



Ministry of Women's Affairs

Beijing+30 Report for the State of Palestine*

(Years of pandemic and genocide committed
by the Israeli occupation against the Palestinian people)

State actions taken to promote gender equality and women's empowerment for five years,
May 2019–May 2024

Prepared by: Ministry of Women's Affairs

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Section 1: Takeaways

On the thirtieth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the State of Palestine, represented by its National Women's Mechanism – the Ministry of Women's Affairs – reaffirms its commitment to the foundations necessary for progress in the twelve critical areas of concern.

These areas of interest form the common foundation for all State institutions, whose cross-sectoral work is based on the principle of integration and interaction to maximize results from a gender perspective.

The comprehensive national review of progress made in implementing the Declaration and Platform for Action and the preparation of this report coincide with an unprecedented escalation of Israeli occupation violence in the occupied Palestinian territory. The human rights situation, especially the right to life, housing, health, water and electricity, and efforts to promote gender equality and empower women and girls, are facing a serious turning point due to the spiral of violence, with which the Israeli occupation violates the rules of international law and international humanitarian law for committing genocide, crimes against humanity and the crime of aggression. The policy of 'Double Standards' has exacerbated the suffering of civilians in the Gaza Strip, as well as the attempts at forced displacement, starvation, and the increase in settlement and colonialism. The current number has reached 185 settlements and 193 colonial outposts. The terrorism of the heavily-armed settlers, moreover, whose number has reached 740,000, and the repeated attacks against East Jerusalem and the West Bank – of the camps, villages and cities – and their reoccupation; field executions and gross violations against prisoners of both genders accompanied all of that. The theft of our money and resources and attempts to liquidate the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) are all part of the Israeli occupation's goal of liquidating our just cause and our liberation and renaissance project.

Since 7 October 2023, there has been an escalation of violence and restrictions in the West Bank and Jerusalem, resulting in a large number of martyrs. Reports indicate that 498 Palestinians were killed by the occupation forces, while approximately 5,000 others were injured. The situation also severely impacted access to healthcare, targeting more than 340 healthcare facilities and staff as documented by the Ministry of Health. In addition, there

are alarming figures regarding prisoners, with a total of 9,500 prisoners in the West Bank, 200 children and more than 700 patients. Furthermore, movement within the area faces significant obstacles, with more than 900 checkpoints and barriers hindering movement between cities and villages. These statistics underscore the urgent need for attention and intervention to address the humanitarian crisis unfolding in the region.

There are attempts on the ground to advance the two-state solution, as the areas of influence of Israeli settlements exceed 60 per cent of the area of the West Bank, although what has been built does not exceed 1.6 per cent of the total area. The occupation authorities intend to build 3,300 settlement units in their settlements in the West Bank, including approximately 2,350 in the Ma'ale Adumim settlement east of Jerusalem. This comes as the pro-settlement website, the West Bank Jewish Population Statistics website, revealed that the number of settlers increased by 3 per cent to reach 517,407 as of 31 December. Meanwhile, the Palestinian government's Wall and Settlement Authority documented 2,410 attacks carried out by settlers in the West Bank, leading to the martyrdom of 22 Palestinians in 2023 and the displacement of 25 Bedouin communities, all after the outbreak of the war on 7 October. In addition, 18 settlement outposts have been established, 8 of which were established after the war.

This ongoing cycle of violence, in which Palestinian women and girls constitute over 70 per cent of the victims, coupled with the repercussions of the "Deal of the Century" and the novel coronavirus pandemic, poses a real threat to human security and stands as a stumbling block to any tangible progress in development in the occupied Palestinian territory, impeding women's advancement in various fields.

To address these structural issues and challenges, the 19th government formulated a programme focusing on relief, reconstruction and economic recovery, the social welfare system, strengthening resilience and democracy, human rights and transparency, financial sustainability, economic stability, restructuring and consolidation of institutions, combating corruption, improving the quality of services and digital transformation. The government reiterated its commitment to international obligations and expressed, at the core of its efforts, a serious desire to address gender inequalities and overcome their root causes.

Hundreds of Israeli aircraft and tanks have been mercilessly bombing civilian homes in the Gaza Strip, non-stop, since 7 October, until the date of writing this report,

mid-May 2024. Hundreds of thousands of Israeli occupation soldiers, armed with all kinds of the most dangerous weapons, are burning everything in their path and burying martyrs in mass graves to conceal their heinous crimes. To date, more than 36,000 have been killed, more than 80,000 have been wounded and more than 10,000 have gone missing, 70 per cent of whom are women and children, which represents 2 per cent of the total population of the Gaza Strip. The world remains silent, watching the killing of women and children in front of the cameras, without taking any action. This is a complete and clear genocide of entire families that have been erased from the civil registry, in addition to the displacement of more than 1 million citizens from their homes in the north of the Strip to the south. This genocide did not exclude anyone, including the health system. At a time when the residents believed that hospitals were safe from the war machine, which prompted them to seek refuge in them and protect them as a safe spot for them and their families after they became homeless, the Israeli occupation deliberately defied the simplest norms of international humanitarian law by bombing hospitals, besieging them with tanks, arresting medical personnel and abusing them.

Israel has not been satisfied with its intensive military operations, but has resorted to cutting off water, electricity, food and medicine to the Strip, which has already been under siege for 17 years, in a clear indication that the 2 million besieged citizens have been subjected to a policy of collective punishment and death in all its forms. If they do not fall victim to the war machine, death and suffering will pursue them, whether through starvation, homelessness, sickness without medicine or injury and the ravages of war will remain etched in their bodies due to their failure to receive the necessary medical care as a result of the deliberate destruction of hospitals and the devastation of the health sector. As a result of this tragic situation, the health of more than 60,000 pregnant women has been particularly affected. They have been denied prenatal care or safe delivery services, with many forced to undergo caesarean sections without anaesthesia, while others have experienced premature births and involuntary abortions, which will double maternal and child mortality.

Even after the Israeli occupation's flames of evil and revenge subside and allow a ceasefire, the woes, catastrophes, psychological warfare and humanitarian crises that will plague the entire population indefinitely will not cease. The dire living conditions that the war will leave behind will particularly affect the most vulnerable groups: women, children, the elderly and people with disabilities, whose rates will rise significantly after the war,

undermining efforts to achieve development. In parallel, the occupation authorities imposed a stifling siege on Palestinian cities in the West Bank, with concrete and earth barriers, humiliating searches and severe beatings. They also invaded camps with heavy tanks, oppressed female and male prisoners, constantly threatened them with rape, committed serious violations against them and cut off food supplies to prisoners in general, causing each prisoner, male and female, to lose more than half their body weight.

Efforts to ensure equality and social justice while the Gaza Strip is witnessing a brutal genocide and the implementation of plans to weaken the Authority and plunder its lands and wealth, amidst complete international silence and confirmation of international double standards, are futile efforts if the safety of Palestinian lives is not guaranteed, the ceasefire is not enforced, the settlers are not restrained from their acts of violence and the destruction of infrastructure in the Palestinian camps in the West Bank is not halted. Rather, the top priority is to work to ensure that Palestinians enjoy their human rights to live with dignity like other peoples.

While the Israeli occupation authorities are seeking to obscure the facts about the crimes they are committing and their repressive practices, which are a major obstacle to human progress and development, the Beijing+30 Report provides evidence and testimony to the crimes and repressive practices committed against Palestinians, both men and women. It demonstrates to the world, as it reviews its achievements and actions over the past five years, that the Israeli occupation has destroyed everything in just a few months.

As part of the preparation of the Beijing+30 report, and in the context of documenting Palestinian efforts to empower and protect Palestinian women and girls, the Ministry of Women's Affairs held two consecutive two-day workshops in May 2024. The workshops aimed to conduct consultations with all national stakeholders in order to conduct a comprehensive review at the national level, highlighting the progress made in achieving social justice, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. This would then lead to a national report that reflects the most prominent measures taken in previous years and highlights the impact of the occupation on women and girls and their enjoyment of a decent level of rights at all levels.

The first workshop included national government stakeholders from ministries and government institutions whose work areas intersect with the critical areas of concern covered

by the Beijing Platform for Action. Representatives from ministries such as the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education were also present, as were representatives from the justice sector, including the Public Prosecution, the Police and the Ministry of Justice. The methodology for preparing the report and the critical areas of interest it covers were reviewed. The attendees were divided into working groups in line with the main themes and sections included in the report. Discussions and presentations were conducted, from which the outcomes to be included in the report will be derived.

Emphasizing the vital role of civil society institutions in enriching international reports – and in the spirit of genuine partnership – the Ministry of Women’s Affairs held a second session with civil society organizations, alongside representatives from UN-Women and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). The session highlighted the importance of the report and the contributions of civil society in reviewing and enhancing its content to produce a comprehensive national report for the State of Palestine. The methodology used to prepare the report, national priorities and challenges for the next five years were also discussed. Additionally, the session included a presentation of the key outcomes from the first session, organized around the six critical areas of the Beijing Platform for Action, where participants engaged in dialogue and provided feedback.

Based on the principle of leaving no one behind, the government prioritizes the specific needs of marginalized women and girls and seeks to address them by amending laws related to women’s economic, social and political participation. Key amongst these are the Labor Law, the Social Security Law, the Retirement Law, the Legal Aid Law and the Family Violence Protection Law. In parallel, economic laws have been reviewed and amended to be more gender-responsive, including the new Companies Law 2020–2021, the E-Commerce Law, the Insolvency Law for insolvent companies, the Commercial Agencies Law, the Competition Law, the Consumer Protection Law and the Secured Transactions Law. Gender-based reviews have also been conducted for the Investment Promotion Law and legislation related to taxation and customs. The government also passed the Health Insurance Law for Persons with Disabilities No. 2 of 2021 – which grants persons with disabilities full coverage on some important tools –, Decree-Law No. 30 of 2021 amending Decree-Law No. 4 of 2016 on the protection of juveniles and Decree-Law No. 33 of 2021 on the development of the

establishment of the Palestinian Fund for Employment – which provides operational programmes for the unemployed.

At the level of procedures, the Ministry of Women’s Affairs, in coordination with partners, launched the National Electronic Observatory on Violence against Women on the website www.gbvo.mowa.pna.ps. At least 300 data entry personnel were trained, and the Observatory began to work slowly in extracting indicators to form a national figure. To encourage women to use technology in their projects, electronic platforms were launched to support women in the economic sector. A website (oilinitiatives.ps) and an e-marketing platform (E Souq) were developed to attract economic initiatives. In addition, multiple awareness programmes for female farmers were launched to train them on topics such as using technology in organic agriculture, safe agriculture and conservation agriculture.

Examples of the key good practices and achievements in achieving gender equality include:

1. Decree-Law No. 21 of 2019 on raising the age of marriage to 18 years for both sexes, according to which discrimination between the sexes in terms of the age specified for marriage has been removed.
2. Decree-Law No. 1 of 2021 amending Decree-Law No. 1 of 2007 on General Elections. This law increased the quota of women in each list from 3 to 4, thereby increasing the percentage of women in the Legislative Council from 12 per cent to 26 per cent.
3. Law No. 24 of 2022 on amending the Civil Service Law No. 4 of 1998 and its amendments, which includes raising maternity leave from 70 days to 90 days and calculating the hour of breastfeeding within the retirement benefit, and paternity leave for 3 days.
4. Granting an annual award to the most distinguished women in the political, social, economic, cultural, human rights and media sectors.
5. A law on inheritance rights that speeds up the procedures for women to obtain inheritance.

One of the key lessons learned in the review process of the Beijing Platform for Action is the need to strengthen the response of monitoring and evaluation processes in official institutions regarding women’s and gender issues, increase coordination and clarity between policymaking circles and hold periodic meetings leading to clarification of concepts and visions and building approaches.

One of the areas that needs support in the State of Palestine in terms of funding, capacity building, policy advice, data collection and analysis, technology and partnerships is the development of a relief and early warning policy to address the urgently needed issues such as the genocide in the Gaza Strip and what is happening against the camps in the West Bank. In addition, women's participation in the economy, technology and workforce should be promoted and empowered through incentives and entrepreneurial projects to employ women in all sectors. Support should be provided in the process of collecting and disaggregating data by sex, as there is no legislation or legal text in the General Statistics Law that explicitly addresses the production and dissemination of statistics by sex and the commitment of working institutions to decent work standards, especially women in the informal sector, including the minimum wage and equal pay for work of equal value.

Also, violence against women and girls must be addressed by fostering a legislative and political environment and implementing practical measures aligned with international standards to eliminate violence and all forms of discrimination. Moreover, women should have the right to inheritance and should have the right of guardianship over children, including after divorce, on an equal basis with men. There is a lack of laws that protect the family and an insufficient legislative environment to ensure the promotion of a culture, customs and social patterns that allow women and girls to live in a society free from violence. It is necessary to provide women who are victims or survivors of violence with full access to justice, health and education services.

Additionally, women's political participation in public life and decision-making positions should be enhanced. This can be achieved through increasing the percentage of women's participation in power and decision-making positions, especially in trade unions, federations and local bodies. It is also crucial to increase knowledge and education about women's political rights among young men and women, particularly in Palestinian universities, thereby enhancing the Palestinian narrative and including women.

Moreover, it is essential to work on the agenda of women, peace and security per Resolution 1325 to protect women from Israeli attacks and violations. It is necessary, to this end, to work to strengthen protection services and efforts to prevent the effects of violations of the Israeli occupation and expand them for women and girls. It is also crucial to monitor the crimes of the Israeli occupation against women and report them to human rights

organizations, United Nations organizations and international agencies. It should also provide the elements of steadfastness and rapid response plans for women who are most affected by the conditions of the occupation.

Furthermore, the institutionalization of gender equality should be promoted. Their needs in all sectors should be mainstreamed through the inclusion and integration of gender issues in plans, policies, programmes, projects and budgets. This can be achieved by allocating the necessary amounts for gender equality and women's empowerment within the sectoral budgets of the leading official institutions. The Palestinian media should be empowered and strengthened to address gender issues. Coordination and networking with national mechanisms that support women's empowerment in relation to gender equality issues should be expanded and enhanced.