

One Hundred Years of Palestinian Women's Struggle (1922-2022)

Filistinli Kadınların Yüz Yıllık Mücadelesi (1922-2022)

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Highlights

- The Palestinian women's struggle to resist the occupation has not stopped since the British Mandate.
 - Political wise, it has been advancing since the emergence of the Palestinian Authority PA (1993).
 - The Israeli occupation has been deemed as the main obstacle to the Palestinian woman in seizing her rights and exercising her role alongside men.
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Abstract: The Palestinian women movement has been subjected to many transformations in its components and activities due to the different circumstances the Palestinian society has been undergoing. The research uses the historical method in narrating the activity and struggle of Palestinian women over a hundred years, divided based on the importance of the sequence of events. Palestinian women's role during the British Occupation (1922-1948) was struggles and logistic. In the 1948 War, the women movement activity immersed in education and finding a job, especially after losing the land for the Israeli occupiers. In the 1960s, the Palestinian women's political participation improved after establishing The Palestinian Women Public Union (1965). After the Oslo Agreement (1993), the Palestinian Authority (PA) integrated the women movements in its apparatus. The advent of the PA made the role of Palestinian women, in addition to resisting the Israeli occupation, to work in the institutions of the PA and decision-making positions and to enact laws that give them their societal rights. Since the last legislative election (2006) until now, the function of the women movements has been improving, but not as good as, they should be. In general, though, the Palestinian women have held ministerial levels excluding the sovereign ministries as the foreign and interior ones. There is, also, an absentee in equal laws that hinder the development and independence of women's lives and society. In addition, there is a need to increase her roles more so that the Palestinian woman can be influential player in her society so that she can issue decisions that affect her life, protect her interests, and be given the opportunity to take part in the liberation process along with her male counterpart.

Keywords: Palestinian Woman Struggle, Empowerment, Quota, Feminist Movement, Palestinian Authority (PA)

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Öne Çıkanlar

- Filistinli kadınların işgale karşı direniş mücadelesi İngiliz manda yönetimi döneminden bu yana durmadı
- Siyasi açıdan Filistin Yönetimi'nin (PA) kurulmasından (1993) bu yana hareketlilik göstermektedir
- Filistinli kadının haklarını elde etmesinin ve erkeklerle birlikte rolünü yerine getirmesinin önündeki en büyük engelin İsrail işgali olduğu belirtilmiştir.

Öz: Filistinli kadın hareketi, Filistin toplumunun geçirdiği farklı koşullar nedeniyle bileşenleri ve faaliyetleri açısından birçok dönüşüm yaşamıştır. Bu araştırma, Filistinli kadınların yüz yılı aşkın süredir süren faaliyetlerini ve mücadelesini anlatmak için tarihsel yöntemi kullanmaktadır, olayların sıralamasının önemi dikkate alınarak bir bölümlendirme yapılmıştır. Filistinli kadınların İngiliz İşgali (1922-1948) dönemindeki rolü, direniş ve lojistik faaliyetlerle ilgiliydi. 1948 Savaşı'nda ise kadın hareketinin faaliyetleri, özellikle topraklarını İsrail işgalcilerine kaybettikten sonra eğitim ve iş bulma üzerine yoğunlaştı. 1960'larda, Filistinli kadınların siyasi katılımı, Filistin Kadınları Kamu Birliği'nin (1965) kurulmasının ardından gelişti. Oslo Anlaşması'nın (1993) ardından ise Filistin Otoritesi (PA), kadın hareketlerini kendi yapısına entegre etti. Filistin Yönetimi'nin ortaya çıkışı, Filistinli kadınların, İsrail işgaline karşı direnmenin yanı sıra, Filistin Yönetimi kurumlarında çalışmak, karar alma pozisyonlarında yer almak ve onlara toplumsal haklarını veren yasalar çıkarmak gibi bir rol üstlenmelerini sağladı. Son yasama seçimlerinden (2006) bu yana, kadın hareketlerinin işlevi gelişim göstermiştir, ancak olması gereken seviyede değildir. Genel olarak, Filistinli kadınlar, dış işleri ve iç işleri gibi egemenlik bakanlıkları dışında bakanlık düzeyinde görev almışlardır. Ayrıca, kadınların yaşamlarını ve toplumlarını geliştirmelerini engelleyen eşitlik yasaları konusunda bir eksiklik bulunmaktadır. Bunun yanı sıra, Filistinli kadının toplumu üzerindeki etkisini artırabilmesi için rolünün daha da güçlendirilmesi gerekmektedir. Böylece, kendi hayatını etkileyen kararları alabilen, çıkarlarını koruyabilen ve erkek meslektaşlarıyla birlikte kurtuluş sürecine katılma fırsatı bulabilen bir konumda olacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Filistinli Kadın Mücadelesi, Güçlendirme, Kota, Feminist Hareket, Filistin Yönetimi.

Genişletilmiş Özet

Filistinli kadın hareketi, Filistin toplumunun farklı koşulları nedeniyle bileşenleri ve faaliyetleri açısından birçok dönüşüm geçirmiştir. Filistin'deki kadın hareketlerinin rolleri, çevrelerindeki farklı koşullarla birlikte gelişmiştir. Bu aşamaların birbirine bağlı olduğu, ancak yaşadıkları farklı siyasi olaylar sonucunda ayrıldığı belirtilmelidir. Bu makale, Filistinli kadınların yüz yılı aşkın süredir devam eden mücadelesini takip etmek için tarihsel yaklaşımı benimseyerek bu durumu ele almaya çalışmaktadır. İngiliz işgali sırasında (1922-1948) kadınların rolü, direniş ve lojistikle ilgiliydi; sömürgeci güçlere karşı direndiler, kurtuluş hareketini desteklediler, gıda temini için dernekler kurdular ve Filistin'in o dönemdeki durumu üzerine görüş alışverişi yapmak için çeşitli toplantılar düzenlediler (Fleishman, 2003: 22, 30).

20'ler ve 30'lar döneminde kadınların mücadelesine dair çok az bir tarih bulunması gerektiği belirtilmelidir. çok az bir tarih bulunması gerektiği ne anlama geliyor? Al-Hout (2010), 1903'te Akka'da (Acre) ilk hayır kurumunun kurulduğunu ve adının Ortodoks Yoksul Yardım Derneği olduğunu, ancak 1916'da faaliyetlerini durdurduğunu belirtmektedir. 1910'da, Yafa'da Ortodoks Yetimler Destek Derneği kurulmuş ve bu dernek, 1923'te bir ulusal okul kurmuş ve okula kendi kendine yeterlilik sağlayan bir mali kaynak temin etmiştir. Ortodoks Kızlarının Terbiye Derneği ise 1918'de kurulmuştur. O dönemde kurulan derneklerin çoğunun sosyal, insani ve hayır amaçlı olduğu dikkat çekicidir. 1928'de Kudüs'te kurulan Arap Kadınları Derneği, Filistin'deki ilk siyasi kadınlar derneği olarak kabul edilmektedir (313, 316, 323).

1948 yılı, Filistin tarihi açısından bir dönüm noktası olarak kabul edilmektedir: Filistin, İsrail işgali altındaki tarihi Filistin'in bir parçası haline gelmiş ve Filistinliler zorla yerinden edilmiştir. Toprağın kaybı nedeniyle, kadınların rolü değişmiş ve ailelerine yardımcı olmak için çalışmak zorunda kalmışlardır (Al Naqshbandi, 2005: 133). 1960'larda, Filistinli kadınların siyasi katılımı, Filistin Kadınları Kamu Birliği'nin (1965) kurulmasının ardından artmıştır. Bu dönemi ayıran özellik, işgale karşı direnişin yollarını organize edebilecek siyasi akımların ortaya çıkmasıdır. Bunun sonucunda, 1964'te Filistin Kurtuluş Örgütü (FKÖ) kurulmuştur. (Muwatin, 2000: 72). 1987'deki birinci İntifada (Halk Ayaklanması), Filistin'deki direnişte yeni bir dönemi başlatmıştır. Birinci İntifada'yı ayıran en önemli özellik, Hamas'ı temsil eden İslami hareketin büyümesi ve bu hareketin bu aşamada ortaya çıkışının plansız kabul edilmesidir. İsrail, Filistin içindeki faaliyetlerini kolaylaştırarak ve hareket özgürlüğünü hızlandırarak, İntifada öncesindeki dönemde popülerliği artan seküler akımı zayıflatmayı amaçladı. Bu İslami akımlar, kadınların konusuna karşı tutucu kalmış ve onları ailenin eğitmeni ve koruyucusu olarak görmüşlerdir. Programları ise vaazlar ve rehberlik derslerine dayalı olup, ev hanımları, dini kadınlar ve cami vaizlerini hedef alıyordu (Jad, 2003: 65-71).

Oslo Anlaşması'nın imzalanmasının ardından 1993 yılı, işgale karşı direnişi sürdürmenin öneminin vurgulandığı ve toplumun geleceği için siyasi, sosyal ve ekonomik destek sağlayacak demokratik bir hükümet sistemi bulma ihtiyacının öne çıktığı bir dönem olarak nitelendirilmektedir (Kitab & Hamami, 2003: 166). Oslo Anlaşmaları'nın (1993) ardından, Filistin Otoritesi (PA) kadın hareketlerini kendi yapısına entegre etti. Feminist hareketler, kadınların statüsünü iyileştirmek ve onları koruyan, yasal ve dinî haklarını (miras, evlilik, boşanma vb.) güvence altına alan yasaların çıkarılmasına odaklanmak yerine, devlet işlerine ve pozisyonlarına ilgi duymaya başladılar (Jad, 2008: 64). Filistinli kadın, 1987'deki Birinci İntifada mücadelesine katılarak siyasi düzeyde kendine bir alan yaratmıştı. 2000'deki İkinci İntifada'da ise şehadet operasyonlarına katıldı. Batı medyası onu çocuklarını ölüme göndermekle suçladı ancak Birinci

İntifada'da olduğu gibi siyasi olarak ön saflarda yer almadı. Kadının rolü sınırlı kaldı ve hâlâ hayır kurumlarıyla sınırlı bir şekilde devam etmektedir (Al-Naqshabandi, 2005: 134, 136).

Son yasama seçimlerinden (2006) bugüne kadar, kadın hareketlerinin işlevi gelişiyor ancak olması gerektiği kadar iyi değil, kadın bakanların sayısı arttı. Cümlenin yeniden kurulması iyi olur 2009 yılında, Filistin Kurtuluş Örgütü Yürütme Komitesi'ne üye olarak atanan bir kadın, bu hassas görevdeki ilk kadın oldu ve aynı yıl bir kadın, Filistin Sermaye Piyasası Kurumu'nun ilk kadın başkanı olarak atandı. 2010 yılında, Ramallah ve El-Bireh İlçesi'nin ilk kadın valisi atandı ve 2011 yılında ise Filistin Merkezi İstatistik Bürosu'nu yöneten ilk kadın oldu (Women and Men in Palestine, Issues and Statistics, 2013). Filistin Merkezi İstatistik Kurumu'nun 2012 yılına ait verilerine göre, dünyadaki 92 kadın büyükelçiden dört tanesi Filistinli idi ve bu, yüzde 4,3'lük bir oranı temsil etmektedir. Bu oran, 2008'de kaydedilen yüzde 5,4'ten daha düşük olup, mevcut büyükelçilerin kadınlarla yer değiştirilmediğini veya yerine kadınların atanmadığını göstermektedir. Kadın yargıç oranı ise yüzde 12'yi geçmemekte olup, 159 erkek yargıca karşılık 21 kadın yargıç bulunmaktadır.

2020 yılına ait verilere göre, kadınların karar alma, kamusal yaşam ve liderlik pozisyonlarındaki katılımı şu şekildedir: Kadınlar, Ulusal Konsey üyelerinin %11'ini, bakanlar kurulunun %12,5'ini ve diplomatik alandaki büyükelçilerin %11'ini oluşturmaktadır. Ayrıca, 16 validen biri kadınken, Filistin'deki yerel yönetimlerin başkanlarının %2'si kadındır. Ticaret, Sanayi ve Tarım Odaları Konseyi yönetiminde ise %99 erkek, sadece %1 kadın bulunmaktadır. Kadın yargıç oranı yaklaşık %19, kadın savcı oranı ise %20'dir. Bu oranların aksine, Filistinli kadınların gayriresmî kurumlara katılım oranlarında ise olumlu göstergeler bulunmaktadır. 2019 yılında, Filistin'deki kurumlar veya merkezler için Genel Sekreterlik üyeleri olarak kadınların katılımı, erkeklerin %30'una kıyasla %70 oranında bir artış göstermiştir (mevcut verilerle 152 kurumdan %40'ı) (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2020). 2022 Şubat ayına kadar Genel Personel Konseyi verilerine göre, kadınların sivil sektördeki katkısı toplam çalışanların %47'sini oluşturmuştur. Ancak, genel müdürlük veya daha üst düzeydeki kadınların oranı, erkeklerin %86'lık oranına kıyasla sadece %14 olarak dikkat çekici bir fark göstermektedir.

Özetle, Filistinli kadının rolü, sosyal, siyasi ve ekonomik birçok alanda artmaktadır. Ancak, bu rolün daha da artması gerekmektedir ki Filistinli kadın, toplumunda etkili bir oyuncu olabilsin, hayatını etkileyen kararlar alabilsin, çıkarlarını koruyabilsin ve erkek meslektaşlarıyla birlikte kurtuluş sürecine katılma fırsatı bulabilsin.

Introduction

The Palestinian woman participated in the various stages of the struggle against the occupation, and a few historical records witnessed that, especially in her first contribution to historical Palestine, the period of the British occupation and the beginnings of the Israel occupation. The woman stood by the man, protected and defended the homeland. Her political role, also, emerged by holding conferences and meetings dealing with the Palestinian situation and its developments, and discussing possible ways to defend Palestine, although some studies have revealed a preference for female civilians over female villagers.

The Palestinian woman continued her distinguished role and struggle in the areas of the Palestinian Authority or the so-called West Bank and Gaza Strip. This seems clear with the beginnings of the emergence and formation of the political movements during the 1960s with formation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (1964) and the Popular and Democratic Fronts (1967) and (1969), respectively. Women participated through these political movements by joining their national membership in the homeland and diaspora, and training in using weapons in the resistance. The nature of her role changed with the signing of the Oslo agreement (1993) and the beginning of self-government in the areas of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Since the first legislative elections (1996), Palestinian women have won two positions as ministers, albeit in two traditional ministers, the Ministry of Social Development and the Ministry of Education (Al-Naqshbandi, 2005: 64).

The number of women ministers reached five in the year (2009); and they included the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Women's Affairs. Their number reached six ministers in the year (2012), with the addition of the Ministry of Communication and Technology (Rahal, 2012:134). Hence, the Palestinian women's struggle movement has historically gone through different stages at the political and national levels. The roles of the women's movements in Palestine have developed with the different circumstances surrounding them, noting that these stages are interconnected, but were separated following the different political events they went through, and this is what this article attempts to address by adopting the historical approach in tracking the struggle of Palestinian women for more than a hundred years.

What distinguishes this research is that it deals with the struggle of Palestinian women a century ago, starting from the British occupation of Palestine in (1922), a period in which women's struggle and resistance to occupation diversified in and outside Palestine, politically, socially and militantly. Accordingly, the research uses the historical method in narrating the activity and

struggle of Palestinian women over a hundred years, divided based on the importance of the sequence of events as seen by the writer.

I- The British Occupation Stage¹ (1922-1947): Various studies show that the role of the Palestinian women began before the British Occupation. At the time, oral history of the women who participated in the struggle, the documents of the British government and the occupation press at the time were relied upon. The role of the Palestinian woman began after the First World War (1914-1918), and perhaps this is due to the economic development and the Ottoman reforms carried out by the Empire in the late 18th century in the field of education. Moreover, her role was political and resistance, so she participated in the struggle against colonialism, this was clear in the year 1929 when she smuggled weapons to the fighters and participated in the strikes and various demonstrations, in addition to her political role in obtaining the support and her Arab women allies (Fleishman, 2003: 22, 30). It should be noted that there is little history of women's struggle in the 20s and 30s. Al-Hout (2010) indicates that in 1903, the first charitable society was established in Akka (Acre) and its name was the Orthodox Poor Relief Society, but it stopped working in 1916. In 1910, the Association for the Support of Orthodox Orphans was established in Jaffa, which later established a national school in 1923 and provided it with a financial source that achieved self-sufficiency. As for the Association for Refinement of the Orthodox Girl, it was established in 1918. It was noticeable that most of the associations that were established during that period had a social, humanitarian and charitable goal. The Arab Women's Association in Jerusalem, founded in 1928, is considered the first political women's association in Palestine (313, 316, 323). The first women's union was established in 1929 headed by Zulekha Al-Shihabi (Daraghme, 1991: 41). In 1929 300 women attended a conference in Jerusalem to discuss the circumstances surrounding the Arab region; telegrams were sent to the United Nations and Britain to demand the cessation of Jewish immigration to Palestine (Abu Ali, 1975: 44-45).

Palestinian women's activism appeared clearly in 1930s through the protest demonstrations against the British Occupation. The participation of rural women was wide, as the mass popular uprisings were launched mainly from the countryside (Matar, 1993: 194). Palestinian women participated in the great Palestinian Revolt (1946-1939), providing fighters with water and fuel and throwing stones at British soldiers (Toenjes, 2011: 27-28). Al-Hout (2010) indicates that the main breakthrough for Palestinian women was between the years 1929 and 1939 with Hebat al

¹ Palestine was among the former Ottoman Empire (1517-1914), after the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire Britain occupied Palestine as part of the Sykes-Picot Treaty (1916) and placed it under the UK administration by the League of Nations in 1922 after WWI.

Buraq and the end of the great revolt. At that time, the woman was aware and clear of her role. Mittel Maghnam, a Christian, gave a speech from the pulpit of a mosque, and in return, Tarab Abdel Hadi, gave a speech in front of the tomb of Christ, and that was during the demonstration organized by Palestinian women on Friday, April 15, 1933, in a protest against the visit of British officials (Abdul-Hadi, 2005: 21). The Arab feminist movement has spread on a wide field, and this is evident through the telegrams that were circulated in the 30s of the 20s century globally and in the Arab world, which dealt with the Palestinian causes, or through conferences and demonstrations against the colonial policy (Fleishman, 2003: 163).

Issa (1997) shows in his study of the Palestinian women's movement in the period 1900-1950 how rural women were less fortunate in education than her counterpart in the city, given the foreign missionary campaigns that were active in the cities at that time. The strikes that Palestine underwent during that period had more impact on urban women than those in the village, because the women villagers were self-sufficient in food and bread, so they moved between the field and the house, unlike the civilian women who learned to manufacture foodstuffs to secure themselves in difficult circumstances (Abdul Hadi, 2005: 61). There was a difference between urban and rural women in the first two decades of the 20s century; noting that residents of the villages constituted (71%) of the population, the women in the city used to wear the black veil and they outperform the rural one scientifically, which helped her in establishing charitable societies. The role of the rural woman in that period focused on the economy and raising the children. Her role was double between doing household chores, selling food products in cities and raising the children (Al-Hout, 2010: 312, 313, 320).

Amer (2007) explains that the feminist movement in the 1920s was interconnected and homogenous, but in the 1930s, the cities' women began to form feminist institutions based on class, so meetings were held in the houses to find out how to confront the conditions surrounding Palestine. Moreover, this led to the adoption of eligible cities' women over others due to their education excluding rural women, who were resisting the occupier. This later created a gap in the membership of women's movements in cities and villages.

Missionary campaigns focused on the cities, which led to increase the level of education of urban women and their awareness of their political roles later. The goal of feminist activism during the British occupation period was to preserve the Palestinian national identity, and it was not framed with any of the political movements. Palestinian Women in general, viewed that period as their social responsibility to defend Palestine by all means, including the reproduction of offspring (Jad, 2003: 40).

Focusing on social and development issues goes back to the Great Revolution (1936-1939) (Jad, 2008: 25). According to recorded history, the first Palestinian female martyr is Fatima Al-Khalil Gazal (Abdul Hadi, 2005: 33). She was martyred on July 26, 1939, following the battle of Wadi Ghazin near the city of Lydd (Al Hindi, 1995:24). The Oriental Women's Conference for the Defense of Palestine was held in Cairo in 1938, during which Palestinian women participated in demonstrating the importance of supporting Palestinian demands and the legitimacy of the Arab-Palestinian struggle (Muwatin, 2000: 94). This conference is considered the first whose objectives were set to discuss the Palestinian issue. It was attended by Arab delegations from Asia and Africa, and the Egyptian press devoted a wide space to it in its news (Khartabeel, 1995: 81-82). In 1942, teams were formed to provide first aid and nursing to the militants against the British and Jews in several Palestinian cities. They were called the Women's Solidarity Societies. Many of them working in these teams were wounded and martyred like Hilweh Zaidan and Hayat Al-Babisi (Daraghmeh, 1991: 47).

Al Khalili (1977) explains that the struggle of Palestinian women before 1948 was characterized by a lack of clarity. This may be due to ignorance and the lack of women's share of education, the preference of national issues over other demands such as women and social issues, in addition to the fact that most of the women movement activities belonged to the bourgeois class who did not face difficult conditions like the rest of the other classes (80).

It is noticeable that the Palestinian feminist struggle took a various form in terms of the demonstrations, the formation of committees to coordinate and present protests against Jewish immigration to rulers and kings abroad, in addition to participate in international conferences that dealt with feminist and social issues. The national movement in Palestine at that period focused on the struggle side, without the influence or importance of one intellectual current on another, so the goal was the same: to defend Palestine.

The stage of the 1948 war² (The Nakba): the 1948 year is considered a turning point in the Palestinian history: It became a part of the historical Palestine under the Israeli occupation, and Palestinians were subjected to displacement. Because of the loss of the land, the role of women was changed, and they were forced to work to help their families (Al Naqshbandi, 2005: 133). After the 1948 war, schools for refugees were established, and this led to increase in the number of female students in schools, after they were almost

²The 1948 war mark the Nakba and referring to the ethnic cleaning of Palestine, in 1948 the Zionist military forces expelled at least 750,000 Palestinians from their homes, attacked major Palestinian cities and destroyed about 530 villages, made massacres and killed 15,000 Palestinian, captured 78% of the historic Palestine land and established their state.

non-existent before. The numbers continued to rise until the beginning of the 1960s. This resulted in the rehabilitation and empowerment of women, and thus obtaining work outside the house and the field. Regardless, this led to change in the nature of the relations within the Palestinian family. The women's work made them an important member of the family, economically, and enabled them to contribute, even if slightly, to building society (Al-Khalili, 1977: 94).

Despite the social and economic changes at the level of Palestinian women, these transformations were not on a mass level, but rather the activity of associations and unions was limited to poor areas and among a minority of women. Others believe that these changes were confined to a group of women. Jad (2003) indicates that the Israeli occupation in 1948 made women more independent on men, especially with the increase in the Palestinian family, which formed means of resisting the occupation and defending Palestine through the policy of procreation and multiplying.

The Nakba of 1948 obligated women to search for a profession to depend on, such as sewing and embroidery, holding various seminars, and establishing literacy classes for awareness and education. In the 1940s, Palestinian women practiced journalistic writing and radio work and joined various Arab political organization. They joined the ranks of the Jordanian Communist Party, the Arab Nationalist Movement and the Arab Socialist Baath Party. This joining was the beginning of the birth of their political organization (Abdul Hadi, 2009: 271-273). Palestinian women doubled their militant roles during that period, taking part in the protests that occurred following the 1948 Nakba, were arrested, and many of them were martyred (Al-Wahidi, 1985: 6).

What distinguished this stage is the emergence of political currents that could organized the means of resisting the occupation, so the Palestine Liberation Organization was formed in 1964, and the General Union of Palestinian Women was established in 1965, which included an elite group of charitable associations and cadres of national organizations, that emerged in 1950s and 1960s. With the Arab Nationalist Movement, the union's goal was to preserve the Palestinian identity and continue the resistance of women, in addition to helping Palestinian women economically, socially and healthily (Muwatin, 2000: 72).

The Nakba period saw both progress and setbacks in the role of the Palestinian women. Schools were established, and education became more accessible to women. However, the majority still faced significant social and economic obstacles, compelling them to work in the fields, while continuing to resist the occupation.

The Stage of the 1967 War³: Because of the changes that occurred with the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip after 1967, the female elements working in the public sphere joined the Palestinian resistance factions. Palestinian woman was martyr, wounded and detained at the hands of the occupation forces. In August 1967, the first women's demonstration in Gaza was anti-Israeli violence against Arabs. In November 1968, demonstration Shadia Abu Gazaleh was martyred in Nablus during a demonstration she was leading (Palestinian National Council, 1975: 8-9). The participation of Palestinian women in the defending Palestine increased after the 1967 war. Fatmia Barnawi was the first female captive from Fatih faction, who placed an explosive device in Jerusalem inside Zion cinema, and was arrested on Oct.8, 1967 and deported for 10 years until 1977. In 1994, she became the first Palestinian female police chief (Rahal, 2012: 92).

An article, was published in 1969 in the *Journal of the Palestinian Revolution*, affiliated with Fatih movement, about the role of women in the revolution, claimed that women's economic dependence on men impeded their independence. The article emphasized the importance of establishing cultural programs to enlighten women about their role in the struggle. In 1970, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine published a pamphlet entitled "The Revolution and the Issue of Women Emancipation". It considered that the oppression of women is economic, social and political. The social revolution requires equality for both genders, and is parallel to the national revolution, with the need to create a large feminist movement in universities, schools, other Palestinian areas, that could address women's issues (Abu Ali, 1975: 65-66, 68).

In October 1973, 300 women relatives of the prisoners protested in Nablus City Hall the death of one of the prisoners during interrogation in an Israeli prison and demanded an investigation into that (The Palestinian National Council, 1975: 9). In 1974, the Palestine Liberation Organization organized its conference on the importance of organizing the efforts of Palestinian women to achieve liberation (Al Naqshbandi, 2005: 133).

The first participation of Palestinian women in the municipal elections was in the year 1976 following the amendment of the Israeli military governor to the Jordanian election law of the year 1955. Every Arab over the age 21 was granted the right to vote in the elections, including women. Hence, the process of the Palestinian women's participation in the elections began. The political process, and as a result, was subjected to Israeli harassment, including arresting and detention (Yanabi al-Hayat, 2011: 35). It is worth noting here that this law was frozen in 1980 by the Israeli

³ In 1967 or what is known as the Six-Day War, Israel has occupied all Palestine (the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip). This part of Palestine is the remaining 22% land from the 1948 Nakba and now is known as the occupied West Bank and the besieged Gaza Strip.

authority with the cancelling of municipal elections in the occupied Palestinian Territories (Daraghmeh, 1991: 62).

The Women's Action Committee was established in 1978 after extensive national deliberations and meetings that produced women's expertise in different political orientations (The People's and Democratic Fronts, The Communist Party and the Independents). The Union of the Women's Work Committee has been subjected to changes in terms of its name because of the split in the two popular fronts. The union's goal was to achieve equal rights in the public sphere between men and women through holding meetings and programs that could achieve this aim. The union is considered the first to obtain foreign funding and support during the first Intifada, which enables it to support civil society projects and conflict resolution (Jad, 2008: 32-34).

Al Hindi (1995) indicates that Israeli occupation did not oppose the Palestinian women's committees, which were established in 1978, because their programs were relief services in solidarity with the prisoners and their families and for the sit-in; these committees were active in 1987 Intifada. The period from 1967 to 1977 is considered one of the most active stages of Palestinian women's struggle (89). The 1970s included women, students and workers in the public frameworks, which helped the cadres of the centre and the base and later became the vanguard of the struggle work in the 1987 Intifada. The work of these cadres concentrated in providing necessary needs of the poor people in the cities and villages, and, as a result, confidence was formed among the cadres and the public (Muwatin, 2000: 73).

In 1981, committees for working women were formed, and March 8 of that year (International Women's Day) was considered a paid holiday. In the 1980s, there was a call for woman to join union movements that advocate their demands, and community centres were made available to support working women, such as nurseries and kindergartens, training women in productive skills and attention to literacy programs. With the beginning of the 1990s, there was an exchange of ideas and activities between feminist frameworks, who opened up to their counterparts in the international arena and participated in conferences dealing with purely feminist issues (Muwatin, 2000: 97-102).

Toenjes (2011) explains that women's political activity in Palestine shifted from its traditional method during the British "mandate" period to becoming widespread in the public sphere, especially in light of the first Intifada. Palestinian women in the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine in the period (1967-1987) obtained leadership position, albeit somewhat formal, at the level of reserve or assistance, and the aim was to improve the image of Palestinian women internationally. The researcher adds that, as a result of the presence of the Palestine

Liberation Organization outside the homeland; political currents seemed to complement the secular and leftist thoughts, knowing that women under the wings of the organization scattered abroad were trained to use weapons and fight, and were aware of the importance of the Palestinian cause.

The Outbreak of the First Intifada 1987⁴: In 1987, the first Intifada (Popular Uprising) marked a new era of resistance in Palestine. What distinguishes the first Intifada is the growth of the Islamic movement represented by Hamas, and its appearance at this stage was considered unplanned. Israel facilitated its activities inside Palestine and its freedom of movement speeded up its appearance, with the aim of weakening the secular trend, whose popularity had increased in the period before the Intifada. These Islamic currents remained conservative regarding women's issues and saw them as the educator and guardian of the family, and their programs were based on preaching and guidance lessons, targeting homemakers, religious women, and mosque preaches (Jad, 2003: 65-71).

In the first two years of the Intifada, Palestinian women achieved a national struggle on the side of men. The number of female martyrs reached about 130 between the two years 1988-1990 (Jordanian Coordinating Office for Beijing Conference Affairs, 1995: 156). The period of the first Intifada (1987) witnessed the largest arrest of Palestinian women during their struggle against the occupation; the number of arrests among Palestinian women reached nearly 3,000 (Commission of Detainees and Ex-detainees affairs). Women's participation in the first Intifada was limited to those in poor neighbourhoods in cities, villages and camps. The participation was subject to the control of political movements that imposed programs on women, preferring men over them and ignoring women's contributions to the uprising. With the increase in financial support for political movements, women became paid workers, and when financial support declined, they withdrew from the membership of political movements. When political Islam grew, feminist frameworks became afraid of this thought because they believed that it would lead to restrictions on women in the field of work and political participation, among other issues (Jad, 2003: 62-65).

The percentage of women in the membership of the National Council with the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization reached 2%. In the 1970s, it was 4%, while

⁴ The First Intifada (The rock-throwing Intifada) began on 8 December 1987, when an Israeli military truck raided buses carrying Palestinian workers from Gaza Strip from their workplace in Israel, which led four workers were killed and seven others were injured. As a result, the volcano of popular anger erupted the next morning from Jabalia camp, Gaza Strip where the families of the victims live and protesting started from Gaza and continued to the West Bank where the resistance fighters used rocket against the Israeli occupation forces in their protest movements.

it was 9%, in 1980 (25 out of 280 members), to become 10% in 1990. This shows the slow noticeable increase in the membership of Palestinian women over the years.

Since 1974, Palestinian women have participated in political and international delegations. In 1991 three women were included in official and media affairs, while six women took part on the technical side of the negotiations. By 1992, two women had been appointed as ambassadors out of 93 (Jordanian Coordinating Office for Beijing Conference Affairs, 1995: 384, 394).

Despite the increased mobilization of women's political movements with diverse ideologies during the uprising, women remained marginalized in society. This marginalization stemmed from both patriarchal perspectives within political current that overlooked their contributions and from religious movements that confined their roles to motherhood and education emphasizing their place in the home. Nevertheless, their overall condition showed some improvement compared to previous stages.

The Stage of Self-Government- Oslo Agreement 1993⁵: the Palestine Liberation Organization agreed to the resolution of a peaceful interim solution in 1973 with the acceptance of the establishment of a Palestinian Authority on any liberated area of Palestine (Jad, 2000: 75). The stage after signing the Oslo agreement 1993 was characterized by the importance of continuing to resist the occupation, and the need to find a democratic system of government that would achieve political, social and economic support for the future of the society as a whole (Kitab & Hamami, 2003: 166).

When the negotiations began between the Palestinians and the Israelis, the women's affairs team was formed in order to support their participation in building the nation in all fields (health, economy, work and education), but despite these efforts, there was no clear vision of women issues and demands (Kamal, 1997: 77). The Oslo Agreement made the feminist sector move towards two

⁵ Oslo Accords is the declaration of principles on interim self-government arrangements; Mahmoud Abbas (PLO) and Peres (Israel) signed it on September 13, 1993, Rabin and Arafat witnessed it. According to the Oslo Accords (1993), the Palestinian Authority was established and the West Bank was divided into three areas: Area A (18% of the territory) it covering the major Palestinian cities in West Bank except for Hebron and East Jerusalem. Area A is placed under the Palestinian Authority's responsibility for law enforcement and civil affairs whereas Israel retains overall military control of the area. Area B (22% of the territory) is placed under the Palestinian Authority's partial control (civil affairs); Israel retained security control, exercised through a continued military presence. Area C (60% of the territory) remains under the full control of Israel and it contains most of the Israeli settlements.

formations; the first is the national orientation, which included supporters and opponents of the agreement that was present before the uprising. The second is the Islamic trend, whose beginning and existence were during the signing of the agreement (Abdul Hadi, 1999: 195). There was a difference of views within the General Union of Women in terms of their rights. Leftist thinkers saw a trinity of oppression against women, which is class, societal patriarchy, and patriarchy, while liberals saw male and patriarchal oppression only (Helou, 2009: 19).

The Oslo Agreement made the feminist movements focus on the issue of gender, sustainable development, and the enactment of laws and legislation that guarantee women rights. In a study by Awad (2008), on the role of Palestinian women's organization in activating women's political participation in the period 2000-2006, it shows how the Palestinian Authority in the early 1990s did not intend to integrate women's movements into the construction and development process, with the exception of a number of female leaders. The feminist movement was incorporated into government work in 1996, leading to the loss of its key figures' efforts as it became increasingly aligned with institutional power.

The process of integrating women into different feminist movements and frameworks in gender units has led to a focus on the means and details of technical procedures, on goals and objectives and achieving gender equality. Feminist movements have become concerned with government jobs and positions, rather than on improving the status of women and the issuance of the laws that protect it and achieve its legal and religious rights such as inheritance, marriage, divorce and others (Jad, 2008: 64). In 1991, Hanan Ashrawi became the spokesperson for the Jordanian-Palestinian delegation to the peace negotiations. After the signing of Oslo Accord 1993, the first legislative assembly was elected 1996 in which two women became ministers; they were Intisar Al Wazir (Minister of Social Development, who also assumed the Ministry of Social Affairs in 1994) and Hanan Ashrawi (Minister of Education) (Al Naqshabandi, 2005: 134).

When the Palestinian Authority commenced its duties after signing the Oslo Agreement, it focused on national and development issues, especially with regard to infrastructure, providing services to citizens and developing affiliated institutions, in addition to human capabilities, competencies, and it implemented some official mechanisms in favour of women. Departments were formed in ministers and official institutions with the aim of creating space for women's work and including them and developing policies for equality and respect for human rights and gender. It created a unit in the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics that deals with gender issues and provides statistics on the status of Palestinian women to benefit from them academically and research in formulating future policies. It established the Women's Unit in the Legislative Council

in 2000 with the aim of achieving equality for both genders at all levels (Women's Centre for Legal and Social Guidance, 2001: 19-20).

Regarding the participation of women in political parties during with the establishment of the Palestinian Authority, women constitute 5% of the Central Committee of Fatih, 10% of the Central Committee of the Popular Front, 19% of the Central Committee of the Feda Party, and 18% of the Central Committee of the Democratic Front in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Note that no statistics were available on Islamic movement in that period (Othman, 2003: 106).

There was no quota in the elections of Jan. 20, 1996, and five women out of 88 members won (5.6%). In 1998, there were government demands to add a woman to each local council, and in 2000 their number reached 63 women out of 3,535 members (1.7%). (In 2005, the quota was approved and there were 537 women out of 2,732 members representing local councils (Jad, 2010: 84). It is worth noting that Samiha Khalil ran for the first presidential elections in 1996 and won 11% of the votes) (Al Shafei & Awad, 2010: 18-19).

In 1998, the Palestinian Ministry of Local Government issued a non-binding decision to appoint at least one woman in every local and municipal councils. Therefore, the percentage of women working in local and municipal councils was 1.6% with 61 out of 3,739 members in the West bank, knowing that the Gaza Strip rejected this decision (Yanabi' Al hayat, 2011: 35).

The Stage of the Second Intifada 2000⁶: Feminist movements continued their work, especially after Israel destroyed the infrastructure of the Palestinian Authority, to the point that it was unable to carry out their work. The women movements, in addition to their institutional work, provided aid to the families of the wounded, prisoners and martyrs.

While the Palestinian woman took part in the First Intifada of 1987 in struggle and created space for herself at political level. In the Second Intifada of 2000, she participated in martyrdom operations, the Western media accused her of throwing her children to death, she did not appear in the first row, politically, such as the First Intifada, and her role has been limited and still is to charitable societies (Al-Naqshabandi, 2005: 134, 136). As for the second Intifada 2000, the number of arrests against Palestinian women reached nearly 900 (Commission of Detainees and Ex-Detainees Affairs).

⁶ The Second Intifada (known as Al Aqsa Intifada) started from the West Bank on September 28, 2000 after Ariel Sharon went to Al Aqsa Mosque, which is the third holiest site in Islam that provoked an angry reaction from the Palestinians and Muslims around the world. According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics the number of Palestinian martyrs in Al-Aqsa Intifada by year 2000-2018 reached 10, 577.

In 2003, the Palestinian Authority issued a law that a Palestinian woman marrying to a non-Palestinian can pass the nationality to her children after this privilege was the preserve of men. According to the Palestinian Basic Law, Article 23: "Women have the right to actively participate in social, political, culture and economic life, and the law works to remove restrictions that prevent women from participating in building the family and society" (Jad, 2008: 58). Zahira Kamal became the first minister of the Ministry of Women's Affairs when it was created in 2003, and Janet Michael was the first woman to head the Ramallah Municipality in 2005, knowing that eight Palestinian governments were formed during the era of the late President Yasser Arafat 1994-2003 (Rahal, 2010: 37-38).

Amer (2007) shows the role of women's institutions in development planning. In 2003, civil society organizations, political factions, and Palestinian personalities signed a memorandum to approve the women quota, which guarantee women's participation at a rate of 20%, i.e, the open quota system. It urged the political factions to guarantee a share of no less than 30% for its female members. Accordingly, 17 women won the legislative elections for the year 2006.

On Dec.1, 2004, a decision was issued to amend the local council elections law No. 5 of 2004, including the allocation of at least two seats for women candidates in the local council elections (the woman quota) (Harb, 2005). The first round of local council elections in the West Bank was on Dec. 23, 2004, and 52 women won their seats. In Gaza Strip, elections were held on Jan. 07, 2005, and 20 women won their seats out of 118 or 17%, which is close to the representative quota. The legislative council had approved that "the size of women's participation in local councils shall not be less than two seats, as minimum, in the event of women's candidacy" (Yanabi al Hayat, 2011: 37).

On Aug.15, 2005, the Local Council Elections Law No. 10 of 2005 was issued, in which the proportional electoral system and a women's quota of 20% of the seats were adopted. And according to the article No. 17: "The number of women's representation in any of the local councils should not be less than 20%, provided that each list includes the limit for the representation of a women of no less than a woman among the first three names of the list, and a woman among the four names that follow that, and a woman among the following names" (Central Elections Committee-Palestine). According to Harb (2005), one of the most important complaints about the Legislative Council elections is that it dealt with the women's quota in an unsatisfactory manner. It was clear that some did not want to promote women's participation in public work in terms of seeking not to allocate guaranteed seats for women in local councils, so they had only two seats as a limit maximum.

The Palestinian woman participated in the Beit Hanoun demonstration on Nov.03, 2006, to lift the siege on 70 Palestinians who were trapped in the Al-Nasr Mosque in Bait Hanoun, and the occupation forces were opposed the demonstration, killing two demonstrators and wounding dozens of them (Al Ghad Newspaper, 2006: 1).

Jad (2008) explains that the bureaucratic process of integrating women's movements into gender units after Oslo 1993 was the result of a fear in the movements of losing the power base they had built, and the assumption of other women who did not deserve those positions. So feminist movements doubled their efforts to preserve their rules in their political factions they belong to their new governmental positions.

The legislative elections in 2006 resulted in the Islamic movement led by Hamas winning a majority of seats; the movement won 74 seats (65%) of the total number. According to the new law for members of the Legislative Council for the year 2006, out of 132 seats: 66 seats in the district system while the other half go for the list system. Fatih won 45 seats (34%), and there were four independent seats for a group allied with Hamas, three seats for the Popular Front, two seats for the Alternative list, two seats for the Third Way, and two seats for the Future Palestine. Thus, the members were distributed to 84 in the West Bank and Jerusalem, and 48 in Gaza Strip. The elections for this council included 17 women (six from Hamas, eight from Fatih, and one woman each from the Popular Front, the Third Way and Independent Palestine) (Rahal, 2010: 40).

The victory of Hamas in the Legislative Council Elections of 2006 affected the Palestinian situation, and there was an international rejection of the election result. In addition, obstacles had appeared to the establishment of a national unity government, along with the partisan conflict that erupted between Hamas and Fatih and ended with Hamas taking control of Gaza Strip. All of this led to the instability of the Palestinian society and the marginalization of the national and political role required to support women in the community and hindered the formation of unified national policy above all partisan, political or ideological differences (Jad, 2010: 82).

To summarize, women, in general, enjoyed limited ministerial positions in the early years of the life of the Palestinian National Authority; such as the Ministry of Education, Social Affairs, Tourism and Antiquities, but in the formation of the ministerial government for the year 2009, five women ministers were sworn in, a percentage that has increased as mentioned above from the previous years. Their numbers increased to six in the cabinet line-up for the year 2012. The percentage of female members of the council of ministers for the year 2006 reached 4%, according to the statistics for the year 2008, and the percentage rose to 9.5% during the year 2007 (Rahal, 2010: 37).

In 2009, the Palestinian council of ministers issued a decision to make the Palestinian national budget sensitive to gender differences, and a committee was established in this regard, headed by what was previously the Ministry of Social Affairs, and now the Ministry of Social Development. The age of marriage was raised to 18 years, and perhaps the most important of these presidential decisions is the President Mahmud Abbas' signature of a decree that cancels the mitigating excuse in the Penal Code, which allows the killer on the- so called "honour killing" to obtain a reduced sentence. These measures show the clear role of the Palestinian feminist movement in public life and its constant endeavour to improve the public and private position of women. As for women's achievements at the individual level, in the same year, Hanan Ashrawi was appointed as a member of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, as the first woman in this sensitive position, and Abeer Mikhail became the first woman head of the Capital Market Authority. In 2010, Laila Ghannam was appointed as the first female governor of Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate, and Ola Awad was the first woman to head the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics in 2011 (Women and Men in Palestine, Issues and Statistics, 2013).

The 2012, 2016 and 2021 Local Elections: The 2012 local council elections were postponed four times (before it was finally held at the end of Oct. 20, 2012). The first delay was at the end of the year 2008, and the legal deadline for all elected local council expired. The second one was governmental at the end of 2010 on the pretext of public interest. The third was around the middle of the year 2011, after the signing of the reconciliation agreement and the desire to grant the Gaza Strip participation in the election. The last one was after the third postponement in 2011 which was due to obstacles to the implementation of the reconciliation agreement. These continuous postponements made the local councils unable to carry out their tasks due to some resigning or abstaining from work.

On May 14, 2012, President Mahmud Abbas amended the Local Council Election law No. 10 of 2005, including that the election cycle should be every four years. In the last local elections, on Oct. 20, 2012, 272 out of 353 local bodies participated and the electoral process was completed on Dec. 22, 2012, and 81 local bodies participated in the process and under the quota; women got two seats in each local council. The percentage of women among the elected members was 20% and about 22% of the winning members by acclamation, and the percentage of women voting was 42.71% of the total voters (Central Election Committee\Palestine). The various political parties and a number of civil society institutions, upon the recommendation of the central council in 2012, signed a document of honour obligating the parties to raise the percentage of women's participation in their electoral lists to 30%. Statistics of the Palestinian Central Agency for the year 2012 show that there were four Palestinian female ambassadors, representing 4.3% of the 92

female ambassadors in the world. It is considered a low percentage and less than the rate recorded in 2008 by 5.4%, which shows that the existing ambassadors were not replaced by women or appointed women in their place. As for the proportion of female judges, it does not exceed 12%, with an average of 21 female judges against 159 judges.

On the level of peaceful community movement women held in the cities of Ramallah and Gaza on June 15, 2015, a conference to raise the voice of women to end the division and achieve reconciliation under the slogan “Women want one homeland, one people, and one flag.” The conference aimed to emphasize the importance of women’s participation in public life in line with the 1979 CEDAW Convention. CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women) was adopted in 2009 and signed by President Abbas in 2014, which obliges the signatory countries to implement all its provisions (The Palestinian Initiative for Promotion for Global Dialogue and Democracy\Miftah).

Nazzal (2016) sheds light on the participation of women in the local elections, which was scheduled to be held in October 2016, but was postponed until further notice. According to the statistics of the Central Election Committee, which recorded the lists nominated for the election, the percentage of women’s participation out of the total of all candidates was 26%. In other words, the parties did not abide by what they signed in 2012 in the honour documents, which requires raising women’s participation to 30% of the list’s size. This means that women are still excluded from the lists.

In 2016, the State of Palestine adopted a National Action Plan (NAP) (2017–2019) to implement UNSCR 1325. The three strategic objectives of the NAP were to enhance protection of Palestinian women and girls, especially from the violations of the Israeli occupation; hold the Israeli occupation accountable nationally and internationally for violations against Palestinian women and girls and increase the participation of Palestinian women in local and international decision-making processes (The Ministry of Women’s Affairs).

In early 2019 a campaign called “My Rights, Our Power,” launched by UN agencies, international organizations, and 17 Palestinian women’s organizations. The campaign was meant "to raise awareness on women's fundamental human rights," and domestic violence in particular. The joint campaign also aims to raise awareness of the public, especially youth, women, and men on women’s fundamental rights (UNICEF). At the end of 2019, a presidential decree was issued, prohibiting males and females from getting married before they reach the age of 18. This decree went into effect at the beginning of 2020 (PCBS: Women and Men in Palestine - Issues and Statistics, 2021).

The Palestinian cabinet decision was passed on Sept.6, 2021, stipulating that local elections would be held in two phases. According to the Central Elections Commission (CEC) data, the first phase of the 2021 local council elections results indicated that the percentage of women who won through voting in lists was 20.5%. The overall percentage in all local councils (voting and acclamation) was 21.8%, which reflects a slight increase in the percentage of the women's quota, and this points to the importance of the quota system (The Palestinian Initiative for Promotion for Global Dialogue and Democracy\Miftah).

The second phase of local elections was held on March 26, 2022, in 50 local councils in the West Bank. Upon comparison between the two phases of local elections, there was a noticeably higher presence of women in competing lists, totalling 27% of the overall number of candidates. Nevertheless, there was a decline in the percentage of women candidates who won through the ballot boxes. In the second phase, only 19% of women runners won by acclamation and voting: 18% by votes and 21% by acclamation. This was a decline from the first phase, where women won 20.5% through voting, 21.8% overall by voting, and acclamation, meaning that these percentages confirm that women's presence in local councils was only maintained because of the women's quota (The Palestinian Initiative for Promotion for Global Dialogue and Democracy\Miftah).

The 2020 data on women's participation in decision-making, public life and leadership position indicates that women constitute 11% of the members of the National Council, 12.5% of cabinet member, and 11% of ambassadors in the diplomatic field. In addition, one woman occupies the position of governor out of 16, and 2% of the heads of local authorities in Palestine are women. As for the management of the Council of Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture, 99% were men compared to only 1% was women. About 19% are female judges and 20% are female prosecutors. Politically, the percentage of winning women in the local elections (2021) (first stage) reached 22%, compared to 78% for winning men, where the percentage of women candidates was 26% of the total candidates. It is clear from the statistics that there is a clear gap in the participation of women at the decision-making level, diplomatic corps and in official institutions. On the contrary, there are good indicators in the percentage of Palestinian women's participation in informal institutions. There is a clear increase in the participation of women as members of the General Secretariat of NGOs for institutions or centres in Palestine by 70% compared to 30% for men in 2019 (40% of 152 institutions for which data are available) (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2020).

According to the data of the General Personnel Council until February 2022, the contribution of women in the civil sector amounted to 47% of the total employees, and the gap is highlighted

in the percentage of women with the degree of general manager or above, which amounted to 14% for women compared to 86% for men.

The reality of the Palestinian women today: According to the statement of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics on March 7, 2023, the number of females in Palestine, reached 2.70 million out of the total estimated population in mid-2023, at the rate of 49% while the sex ratio reached 103.3, meaning that there are 103.3 males for every 100 females. Women head about 12% of households in Palestine in 2022, with 12% in the West Bank and 11% in the Gaza Strip. In terms of struggle, the Palestinian woman is still performing her duty in resisting the Israeli occupation, as there are female martyrs and prisoners. During the year 2022, 172 women arrested, including 129 women from Jerusalem City and the occupation forces are still detaining 29 female prisoners in their prisons until the end of 2022, while 18 women were martyred during the year 2022 (The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2023). In the same context, according to the Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association (2019), since the beginning of the occupation, in 1967, over 10,000 Palestinian women have been arrested and detained by Israeli occupation forces. In their arresting, the Israeli Occupation Forces targeted university students including female students. The Palestinian woman also continues to participate in the demonstrations, rejecting the occupation and the seizure of land for the establishment of settlements, in addition to her militant role in the funeral of sons' martyrs who sacrifice themselves for the sake of Palestine.

With regard to Palestinian women's participation in decision-making, public life and leadership positions, the percentage of women who were elected and appointed in the 2021\2022 local elections were 21% compared to 79% for men. The data for the year 2021, showed that the percentage of women among the members of the Central Council constitutes 23%, and 19% of the members of the National Council, and 12% of the members of Council Ministers are women. Moreover, there is one woman occupies the position of governor out of 15 governors, and 1% of the heads of local bodies in Palestine are women. Which showed that the percentage of women in decision-making positions is still limited and modest compared to men (The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2023).

In the field of education and work, the data for the academic year 2021\2022 indicated that the participation rate in formal education in Palestine was 73%, with 68% for males and 78% for females. While females outperform males in the completion rates for the lower and upper secondary stage, as these percentages reached 97% and 78% respectively, while the percentage among males reaches 90% and 53% respectively. The percentage of women's participation in the

labour force for the year 2022 increased compared to 2021, reaching 19% of all women of working age in 2022, after it was 17% in 2021. On the other hand, the unemployment rate among women participating in the labour force was 40%, compared to 20% among men for the year 2022 (The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2023).

In other words, the role of the Palestinian women is increasing at all levels, be it, socially politically and economically to name a few. Non the less this role needs to increase more so that the Palestinian woman can be influential player in her society so that she can issue decisions that affect her life and protect her interests and be given the opportunity to take part in the liberation process along with her male counterpart.

Conclusion

The struggle and political role of the Palestinian woman began after the WWI (1914-1918), and perhaps this is due to the economic development and the Ottoman reforms carried out by the Empire in the late 18th century in the field of education. Moreover, her role was political and resistance, so she participated in the struggle against colonialism, and she sought to spread the Palestinian issue internationally by holding political meetings, conferences and seminars. Palestinian women resisted the British occupation (1917-1948) and resist the Israeli occupation (1948-present) and they lived through two Palestinian uprisings, the first in 1987 before the coming of the Palestinian Authority (PA) in 1993 and the second uprising (2000) during the rule of the Palestinian Authority.

The struggle of Palestinian women to liberate the land was the reason for their keenness on education in addition to their militant role and this was demonstrated by the post-Nakba 1948 period, as the Nakba stage witnessed some improvements and setback in the role of the Palestinian women schools were established and education spread among women still the majority of women confronted many social and economic obstacles that forced them to work in the fields, while maintaining their resisting the occupation.

The Oslo Accords (1993) made the feminist movements focus on the issue of gender, sustainable development, and the enactment of laws and legislation that guarantee women rights. After the Oslo Accords (1993), the Palestinian Authority (PA) integrated women's movements into its apparatus. Such a policy negatively affected the roles and activities of the women's movement because most of women's activities came under (PA) control. Since the beginning of the Palestinian Authority's rule, Palestinian women have focused on enacting laws that grant them their rights. As an example, they obtained the right to grant citizenship to their children from a

non-Palestinian father in 2003. They also obtained the quota law in 2005, which allocates a 20% share to them in local and legislative elections.

Palestinian women are still struggling to gain their rights to participate in decision-making power, hold ministerial positions, and participate in local and legislative elections and political parties, in addition to their national struggle to liberate the land and end the Israeli occupation.

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