

AHED TAMIMI AND DENA TAKRURI

THEY CALLED ME A LIONESS



BOOK CLUB KIT

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



1. What did you know about Palestine—its culture, its people, its war and the aftermath—prior to picking up *They Called Me a Lioness*? Did you have any preconceived ideas about the country or its people's struggle? How did Ahed Tamimi's story and ideas inform or change your opinion, if at all?
2. Before reading the book had you heard about Ahed? Were you surprised this story isn't more well-known?
3. Discuss the book's title: how do you think it relates to the overall story? How does it apply to Ahed Tamimi?
4. Ahed carries unspeakable traumas with her through most of her life. How do memories of traumatic events manifest in her behavior over the years? Have you dealt with a traumatic or life changing experience? How did you react in the aftermath of that incident?
5. Ahed's passion and activism may lead the reader to forget that she is only a teenager when she is arrested. Are there moments in or recollections of her school and home life when you feel that the "teenager" in Ahed becomes apparent? How did they influence your perception of Ahed and her story?
6. *They Called Me a Lioness* is written with Dena Takruri, an award-winning Palestinian American journalist. When a biographical account is written with another author, does it affect your reading of the book? Why? What are some circumstances in which having a second author is necessary or appropriate? How might the book be different had Ahed written it by herself?
7. By writing this very personal story—and sharing details that place the reader inside her everyday life—does Ahed increase your concern about the fate of the people in Palestine? How does reading this book compare to reading news stories in *The New York Times* or watching CNN?
8. Ahed is known for her passion for freeing Palestine. How does this very passion shape her life? Do you have a particular cause that you care about deeply? Discuss.
9. Ahed became an activist when she was very young. Discuss how you felt while reading about her experience. Where did Ahed find her courage and inspiration?
10. Ahed demonstrates an overwhelming sense of courage in the face of adversity. Discuss how she reacts to the challenges she faces. How do her peers react? What gives them strength?
11. How would you describe *They Called Me a Lioness* in one or two sentences? What message or messages does it convey?
12. If you were living in Palestine, would you join the fight for change knowing it could potentially destroy your home? Is the fight for progress and freedom justified if so many lives are lost?

PALESTINIAN MAP DETAILS



The Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (Oslo II), signed on 28 September 1995, created—as an interim, five-year measure—three distinct zones in the West Bank: Areas A, B, and C—each with different security and administrative arrangements:

AREA A: full Palestinian control; mainly urban areas (cities and towns, such as Hebron, Ramallah, Nablus, Tulkarem, and Qalqilya) where PA police patrol the streets.

AREA B: Palestinian civil and Israeli security control; mainly villages on the outskirts of Area A cities.

AREA C: Full Israeli military and civil control; includes settlements, roads, strategic areas, areas adjacent to Israel proper.

Area C is home to 150,000 Palestinians in over 500 communities and to some 325,000 Israeli settlers in over 200 settlements and outposts. It holds 63% of the West Bank's most fertile and resource-rich lands and almost all of the Jordan Valley, which contains the largest (uninhabited) land reserves of the West Bank and much of its natural resources. The Oslo Accords mainly aimed to gradually transfer Area B and Area C from Israeli to Palestinian control (Area A). However, since 1999, none of the land in Area C has been transferred to the PA, and the entire West Bank remains occupied territory with Areas A (17.2% of the West Bank) and B (23.8%) consisting of 227 non-contiguous enclaves, cut off from one another as well as from their land and other resources.



Approximately 40% of Area C is privately owned Palestinian land on which illegal settlements have been built. Israel retains full control over building and planning in Area C, leaving 70% of it (about 44% of the West Bank) classified as settlement areas, firing zones, or nature reserves and thus off-limits to Palestinians. In the remaining 30% construction is heavily restricted, with less than 1% eligible for Palestinian development, of which a large portion is already built-up. Israeli goals in Area C are clear cut: to drive out as many Palestinians as possible by making their lives so unbearable that they will seek a better livelihood in Areas A or B.

On average, 500–600 Palestinian structures (shelters, water infrastructure, schools, clinics, storages, and animal shacks) are destroyed annually in Area C, while the Israeli authorities are denying building permits for Palestinians. As a result, any form of local socioeconomic development is severely hampered and thousands of Palestinians are at immediate risk of displacement. With the exception of those located in East Jerusalem, all Israeli settlements are located in Area C; their actual municipal area comprises some 9.3% of the West Bank territory, but this figure grows to 40% if the settler road network and restrictions on Palestinian access to land are taken into consideration.

The planned expansion area of the Area C settlements is nine times larger than their actual built-up area. In 2012, the settler population in Area C had more than tripled since Oslo, reaching 350,000—more than double the Palestinian population of the area. Many of them live in remote areas and under substandard conditions with inadequate access to basic social services and assistance. However, Israel's policies in Area C also

impact Palestinians from other areas who own land in Area C, or Area B residents who are encircled by Area C, and—more generally—the entire West Bank population which faces territorial interruption and severe restrictions on access and development. Many observers believe that Israel aims at an eventual annexation of Area C, with the remaining Palestinian population being possibly offered Israeli citizenship. The report of the government-appointed, so-called Levy Committee—published in July 2012—recommended de facto annexation of more than half of the West Bank, concluding that Israel was neither an occupying power nor were the settlements illegal, and that outposts should be legalized. A recent poll was conducted by Dialog, according to which a large majority of the Jewish public (69%) objects to giving 2.5 million Palestinians the right to vote if Israel were to annex the West Bank, and 74% favor separate roads for Israelis and Palestinians in the West Bank. The survey indicates that a third to half of Jewish Israelis want to live in a state that practices formal, open discrimination against its Arab citizens. An even larger majority wants to live in an apartheid state if Israel annexes the territories.