

Fatima Barnawi | The first female prisoner of the Palestinian revolution and the founder of the Palestinian Women's Police Force



Fatima Mohammad Ali Barnawi (1939 – November 3, 2022) was a Palestinian fighter of African descent who participated in the Palestinian resistance in the mid-1960s, a crucial period in the Palestinian cause. Fatima is known as the first Palestinian woman to organize a semi-military operation in Israel - an attempt to bomb a cinema in October 1967. She executed this operation with her sister Ehsan, who was about 5 years younger. Fatima was the first Palestinian female detainee in Israeli prisons and the founder of the Palestinian Women's Police in

1994 when the Palestinian National Authority was established, holding the rank of colonel.

Life:

Fatima Barnawi was born in Jerusalem in 1939. Her experience with Israeli occupation began at the age of nine when she moved with her mother and family from Jerusalem to a refugee camp near Amman. Her father, Mohammad Ali Barnawi, fought in the 1936 Palestinian revolution alongside Hajj Amin al-Husseini, and remained in Palestine. Fatima worked as a practicing nurse at the Saudi Arabian Oil Company ARAMCO, but she was not allowed to administer injections to patients due to her skin color, despite being of Palestinian nationality.

Political Life:

Among thirty-four Palestinian women interviewed by Amal Q'awar for her study "Daughters of Palestine," Fatima was one of four women who joined the resistance movement in its early stages as a fighter before becoming a political activist. The other three were Leila Khaled, Aisha Odeh, and Rasma Odeh.

Honors:

In 2015, President Mahmoud Abbas awarded her the Military Star of Honor, and in 2020, Ambassador Diab Al-Louh, Palestine's Ambassador to Cairo and Permanent Representative to the Arab League, presented her with a commemorative shield in

recognition of her role in the struggle.

Her Death:

Fatima Barnawi passed away at the Palestine Hospital, affiliated with the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, in Cairo, the capital of Egypt, on November 3, 2022. Later, on November 6, 2022, she was buried in Gaza.