

Nadira Abu Dubey Saadi, Women Against Violence, “Hourat, protest vigil against the genocide”, 18/9/2025

Introduction

Welcome to “Eyes on Gaza,” our daily gathering that brings together protest and learning. The genocide in Gaza is becoming normalized as quickly as it sinks to new depths. We stand in astonishment, anger, or sheer inability to grasp what is happening, and how it can possibly be, and moreover as to our ability to resist. Yet we must resist. Although, as we have heard here more than once, even this ability to resist is not distributed equally, and it is certainly more difficult, for many reasons, for Palestinian men and women in Israel—trapped within intersecting pressures of oppression, silencing, solidarity, a sense of responsibility, and fear. It is a great honor for us today to host Nadira Abu Dubey Saadi, coordinator of women’s employment at the *Women Against Violence* organization in Nazareth. She will speak with us about *Hurāt* – حرّات, the feminist movement organizing a regular protest against the genocide. Hello, Nadira, and thank you very much for joining us today. Nadira will speak for eight minutes, after which we will be able to ask questions in the chat, and I will read them to her. Thank you very much, Nadira.

Presentation

Thank you, and hello. I will tell a story—the story of *Hurāt* how it began and where we stand today. When the ceasefire failed in March 2025 and the assault on Gaza resumed, we were in the midst of our campaign called *Hurāt* – حرّات. The goal of the campaign was to challenge the policy of repression and silencing, including the policy imposed on us since October 7th, as a Palestinian minority, but also on all ideological and intellectual minorities calling for an end to the war and for a negotiated deal. We asked ourselves: what could our role be in opposing the genocide taking place in Gaza—while also resisting the normalization (as you said earlier) of the existing situation, the perception that war and killing in Gaza are a permanent condition, static images to be accepted as if they were natural. Out of this came the idea of a weekly vigil by *Hurāt* – حرّات – to protest against the war, and a call for people to begin taking heart and to act, to take part in resistance.

The protest vigil is, ostensibly, a quiet and symbolic form of protest, in which participants stand in a public space. In our case, we stand in the *Ma‘ayan Square* in Nazareth for one hour. We hold signs and wear special clothes. At first, we wore black; later, in the summer, we began wearing white, because it was too hot to stand from one to two in the afternoon in the unbearable heat of June and July. Without speeches, without marches—similar to what our feminist comrades in *Women in Black* have done since the first Intifada, standing every Friday at intersections and squares with signs against the occupation. In the same way, our weekly vigil of *Hurāt* became not only an act of protest against the war, but also a symbol of a continuous civic stance. This week marks our 24th week of standing in the same place at the same time.

At the beginning of our protest, there were few of us. Fear was there—we were afraid of what might happen to us, even though we knew what we were doing was, in fact, legal. But no one knows what counts as legal under Ben Gvir’s fascist police. Over time, week after week, more people joined our weekly protest. Political activists began to see us as an address and sometimes joined in. Journalists too, and anyone who felt they had something to say—who wished to stand against silencing and the suppression of free expression—found an address in us and began to come. Even today, our vigil does not draw large crowds, because people are still afraid. Yet, as feminist activists, we decided to continue being present. One of the sentences common among us as a group is: “Even if we are only two or three, we will stand there.” We will raise our voices, as our conscience and our human duty instruct us.

Our standing, in essence, points to our ability—to the fact that, despite all the silencing, despite all the repression, we have not lost hope in our own strength. We will stand. We will speak our word—in the face of all disappointments, and in the face of the horrifying silence, both local and global, in the presence of a genocide broadcast live from Gaza. Thank you. *Shukran*.