

The January 2006 elections made the necessity for internal reforms clear to Fatah. The young generation in particular is frustrated about Fatah's leadership and organization of Fatah. Women are actively involved in this process of restructuring Fatah and re-orienting it in organizational terms. The long tradition of their participation and their commitment to tolerance, social justice, the rule of law, human rights, and a peaceful solution to the conflict needs to be explored in greater depth. The stagnation that came about following the 2006 elections must be overcome, and a new positive dynamic must develop. Hence new impetus is expected from Fatah's Sixth General Congress, scheduled for 2008.



*Jabril Rajoub (former national security adviser) addressing women representatives of Fatah associations.*

The FES has supported the involvement of women in the process of reforming Fatah since 2007, through various programs. The goal is to develop organizational structures for women within Fatah, and in that way to offer them an area in which they can contribute actively to the re-structuring process.



*Participants during a workshop.*

Since then, efforts have been made at various seminars to strengthen female leadership and to develop local networks. Through these networks, extra women can be recruited and involved in the process of change. Young women leaders have been trained at seminars specifically designed for them. The purpose of the seminars was to convey the concerns of women to a broad range of Fatah members and to prepare women for the

upcoming Sixth General Congress. Women were informed of their own rights in order to further develop their political involvement.

In March 2008 participants from the various seminars got together in order to take stock and jointly evaluate the experience gained. This was extremely positive. Reference was made to a great need for extensive networking within the West Bank, as well as expanding cooperation with Fatah in the Gaza Strip. At the seminars, according to reports from participating councilwomen and student representatives, they learned to represent Fatah. Through the local networks they learned to support each other and to become involved in the political reform process. In this way they were offered a forum for exchanging their experiences, as well as for standing up for their own ideas and putting them into practice.

A further achievement of the program was a campaign to gather signatures for implementing a 30% women's quota for all Fatah committees and associations. Support for introducing this quota indicates that Fatah members are aware of the need to address social matters and equality of the sexes.



Participants from various seminars at the evaluation of experience gained.