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## **From Silence to Freedom: Women Rising Against Violence**

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### **Abstract**

As a filmmaker and researcher deeply rooted in Arab-Palestinian society, I explore the mechanisms of silence and repression that shape women's lives in this patriarchal context. Based on extensive field research and personal encounters, I argue that women in Arab and Palestinian communities are subjected to intense familial and societal control, sustained by a cultural code of secrecy. The phrase "Dirty laundry is not hung outside" captures the expectation that women suppress and conceal experiences of violence and shame. In this presentation, I will screen selected scenes from my documentary *Women of Freedom*, which follows the stories of women who were murdered in the name of "honor," women who survived such attempts, and the rare confession of a remorseful killer. These testimonies serve as a lens to examine the social and political conditions that enable gender-based violence, while also challenging cultural taboos and collective silence. The discussion will address both the content and the process of making the film: the ethical, emotional, and technical challenges of giving voice to silenced women while working within communities where such exposure is dangerous. The presentation aims to contribute to broader conversations on gender, violence, and resistance in the Middle East, and to highlight the transformative potential of storytelling as a tool for social change.

**Keywords:** arab society, gender-based violence, silence, women, repression, resistance, honor killing, taboo, documentary film.