

## **Conflict, Peace, International Dimension: Palestinian Feminist Point of View**

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The women's roundtable discussion, "Conflict, Peace, International Dimension: Feminist Point of View", was held on October 15, 2015, as a session in the Fourth Annual Conference of the Palestinian Center for Policy Research and Strategic Studies/Masarat, "Internationalization of the Question of Palestine :Opportunities and Strategic Requirements". The conference brought together women and men from all sectors of Palestinian society, from Ramallah to Gaza. It aimed to discuss the internationalization of the Palestine-Israel conflict, emphasize the difference between internationalization of conflict resolution and internationalization of the conflict itself, and to revive the role of international actors in supporting the struggle to ensure that Palestinian people can practice their right to self-determination.

The women's roundtable discussion, coinciding with peace tables organized in countries around the world including Indonesia, Nicaragua, Brazil, Kenya, Bangladesh, Sudan, Thailand, Nepal and Pakistan, aimed to discuss the feminist concept of peace and its relation to the issue of conflict internationalization in the Palestinian context. Three working papers regarding the impact of the occupation on women and their role in creating pace and justice were discussed and commented on by the presenters and the attendees in Ramallah and others participating by videoconference in Gaza.

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The idea of organizing women's peace tables came after the Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict held in London in 2014. A group of women launched a global campaign about women, peace and security entitled "Women Seriously", aiming to raise the voices of women, en masse, to deliver the message: "If we are serious about peace, we should take women seriously!"

Its vision is that collective work has the greatest impact to bring about social change and quickly. The campaign aims to start a global movement, and establish women's effectiveness and leadership as a vital and main component in achieving peace and security.

The goal of peace tables is for the biggest number of women around the world to develop a global women's agenda for peace in order to end wars and to build peace.

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What do Palestinian women share with the women of the world? And what's related to Palestinian women in particular? This year, 2015, is one of important milestones in the global women's movement. It is the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the oldest international organization for women for peace, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) in The Hague; the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United Nation's First World Conference on Women in Mexico; the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing; the 15<sup>th</sup> year of the passing of the United Nations Security Council

Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security; and finalization of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, which put women's equality as one of the goals. Moreover, it is the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the PeaceWomen Across the Globe Organization launching the 2005 initiative, "1000 Women for the Nobel Peace Prize".

What Palestinian women share with other women around the world is hope for just peace and genuine human security for them, their families, and all people of the world.

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Palestinian women are in desperate need for words to be turned into actions, as are other women living in armed conflict areas of the world.

Groundbreaking international conventions and agreements are in place to improve the lives of dispossessed women, and men, around the world. This year, all 193 countries of the UN adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (replacing the Millennium Development Goals) to establish a global vision with specific indicators for improving the human condition. Along with gender equity and reducing other inequalities, the SDG focus areas include reducing poverty, peace and security, protecting the environment, and human rights and democracy. The SDGs were another way also to implement the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) adopted in 1979. The Beijing Platform for Action and proceedings of the Fourth Global Conference on Women stressed the serious consequences of armed conflicts in women's lives. In 2000 the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 1325, which reaffirms "the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building,...and the need to increase their role in decision-making", "support for gender-sensitive training efforts", "the protection, special needs and human rights of women and children in conflict situations, and "the urgent need to mainstream a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations," and, subsequently in 2009, Resolution 1889 which "emphasizes the responsibility of all States to put an end to impunity and to prosecute those responsible for all forms of violence committed against women and girls in armed conflicts, including rape and other sexual violence." When we look at the reality of our lives from all the words crafted to describe the laws and conventions such as above, what Palestinian women share with other women of the world becomes evident. We have a shared dream of achieving just peace and genuine human security. We need to fight together to turn this dream into reality.

For Palestinian women's particular situation, we are struggling for freedom from the racist Israeli Occupation and to build a Palestinian state based on the rule of law according to the document "Palestinian Women's Rights," with its roots in the international charters and legal principles and the Basic Palestinian Law.

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Every feminist peace table called for something that contributes to achieving peace where the table was organized, and each condemned the forces that hinder achieving the women's goals of living in just peace and human security.

**What did Palestinian women call for?**

Our table, first and foremost, called for just peace, the only condition that can guarantee genuine human security. We declared that this can only be achieved after the end of the Israeli Occupation. Furthermore, we asserted that a just peace involves achieving internal peace, which means reconciliation and, on a deeper level, ending the current political and social divisions, including gender inequality. All Palestinian people must unite and women and men must be equal before the law and in the society.

We also called for presenting existing and new documentation of violations against women under Occupation to specialized international institutions such as the Human Right Council and International Criminal Court.

Finally, we called for hosting delegations from countries around the world to investigate the violations occurring in Palestine.

### **What did we condemn?**

The Palestinian feminist table condemned the double standards within the UN Security Council and the Western media and the silence in most of the world against the crimes and human rights violations committed by both state and non-state actors who enforce the daily instruments of the Occupation. We particularly emphasized their arrogance towards women in and the overall discrimination and racism that are among the pillars of the Occupation.

We also condemned the lack of accountability mechanisms especially in times of conflicts and war and the poor implementation of international resolutions related to Palestine and Palestinian women, especially UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

Finally, we condemned the division within Palestinian society.

The Fourth Annual Conference adopted the feminist table's recommendations at the same time as it called for adopting the process of conflict internationalization as part of a comprehensive strategy based on unity and shift in the balance of power.

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Women of the world, we Palestinian women are celebrating the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the historical political resolution that condemned Zionism as a form of racism, adopted by the First World Conference on Women in Mexico in 1975 and later revoked. We are calling for the re-adoption of this resolution for the benefit of Palestinian women and men and because such as move is aligned with the collective struggle against discrimination of all types, particularly racial discrimination.

Let us all work together for just peace for us, for you, and for the world!

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