

Commission on Syria

Health in Conflict



Rita Giacaman

Rita Giacaman is a professor of public health at the Institute of Community and Public Health, Birzeit University, occupied Palestinian territory. A founding member of the Institute in 1978, she has also helped establish the Women's Studies Institute at Birzeit University in 1993 and continues to be affiliated to it. She was a researcher/practitioner in the 1980's Palestinian social action, which led to the development of the Palestinian primary health care model. In the 1990s, she participated in building the Palestinian community based disability rehabilitation network.

Professor Giacaman has chronicled the effects of Israeli military occupation on the physical and mental health of Palestinians. Since 2000, she has been focusing on the impact of chronic war-like conditions and exposure to political violence on the health and well-being of Palestinians, with an emphasis on psychosocial health; and the development of measures suitable for assessing health and well-being in conditions of protracted political violence; and ways in which interventions could generate the needed active and positive resilience and resistance to ongoing war-like conditions, especially among young people.

Professor Giacaman has published extensively on women's health and mental health from a public health perspective, and was awarded an honorary PhD from the LSE in 2011 for having made an "outstanding contribution to the increased understanding or appreciation of ' the causes of things...".