

Dear Paola,

Thank you so very much for your invitation to take part in the magazine Combonifem issue on women working for PEACE.

I tried my best to answer your questions in the short time I have got. You are welcome to add any question that might help you in producing your interview.

All the best,

Ruchama Marton.

- [Who you are \(short notes to capture your background and link with PHR\)](#)

Dr. Ruchama Marton is a psychiatrist, a psychotherapist, feminist, peace and human rights activist. She is the founder and president of Physicians for Human Rights, Israel, a non-profit health and human rights NGO, established in 1988 and based on cooperation between Israeli and Palestinian health professionals and human rights activists. Marton has been one of the leading persons of the peace movement in Israel, struggling unrelentingly against the Israeli violations of the Palestinians' human rights. In four decades she has also been involved in feminist activities fighting for a just social order in Israel.

Among her publications is *Torture: Human Rights, Medical Ethics and the Case of Israel* (1995) Zed Books, edited with Neve Gordon.

Marton is the recipient of several peace and human rights awards, including the Emil Grunzweig Award for Human Rights, presented by the Association for Civil Rights, Israel, and the Jonathan Mann Award for Global Health and Human Rights, 2002. She is one of 1000 women nominated for the 1000women Nobel Peace Prize 2005. In 2010, Marton and PHR-I were the laureates of the Right Livelihood Award, (the Alternative Nobel prize).

- Where you live (to capture the context)

I'm living In Israel, Tel Aviv.

- What you have been doing in PHR to “weave peace”...

In addition to a nearly 40-year career as a practicing psychiatrist and teacher, Marton has engaged in a very active political life. For many years she was an active person in the "Peace Camp" in Israel. She has co-founded ten Israeli organizations, among them the Committee Against the Lebanon War; The Public Committee Against Torture in Israel; One in Nine: Women for Women With Breast Cancer; and the Committee of Political Prisoners. She is probably best known as the founder and current President of Physicians for Human Rights-Israel (originally named the Association of Israel-Palestinian Physicians for Human Rights).

This association was the first in Israel to use the term **human rights** and to introduce it to the public and decision makers in a forceful dynamic way. Marton was the first woman that stood as a leader in an NGO in Israel. She became a model for many NGOs in a short time.

Being the founder and president of PHR Israel Marton was the leading force for the struggle for peace with the Palestinians through education for solidarity and monitoring human rights.

Marton said: "Solidarity is identification with an oppressed group combined with action to eliminate the oppression. It might be solidarity with a social group similar to us (like workers on strike) or with a different group, even with such who considers to be an opponent one (like the committee for solidarity with Bir Zeit University).

Therefore solidarity is of central value for the political left wing who endorses universal values over one's own group interests

Sense of equality is needed even if equality is not realistic. This sense of equality combined with respect enables men to take part in the feminist

struggle. Human rights and human dignity are part of the feminist struggle.

Education is a vital part of solidarity. It should start at young age, providing children with knowledge about human rights and human dignity, and tools of critical thinking".

- **Overcoming which challenges?**

Being a feminist woman, a woman that struggles for peace and equality for all, for human rights for all is a big challenge in a society that doesn't separate between statehood and religion; that is extremely patriarchic and militaristic; a society that is driven by hatred, racist ideas and profound catastrophic fears.

Your personal feelings about what you do with the others and its "outcome".

I'm proud and contained by the activity and growth of PHR Israel from eleven people some 28 years ago to a vivid organization of about 3000 members. We succeeded in internalize the concept of human rights in Israel and to maintain solidarity with Palestinians inside Israel and in the occupied Palestinian territory.

In spite of threats to my life and accusations of being a traitor which is a bitter experience, I gained many followers and personal friends in Israel and Palestine and in the world which is a very 'sweet' feeling. I enjoy the fact that my voice and all the peace fighters' voice are heard in my country and around the world.