

# Leila Khaled: Unveiling the Icon of Palestinian Liberation

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In the enigmatic realm of Palestinian liberation, the name Leila Khaled has become synonymous with courage, resilience, and unwavering determination. Her journey as a revolutionary icon has not only shaped the course of Middle Eastern history but has also left an enduring legacy that continues to inspire generations. This article delves into the life and times of Leila Khaled, exploring her transformation from a young refugee to a symbol of resilience and resistance.

## Early Life and Exile:

Leila Khaled was born in Haifa, Palestine in 1944. Her early childhood was marked by the turmoil and displacement of the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, which forced her family to flee to Lebanon. Growing up in the sprawling Ain al-Hilweh refugee camp, Khaled witnessed firsthand the harsh realities faced by Palestinian refugees. Deprived of their homeland and rights, her experiences ignited within her a deep-seated desire for liberation.



## Leila Khaled: Icon of Palestinian Liberation

**(Revolutionary Lives)** by Sarah Irving

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

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Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 170 pages



## **Revolutionary Awakening:**

In the early 1960s, Khaled joined the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), a militant group committed to armed struggle against Israeli occupation. Her fiery speeches and unwavering belief in the Palestinian cause soon caught the attention of the organization's leaders. It was during this time that she met her future husband, Bassam Abu Sharif, who would become a prominent figure in the Palestinian resistance movement.

## **The Iconic Hijackings:**

In 1969, Khaled's name reverberated across the world when she became the first woman to hijack an airplane for political purposes. The daring operation, which targeted an El Al flight departing from Rome, was designed to raise awareness of the Palestinian plight. Khaled and her comrades successfully diverted the plane to Damascus, capturing the attention of international media and igniting a fierce debate about the legitimacy of armed resistance.

Just months later, Khaled participated in another hijacking, this time of a TWA flight from Frankfurt to Zurich. The hijacking ended with the release of all passengers unharmed, but Khaled's actions further cemented her status as a symbol of Palestinian defiance.

## **Symbol of Liberation:**

Khaled's hijackings were met with both praise and condemnation. While some saw her as a terrorist, others hailed her as a freedom fighter.

Regardless of one's perspective, there is no denying that her actions brought the Palestinian cause to the forefront of global consciousness. Her image, adorned with a black and white keffiyeh, became an iconic symbol of Palestinian liberation and resistance.

### **Life After Hijacking:**

In the wake of her hijackings, Khaled faced imprisonment and intense scrutiny. However, she remained unyielding in her commitment to the Palestinian cause. After her release, she continued to work tirelessly for a just and lasting peace in her homeland. Khaled's advocacy efforts extended beyond the political sphere, as she also became a vocal supporter of women's rights and social justice.

### **Legacy and Impact:**

Leila Khaled's legacy as an icon of Palestinian liberation continues to resonate today. Her willingness to sacrifice her own freedom for the cause of her people has left an enduring mark on the Palestinian struggle. Her life story serves as a testament to the resilience, courage, and determination of the Palestinian people in the face of adversity.

Khaled's contributions to the Palestinian cause have been recognized globally. In 2012, she was named one of Time Magazine's "100 Most Influential People in the World." She has also received numerous awards and accolades for her tireless advocacy work.

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Leila Khaled's journey as an icon of Palestinian liberation is a story of unwavering resilience and unwavering commitment. From her humble beginnings as a refugee to her iconic hijackings and beyond, she has

dedicated her life to the pursuit of justice and freedom for her people. Her legacy as a symbol of resistance and determination will continue to inspire generations to come.







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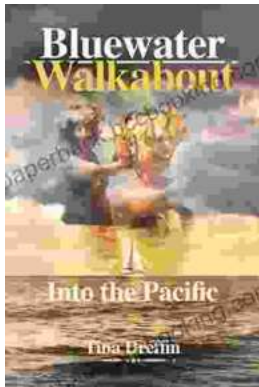
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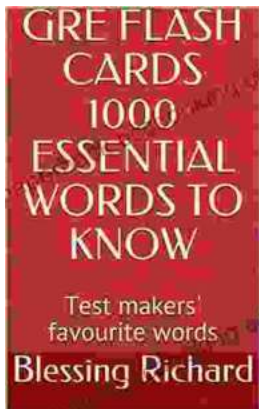
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