

# WOMEN on the Frontline

One of the most prominent feature of the current Palestinian uprising is its comprehensiveness, geographically and demographically. The confrontations with the occupation forces have expanded to all cities, villages and camps in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The massive participation of women, children, elderly, youth and men, from all sectors of the Palestinian society, is a logical result of the fact that Zionist terrorism and suppression has affected all our people.

The intifada which began on December 8, 1987, has come to end the suffering and oppression which Palestinians have endured for over 20 years. Naturally it is the Palestinian women who have been the most affected by the occupation. Added to their social oppression was a new oppression. This explains their broad participation in the Palestinian national struggle and outstanding role in the intifada. This role is manifested on all levels. The past 15 months of daily struggle against the Zionist occupation have borne witness to the prominent role of women to the point that the development of their role has become an important feature of the intifada.

## POLITICAL MATURITY

Women have been involved in the political and military fields of the struggle since the beginning of the century. They have accumulated much experience from demonstrations, marches, political statements, pamphlets, lectures, slogan-writing on the walls, military work and armed struggle.

They have intensified their political activities over the last 15 months. Undoubtedly, the most significant aspect is their level of political awareness and maturity, as well as their adherence to the political organizations in the occupied territories, in addition to active participation in the militant struggle. To emphasize the degree of women's

political awareness and consciousness, it is enough to point out the qualitative contribution made by the women's sector in the occupied territories. As the intifada entered its second year, the women's organizations held a series of meetings to address the continuation, escalation and consolidation of the intifada. They concluded that reinforcing national unity is one of the major means of consolidating the intifada, and therefore decided to unify all the women's organizations and establish the Higher Women's Council, thus providing a model for unifying all mass

organizations and unions in confronting the occupation.

The Higher Women's Council issued its founding statement on December 1, 1988. In this statement, the Palestinian women reasserted that they welcomed the PNC's decisions, specifically the Declaration of Independence and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. They also declared their adherence to the UNL calls. They called for continuing the struggle and for the convening of a fully empowered international peace conference with the participation of the PLO, the sole

