



A STORY OF LOVE, FAMILY AND FREEDOM

ABOUT

When a nation-wide uprising breaks out in 1987, a woman in Gaza must make a choice between love, family and freedom. Undaunted, she embraces all three, joining a clandestine network of women in a movement that forces the world to recognize the Palestinian right to self-determination for the first time.

Naila and the Uprising chronicles the remarkable journey of Naila Ayesah whose story weaves through the most vibrant, nonviolent mobilization in Palestinian history – the First Intifada in the late 1980s.

Directed by Julia Bacha
Executive Produced by Suhad Babaa
Produced by Rula Salameh and Rebekah Wingert-Jabi

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JUST VISION PRESENTS
In Association with Fork Films

NAILA AND THE UPRISING



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT



FOR OVER A DECADE, whenever I've asked Palestinian grassroots leaders about the models of inspiration that they draw on, they've consistently pointed towards the First Intifada. I knew after years of filmmaking in the region that, despite the First Intifada's revered status among Palestinians, it remained seriously misunderstood internationally, clouded by a dominant narrative that simplified the uprising with a single image: stone-throwing Palestinian youth facing off against Israeli tanks. When the Just Vision team decided to conduct our own in-depth research, we came to grasp just how much of the story had become obscured by history. The First Intifada was not only a vibrant, strategic and sustained nonviolent civil resistance movement; for months, it was led by a network of Palestinian women who were fighting the dual struggle for national liberation and gender equality.

We knew we wanted to bring this story to light by producing a documentary that could provide insight and wisdom from the veteran women activists of the First Intifada for today's rising leaders. We felt it was our responsibility to provide a more holistic account of that time, illuminating how Palestinians have historically engaged in nonviolent activism, underscoring the power of civil society in creating change and elevating the role of women in civil resistance.

The lessons of *Naila and the Uprising* are as relevant today as they were in 1987. Women across the globe are continuing their struggle for basic freedoms and for the uplifting of their inherent dignity, building robust movements that offer models for civil resistance. From the First Intifada to the present moment, it's clear: women's leadership in civil society organizing is vital. But too often, their work is sidelined or ignored. That's a troubling trend, because a number of academic studies have demonstrated that movements with women in leadership positions are more likely to employ nonviolent tactics. And those that employ unarmed civil resistance are much more likely to achieve their goals. This research resonates strongly with what Just Vision has observed in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories for over 14 years, including in the successful struggle against the separation barrier waged by Budrus - a village in the West Bank and the subject of our 2009 film - in which women and girls in the village played a central role.

Our research on the First Intifada made it clear that the women in Budrus were drawing from a deep legacy. Women have consistently been a part of influential social movements coming out of the Middle East, but time and again, the cameras focus on armed men, leaving us with a narrative that erases women from the struggle and obscures the nature and demands of the movement. *Naila and the Uprising* is a call to pay attention to those women leading from the grassroots, in real time and historically, so their courage and creativity can be leveraged, replicated and ultimately effective. The film is also a cautionary tale for what happens when women are stripped of their leadership roles and excluded from ongoing struggles.

When the team at Just Vision first embarked on *Naila and the Uprising* nearly four years ago, we knew that surfacing this history was important. But we didn't fully anticipate exactly how timely the film would be. The women in *Naila and the Uprising* are not only role models for the rising generation of Palestinians and Israelis struggling for justice and equality. They also illuminate lessons and legacies for communities around the globe who are demanding more of their political leaders as they organize for the rights and well-being of all.

We were privileged to connect with dozens of women in the course of making this film who demonstrated incredible courage and resilience - both in their ongoing resistance on so many levels and in stepping forward to tell their stories, despite the challenges that they face. It is our hope that their experiences will inspire and inform audiences worldwide just as they have moved and educated me.

Julia Bacha (2017)

SYNOPSIS

WHEN A NATION-WIDE uprising breaks out in 1987, a woman in Gaza must make a choice between love, family and freedom. Undaunted, she embraces all three, joining a clandestine network of women in a movement that forces the world to recognize the Palestinian right to self-determination for the first time.

The film revolves around the tragic and remarkable story of Naila Ayesh, an active student organizer in Gaza in the 1980s. Naila has spent years building the infrastructure for economic independence for women and self-sufficiency for Palestinians under Israeli occupation. She is pregnant when first arrested in 1986. None of her friends and family knows where she is being detained, and the Israeli army and prison system deny that she is in their custody. After days of torture and interrogation in the prison, she starts bleeding – a sign of a possible miscarriage – but guards ignore her repeated requests to see a doctor.

Naila's husband and long-time partner in activism, Jamal, reaches out to Israeli journalist and activist Roni Ben Efrat, imploring her to look into Naila's case. She works with Israeli journalist Oren Cohen, whose investigation points to clear evidence despite police denials. He publishes just the same. Oren's story hits the headlines, forcing the authorities to reveal that Naila Ayesh is being held by the Shin Bet, Israel's secret service. By the time the bureaucratic machine releases her – without charge – she has lost her child.

One year later, Naila gives birth to her son Majd, and as the uprising breaks out, she pours her heart into it. Naila and dozens of other women start building parallel institutions to challenge the Israeli military's control of Palestinian life: underground classrooms to replace schools that were shut down by the army,

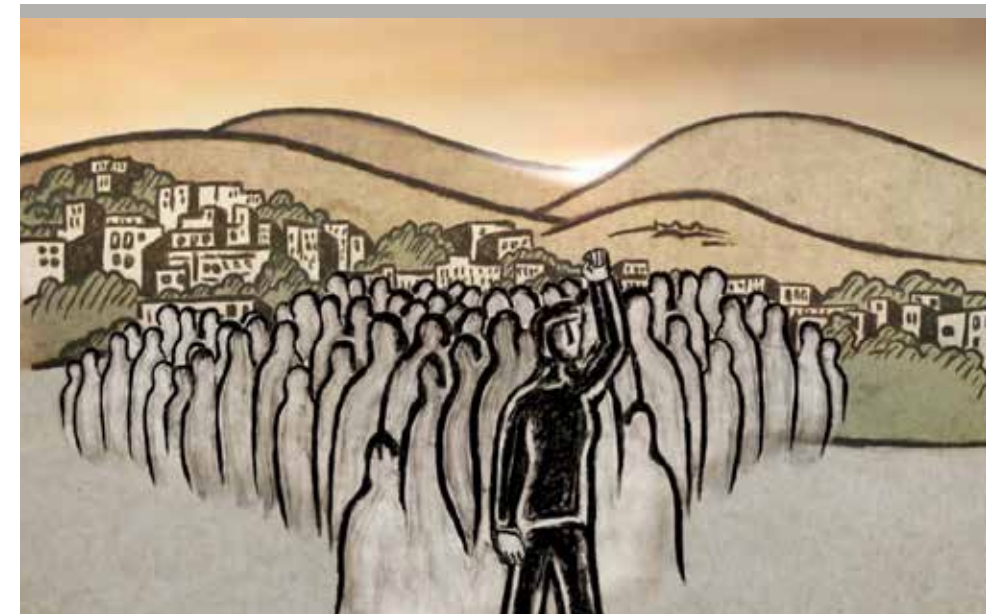
citizen-run health clinics to treat those with no access to hospitals, and "victory gardens" to break reliance on Israeli agriculture.

Naila also orchestrates the secret distribution of leaflets, the underground leadership's communication system to inform people of strikes, boycotts, marches, and other direct actions being planned each week. A new mother, Naila puts baby Majd in a sling and takes him with her at night, hiding the communiqués in loaves of bread.

When her husband is deported for political activities soon after the outbreak of the Intifada, Naila is left to raise a child alone while sustaining her vital role in the uprising. As she gains visibility in the movement, the Israeli authorities arrest her again, this time in the middle of the night, taking her away from her 6-month-old son. With one parent in prison and the other deported, Majd is eventually sent to join his mother and the imprisoned women of the First Intifada, taking his first steps in an Israeli prison yard. Months pass and the uprising persists, leaving the fate of Naila and her family hanging in the balance.

We follow Naila and the women's struggle through the end of the uprising and into negotiations with Israel, where Palestinians are recognized for the first time on the world stage. The women's movement bore immediate fruit, with female activists taking their place on the Palestinian delegation, more female representation than any other party. But will the women be able to carry forward the vision of equality that their activism set in motion?

Using evocative under-camera animation, intimate interviews, and exclusive archival footage, this film brings out of anonymity the courageous women who shook the Israeli occupation and put Palestinians on the map for the first time. Most images of the First Intifada paint an incomplete picture from a law-and-order frame. This film tells the story that history overlooked – of an unbending nonviolent women's movement at the head of Palestine's struggle for freedom.



WHO'S WHO



Naila Ayesh was an activist and student organizer in the years leading up to the First Intifada and became a leading figure in the uprising. She later became General Director of the Gaza-based Women's Affairs Center, a non-profit devoted to advancing women's leadership and participation in political and public life.



Zahira Kamal has been at the vanguard of the women's movement and national liberation movement in Palestine since the 1970s. Today, she serves as the General Secretary of the Palestinian Democratic Union Party - FIDA, the only female leader of a major political party in Palestine.



Azza al-Kafarneh was one of the founders of the Union of Palestinian Women's Committees in Gaza during the First Intifada through the PFLP and was involved in student activism at Birzeit University before the uprising. She traveled between the West Bank and Gaza during the Intifada to ensure that actions were coordinated across the Occupied Palestinian Territories. She continues her work in Gaza today.



Naima Al-Sheikh was a student activist with the Fatah-affiliated Young Students Movement at the Islamic University in Gaza and an active member of the Union of Women's Committees for Social Work when the First Intifada broke out. As an organizer, she became especially active in the women's struggle. After the creation of the Palestinian Authority, she became part of the General Union of Palestinian Women and continues to fight for gender equity in the Occupied Palestinian Territories today.



Roni Ben Efrat was a journalist and activist during the First Intifada, reporting on human rights violations in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. She was one of the founding members of the Israeli human rights group, Women in Black, in 1987. She wrote for a Hebrew biweekly, *Derech-Hanitzatz*, which was shut down under administrative law during the uprising. Roni spent nine months in jail for her involvement with the publication.



Sama Aweidah was an active organizer in Jerusalem during the First Intifada and the Secretary-General of the Executive Office of the Palestinian Federation of Women's Action Committees. She has been the Director of the Women's Studies Society in Jerusalem since 1998.



REACTIONS >>

"The smart direction and tech work are as straight-arrow and determined as the protagonist."

The Hollywood Reporter

"Stories like Naila's remind us of a third way: one of nonviolent resistance led by self-reliant, democratic, gender-equal communities."

The Nation

"In (*Naila and the Uprising*), female activists are not shiny aberrations—they are the unseen spine holding up a movement."

The Daily Beast

"Julia Bacha's moving film which combines stirring archival footage, thoughtful interviews and evocative animation is a fitting tribute to the women who still struggle for a fully democratic Palestinian state . . . and their rightful place in that state."

Huffington Post

"*Naila and the Uprising*, seeks to ensure that our analysis does not erase a core element of [the First Intifada]: the participation and the leadership of Palestinian women."

The National

IMAGES FROM THE FILM



1.

Naila in Demonstration, as seen in Naila and the Uprising, Created by Just Vision.

Image Courtesy of Luisa Morgantini.



2.

Naila Ayesh and her son, Majd, as seen in Naila and the Uprising, Created by Just Vision.

Image Courtesy of Naila Ayesh.



3.

Woman and Leaflet, still from animated sequence in Naila and the Uprising, Created by Just Vision.

Image Courtesy of Just Vision.



4.

At Door with Leaflet, still from animated sequence in Naila and the Uprising, Created by Just Vision.

Image Courtesy of Just Vision.



5.

First Intifada Demonstration, as seen in Naila and the Uprising, Created by Just Vision.

Image Courtesy of Mahfouz Abu Turk.



6.

Women of the First Intifada, Still Animated Sequence in Naila and the Uprising, Created by Just Vision.

Image Courtesy of Just Vision.

DOC NYC

ON THE ROAD



Naila and the Uprising had its world premiere for a sold-out audience of 450 at DOC NYC on November 12, 2017. Naila Ayesh and Zahira Kamal, two of the film's protagonists, joined producer Julia Bacha, producer Rula Salameh and executive producer Suhad Babaa for a Q&A moderated by DOC NYC's Artistic Director, Thom Powers.

DOC NYC

A SOLD-OUT THEATER AT THE FILM'S WORLD PREMIERE, DOC NYC, NOV. 12, 2017



ZAHIRA KAMAL AND NAILA AYESH



JULIA BACHA AND SUHAD BABAA WITH DOC NYC ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, THOM POWERS



JUST VISION TEAM WITH CAST AND CREW



JUST VISION TEAM WITH CAST AND CREW

IDFA

ON THE ROAD



Naila and the Uprising held its International Premiere with a series of screenings at the International Documentary FilmFestival Amsterdam (IDFA) in November 2017, followed by Q&A with Naila Ayesh, Zahira Kamal, Suhad Babaa and Julia Bacha. Director Julia Bacha also spoke alongside other filmmakers at IDFA's Visual Voice Marathon and at the IDFAcademy Session on Impact and Outreach.

idfa

JUST VISION'S CREATIVE DIRECTOR,
JULIA BACHA SPEAKS AT IDFA'S
VISUAL VOICE MARATHON.



JULIA BACHA, NAILA AYESH AND SUHAD BABAA
ADDRESS THE AUDIENCE AT IDFA SCREENING



SUHAD BABAA, NAILA AYESH, JULIA BACHA AND EVA
NAJJAR AHEAD OF INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE AT
IDFA



RULA SALAMEH, NAILA AYESH AND SUHAD BABAA AT DIFF



NAILA AND THE UPRISING IN DIFF FESTIVAL CATALOGUE

Naila and the Uprising had its Middle East premiere for sold-out audiences at the Dubai International Film Festival (DIFF) in December 2017, with protagonist Naila Ayesh joining producer Rula Salameh and Executive Producer Suhad Babaa for Q&As following the screenings.

Dubai International Film Festival

OVERFLOWING THEATRE AT THE FILM'S MIDDLE EAST PREMIERE, DIFF, DECEMBER 2017.

TEAM



JULIA BACHA
DIRECTOR



SUHAD BABAA
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER



RULA SALAMEH
PRODUCER



REBEKAH WINGERT-JABI
EDITOR AND PRODUCER



FLÁVIA DE SOUZA
EDITOR



TALAL JABARI
CINEMATOGRAPHER



**SHARRON MIRSKY AND
DOMINIQUE DOKTOR**
ANIMATORS



FADI ABU SHAMMALAH
CO-PRODUCER



JEN MARLOWE
CO-PRODUCER

JULIA BACHA DIRECTOR

Julia Bacha is a Peabody award-winning filmmaker, media strategist and the Creative Director at Just Vision. Credits include *Control Room* (2004, Writer/ Editor), *Encounter Point* (2006, Writer/Co-Director), *Budrus* (2009, Director/ Producer), *My Neighbourhood* (2012, Director/Producer) and *The Wanted 18* (2014, Impact Producer). Her work has been screened at the Sundance, Berlin and Tribeca Film Festivals, broadcast on the BBC, HBO and Al Jazeera, and shared with Palestinian refugee camps and the US Congress. In addition to 20 international film festival awards, Julia is recipient of the 2017 Columbia University Medal of Excellence, 2016 Guggenheim Fellowship, King Hussein Leadership Prize, Search for Common Ground Award, Ridenhour Film Prize, and PUMA Creative Impact Award. She is a Term Member at the Council on Foreign Relations, a Young Global Leader at the World Economic Forum, an Advisory Board Member to the Tribeca Film Institute and a TED speaker.

SUHAD BABAA EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Suhad Babaa is the Executive Director at Just Vision, an organization dedicated to increasing the power and reach of Palestinians and Israelis working to end the occupation and build a future of freedom, dignity and equality. She previously served as the Director of Programming, overseeing all educational and community outreach efforts across the US, Israel and Palestine. Suhad has addressed dozens of audiences at venues including the United Nations General Assembly, Harvard University and film festivals, mosques, synagogues and churches across the US. She was an integral member of the impact campaigns around the award-winning films *Budrus* and *My Neighbourhood*.

RULA SALAMEH PRODUCER

Rula Salameh is a veteran journalist and Just Vision's Educational and Outreach Manager in Palestine. She produced Just Vision's films, *Budrus* and *My Neighbourhood*, and has led the team's public engagement campaigns in Palestinian society for over nine years. Active during the First Intifada as a teenager, Rula played a key role in building relationships of trust with the women protagonists of our film. In addition to her work with Just Vision, Rula is the host of one of the most popular TV shows in Palestine, "Philanthropy in Palestine." She was one of the founders of the Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation in 1993 and is a member of the International Federation of Journalists.

REBEKAH WINGERT-JABI EDITOR AND PRODUCER

Rebekah Wingert-Jabi has over 14 years of producing, directing and editing experience in film and television. She was the director and editor of *My Neighbourhood* and worked on films that aired on *Al Arabiya*, the *Discovery Channel* and *PBS*. Rebekah lived in the West Bank for 8 years where she worked with local filmmakers to produce and edit several films, including *Swish, Swish*, and taught filmmaking at Al Quds University and Dar Al Kalima College. Rebekah recently produced and edited the featurelength documentary *Another Way of Living*. She holds a Master of Fine Arts in Film and Television Production from the University of Southern California.

FLÁVIA DE SOUZA EDITOR

Flávia de Souza has worked on more than 20 film and TV projects, including Academy Award-nominated *Open Heart*, *Armed with Faith*, *Ranher, Farmer, Fisherman*, and *Song of Lahore*. Her films have premiered at the Sundance Film Festival, Tribeca Film Festival, and the Sheffield International Documentary Festival.

TALAL JABARI CINEMATOGRAPHER

Talal Jabari started his career as a film producer in East Jerusalem and has worked on over thirty documentaries. In 2010, he directed *Full Signal*, and has since directed numerous historical and political films and television series around the globe, including *Aggressive Decrees* (2011), *Holy Blood* (2012), and *Enemies of the South* (2014). His work has appeared on the *Al Jazeera Documentary Channel* and *The New York Times*, among others. He's currently based in New York.

SHARRON MIRSKY AND DOMINIQUE DOKTOR ANIMATORS

Sharron Mirsky and Dominique Doktor (Animators) are a team of animators based in Montreal, Canada. They came together for the exploration of new and interesting ways of sharing stories. Their specialty is direct Under-Camera Animation, which is a technique that involves an alternative process to the standard 2D or 3D mediums often used today, and lends a unique richness in the quality achieved. Both Sharron and Dominique are graduates of animation at Concordia University's Mel Hoppenheim School of Cinema.

FADI ABU SHAMMALAH CO-PRODUCER

Fadi Abu Shammala has lived his entire life in the Gaza Strip. He is the executive director of General Union of Cultural Centers in Palestine – the only cultural union. In addition, he is working as an interpreter, fixer, and producer for many international institutions and news agencies. Fadi has a BA in English Language.

JEN MARLOWE CO-PRODUCER

Jen Marlowe is an author, documentary filmmaker, playwright, journalist and human rights/social justice activist. She is the founder of Donkeysaddle Projects, which creates pieces within the realms of film, theatre, and creative non-fiction, amplifying stories of resistance and struggles for equality and liberation. Her works include: *Witness Bahrain* (film, 2015), *I Am Troy Davis* (Haymarket Books, 2013), *The Hour of Sunlight* (Nation Books, 2011), *One Family in Gaza* (film, 2011), *There is a Field* (play, 2010), and *Darfur Diaries: Stories of Survival* (Nation Books, 2006). She is also the part-time Communications Associate for Just Vision, which uses media to support the grassroots efforts of Palestinians and Israelis working to end the occupation and build a future of freedom, equality and dignity.

ABOUT JUST VISION

While violence and extremism receive front-page exposure, Palestinians and Israelis engaged in nonviolent civil disobedience are often invisible in the media. Just Vision fills this gap by researching, documenting and disseminating their stories so that audiences are equipped with a more complete understanding of one of the most intractable issues of our times.

Over the past decade, Just Vision has produced several award-winning documentary films (*Encounter Point*, *Budrus* and *My Neighbourhood*), a graphic novel (*Budrus*), and a news site (*Local Call*) featuring Palestinian and Israeli grassroots leaders. They also ran the US-based impact campaign for the critically-acclaimed documentary, *The Wanted 18*. Their films have been placed in top festivals internationally from the Berlinale to IDFA to Tribeca. Just Vision media productions have reached millions of viewers worldwide, received high-level media attention and won numerous prestigious prizes, including over two-dozen festival honors, the PUMA Creative Impact Award and a Peabody Award. Our work has been featured in leading press outlets including *The New York Times*, BBC, Israeli Channel 2, Al Arabiya, HBO Latin America and many others.



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