

Actress Hind Sabry defends her Palestine visit

Contributed by Egypt News
Sunday, 01 November 2009

Hind said it is utterly senseless to accuse those who visit Palestine of promoting the normalisation of ties with Israel.

Tunisian actress Hind Sabry, under fire from the media for making a trip to Ramallah, lashed back at her critics, saying that they did not really appreciate the pain and plight of the Palestinians and were engaged in frivolous outbidding.

“Those who have attacked me do not make any sense. Accusing anyone who visits Palestine of promoting the normalisation of ties with Israel is utterly senseless. In fact, whoever visits Palestine contributes to the breaking of the blockade imposed on the Palestinians and puts a smile on the faces of its people,” Hind Sabry said.

“I do invite all Arabs, particularly artists, to visit Palestine because they cannot really appreciate the painful reality on the ground unless they witness it and feel the frustration suffered by the Palestinians. Everybody needs to understand better the terrible conditions in which the Palestinians are forced to live,” said the actress, whose career in films and television series spans her native Tunisia and Egypt.

The 30-year-old actress admitted that she had not been aware of what was really happening in Palestine until she made the trip two weeks ago to take part in the fourth international film festival.

“For instance, I heard the word ‘permit’ more than 300 times and wherever I went, which reflects the depth of the plight of the Palestinians trying to go from one place to the other. This word, which controls people’s movements, has deeply provoked me,” she said.

Israeli authorities have imposed great restrictions on the movement of Palestinians, residents and visitors. The permit system is hampered by bureaucratic delays, lack of transparency, complexity and uncertainty.

“Despite all the restrictions, pains and atrocities which cannot be easily described, I have discovered that the Palestinians are a people keen on leading normal lives like all other peoples,” said Hind.

Several Palestinian artists and intellectuals this week offered support to Hind for her trip, saying that the campaign launched by Egyptian media after her return was totally biased and lacked credibility.

“We are proud with Hind because she was brave enough to break the blockade and take part in several humanitarian and social activities in Ramallah. She met several officials and helped put smiles on the faces of Palestinian children and teenagers,” the Palestinian artists and intellectuals said. “She also visited the graves of Yasser Arafat, our great martyr, and Mahmood Derweesh, the poet. She never made a trip to Tel Aviv as some media published and confined her movements to Palestinian towns and areas.”

According to the statement, visits to Ramallah, Gaza, Jerusalem or Bethlehem or other Palestinian towns can never be equated as steps towards normalization.

“It is simply ridiculous to turn Arab artists and intellectuals into helpless prisoners held by some media people who do not even know the difference between Ramallah and Gaza, between Arab Jerusalem and Tel Aviv,” the statement said.

During the visit, Hind discussed her first movie “Silence of the Palaces” with Palestinian audiences, visited refugees’ camps and attended the training of the Palestinian women’s football team.

“We urge more artists to visit us to help lift the blockade and state their solidarity with us against the savage attacks on our people. Art and culture are powerful weapons that can help us resist the oppression against our people,” the statement said.

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