Palestinian Land Day.. A battle of resilience that continues to this day



The Palestinians commemorate on the 30th of March every year the anniversary of Land Day, which dates back to the year 1976. It marks the first direct confrontation between Palestinian citizens on one side and the Zionist Israeli state since 1948. The result was the martyrdom of six Palestinian martyrs, in addition to 49 injured and around 300 detained. The martyrs are:

Khadija Qasem Shwahna	Sakhneen	23
Khair Ahmed Yassin	Araba	23
Raja Hussain Abu Raya	Sakhneen	23
Khader Eid Mahmoud Khalaila	Sakhneen	24
Mohsen hasan said taha	Kfr kana	15
R'afat ali zhairi	Nor Shams Kamp	20

The events started with the announcement by the Israeli occupation government

under the leadership of Yitzhak Rabin in 1975 of a plan to Judaize the Galilee region, aiming to build Jewish settlements on land owned by Palestinian Arab citizens who represent the majority in this area, under the name "**Galilee Development Project**."

In this context, the Israeli occupation government approved on February 29, 1976, the confiscation of 21,000 dunams owned by Palestinian farmers from the towns of Sakhnin, Araba, Deir Hanna, and Arab al-Sawa'id, to allocate them for the construction of more settlements. It is noteworthy that the Israeli occupation forces had seized between 1948 and 1972 more than one million dunams of land from Arab villages in the Galilee and the Triangle region, in addition to millions of other dunams that were confiscated in 1948.

Following the confiscation decision, the Land Defense Committee, which emerged from local committees within the framework of a general meeting held in the city of Nazareth on October 18, 1975, convened to discuss the latest developments and ways to confront the confiscation process. They agreed to declare a comprehensive one-day general strike on March 30, 1976.

Israeli Zionist forces rushed on March 29, 1976, to declare a curfew on the villages of Sakhnin, Arraba, Deir Hanna, Tur'an, Tamra, and Kabul starting from 5 p.m. The Israeli occupation government announced that all demonstrations were illegal and threatened to shoot "instigators" to prevent the strike from being implemented.

Despite the Israeli threats, the strike spread across all Palestinian population centers from the Galilee in the north to the Negev in the south, and massive protests condemning and rejecting the land confiscation decision took place. The Israeli response to break the strike was a bloody military one led by General Rafael Eitan. His forces, supported by tanks and armored vehicles, stormed the Palestinian Arab villages and towns, indiscriminately opening fire, resulting in the martyrdom of six Palestinians: four of them killed by army gunfire and two by police gunfire, and dozens were injured.

Last but not least, the battle for the land did not end on March 30, 1976, but it continues to this day. We can say that every Palestinian day is like "Land Day", as every day the Israeli occupation government seizes Palestinian land, builds settlements, demolishes homes, and displaces inhabitants.

On the anniversary of Land Day, my heart is captivated by what was written on the grave marker of Fadwa Tuqan, from her book "The Night and the Knights."

"Enough for me to die on its soil,

And be buried within it,

Beneath its earth, I dissolve and fade away,

And I'll be resurrected as grass on its land,

And I'll be resurrected as a flower,

Nourished by the palm of my homeland,

Enough for me to remain embraced by my homeland,

As soil,

And grass,

And flower."