A FACE FROM JERUSALEM

Lamis Alami



From Karm al-Alami in the Heart of Jerusalem to the Halls of Political Decision-Making and Governance

Lamis Alami was born in Jerusalem in 1943, in the Karm al-Alami neighborhood that bears her family's name – an indication of deep roots and a profound bond with this place. She grew up in a city that was, and remains, a crossroads of history, politics, and culture, and she experienced early on the major upheavals that shaped the consciousness of an entire generation, from the *Nakba* of 1948 to the Naksa of 1967 and the years in between, marked by movement, experience, temporary exile, and an enduring return to Jerusalem that carried significance for both her identity and destiny.

Lamis has moved across the Arab world and Britain, carrying with her a rich human and intellectual experience that were shaped by years of study and work in Lebanon during its golden age, when it stood as a beacon of education, culture, and Arab and international openness. She studied first at Beirut College for Women, then at the American University of Beirut, and later at the University of Edinburgh – an academic path that reflects ambition in an educated and open-minded woman at a time when it was not easy for women to break prevailing social norms.

As a Jerusalemite woman who chose knowledge as her path, Lamis faced and overcame many challenges. Breaking the glass ceiling as a woman leader, she carved her way through male-dominated institutions, proving competence in senior roles. Thus, she held a significant position at the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), where she played a pivotal role in developing education, particularly women's education and vocational training, guided by a vision aligned with global standards in education and capacity-building. Her experience at UNRWA was among the richest phases of her professional life, offering extensive international engagement and cross-border expertise.

Later on, Lamis took on leadership positions not only at the Palestinian Ministry of Education, where she contributed to the shaping of educational policies, but also as a member of the Central Elections Commission, where she brought together education, governance, and institution-building. Throughout her engagement in public service, Lamis worked under constant political pressure, managing education and electoral portfolios amid occupation, internal division, limited resources, and shifting political realities.

Lamis Alami is the mother of five children and has four grandchildren. She believes that education, especially women's education, is a weapon for progress, independence, and dignity. Her life stands as a model of the Jerusalemite woman who unites deep roots with global openness and a steadfast belief that knowledge has the power to change destiny, for both the individual and the nation.