

WHY PALESTINE IS A FEMINIST ISSUE

Palestinian feminists across historic Palestine and the diaspora are central to the liberation struggle, through groups such as the Union of Palestinian Women's Committees, *Tal'at*, *Aswat*, *AlQaws*, *Kayan*, and the *Palestinian Feminist Collective*.

Other feminist groups globally (especially in the Global South) also recognise Palestinian liberation as fundamental to feminist thought and action. In October 2023, *African Feminists in Solidarity with Palestine* said: 'Generation after generation, Pan-African elders and Black/African feminists have been unafraid in their support for the Palestinian people's resistance against settler colonial occupation.'

In November 2023, the *World March of Women* affirmed women's rights 'to defend our lands, bodies, labor, and waters, in Palestine and everywhere', with details of actions undertaken in support of Palestine in countries such as Brazil, India, and Lebanon.

This short teaching aid lists some of the reasons why Palestinian liberation is a feminist issue, starting with the obvious: *Palestinian women are women too*. It is intended for fellow feminist scholars who are not experts on Palestine but who want to centre this issue as much as they can in their classrooms.

The points on the next page can be elaborated in class (or a series of classes, or together with other related topics), and there are links to a mixture of materials students can be asked to read and discuss. The resource can also be given directly to students as a handout. Please feel free to download, adapt, use, and share.

1. Militarism is essential to patriarchal racial capitalism and a cause of gender-based/sexual violence

- Conditions of occupation and conflict are linked to gender-based/sexual violence in both occupied and occupier societies
- Sexual violence is deliberately used as a tactic of war
- The stress of war can cause pre-term labour, miscarriage and stillbirth
- Palestinian women are targets of political/sexual violence and imprisonment as key actors in the struggle to free Palestine

2. The suppression of reproduction and social reproduction is integral to settler colonial strategy

- Homes are demolished and families separated by force
- The imprisonment, murder and migration of men leaves women to head (often large) households alone
- Women and children are disproportionately impacted by poverty and financial insecurity
- There are attacks on subsistence infrastructure (agriculture, water)
- The current Gaza genocide also involves the prevention of births and withholding of food
- Forced displacement causes vulnerability to sexual violence and exploitation, gender discrimination in access to refugee status and services, and human rights abuses (especially of LGBTQI people)

3. Narratives about Palestinian society as especially misogynist and queerphobic are not about protecting women or LGBTQI people

- The idea of Muslim men as particularly threatening justifies colonial and Islamophobic violence
- Such ideas also conceal gender/sexual violence by the Israeli military
- They 'pinkwash' the Israeli state as a progressive democracy (also harmful to Israeli women and LGBTQI people who experience violence)
- Women within Palestinian societies do not speak out about gendered harms for fear of feeding racism
- Recent statements about sexual violence perpetrated by Hamas fighters have weaponised feminism to justify genocide
- When Palestinian deaths are mourned in the West it is usually of Palestinian 'women and children', which invisibilises the killing, maiming and imprisonment of Palestinian men and boys

Further reading

Why Feminism? Why Now? by Loubna Qutami

No Free Homeland Without Free Women by the
Palestinian Youth Movement

Only by abolishing colonialism will Palestine be free by Nada Elia

Palestinian Feminist reading list of fiction and non-fiction

Black Feminist perspectives on Palestine - a reading list

FUCK YOUR LECTURE ON CRAFT, MY PEOPLE ARE DYING BY NOOR HINDI

Colonizers write about flowers.
I tell you about children throwing rocks at Israeli tanks
seconds before becoming daisies.
I want to be like those poets who care about the moon.
Palestinians don't see the moon from jail cells and prisons.
It's so beautiful, the moon.
They're so beautiful, the flowers.
I pick flowers for my dead father when I'm sad.
He watches Al Jazeera all day.
I wish Jessica would stop texting me *Happy Ramadan*.
I know I'm American because when I walk into a room something dies.
Metaphors about death are for poets who think ghosts care about sound.
When I die, I promise to haunt you forever.
One day, I'll write about the flowers like we own them.

In [Poetry Magazine](#), December 2020

POEM BY HIND JOUDEH

Boat
Field olives,
drowning in the oil of fatigue.
Fishermen's boats,
that an absent moon cannot extinguish.
A boat singing to the waves,
illuminating the hungry fish.
The love of my heart,
who falls asleep while hungry,
and wakes up to the lisp of the morning rooster,
and claws its morsels between the noise of steps,
which are burdened.

From the 2013 collection [Nobody Always Leaves](#)