



Every year we observe International Women’s Day to celebrate women’s achievements and whatever progress may have been made in the realization of their human rights; we express our concern about the prevailing gender-based social imbalance and protest violence against women and girls. A few milestones: In 1909, the first National Women’s Day was observed by the socialist party in the United States in order to honor the role of women in the garment workers

strike against labor conditions. The following years witnessed large rallies that demanded women’s right to vote and hold public office, to work and receive vocational training, and to not be discriminated against on the job. During World War I, the rallies were also calls for peace. Since 1975, International Women’s Year, the United Nations has celebrated International Women’s Day on March 8. And in 1995, the Beijing Declaration was signed by 189 governments that advocated for a world where each woman and girl could exercise her right to choose: to participate in politics, to get an education, to have an income, and to live in societies free from violence and discrimination.

We have come a long way, and gender equality and women’s empowerment have become issues that few people are able to brush off the table as irrelevant. But have these ideals been implemented? This issue gives some insight into the meaning of these ideals in Palestine. In “Women in the Labor Force,” you will get a somewhat dire account of the status quo, whereas you can read inspiring success stories in most of the other articles.

So how does a Palestinian woman view herself? As one author asserts, “We are both... the subordinate and the superwoman. We are a reflection of our society and of our ongoing struggle to end the occupation, to end the Palestinian political divide, and to end the violence and discrimination against women that still prevails in many segments of our society. We are a reflection of our society and we are shaping it.”

Our sincere thanks go to UN Women and UNESCO for their sponsorship of this issue. And from all of us here at TWIP, we wish you Happy Women’s Day! We would like to not only congratulate you on your achievements, be they at home in raising a family or at work; we also wish you perseverance and strength in your struggles. And last but not least, Happy Mother’s Day! It may not be a coincidence that the month of March harbors these holidays and the beginning of spring: so many occasions to celebrate renewal and be inspired to move forward in positive ways. As UN Women and UNESCO emphasize, just as a bird needs two wings to fly, we need the cooperation of both men and women.

Bettina Ezbidi
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