مركز المرأة للارشاد القانوني والاجتماعي
Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling
WCLAC

منتدى المنظمات الأهلية الفلسطينية لمناهضة العنف ضد المرأة
Palestinian Non-Governmental Organization Against Domestic Violence Against Women (Al Muntada)

Facing the Double Jeopardy of Colonial Occupation and Patriarchy

Palestinian Women Striving for Justice, Liberation, and Freedom

PLATFORM FOR ACTION
BEIJING +30

NGO PARALLEL REPORT
PALESTINE - 2025

Facing the Double Jeopardy of Colonial Occupation and Patriarchy

Palestinian Women Striving for Justice, Liberation, and Freedom

PLATFORM FOR ACTION

BEIJING +30

NGO PARALLEL REPORT
PALESTINE - 2025

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	**4**
Preface	**6**
Introduction	**9**
Section 1: Priorities, achievements, challenges and setbacks	**11**
Section I Overarching Palestinian Context and Challenges	12
Overall Achievements	17
Section 2: Progress across the six critical areas of concern	**19**
Section II Six Overarching Dimensions: Updates and Analyses	20
Achievements	20
Realities and Challenges	22
II. Poverty Eradication, Social Protection, and Social Service	30
Critical Area of Concern: Women and Poverty	30
Achievements	30
Realities and Challenges	31
Pre-War Realities and Challenges	32
Section 3: Freedom from Violence, Stigma, and Stereotypes	**41**
III. Freedom from Violence, Stigma, and Stereotypes	42
Achievements	42
Realities and Challenges	43
Section 4: Participation, Accountability, Gender-Responsive Institutions	**49**
IV. Participation, Accountability, Gender-Responsive Institutions	50
Achievements	50
Section 5: Peaceful and Inclusive Societies	**55**
V. Peaceful and Inclusive Societies	56
Achievements	56
Realities and Challenges	57
Section 6: Environmental Conservation, Protection, and Rehabilitation	**59**
VI. Environmental Conservation, Protection, and Rehabilitation	60
Achievements	60
Realities and Challenges	61
Final Summary, Priorities, and Recommendations	**65**
Priorities and Recommendations for 2024-2029 for the Overarching Six Dimensions	66
References	73

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling extends sincere gratitude and appreciation to everyone who contributed to the preparation of Facing the Double Jeopardy of Colonial Occupation and Patriarchy: Palestinian Women Striving for Justice, Liberation, and Freedom. This national report is a comprehensive evaluation of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action by the State of Palestine on the 30th anniversary of its adoption in 1995.

We are grateful for all who joined the national consultations conducted in 2024 in various parts of Palestine. The consultative process involved numerous researchers, activists, and representatives of grassroots and community organizations and local and international institutions. The meetings and individual interviews generated invaluable multiple perspectives, firsthand testimonies, observations, analyses, and insights about implementation up to now and offered recommendation regarding how to move forward. Their contributions played a crucial role in highlighting key issues and ensuring the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the report.

We express our sincere gratitude to Dr. Maisa Shquier for her dedicated and heartfelt efforts in preparing the core substantive content and the outline of this report. Her commitment and hard work significantly contributed to providing a comprehensive evaluation. We also appreciate her notable contributions to advancing gender, women's rights, human rights, and movements for social justice.

We sincerely thank Margo Okazawa-Rey for her invaluable efforts in reviewing the report. Her expertise in feminist studies and keen attention to detail greatly improved the report's quality, ensuring clarity and comprehensiveness. Her constructive feedback not only enriched the content but also enhanced its scientific accuracy and objectivity. Margo's contributions were instrumental in refining the report, helping to present the issues in a clear, in-depth, and well-structured manner. Her dedication to highlighting essential details with precision demonstrates her unwavering commitment to supporting equality, social justice, and feminist principles. We deeply appreciate her support in making this report more impactful and aligned with the highest standards of research and advocacy.

Finally, we thank our Inaugural Maha Abu-Dayyeh Fellow, Dania Hawari, for her role in writing the final draft. She reviewed the document by comparing the Arabic and English versions to ensure the accuracy of both and provided additional reviews of the published documents and reports referenced in—and added to—the final report, as needed. Her hard work and dedication were invaluable in finalizing this report. While completing her Master's degree in International Law and Diplomacy at the Arab American University, this experience further strengthened her academic and professional skills in analyzing global feminist theories and engaging with them through the programs of WCLAC.

We would also like to thank our international partners and United Nations organizations, especially UN Women, for their support and cooperation in this evaluation process.

Finally, WCLAC wishes to express its appreciation to all Palestinian women who continue their courageous and persistent struggle for justice and equality despite the challenges and hardships. Your resilience is an inspiration to us all.

With sincere thanks and respect,

Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling (WCLAC)

PREFACE

The Women's Center for Legal Aid and Counseling (WCLAC) and Al Muntada, a coalition of 17 Palestinian women's organizations working to end GBV in the West Bank and Jerusalem, are pleased to launch their joint Beijing+30 CSO Follow-up Report of Palestine. At the same time, the thirtieth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, the Beijing Platform for Action 1995, and the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will be commemorated.

Our follow-up report specifically highlights the ongoing emergency conditions in Palestine over the past five years, including the Covid -19 pandemic, increased gender-based violence, political division, counter-attacks on women's organizations, and the failure of the Palestinian National Authority (PLO) to confront incitement attacks against feminist organizations, This has led to a confrontation with traditional conservative forces in Palestinian society, resulting in limited achievements of the Palestinian women's movement. Also, the report highlights the need for gender equality and the adoption of the Family Protection Law to protect abused women.

Naturally, the continuation of The Israeli colonial occupation, systematic policies against Palestinians, settlement expansion, settler terrorism, military aggression, war of extermination, genocide, and ethnic cleansing have significantly impacted women and girls. This has doubled the suffering of Palestinian women and increased their care burdens within families. The economic, social, and political conditions in the occupied territories don't provide dignified human life components. The war of extermination has continued for over fifteen months, forcing the displacement of most residents of the Gaza Strip multiple times. The absence of international accountability has led to a rise in the number of women in families.

The report is a comprehensive analysis of Palestinian women's experiences over the past five years, compiled through collaboration between the Forum to Combat Violence against Palestinian Women and WCLAC with extensive consultations with civil society, women's organizations, and grassroots organizations, and a participatory national review process.

The report, a collaboration between WCLAC and Al Muntada, outlines the priorities, challenges, and progress in six critical areas for localizing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Sustainable Development Plan over the next five years. It is based on the UN Women's Office's Guidance Note for Comprehensive National Reviews, offering suggestions and recommendations for the review process.

Our follow-up report specifically addresses the six issues highlighted in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The first section, addresses priorities, challenges, and setbacks during the past five years, followed by the progress made across the six critical areas of concern. The third section, discusses actions made to address the issue of freedom from violence, stigma, and stereotypes, then moves to the fourth section on meaningful participation, accountability, and gender-responsive institutions, including the governments' responses to gender-sensitive strategies, action plans and their obligations to take measures to meet their legal obligations under international law. Thus, the focus was on the achievements, facts, challenges, priorities, and recommendations related to the six axes.

The report will used as a reference and advocacy tool for the Beijing Declaration and Sustainable Development Plan, starting with the 69th session of the Commission on the Status of Women in March 2025, alongside other initiatives that WCLAC and Al Muntada plan to implement in collaboration with the NGO Forum.

Randa Siniora

General Director/WCLAC

Introduction

We are pleased to submit this Beijing Platform for Action, Beijing + 30 NGOs Parallel Report for Palestine. This final report is based on the results of a thorough and collaborative review process that took place between May and October 2024 and was prepared by the Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling in partnership with Al Muntada, a coalition of 17 Palestinian women's organizations working to end Gender Based Violence (GBV) in the West Bank and Jerusalem.

The process of preparing the report comprised consultative meetings and individual interviews covering all regions of Palestine and reviews of published reports and research papers. The 13 consultative meetings were held with three sets of stakeholders and interested parties, ranging from grassroots groups to international organizations. One group consisted of CBOs, protection networks, volunteers of lawyers and journalists, activist women's groups, and WCLAC programmatic units. The CEDAW and UNSCR 1325 coalitions and Al Muntada constituted the second group. International partners and UN organizations participating online in the third group, including UN Women. We also interviewed seven expert researchers and activists from East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza. Because of the horrific conditions facing the people of Gaza, we made a special effort to ensure their realities are duly reflected in this report including before the current war. Our process also included a comprehensive review of national, regional, and international reports and studies and culminated with workshops with Al Muntada and the General Union of Palestinian Women. The overall goals of the meetings, interviews, and document analysis were to create the foundation from which to respond to the State of Palestine National Report and, more generally, to assess the situation of women in Palestine from 2020 to 2024 and to invite all kinds of input regarding securing women's rights in Palestine.

We are pleased that our truly inclusive and participatory process engaged participants in all regions of Palestine and generated rich discussions regarding the primary needs, achievements, setbacks, and challenges to securing and ensuring women's rights, gender equality, and women's empowerment in the country, and encouraged the emergence of additional inputs, reflections, and insights. We engaged the stakeholders in the ways described to ensure that

the final report accurately reflects the collective assessment of the current state of women's rights and gender issues.

From among the 12 Critical Areas of Concern in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted by consensus of the 189 participating countries at the Fourth World Conference on Women on 15 September 1995, we chose to focus on our priorities: women and poverty, women and the economy, violence against women, women and power and decision-making, women and armed conflict, and women and the environment. We then created Overarching Dimensions to categorize more broadly the primary topics and issues, concerns, findings, and analyses with each Dimension focusing on one Critical Area of Concern including any related content or that which explicates deeper Palestine-specific issues and concerns.

The Six Overarching Dimensions we will address are:

- Inclusive Development, Shared Prosperity, and Decent Work
- Poverty Eradication, Social Protection, and Social Services
- Freedom from Violence, Stigma, and Stereotypes
- Participation, Accountability and Gender-Responsive Institutions
- Peaceful and Inclusive Society
- Environmental Conservation, Protection, and Rehabilitation

The terms "women" and "girls" are sprinkled throughout this report. We use these as categories of people with the full understanding that factors such as class, ability, place of residence, citizenship status, marital status, age, and more, influence the lives of women and girls structurally and otherwise.

Reporting during War-Time

The preparation of this parallel report coincides with the first-ever televised genocide in the history of the world: against Palestinian people in Gaza beginning October 8th, 2023. Although women's lives in Palestine have never been easy or simple, the war has catastrophically impacted all areas of critical concern of the Beijing Platform, with disproportionate effects on women and children in East Jerusalem and West Bank, as well as Gaza. This underscores the critical need for in-depth reports on each area of concern, which is beyond the scope of this report. Our hope is that this Beijing+30 report will compel, inspire, and result in more detailed assessments and research studies to present the most comprehensive documentation possible so Palestinian women's rights will be secured and their needs met.

The data included here are not comprehensive due to the unpredictable and rapidly changing nature of the Israeli war, occupation, and related developments. However, we include the most recent data available as of publication regarding the status of women and girls in all areas of concern, noting that some date back to 2021.

Organization of the Report

The report is organized into three sections. Section I addresses the overarching Palestinian context and challenges; Section II delineates the achievements as reported in the Beijing +30 Report for the State of Palestine and contrasts those to the realties and challenges related to the Six Overarching Dimensions. We conclude with recommendations and priorities for the upcoming five-year reporting period 2025-2030 in Section III.

SECTION 1

PRIORITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES AND SETBACKS

Section I Overarching Palestinian Context and Challenges

This section provides description and analysis of the major forces affecting Palestinian people from the nakba of 1948 until now with their notable continuities and extensions throughout the decades. The ongoing colonial occupation, now commonly described as apartheid, continuous wars and military aggression, and the increasingly violent colonial settler aggression against Palestinian people in Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem have reached epic proportions in the current moment.

One foundational reality that shapes the lives of all Palestinian people is the problem of the power and authority of the State of Palestine in relation to State of Israeli. There are numerous examples and manifestations of its limited power, but for the purposes of this report, the problem of demarcation of territory and jurisdictional authority: East Jerusalem, West Bank, and Gaza and the profound separations that continues to reinforce and to create. The concept of apartheid has begun to be applied to frame reality of Palestine because of the similarities to the South African apartheid system that separated people in every aspect of life--geographically, politically, ideologically, structurally--based on race.

Two landmark events after the nakba of 1948 are critical to understanding the current moment or military occupation and colonisation. A detailed history is beyond the scope of this report; however, the War of 1967 and the signing of the Oslo Accord II must be mentioned because of their direct impacts felt today. After the 1967 War, Israel took full control of Gaza, although by 2005 it solely controlled only the borders. The Oslo II Accord signed in 1995 divided the West Bank into three "security" (military presence and policing) and administrative (health, education, and economy) jurisdictions. In Area A (18%), the most densely populated among the three, both are controlled by the PA. Area B (22%) is under PA administrative matters and "shares" security control. Israel controls Area C (60%) land management and infrastructure construction and supervision, but the PA is responsible for education and health matters. Area C by approximately 400,000 illegal Israelis settlers live in 230 settlements and 300,000 Palestinian people live in over 500 residential areas. Moreover, "around 30% of Area C is a designated 'firing zone' for military training – 38 Palestinian communities are located within these training areas."[1] Long before Oslo II, Israel annexed East Jerusalem after the 1967 War. The "municipal

1 Anera. "What are Area A, Area B, and Area C in the West Bank?, no date, Retrieved February 14, 2005 from. https://tinyurl.com/4jkafurx

boundaries of Jerusalem were drawn largely in accordance with demographic concerns, chief among them to leave out densely populated Palestinian areas in order to ensure a Jewish majority in Jerusalem."[2]

A third important event in current Palestinian history specifically crucial to feminist history, but not well known outside Palestinian feminist circles of the older generations, was the "Palestinian Model Parliament: Women and Legislation" held in 1996, organized over two years from 1994 after the signing of the Oslo Accords. The Beijing +30 reporting period also marks the 30th anniversary of this visionary endeavour. Among the core visionaries, leaders, and members of the organizing committee were the late Maha Abu-Dayyeh, founding General Director of the Centre, and Randa Siniora, the current General Director.

"As the only organisation that dealt with legal matters for women, WCLAC felt a strong responsibility to take the lead in developing a comprehensive strategy to use the transition process created by the Oslo Accords to address women's strategic needs in legal and policy matters. The organisers…absolutely believed in the possibility of democratic change. In 1994, when we embarked on this ambitious project, the world seemed new".[3]

A heartbreaking disappointment during this endeavour was the unexpected backlash and resistance of progressive political parties regarding women's issues, interests, and liberation as essential elements and processes of nation and state-building. These were to have been expected from Islamist political parties and cultural traditionalists but not from those whom the feminists considered their brothers (and some sisters) and allies in the struggle.[4]

This brief history of the three struggles provides a necessary context for the discussions to follow in this report.5 In the following pages, we hope readers can see both the continuities and discontinuities of colonisation, patriarchy, and Palestinian struggles for both state-building and liberation of women.

2 B'TSELEM. East Jerusalem. https://www.btselem.org/jerusalem, (updated 2019).

3 WCLAC, Palestinian Model Parliament: Towards Legislation Based on Palestinian Identity, Progressive Ideals, and Just Content, 2015, Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling, https://tinyurl.com/3z7m7hsz

4 Ibid.

5 For more history of Palestine, see for example, Noura Erakat, Justice for Some: Law and the Question of Palestine, 2019, Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA; Norman Finkelstein, Gaza: An Inquest into Its Martyrdom, 2018/2021, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press; Nur Masalha, Palestine: A Four Thousand Year History, 2018, London: Zed Books; Khalid Rashidi, The Hundred Years' War on Palestine: A History of Settler Colonialism and Resistance, 1917–2017, 2020, New York: Metropolitan Books.

Cumulative Interlocking Crises

According to Palestinian health authorities, as of October 2024 in Gaza alone, the number killed rose to 42,438 persons and 99, 246 injured, the majority of whom are women and children. Countless other persons and bodies trapped or buried in rubble due to the Israeli genocide on Gaza are not included in the count.[6] The man-made humanitarian crisis in Gaza is grave and catastrophic. Critical infrastructure is entirely or partially destroyed, including water, sewage, health, electricity, roads, all levels of educational institutions, cell phone towers and other virtual communication systems. There are more than 2 million refugees and displaced persons entirely without food, water, electricity, sanitation and health services, and most important, safe places.

Concurrently, the ongoing Israeli military aggression in East Jerusalem and West Bank cities, refugee camps, and villages has escalated significantly since October 7th, 2023. According to the figures released in August 2024, the aggression and attacks have resulted in 587 Palestinians killed and 5,400 injured in the West Bank. During this time, the arrest and detention of children, women, and men added to more than 10,000.[7] The number killed surged to nearly 47,000 and injured to more than 111, 620 by the end of January 2025.These prisoners have faced starvation, torture, and physical and sexual violence including rape, [8] with more than 50 killed because of torture by the end of 2024.[9] Additionally, there are thousands of prisoners from Gaza about whom there is no information yet.[10]

The escalation of violence by both colonial settlers and the Israeli military in the West Bank and Jerusalem were further compounded other destructive factors. The internal political divisions, economic instability, shrinking civil spaces for CSOs, curtailed freedom of expression, arbitrary arrests of political dissenters by the Palestinian Authority, and a concerted backlash against women's organisations all are steadily eroding the possibilities for a truly democratic society and for guaranteeing the rights and wellbeing of women and girls.

6 Wafa Palestine News Agency. "Death toll across Gaza Strip surges to 42,438, over 99,246 injured," October 17, 2024. https://tinyurl.com/nhhja7cs. Retrieved from https://tinyurl.com/yruy3cey.

7 Slingshot. «War in Numbers," August 18, 2024. https://tinyurl.com/29b5xswp

8 Euro-Med Monitor. "Palestinian prisoners are victims of torture and systematic executions as international organisations are silent," March 9, 2024. https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6215/Palestinian-prisoners-are-victims-of-torture-and-systematic-executions-as-international-organisations-are-silent

9 Middle East Monitor. «Palestinian prisoners from Gaza die in Israeli jails,» December 30, 2024). https://tinyurl.com/bdz7t52z/

10 IMEMC News. A Palestinian Detainee Dies in Israeli Prison, July 26, 2024. https://tinyurl.com/47sdzpbk

During the same reporting period, the world grappled with the COVID-19 pandemic. In March 2020, the Palestinian government declared a state of emergency and instituted movement restrictions throughout the West Bank and Gaza. This had severe consequences. Economically, there was a decrease in income and an alarming increase in poverty and unemployment. Socially, we observed an overall significant rise in violence, specifically domestic violence against women, girls, and people with disabilities. Moreover, the already fragile protection mechanisms and limited essential services were further compromised. These challenges were cumulative and particularly acute for those living in marginalised areas, illustrated in this report.

The layered crises and challenges over the past five years have exhausted and weakened the already fragile state institutions, systems, policies, and procedures. These have also thwarted attempts to design and implement comprehensive repair plans in all these areas. Learning from the past is essential in dealing with the emerging and unprecedented challenges and obstacles towards achieving gender equality and women's empowerment and for better preparation for the future.

Specific Challenges for Women and Girls

The convergence of the events and developments has had severe multiple and interrelated repercussions on women and girls, exacerbating pre-existing challenges in promoting and enhancing gender equality and women's empowerment. We begin with critical challenges and obstacles faced by civil-societal actors and movements engaged in securing rights for women and girls between 2020-20024.

- PA has limited jurisdiction and authority in most Palestinian areas, including East Jerusalem due to the Israeli military occupation, the expansion of settlements, and geographical fragmentation.
- Internal political divisions, the dissolution of the Palestinian Legislative Council in December 2018, and the absence of national elections have nearly totally prevented meaningful political participation of Palestinian people.

- Long history of significant dependence on insufficient and always conditional foreign government assistance and international aid. The funding landscape including conditionality, imposed agendas, and work priorities present major challenges and raise questions regarding the political agenda of certain donors. Moreover, the dependency has effectively prevented sustainable development and profoundly undermined the empowerment local communities.[11]
- Securing sufficient funding and ensuring aid is effectively utilized and aligned with the actual and critical needs of the Palestinian people, especially the most vulnerable such as economic development, education, health care, and gender parity. Insufficient funding is also a result of Israeli government withholding "clearance revenues" transfers to the PA.[12]
- Rise in political repression by PA security services, including arrest, abuse, and humiliation of outspoken activists critical of the current government, including women. These services also arrested and killed prominent human rights activist Nizar Banat in the West Bank.
- Intensification of overall patriarchal and hostile environments and the increase in smear campaigns against women, feminist, and human rights NGOs and activists perpetrated by both state and social actors and of the failure of the state to protect and support the targeted activists and NGOs.
- State suspension of Ministry of Education programmes on curtailing child marriage and protecting women and girls from sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (SEAH), implemented collaboratively with civil society organizations. This suspension was not included in national report on Beijing + 30.
- State failure to respond to the complaints filed by feminists and activists with the Cybercrimes Prosecution in Ramallah.
- Lack of emergency preparedness. The absence of emergency response policies and procedures became amply evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, the current war in Gaza and in relation to violence throughout Palestine.
- Lack of coordination and fragmentation among all stakeholders and lack of a unified framework of action to provide life-supporting services and protections.

11 Wildeman, Jeremy and Alaa Tartir. «Political Economy of Foreign Aid in the Occupied Palestinian Territories: A Conceptual Framing» in Political Economy of Palestine: Critical, Interdisciplinary, and Decolonial Perspectives. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave McMillian, 2021, (223-247).

12 Clearance revenues are mostly VAT and import duties collected by Israeli government then transferred to the PA monthly according to the Paris Protocol. https://tinyurl.com/kyca6kxy

- Double standards and the failure of the most powerful states to implement international laws, conventions, and other mechanisms raising fundamental questions regarding accountability and the capability of global systems. This is exemplified in their failure and unwillingness to stop the genocide in Gaza and violations of international law and human rights throughout Palestine.

These challenges had, and continue to have, disastrous consequences for women, men, and children in Palestine. With the rapid increase in poverty, unemployment, displacement, and all forms of violence, including cyber and economic violence in addition to GBV and a decrease in fundamental human rights, people throughout Palestine are experiencing vulnerability, poverty, violence, and inequalities more severe than five years ago.[13]

Overall Achievements

We delineate here the State achievements reported in the national report. Note that they differ from the NGO reports and the findings from our consultations. Several reported by the State, including the legal amendments, are incomplete or false achievements since they were never implemented due to various factors such as the lack of follow-up mechanisms, refusal to exercise executive power in certain instances, and the absence of political will of the state to advance gender equality and women's empowerment.

The following is a brief overview of the achievements between 2020-2024 reported by the State:

- Adoption of the CEDAW Article 1 definition in the 16th revision of the Penal Code in September 2023 that "'discrimination against women' shall mean any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field."[14]
- Introduction of specific laws by decree aimed at protecting women's rights.

13 International Monetary Fund. «West Bank and Gaza: Selected Issues,» April 25, 2023. https://tinyurl.com/54282xjf.

14 UN. "Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women New York, 18 December 1979." https://tinyurl.com/ynnhsnbx.

- Allocation of resources for women's empowerment programs and formation committees to address needs by the Council of Ministers.
- Active engagement of women's and human rights NGOs, organisations, and coalitions have resulted in service-provision, advocacy, awareness-raising, and the publication of factsheets, policy papers, and other materials, which is particularly significant given the challenging context.
- Civil-society advancements in preventing sexual harassment and violence and providing protection in the workplace.
- State issuing a decree raising the minimum wage to ILS1800 monthly (approximately US$500 at the current conversion rate), the direct outcome of civil-society minimum wage coalition advocacy and awareness campaigns.
- People with disabilities securing a Cabinet decision for the right of people with disabilities to access health services after three years (2018-2021) of protest and advocacy.

Summary

National consultations revealed overall that existing interventions and programmes have had limited impact on the general situation of women and girls, achieved limited progress, or both, during the reporting period. Our findings revealed the critical problem of the lack of full, or any, implementation and mechanisms for enforcement, oversight, monitoring, evaluation, and follow-up plans attached to legal changes, cabinet decisions, and other changes undermine their effectiveness. Additionally, ongoing budget allocations are critical to ensure the continuity and effectiveness of efforts to secure women's right, achieve gender equality, and strengthen women's empowerment. Indeed, the intended results will never be achieved without all elements name here. Most fundamentally, the national consultations suggested that overall actions during the past five years needed to have addressed the root causes of gender inequalities and to have been better coordinated to achieve the real required positive impacts on women's and girls' lives. Doing all the above will demonstrate the political will and commitment of the state to advance women's and girls' rights and empowerment.

SECTION 2

PROGRESS ACROSS THE SIX CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN

Section II Six Overarching Dimensions: Updates and Analyses

This section provides more detailed updates and analyses of measures and efforts to advance gender equality in the last five years (2020-2024) across the Six Overarching Dimensions. It relies on claims reported in State submission and findings and insights from the consultations described in the introduction.

I. Inclusive Development, Shared Prosperity, and Decent Work

Critical Area of Concern: Women and the Economy

Achievements

The State has made concerted efforts to advance gender equality in the workplace over the past five years as outlined in the national report. These include promoting and enforcing laws, policies, and practices that prohibit discrimination in the recruitment, retention, and promotion of women in both public and private sector employment. The state has also adjusted laws, formed committees, organised conferences, developed manuals and guides, conducted awareness-raising activities, launched the employment online initiative E-SOUQ, and established the Palestinian Employment Fund and the national strategy for employment for 2020-2025.

- Legal adjustments to the Retirement Law No.7 of 2005 by Law by decree No. 48 of 2022 and the approval of three days of paternal leave and paid maternal leave of no less than 14 weeks as amended in the civil statues by Law by Decree No.24 of 2022.
- Establishment of the Palestinian National Economic Empowerment Institution (PNEEI) by Decree-Law No. (1) of 2019, implemented by UNDP, to economically empower families, youth, women, small farmers, and people with disabilities, for example.[15]

15 PNEEI. «State of Palestine President Decree-Law No. (1) of 2019 by President Concerning the Palestinian National Economic Empowerment Institution (PNEEI). https://tinyurl.com/bdfn3s7t

- Equal consideration of men's and women's testimonies in all contracts and legal Land Authority dealings, issued in August 2023.
- Increase in women's participation overall in the labour force between 2020 and 2022, from 16% to 18% with an increase in women working in the public sector from 45% to 48%.[16]
- Establishment of the National Committee for the Promotion of Fair Wages and Ensuring Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value tasked with conducting studies to assess the wage gap and implementing policies in line with the general guidelines of Agreement 100 of the ILO.[17] This committee, comprised of various stakeholders such as academics, the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (HCD) and others, is a promising platform from which Palestine can join the International ILO Coalition and would obligate the state to report on its annual progress.
- Law by Decree No. 4 of 2021 increased the minimum wage from ILS1,450 (approximately US$400) to ILS1,880 (approximately US$520) per month, effective beginning 2022. However, did not specify how the standard would be applied and was not implemented in the Gaza due to the ongoing political division.

Civil society actions to promote gender equality in employment during the past five years have been instrumental in creating change. Their advocacy campaigns, research papers, collations, and awareness-raising activities have focused on increasing the minimum wage (specifically Palestinian General Federation of Trade Union) and addressing workplace sexual harassment. Several organisations have pressured the state by organizing media and advocacy campaigns, raising awareness, and producing research reports to reform Palestinian labour laws more aligned with ILO agreements, more gender-sensitive and inclusive, and which protect women's rights to access decent work. Various women's organisations and coalitions, in cooperation with community-based groups, women's cooperatives, and international and UN organisation focused their efforts to support and advocate for workers' rights for women in both formal and informal economies including agriculture, thus empowering women across various fields of employment.

16 Palestine National Report Beijing + 30, 2024. (Arabic) https://tinyurl.com/4rux2nrh

17 The Equal Remuneration Convention (No. 100) is an International Labour Organization agreement that focuses on gender discrimination in employment.

Realities and Challenges

Pre-War Realities and Challenges

Despite all efforts to promote women's participation in the labour force, the overall economic reality is catastrophic. Even before the current war, the situation for women was not very promising because productive work outside the home is still considered primarily a space for men.

- Only 10% of women aged 15 and over were employed in the West Bank and Gaza in 2021.[18]
- Female unemployment rate increased dramatically from 12.4% in 2000 to 43% in 2021[19] compared to the male unemployment from 14.6% in 2000 to 22.4% in 2021.[20]
- The unemployment rate among women in the labour force in 2022 was 40.4%, while it was 20.3% for men.[21] By the fourth quarter of 2023, the rates changed to 33.9% for men and 24.6% for women.[22]
- Most unemployed women in 2022 were age 34 or younger and had high levels of education, with 93% having completed 13 or more years of schooling. By contrast, only 30% of men reached the same educational level.[23] Women take approximately twice as long to find a job as their male counterparts, with an average duration of unemployment around 20 months for women compared to only 10 months for men.[24]
- Youth unemployment remains high, exceeding 33% at the end of 2022, and over 60% in Gaza, with young women experiencing the highest rate at 53% overall.[25] Women with disabilities also face high unemployment rates.[26]

18 International Monetary Fund. «West Bank and Gaza: Selected Issues,» April 2023, https://tinyurl.com/54282xjf.
19 PCBS. "Presents the Main Findings of Labour Force Survey in 2022," 2022. https://tinyurl.com/48m6ku5c
20 PCBS. «Current status of the Palestinian labour force in 2023,» 2023. https://tinyurl.com/4j5jxvmy
21 PCBS. "Presents the Main Findings of Labour Force Survey in 2022," 2022. https://tinyurl.com/48m6ku5c
22 PCBS, ibid, 2023.
23 PCBS. 2022, op cit.
24 ibid
25 International Monetary Fund. op cit. April 2023.
26 Qader. Parallel report submitted by Qader Foundation for Community Development to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the right to health, work and protection from violence for women and girls with disabilities, 2022. In Arabic

- The gender gap in labour participation is significant; approximately 70% of males are active in the labour force, in contrast to just 20% of females. According to a 2022 PCBS labour force survey, female participation rate in the labour force was 18.6%, compared to 70.7% for males.[27]
- The most women work in high-risk sectors in the informal economy such as in private homes, agriculture and Israeli settlements. These areas are characterized by a high risk of exploitation and poor implementation of labour laws. These women may be self-employed, have insecure jobs, or work as unpaid family members, leaving them unprotected.
- In 2022, 62% of employees were engaged in informal employment, with a higher rate in the West Bank (66%) than in Gaza (51%). Moreover, more men (53.2%) than women (38.9%) were part of informal employment.[28]
- In 2019, approximately 68% of working Palestinian women were employed in the private sector.[29] On the eve of International Women's Day, PCBS showed that by 2022, about 40% of employees in the private sector earned a monthly wage below the minimum average wage of 1ILS,880. For men, this percentage was 38%, while for women, it rose to 50%. Additionally, only 46% of female employees in the private sector received paid maternity leave in 2022. A significant portion of female employees—40%—worked without an employment contract, and only 44% received retirement or end-of-service packages. Furthermore, just 9% of private sector firms in Palestine are led by women.[30]
- There is an unequal gender distribution jobs between men and women in Palestine. According to PCBS (2023), 73.6% of women are employed in the service sector, while only 27% of men work in this area. Furthermore, just 1.6% of women are employed in commerce, hotels, and restaurants, compared to 6.4% of men in these establishments.[31]
- Most women university students tend to study social sciences. Among employed women with tertiary education, 73% work in service sectors, with the largest percentage found in education, public administration, and health and social work. Notably, only 14% of women hold high-ranking positions (such as director-general or higher), in contrast to 86% of men.[32]

27 PCBS. op cit, 2022.

28 ILO. "Decent Work Programme Occupied Palestinian Territory 2023–2025 Summary," 2023. https://tinyurl.com/r93cttvh

29 PCBS. «On the occasion of the International Workers› Day,» Press Release, 2020. https://tinyurl.com/3acb2w5t

30 PCBS. «The Reality of the Palestinian Women on the Eve of International Women›s Day, press release, 7 March 2022. https://tinyurl.com/585997hw

31 PCBS. «Men and Women in Palestine: Issues and Statistics,» 2023.

32 ibid

- Women earn less than men, even when they have the same level of education. In the second quarter of 2024, women earned 19.1% less than their male counterparts.[33] Even with equal levels of education, women's average daily wages are about one-third lower than those of their male colleagues across nearly all sectors.[34] Moreover, women entrepreneurship rates remain low.[35]
- Women carry out significantly more unpaid care work than men, particularly domestic tasks and in the agricultural sector. Approximately one-sixth of women in Palestine are involved in agriculture, contributing to 54% of vegetable and fruit production and 87% of animal production. [36] Despite this substantial involvement, women own only an estimated 6.7% of agricultural holdings in the region and 60% currently work without social protection.[37]
- Impacts of the COVID19 Pandemic
- The pandemic and the overall response to it had profoundly negative consequences for women. They bore the brunt of the pandemic and suffered more than men in almost all aspects of work and income. Women experienced more than men a significant decline in wages and were more frequently laid off, completely terminated, or faced reductions in their working hours hence wages.[38]
- They consistently lost more jobs than men, particularly in the personal services, hospitality, and trade sectors. Hence, women's income declined more substantially. Women in the Gaza more frequently lost their jobs and faced more reductions in their working hours than in the West Bank.[39]

33 ILO. «A Year of War in Gaza: Impacts on Employment and Livelihoods in the West Bank and Gaza Strip,» Bulletin No. 5. https://tinyurl.com/24y4nmcp.

34 International Monetary Fund. op cit. 2023.

35 International Monetary Fund. op cit. 2023.

36 Food and Agricultural Organization of the UN. «Gender, water and agriculture assessing the nexus in Palestine,» 2022. https://tinyurl.com/bdev429t.

37 ibid

38 UN Women. "COVID-19: Gendered Impacts of the Pandemic in Palestine and Implications for Policy and Programming Findings of a Rapid Gender Analysis of COVID-19 in Palestine April 2020," 2020. https://tinyurl.com/bdjy5nc2.

39 UN Women. "Scarcity and Fear: A Gender Analysis of the Impact of the War in Gaza on Vital Services Essential to Women's and Girls' Health, Safety, and Dignity - Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)," 2024. https://tinyurl.com/ysd8j2xn.

- During the pandemic, there was a surge in economic violence against women, particularly those in the informal economy. For example, many women employed in private homes were not paid, and even among those paid, only a small fraction received their full wages. Women in the informal economy often faced a complete loss of income, while many women were subjected to significant family pressure and violence to provide for their husbands and children.[40]
- Women business owners and leaders were more considerably impacted by the pandemic more than men. An assessment conducted by CARE in April 2020 showed that 89% of "female small business owners were forced to reallocate money previously dedicated to their work or business to the household, compared to half of male respondents."[41]
- In addition, movement restrictions, lack of childcare, and decreased demand for goods and services were reported as factors that negatively impacted women's small businesses and employment.[42] The direct economic difficulties and the increase in unpaid care, particularly for the elderly and children, accompanied by the rise in food insecurity and a lack of access to needed services, increased women's dependency and pushed them to remain in abusive situations.[43] Taken together, these factors further exacerbated women's underrepresentation in the labour force.[44] The impacts were especially severe on women-headed households, which comprise 12% of Palestinian families.[45]
- Finally, the pandemic starkly revealed the reproductive health challenges faced by women regarding the state's Occupational Health and Safety requirements. The requirements, outdated even at the time of the pandemic, have not yet been updated, thus significantly impacting the health and safety of women at work even as this report was being written.

40 The Civic and Women Coalition for the Implementation of CEDAW. "Report on the Violence Against Women and Girls during COVID-19 in the State of Palestine. Submitted to: The United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women," June 30, 2020. https://tinyurl.com/37c5ec56

41 UN Women. "A Feminist Economic Analysis on the Impact of COVID-19 in the Palestinian Economy," 2021. https://tinyurl.com/my3uabvu

42 ibid.

43 UN Women. op cit. 2020.

44 UN Women. op cit. 2024.

45 PCBS. "Unleashing the power of gender equality: Uplifting the voices of women and girls to unlock our world's infinite possibilities". Press release on the Occasion of the World Population Day, 11/07/2023. https://tinyurl.com/2w3r6yu5.

War-Time Realities and Challenges

The World Bank has warned that the Palestinian economy is on the brink of an economic freefall, with a 35% decline in real GDP in the first quarter of 2024, marking its most significant economic contraction on record and a financial gap (expenses compared to revenue) more than double the gap of 2023.[46] The military and settler aggression and systematic destruction of Palestinian infrastructures in the Gaza and West Bank will have long-term effects, further reducing men's and women's labour participation, increasing poverty and economic decline, and negatively affecting lives of Palestinian people in general and most especially Gazans.

Women in the Labour Force

- There has been significant job loss and reduction in full-time employment and wages for women and men in the labour force in Gaza and the West Bank. The unemployment rate surged to 79.7% in the Gaza and 34.9% in the West Bank between early October 2023 and the end of September 2024.[47] As of June 2024, there was also a loss of jobs stemming from movement restrictions across West Bank governorates. In addition, approximately 160,000 Palestinian workers in the Israeli economy, including in illegal settlements in the West Bank, lost work due to the revocation of work permits.[48] The ILO anticipates a further decline in men's and women's labour participation. It predicts a decrease in Palestine's labour force participation rate by 2.5% in 2024 compared to 2023. For men, the participation rate is projected to decline by 3.8 percentage points, while for women, the projected decrease is 1.3 percentage points.[49]
- Between October 2023 and January 2024, about half of private sector establishments in Palestine faced either complete cessation or reduced operations. In the West Bank, 29% of these establishments were affected, while in the Gaza, the impact was total, with 100% experiencing disruptions.

46 World Bank. "Impacts of the conflict in the middle east on the Palestinian economy, World Bank Economic Monitoring Report," September 2024. https://tinyurl.com/4z7z9bb8

47 ILO. "A year of war: Unemployment surges to nearly 80 per cent and GDP contracts by almost 85 per cent in Gaza. ILO Brief - Bulletin No. 5," October 17, 2024. https://tinyurl.com/52byn2z3

48 ILO. "Impact of the war in Gaza on the labour market and livelihoods in the Occupied Palestinian Territory: Bulletin No. 4, June 2024." https://tinyurl.com/5b5p64ew

49 Ibid.

- The private sector in Gaza has been particularly hard hit, suffering an astounding 85.8% loss in production value during the first four months of the war, translating to an estimated loss of USD 810 million.[50] By comparison, although the private sector in the West Bank experienced a heavy loss due to the war, it was not as dramatic with a notable 27% decrease in production value during the same period, amounting to USD 1.5 billion.[51] However, the increased Israeli military aggression significantly affected enterprises in the West Bank, with 98.8% of those in reporting adverse effects on their operations, production capacity, and, ultimately, sales and profits.[52]
- Women who are often employed in informal sectors faced additional challenges in maintaining their employment and economic empowerment during these times. These challenges are further compounded by inflationary pressures, which erode individuals' purchasing power and ability to meet their basic needs, particularly amid increased job losses and reduced incomes.[53]

Challenges

- One crucial issue is the lack of full alignment of the Palestinian Labour Law with several ILO conventions, specifically Conventions 111, 100, 156, 183, and 190 that are vital for ensuring gender equality.
- Palestinian Labour Law also excludes certain groups from protection by labour laws, such as domestic workers and small facilities run by women.
- Even though the ILO introduced C-190 Violence and Harassment Convention in 2019 to support States, neither Labour Law nor Palestinian Civil Service Law in Palestine has addressed sexual harassment in the workplace or sexual harassment in general.
- There are no regulations or bylaws to implement the decree law for paternal and maternal leave and other amendments to support participation of women in the labour force.
- State actions to support women transitioning from the informal to the formal sector through incentive policies and tax exemptions have been criticized. These mechanisms primarily benefit large businesses and overlook the small ones, which are primarily run by women.

50 ibid
51 ibid
52 ibid
53 UN Women. op cit, 2020.

- Monetary Fund loans include interest rates, and State incentive programmes excluded groups such as women from working in Israeli settlements.
- Women involved in cooperatives face unique challenges particularly due to the current Cooperatives Law. The State economic policies, especially the open market policy, significantly undermine the capacity of women's cooperatives to compete. Moreover, the procedural obstacles facing cooperatives in opening bank accounts further exacerbate their challenges.[54]
- State efforts to recognise, reduce, and redistribute unpaid care and domestic work have been strongly challenged in national consultations, although there has been some progress in this area. They identified the absence of mechanisms to implement the decree law for parental leave and other amendments.
- Women domestic workers also face specific challenges, alongside general insecurity and unpredictability attached to form of labour. The inclusion of domestic workers in the Social Security Fund has been legalised, yet a specific timeline for launching this system has not been set. Recognising the significant role of domestic workers in the labour force, collecting more official data regarding women domestic workers including numbers and working conditions is necessary.
- There is widespread discrimination against people with disabilities regarding work in the public and private sectors. The current sectoral strategic action plan (2021-2023) does not include a clear strategy to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all the main sectors and completely overlooks the interests of women with disabilities. Although the 1999 Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities mandates 5% quota allocated to persons with disabilities in the public and private sectors, this has not been practiced.[55]

54 ibid

55 Qader. "Parallel report submitted by Qader Foundation for Community Development to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the right to health, work and protection from violence for women and girls with disabilities," 2022. In Arabic.

Summary

Overall State strategies, actions, and legal adjustments for women's economic empowerment and for promoting an equal labour market in the past five years have had very limited impact because they excluded certain groups and lacked clear guidelines and enforcement mechanisms. For example, although the percentage of irregular labour is at its highest at the current moment, State efforts do not include policies to convert irregular to regular work, leading to job insecurity and instability for a significant portion of the workforce.

The findings from the national consultations suggest the necessity for an inclusive, comprehensive, and intersectional national economic plan and one that considers the multiplicity of women in the labour market and as essential participants in the economic life of Palestine. However, any kind comprehensive economic development plan for the country is severely limited by Israeli control of the Jordan Valley, one of the most promising sites for development of tourism, for example, because it is located Area C (see above).

II. Poverty Eradication, Social Protection, and Social Service

Critical Area of Concern: Women and Poverty

This section delineates and critically analyses State efforts to eradicate poverty, protect women and girls, and provide life-sustaining social service during the past five years. The efforts included programmes to improve girls' access to education and technical and vocational education training (TVET), promote gender-sensitive and inclusive curricula, provide sexual and reproductive health services, and awareness-raising initiatives on reproductive health, and health services to people with disabilities.

Alongside State efforts, civil society organisations have been instrumental in providing services for poor families and women, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their role has been crucial, especially in reaching out to groups who overlooked by the state, such as women farmers, women workers in the settlements, and women and girls with disabilities in remote areas including Area C and in East Jerusalem. These organisations have provided a range of services, from sexual and reproductive health services to economic empowerment, legal services, and raising awareness.

The COVID-19 pandemic, ongoing Israeli military and settler aggression in the West Bank, the current war on Gaza further complicated and challenged all efforts towards poverty eradication and promoting social protection and social services. Given the current humanitarian crisis, we have devoted a subsection to the conditions in Gaza.

Achievements

- Introduction of Regulation No. 1 of 2021 for free health services for people with disabilities.
- Cabinet Decision No. 8 of 2021 providing social services for marginalised groups and expanding social protection to include women working in the informal sector.

- Ministry of Social Development, in partnership with the ILO, officially implemented cash allowance program in August 2024 for persons with severe disabilities and persons above 65 on the national registry. This action is the result of Council of Ministers 2023 approving rights for people with disabilities and elderly persons, lobbied by the disability rights movement advocating for inclusive health insurance after recognizing the differential impacts of COVID-19 pandemic om people with disabilities. Additionally, in November 2024, the PA earmarked equivalent of 3 million EUR to "ensure the continued rollout and payment of social allowances to 15,000 individuals with severe disabilities and nearly 18,000 older persons in the West Bank."[56]54

Realities and Challenges

Pre-War Realities and Challenges

Poverty has been escalating among women before and throughout the reporting period. This rise was largely because the COVID-19 pandemic caused the Palestinian economy to contract by 10–12%.[57]55 As the pandemic impacts lessened, the poverty rate as of April 2021 decreased to an estimated 27.3% which represented around 1.5 million people.[58]56 Before the start of the current war in 2023, poverty in Gaza, East Jerusalem, and the West Bank was 32.8%, compared to 29.7%, the final count in 2020, with significant disparities the location. Even before October 2023, 80% of Gazans depended on international assistance, thereby living with profound insecurity and precarity. The World Bank also reported that by 2022, one-third of the Palestinian population (approximately 1.84 million people) were food insecure, lacking consistent access to sufficient and nutritious food.[59]

The Second Arab Multidimensional Poverty Report (2023) underscores urgency of addressing poverty in Palestine because, although most countries in the region have made strides in reducing poverty, it has increased in Palestine from 15% to 15.8% (2014-2019). The vulnerability to poverty has surged to 29.96

56 54 ILO. "Palestinian authority allocates domestic funding for social allowances supporting persons with disabilities and older persons in the West Bank," December 4, 2024. https://tinyurl.com/44u838pf

57 55 UN Women, «A Feminist Economic Analysis of Covid-19 Impact on the Palestinian Economy,» 2021, https://tinyurl.com/yz77k3u7.

58 56 World Bank. "Palestinian Territories' Economic Update," April 2022.

https://tinyurl.com/2s9d4cje, World Bank. "The Impact of the Conflict in the Middle East on the Palestinian Economy," May 2024. https://tinyurl.com/kyca6kxy World Bank. "The Impact of the Conflict in the Middle East on the Palestinian Economy," May 2024. https://tinyurl.com/kyca6kxy

59 World Bank. «The Impact of the Conflict in the Middle East on the Palestinian Economy,» May 2024. https://tinyurl.com/kyca6kxy

% in Palestine, with the rate of severe poverty at 2.85%.[60] Furthermore, the poverty rate is higher in the Gaza than in the West Bank, in the south more than in the north, and in urban more than rural areas. Moreover, the report reveals that multidimensional poverty among children is more concentrated among children living in refugee camps, among them in urban areas also experiencing higher rates of compared to their rural counterparts. As is typically the case worldwide, the poverty rate is higher among women, children, and people with disabilities.

War-Time Realities and Challenges

- At the end of the first three months of the war, the poverty rate throughout Palestine reached 38.8%. An additional 2.61 million Palestinians fell into poverty in 2024, bringing the total to 4.1 million, nearly doubling the figure to 74.3%.[61] Poverty is rising rapidly in the West Bank.[62]

Spotlight on Gaza

- Currently, nearly every resident of Gaza lives in poverty and is facing humanitarian poly crises.
- "Violence has displaced nearly 2 million people, decimated livelihoods, crippled food systems, destroyed 70 percent of crop fields, severely restricted humanitarian operations and resulted in the collapse of health services and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) systems. Catastrophic acute food insecurity and concerning acute malnutrition levels will continue to prevail if the conflict continues, and humanitarian activities are restricted."[63]
- The October 2024 UN assessment provides an overall snapshot. We add key details below with the most recent available data. Some of those, however, extend only through May 2024, the
- 7-month mark of the war. Subsequent popular news reports and similar outputs are documenting the ongoing horrors until now, but we have chosen to use the more reliable sources here.

60 United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), and others. Second Arab Multidimensional Poverty Report. E/ESCWA/CL2.GPID/2022/4, 2023Beirut. https://tinyurl.com/y33xvze8

61 Middle East Monitor, (2024, Oct). Poverty rate in Palestine Territories doubles amid Israel invasion, pulling Gaza development back to 1950s levels. Available at: https://tinyurl.com/4yrnwnf2/

62 ibid

63 UN. "Gaza Strip: Acute Food Insecurity and Acute Malnutrition – IPC Special Snapshot – September 2024 – April 2025," October 17, 2024. https://tinyurl.com/3zwawz9k

- Entire Gaza was classified as being in the Phase 4 Emergency Phase based on the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) between September and October 2024. Among the entire population approximately 1.84 million people are experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity including nearly 133,000 people experiencing "catastrophic food insecurity" (IPC Phase 5). Acute malnutrition is 10 times higher than before the escalation of the war.[64]
- Water supply and condition in Gaza threaten all Gazans. The supply dropped by 95% after the second day of the war (October 9, 2023) and remains at a mere 7% of its pre-October 2023 levels. For years prior to the war, Gazans suffered from acute water shortage and harmful water quality due to the Israeli occupation, only to be exacerbated by the current war.[65]
- Clean water scarcity, food insecurity, unsanitary conditions have resulted in dehydration, malnourishment, and outbreak of diseases. These have constrained breastfeeding and neonatal care, increased the risk of diarrhoea, skin diseases, and even caused an outbreak of polio virus.66 Nearly 10,337,057 girls and boys under five are at risk of waterborne diseases.
- People resorted to using partially desalinated water from agricultural wells, 30 times saltier than freshwater. This increased the risk of immediate health consequences for infants, pregnant women, and people with kidney diseases.[67]
- Women and children constitute nearly 70% of verified casualties, with 80% all verified deaths were results of Israeli attacks on residential structures. One year into the war, as of 7 October 2024, over 35,000 children had lost one or both parents.[68]

64 UN. Gaza Strip: Acute Food Insecurity and Acute Malnutrition – IPC Special Snapshot – September 2024 – April 2025. https://tinyurl.com/3zwawz9k/

65 Center for International & Strategic Studies. "The Siege of Gaza's Water," January 12, 2024. https://tinyurl.com/44223n3u.

66 UNICEF. "Gaza's Children Protected from Poliovirus Outbreak After Challenging Vaccine Campaign." https://tinyurl.com/5n6yuc92

67 UN Women. op cit. 2024

68 UNOCHA, UPDATE REPORT Six-month update report on the human rights situation in Gaza: 1 November 2023 to 30 April 2024, November 2024. https://tinyurl.com/26nu7tmy

- More than 540,000 women and girls in Gaza of reproductive age desperately need appropriate items to support their hygiene, health, dignity, and well-being. In this void they are resorting to cloths and sponges as improvised sanitary pads to compensate for the lack of menstruation supplies. There is limited privacy for menstrual hygiene management for over 690,000 women and girls in Gaza. [69] Ten million disposable menstrual pads are needed each month to cover the needs and preserve the dignity of women in the Gaza.
- Systematic destruction of the healthcare system has been reported as strategic objective of the current war. According to Al Haq, "Israel has systematically targeted and attacked the healthcare system to the point of its collapse…(and) targeting of hospitals and health centres, the denial of adequate medical provisions into and around the Gaza, and the abduction, torture, and killing of medical personnel is evidence of Israel's genocidal intent to (i) inflict conditions of life calculated to bring about the physical destruction of the Palestinian people in the Gaza and (ii) impose measures intended to prevent Palestinian births in the Gaza."[70]
- Systematic destruction has led to the killing of health workers, destruction of hospitals, clinics, and other kinds of health facilities, lack of medicine, medical supplies and equipment, ambulances, electricity, water, therefore, the provision even of life-saving treatments. This destruction has resulted in "a spike in preventable deaths, the rapid spread of diseases, and high rates of physical and mental illnesses (with) an estimated 177,000 women…facing life-threatening health risks, including non-communicable diseases, hunger, and poor nutrition during pregnancy."[71]
- Other health risks borne by women, girls, elderly persons, and persons with disabilities persist. As of April 2024, 107,000 elderly men and women have faced heightened severity and fatality due to Hepatitis A outbreaks, though treatable. Typically bearing primary responsibilities as caregivers for sick family members, women and girls were at higher risk of exposure to infectious diseases. Women and all persons with motor and multiple disabilities were challenged when attempting to access WASH services, especially those with who require highly specialized tools, equipment, and facilities.[72]

---

69 UN Women. op cit. April 2024. https://tinyurl.com/mr37uyjz

70 Al Haq. «Systematic Destruction of Gaza›s Healthcare System: A Pattern of Genocide, p. 1,» January 12, 2024. https://tinyurl.com/yhz3jdwd

71 UN Women. «Gender Alert: Gaza: A War on Women›s Health,» September 2024. https://tinyurl.com/2sbw4t5u

72 UN Women. "Scarcity and Fear: A Gender Analysis of the Impact of the war in Gaza on vital services essential to women's health, safety, and dignity - Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH),"

- Education system, infrastructure, students, and school personnel are another casualty of the current war. As of 30 July, 92.9% of school buildings have undergone various kinds of damages because of direct and indirect strikes, with a minimum of 84.6% of schools require some kind of reconstruction before functioning as schools. Lives have also been affected with 9,211 students and 397 educational staff have been killed and more than 14,237 students and 2,246 teachers injured. Thus, the 625,000 students enrolled in Gaza schools have lost one full academic year of learning. Moreover, thousands of students in the graduating class of 2024 were denied the right to take the national tawjihi, the make-it-or-break-it high school completion examine that almost completely determines the life chances for graduates. Undamaged schools and their playgrounds have been serving as shelters, though overcrowded, unhygienic, and sometimes with fast spread of diseases, for displaced families, not places of learning. "These conditions have had a significant negative impact on the mental health and psychosocial well-being of children, teachers, and caregivers, as well as severely harming the ability of children in Gaza to exercise their right to learn." [73]

Overall Challenges

- Disturbing increase in disparities and the absence of protection for women and girls living in remote and marginalised areas, and those with disabilities lacking social protection and access to their fundamental human rights. The pandemic in 2020 led to a surge in all forms of violence further exacerbating these issues.
- Inadequacy of the state health insurance system negatively impacts women's health. Design of a "gender-neutral" system prevents the consideration of specific needs of both women and men related to their gender roles and other social and cultural realities.
- Deprivation totally or reduced compulsory of compulsory health insurance for an alarmingly high percentage of eligible women.
- Superficial efforts have no concrete, direct health impacts. For instance, sporadic awareness campaigns to improve access to healthcare, especially women and girls in remote and marginalised areas and those with disabilities.

73 Occupied Palestinian Territory Education Cluster. "A year of silence in Gaza's classrooms: the urgent need for educational revival," August 3, 2024. https://tinyurl.com/mr4xaa2k.

- Absence of comprehensive programs for preventive care and management of chronic illnesses and conditions.
- Failure of government to delineate the policies needed to enhance the health system considering a natural population growth of 2.5%, a rising number of older persons, and healthcare gaps revealed during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Lack of government plans and budget to increase the number of hospitals, primary health care centres, hospital beds, and medical staff.
- Absence of comprehensive list pf medicines and health services provided to beneficiaries with chronic and serious diseases. This list will reveal the extent to which medicines available at MoH pharmacies is adequate and inclusive for those with health insurance.
- Lack of comprehensive primary health care centres and infrequent vaccination services in marginalised and remote areas.
- Health Needs of Women and Girls with Disabilities
- Government failure to provide a plan to protect women and girls with disabilities during the state of emergency in the pandemic led to a further decline in their rights and their exclusion from essential services.
- National Health Strategic Plan for 2021-2023 neither inadequately address the rights of women with disabilities nor guarantee accessibility. Moreover, the plan lacks an analysis of the lived realities of women and girls with disabilities along with data, statistical indicators, measures taken, and progress made for women and girls with disabilities.
- Lack of commitment to ensuring the health rights of persons with disabilities demonstrated by the absence of institutionalisation of those rights and necessary interventions. Legislation designated disability as a sectoral issue under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD). The MoSD has the primary responsibility to address issues, determine economic and social rights and entitlements, such as the right to work, health insurance, tax exemption, and so on. However, there is no clear published plan outlining the administrative and financial responsibilities of the Ministry. Concomitantly, a non-specialist "Medical Committee" at the Ministry of Health (MoH) determines and communicates via "medical reports" whether specific persons with disabilities are entitled to economic and social rights, controlling the destinies of applicants with disabilities.

- Lack of specific provisions for women with disabilities within state policies regarding health insurance for people with disabilities.
- Primary healthcare centres, whether sporadically or continuously provide sexual and reproductive health services, do not cater adequately to the needs of women and girls with disabilities.
- Sexual and Reproductive Health
- Absence of legislation and national strategy on sexual and reproductive health. The lack of formal guidance hampers the provision of comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services and the exclusion of this vital aspect human development from educational curricula perpetuates cycle of ignorance on these topics.
- MoH failure to ensure the right to access sexual and reproductive health services.
- Blatant denial of availability, access, and quality sexual and reproductive health services including family planning and maternal and child health services, particularly in marginalised and remote areas.
- Provision of receive free health pregnancy, post-natal care family planning, and maternal health care and supervision without considering broader sexual and reproductive health care issues.
- Accessing of sexual and reproductive health services constrained by long journeys to reach health centres due to transportation challenges and finances.
- Education
- The educational system comprises UNRWA, government, and private schools, colleges, and universities. UNRWA rely on funding from the agency with other supplements and the privates operate on tuition and contributions from sponsoring organizations and private donors. The governmental institutions depend almost entirely on government support. The government education sector has faced enormous challenges during the reporting period. The sector continues to reel from the ongoing financial crisis partly due to the withholding of revenues by Israel, which started even from before the reporting period, the pandemic, and the heightening Israeli occupation across the country and the war on Gaza.

- The education sector, moreover, has been the least prioritized and has endured significant setbacks over the past five years. According to the Independent Commission for Human Rights (ICHR), the Ministry of Education (MoE) budget allocation constitutes only 20% of the State general budget, with half earmarked for salaries and wages.[74] This has left little for curricular, programmatic, and student development. Because of the dire overall fiscal condition of the state, teachers (along with other government workers) have received only 50%-60% or less of their salaries, or none, during the past several years and their working conditions deteriorated due to the pandemic. Results were the teacher strikes on and off since 2016 but more acute during academic years 2021-2023, cutbacks in school hours, shift to online learning, and general unpredictability and precarity. Others were the decline in student attendance, achievement, and overall interest in education.[75]
- Article 10 of the Palestinian Disability Law guarantees the right of persons with disabilities to access all educational facilities. However, this policy lacks standards and principles of non-discrimination and inequality against girls with disabilities.[76] According to ICHR, the number of persons with disabilities integrated into the governmental school system was a negligible 1% of all students. The data showed that 68.7% of school bathrooms and the installation of accessibility ramps in 60.6% of schools met the needs of students with mobility disabilities. However, there is a dearth of information concerning other types of disabilities.[77]
- Universities are grappling with significant challenges represented by a permanent budget deficit ranging from 20% to 50%. The lack of regulations and policies to govern government financing of the higher education sector is a crucial factor contributing to this deficit.[78] This deficit underscores the urgent need for regulations and policies to govern government financing of the higher education sector.

74 Independent Commission for Human Rights. "Preliminary review submitted to CESCR in the United Nations on the State of Palestine's initial report on the implementation of the ICESCR," December 2023. https://www.ichr.ps/en/reports/category-136.

75 A. Ahmad Alnajar, M. Abdel Mohdy, and F. Ata Qaraqe, et al. (in press). "We Speak for Ourselves": Experiences of Government School Students, Families, Teachers, and Principals Facing Israeli Occupation, COVID-19 Pandemic, and Teacher Strikes from Spring 2020 through May 2023. A. M. Qattan Foundation. Ramallah, Palestine.

76 Qader. op cit. 2022

77 ibid

78 ICHR. Preliminary review submitted to CESCR in the United Nations On the State of Palestine's initial report on the implementation of the ICESCR, 2023.

- ICHR monitoring reveals a stark disparity in the access to education for vulnerable and marginalized groups. MoE data further indicate that only 18.3% of governmental kindergartens are operational, serving a mere 6.2% of the entire pupil population.
- 110, 293, students not including kindergarteners in East Jerusalem are caught in a fragmented system most directly related to the undecided legal status of Jerusalem (Palestine or Israel) and the refusal of Israel as the occupying power to ensure rights to education, both related to international law. This fragmentation can be seen in the administrative structure of education comprising three entities with different responsibilities: The PA Ministry of Education is responsible for curriculum, textbooks, national examinations, and report cards; Jerusalem Municipality responsible for extra funding, special programs, and buildings: Israeli Ministry of Education (IMoE) fund, supervise personnel, and certifies teachers.[79] Students studying in three separate categories of schools under different authorities: schools recognized officially and funded by the IMoE (41% in 65 schools); officially recognized private schools funded by Christian organizations, NGOs, and for-profit companies ("contracting schools"), all partly supported by the IMoE funds (44% in 105 schools); and unrecognized schools operated by the Ministry of Awqaf (Islamic Affairs) and UNRWA (15% in 73 schools), which have been banned since 2019 but still operating.[80]
- Ongoing violations of the legal responsibility as the occupying force to ensure the right to education demonstrated by several key indicators including shortage of 2,447 classrooms, transferring students to the Israeli curriculum, missing study locations of 11,000 students, and enduring daily experiences of mobility restrictions imposed through military checkpoints, strict inspections, the apartheid wall to reach their schools in Jerusalem. Girls, particularly, face harassment on their way to school.

79 Jerusalem Story. «East Jerusalem»s Education System,» 2023. https://tinyurl.com/bdz29762

80 Jerusalem Story. «East Jerusalem Schools,» 2024. https://tinyurl.com/4s9a7br2

Summary

Our findings indicate that the State poverty eradication and social protection measures are inadequate to meet the enormous needs of people and address and rectify the internal structural, political, and cultural challenges and impediments toward a steadier realisation of economic and social goals discussed here. The absence of a comprehensive economic development plan and the resulting piecemeal and project-based approaches have proven ineffective, not to mention having failed to engage all stakeholders, included those directly affected by the problems, to strategize, design, and implement policies and programs and to evaluate them. Equally critically, existing approaches have not meaningfully integrated principle of gender and culturally sensitive responsiveness and approaches in the interventions.

SECTION 3

FREEDOM FROM VIOLENCE, STIGMA, AND STEREOTYPES

III. Freedom from Violence, Stigma, and Stereotypes

Critical Area of Concern: Violence against women

We have observed a rapid increase in all forms of violence against women beginning with the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 until today related to and exacerbated by the ongoing military aggression in the West Bank and war in Gaza. The many paths and intervention approaches have not led to securing and ensuring fully women's and girls' freedom from violence, stigma, and stereotypes during the past five years. As demonstrated below, while traveling in the main direction, we have seen some changes, faced severe obstacles, and consolidated relationships and partnerships with relevant individuals and groups.

Women's and feminist organisations partnered with groups such as Al-Muntada and other civil society organisations and stakeholders and prioritised ending all forms of discrimination against women and promoting economic, political, and social equality. Specifically, they worked continually during the past five years to end violence against women and gender-based violence. They did so through various lobbying and advocacy activities locally, including mobilisation campaigns, policy dialogues, and demonstrations, among others. These efforts raised awareness of gender-based violence and influenced legal, policy, regulatory changes.

Achievements

- Key sections of the Penal Code amended through Law by Decree now better support the protection of women and girls. The amendments now include a definition and criminalisation of torture and other forms of cruel, inhuman, and degrading punishment and prohibits the use of discretionary mitigating excuses related femicides.
- Council of Ministers (constituting a representative from all ministries) and civil society orgs approved the National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women 2024-2030 that includes budgets and human resources

- NGO-led media campaigns and programmes challenged stereotypes and media biases and fostered a broader awareness of gender-based violence and women's rights more generally utilising a diverse range of platforms to ensure that they reach a wide and varied audience. Nisaa FM, PYALARA TV, Roya TV, and Afkar Media, a company specializing in healthcare, achieved these goals through television spots and episodes, informational cards shared on social media, billboards, video shorts, radio spots and episodes, and advertisements on public transportation.
- Some NGOs prioritised addressing GBV in the digital space. They developed and implemented national campaigns and initiatives to enhance awareness, lobby, and advocate. For instance, 7amleh (The Arab Center for the Advancement of Social Media), provided crucial resources such as A Guide to Combating Digital Gender-Based Violence and other research papers related to technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV).[81]

Realities and Challenges

Pre-War Realities and Challenges

The Pandemic

- UN Women 2020 assessment of gendered impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic found that 53% of service providers reported a surge in domestic violence, mainly psychological, verbal, and physical violence. The assessment also reported a surge in other forms of violence including community violence, sexual harassment and violence, incest, economic violence, and violence facilitated by technology.[82]
- State measures in response to the pandemic, including the lockdown and movement restrictions, led to a significant increase in domestic violence. Women at risk spent more time with an abusive husband or immediate relative due to the lockdown, leading to a stark rise in domestic violence.
- Movement restrictions forced all working NGOs and CSOs to reduce their direct interventions with girls and women victims of violence during the pandemic.

81 7amleh. "A Guide to Combatting Digital Gender-Based Violence," 2023. https://tinyurl.com/5ewv9am7.

82 UN Women. (2020). «COVID-19: Gendered Impacts of the Pandemic in Palestine and Implications for Policy and Programming Findings of a Rapid Gender Analysis of COVID-19 in Palestine April 2020.» https://tinyurl.com/5t4ed83u

- State neither adopted a comprehensive inclusive protection system as part of its emergency plan nor ensured the provision of services to prevent gender-based violence and to maintain referral mechanisms for victims and survivors. [83]
- Existing legislative and policy measure failed to address violence against women and girls, indeed exacerbated the problems they faced, particularly those with disabilities and in remote and marginalized areas who were left without access to essential services including health and protection from violence.[84]
- MoSD mandated restrictions on its protection centres and shelters, the closure of those in the Gaza, and instructions to the West Bank centres and shelters to admit only those who had satisfied a 14-day quarantine period significantly reduced protection for women victims of violence. Relatedly, inability of these facilities to establish quarantine facilities negatively impacted the safety of women and girls.[85]
- Virtual space and technology are not safe for women and girls. Approximately 10% of those between the ages of 15-64 who have ever been married have been exposed to some form of TFGVB. 12% of never-married women ages 18 to 64 have been exposed through social media networks. 8% of women faced violence and threats of violence including blackmail and harassment voice calls and text messages.[86]
- Backlash against Women and Human Rights Defenders
- Numerous feminist organisations and individual feminist activists and human rights defenders were subjected to a severe smear campaign and boycott on social media platform "Popular Movement Against CEDAW Convention." They specifically called for boycott of 12 organisations and activists. Individual feminists were defamed and faced further violence when they were named, their photos posted, and they were accused of "engaging in immorality and inciting women and girls to do the same." on the platform. The Movement claimed that any effort promoting gender-based equality is contrary to Islamic Shari'a Law thereby encourages immorality and that feminist activism is instigated by foreign organisations and countries seeking to dismantle the structure of Palestinian society. [87]

83 WCLAC. "Parallel report to the initial report submitted by the state of Palestine in accordance with Article 19 of the Convention Against Torture and other cruel or inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment," 2023. https://tinyurl.com/4f4mwmyr

84 ICHR. "Preliminary review submitted to CESCR in the United Nations on the State of Palestine's initial report on the implementation of the ICESCR," 2023. https://tinyurl.com/5xntyj23

85 GUPW. "Report on the Violence Against Women and Girls during COVID-19 in the State of Palestine. Submitted to: The United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, "

86 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. (2023). Women and Men in Palestine - Issues and Statistics.

87 WCLAC. "NGO Follow-Up to the Parallel Report to the Initial Report of the State of Palestine Submitted to the CESCR," August 2023. https://tinyurl.com/yk8xknry.

- No protective measures have been taken to safeguard these feminists until today, despite having filed several complaints as early as March 31, 2022with the Cyber Crimes Prosecution in Ramallah and with the Attorney General.[88]

Femicide or "Suicide"?

- There are discrepancies between official statistics and those of human rights NGOs and feminist organisations in the overall number of cases of femicide. Official figures stating a decrease in women intentionally killed from 30% in 2019 to 5% in 2022 are misleading. Findings from the national consultations showed there had been an increase in femicide during the reporting period. The recent WCLAC study documented 24 in 2019 and 57 murders of women and girls between 2021 and 2022 in West Bank and Gaza.[89]
- Most femicide cases were officially closed as "suicide." Testimonies collected by WCLAC researchers provide evidence that the women were victims of femicide provide insights regarding the murders. Of the 57 killings between 2021-2022, 20of them were categorized as suicides. Other causes of the deaths included falling from heights, medical negligence, heart attacks, and other causes.[90] These classifications have institutionally "disappeared" femicide.
- Families force women to commit suicide so perpetrators can avoid prosecution and punishment for murder due to a legal loophole.[91]

88 ibid

89 ibid

90 WCLAC. "Femicide in the Palestinian Society Do Women Actually Commit Suicide? Analytical Report of Documented Femicide Cases 2021-2022, 2023." https://tinyurl.com/2p5m7d3h

91 WCLAC. "Parallel report to the initial report submitted by the state of Palestine in accordance with Article 19 of the Convention Against Torture and other cruel or inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment (CAT)," https://tinyurl.com/vytvbew9

Child Brides

- Official claim of a decrease of early marriages from 20% in 2019 to 11% in 2021 resulting from Law by Decree No. 21 of 2019 which raised the marriage age to 18 was strongly contested. A critical gap in the law grants exemptions under exceptional circumstances without specifying criteria for the exceptions. Thus, more than 10 thousand girls under the legal marriage have been married mostly to older men 2020-2021 in accordance with the allowed exceptions. The "marriage of minors continued in 2021 at an accelerated rate, and the number of marriages increased from 5,102 in 2020 to 5,384 in 2021."[92] This has meant approximately 32% of finalized marriage contracts were exceptional marriage contracts. [93]
- Since issuance of the Law, many child marriages have taken place outside the court system through marriage registration offices then registered and legalized retroactively by the courts once the child bride reaches the legal marriage age.[94]
- Our findings highlight the profound physical, social, legal, and economic challenges the child-brides face, especially acute in situations involving childbirth and divorce and when married couples hold different resident/citizenship status of West Bank, Gaza, Jerusalem, and Israel.

Challenges

- Personal Status Law jurisdiction reinforces the principles of inequality and discrimination against women. For example, women's economic and social rights are legally linked to men's will.[95]
- Discriminatory and outdated legislation inherited from previous legal regimes applied to the Palestinian state, such as the current Penal Law and the Personal Status Law, in which comprehensive systems of protection from GBV and services for survivors are absent.

92 Iyad Riyahi. "The Marriage of Minors in Palestine," 2022. Al-Marsad. Ramallah, Palestine. https://tinyurl.com/3una5886

93 ibid

94 Women Studies Centre. Between legalization and prevailing culture: Child marriage is a legitimization of the deprivation of their rights, 2023. In Arabic

95 ICHR. (2023). Preliminary review submitted to CESCR in the United Nations on the State of Palestine's initial report on the implementation of the ICESCR.

- Legal corpora constitute a major obstacle to the alignment of national laws with CEDAW and other legal mechanisms to ensure the rights of women and girls and protect them from violence in its multiple forms. The state has yet to enact any legislation specifically addressing violence against women. A groundbreaking Family Protection Bill languishes waiting for final approval.
- Absence of new strategic plan to combat violence against women replacing the expired 2011-2019 plan, which was not sensitive to gender or disability.
- Lack of proactive measures is a matter of urgent concern.
- Outdated data limit providing accurate assessments of issues and problems. Most recent survey on violence was in 2019, and the first and last specialised survey of persons with disabilities was conducted by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Development in 2011.
- Patriarchal perspectives and absence of genuine political will are significant obstacles towards promoting gender equality. This is evident in the Family Protection Bill, which has been drafted 11 times since 2003. In the latest draft, the state adopted a definition of discrimination, but not a comprehensive legal framework. The absence of a national legislation system that includes a comprehensive definition of discrimination against women, covering all prohibited grounds of discrimination and encompassing direct and indirect discrimination in both the public and private spheres, highlights the immediate need for such a framework.

Summary

The confluence of three dominant forces with their interrelated related systems currently severely limit the extent to which freedom from violence, stigma, and stereotypes can be fundamentally realized. First is the legal systems themselves. They institutionally disempowered women and girls.

"The legal system in Palestine is one of the most complex legal systems in the world due to the

fact that Palestine has been ruled by various nations and political regimes including the

Ottoman empire, Britain, Jordan, Egypt, Israel – as an occupying power--and partially the Palestinian Authority."[96]

96 WCLAC. «The Experience of Personal Status Law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory,» 2011. https://tinyurl.com/4vev6wbd

These multiple legal systems, parts still intact, are also deeply rooted in both Ecclesiastical and Shari'a laws. Women and girls specifically are severely constrained in the face of multiple legal regimes especially around Personal Status, which includes foundational matters of life and death (sometimes literally) related to legal standing, marriage, divorce, parenthood and child custody, property and rights, and the like. This system institutionalises unequal relations between women and mend within the marriage institution, further exacerbating gendered disparities within the family.[97]

Decades-old refrain, heard throughout many countries of the Global South when women exert their agency to demand their rights, has been deployed again in this reporting period: feminists and other human rights defenders are under the influence or are dupes of Western powers and of feminists intent on destroying the Palestinian family, culture, and nation.

There is a crucial need for specificity regarding the implementation and enforcement of laws. This absence of or inadequacy in judicial enforcement has led to a steady increase in various forms of GBV enacted in both private and public spheres. Despite the progressive legislative changes, there remains a significant gap between the amendments and their enforcement in court rulings. The decrees have amended or suspended some pieces of legislation to protect women and girls against violence and to prevent it. The changes have not been reflected consistently in practice in judicial rulings. The rulings continue to be determined by a restricted definition of laws and by the cultural perspectives of the judges that lack gender sensitivity and encapsulated in traditional social and cultural gender stereotypes and expectations.

Finally, there is a shortage of accurate recent data and statics regarding the incidence and forms of violence, victim demographics, demographics of direct and indirect perpetrator, institutional responses, and final outcomes such as legal rulings, for example. This is especially true for women and girls with disabilities, living in rural and remote areas, and otherwise marginalised, cases of early marriage, and femicide.

97 WCLAC. op cit. 2022

SECTION 4

PARTICIPATION, ACCOUNTABILITY, GENDER-RESPONSIVE INSTITUTIONS

IV. Participation, Accountability, Gender-Responsive Institutions

Critical Area of Concern: Women in Power and Decision-Making

State institutions usually are the backbone of ensuring its people's rights, interests, dignity, and overall wellbeing. Its strength and influence rely on cultures, religions, histories, the will of the people, along with integrity, competence, and vision the leaders. Concurrently, standing in and relations with international institutions and governance systems and other states also heavily influence the functioning of the institutions and the state itself. The meaningful participation of women, if at all, is rooted in all the factors named above, along with the activism and movement-build by feminists and other human rights defender.

The history and extremely volatile political and economic situation in Palestine in large part to Israeli colonisation, although not unique in modern history of the world, is a critical context (see Section I of this report) that has shaped the role and extend of women in power and decision-making at all societal levels.

Achievements

- State efforts to promote women's participation in public life included increasing the quota to 26%. Civil Service Law No. 4 of 1998 and 2005 amendment to it stipulates gender equality.
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights was published in the Official Gazette in accordance with Law No. 18 of 2023.
- Council of Ministers approved the national strategy to enhance the political participation of women in 2023 under Resolution No. 6 of the Basic Law. National strategy seeks to harmonize Palestinian legislation, educate on political rights for women, and promote cooperation among Palestinian women's institutions and between them and regional and international human rights institutions.

- Women ambassadors increased from 11% in 2019 to 17% in 2023 and women in government and management or senior positions increased from 14.2% between 2021-2022 to 16% in 2024.[98]
- Formation of the Elections Cases Court for Local Authorities by presidential decree issued on September 30, 2021, mandated to adjudicate elections crimes. The Court consists of 15 members, two of whom are women judges.
- Code of Conduct to prevent and combat infringement on public rights in elections was launched with participation of representatives of political parties, political and national forces, civil society institutions, governmental institutions, journalists, and human rights activists.
- Three measures were instituted to prevent violence against women in the political sphere and public life. First is to prevent and combat infringement on women's rights in elections. Second is the code of conduct for employees of local authorities. The third "Gender Integrity Charter" to support and strengthen the role of women in local authorities and incorporate standards and principles of integrity.
- Several CSOs advocated, organised lobbying campaigns, published research and policy papers, created media spots on several platforms with the goals of raising awareness and promoting women's participation in public life and decision-making.

Realities and Challenges

- Women still excluded from meaningful political participation and decision-making. They are still significantly underrepresented in the highest positions in ministries, civil service, public administration, judiciary, and justice systems.[99] Only 12.5% of Cabinet members are women and 11% are ambassadors in the diplomatic corps.[100] Data from 2021 show that women constitute approximately 23% of Central Council, 19% of National Council, and 12% of Council of Ministers. Moreover, only one woman holds the position of governor out of 15 governates and comprise only 1% of heads of local councils. Only 1% of Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture Boards of Directors were women. Mere 19% of judges and 18% of prosecutors are women.[101]

98 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. "Proportion of women in government, management or senior positions in Palestine," August 11,2024. https://tinyurl.com/2z4m4urw

99 WCLAC. "NGO Follow-Up to the Parallel Report to the Initial Report of the State of Palestine Submitted to the CESCR," 2023. https://tinyurl.com/yk8xknry

100 ibid

101 ibid

Moreover, 1% of all heads of local authorities in Palestine are women.[102]

- Existence of massive gender gap, marginalisation in all stages of the electoral process. In the last elections in 2021, there were nine lists of candidates created by the Central Elections Commission with sprinkling of women and only 1% of all lists headed by women. There was also a noticeable absence of women not only as candidates but also campaigners. The photos of women candidates were replaced with pictures of vases or an olive tree, a question mark, or simply an X.[103]
- Women candidates constituted 26% of the total number of candidates with approximately 21% women winning seats in the first phase of local elections compared to 79% men.
- Women still suffer from discrimination and marginalization in the civil service sector. Approximately 85,000 women are employed in the civil service sector, distributed among 83 ministries and government agencies but opportunities for them to reach decision-making positions remain far fewer than for men.[104] Although constituting 48% of the civil service sector, only 14% of women hold the rank of Director General or higher compared to 86% of men.[105]
- Women and civil society organisations were largely excluded from meaningful participation and decision-making during the COVID-19 pandemic. A rapid assessment conducted by CARE-Palestine in April 2020 with 51 male and female respondents from the West Bank and Gaza showed that women's participation in the COVID-19 response was marginal. Among the respondent 47% women were involved with associations, groups, clubs, or political parties supporting the COVID-19 response, compared to 60% men. The government's main goals were to manage the health situation and control the spread virus by imposing movement restrictions. The sole focus on these two aspects overlooked other essential services and needs.

102 Central Elections Commission Palestine. "Report on 2021 local elections," July 2021. https://tinyurl.com/bdz3mtsr

103 Women, Media and Development – TAM. (2024). Beijing +30 Parallel report. unpublished

104 WCLAC. op cit. 2023.

105 PCBS. "Proportion of women in government, management or senior positions in Palestine,"

- Most CSOs were not approached to engage in response planning and implementation and women's participation in emergency and response committees was minimal. Women's rights organisations reported that the response planning excluded their expertise and marginalised their work. Thus, after the first three months, some organisations took the initiative and advocated for their involvement.
- Leaders of women's service centres navigated a complex system to gain approval to reopen their centre to continue providing services to women. They eventually were forced to move their offices to a different location within the area.
- Majority of workers in the quarantine centres were reported to have been men, making it difficult for women who accessed the centres to get their needs met comprehensively.

Summary

The goals of greater empowerment and meaningful participation of women in politics, national and local decision-making arenas, and other spheres of influcne are hindered, weakened, and sometimes blocked, by multi-layered colonial, economic, and socio-cultural structures combined sometimes with self-imposed barriers. Additionally, the absence of political will, corruption, lack of transparency of the State are also obstacles.

Glimmer of hope regarding the meaningful participation of women and feminist perspectives on state-building between mid-1990s until the national election of 2006 has been dimmed steadily since then, most especially in the face of the ongoing genocide of Palestinian people. The increasing conservatism, including reversion to even more traditional gender roles, is marginalising women, limiting them to conventional roles in public life, and excluding them from political leadership in this moment. Additionally, patriarchal structures and patriarchist perspectives prevalent in political parties prevented adequate and necessary gender representation and advocacy for interests of women's issues and concerns. In this regard, some women may genuinely prefer to engage in social or community work rather than seeking positions of formal authority power.

Among the serious challenges are most centrally the ever-intensifying Israeli occupation alongside internal political divisions and geographic fragmentation. Both have resulted in heightened security measures, imposed by both Israel and PA. Arbitrary detentions of current and future leaders, both men and women, further complicate this situation.

SECTION 5

PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES

V. Peaceful and Inclusive Societies

Critical Area of Concern: Women and Armed Conflict

Addressing the issue of women and conflict could not be more lifesaving than in this moment. As discussed throughout this report, the ongoing genocide and the worsening Israeli military incursions and violence place heaviest and unimaginable burdens on women. The evidence for the need for Palestinian independence and genuine security, not only cessation of hostilities, is irrefutable.

Achievements

- Preparation of the second-generation National Plan for Women, Peace, and Security (2020-2024) was a significant step toward building and sustaining peace, promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, and implementing the WPS Agenda.
- State efforts included increasing the number of women in the Ministry of Interior to 41%, the security establishment to 7.4%, and civil defence to 4.5%.
- Presence the Higher National Committee for the Implementation of UNSCR1325, though inactive.
- NGOs, such as MIFTAH and others, have joined forces to pressure the state to translate UNSCR 1325 and the WPS Agenda into concrete tangible actions.

Realities and Challenges

Pre-War Realities and Challenges

- 17-year-old blockade of the Gaza and five wars between 2008 and 2022 preceding the current war.
- Surge in military incursions and violence in the West Bank.
- Intensification of rights violations in East Jerusalem with increase in house demolitions, denial of family unification, for example Jerusalemites and West Bankers, the violation of children's rights, detention, arrests, and house arrests. and other discriminatory policies.
- New settlement construction and increased colonial-settler violence in West Bank.
- COVID-19 pandemic, qua pandemic, posed significant and urgent challenges for the state ill-prepared to address them at the time and beyond the height of the pandemic well into the years following. This also affected the state's capacity to address the increased restrictions and violence inflicted by Israeli military and colonial settlers

War-Time Realities and Challenges

Settler colonial violence in the West Bank has dramatically increased, with the killing of over 500 Palestinians, arrests, house demolitions, geographical fragmentation through over 700 checkpoints, land confiscation, new illegal settlements, the annexation of Areas B and C since October 7, 2023. The horrific impacts of the genocide have been detailed in Spotlight on Gaza segment of this report.

Women Peace Security Agenda and UNSCR Resolution 1325 during Genocide

- Any discussion and analysis of Women Peace and Security Agenda and Resolution 1325 must connect current realities in the country with the ideal goals of both: no woman, man, or child feels secure; precarity and unpredictability are the daily reality for all. The WPA and UNSCR 1325 have had negligible impact on addressing the immediate and longer-term needs for genuine peace and security. Thorough national and international discussion and debate on Resolution 1325 and its

relevance to the Palestinian context is necessary if it is to have any impacts. This sort of discussion is especially essential given that serious discussions regarding 1325 are confined closed-room conversations among elite groups, according to findings reported by the Arab Reform Initiativ.[106]

- Exclusion of colonial occupation as one situation of armed conflict nearly totally negates the value of UNSCR 1325, especially since the most powerful governments of the world have given Israel complete impunity for violations of international humanitarian and human rights laws and conventions. The exclusion and impunity limit addressing the situation of women under occupation with continuous military invasions in the West Bank and in the ongoing war on the Gaza.
- Exclusion of women from all segments of Palestinian society has limited the content and depths of conversations that have been had. Because privileged feminists are the representatives, those outside elite circles are unaware of the resolution and, even when they know, they often find it irrelevant to their realities and needs in marginalised and rural areas.

Summary

The question of accountability for violations of international humanitarian law and the human rights of women and girls is more critical than ever during the genocide in the Gaza and ever-escalating violence and destruction by Israeli military and colonial settlers in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The UN Security Council and heads of state have been unwilling, unable, or both, to ensure the safe entry immediately of life-saving goods and humanitarian assistance. The complete impunity for the state of Israel for its war crimes and violations of international laws and conventions has exposed fully the hypocrisy of the Western states, who constructed the foundation and structure of international governance after WWII and raised fundamental questions regarding the relevance and efficacy of global governance systems especially in the case of Palestine. Most important, all these combined have produced destruction and suffering of the most unimaginable nature and scale--televised across the world.

Finally, Middle Eastern countries have not been reliable political partners. For example, they have not leveraged any political and economic power they may have in calling for ceasefires, challenging Israeli impunity, facilitating the delivery of humanitarian aid to needed in Gaza, and so on.

106 Arab Reform Initiative. (2023) Resolution 1325 through the eyes of Palestinian Women. Available at: https://tinyurl.com/bdeh3xxu

SECTION 6

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION, PROTECTION, AND REHABILITATION

VI. Environmental Conservation, Protection, and Rehabilitation

Critical Area of Concern: Women and the Environment

The environmental destruction of Palestine cannot be overstated. The conditions exemplify the destruction of water, air, and land through the apartheid infrastructure, militarization, armed conflicts, wars and preparations for them, wanton killing of trees and other natural life, and unceasing building of illegal settlements throughout the West Bank, and the dumping of toxic wastes are but a few exampes. As Mazin B. Qumsiyeh argues, "data do suggest that environment and human health impacts need to be highlighted in public discourse and remedial actions must be taken in protracted conflict situations like the Palestine/Israel conflict."[107] It is also important to note that the climate change experienced globally also impacts Palestinian people, with women in particular bearing the heaviest burden.

Achievements

- Women hold senior positions as head of the Environmental Quality Authority and Deputy Minister of the Energy and Natural Resources Authority as part of State effort to integrate gender into environmental issues.
- Environmental awareness-guides explain the role of women in environmental issues, such as the environmental culture guide, summer camp guide, environmental activities guide on solid waste and climate change, and a guide for gender mainstreaming in the water sector.
- Policies and programmes seeking to reduce risks for disasters and build environmental and climate resilience have integrated gender perspectives. These have included forming a risk and disaster committee, launching the 2023 Climate Change Platform, and preparing a guide for integrating gender issues and concerns into infrastructure projects. Basic Law No.7 of 1999 was updated and detailed gender-sensitive action plans were developed.

107 M. B. Qumsiyeh, Impact of the Israeli military activities on the environment, International Journal of Environmental Studies, 81, 2, 2024, pp. 997-992. Retrieved from https://tinyurl.com/2s3k2sed

- Civil society actions on women and the environment included organizing awareness-raising campaigns and conducting research on the impact of environmental factors on the health of women and girls.

Realities and Challenges

Pre-War Realities and Challenges

- Climate crisis and its gendered effects are closely connected to and exacerbated by Israeli occupation policies and practices. Israel controls the water sources and resources including its distribution leading to the inequitable distribution and shortage of water. They also prohibit new construction of buildings and structures including water wells and tanks and entry of necessary heavy equipment in many parts of Area C. Increased salinity of water in the Jordan Valley due to waste from Israeli settlements limits and restricts the cultivation of the land.
- West Bank women and girls working in the agricultural sector bear an immense burden. Their only source of income is diminished or entirely lost due to the depletion of water sources, inaccessibility to, confiscation of land, or both, uprooting of trees and desertification, and settler violence for example.
- Climate changes including the severe frost, drought, and heatwaves destroy the crops. This destruction contributes to food insecurity for Palestinian families and places a disproportionate burden on women who are often the breadwinners and primary caregivers.[108]
- Water scarcity hampers women's capacity to irrigate crops during heat waves and to develop their agricultural enterprises overall.[109]

108 WCLAC. (2023). NGO Follow-Up to the Parallel Report to the Initial Report of the State of Palestine Submitted to the CESCR

109 ibid

Ecocide and Women in Gaza Strip

- Ecocide operates alongside genocide in Gaza. Only 3% of the water in Gaza potable, water causing severe water insecurity.[110]
- There is increased groundwater salinity, complete burning of land and crops, deterioration of soil, presence of heavy and toxic metals and residues in agricultural land, over million tons of solid waste, and increased water, soil, and air pollution.[111]
- Destruction of water resources and the burning of lands and crops have exacerbated water and soil pollution. These actions compound the burdens and responsibilities of women heads of households, such as being responsible for securing water and food for their families and having numerous duties in addition to caring for children, the elderly, and individuals with disabilities.[112]
- Collapse of the waste management system has significantly increased the public health risks associated with solid waste exposure for tens or even hundreds of thousands of displaced people. For the seven months between October 2023 and May 2024, there were at least 225 waste disposal sites and informal landfills throughout Gaza, including 14 UN-designated emergency landfills. These sites, often located in densely populated areas, pose a significant threat to public health and the environment.[113] This includes the spread of infectious diseases, airborne illnesses caused by deteriorating air quality from waste burning and the stench of decomposing waste, and the exposure of waste-pickers to hazardous medical and industrial waste. These health impacts pose a significant risk to women, who are disproportionately affected by health risks linked with informal waste picking and domestic waste management in the absence of functional solid waste management systems.[114]

110 WCLAC. (2023). NGO Follow-Up to the Parallel Report to the Initial Report of the State of Palestine Submitted to the CESCR

111 PNGON. (2024). Ecocide in Gaza: The environmental impact of Israel's war on Gaza https://tinyurl.com/2s8x6jv5

112 WCLAC, (2023). NGO Follow-Up to the Parallel Report to the Initial Report of the State of Palestine Submitted to the CESCR

113 Wim Zwijnenburg, PAX, and Marilena Zigka. "War and Garbage in Gaza: The public health and environmental crisis from widespread solid waste pollution," July 2024. https://tinyurl.com/74zutkss

114 Ibid

War-Time Challenges

- None of the efforts mentioned in the State report impact the integration of a gender perspective into environmental protection policies and programmes. According to the Palestinian Working Women Society for Development report, State achievements have been "modest" and there is the need to modify existing legislation and policies and enact new ones to align them with international laws, standards, and obligations because the State has become party to those, such as the International Waste Management Conventions.[115]
- CSO studies and national consultations revealed there are still significant concerns regarding women and the environment. There is a lack of commitment from the Palestinian state to International Waste Management Conventions, highlighting the urgent need for action. There is an urgency of implementing the approved Medical Waste Management and Handling System. Despite its approval in 2012, it has yet to be fully put into practice. The lack of a penalty system for violations of safe waste disposal is a serious issue, as it effectively allows environmental crimes to go unpunished.
- There are legal violations due to the failure to implement international laws and agreements related to medical waste management, leading to unsafe handling of hazardous waste. Furthermore, there is a violation of women's and children's health and environmental rights due to environmental pollution by medical waste, whereby the state must protect these rights and take the necessary measures to prevent pollution.[116]

115 Palestinian Working Women Society for Development. "Environmental Challenges in Palestine Gender perspectives," October 2021. https://tinyurl.com/4w8kyker

116 Women, Media and Development – TAM. (2024). Beijing +30 Parallel report. unpublished

Summary

The impact of environmental destruction is not "gender neutral." As has been amply documented, women worldwide are disproportionately and gender-specifically affected by environmental destruction and climate change. Such is the case for Palestine, most acutely in Gaza. Ecocide impacts have amplified and multiplied the vulnerabilities of the most vulnerable survivors: women, children, elderly persons, and those with disabilities. Although the state and civil society organizations have worked to create change, their efforts have not resulted in the intended outcomes. As the occupation and war ravage on, the need for comprehensive plan that includes more effective methods to face the challenges must be developed.

FINAL SUMMARY,

PRIORITIES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Section III Final Summary, Priorities, and Recommendations

Final Summary

The overall situation in Palestine today is dire, nearly at breaking point in all Six Overarching Dimensions and not only due to the extreme humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Women's organisation and other NGOs have been instrumental, indeed heroic, during the past five years in saving lives and being part of preserving the society. The women's work with marginalised women especially such as women with disabilities, women and girls living in remote and marginalised areas, and women working irregular jobs in the informal sectors of the economy, among others has been extraordinary. Their work played an especially unique and vital role during COVID-19 when governmental services were limited or unavailable. For example, they provided hygiene kits, sexual and reproductive health services, and psychosocial support, while main government focus was on manging the pandemic and preventing infections.

Priorities and Recommendations for 2024-2029 for the Overarching Six Dimensions

Given our understandings of the issues at hand, our recommendations call on three sets of institutions and actors: International and UN Institutions, State of Palestine, and Palestinian Civil Society.

International and UN Institutions

Political Support

- Member states of the UN and signatories to various conventions, international human rights and humanitarian laws must fulfil their responsibilities and obligations accordingly. End impunity and political and ideological support accorded to Israel and its top leaders.
- Hold accountable all violators of international human rights and humanitarian laws.
- Halt the confiscation of Palestinian land in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.
- Demand accountability of military personnel and settlers perpetrating violence in the West Bank.
- Ensure just and fair application of laws, rights, responsibilities, and accountability.

Technical Support

- Assist the State to develop truly participatory planning processes, with the purposeful inclusion of civil society organisations, community-based groups, and representatives of all demographic groups, for developing a comprehensive relief and reconstruction plan for Gaza and West Bank.
- Ensure the leadership of women and girls from various demographic groups as leaders as well as participants.
- Prioritize addressing the specific needs of those most affect and typically relegated to the margins--women, girls, people with disabilities, and people living in villages and other remote areas in the governates.

Resources

- Provide humanitarian assistance and relief immediately.
- Guarantee unconditional funding to the State and to organizations.
- Commit to resourcing fully the plans developed through the participatory processes.
- Ensure both financial and non-financial resources for organizations and initiatives that serve, and are led by, women, girls, and those with disabilities so they will more likely be able to make significant progress securing women's and girls' rights, gender equality, and women's empowerment.

State of Palestine

Legal Reform and Legislative Development

- Establish and adhere to the principle of inalienability and inviolability of laws and rights.
- Review and align Palestinian Basic Law with international laws, conventions, and agreements that the State has ratified, is a signatory, has acceded, or all. This most immediate includes CEDAW, ILO Conventions, Convention on the Rights of the Child, and International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- Review, amend, ratify, or all, laws specifically addressing and impacting the rights, lives, dignity, and wellbeing of women and girls. Most immediately these are Personal Status Law, Family Protection Law, Labour Law, and the Civil Service Laws.
- Draft new legislation based on various reviews and current lived experiences with special attention to women and girls typically and systematically excluded from protection such as divorced women, domestic workers and others in the informal economy, and women-operated businesses.
- Establishing credible and sturdy institutional and structural mechanisms, with clearly defined responsibility and accountability of all parties to ensure the effective implementation and enforcement

Immediate Priorities

- Identify and address loopholes and gaps in the law regarding early marriage.
- Finalizing and approving a progressive and equitable Family Protection Law
- including establishing a comprehensive protection system for victims of gender-based violence.
- Expanding the definition of femicide to investigate office reported and alleged suicides by women.
- Implementing CEDAW General Recommendation 40 on the "equal and inclusive" representation of women in decision-making systems including public, private sector, political, economic, and digital spaces.[117]
- Criminalizing sexual harassment in workplaces in national legislation, aligned with the ILO Convention 190 on Sexual Harassment.

117 The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women's (CEDAW) General Recommendation 40 (GR40) is a call to action for equal and inclusive representation of women in decision-making systems

- Enforcing laws. The State of Palestine should establish clear mechanisms to enforce laws that mandate a 5% quota for employing persons with disabilities in both public and private sectors, ensure a decent wage, and provide health insurance for persons with disabilities. Promoting gender equality in decision-making is also essential.
- Social and Economic Development
- Assess thoroughly and comprehensively the State economic, social, health, and educational plans and policies to identify their impact on women and girls, including those with disabilities, workers in the informal sector, those living in rural areas and Area C, and other marginalized groups.
- Design a national economic development plan, through a genuinely participatory process engaging all segments of the society including youth and elderly persons with women and girls in leadership roles, that will account for the precarity and unpredictability of life in Palestine and indeed the current state of the world. This process may initially be experimental and therefore resisted. Nonetheless, this process could produce much needed conversations about the economy and vision for just economics.
- Evaluate emergency response policies and protocols relative to all societal sectors and demographic groups, and specifically women and girls. Update those based on lessons learned from the past and preparing for future emergency, both predictable based on political history and completely unpredictable or foreseeable as was the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Generate meaningful and accurate data using both quantitate and qualitative research methodologies to conduct a comprehensive assessment of poverty, work including wages lost due to military occupation, unemployment, violence, health and wellbeing, time spent, and harassment encountered while waiting to cross military check points, educational outcomes, and other factors that shape the lives of women and girls. The research methods should include gathering demographic information such gender, age, marital status, religion, disability, place of residence, and more and generating "stories" that will provide texture, nuance, and insight to women's and girls' realities. The findings will serve as a foundational resource for government officials, policymakers, other researchers, stakeholders, and anyone interested in learning about the lived experiences of Palestinian women and girls and in creating change. The findings can be crafted into various forms according to the audience, such as conventional research papers and reports, video, radio programs, social-media outputs, and much more.

- Localize UN Resolution 1325 and the principles of Women, Peace, and Security Agenda addresses militarized colonial and context, while cooperating, networking, and building solidarity with women-led civil society organizations locally and nationally to begin then with regional and international movements.

Civil Society

War and Occupation

- Insist on investigations into Israeli genocide and war crimes in Gaza and human rights violations in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.
- Collect, document, and disseminate testimonies, particularly from women and girls, including those with disabilities, heads of households, and those working in agriculture and the informal sector.
- Highlight the experiences of women and girls in Area C, refugee camps, and villages across the West Bank who have experienced and observed genocide, war crimes, and human rights violations.
- Actively engage in regional and international alliances to advocate for accountability and punishment of Israel for genocide and war crimes.

Movement-Building

- Organize formal discussions and informal conversations to re-assess the current state of progressive politics including ideologies, strategies, and vision among women's and human rights groups, civil society organizations, national coalitions, progressive political parties, and other less visible formations and individuals.
- Based on the results from such discussions and conversations, identify shared values, principles of engagement for integrated, collaborative, and effective partnerships and coalition work, a vision of the future. From there agree on shared priorities, demands, community organizing and mobilisation strategies.
- Maintain pressure on the State to change legal systems to enable persons inside and out to employ them to address the needs and interests of women and girls, a crucial step for generating hope for a more equitable future.

- Highlight the crucial role of research for creating change by conducting feminist studies of women and girls, understood intersectionally, producing and "activating" working papers that explain, describe, illuminate, and provide evidence for specific conditions, whether war, pandemic, climate catastrophe, chronic illness, reproductive health, aging, and so on.
- Reiterate the vital role of partnerships with all community groups, especially women's and youth grassroots organizations, and commit to relational and leadership practices that are honourable, transparent, values-aligned, and rooted in love: of Palestine and Palestinian people; of Palestinian women and girls; of life itself.
- Imagine a "feminist vision of genuine security and a culture of life" with "sustainable environment for all people and the planet. Guaranteeing people's basic needs. People are entitled to self-determination, and should be treated with dignity, and Societies must be organized to preventavoidableharm."[118]

118 International Women's Network against Militarism, "An Urgent Call for Feminist Genuine Security for the People of Palestine, Israel, and the Wider World, 2023, https://tinyurl.com/5auuwt7x

Conclusion

We are confident that this report provides useful history and context, data, analysis, and recommendations that could serve as roadmap for legislators, policymakers, INOGS and NGOs, CSOs, grassroots organizations, and social actors concerned with the rights, dignity, and wellbeing of all Palestinian women and girls. Simultaneously we also are extremely mindful the contraction of funding for women and girls by donors and foundations globally, backlash from Right-Wing and fascist governments is on the rise both on the rise globally.

Against this background, what must Palestinian feminists, women's movement, and human rights organisation do to withstand the pressure of competing for funding and other material resources, the dangers of being divided against one another, of making the connections between our struggles and those of women and girls worldwide as they face genocide and extreme violence?

REFERENCES

- Anera. (nd). What are Area A, Area B, and Area C in the West Bank?. https://tinyurl.com/4jkafurx
- WAFA Palestinian News Agency. (October 17, 2024). The death toll across the Gaza Strip has risen to 42,438, with more than 99,246 injured. Link: https://tinyurl.com/nhhja7cs
- By the end of January 2025, the death toll had risen to nearly 47,000, with more than 111,620 injured. https://tinyurl.com/yruy3cey
- OCHA. (2024, November). Humanitarian Situation Update #239 | Gaza Strip. Available at: https://tinyurl.com/nxurha5c
- Slingshot, War in Numbers, https://tinyurl.com/8hc8zwhd
- Euro-Med Monitor. (2024 9 March). Palestinian prisoners are victims of torture and systematic executions as international organisations are silent. Available at: https://tinyurl.com/fcpe9ex7
- Middle East Monitor. (2024 30 Dec). Palestinian prisoners from Gaza die in Israeli jails. Available at: https://tinyurl.com/bdz7t52z/
- IMEMC News. (2024, 26 July). https://tinyurl.com/47sdzpbk
- Wildeman, J., & Tartir, A. (2021). Political Economy of Foreign Aid in the Occupied Palestinian Territories: A Conceptual Framing. In Political Economy of Palestine: Critical, Interdisciplinary, and Decolonial Perspectives (pp. 223-247). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Clearance revenues are mostly VAT and import duties collected by Israeli government then transferred to the PA monthly according to the Paris Protocol. https://tinyurl.com/kyca6kxy
- International Monetary Fund. (2023, April). West Bank and Gaza: Selected Issues. Middle East and Central Asia Dept. Volume 2023: Issue 147.
- UN. (1979). Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women New York, 18 December 1979.
    - https://tinyurl.com/ynnhsnbx
- PNEEI, http://www.pneei.org/webs/en-us/About-Us/Our-Story
- Palestine National Report Beijing + 30 (2024). (Arabic)
    - https://tinyurl.com/4rux2nrh.
- The Equal Remuneration Convention (No. 100) is an International Labour Organization (ILO) agreement that focuses on gender discrimination in employment.

- International Monetary Fund. (2023, April). West Bank and Gaza: Selected Issues. Middle East and Central Asia Dept. Volume 2023: Issue 147.
- PCBS. (2022). Labour Force Survey.
- PCBS. (2023). The status of the Palestinian labour force in 2023. Available at: https://tinyurl.com/4j5jxvmy PCBS (2022) Labour Force Survey.
- International Monetary Fund. (2023, April). West Bank and Gaza: Selected Issues. Middle East and Central Asia Dept. Volume 2023: Issue 147
- Qader. (2022). Parallel report submitted by Qader Foundation for Community Development to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the right to health, work and protection from violence for women and girls with disabilities. In Arabic
- ILO. (2023). Decent Work Programme Occupied Palestinian Territory 2023–2025 -Summary. Available at: https://tinyurl.com/r93cttvh
- PCBS. (2020). Press release: On the occasion of the International Workers' Day. Available at: https://tinyurl.com/3acb2w5t
- PCBS. (2022). The Reality of the Palestinian Women on the Eve of International Women's Day, press release, 7 March 2022.
- PCBS. (2023). Men and Women in Palestine: Issues and Statistics
- ibid
- ILO (2024, October). A Year of War in Gaza: Impacts on Employment and Livelihoods in the West Bank and Gaza Strip: Bulletin No. 5. Available at: https://tinyurl.com/24y4nmcp
- International Monetary Fund. (2023, April). West Bank and Gaza: Selected Issues. Middle East and Central Asia Dept. Volume 2023: Issue 147
- FAO. (2023). Gender, water and agriculture assessing the nexus in Palestine. Available at: https://tinyurl.com/2hs98mkb.
- UN Women. (2020). COVID-19: Gendered Impacts of the Pandemic in Palestine and Implications for Policy and Programming Findings of a Rapid Gender Analysis of COVID-19 in Palestine April 2020.
- UN Women. (2024) Scarcity and Fear: A Gender Analysis of the Impact of the War in Gaza on Vital Services Essential to Women's and Girls' Health, Safety, and Dignity - Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH).

- General Union of Palestinian Woman. (2020). Report on the Violence Against Women and Girls during COVID-19 in the State of Palestine. Submitted to: The United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women.
- UN Women (2021). A Feminist Economic Analysis on the Impact of COVID-19 in the Palestinian Economy
- UN Women. (2020). COVID-19: Gendered Impacts of the Pandemic in Palestine and Implications for Policy and Programming Findings of a Rapid Gender Analysis of COVID-19 in Palestine April 2020.
- UN Women. (2024). Scarcity and Fear: A Gender Analysis of the Impact of the War in Gaza on Vital Services Essential to Women's and Girls' Health, Safety, and Dignity - Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH).
- PCBS. (2023). "Unleashing the power of gender equality: Uplifting the voices of women and girls to unlock our world's infinite possibilities". Press release on the Occasion of the World Population Day, 11/07/2023.
- World Bank. (2024). Impacts of the conflict in the middle east on the Palestinian economy, World Bank Economic Monitoring Report September 2024.
- ILO. (2024). A year of war: Unemployment surges to nearly 80 per cent and GDP contracts by almost 85 per cent in Gaza. ILO Brief - Bulletin No. 5.
- ILO. (2024) Impact of the war in Gaza on the labour market and livelihoods in the Occupied Palestinian Territory: Bulletin No. 4, June 2024
- UN Women. (2020). COVID-19: Gendered Impacts of the Pandemic in Palestine and Implications for Policy and Programming Findings of a Rapid Gender Analysis of COVID-19 in Palestine April 2020.
- National Consultations, Aug 2024.
- Middle East Monitor, (2024, Oct). Poverty rate in Palestine Territories doubles amid Israel invasion, pulling Gaza development back to 1950s levels. Available at: https://tinyurl.com/4yrnwnf2/
- UN Women. (September 2024). Gender Alert: Gaza: A War on Women's Health. https://tinyurl.com/2sbw4t5u
- WCLAC, (2023). NGO Follow-Up to the Parallel Report to the Initial Report of the State of Palestine Submitted to the CESCR.

- Wim Zwijnenburg, PAX, and Marilena Zigka. (July 2024). War and Garbage in Gaza: The public health and environmental crisis from widespread solid waste pollution. https://tinyurl.com/74zutkss.
- World Bank, (2024 May). The Impact of the Conflict in the Middle East on the Palestinian Economy. Available at: https://tinyurl.com/kyca6kxy
- 7amleh. (2023). A Guide to Combatting Digital Gender-Based Violence. https://tinyurl.com/5ewv9am7.
- A. Ahmad Alnajar, M. Abdel Mohdy, and F. Ata Qaraqe, et al. (in press). "We Speak for Ourselves": Experiences of Government School Students, Families, Teachers, and Principals Facing Israeli Occupation, COVID-19 Pandemic, and Teacher Strikes from Spring 2020 through May 2023. A. M. Qattan Foundation. Ramallah, Palestine.
- Al Haq (2025). Systematic Destruction of Gaza's Healthcare System: A Pattern of Genocide, p. 1. https://tinyurl.com/yhz3jdwd
- Arab Reform Initiative. (2023) Resolution 1325 through the eyes of Palestinian Women. Available at: https://tinyurl.com/bdeh3xxu
- Center for International & Strategic Studies. (January 12, 2024). The Siege of Gaza's Water. https://tinyurl.com/44223n3u.
- Central Elections Commission (2021). Report on 2021 local elections
- GUPW. (2020). Report on the Violence Against Women and Girls during COVID-19 in the State of Palestine. Submitted to: The United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women
- https://tinyurl.com/44u838pf
- https://tinyurl.com/3zwawz9k/
- https://tinyurl.com/5n6yuc92
- ICHR. (2023). Preliminary review submitted to CESCR in the United Nations on the State of Palestine's initial report on the implementation of the ICESCR.
- Independent Commission for Human Rights. (December 2023). Preliminary review submitted to CESCR in the United Nations on the State of Palestine's initial report on the implementation of the ICESCR. Available at https://tinyurl.com/5n8v9wjb
- Iyad Riyahi. (2022). The Marriage of Minors in Palestine. Al-Marsad. Ramallah, Palestine. https://tinyurl.com/3una5886
- Jerusalem Story. (2023), East Jerusalem's Education System.
- https://tinyurl.com/bdz29762.

- Jerusalem Story. (2024). East Jerusalem Schools.
    - https://tinyurl.com/4s9a7br2
- M. B. Qumsiyeh, Impact of the Israeli military activities on the environment, International Journal of Environmental Studies, 81, 2, 2024, pp. 997-992. Retrieved from https://tinyurl.com/2s3k2sed
- Occupied Palestinian Territory Education Cluster. (3 August 2024). A year of silence in Gaza's classrooms: the urgent need for educational revival. https://tinyurl.com/mr4xaa2k.
- Palestinian authority allocates domestic funding for social allowances supporting persons with disabilities and older persons in the West Bank (4 December 2024).
- Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. (2023). Women and Men in Palestine - Issues and Statistics.
- Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. (2024). Proportion of women in government, management or senior positions in Palestine. Available at https://tinyurl.com/2z4m4urw
- Palestinian Working Women Society for Development. (October 2021). Environmental Challenges in Palestine "Gender perspectives.
    - https://tinyurl.com/4w8kyker
- PCBS (2024). Proportion of women in government, management or senior positions in Palestine.
- PNGON. (2024). Ecocide in Gaza: The environmental impact of Israel's war on Gaza https://www.pengon.org/articles/view/170/en
- Qader. (2022). Parallel report submitted by Qader Foundation for Community Development to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the right to health, work and protection from violence for women and girls with disabilities. In Arabic
- The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women's (CEDAW) General Recommendation 40 (GR40) is a call to action for equal and inclusive representation of women in decision-making systems
- The Equal Remuneration Convention (No. 100) is an International Labour Organization agreement that focuses on gender discrimination in employment.
- UN The Question of Palestine (17 October 2024). Gaza Strip: Acute Food Insecurity and Acute Malnutrition – IPC Special Snapshot – September

2024 – April 2025. Retrieved from https://tinyurl.com/3zwawz9k

- UN Women. (2020). COVID-19: Gendered Impacts of the Pandemic in Palestine and Implications for Policy and Programming Findings of a Rapid Gender Analysis of COVID-19 in Palestine April 2020.
  - https://tinyurl.com/5t4ed83u
- UN Women. (April, 2024). Scarcity and Fear: A Gender Analysis of the Impact of the war in Gaza on vital services essential to women's health, safety, and dignity - Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH).
  - https://tinyurl.com/mr37uyjz
- UN. (17 October 2024) Gaza Strip: Acute Food Insecurity and Acute Malnutrition – IPC Special Snapshot – September 2024 – April 2025.
- UNICEF. (12 December 2024). Gaza's Children Protected from Poliovirus Outbreak After Challenging Vaccine Campaign
- United Nations and League of Arab States. (2023). Second Araba multi dimension poverty report https://tinyurl.com/y33xvze8
- WCLAC. (2011). The Experience of Personal Status Law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. https://tinyurl.com/4vev6wbd
- WCLAC, Palestinian Model Parliament: Towards Legislation Based on Palestinian Identity, Progressive Ideals, and Just Content, 2015, Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling, https://tinyurl.com/3z7m7hsz
- WCLAC. (2022). Parallel report to the initial report submitted by the state of Palestine in accordance with Article 19 of the Convention Against Torture and other cruel or inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment CAT
- WCLAC. (2023). Femicide in the Palestinian Society Do Women Actually Commit Suicide? Analytical Report of Documented Femicide Cases 2021-2022. https://tinyurl.com/2p5m7d3h
- WCLAC. (2023). NGO Follow-Up to the Parallel Report to the Initial Report of the State of Palestine Submitted to the CESCR
- WCLAC. (2023). Parallel report to the initial report submitted by the state of Palestine in accordance with Article 19 of the Convention Against Torture and other cruel or inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment. https://tinyurl.com/4f4mwmyr
- Women Studies Centre. (2023). Between legalization and prevailing culture: Child marriage is a legitimization of the deprivation of their rights. In Arabic

- Women, Media and Development – TAM. (2024). Beijing +30 Parallel report. unpublished
- World Bank (2022 April) Palestinian Territories' Economic Update — Available at: https://tinyurl.com/2yv8bjrw.
- World Bank (2022 April) Palestinian Territories' Economic Update https://tinyurl.com/2yv8bjrw
- For more history of Palestine, see for example, Noura Erakat, Justice for Some: Law and the Question of Palestine, 2019, Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA; Norman Finkelstein, Gaza: An Inquest into Its Martyrdom, 2018/2021, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press; Nur Masalha, Palestine: A Four Thousand Year History, 2018, London: Zed Books; Khalid Rashidi, The Hundred Years' War on Palestine: A History of Settler Colonialism and Resistance, 1917–2017, 2020, New York: Metropolitan Books.

Download the Beijing +30 report by scanning the QR code or clicking on the link: https://tinyurl.com/5n8b33ae

