Artist of the Month

Hatta Girls' Band

By Naseem Rimawi



Bala 3inwan band.

On a weekday afternoon in downtown Ramallah, the sound of a drum fill slips through the walls of the Palestine Music Space (PalMS). Inside, five schoolgirls lean into their instruments, negotiating rhythm and aiming for perfection. This is Hatta Band, one of Palestine's first schoolgirl rock bands. Zain Rami (16), Celine (17), Laila (17), Aseel (18), and Layan (17) came together through an open jam session at PalMS. For more than three years, these weekly jams have taken place at PalMS, a place where young people show up with curiosity and eagerness to learn, no credentials required. For these girls, their jam sessions were the first environment where being loud was not questioned, where holding a guitar or stepping up to a microphone felt possible.

From their earliest rehearsals, Hatta members have been mentored by Naseem Rimawi, the PalMS artistic director, and Ahmed Eid, its founder. The mentorship has grown alongside the band, evolving from guidance in ensemble playing and songwriting into a long-term relationship that is rooted in trust, listening, and artistic agency. Rather than shaping the band into a predefined sound, the mentors support the girls in discovering their own musical voice, encouraging experimentation and collective decision-making while building confidence.

Their song "Sowt al-Hurriyah"[1] (The Sound of Freedom) was written and performed as part of the Delia X Palestine Music Space Sessions project, which, since its release on all major music platforms, has achieved great acclaim. The melodic, raw song carries the struggle of Palestinian youth who are being shaped by the present moment, unafraid to claim freedom as both a personal and collective demand. The fact that it was written by schoolgirls holds significant meaning, and the fact that it was recorded and shared with the world could not have been more crucial in light of today's Palestinian reality.

Alongside Hatta, the bands Fantazya and Bala 3inwan (Without a Title) emerged from the same rooms. Like Hatta, they formed organically through jam sessions that were shaped by experimentation, collective listening, and spontaneity rather than rigidity and instruction. Their presence expands what participation looks like for young Palestinians, especially girls, in rock and alternative music, genres that had long been assumed to belong elsewhere or to someone else.

What binds these bands together is not just sound but also circumstance. Over the past couple years, PalMS has remained active through the escalating violence and genocide. Jam sessions have continued to pulse even amid the suffocation of daily life and the instability that overwhelms everyday conversation. In such a reality, gathering to play music is not a distraction; it is an act of continuous living. Writing songs has become a way to process fear, grief, and anger together, without having to translate those feelings into acceptable standardized language.



Hatta band in a training session with PalMS founder Ahmed Eid.



Hatta band in the 2025 PalMS X Delia Sessions.



Fantazya band in the 2025 PalMS X Delia Sessions.

Empowerment here is not framed as achievement but as practice. It can be seen in Zain counting the band in, in Celine insisting on her solo, in Laila, Aseel, and Layan shaping a song until it feels honest. It is present in Fantazya's newly released song "Hayne Hon"[2] (Here I Am), and in Bala 3inwan's refusal to define themselves too early, too narrowly.

Through Hatta, Fantazya, and Bala 3inwan, PalMS becomes more than a venue; it becomes a living archive of young people, especially girls and young women, insisting on presence. These bands are not exceptions; they are beginnings, and they signal the emergence of a Palestinian music scene beyond the traditional music genres, a scene that is increasingly shaped by young Palestinians. Hatta's members know that even in the harshest conditions, creation not only remains possible but is utterly necessary. It is a reminder that new futures often begin quietly, in spaces that are built on trust.

SCAN TO SHARE

[1] Available on YouTube under Hatta Band, "Sowt al-Hurriyah," including a short testimony by band members.

[2] Available on YouTube under Fantazya Band, "Hayne Hon," including a short testimony by band members.