



## **World March of Women – MENA Coordination**

### **Palestine Coordination's Report on the State of Women in Palestine**

What the Palestinian people are experiencing is a great deal of trouble which cannot be escaped through the approach of betting and the illusion that the Palestinian mentality may be drifting towards peace, and therefore relying on the policy of negotiation. The Oslo Accords were the clearest expression of that illusion in terms of the individuality approach adopted by Palestinian leadership who sought to establish itself a practice in which it gambled with historical rights in favor of a partial solution that led us to the unknown, and constituted a cover for the old and new normalizers, the Palestinian people until they regain their confidence in these leaders want a clear rejection of the Oslo approach and agreement and to dismantle all of the obligations associated with it, and in the frontline, the withdrawal of recognition of the Zionist entity.

The effects of occupation policies, such as increased settlement activity, in addition to threats of forced evictions and house demolitions, have affected women, particularly in East Jerusalem and Area C of the West Bank.

The COVID-19 crisis has, of course, affected all women around the world. In Palestine, and not separate from the rest of the countries, we found that the presence of family members within the family framework, i.e. the long times spent in the confinement of the home due to the closure policies announced by the Palestinian Authority to maintain the safety of citizens, has had negative effects in many areas, including the increase in domestic violence against women, this comes due to and alongside the absence of grounds of legal, social and economic regulations to protect the Palestinian family.

The Palestinian society is classified as a patriarchal society where violence against women is promoted through education, upbringing, customs, traditions and community culture that adopts the perpetuation of the inferior view of women, as well as the lack of laws protecting women, as laws can be considered faulty and have not been amended to protect women. In the context of the COVID-19 crisis, the increase of gender-based violence, which is represented in many forms of verbal, physical and psychological abuse, and the worst of all is the rise of murders on the basis of gender, all of which faced a rise during the COVID-19 period. The figures are mixed, but the average is between 30 and 35 women who have lost their lives in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The numbers remain inaccurate due to reporting some cases as physical violence, killing on the

grounds of 'honor', inheritance, or economic reasons. The rise is considered very high when seen in the framework of 6 months.

There are attacks on women's work, feminists and feminist human rights defenders. Unfortunately, this has become noticeable in the Palestinian society, and could be seen as a cause for raising concerns. Palestinian women stand in the way of outdated legislations, as the overlapping legal texts that go back to the Ottoman, British, Jordanian and Egyptian periods are no longer compatible with reality, the State of Palestine has joined several conventions on women in the last decade, the most recent of which is the CEDAW Convention. Jordan's personal status law is still in force in the West Bank, and the family provisions law in force in the Gaza Strip contains distinct privileges against women. The Palestinian Authority's amendments to the law to protect women are still controlled and performed by the judicial authority. The law remains meaningless until abusers are reprimanded, and the governing authorities be able to implement and put in force laws that protect the Palestinian woman, and to work with the amendments that were reached through working with legal and rights-based institutions in Palestine. The reason for the failure of implementing such laws was that the legislative council authorized to implement and amend laws was suspended after Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas ordered its shutdown in 2007. Prior to this, some amendments were made in order to protect women, but these amendments are still in the hands of the judicial force that keeps on issuing small punishments with a maximum of 2 years in prison for the abusers.

**Working women** in Palestinian society suffer from many harsh and inhuman conditions within the labor market, as they suffer from low wages, increased working hours, lack of health care, and lack of access to their rights of vacation days, especially annual and weekly paid leave as well as maternity leave, in addition to harassment of working women verbally, sexually and physically. In light of the COVID-19 crisis, violence against working women increased, as they were arbitrarily dismissed without taking their rights, as well as being denied pay during the period of lockdowns and quarantine, despite working from home for those who were able to.

**Prisoners in Israeli prisons:** The occupation forces continue to violate the rights of Palestinian women, holding prisoner 43 Palestinian women, 8 of whom are wounded, 12 are ill, 16 women are in administrative detention without charge or trial, living in harsh conditions that do not meet minimum human needs, and are subjecting them to various types of physical and psychological torture. The female prisoners are held in Al-Damoun prison, which is located inside the occupied territories in 1948, in contravention of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits the transfer of Palestinians from the occupied territories.

**The current situation in Gaza:** 2 million people have been living under siege for 15 years, have been subjected to three wars in which thousands were murdered, electricity, infrastructure and simple structures Gaza were destroyed. Over two-thirds of the population lives under the poverty line, the percentage of unemployment is about %55, and reaches around %68 among young people and graduates. Electricity is cut in Gaza for around 18 hours each day and is available for

4 hours only. Gaza has been swarmed with COVID-19 in the time where it suffers from poor resources and is not able to fight it, as a result, the strip closed in on itself and started an additional health-related blockade and stopped all aspects of life. Gaza has living an epidemic for decades, which is the epidemic of occupation, the epidemic of siege, the epidemic of division and sanctions, and now, COVID-19. The situation in Gaza is catastrophic and inhuman, and that demands urgent intervention from the whole world. The COVID-19 pandemic has left the Strip with thousands of losses in jobs, many sectors have been stopped due to workers working on daily wages without social protection, and all of that requires an end to the blockade.

**Astonishing unemployment rates among women in Gaza:** A large burden falls on Palestinian women in Gaza, due to the siege, confined movement of people and goods, Israeli military operations, and the Palestinian political divide. Indications are noticed in the rising rates of unemployment among them, especially the educated young women. The report notes the sharp contrast between high levels of educational attainment among women, which reached a staggering 78.3% in the second quarter of 2018, and the ever-rising unemployment rate among them.

**The women of the occupied territories in 1948** are not in a better state than the rest of the women in the West Bank and Gaza, perhaps the opposite is true. The hegemony of patriarchy and fundamentalism has contributed to the prevalence of violence against women in the occupied areas in 1948, adding to this other curses such as Israeli police and judicial forces that are resigned from imposing any punishment on abusers and murderers.