On the morning of 14 January 2004, a twenty one year old mother of two children carried out a martyrdom operation at Erez checkpoint between Israel and the Gaza Strip killing four Israeli soldiers. The Palestinian female martyr, Reem Rayashi of Gaza City, was a university student with two children, ages one and four whom she loved dearly. She made the ultimate sacrifice for the freedom and independence of the Palestinian people, and wrote in her virtuous blood the most elegant and honest words.

Zainab Abu Salem is the eighth Palestinian female suicide martyr (Istishhadiya) to carry out a martyrdom operation in an effort to liberate Palestine. Abu Salem, 18 year old, blew herself up near a hitch-hiking post in Jerusalem on 22 September 2004, killing two Israeli border police and wounding 17 others. The blast tore through the main Jewish district of French Hill in Arab East Jerusalem, captured by Israel in 1967 Middle East war and annexed in a move not recognized

internationally. Relatives of Zainab had little time to absorb the shock. They rushed to empty the family home in the Palestinian refugee camp of Askar near the city of Nablus, expecting Israeli bulldozers to soon come and demolish it. “I don’t know what’s happening, I don’t know where she is. She isn’t at home” said Abu Salem’s twelve-year-old brother, Tarek, in disbelief that his sister had died. Family members said that they had known nothing of her plans for the operation. Her father, Ali, who was recovering from the surgery of open clogged arteries, collapsed and was taken to hospital after learning of his daughter’s martyrdom operation. Relatives stated that Abu Salem had just passed high school graduation exams and had spoken of gaining admission into university. Days later, Abu Salem’s mother also passed out and was rushed to a local hospital. “Oppression is everywhere” said her uncle, Mustafa Shinawi. “Every Palestinian finds his own suitable way to protest the Israeli oppression”.

Two days after, the Israeli army had fired at a group of Palestinian mothers on their way to Beit Hanoun Mosque killing two persons. 18 year old Mervat Massoud decided that she have had enough to give up her life for the liberation of Palestine. She strapped explosives on her waist and strode defiantly towards Israeli army troops in Beit Hanoun on 6 November 2006, blew herself up, and injured one Zionist soldier. Mervat was a student at the Islamic University of Gaza. Six days before she carried out her mission, the Zionist occupation army had killed 50 Palestinians, mostly women and children, in the northern Gaza town of Beit Hanoun. The Brigades of Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility for the mission and released a videotape of the tall and thin teenager holding the Koran and an M-16 rifle while smiling and stating calmly her intention to die in fighting Israel. Asking for forgiveness from her parents, she said, “I love you very much, but I love Palestine and God more”. Mervat Massoud is the ninth Palestinian female suicide martyr (Istishhadiya).

Fatima Najjar is the oldest Palestinian female suicide martyr (Istishhadiya) till date. She was 57 years old when she decided to give up her life for the liberation of the Palestinian people. Fatima was the mother of 9 and grandmother of 41 children. She was one of the Palestinian women who bravely formed a human shield around a Mosque in Beit Hanoun to save a number of Palestinian men trapped inside who were being shelled by Zionist soldiers. Fatima made her decision to carry out the martyrdom operation against the Zionist occupiers two weeks after the Israeli shelling in the Gaza town of Beit Hanoun left 19 Palestinians, mostly women and children, dead. Fatima approached a group of Israeli soldiers in Gaza, detonated explosives strapped around her waist, and left 5 Zionist soldiers wounded. She was from the town of Jabaliya and was a woman who experienced the Nakba of Palestine. She saw the exodus of the Palestinians from their lands in 1948. Her days were mixed with grief and sorrow. This woman, whose face would tell the pitfalls of the bitter time, had no hesitation, not for a moment, in carrying out a martyrdom operation amid a large group of Israeli soldiers in Gaza Strip on 23 November 2006, confirming that the Nakba generation, the generation of the 1948 Palestinian exodus, marks the beginning of martyrdom and repatriation generation.

The Palestinian resistance to the Israeli occupation in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip took a very important turn with the start of Al-Quds Intifada in September 2015, when Palestinian youth, and more lately women, started to use other struggle tools mostly, shooting, stabbing, and run over operations against Israeli occupation. Also, they were able to implement more than one hundred-fifty operations. These tools are considered as an extension of the martyrdom operations (Banat & Ajarma, 2017).

The Istishhadiya Ashraat Qatanani executor of Hawara checkpoint stabbing operation on 22 November 2015, asked her family in her will to show solidarity and steadfastness through celebrating her martyrdom and not to cry over her; she wanted them to refuse any condolences, but rather to open a house of joy to receive congratulators and well wishers on her martyrdom. The Istishhadiya father expressed his pride in his daughter's martyrdom saying: "We cannot but take pride in our Istishhady who raised our heads high and fulfilled her will. She chose the martyrdom path which was her most precious wish and we bless her for that. We do pray to God the Almighty to accept her martyrdom for her sake only. I wished Ahraat could see better days than we have lived" (Banat & Ajarma, 2017).

In addition, the Istishhadiya Rasha Uwaysi, executor of Qalqilya checkpoint stabbing operation on 9 November, 2015, wrote in her will: "My dear mother, I do not know what is going on; I just know that my road is over, the road that I have chosen [while I am] in full consciousness, in defense of my homeland and the people of my country. I can no longer stand the heinous crimes that I can see perpetrated against our Palestinian people. There is no way other than this road; I'm sorry for this [kind of] departure".

Moreover, the influential words which some mothers and sons of the Istishhadiyin delivered at the overcrowded funeral of the Istishhady while carrying their bodies were very expressive, emphasizing their determination and steadfastness in the face of the Israeli occupation, that affected positively the role of the Palestinian women in the national struggle. Regarding this point, Evans (1999) indicated that the behavior of mothers of martyrs is a powerful tool that many women possess for political action in traditional societies. The power of this tool is contingent upon the concept of martyrdom as a powerful weapon for the survival of the community. In this regard, the mother of the Palestinian Istishhady Khalid Jawabreh, Arroub Camp shooting operation on 26 November, 2015, stated: "What Khalid did is an honorable act and it is the most successful response to the daily occupation crimes which are beyond description. She added: "I always teach my children to love others but unfortunately, the occupation practices like the daily killing, demolitions, and imprisonments have changed the way boys and girls think. These conditions have forced us and our children to carry out martyrdom operations, since it has become a duty to resist the occupation". She also added: "Our children don't need us to explain anything, Khalid didn't consult me; he saw what was going on to his people and did what was necessary; Israelis seek surrender not peace, the Palestinian people will never surrender; if Khalid is gone, there will be a million other Khalids" (Banat & Ajarma, 2017).

In a word addressed to the thousands of participants in the funeral procession of her martyred daughter, KelzarOwaiwi, Ibrahim Mosque heroic stabbing operation in the city of Hebron on 13 February, 2016, her mother said: “My decision to participate in carrying the body of my daughter and walking in the funeral procession is a message to challenge the usurper, the occupier, and we will continue to follow the course of those Istishhadiyin and upset the occupation by carrying our children and seeing them off to the Gardens of Eternity”. She added: “I wished to see my daughter, who was distinguished in her class and committed to her religion, a bride, whom I would escort to her marital home. As she has been martyred, I have to participate in her wedding procession to Heaven; she is a martyr of whom we are proud, and we will cherish forever” (Banat & Ajarma, 2017).

Um Samer, the first Palestinian female prisoner in 1969 and the mother of the Palestinian female suicide martyr (Istishhadiya), Ayat Al-Akhras, at Jerusalem operation on 29 March 2002 said: “What Ayat did is an honorable act and it is the most successful response to daily occupation crimes which are beyond description, since we as Palestinians have only the weapon of the human bomb (Istishhadiyin) which has threatened the security of Israel; if I only knew that she was going to do this, I would have stopped her and would have gone instead of her, nothing is dearer than ones children”. She added: “The whole world was occupied and has gained its freedom as expected for Palestine, and the occupation requires resistance. As refugees, we need a solution that gives us our rights; when we regain our rights, our land, have a state and see our children released from prison; I will go on TV and on satellite stations and say we want peace”. Her sister, Samah, said: “Congratulations on her martyrdom; she deserves this for her courage; we are all martyrdom projects” (Banat, 2010).

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

Palestinians have offered the world through their suicide martyrdom operations the highest kind of self-sacrifice on the road to victory and liberation. They have portrayed the greatest examples ever drawn on the pages of international struggle. It is the first time ever in the modern history of liberation movements all over the world in which the human bomb becomes a comprehensive social and political phenomenon that sweeps through large sectors of an entire people and not only a handful of dedicated individuals. The majority of the Palestinian public prefers the option of martyrdom which attracts large numbers of Palestinians from different sectors, whether men or women. The Palestinian women involvement and participation in suicide martyrdom operations have shocked Israeli security circles who realize now that they are facing a phenomenon by which the entire Palestinian people, both young men and women, look for someone to help them carry out such suicide martyrdom operations.

The Palestinian society just like other Arab societies is a patriarchal society in which men holds a great responsibility. The Palestinian education seeks to direct males towards affirmation of masculine qualities like manhood, chivalry, bravery, gallantry, dare, and stamina. On the other hand, it stresses on directing females towards feminism, decency, decorum, virginity, love of

children, home economics, and stability. Consequently, it was easy to recruit several male youth and women as well for the national struggle in general and the for martyrdom operations in particular (Barakat, 1993; Banat, 2014).

The Palestinian woman realized the importance of national struggle and its effective role in the liberation of Palestine and salvation from the occupation slavery. It barged into the battlefield and was exposed just the same way as other Palestinian men to all sorts of Israeli violence. The main concern for both men and women was to liberate Palestine. They actively participated in the national struggle across Palestinian history; she was the mother, the captive, the activist and the martyr when she entered into the circle of martyrdom operations. When a woman voluntarily takes off her feminine dress and put on her war outfit, meanings become deeper and add new innovative colors to nature. Her participation has reconstructed the scene and made it an active element in the new formula. That was the situation of the Palestinian woman; she was able to reveal the strong relationship between death and life makers, and eventually the female suicide martyr (Istishhadiya) came into being. The Palestinian women stood beside man in resistance. Their contribution was made possible through wearing explosive belts that decorated and ornamented their bodies, rather than wearing necklaces and jewelry that ordain girls' bodies nowadays. These female martyrs have derived their strength from their firm belief in their just course that possessed their hearts. They have written a new chapter in conflict management. During Al-Aqsa Intifada, Palestinians have sacrificed a procession of ten female martyrs starting with Wafa Idris and Darene Abu Aisha who implemented the suicide martyrdom operation at *Maccabim settlement* checkpoint near Ramallah on 27 February 2002. In her will, Darene said: "Because the role of the Muslim Palestinian woman is equal to that of our mujahidin brothers, I wholeheartedly offer my self for God's sake to retaliate for corpses of our martyred mujahidin, in revenge for the sanctity of our religion and mosques, sacredness of Al-Aqsa Mosque and Houses of God which were turned into bars where all obscenities forbidden by God are practiced in defiance of our religion and the message of our Prophet Mohammed May God's Peace and Prayer Be Upon Him. The role of the Palestinian woman is no longer limited to grieving over the loss of a father, a brother or a husband but we will turn our bodies into human bombs that are scattered everywhere in order to wipe out the illusion of the Israeli security. I call on every Muslim and determined fighter who loves freedom and martyrdom to follow this honorable path of Martyrdom and freedom".

By the same token, the Israeli editor of Haaretz newspaper, Arnon Goler, wrote: "The phenomenon of female suicide martyrs (Istishhadiyat) has turned norms upside down; it has created a link with the potential female suicide martyr making out of their recruitment and armament a very complex issue. He who recruits breaks the social rule in the Palestinian society because he did not ask for the permission of the family" (Abu Ras, 2006).

In fact, the Palestinian women keep stressing day after day that they hold an advanced resistance position in the history of the Palestinian question. Ever since the outbreak of the Palestinian revolution towards resistance, the Palestinian women freely offered their lives to redeem their precious country. The names of several female suicide martyrs narrated with their



blood the most remarkable epics like DalalMughrabi, Shadia Abu Ghazala, Itafllayan, and others who were leaders of armed operations against occupation. Undoubtedly, the Palestinian woman is still suffering from the Israeli crimes, disintegration of economic and social structure, and uprooting of thousands of Palestinians from their homes. She also bears witness on the suffering of the Palestinian people and its tragedy. This has reinforced her feelings of patriotism like those of men and has pushed her to actively participate in the struggle against the occupiers. The high rate of Palestinian woman participation in the national struggle in general and in the martyrdom operations is due to their everyday follow up of the Israeli occupation crimes on television. Due to their great grief over the loss of their brothers and children in their struggle against the occupiers, the women's shocking experiences gave them the strong motive to fight the occupiers.

The results of a study carried out by Punamäki(1986) showed that previous experiences due to occupation cause more tension and stress than the problems of everyday life. Women with the highest scores of shocking experiences associated with occupation tends to evaluate all of life events as stress compared to women who were less exposed to the shock based on a statistically significant difference. As for the patterns of adaptation of Palestinian women under occupation, general anxiety and unpleasant feelings were the most common responses to stress instances in the study sample. The results had shown the relatively high level of suffering of women under Israeli occupation in psychological health through anxiety, aggressiveness, psychiatric symptoms, and general health.

The female suicide martyr (Istishhadiya),AndaleebTaqatqa, did not wait till Sunday 14 April 2002 to celebrate her twentieth birthday because she preferred to celebrate it in a different place and in a different manner. Instead of blowing her twentieth birthday party candles in her father's very humble house in BeitFajjar village in Bethlehem governorate south of the West Bank, she quenched her fire of revenge from Israelis on Friday 12 April 2002 in Jerusalem. Her elder brother, Mohammed, considered that the continuous occupation crimes were the motive behind this heroic act which every Palestinian is proud of. He stressed that: "The more she watched the occupation crimes and bloodshed, the spirit of revenge for the martyrs and the wounded increased inside her; through her explosive body of only 40 kg, she sent a message to the leaders of the Arab nation to move and save our Palestinian people; she also stressed that her tiny body was capable of doing what Arab armies failed to do" (Banat, 2010).

In very touching and passionate words, the Palestinian female suicide martyr (Istishhadiya) and lawyer, HanadiJaradat, from Jenin governorate stated in her will: "By God's force and determination, I have decided to be the sixth Istishhadiya who would make out of her body separate explosive fragments to kill the Zionists and destroy every settler and Zionist since it is not us alone who have to pay the price and harvest the price for their crimes".However, she carried out a qualitative martyrdom operation in Haifa on 4 October 2003 to revenge the Israelis who killed her brother,Fadi, and cousin, Salah, in cold blood in Jenin on 12 June 2003. Besides, she was greatly influenced by the brutal Israeli aggression against Jenin camp in particular and the Palestinian people in general.

The words of some Istishhadiyin mothers were like a strong message to the Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim mothers of the world to encourage their children to shake off the occupation and the liberation of Palestine. The Palestinian mothers often raise their sons to love the national struggle against the Israeli aggression on their lands. Their words explained the extent of determination, belief, and patience in their hearts and the glory and pride they feel because of the heroic act their sons and daughters had carried out for the sake of their country. In this regards, the mother of the suicide martyr (Istishhady), Ismail Almasuabe, executor of the suicide martyrdom operation in Dugit Settlement in Gaza Strip on 22 June 2001, stated: “We hope to achieve victory in Majdel, Jaffa and Haifa. We hope to pray at the Al-Aqsa Mosque; this victory is ours; it has come from the blood of the martyrs, the injured and sacrifices of the prisoners; Praise Be to God; it is enough that God is pleased with Ismail, us and the Islamic nation; what he did is an honorable act that humiliated the enemies; he killed three according to Jews confessions; I am by God’s name very proud of what he did and do wish that God would honor me and my children in the same way”. Likewise, the mother of the suicide martyr (Istishhady), Samer Shawahna, Hadera operation on 29 November 2001 said as she was kissing his photograph and listening to his will: “Thanks to God that I stayed alive till the day I was able to see my son a martyr for the sake of Jerusalem and Al-Aqsa. Our sons are heroes and mujahidin and their sacrifices would not go in vain; every Muslim has to fight with himself, his money, his life, and his children until right is regained, land of the Isra and Miraj (Prophet’s nocturnal Journey to Jerusalem and ascension to heaven) is free from the desecration of the Zionists” (Banat, 2010).

Likewise, the mother of the suicide martyr (Istishhady), Ra’fat Abu Diyak, Wadi Ara/ Umm El Fahm operation on 20 March 2002 stated: “Thanks to God who bestowed upon us this great rank which our hero and son enjoyed. I am really proud of him and I will not cry or grieve; he is a hero who challenged Sharon, his soldiers and his terrorism; he heroically attacked them, killed them and injured them”. She added: “The enemy only understands the language of martyrdom; what was taken by force will only be regained by force. Jihad (Holy War) is the right path towards liberation and victory” (Banat, 2010).

Wednesday 14 January 2004 was not an ordinary day in the mission of the Palestinian national resistance. Therefore, all will remember that a Palestinian mother called Reem Rayashi had painted the most sublime image of a Palestinian woman making a sacrifice when this suicide martyr (Istishhadiya) mother appeared on satellites bidding farewell to her two children before she went to carry out her martyrdom operation at Erez checkpoint in Gaza Strip; she wrote in her virtuous blood the most elegant and honest words (Amir, 2004; Abu Ras, 2006; Naaman, 2007).

Regarding the involvement of the Palestinian woman in the arena of national struggle in general and in the martyrdom operations in particular, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, Founder of Hamas Movement, stated: “Hamas has used for the first time a Palestinian female fighter to carry out an operation against the occupation indicating that this was a new development in the resistance against the enemy”. He also mentioned earlier: “We already said that women were a strategic storage for resistance” (Amir, 2004). In the same context, Sheik Yousef al Qaradawi stressed the

right of the woman in contributing to her role in Jihad and martyrdom; he in fact emphasized that Jihad is a duty to her under the current condition of the Palestinian people. When there is jihad (*Fardh 'ayn*– an individual duty), especially when an enemy enters a certain country, then the woman is required to take part in the Jihad alongside the man. In a public opinion poll carried out at AnNajah National University in Palestine regarding the role of the Palestinian women in the Al-Aqsa Intifada, it was found that 57.7% support the continuation of women in carrying out martyrdom operations, while 42.3% opposed it (Mustafa, 2003; Sawahil, 2003).

Today, new generations of Palestinian women are taking part in the Palestinian civilian resistance within the framework of the Palestinian struggle to defeat the Israeli occupation (Dayyeh& Banat, 2017).

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