

## Colonel Abdul-Hakeem Abu-Rub

By the TWiP Collective



Admittedly, when we approached Colonel Abu-Rub for this interview, we found his official title a bit mundane – “Deputy Director of the Training Department” at the Palestinian Civil Police. However, his persona immediately became apparent when the colonel wasted no time in sweeping us away in passionate explanation of his work! Clearly, we were talking to the right person, an individual filled with a sense of mission and profound convictions.

Originating from the traditional village of Jalaboun near Jenin, Colonel Abu-Rub reveals a sincerely open mind and modernist values. He demonstrates a

deep understanding of gender issues and of the challenges facing women, particularly in relation to his work with the police. This activist stance and his consistent position of advocacy in working towards progress in gender equality brought our sponsors to reflexively nominate him as Personality of the Month for the current issue of *This Week in Palestine*.

Stern, yet with an amiable character, Colonel Abu-Rub articulately delved into thorny issues surrounding gender equality. He raises gender-related issues and challenges societal patterns within the various committees in which he is involved, while remaining sensitive

to local cultural norms. “We’ve come a long way since we started back in 1994,” Colonel Abu-Rub says proudly. Be it in training on self-defense, traffic control, fitness, investigation techniques, or other training-related areas, women receive the same program as men and are qualified according to the same international standard.

As for the presence and status of women in the police force, Colonel Abu-Rub added that among the 200 posts recently recruited, only 10 percent were offered to women. “We cannot talk about equality in our Palestinian society,” he stated, “but we are striving to promote fairness and justice.” Importantly, a greater general acceptance of policewomen is apparent, and women are becoming increasingly eager to join the police force and develop their careers. Whereas women previously had applied primarily for secretarial or administrative positions, most women now submit their candidacies for policing posts. Colonel Abu-Rub added that the Palestinian police are conscious of the need and eager to include policewomen, even more so as women are increasingly recognized for their particular abilities and skills in dealing with certain aspects of police work.

Colonel Abu-Rub has been an active member of the strategic planning team that developed the first-ever Palestinian police force gender strategy that was adopted recently. Proudly he referred to the training department as one of the first departments to integrate the strategy. As a member of the Gender Steering Committee, he plays a crucial role in supporting the gender unit at the policy and strategic levels and

promotes the inclusion of gender issues in the institutional development agenda.

When asked about his deepest-rooted passion, Colonel Abu-Rub smiled and appeared lost for words. He then revealed that, rather than his upbringing or the evolution of his life, his experiences while a university student in Yemen contributed to his gender focus. The hunger for an education shown by a number of young Palestinian women students, their values, strength, and steadfastness left a deep impression on him and inspired him to become a dedicated advocate for women.

In 1995, Colonel Abu-Rub received his bachelor’s degree in Arabic literature from Aden University in Yemen. In 1996, he earned a diploma in police science after graduating from the Police College in Jericho. He began his career in 1996 as a field officer, and advanced in 2003 to take on management of the security centers throughout the State of Palestine. From 2007 to 2008, he lectured at the Police College and subsequently joined the Forces’ training department. In 2014, Colonel Abu-Rub received a professional diploma in public administration from Birzeit University, specializing in gender and accountability in a program organized and sponsored by the UNDP. This qualification gave a major boost to his career and empowered him to achieve his goals and contribute to gender integration. Colonel Abu-Rub is a member of the Police Projects Committee, the Gender Steering Committee, the Planning Committee, and the Police Recruitment Committee. He lives in Ramallah with his spouse, who works in the field of social welfare, and their three girls and two boys.