

Jibreel, Amneh. Interviewed 2012. Translated by *The Palestinian Revolution*, 2016.

I was a member of the administrative board of the GUPW, and the invasion started during one of the administrative board meetings. We immediately transformed all the GUPW branches in the camps and Palestinian communities into emergency committees. We remained in contact with all the branches and began working with our sisters at the General Secretariat office in Beirut.

We met up to distribute tasks between us, and the emergency committees gradually started providing care for those displaced: the south was being bombed continuously, and most families took refuge in Sidon, on their way to Beirut.

We looked after the centres that were set up for the displaced carefully, providing medicine, clothing, food, and saw to all the various needs of the displaced. We also set up a central kitchen to provide meals for the fighters in the areas we were working in, such as the Arab University district, where there was a hospital. We distributed food to hospitals all over Beirut, and were able to provide blood transfusions for the injured. Actually, the GUPW had previously made individual cards for each member to facilitate the distribution of blood donations, as well as the running of the central kitchens, and the provision of supplies.

This work was additional to our real presence on the military bases. Of course, some of our sisters had participated in the fighting, especially in the Shiyah and Jabal areas, and this was clearly driven by our sense of belonging to Palestine, to the Fateh movement, and to the Palestinian people.

We were also involved in distributing political publications and leaflets, such as the magazine *Filasteen Al-Thawra* (Palestine Revolution), which continued to be published despite constant bombardment.

I also worked with *Sawt Filasteen* (Voice of Palestine) radio where we used to broadcast communiqués along with the radio station staff - the Voice of Palestine was supervised by brother Tayeb Abdel Rahim, brother Nabil Amr, and others.

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Our work covered the centers set up for the displaced, looking after their requirements. The leadership of GUPW was also in direct contact with brother Yasser Arafat, who gave instructions to support these centres. We were therefore able to provide hot meals, fruit, vegetables, and other supplies quickly, and provide different types of medicine through the Palestinian Red Crescent centres, and our hospitals.

It was a huge catastrophe, but the Palestinians have always been able to rise from beneath the rubble, because they know their cause is a just one, and they know that they have the right to live like other peoples. You took me back to those days and those events. As Palestinians, we tend to face our crises on a daily basis. The difficulty of recent challenges has us forget the previous ones, because more recent ones are always more difficult and complicated. But we are still resilient, and our people are determined to achieve their goal of return and liberation. We are not seeking to achieve the impossible: we are fighting for our right to our land, to establish our Palestinian state, despite Israel's intransigence, and despite the constant theft of our land, expansion of settlements, expulsion of residents, and demolition of houses. We know our cause is just: the land is ours and Palestine is ours.

On a personal level, the experience was harrowing, and I think most Palestinian women have gone through similar experiences to this. Some were taken prisoner by Israel, and some are still active to this day. At the GUPW, we now work to create projects and programmes by which we seek to ease the suffering of the Palestinian people. We can safely say that our work is not restricted to Palestinian women – it touches all segments of our people, including youth, the elderly, and children. Our programmes covered all these social sectors, in all our refugee camps and communities here.

Where were you working during the 1982 invasion?

In 1982 I was in Beirut, and I was the vice-president of the GUPW in Lebanon. The president was sister Shadia Al Helou – she was outside Lebanon at the time, so I assumed the responsibilities of the president of GUPW-Lebanon. The GUPW's headquarter was like a beehive, constantly working throughout the Lebanese civil war, the 'war of the camps', and throughout the Israeli invasion.