

# Women and War in the Arab World

In wars, some women choose to take up arms but, for most, war is about coping with the disruption of normal life. Women are the carers, the sustainers, the mediators. Throughout history, women and children constitute 75 percent of war refugees. Unfortunately, even after fighting ceases, the issues driving the conflict are often disregarded or swept under the rug once the ink has dried on a peace accord, prolonging instability and misery for millions.

In Arab countries, many people have suffered from war. This issue of *Al-Raida* highlights the situation of women in the Arab world in conflict areas. It begins with an overview of the situation of women during war. The article prepared by Charlotte Lindsey of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) sheds light on the multifaceted ways in which women experience armed conflicts. Shahrzad Mojab takes on the plight of Kurdish women by addressing the issue of genocide and gendercide. Maria Holt attempts to shed light on the past and future struggles faced by Palestinian Women under occupation. Nada Mustafa Ali discusses women's human rights in war torn Sudan and the struggle to restore democracy. Darine Al-Omari and Lynn Maalouf concentrate on Lebanon. Al-Omari interviews four women fighters from different political backgrounds, who relate their experiences in combat

during the Lebanese war. Maalouf addresses the 'case of the disappeared' and highlights the active role women played through the Committee of Families of Kidnapped or Disappeared in Lebanon.

Hazem Al-Amin writes about the current state of affairs of Iraqi women and Diana Mukalled exposes the unfairness surrounding the trial of Samar Alami and Jawwad Botmeh. Mukalled also uncovers the past and future conditions of women in Algeria, Iraq, Kuwait and Western Sahara based on her many journalistic missions to various conflict areas. Fawwaz Trabulsi in his piece "Losing Sense" analyzes the award winning photo 'The Madonna' of a woman grieving the loss of her loved ones after a massacre in Algeria.

This issue of *Al-Raida* also contains two conference reports and a book review. Marie-Christine Aquareone reports on a Sudanese women's advocacy mission to New York and Washington and Abby Jenkins, Megan Brown, and Sian MacAdam discuss the Women's Learning Partnership Conference on human security. Last but not least, Valerie Morgan reviews the book *Women and the Politics of Military Confrontation* edited by Nahla Abdo and Ronit Lentin.

*Diana Mukalled*