

Summary and Goals of Session 4:

In this session we see and hear testimonies from Palestinians describing what life was like before and during 1948. We ask what “testimony” means, and examine how we feel when we hear people tell what happened during the Nakba. We may use academic texts, concepts, and empirical research to understand testimonies, but our focus is first and foremost on the personal experience and process.

Total time: 1.5 hours

Materials for Session 4:

- Pens/markers
- Paper/chart paper
- Internet connection
- Computer/projector
- Testimony concepts written and displayed/hung around the room
- Reflection questions on chart paper/computer screen

I. (5 min) Welcome

Materials and set-up:

- Testimony concepts written and displayed/hung around the room

Facilitator Action: *Before the session, post the following concepts on the wall, with each concept on a single sheet of paper:*

- *Memory*
- *History*
- *Truth*
- *Time*
- *Language*
- *Past, present, future*
- *Identity*
- *Collective memory*
- *Myths*
- *Private/Public*

Welcome participants to this session. Briefly recap the last session with reminders of the major activities and themes discussed so far. In this session, we see and hear

testimonies from Palestinians describing what life was like before and during 1948. We ask what “testimony” means, and examine how we feel when we hear people tell about what happened during the Nakba.

II. (30 min) Conceptualizing Testimony

Materials and set-up:

- Participants’ reflection notebooks
- Reflection questions written/displayed with projector or printed

1. (15 min) Personal Reflections

Facilitator Action: *Ask participants to think about circumstances of marginalization, loss, expulsion, or forced removal experienced by their own families or communities. Pose this question: What is important to you to convey about these experiences, and have these experiences been shared in public spaces before? Give participants 15 minutes to reflect and write in their notebooks.*

2. (15 min) Group Discussion

Facilitator Action: *Guide a discussion based on these questions, to be answered from one’s life experience and experiences of their family and community.*

- *What is a testimony?*
- *What famous testimonies are you familiar with?*
- *Where have you heard testimonies?*
- *What happens to us when we hear testimony?*
- *What happens to someone when they testify?*
- *To whom is testimony given?*
- *Why do you think the witness testifies?*
- *Is testimony the same as history?*
- *Is there a connection between testimony and history?*

Facilitator Note: *You may want to bring the relationship between power dynamics and testimony to the discussion. Note to participants that people often hear testimonies differently based on one’s notion of the teller. Ask participants to consider what makes one testimony more convincing or powerful than another, and to think about testimonies of voices that have been silenced.*

III. (40 minutes) Presenting Testimonies

Materials and set-up:

- Internet connection
- Computer/projector
- Two short films: "[Women's testimonies](#)" and "[Binyamin \(Roski\) Eshet](#)"
- Participants' reflection notebooks
- Reflection questions written/displayed with projector or printed

1. (25 min) Video Testimonies

Facilitator Action: Present two short films. The first, "[Women's testimonies](#)," focuses on the experiences of a group of Palestinian women who survived the Nakba. The second, "[Binyamin \(Roski\) Eshet](#)," is the testimony of a Palmach soldier. Begin the video of Eshet at minute 2:52.

Facilitator Note: Eshet's testimony refers to a massacre in a mosque, which occurred in Dawayima. These links provide background about this massacre: "['Barbarism by an educated and cultured people' — Dawayima massacre was worse than Deir Yassin](#)" and "[The Mukhtar's sworn testimony – more on the 1948 Dawaymeh Massacre.](#)"

Participant Action: Focus on how the testimonies shared in the films are particular to individual identities and experiences. Use scrap paper/notebook to write down thoughts, responses and questions; consider the words/concepts on the walls in relation to the testimonies.

2. (15 min) Group Discussion

Facilitator Action: Guide discussion with the following questions:

- Share your general comments and thoughts about these short films, as well as the testimonies you watched/read in preparation for today's session.
- How did you feel when you saw the testimonies?
- How did the testimonies differ from each other?
- How do these testimonies humanize these individuals and their experiences? How does this contrast with dehumanizing depictions in the media, etc.?

After 10 minutes, ask participants to reflect and post/write/draw responses, thoughts, or questions on the testimony concepts displayed around the room.

IV. (15 minutes) Closing

1. (13 min) Closing Reflections

Facilitator Action: *Pose this question: What is one question that these testimonies raise for you? These can be about history, about your relationship and access to it, about whose stories we hear and why—anything.*

Guide a 10 minute conversation, and encourage participants to look back at the key concepts posted around the room. Participants may spend a few minutes writing additional reflections and comments on them.

2. (2 min) Prep for next session

Facilitator Action: *Ask participants to read the following items in preparation for the next session.*

Participant Prep for Session 5

- Read [“The Original No: Why the Arabs Rejected Zionism, and Why It Matters”](#) by Natasha Gill
- Read this excerpt from Edward Said’s [“Zionism from the Standpoint of Its Victims”](#) to begin thinking about what’s erased from the official history