



Social and Economic Situation of Palestinian Women and Girls

July 2018 - June 2020

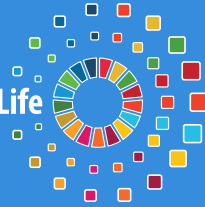


Shared Prosperity **Dignified Life**





Shared Prosperity **Dignified Life**



VISION

ESCWA, an innovative catalyst for a stable, just and flourishing Arab region

MISSION

Committed to the 2030 Agenda, ESCWA's passionate team produces innovative knowledge, fosters regional consensus and delivers transformational policy advice. Together, we work for a sustainable future for all.



Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

Social and Economic Situation of Palestinian Women and Girls



July 2018 - June 2020

© 2021 United Nations
All rights reserved worldwide

Photocopies and reproductions of excerpts are allowed with proper credits.

All queries on rights and licenses, including subsidiary rights, should be addressed to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA),
e-mail: publications-escwa@un.org.

The findings, interpretations and conclusions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations or its officials or Member States.

The designations employed and the presentation of material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

Links contained in this publication are provided for the convenience of the reader and are correct at the time of issue. The United Nations takes no responsibility for the continued accuracy of that information or for the content of any external website.

References have, wherever possible, been verified.

Mention of commercial names and products does not imply the endorsement of the United Nations.

References to dollars (\$) are to United States dollars, unless otherwise stated.

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

United Nations publication issued by ESCWA, United Nations House, Riad El Solh Square,

P.O. Box: 11-8575, Beirut, Lebanon.

Website: www.unescwa.org.

Photo credits:



"I live in a tiny house in Khan Younis refugee camp," says Maryam. "During summer, it gets very hot inside, and outside, there is nowhere to play as it is very crowded in the camp. I love coming to the sea, where I can play and have fun, but it is far from my home. I wish that my refugee camp will have a park and playground one day."

©UNICEF/UNI192388/EI Baba

©iStock.com/bomberclaad

Executive summary



This report reviews the situation of Palestinian women and girls during the period July 2018–June 2020, focusing on political, social, economic and human rights development outcomes. Building on published research by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), and drawing on the most recent data, it highlights a complex situation, presenting a picture of progress made and setbacks in the context of the Israeli military occupation of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza. While much effort has been put into building a Palestinian State that addresses gender inequalities, women and girls continue to suffer from entrenched discrimination and insecurity.

The report highlights that occupation-related policies do not account for the needs of Palestinian women and girls. The gendered impacts of these policies during the two-year reporting period are examined, including increasing settlement activity, threatened evictions and house demolition, particularly in East Jerusalem and Area C of the West Bank, along with the consequences of the 13-year Israeli blockade of Gaza and the toll of the Great March of Return on the population. The stark effect of the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) on women is also analysed. The pandemic has further exacerbated inequalities and instances of violence while adversely impacting access to services for survivors.

The socioeconomic indicators that define the lives of women and girls in the State of Palestine are presented. The increasing gap in living standards between communities in the West Bank, particularly Area C, H2 and

East Jerusalem, is examined, and between the West Bank and Gaza, where the blockade, combined with periodic escalations of violence and the political tension between the Government of Palestine and Hamas, which has de facto control of Gaza, has left many women and girls living precarious lives, deepening their vulnerability.

In terms of rights, the situation shows mixed results, with high educational attainment levels among women sharply contrasting with their escalating levels of unemployment. Despite a number of measures put in place by the government over the reporting period, violence against women and girls continued, posing a serious challenge to them, and their rights in general.

The extent to which the State of Palestine has made progress in aligning national legislation and policies with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Platform for Action, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Women, Peace and Security agenda is assessed. While there have been a number of positive steps, legislative reform needs to be expedited to better protect and promote women and girls. More needs to be done regarding women's political representation, including increasing the number of females holding political office and assuming decision-making positions.

Finally, a set of recommendations is proposed that encompasses a broad range of gender-sensitive legal and institutional reforms, alongside economic and social measures to enhance the rights and well-being of women and girls.

KEY MESSAGES



PALESTINIAN WOMEN AND GIRLS

SUFFER THE ADVERSE EFFECTS OF



OCCUPATION



POLITICAL
VOLATILITY



HUMAN RIGHTS
VIOLATIONS

Palestinian women and girls in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip continue to suffer the adverse effects of occupation, political volatility and human rights violations.

PALESTINIAN WOMEN AND GIRLS

EXPERIENCE MULTIPLE SOURCES OF VIOLENCE



NEGATIVE IMPACT OF ISRAELI
POLICIES IN THE OCCUPIED
PALESTINIAN TERRITORY



PATRIARCHAL GENDER NORMS & LEGAL
FRAMEWORKS NOT FULLY ALIGNED WITH
INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS.

Palestinian women and girls experience multiple sources of violence. They suffer from the negative impact of Israeli policies and practices in the occupied Palestinian territory, many in violation of human rights law, and also as a result of patriarchal gender norms exacerbated by a legal framework that does not fully align with international standards.

THE GAZA BLOCKADE



SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

RESTRICTED WOMEN'S ACCESS TO



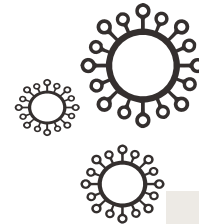
ADEQUATE LIVING STANDARDS

The Gaza blockade has severely restricted women's access to health care, including sexual and reproductive health services, and to adequate living standards for themselves and their families.

ACCESS TO JUSTICE PROTECTION SECURITY SERVICES



HAS BECOME MORE CRITICAL



COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Palestinian women and girls' access to justice, protection and security services has become more critical with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

SECURING THE RIGHTS OF PALESTINIAN WOMEN AND GIRLS RELIES ON ENSURING



GENDER EQUALITY



WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT



ENDING THE OCCUPATION

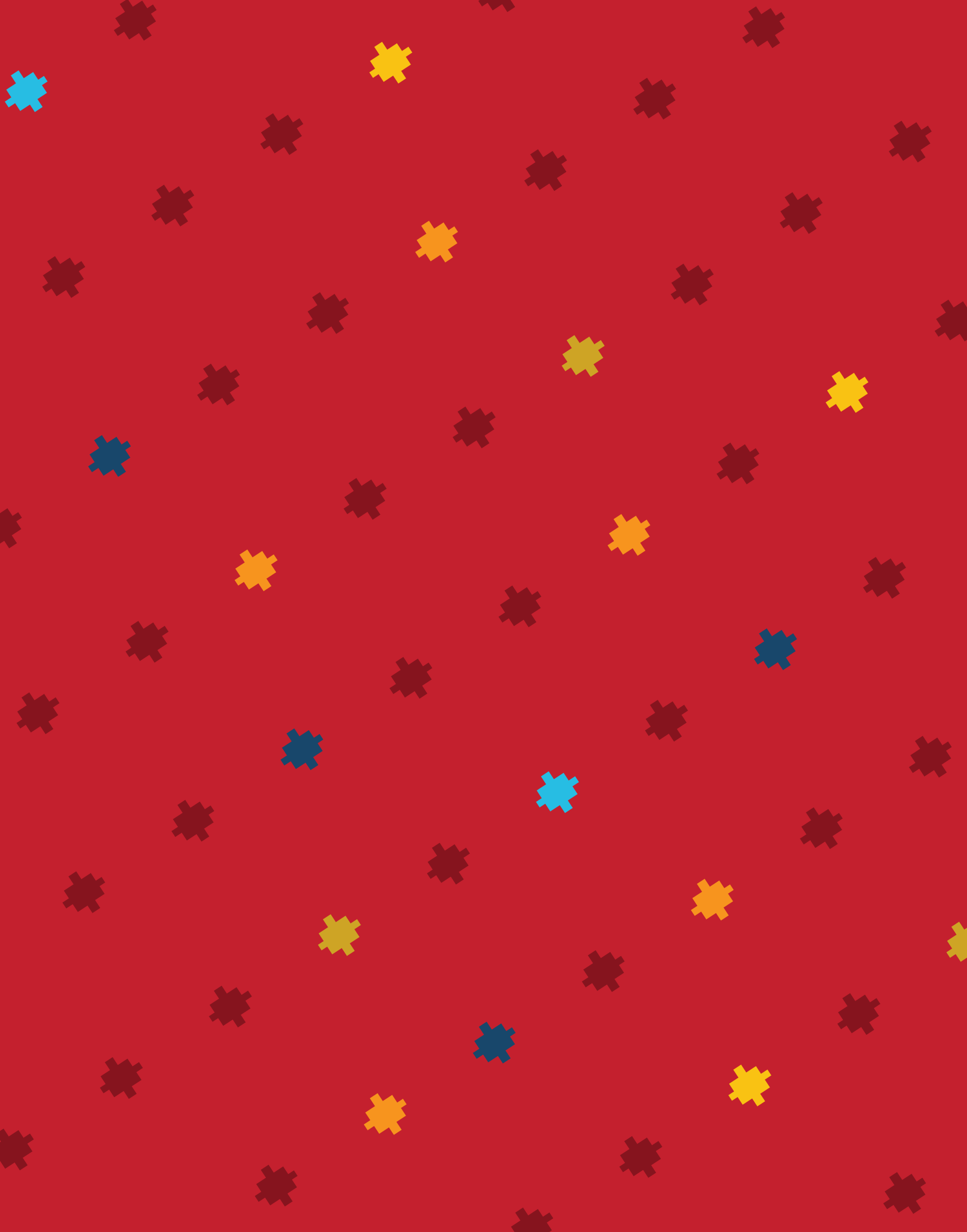
Securing the rights of Palestinian women and girls relies on ensuring gender equality and women's empowerment and, critically, on ending the occupation so that the Government of the State of Palestine can exercise due diligence.

Contents

Executive summary	3
Acronyms	7
1. Twenty years of reporting: trends and developments	9
2. Political setting and gendered aspects of the Palestinian territory under occupation	13
A. Political and security developments	14
B. Life under occupation	21
3. Demographic and socioeconomic trends among Palestinian women	27
A. Population and demographics	28
B. Poverty and food insecurity	29
C. Education	30
D. Employment	32
E. Health	34
F. Environment	35
G. Gender-based violence	37
H. Media	41
I. Girl child	41
4. Political and social participation, legal frameworks and the rights of Palestinian women	43
A. Political participation and processes	44
B. The national women's machinery and other institutions	46
C. Aligning national legislation with international frameworks	47
5. Conclusion and recommendations	49
Bibliography	53
Endnotes	60
List of tables	
Table 1 Population, by region and sex	28
Table 2 Employment indicators, by region and sex, 2019 (percentages)	32
Female participation in political life, 2019 (percentages)	44
List of boxes	
Box 1 Arson in Qalqilya leaves family with no hope for justice	17
Box 2 COVID-19 and pre-existing vulnerabilities of women and girls in Gaza	19
Box 3 Grounds for denial: no cell phone	20
Box 4 Profiles of female prisoners and detainees	24
Box 5 Multifaceted impacts of COVID-19 on the health of women and girls	36
Box 6 Psychological and social effects of GBV during the COVID-19 pandemic	39
Box 7 Women speak out	45

Acronyms

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
CRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSO	civil society organization
ECD	early childhood development
ESCWA	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
GBV	gender-based violence
GMR	Great March of Return
ILO	International Labour Organization
MCH	maternal and child health
NCDs	non-communicable diseases
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PCBS	Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics
PWWSD	Palestinian Working Women Society for Development
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
TIPH	Temporary International Presence in Hebron
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WCLAC	Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling
WHO	World Health Organization
WPS	Women, Peace and Security



1. TWENTY YEARS OF REPORTING TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS

1. Twenty Years of Reporting Trends and Developments

This edition of the biennial report on the social and economic situation of Palestinian women is the 10th in a series. Together, the reports recount how gender equality and women and girls' empowerment have evolved over the past two decades. They also provide a narrative for better understanding the progress and reversals that have occurred within the legal, political, development and humanitarian sectors in the State of Palestine under the longest military occupation in modern history, and one of the most inhumane.

During the past 20 years, the Government of Palestine has worked to ensure that the State conforms to international standards concerning gender equality and women's empowerment. In 2014, shortly after gaining non-member observer status at the United Nations, the State of Palestine acceded, without reservations, to several international treaties, conventions and covenants, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Further, with support from the Ministry of Women's Affairs and women's civil society, the State has committed to engaging in frameworks advancing women's rights, such as the Beijing Platform for Action, the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Despite these efforts, it is clear that the political, economic and social context continues to worsen, and the situation of women and girls to stagnate. More recently, the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuing lockdowns have further impacted on any gains made.

This series has highlighted the gendered dimensions and impact of life under prolonged occupation. As it enters its 53rd year and takes on new dimensions, Palestinian women and girls continue to be exposed to direct and indirect harms. They continue to experience death and the trauma

of injury or detention of family members, as well as a high level of threat from night raids, child arrests and settler violence. For many, the collective punishment of house demolitions and forced displacement persists, creating greater vulnerabilities for women and girls without a safe space to call their own. Women and girls are direct targets of occupation aggression. Several thousand people, including women, participated in the Great March of Return in Gaza in 2018 that resulted in the death of Razan al-Najjar, a 21-year-old medic. Further, while not the vast majority, women and girls continue to be routinely arrested, or detained in Israeli prisons.

Women and girls living in the Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem or Area C¹ continue to be denied access to socioeconomic resources and services. In East Jerusalem or Area C, this means these populations have been cut off from Palestinian services and service providers. In the Gaza Strip, Israeli military intervention and a 13-year blockade caused and sustained a humanitarian crisis. As a result, women and girls in these locales continue to be exposed to violence and insecurity.

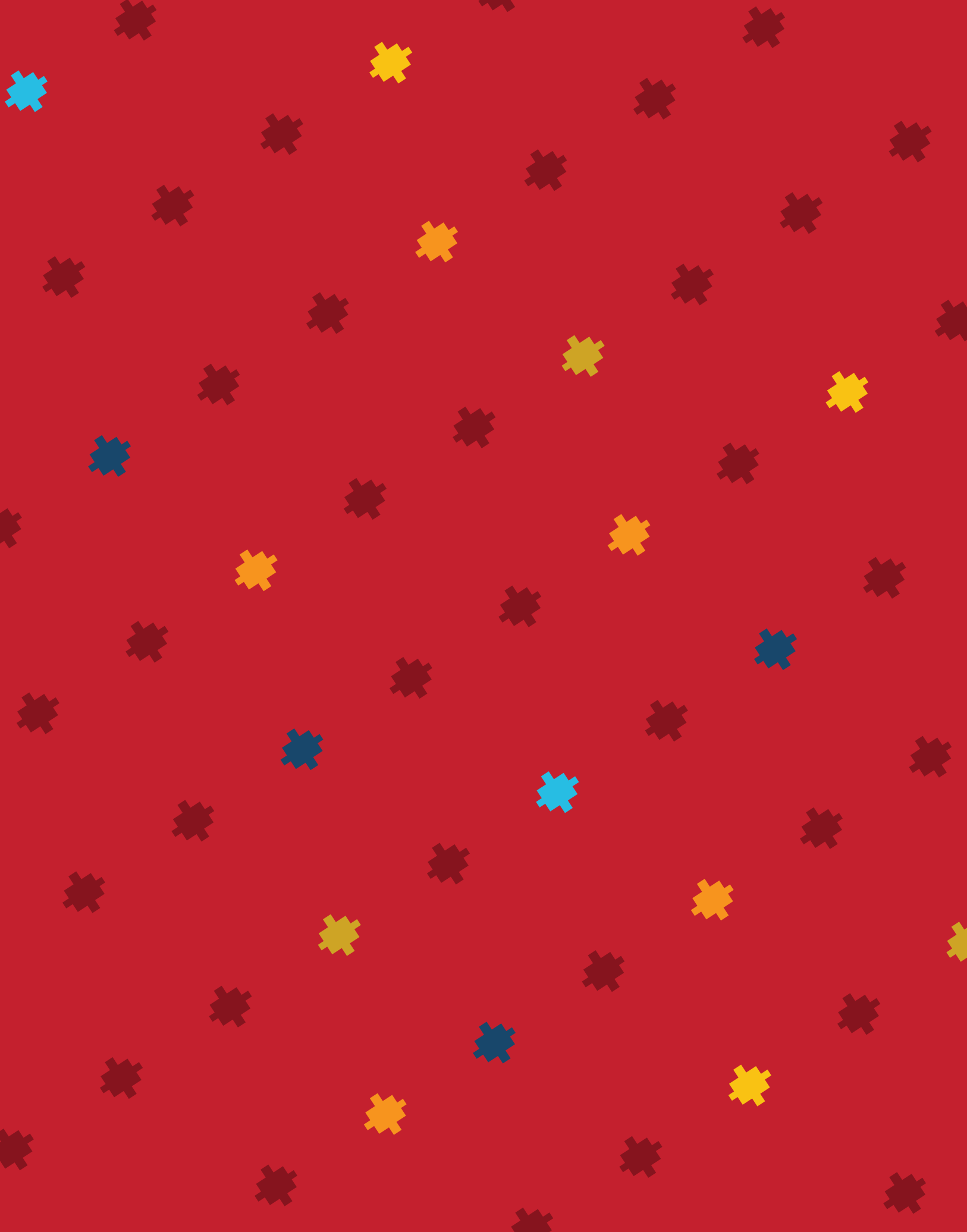
Violence against women and girls does not only stem from their experience of Israeli occupation, but also from the patriarchal

norms of Palestinian society. Attacks by Israeli settlers and soldiers have continued in the West Bank. In general, women and girls are subjected to violence away from direct clashes, either near or inside their homes, or when crossing checkpoints. Therefore, in the midst of the most ordinary everyday activities, they are at risk. Data and perceptions indicate that violence, including instances of child marriage, increase after Israeli military incursions, most often in the Gaza Strip. This reality highlights the links between occupation-related violence and particular forms of violence in the family.

Recent data from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) indicates that violence against women has declined over the past 15 years. However, domestic violence, sexual harassment, so-called honour crimes and child marriage, among the additional harms perpetrated under the occupation, remain a daily reality for many women and girls. Violence against women service provision has improved, particularly through the creation of a referral network (Takamol), hotlines, shelters and psychosocial support, but there is still no law criminalizing violence against women. PCBS data also show that few women access services due to the stigma attached to seeking such help. Communities in the Gaza Strip, Area C and East Jerusalem face compounded violence yet continue to have limited access to services. In most instances, this is because the government and civil society do not have jurisdiction over the areas where survivors live, or they are unable to reach these populations to provide such services.

The engagement of women and girls in the public sphere, either through employment, education or political participation and representation, has varied over the decades. Rates of female education are consistently high, in contrast to women's labour force participation, which has increased, but only from 10.3 per cent in 2001 to 18.1 per cent in 2019. Meanwhile, women's unemployment has jumped from 13.8 per cent to 41.2 per cent over the same period. Women's contributions to politics and their efforts to resist the occupation are strongest at community and grass-roots level, which has been the case since the early days of the occupation. In terms of formal political participation and representation, women continue to remain underrepresented at all levels in decision-making bodies, including the cabinet, diplomatic corps and the judiciary, and municipal councils and camp committees.

While considerable effort has been devoted to building a Palestinian State through legislation and adherence to international norms and frameworks promoting gender equality over the past 20 years, on the ground women and girls continue to suffer from discrimination and insecurity, stemming from the double burden of Israeli occupation policies and deep-rooted patriarchal attitudes. The biennial reports have highlighted the socioeconomic status of Palestinian women and girls, drawing attention to the limited gains made, and the gaps that persist. Securing their rights relies on ensuring gender equality and women's empowerment, and importantly, ending the occupation so the government has the opportunity to exercise due diligence.



2. POLITICAL SETTING AND GENDERED ASPECTS OF THE **PALESTINIAN TERRITORY UNDER OCCUPATION**

2. Political Setting and Gendered Aspects of the Palestinian Territory Under Occupation

In accordance with United Nations Economic and Social Council Resolution [2003/42](#) on Palestinian women, and ESCWA Resolution [330 \(XXX\)](#) requesting the secretariat “monitor, analyse and document the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation and Israeli violations of the rights of the Palestinian people and of international law”, ESCWA issues biennial reports on the status of women and girls in the occupied Palestinian territory.² They provide an overview of progress and challenges in advancing the political, social, and economic and human rights of Palestinian women and girls. This report covers the period from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2020.

The information in the report is based on published PCBS data and reports by United Nations entities, including the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and the World Health Organization (WHO). The analysis has been complemented by information provided by the Palestinian Ministry of Women’s Affairs, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education, and civil society organizations (CSOs) and international development agencies.

A. Political and security developments

The political and security context of the occupied Palestinian territory continues to be defined by 53 years of Israel’s direct military occupation, and practices and policies that entail violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. This has resulted in protracted humanitarian crises, deteriorating living conditions and stunted social and economic development, and in some cases de-development. After 25 years of international support for State building, the government continues to have limited sovereignty and authority.

In Areas A and B (38 per cent) of the West Bank, the government faces challenges

and restrictions in providing services and applying the rule of law, while it is unable to provide any services to Palestinians in Area C (which is under Israeli military and administrative control), and East Jerusalem (annexed in 1980, an act the United Nations condemned as unlawful). Israel, as the occupying power, remains effectively in control of the entire West Bank and has initiated legislative steps to apply its sovereignty over areas therein.

During the reporting period, Israel has continued to impose restrictions on Palestinians, including an air, sea and land blockade of the Gaza Strip, movement

restrictions in the West Bank, and building and access restrictions in Area C and East Jerusalem. The internal divide between the West Bank-based government and de facto authorities in Gaza also persisted. All the while, women and girls in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza continued to suffer the adverse effects of political volatility and human rights violations.

1. Political developments

Negative political, legislative and security developments over the reporting period have continued to erode prospects for a two-State solution. Israel has consolidated its control over Area C (some 60 per cent of the West Bank is considered Area C), evidenced by accelerated expansion of settlements in the West Bank and the number of laws passed by the Israeli Knesset extending sovereignty over these settlements, and the departure of the United States of America from the broad consensus that Israeli settlements and the annexation of East Jerusalem are illegal under international law.

In January 2020, the United States administration released a document, *Peace to prosperity: a vision to improve the lives of the Palestinian and Israeli people*, outlining elements constituting a clear departure from the two-State framework that has governed negotiations since the Madrid Peace Conference in 1991. While Israel welcomed the plan, the Government of Palestine, as well as the League of Arab States, Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and several States, rejected the proposals as failing to reflect core elements of internationally recognized legal frameworks, as set out by United Nations resolutions.³

Concerning the peace plan, the United States Secretary-General António Guterres has reasserted that, “any plan must align with UN and UNSC resolutions and secure the approval of all parties involved”.⁴ Michael Lynk, United Nations Special

Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, further commented: “This is not a recipe for a just and durable peace but rather endorses the creation of a 21st century Bantustan in the Middle East ... the Palestinian statelet envisioned by the American plan would be scattered archipelagos of non-contiguous territory completely surrounded by Israel.”⁵

Annexation of large parts of the West Bank was a major topic during the Israeli election, the third round of which was held in March 2020, and was advocated by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The announced plans cover most of the Jordan Valley and lands on which Israel has built some 235 settlements, illegal under international law. This would likely undermine chances of a just and lasting peace and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State.⁶ It would also increase pressure on Palestinians living in and around annexed areas, as they would potentially lose access to land, livelihoods and basic services, and be exposed to greater violence and insecurity. Palestinian women would no doubt become more isolated and less financially secure, while girls’ education, often viewed as a poor investment by families in poverty, “is likely to decline precipitously in areas near annexed territory”.⁷

Ahead of stated plans to annex parts of the West Bank, the Government of Israel stepped up its policy of land appropriation and settlement activity in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, in violation of Security Council resolutions, including Resolution 2334, adopted on 23 December 2016. Resolution 2334 affirms that all Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory constitute a flagrant breach of international law, declaring them a “key driver of human rights violations, including restrictions on freedom of movement, the demolition of Palestinian homes and property, settler violence, confiscation of

property and subsequent impunity”.⁸ The 2019 report on settlement construction by Peace Now revealed the annual average construction of housing units in the West Bank, excluding East Jerusalem, since 2017 was 25 per cent higher (2,267 units) than before 2017 (1,807 units).⁹

In November 2019, the United States announced that it no longer considers Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory as violating international law, despite resolutions from international bodies and the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice in 2004. The result was accelerated settlement construction in East Jerusalem. This includes initiating work on what will become the largest settlement compound within a Palestinian neighbourhood; Nof Tzion is a settlement project sitting not adjacent to Jabal Mukaber, but within it.¹⁰

The reporting period also included other sources of tension between the governments of Israel and Palestine. In February 2019, based on 2018 law, Israel’s government began unilateral deductions of almost \$12 million per month from the clearance revenues it collects on behalf of the Palestinian government.¹¹ In reply, the Palestinian government temporarily refused clearance revenue transfers from Israel, noting it will accept the revenue only if the full amount is transferred.

2. Security context: violence and the use of force

The security situation in the occupied Palestinian territory has continued to deteriorate, with a differentiated impact on Palestinian women, men, girls and boys.

In Gaza, the situation has remained volatile, threatening Palestinian lives and physical security. During this reporting cycle, 224 Palestinians in Gaza were killed, eight of them women and two girls,¹² and 22,269 persons were injured, including 1,159 women and

314 girls.¹³ The leading cause of death was the use of live ammunition by Israel and air strikes, while the main causes of injury were tear gas inhalation and individuals being hit by tear gas canisters, and the use of rubber bullets.¹⁴ Many casualties occurred during the so-called Great March of Return (GMR) demonstrations, launched in March 2018, which called for the right of return for Palestinians and an end to the Israeli blockade of Gaza. The protests continued until December 2019. Recurrent escalations were recorded during the reporting period, the Israeli army launching intermittent air and artillery strikes at the Gaza Strip, resulting in casualties and damage.

Israel’s response to the GMR protests, according to a 2019 OCHA report, highlighted “longstanding concerns about Israel’s excessive use of force and a lack of accountability”.¹⁵ The United Nations Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the protests in the occupied Palestinian territory found reasonable grounds to believe that some violations by Israeli security forces may constitute international crimes. These include possible war crimes and crimes against humanity, particularly through unlawful, excessive and disproportionate use of force and the intentional targeting by Israeli snipers of civilian demonstrators in Gaza, including children and persons with disabilities, and health workers and journalists.¹⁶

Many of those injured have permanent disability. Injuries, especially severe limb injuries caused by live ammunition, have placed a substantial burden on a health-care system already overburdened by the long-standing blockade, acute shortages in medical supplies and a chronic energy crisis. At household level, the responsibility of caring for injured family members has fallen on women, compounding their care burden.¹⁷ The GMR demonstrations generated “widespread mental health and psychosocial consequences, particularly [for] injured adults,

youth, children and their caregivers”, as reported by OCHA.¹⁸

In this environment, girls’ vulnerability to child marriage has been exacerbated, with Oxfam in 2019 stating: “Girl children who have lost a father, or whose father has become disabled due to injury, are at increased risk of forced child marriage due to reduced income, as the father/husband is usually the family breadwinner.”¹⁹ Moreover, women and girls were subjected to forced or early marriage to men who were injured or maimed. Of the women injured during the GMR protests, 12.5 per cent were unable to return to work. They also suffered from increased exposure to physical and sexual abuse.²⁰

In the West Bank, a total of 65 Palestinians (including two women and one girl) were killed²¹ and 6,818 injured (including 159 women and 59 girls) by Israeli forces during the reporting period.²² Casualties occurred during demonstrations, arrests, raids and detention,

and incidents at checkpoints, and as a result of settler violence. Across the West Bank, State-backed settler violence continued regularly. From 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2020, 1,565 incidents of trespass, violence, harassment and intimidation by settlers towards Palestinians were documented, resulting in three fatalities and 262 injuries,²³ mainly in Jerusalem (434 cases) and Hebron (316 cases). Following the outbreak of COVID-19, settler violence was reported as increasing dramatically in intensity and severity.²⁴ Israeli settlers rarely face legal consequences for attacks on Palestinians, with the Israeli human rights organization Yesh Din finding that 91 per cent of settler violence cases were closed with no indictment filed following investigation.²⁵ The failure of Israeli authorities to investigate or pursue accountability for the vast majority of such crimes contributes to a culture of impunity for Israeli settlers, and a hostile and coercive environment for Palestinians, particularly in Area C and East Jerusalem.²⁶ Such an environment may compel people to

Box 1 Arson in Qalqilya leaves family with no hope for justice

“Depression, anxiety, symptomatic stress, mood disorder and behavioural issues, as well as post-traumatic stress, are some of the most common conditions reported ... [by] victims of attacks by settlers. The feeling of injustice and impunity, the trauma of events and the anticipation of repeated abuses – especially on relatives and children – worsen all these conditions.

“On 20 December 2019, Rola Jaber put her children to bed early, feeling helpless as she heard settlers at her doorstep and the sound of spray cans near her living room window. ‘They tried to open the window here in the living room, and tried to open the door,’ she said. ‘I was frightened. I didn’t know what to do. I was up breastfeeding my one-year-old child, Sahhar. Fearing for my two other children, I covered them up and froze by the door, trying to remain as silent as possible. Then I saw flares of fire outside through the glass. That’s when I woke my husband up.’ At that moment, 23-year-old Rola went outside to see her and her neighbour’s car on fire. ‘My husband broke into tears and started shouting. We used this car to earn our living. My husband has no other job,’ she said after a long silence, followed by a deep sigh.”

Source: Oxfam, 2020, p. 13.



leave their areas of residence, raising serious concerns as to forcible transfer.²⁷

Settler violence has a dramatic psychological impact on women, as they live in constant fear for themselves and their children.²⁸ It may also restrict women and girls' mobility and reduce their access to employment and educational opportunities. A 2019 household survey of Area C by Oxfam and the Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University found that, "fear of military/settler violence was the primary reason women cited for their lack of freedom to move in or to family fields/herding areas, with two thirds ... of women citing this as the reason they were restricted in accessing productive lands".²⁹

The reporting period saw multiple escalations in violence in East Jerusalem, especially in the Al-Issawiya neighbourhood, where, since April 2019, there have been concerns about excessive use of force by the police and a lack of accountability, with residents reporting large-scale harassment, police raids, arrests and detention. The police operation in Al-Issawiya was unprecedented in scale and, as noted by the Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem: "Special Patrol Unit and Border police officers, armed from head to toe, enter the neighbourhood with vans, jeeps and drones and intentionally create arbitrary instances of violent 'friction' that disrupt routine and make daily life extremely difficult in the neighbourhood."³⁰ By the end of 2019, more than 600 residents of Al-Issawiya had been arrested, a third of them minors.³¹

The security situation in Hebron also deteriorated during the reporting period, in particular in the Israeli-controlled H2 area.³² Some 700 Israeli settlers and 33,000 Palestinians live in H2, with approximately 7,000 Palestinians – 20 per cent of the H2 population – residing in access-restricted areas near settlement compounds, designated as closed military zones.³³

In January 2019, the Israeli authorities announced the mandate of the temporary international presence in Hebron (TIPH) would not be renewed.³⁴ Combined with intensified harassment by soldiers and armed settlers, and movement restrictions on Palestinians (with 121 physical obstacles, including checkpoints, separating the centre of Hebron from the rest of the city), the absence of TIPH has heightened the protection risks faced by the population, particularly women and girls.³⁵ In 2019, OCHA recorded 47 attacks by Israeli settlers against Palestinians in H2, triple the number recorded in 2017.³⁶ The deteriorating security environment has restricted women's access to education, employment and health care, and has exacerbated gender roles, with girls pressured into marriage as a means of "protection" so they might be able to move from the H2 area.³⁷

3. Internal political divide

Notwithstanding the 2017 Fatah-Hamas Agreement, there was no notable progress during the reporting period in resolving the political and administrative divide between the Fatah-dominated Government of Palestine in the West Bank and Hamas, which has de facto control of Gaza. Reconciliation efforts, announced following the release by the United States of the Israel and Palestine peace plan in January 2020, were not realized. The withholding of payment of salaries and allowances of employees by the Palestinian government in the context of the Palestinian political divide also continued, exacerbating the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. The paralysis of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), suspended since 2007, has impeded national policymaking and legislative reforms. Without a functioning PLC, the legal systems have remained fragmented. Women and girls in Gaza and the West Bank continue to be subjected to different sets of laws that are not in harmony with CEDAW, ratified by the State of Palestine in April 2014.

4. State of emergency following the outbreak of COVID-19

The first case of COVID-19 in the West Bank was confirmed on 5 March 2020. The Government of Palestine immediately declared a 30-day state of emergency, announcing a set of measures to contain the pandemic and mitigate its impacts. Shortly after, it released a COVID-19 Response Plan, rolling out stricter measures, preventing movement between governorates and closing all non-essential facilities. The state of emergency has been extended repeatedly, though a series of relaxation measures allowing the resumption of economic activities has subsequently been undertaken.

Despite these measures, the WHO has identified the risk to the occupied Palestinian

territory as very high, due to the limited capacity of the health system to cope with a potential surge in the number of cases. The State, for instance, has only 375 adult intensive care unit beds in private and government hospitals and 295 ventilators.³⁸ Moreover, emergency response capacities have been significantly hindered by the volatile political situation. Israeli policies and practices, especially demolitions, mobility restrictions, arrests and detention, and the Gaza blockade, have persisted or even escalated, exacerbating vulnerabilities and complicating efforts to combat the pandemic.

In Gaza, the health infrastructure is eroded, overstretched and on the verge of collapse due to the long-standing blockade, multiple military operations and power shortages.

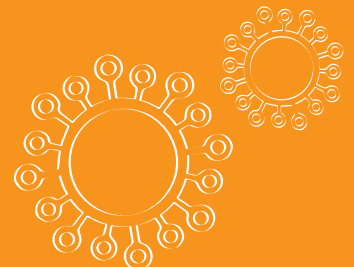
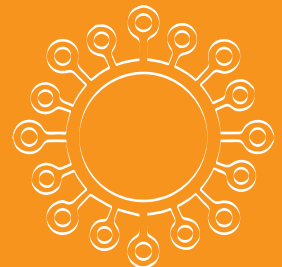
Box 2 COVID-19 and pre-existing vulnerabilities of women and girls in Gaza

“The situation in Gaza has been difficult for a very long time. Even before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the situation was challenging, affecting women’s rights, position and well-being. You could say that we have been living under lockdown for a long time, and with widespread job losses since the blockade and the internal divide, many men have been in home confinement. Tensions in households have been simmering for a long time, and women have been vulnerable to abuse and violence.

“The economic impacts of COVID-19 have placed greater pressure on households, and women are always the first to be impacted. In April of this year, Aisha Association for Woman and Child Protection carried out a survey to explore the psychosocial effects of the health crisis caused by COVID-19. The survey results back our impressions that violence against women, especially psychological and economic violence, is on the rise, while women have less access to means of protection.

“Women have always faced challenges accessing justice. The lockdown and suspension of family courts and legal procedures have made women more vulnerable, with many fathers, for instance, taking advantage of the situation by denying mothers the right to custody of their children following a divorce. Depression, drug use, anxiety and violence have been a problem for many years, and COVID-19 is making all this more problematic, while making it even more difficult for women to access mental health and psychosocial support.”

Source: Reem Freinah, Director, Aisha Association for Women and Child, Personal communication, 10 September 2020.



Overcrowded conditions, particularly in refugee camps and densely populated areas of Gaza, are also likely to lead to high community transmission. Israeli occupation policies, in violation of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, have potentially impeded the Government of Palestine's efforts to contain the pandemic, particularly in Area C and East Jerusalem, where it has no jurisdiction. It is reported that testing clinics in a Jerusalem neighbourhood were raided,³⁹ emergency clinics demolished,⁴⁰ Palestinian volunteers in East Jerusalem arrested and materials confiscated.⁴¹ There have been grave concerns that the rights and health of Palestinian workers in Israel, and those of prisoners' in Israeli detention centres, have not been sufficiently safeguarded.⁴²

Given the relatively high number of COVID-19 cases in Israel, the wives of Palestinian workers in Israel, women workers in Israeli settlements and detainees in Israeli prisons are all groups at high risk of infection.⁴³

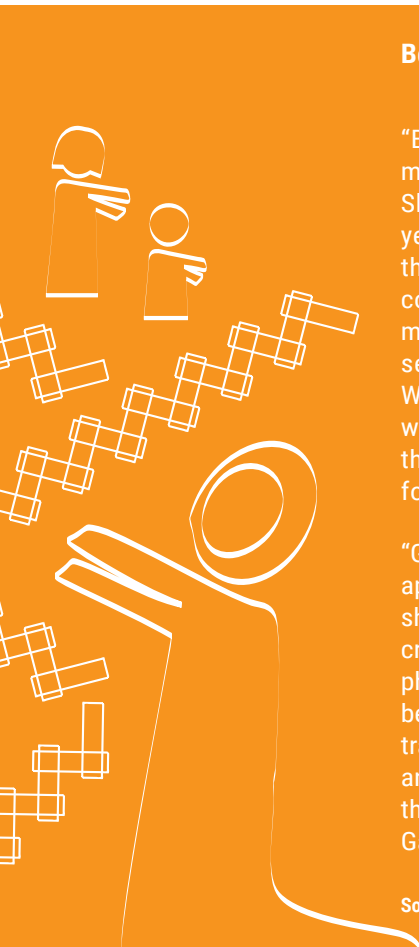
By 30 June, the number of cases had risen to 2,765, from 690 on 16 June, one of the highest rates of increase reported worldwide during the period.⁴⁴ Of these, 97 per cent were in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The cumulative number of fatalities reached 11, including a 19-year-old woman with underlying health conditions.⁴⁵ The pandemic has disproportionately affected women and girls, exacerbating pre-existing vulnerabilities and heightening protection and livelihood risks (box 2). Despite low economic participation rates,

Box 3 Grounds for denial: no cell phone

"Born and raised in the West Bank, the [31-year-old mother of three] moved to Gaza after marrying a resident of the Strip seven years ago. She hadn't been out of Gaza or seen her West Bank-based family in five years. Like so many others in Gaza, her husband cannot find work. Given the deep economic crisis in the Strip, the couple reached the heart-breaking conclusion that their children would be better off if they moved with their mother to her parents' home in the West Bank, even at the heavy cost of separation from their father. The woman has applied for permits to visit the West Bank multiple times in the past. Twice, upon reaching Erez Crossing with her eldest daughter, then a toddler, the authorities denied her exit with the child, so she was forced to turn back. Other applications she submitted for a permit to the West Bank were never answered.

"Gisha contacted the Israeli authorities on her behalf; they responded that her application was denied 'for security reasons' ... [then after another application] she was summoned for security questioning ... but the Israeli officials at the crossing refused to proceed on the grounds that 'she arrived without her cell phone' ... Almost a year and a half after the processing of her application began, the woman and her three children were finally able to exit the Strip and travel to the West Bank via Erez Crossing. Her struggle to return to her home and reunite with her family, a basic right, shows how Israel uses its control over the Palestinian population registry to restrict travel, first and foremost from Gaza to the West Bank, in violation of international law."

Source: Gisha, 18 December 2019.



women represent nearly 60 per cent of workers in the care sector in the occupied Palestinian territory.⁴⁶ According to the non-governmental organization CARE, “Women tend to be front-line health workers, and care takers of the elderly, who themselves are in a high-risk category, and, therefore, are at risk of exposing themselves to the virus”.⁴⁷

Female care workers are working under stressful conditions, which may negatively affect their psychological well-being. Further, designated quarantine facilities do not appear to include adequate space for women and girls and their respective needs, including health, reproductive and sanitation rights.⁴⁸

B. Life under occupation

In the West Bank, Palestinian women and girls, particularly in Area C, East Jerusalem and H2, continue to face protection threats, including movement restriction, night raids, arrests, settler violence, land confiscation, demolition of homes and other property, displacement and/or risk of forcible transfer, often against a backdrop of relentless settlement building.

Israel unilaterally disengaged from Gaza in 2005 yet is still the occupying power, retaining control of sea and air access and all but one of its land border crossings, Rafah. A blockade has been in place since 2007, severely restricting the movement of people and goods in and out of Gaza to Israel, the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory and the outside world. The situation has been compounded by intermittent and varying restrictions imposed by the Egyptian authorities at the Rafah crossing. The blockade has severely restricted women’s access to health care, and sexual and reproductive health services, and to adequate living standards for themselves and their families, including shelter, water, electricity and sanitation. As women are considered the cornerstone of the family, the “shock-absorbers” in times of crisis, these unrelenting, adverse conditions have had a detrimental impact on their psychosocial health, making them vulnerable to tension, depression and violence.⁴⁹

1. The Gaza Blockade

During the reporting period, the ongoing Israeli blockade of Gaza continued to severely constrain the movement of Palestinians and limit the movement of equipment, goods and materials needed to rebuild infrastructure and revitalize the economy.

The average number of exits per month by Palestinians via Erez Crossing in 2019 was 14,960, a 43 per cent increase on 2018 but still significantly below the 500,000 in 2000.⁵⁰ According to Gisha – Legal Center for Freedom of Movement, with the onset of the pandemic, Israel further tightened movement restrictions “under the guise of averting the spread of the virus” and in “May and April, only 222 and 213 exits were recorded, respectively, less than 2 per cent of the monthly average in 2019”.⁵¹

In July 2018, the Rafah Crossing began operating five days a week, following some four years of irregular opening.⁵² However, as reported by the WHO, “the process for exit through Rafah is confusing and obscure, while the journey across the Sinai is long, arduous with many checkpoints, and complicated by a night curfew imposed by Egyptian authorities”.⁵³

Gaza’s isolation has taken a heavy toll on women and girls, disrupting daily family and social life and undermining livelihoods, and

increasing their care burden. Nearly a third of residents have relatives in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and many families have been separated for years due to the near impossibility of obtaining permits for visits.⁵⁴

The blockade has also adversely affected access to education, jobs and medical care that is unavailable in Gaza, including cancer treatment options (see section III.E.). It has contributed to a marked deterioration in living conditions. With increased economic hardship and unemployment, women have become – more than ever – responsible for keeping the family going and finding ways to cope. In 2019, UNRWA reported: “They prepare less and cheaper food, borrow money, sell assets, and exchange food and other items if they can. Many cook with collected firewood, wake in the night to do housework while power is on, forego medical and other costs, and split rooms or homes to look after more people under one roof.”⁵⁵

2. Movement and access restrictions in the West Bank

Over the period July 2018–June 2020, the Israeli authorities continued to impose wide-ranging and systematic movement and access restrictions within the West Bank, compounding the geographical fragmentation and cantonization, disrupting economic activity and hindering the ability of the Palestinian government to provide services, especially in Area C and East Jerusalem. Movement has remained restricted by a multi-layered system of physical obstacles, bureaucratic and administrative requirements such as permits, the designation of areas as restricted or off-limits to Palestinians, and the construction of settler-only roads.⁵⁶ In January 2020, an estimated 593 physical obstacles (checkpoints, earth mounds, road gates) were recorded, down from 705 in July 2018.⁵⁷ Along with the 40 km of road for the exclusive use of Israeli citizens, these

obstacles impose partial restrictions on Palestinian use of 20 km of road within the West Bank.⁵⁸

One of the main physical obstacles to Palestinian movement in the West Bank is a wall constructed by Israel and considered illegal by the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice in 2004. Twisting across Jerusalem, its deviation from the Israeli-declared municipal boundary has resulted in localities such as the Shu’fat refugee camp and Kufr Aqab being “walled out” of the city. Over 130,000 Palestinian Jerusalemites in these walled out communities have been cut off from each other and the urban centre, diminishing their access to municipal services, and destabilising social and economic links.⁵⁹ This has reduced opportunities for girls to access education and women to access livelihoods opportunities. According to the Palestinian CSO, the Women’s Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling (WCLAC), “as a result of frequent violence by the Israeli military at checkpoints and harassment by soldiers, many parents are hesitant to allow their daughters to cross the checkpoints to attend school”.⁶⁰

Due to the wall’s deviation from the internationally recognized 1967 boundary, or Green Line, approximately 9 per cent of West Bank – the seam zone – is isolated. Access and movement in these areas are restricted by Israel through a permit and gate regime consisting of 17 different types of permit.⁶¹ Some 11,000 Palestinians live in the seam zone, where most of the land has been declared a closed zone under Israeli military order. Fewer permits for Palestinian farmers to access their land have been granted, down from 76 per cent of requests in 2014 to 28 per cent in 2018.⁶² Women in the seam zone are especially restricted in their movement, reporting that they avoid leaving their houses because of delays at checkpoints and the risk of sexual harassment by soldiers and private guards.⁶³

During the reporting period, Israeli restrictions in Area C, where approximately 300,000 Palestinians live, continued to impede Palestinian access to natural resources, services and infrastructure. Movement remains severely limited, particularly for communities adjacent to settlements. A report by the United Nations Secretary-General in 2019 noted that, “Circumstances in Area C are especially hard for women and girls, in the face of geographic isolation, poverty and conservative traditions and the absence of basic infrastructure and services ... such as police, health centres or shelters”.⁶⁴

A household survey in Area C indicated that one quarter of households lack basic infrastructure, such as piped water and sanitation facilities, and are dependent on firewood for cooking fuel, while one third had no access to piped water.⁶⁵ This has resulted in heavy domestic workloads for women and girls.

Living conditions are particularly difficult in areas “closed” or “restricted” by Israeli military orders. Nearly one third of Area C has been designated firing zones for military training by the Israeli authorities. These zones are home to some 6,200 Palestinians in Bedouin and herding communities, who are at heightened risk of forcible transfer.⁶⁶ Further, an estimated 14.5 per cent of Area C has been designated natural parks and reserves, further impeding and penalizing Palestinians for attempting to graze animals or use their agricultural land, or establish or expand their homes.⁶⁷

3. *Demolitions and displacement*

A restrictive planning, zoning and building regime is applied in East Jerusalem, Area C communities and H2 by Israel, impeding the development of housing and service infrastructure, and economic activity. Less than 1 per cent of the land in Area C, and 13 per cent of the land in East Jerusalem is allocated for Palestinian use.⁶⁸ In 2020,

the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination noted that for Palestinians, “the process of applying for building permits is prolonged, complicated and expensive” and few such applications are approved, while this same process is facilitated for the construction of Israeli settlements.⁶⁹ By the end of June 2020, only six out of 700 housing units announced for Palestinians in Area C in July 2019 were issued permits; in contrast, between July 2019 and March 2020, the Israeli authorities issued a total of 1,094 building permits in Israeli settlements.⁷⁰

The virtual impossibility of obtaining Israeli-issued building permits in East Jerusalem and Area C has driven Palestinians to construct residential, business, health, water and sanitation structures (often with donor funding), placing them at constant risk of demolition on the grounds of being unauthorized.⁷¹ Such demolition of residential and non-residential structures continued throughout the West Bank during the reporting period. A total of 1,205 structures (housing, agricultural, livelihoods, water and sanitation) were pulled down.⁷² The demolitions, including 217 donor-funded structures, affected 69,153 people and displaced 1,584 people, including 419 women and 368 girls.⁷³ Nearly 40 per cent of the demolitions occurred in East Jerusalem, including neighbourhoods such as Jabal al-Mukaber and Silwan.⁷⁴ In April 2019, 60 homes and other structures were knocked down in East Jerusalem, “the highest number of demolitions in one month since the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs started recording such acts in 2009”.⁷⁵

The demolitions, forced evictions and displacement resulting from the restrictive, discriminatory planning and building regime pursued by Israeli authorities contribute to a coercive environment. Palestinians are thus expelled from their homes, seemingly of their own free will, by the desperately unbearable living conditions.⁷⁶ These practices entail

Box 4 Profiles of female prisoners and detainees

Widad Bargouthi, a lecturer at Birzeit University, was arrested on 1 September 2019, primarily for charges related to “incitement” via Facebook. Bargouthi was taken to Al-Mascobiyya for the detention period and interrogated, presumably to place pressure on her son, Qassam Bargouthi, who was also being interrogated at that time. Bargouthi was conditionally released on 16 September 2019. The terms of her release included NIS 40,000 bail and house arrest.

Mais Abu Gush, a fourth-year student at Birzeit University, was arrested on 29 August 2019. Her house was raided by Israeli forces, heavily armed and with security dogs. Abu Gush was taken to Al-Mascobiyya and was “subjected to severe physical and psychological torture and ill treatment”. She was then transferred to Damon prison and charged with an assortment of charges, including “participating in university activities, including a summer camp”.

Shatha Hassan, a 20-year old Birzeit University student, was arrested on 12 December 2019. Her arrest occurred in the middle of the night, when soldiers broke into her house. After three days, Hassan was given a three-month administrative detention order that may be extended indefinitely.

Source: Addameer, 2019.

numerous human rights violations, while the resulting involuntary movements could amount to forcible transfer, in breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention and a war crime.⁷⁷ They are also intensifying pressure on the most vulnerable Palestinian communities and have a devastating impact on the lives of women and girls, often resulting in psychological distress, loss of livelihood and limited access to basic services. Women and girls are often significantly and differentially affected by house demolition policies. Testimonies collected by WCLAC “demonstrate that the constant fear and intimidation experienced by women in relation to house demolitions is profound, especially since some women and girls from rural or traditional backgrounds are more likely to stay at home ... Therefore, they are more likely to be at home and to be intimidated when Israeli officers come to inspect, serve demolition orders and carry out the actual demolishing”.⁷⁸

Forty-six Bedouin communities in the West Bank (home to some 8,000 Palestinians, the majority registered as refugees) are at risk of forcible transfer, and have been targeted by the Israeli authorities for “relocation” to a number of designated sites.⁷⁹ Displaced Palestinian women find their access to public spaces and livelihood opportunities further constrained, against a backdrop of increasing personal and family food insecurity and vulnerability.⁸⁰

4. *Arrests, detention and imprisonment*

During the reporting period, the arrest and detention of Palestinians continued, based on Israeli military orders that suppress their civil rights. These include Military Order 1651, promulgated in 2010, that prohibits “attempts, orally or in another manner, to influence public opinion ... in a manner which may harm public peace or public order”, classifying such speech as incitement that carries a 10-year prison sentence.⁸¹

As of June 2020, of the 4,700 Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli prisons, 41 were women,⁸² among them human rights defenders, university professors, students and journalists. They include women held in administrative detention without trial or charge.⁸³ For example, Khalida Jarrar, a Palestinian parliamentarian, was held in administrative detention from July 2017 to February 2019, a year after she had spent 14 months in prison for charges related to political activism. She was re-arrested in October 2019.

Detention conditions for Palestinian women are harsh, and there are reports of prisoners, including those with severe health conditions, being deprived of medical care, access to psychosocial support, adequate nutrition and family visits. There are also reports of torture and ill treatment in interrogation centres (box 4). In July 2019, women prisoners threatened a hunger strike to protest against the conditions under which they were held.⁸⁴ In April 2020, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, and a relative increase in transmission rates in Israel, a group of United Nations human rights experts urged Israel “not to discriminate against thousands of Palestinian prisoners facing high-risk exposure to COVID-19 and to release the most vulnerable – particularly women, children, older persons and those with pre-existing medical conditions”.⁸⁵

The mass arrests of Palestinian men in the West Bank have also placed a greater burden on their wives, who in many cases must maintain their households financially and provide for their children while simultaneously experiencing psychological strain and distress.

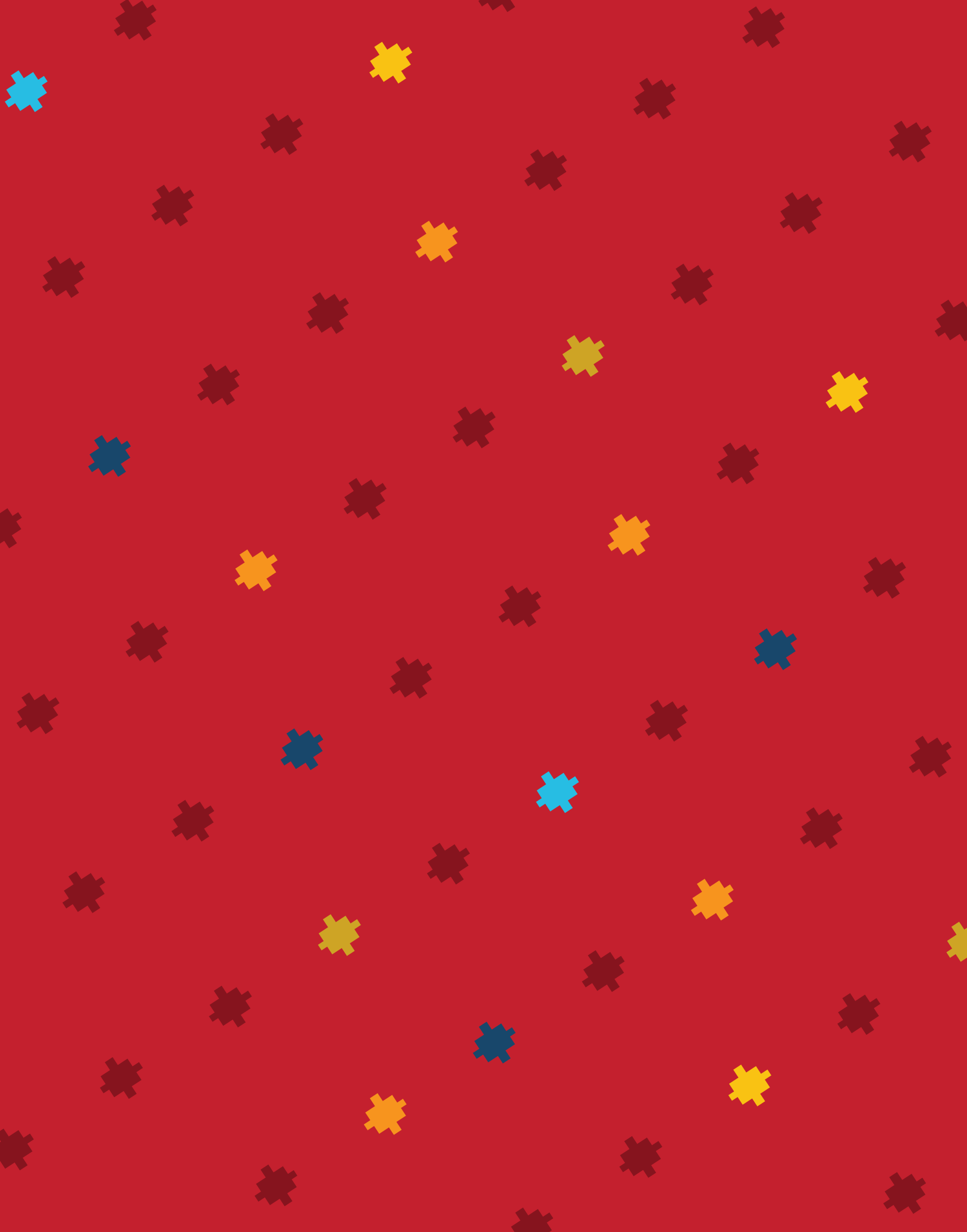
5. Night raids and home arrests

During the reporting period, night raids and house searches by Israeli forces in

East Jerusalem and the rest of the West Bank continued to be a major human rights concern. A United Nations assessment in communities vulnerable to reported Israeli violations found that women whose families were exposed to raids reported higher levels of exposure to violence by their husbands; for example, while 21 per cent of women exposed to home raids reported sexual violence at the hands of their husbands, only 3 per cent of those whose homes were not raided reported the same.⁸⁶

Women’s organizations have found that the fear of not knowing the timing of raids means women sometimes opt to wear the hijab at all times, even when sleeping. Some report that the frequent or permanent presence of settlers, soldiers or male residents around their home affects their privacy and freedom of movement.⁸⁷

Testimonies collected by the women’s rights organization WCLAC indicate women who have witnessed the arrest and detention of their children experience significant psychological turmoil.⁸⁸ Against a backdrop of rising COVID-19 cases in Israel, soldiers’ lack of safety precautions and protective gear, including masks and gloves, has added another layer to the myriad detrimental effects of night raids and detention.⁸⁹ Further, the testimonies raise concerns that the house arrest of minors not only violates the rights of children, but also has a disproportionate impact on women. Women are most likely to stay indoors to monitor and care for minors under house arrest. According to WCLAC, “the weight of this responsibility often falls on the mother who must sacrifice her own personal and economic liberty ... The stress and burden of this can result in subsequent psychological strain and feelings of isolation”.⁹⁰



3. DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIOECONOMIC TRENDS AMONG PALESTINIAN WOMEN

3. Demographic and socioeconomic trends among Palestinian women

A. Population and demographics

1. Population size and age structure

By the end of 2019, the total population of the occupied Palestinian territory was an estimated 5.04 million, with 3.02 million in the West Bank and 2.02 million in Gaza.⁹¹ Men comprise 51 per cent of the population and women 49 per cent, while the sex ratio stands at 103.4, meaning there are 103 men to every 100 women.⁹² The population includes a large number of refugees, particularly in Gaza. There are nearly 859,000 refugees in the West Bank registered with UNRWA and 1.46 million in Gaza.⁹³

Population growth in the occupied territory remains high, at 2.7 per cent.⁹⁴ This puts pressure on service delivery systems, especially in Gaza, one of the most densely populated areas in the world and where health systems are already severely strained. In mid-2019, population density in Gaza was 5,453 persons/km² compared with 528 persons/km²

in the West Bank.⁹⁵ This will likely compound the housing shortage and overcrowding, which has a clear gendered impact, particularly related to privacy and increased vulnerability to domestic violence. Women in Gaza have emphasized the impact of overcrowding on intrahousehold tensions and violence.⁹⁶

The Palestinian population is one of the youngest in the world. In 2019, persons aged 0–17 years made up an estimated 45 per cent of the total population (43 per cent in the West Bank, 48 per cent in Gaza Strip),⁹⁷ and youth (18–29 years) 23 per cent.⁹⁸

The proportion of elderly people (aged 60 years and above) is relatively low, at 5 per cent.⁹⁹ As women have a longer life expectancy than men (75.2 compared with 72.9 in mid-2019), there are more elderly women than men.¹⁰⁰ Women, however, are twice as likely as men to develop acute and chronic health conditions.¹⁰¹ Higher disability prevalence

Table 1 Population, by region and sex

Indicator	State of Palestine	West Bank	Gaza
Population (end 2019)	5 038 918	3 019 948	2 018 970
female	2 476 614	1 480 910	995 704
male	2 562 304	1 539 038	1 023 266
Refugee population (end 2019)	2 319 073	858 758	1 460 315
Population density (mid-2019)	826 persons/km ²	528 persons/km ²	5 453 persons/km ²
Share of population aged 0–17	45 per cent	43 per cent	48 per cent
Share of female headed households	11 per cent	12 per cent	9 per cent

Sources: PCBS, 2019a, p. 1; PCBS, 2019b, p. 1; PCBS, 2020a, p. 8; PCBS, 2020b, p. 1; UNRWA, 2020, p. 13, 14.

is not only linked to living longer but also to the disadvantages women suffer, including limited access to education, jobs, income and health care. Functional impairment in later life is also thought to increase the sense of social exclusion of elderly women, leading to depression and lack of self-care.

2. *Marriage age, patterns and fertility rates*

Palestinians show a strong commitment to the institution of marriage. In 2018 the average age at which women in the occupied Palestinian territory got married was 20.5 years. For men, it was 25.1.¹⁰² Fertility remains high, though it is declining; between 2014 and 2020, the rate was expected to fall from 4.1 to 3.4.¹⁰³

The share of female headed households (widowed, divorced or separated) has remained stable at 11 per cent of total households, with a slightly higher rate in the West Bank (12 per cent) than Gaza (9 per cent).¹⁰⁴ The percentage of households effectively headed/managed by a woman who is the primary breadwinner in Gaza is likely to be even higher, given the joblessness, trauma or addiction that can cause men to be “effectively or economically absent”.¹⁰⁵ Female headed households in Gaza are more likely to be impoverished, with an average poverty level of 54 per cent, almost double that of male headed households.¹⁰⁶

The crude divorce rate in 2018 was 1.8 per 1,000 inhabitants, with a slight difference between Gaza (1.6) and the West Bank (1.8).¹⁰⁷ The divorce rate for female youth was 67 per cent of total divorce cases, compared with 55 per cent for males of the same age.¹⁰⁸ Divorced women in Gaza are particularly vulnerable and face social discrimination and stigma (significant restrictions that limit their freedom), financial instability and psychological distress, as well as the risk of losing custody of their children.¹⁰⁹

Child marriage, while declining, persists. PCBS data show a fall in the percentage of women (20–24 years) who were married before the age of 18 years, from 30 per cent in 1997 to 11 per cent in 2017.¹¹⁰ Rates are higher in vulnerable communities. A 2019 survey of Area C by Oxfam and the Institute of Women’s Studies at Birzeit University found that 31 per cent of surveyed women had been married before the age of 18, with the highest rates of child marriage in encampments (40 per cent) and in the Jordan Valley (38 per cent).¹¹¹ The survey also found that encampments have higher incidents of polygamous marriage, with 9 per cent of married women in polygamous unions, significantly higher than the 1 per cent average.

B. Poverty and food insecurity

Economic growth continued to decelerate during the reporting period, exacerbating precarious living conditions, especially in Gaza. Economic potential has been undermined by the prolonged blockade of Gaza and wide-ranging restrictions on access, movement and trade imposed by the Israeli authorities, including access to land and water resources in Area C. The liquidity shock in 2019 resulting from Israel withholding Palestinian clearance revenues, and the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020,

further constrained the economy. Following a 1 per cent real growth in 2019, the economy was forecast to contract by 7.6 per cent in 2020, based on a gradual return to normality following the COVID-19 containment measures, and up to 11 per cent in the case of a slower recovery or further restrictions due to another outbreak.¹¹² In 2020, the World Bank estimated that the government faced a financing gap of more than \$1.5 billion to adequately address health, social protection and business support

expenditure needs, including those arising from the impact of the pandemic.¹¹³

With the detrimental impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on the Palestinian economy, poverty, already at a staggering 53 per cent in Gaza, is expected to rise to 64 per cent. The rate in the West Bank is expected to double from 14 to 30 per cent.¹¹⁴ Already vulnerable people – such as households headed by women, and women with disabilities, and households across Gaza and in Area C, H2, the seam zone, and Bedouin and herding communities in the West Bank – are likely to be disproportionately impacted.

Extreme food poverty – as measured by the \$1.90 poverty line used for monitoring Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 1 on ending poverty in all forms – is expected to more than double, from 1.1 per cent in 2018 to 2.5 per cent in 2021.¹¹⁵ Preliminary evidence suggests that since the COVID-19

outbreak, food insecurity has been increasing, with female headed households more likely to reduce the quality and quantity of food consumption and to adopt additional negative coping strategies.¹¹⁶ Consequently, the prevalence of anaemia among women of reproductive age, a key dimension of food insecurity, may increase.¹¹⁷ Even prior to the pandemic, most households in vulnerable communities in Gaza were not eating sufficient iron-rich food groups, with women very likely at high risk for anaemia.¹¹⁸

Poverty is also expected to increase in East Jerusalem, where the main drivers of vulnerability are discriminatory policies, including the allocation of municipal budgets. In 2019, an estimated 72 per cent of Palestinian families in Jerusalem lived below the poverty line, compared with 26 per cent of Jewish families. Despite this, only six welfare offices operated in East Jerusalem, compared with 19 in the western part of the city.¹¹⁹

C. Education

1. Educational indicators

The enrolment rate of girls in education continues to be consistently higher than that of boys in the occupied Palestinian territory. In the academic year 2019/2020, slightly more girls than boys were enrolled in basic and secondary schools (660,255 and 652,481, respectively).¹²⁰ Gender gaps in favour of girls are particularly notable in secondary education. UNICEF's country report on out-of-school children reveals that the estimated rate for boys soars from 1.4 per cent at age 10 to 22 per cent at age 15 (for girls, the increase is 0.4 per cent to 5.4 per cent), indicating one out of five boys versus one out of 20 girls are estimated to have left formal education systems by the time they have reached

age 15.¹²¹ This gender difference is attributed to the economic pressure for males to work, combined with the high cost of education or its related expenses, and low academic achievement.

While the overall educational attainment levels of girls are higher than that of boys, there are pockets of vulnerability where their access to education is particularly restricted and they face greater barriers than their male counterparts. This is especially the case for girls residing in Area C communities, in particular in hamlets/encampments, and also in the Jordan Valley, where lack of access to education is often linked to early female marriage.¹²² Girls who drop out of school in the West Bank and Gaza are often

homebound, socially isolated and vulnerable to psychosocial stressors.¹²³

Gender gaps in favour of females are particularly notable in tertiary education, with considerably more young women than men enrolled in university in 2018/2019 (127,944, and 79,363, respectively).¹²⁴ The high number of women completing post-secondary education still does not translate into economic participation.¹²⁵ One reason may be that fields of study continue to be heavily influenced by gender perceptions, with women disproportionately represented in humanities. For example, only 36 per cent of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) university students are female; as a subsection, only 27 per cent of females are located within the fields of engineering, manufacturing and construction.¹²⁶

The onset of the pandemic in March 2020 disrupted schooling in the occupied Palestinian territory. A rapid assessment on the impact on early child development (ECD) reveals that the closure of ECD centres and home confinement has implications for the social, emotional and cognitive behaviours of girls and boys.¹²⁷ There are also indications that school closure has particularly affected the well-being of adolescent girls in Gaza, with the global think tank Overseas Development Institute noting, “school is not only a place to learn, but also a space to establish social contacts and practice voice and agency, and a legitimate reason to go outside without the questioning and supervision of male adults”.¹²⁸

2. Quality of education and educational violations

Israeli policies and practices continue to render access to education in a safe learning environment a critical challenge. The Secretary-General noted that in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem,

children are exposed to conflict-related violence and movement restrictions, potentially increasing school dropout rates. Additionally, “access to safe education is compromised by armed search operations in schools; harassment, intimidation and violence towards students and teachers on the way to and from school; a severe shortage of classrooms; and demolition or stop work orders on school buildings”.¹²⁹ Gaza faces its own set of problems, the blockade and chronic military escalations resulting in recurring damage and destruction to a fragile education infrastructure. This is further compounded by severe electricity shortages, increased poverty and protection concerns.¹³⁰

An estimated 403,000 schoolchildren, 18,000 of who are living with a disability, face challenges in accessing quality education in a safe, child-friendly environment in Gaza, and Area C, H2 and East Jerusalem.¹³¹ In the West Bank, especially in areas near settlements, these include armed searches, tear gas and sound grenades fired in the vicinity of schools, student arrests and detention, intimidation and harassment of students on their way to and from school, and demolition or stop work orders on school buildings. In Gaza, the blockade, deteriorating living conditions and a deepening funding crisis facing both the Palestinian Ministry of Education and UNRWA have affected the delivery of quality education. An estimated 70 per cent of UNRWA schools and 63 per cent of schools run by the Ministry of Education operate on a double- or triple-shift system, resulting in reduced school hours.¹³² Compounding these challenges is the limited availability of assistive devices, appropriate transport and infrastructure, specialized learning materials and educational resources for children with disabilities, specifically those injured during GMR demonstrations, as well as psychological distress experienced by children and teachers.¹³³

D. Employment

Significant change has occurred over the past 20 years regarding women's educational status, with female educational attainment surpassing that of their male counterparts in the occupied Palestinian territory. However, women, especially young women, remain largely excluded from a stagnant labour market, stymied by Israel-imposed restrictions on trade, movement and access. Low labour force participation hinders women's economic advancement and also harms potential economic growth through a reduction of women's human capital.

Women's labour force participation, despite increasing slightly over the past decade, remains among the lowest in the world. Just seven countries have a lower rate.¹³⁴ In 2019, nearly 82 per cent of women remained outside the labour force, meaning that they were not seeking or engaged in employment, compared with 30 per cent of men.¹³⁵ Of particular concern is the high number of young Palestinian women who are not in school, training or employment (40 per cent of women, compared with 27 per cent of men).

Globally, the State of Palestine ranks among the bottom 10 per cent for this,¹³⁶ which corresponds to SDG indicator 8.6.1, on youth not in education, employment or training.

The gap between male and female unemployment rates has also continued to grow. In 2019, the rate for women was 41.2 per cent compared with 21.3 per cent for men.¹³⁷ Reflecting overall economic trends, the female unemployment rate was significantly higher in Gaza (63.7 per cent) than in the West Bank (25.8 per cent).¹³⁸ As reported by the International Labour Organization (ILO), in no other country is women's unemployment as high and, in Gaza, youth and female unemployment rates are steadily approaching "universality".¹³⁹ In Gaza during the first quarter of 2020, 81.6 per cent of female youth (aged 15–29 years) were unemployed compared with 58.3 per cent of their male counterparts.¹⁴⁰

Joblessness among more educated young women was particularly high. The rate among women with more than 13 years of schooling was more than double that of

Table 2 Employment indicators, by region and sex, 2019 (percentages)

Region	Labour force participation	Unemployment	Youth unemployment	
			Ages 15–24	Ages 25–34
State of Palestine	44.3	25.3	40.1	30.8
female	18.1	41.2	67.1	53.8
male	69.9	21.3	34.7	23.4
West Bank	46.4	14.6	25.1	16.8
female	17.4	25.8	52.5	35.2
male	74.4	12.1	20.6	11.7
Gaza	40.9	45.1	67.4	52.0
female	19.2	63.7	85.6	75.6
male	62.3	39.5	62.7	42.7

Source: PCBS, 2020c, pp. 52–54.

men (47.2 and 18.9 per cent, respectively).¹⁴¹ Even in sectors traditionally perceived as female, such as education and humanities, women's unemployment is higher than male; for example, 50.6 per cent of women specializing in education were unemployed in 2019, compared with 20.7 per cent of their male counterparts.¹⁴² Further, unlike men, high-skilled women are more likely to be unemployed than low-skilled women. Qualitative evidence reveals that men are viewed as family breadwinners and thus more deserving of jobs when competing directly with skilled women.¹⁴³ As observed by the international non-governmental organization Action Against Hunger, in Gaza, "despite the economic hardships ... masculinity remains strongly tied to the breadwinner identity and is primarily embodied by financially providing for one's family".¹⁴⁴ The research highlights the extent to which the conventional gender division of labour is strongly anchored in society; even when a woman works, this is usually considered temporary due to circumstances preventing her husband from working and fulfilling his role as breadwinner, while she is also expected to continue with all the unpaid care work.¹⁴⁵

Wage differentials between women and men persisted during the reporting period. In 2019, the average daily wage for women was 73 per cent that of men.¹⁴⁶ A key factor behind the gender gap is that workers employed in Israel and in Israeli settlements, where wages are notably higher than in the West Bank and Gaza, are predominantly men. Further, in the Palestinian private sector, the incidence of low pay has an unambiguous gender dimension, with 60 per cent of women earning less than the minimum wage, more than double the corresponding share of men.¹⁴⁷ In many communities, moreover, women's economic activity is largely concentrated

in family agricultural work, and unpaid women workers do not often have access to an independent income or control over agricultural assets.¹⁴⁸

Legislative gaps are some of the obstacles to women's economic advancement and empowerment. These include the absence of comprehensive provisions in relation to non-discrimination, equal pay for work of equal value, prohibition of gender-based violence (GBV) including sexual harassment in the workplace, and legal coverage for domestic workers.¹⁴⁹ The occupied Palestinian territory ranks lowest globally in the World Bank's Women, Business and the Law index for 2020. While scoring high in female entrepreneurship, it lags behind vis-à-vis narrowing legal differences between men and women with regard to pay (for example, restrictions on women's ability to work at night), parenthood (including maternity benefits and parental leave), and marriage (for instance, protection from violence).¹⁵⁰

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated women's economic marginalization. The livelihoods of women are expected to be most affected, particularly those active in the informal sector where there is no work protection or income compensation.¹⁵¹ A survey by UN Women between 17–27 March 2020, found that 27 per cent of women-led businesses had shut down, and 95 per cent of Palestinian women owners of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises reported negative impacts due to the pandemic.¹⁵² An assessment in April 2020 by the international humanitarian agency CARE found that to cope during the crisis, 89 per cent of female small business owners were being forced to reallocate money previously dedicated to their work to the household, compared with half of male respondents.¹⁵³

E. Health

1. *Access and availability of health care*

In the occupied Palestinian territory, women's right to health is hindered by the numerous restrictions imposed by Israel. The blockade of Gaza has drastically reduced the movement of people and goods, including patients, medical personnel and supplies. While patients and their companions are eligible for Israeli-issued permits to exit Gaza, 35 per cent of patient applications were unsuccessful in 2019, either denied outright or delayed, or with no definitive response in time for the designated hospital appointment.¹⁵⁴

Cancer is the second leading cause of death in the occupied Palestinian territory, accounting for 15 per cent of all deaths, with breast cancer in women the most common.¹⁵⁵ For patients with breast cancer in Gaza, permit delays or rejections can obstruct access to life-saving services. Due to long-standing shortages of cancer drugs, and treatments such as radiotherapy and specialist surgeries being unavailable, permit denial or delays for those seeking medical care outside Gaza contribute to lower survival rates.¹⁵⁶

The air, sea and land blockade, the energy crisis and related power cuts, the funding shortfall and political violence have strained the fragile health sector in Gaza, adversely affecting women's access to quality health services. While the electricity supply increased in 2018 and 2019, Israel again curtailed fuel entry and, at the beginning of 2020, residents of the Gaza Strip were reportedly receiving approximately six hours of electricity, followed by eight hours off.¹⁵⁷ To preserve energy for central hospitals, other hospitals are at risk of closure, which will have a particularly detrimental impact on the health status of adolescent girls, pregnant women, survivors of GBV, older persons and those with chronic illnesses.¹⁵⁸ Diminished services are already compromising maternal health in Gaza, where

at any given time there are approximately 45,000 pregnant women. According to CARE, "pregnant women reported walking for an hour to reach a facility, others unable to walk depend on local women for assistance in childbirth".¹⁵⁹ In August 2019, half of essential medicines had less than a month's supply, up from 46 per cent in 2018, with maternal and child health (MCH) often the most affected by stock-outs.¹⁶⁰ Sixty nine per cent of essential MCH drugs were at zero stock in August 2019,¹⁶¹ exacerbating the risk of maternal and newborn disability and mortality.

In Area C, where Israel retains administrative and military control, there are more than 100 vulnerable communities, home to some 162,000 Palestinians who have limited or no access to primary health care because the restrictive planning regime prevents construction of the necessary facilities.¹⁶² The discriminatory practices not only limit the availability of health infrastructure, but also impact deeply on the underlying determinants of health for Palestinians living there, such as access to water and sanitation, nutritious food and secure shelter.¹⁶³

Across the occupied Palestinian territory, women and girls with disabilities, particularly those from rural and more remote communities, have restricted access to care. In addition, health facilities are not sufficiently adapted to the needs of women with disabilities, and medical staff in general lack the competencies to adapt their behaviour and diagnostic procedures to meet the requirements.¹⁶⁴ In its 2018 concluding observations on the initial report of the State of Palestine, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee) noted that disabilities are not included in the national strategic plan on health and that women who are considered to have a disability are excluded from health insurance.¹⁶⁵

Other health gaps relate to maternal and reproductive care. While overall reproductive health indicators have improved, gaps remain in terms of targeting the most vulnerable groups, including youth and adolescents, post-reproductive age women, survivors of GBV, women living with disabilities, poor and unemployed women, and residents of communities marginalized and affected by the Israeli occupation.¹⁶⁶ UNICEF reports that although the maternal mortality ratio is declining, every fourth pregnant woman in the occupied Palestinian territory is still considered high-risk, and in need of specialized care.¹⁶⁷ The reproductive and maternal health status of women may be further compromised by the limited supervision and regulation of in vitro fertilization services, which UNFPA notes “play a significant role in increasing premature births in Palestine and also contributing to an increase in the rate of Caesarean Section as a result of multiple-pregnancy and the possibility of developing life-threatening complications for women”.¹⁶⁸

2. Impact of COVID-19

The capacity of health-care systems to effectively deal with surges in COVID-19 cases is severely limited, especially in Gaza, by shortages in equipment, including intensive care unit beds and ventilators. The pandemic is influencing the quality,

accessibility and affordability of health services across the State of Palestine, and is likely to have repercussions on the mental and physical health of women and girls (box 5). For example, the inability or fear of patients at high risk to consult a physician or other health-care personnel is potentially disrupting chronic disease management related to non-communicable diseases (NCDs), which is of concern as people living with NCDs are at higher risk of severe COVID-19-related illness and death.¹⁶⁹ The nutritional status of vulnerable groups, including pregnant and lactating women, and women and girls with disabilities, is expected to further deteriorate in the coming months due to the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19.¹⁷⁰

Public mental health issues – one of the most significant health challenges facing the State of Palestine, given the context of chronic occupation and repeated exposure to violence¹⁷¹ – are also likely to be exacerbated. Amid the COVID-19 lockdown, demand for counselling has spiked, with service providers witnessing an increase in calls by women for mental health care and psychosocial services unrelated to domestic violence.¹⁷² The main psychological impact of COVID-19 thus far has been elevated rates of stress or anxiety. As new measures are introduced, there is a risk that levels of loneliness, depression, drug use, and self-harm or suicidal behaviour may also rise.¹⁷³

F. Environment

The political situation in the occupied Palestinian territory limits the space for good environmental management and governance. Due to severe restrictions placed by the Government of Israel on the construction and rehabilitation of the water infrastructure, including cisterns and wells, about 22 per cent of the West Bank population, especially in Area C, are affected by a lack of access and poor water quality.¹⁷⁴ The resulting water

scarcity has increased pressure on women, especially those in rural communities, who due to gendered roles typically bear the brunt of domestic responsibilities for water management, conservation and hygiene.

Further, as reported by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in 2020, the development of Israeli industrial complexes and activities inside settlements

Box 5 Multifaceted impacts of COVID-19 on the health of women and girls

Dr. Umayyah Khammash, Director of Juzoor for Health and Development, states:

“The ongoing pandemic will have wide repercussions and profound effects on all aspects of society, including mental and physical health. Juzoor, with its partners such as the Palestinian Coalition of Adolescent Health, UNFPA, HAYA Programme and the GBV Cluster, has conducted a wide range of studies to shed light on health and social ramifications of COVID-19 lockdowns, including on family dynamics and domestic violence, adolescent health, prevalence of NCDs, ECD and the functionality of the Palestinian health care system. The course of COVID-19 is still unpredictable and the full extent of effects of COVID-19 on mental and physical health cannot be discerned at this stage. Still, there are strong indications that the pandemic will have multifaceted effects on the health status of women and girls and long-term adverse impact on already fragile and under-equipped health systems in Palestine.”

Juzoor’s findings include the following:

- ◆ A phone survey with 150 prediabetic refugee women participants of the National Diabetic Programme in Palestine (NDPP) found that almost a third reported eating more compared to before the lockdown, while 68 per cent reported they were not following NDPP physical activity-related recommendations as they had before the lockdown. The majority reported feeling very stressed, worried or nervous during the lockdown, which may explain their lack of motivation to follow NDPP-related recommendations. Lockdown also had a drastic effect on women’s financial situation, negatively impacting on their economic access to healthy food, and restricting their ability to follow NDPP dietary recommendations.
- ◆ A survey to track lifestyle habits and behaviours of 600 adolescents (50 per cent females, ages 10–19 years old) in the West Bank noted similar results on risks of weight gain among adolescents, decreased physical inactivity and increased time spent on screen, noting numerous stressors challenging adolescents during lockdown. Weight gain is alarming as the State of Palestine is already increasingly affected by the double burden of malnutrition: the persistence of undernutrition, combined with a rapid rise in overweight and obesity. It is especially concerning for adolescent girls as they already have higher rates of physical inactivity than their male counterparts, exacerbating NCD risk factors.

Source: Umayyah Khammash, Director, Juzoor for Health and Development, Personal communication, 9 September 2020.

in the occupied West Bank have led “to an increase in the amount of groundwater being extracted, to the pumping by some settlements of untreated wastewater into wadis and agricultural lands, to industrial

pollution, and to land and soil degradation”.¹⁷⁵ In interviews with WCLAC, women living in rural communities where supplies have been contaminated by surrounding Israel settlements, spoke of “their feelings of

Table 3 Violence faced by married or ever-married women, by type and region, 2011 and 2019 (percentages)

Region	Prevalence of violence		Psychological violence		Physical violence		Sexual violence		Social violence		Economic violence	
	2011	2019	2011	2019	2011	2019	2011	2019	2011	2019	2011	2019
State of Palestine	37.0	27.2	58.6	52.2	23.5	17.4	11.8	6.9	54.8	27.6	55.1	36.2
West Bank	29.9	22.2	48.8	46.1	17.4	12.1	10.2	5.8	44.8	20.2	41.6	29.3
Gaza Strip	51.0	35.2	76.4	62.5	34.7	25.8	14.9	8.7	78.9	41.0	88.3	46.7

Source: PCBS, 2019e.

stress, hopelessness and exhaustion from knowingly exposing themselves and their families to diseases by being forced to drink polluted water ... and also from having to use contaminated water for agriculture, treating livestock and for meal preparation".¹⁷⁶

Rapidly deteriorating infrastructure, limitations on the import of materials and an unreliable energy supply have accelerated the dual water crisis in Gaza, where only

10 per cent of the population have safe drinking water through the public network and a lack of wastewater sanitation has increased the risk of diseases.¹⁷⁷ Women and girls are exposed to the associated public health risks, while, as noted by OCHA, the limited access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene services also prevents them from "participating in other activities, in addition to mobility restriction and lack of resources at the family level".¹⁷⁸

G. Gender-based violence

Incidents of GBV have continued unabated, posing a significant challenge to the attainment of economic, social, civil and political rights of women and girls, despite several commendable measures put in place by the Government of Palestine over the reporting period.

1. Prevalence of different forms of gender-based violence

Palestinian women experience multiple forms of violence. They suffer from the consequences of Israeli policies and practices in the occupied Palestinian territory, many in violation of human rights law, and also as a result of patriarchal gender norms exacerbated by a legal framework that fails to fully align with international standards.

The PCBS 2019 national violence survey indicates that 27.2 per cent of currently married or ever-married women have experienced violence at the hands of their husbands. The most frequent form of violence is psychological (52.2 per cent), followed by economic violence (36.2 per cent). The survey revealed an overall decrease in the prevalence of violence relative to 2011 (table 3).¹⁷⁹

The decrease is most notable in Gaza, where it fell by 15.8 percentage points. Despite this, the prevalence of violence, in its multiple forms, against women by their husbands remains higher (35.2 per cent) than in the West Bank (22.2 per cent).¹⁸⁰ This geographical difference is attributed to wide impoverishment, high unemployment rates and overcrowded

living conditions. An Action against Hunger study on masculinity in Gaza also found that psychosocial stress experienced by men in the enclave is a contributing factor, with “GBV most commonly mentioned in relation to the pressure men experience when they are not able to provide their wives with the necessary financial means to meet the household needs”.¹⁸¹ The 2018 study suggested that when men are unable to fulfil their traditionally ascribed roles as protectors and providers, deeply held frustration might lead to increased violent behaviour in an attempt to reassert control. According to OCHA, the incidence of intimate partner violence, sexual abuse and forced marriage are particularly high among vulnerable women, such as adolescents and those with disabilities, and those who are internally displaced, or have limited availability and access to multisectoral services.¹⁸²

Femicide, the most extreme expression of violence against women, received renewed public attention during the reporting period, with the case of Israa Ghrayeb, a 21-year-old Palestinian make-up artist from Beit Sahour near Bethlehem, who was hospitalized in August 2019 after being beaten by her family. Her death sparked a campaign, We are all Israa Ghrayeb, with hundreds of Palestinian women demanding an investigation and calling for more protections for women.¹⁸³ WCLAC documented 23 killings in 2018 (10 in Gaza and 13 in the West Bank)¹⁸⁴ and 24 in 2019 (18 in the West Bank, six in Gaza), perpetrated mainly by male relatives.¹⁸⁵ In the first half of 2020, 17 cases of femicide were reported, a marked rise.¹⁸⁶

Available data also suggest that sexual harassment, blackmail and extortion in the virtual space are a growing concern. These forms of cyberviolence often include publishing compromising images or extortion through the threat of publication.¹⁸⁷ As UN Women states, “the threats posed by these activities are compounded by

the perception of powerlessness and isolation when confronting them”.¹⁸⁸ Sexual harassment in the virtual space mirrors the risk of sexual harassment in public places confronting women of all age groups, with women aged 17–28 years facing more unwanted sexual attention than those in older age groups, as stated in the 2019 Arab Barometer report.¹⁸⁹

Qualitative evidence indicates that the COVID-19 crisis is disproportionately affecting women, leading to a new wave of violence, including sexual violence. WCLAC states the pandemic has become a third threat for women already facing the dual oppression of the Israeli military occupation and patriarchal Palestinian society. Poor access to health care, increased economic hardship, home confinement and the primary responsibility for caregiving place women at greater risk of multiple forms of GBV.¹⁹⁰ An assessment by UN Women of domestic and family violence services across the occupied Palestinian territory confirms that domestic violence is on the rise as women spend more time in lockdown with their abusers.¹⁹¹ Interviewing Palestinian families in April 2020, the Palestinian CSO Juzoor for Health and Social Development found that nearly one in five indicated an increase in domestic violence during lockdown, with 70.8 per cent thinking violence would increase with any lockdown extension: “Men, especially workers in Israel and other daily paid workers, have found themselves unemployed not knowing when and how they will be able to provide for their families while confined in generally densely populated dwellings. Tensions mount and potential of abusing of and being abused by family members increases with further lockdown fatigue, loss of income and continued uncertainty.”¹⁹²

Further, women’s rights organizations Sawa, the Palestinian Working Women Society for Development (PWWS) and the Women’s Affairs Center in Gaza all reported that calls and consultations regarding abuse,

Box 6 Psychological and social effects of GBV during the COVID-19 pandemic

During the period from 22 March to 21 May 2020, the Palestinian Working Women Society Development (PWWS) provided 3 260 phone consultations and counselling sessions to a total of 2 576 people, 96 per cent of them women. It stated:

Women reported an increase in feelings of anxiety, frustration, fear, despair, insecurity, and anger directed towards other people and themselves ... There were high levels of concern over the deteriorating economic conditions brought about by the shutdown, and fears that salaries would be either cut or reduced, resulting in families not being able to provide for their families. They also expressed fear of physical abuse from their husbands, fathers, brothers and other male relatives. These fears were compounded by concerns for their health and the health of their families due to the unknown consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. Those who have family members in Israeli occupation prisons were particularly concerned for their health, while women whose male family members work in those parts of the territory occupied in 1948 feared that quarantine at home would mean losing their jobs, as most are daily workers not protected by formal job contracts ... Some abused women had nervous breakdowns and reported feeling psychosomatic symptoms. In some cases, their feelings of depression were accompanied by low self-esteem, low self-awareness and a lack of perseverance.

Source: PWWS, 2020a, p. 12, 14.



specifically domestic violence by husbands, have increased. In response to this escalation of violence, the feminist coalition FADA – Palestinian Women Against Violence launched the We are your voice campaign in June 2020, to appeal to “every woman subject to violence, to seek help and to never hesitate and wait until it is too late”. It urges those who witness violence “to intervene and contact those who can provide aid”.¹⁹³

2. Access to justice, the gender-based violence response and prevention services

It is a matter of some concern that of the women surveyed for the 2019 PCBS report who experienced violence, just 1.4 per cent sought counselling or legal assistance,

while 60.6 per cent of domestic violence survivors said they did not tell anyone about the abuse, including friends, family members, colleagues or neighbours,¹⁹⁴ indicating a persistent culture of silence around domestic violence. One reason may be the fear of reprisal; that disclosure would be considered a “disgrace” to family honour, exacerbating acts of violence. An article in the online journal SSM – Population Health states, “... GBV victims often stay silent, endure violence in order to keep their families together, and hope that increased domestic diligence will stop the violence”.¹⁹⁵ A 2019 study on the experiences of Palestinian women and intimate partner violence revealed that suicidal ideation could result from such violence and the inability to change things. Many women indicated it was

difficult to leave an abusive partner because of children in common, and lack of support and financial dependence.¹⁹⁶ Contacting one of the five women's shelters in the West Bank and Gaza is often considered a last resort, despite their importance in assisting survivors. A UN Women assessment shows shelters serve an important function in the Palestinian context but stigma around GBV services persist.¹⁹⁷

Despite significant progress, the availability of services, especially for vulnerable groups of women, remains a challenge, especially in Israel-controlled Area C. The 2019 PCBS violence survey revealed that only 40 per cent of women (28 per cent in Gaza, 49 per cent in the West Bank) were aware of institutions or centres for protection against violence in the region, governorate or locality where they live.¹⁹⁸ An UNFPA-led assessment on the impact of COVID-19 on family dynamics also highlighted that despite available services, only 2.9 per cent of those interviewed were familiar with helplines as a source of support for GBV survivors.¹⁹⁹

Women and girls with disabilities face particular difficulties in accessing services. According to an UNFPA report in 2019: "Women with disabilities have limited knowledge of services offered by the different actors and how to access them ... do not have any knowledge on how to report an incident of violence, who the service providers are and what types of services are available."²⁰⁰ Generally, shelters in the West Bank and Gaza do not admit women and girls with disabilities, the exception being one shelter in the West Bank that receives women with minor disabilities who have been assaulted.²⁰¹ Health facilities do not have appropriate equipment, and legal and counselling services are offered only by specialized NGOs, many with limited understanding of disability.²⁰²

While Palestinian women's access to justice, protection and security services has become

even more critical with the onset of the pandemic, lockdown and fear of contracting COVID-19, combined with the downscaling of services by many organizations, have made it increasingly difficult for women exposed or at risk of violence to access help. CSOs have had to adapt to remote methods of service provision, including for psychosocial support. These changes may have adverse implications for accessibility, however, as some women might not have access to electricity, or the Internet, among other challenges.²⁰³ Further, while an overall increase in calls to domestic violence helplines has been reported, for many women confined to home with family members, finding the privacy to call may be challenging. PWWSD, which operates a helpline, has reported that women and girls have said "they are uncomfortable in sharing their feelings and discussing specific details due to the presence of their children, husbands and other family members all day inside".²⁰⁴

UN Women has indicated that movement restrictions are preventing women at risk from leaving their homes to seek appropriate help, and subsequently, family and juvenile protection units at the Palestinian Civil Police and the Public Prosecutors Office are observing a fall in reported cases of domestic violence.²⁰⁵ Further, access to justice has been disrupted with the closure of family courts in the West Bank and Gaza, heavily impacting the rights of women in cases including alimony, custody, visitation rights, protection orders and inheritance rights.²⁰⁶ There is concern that traditional conflict mediation mechanisms (sulha) preferred in some Palestinian communities will become more prevalent. Such informal mechanisms are generally led by male community leaders and tend to favour the family over the individual, and men over women, potentially increasing the vulnerability of GBV survivors and risking their safety.²⁰⁷

H. Media

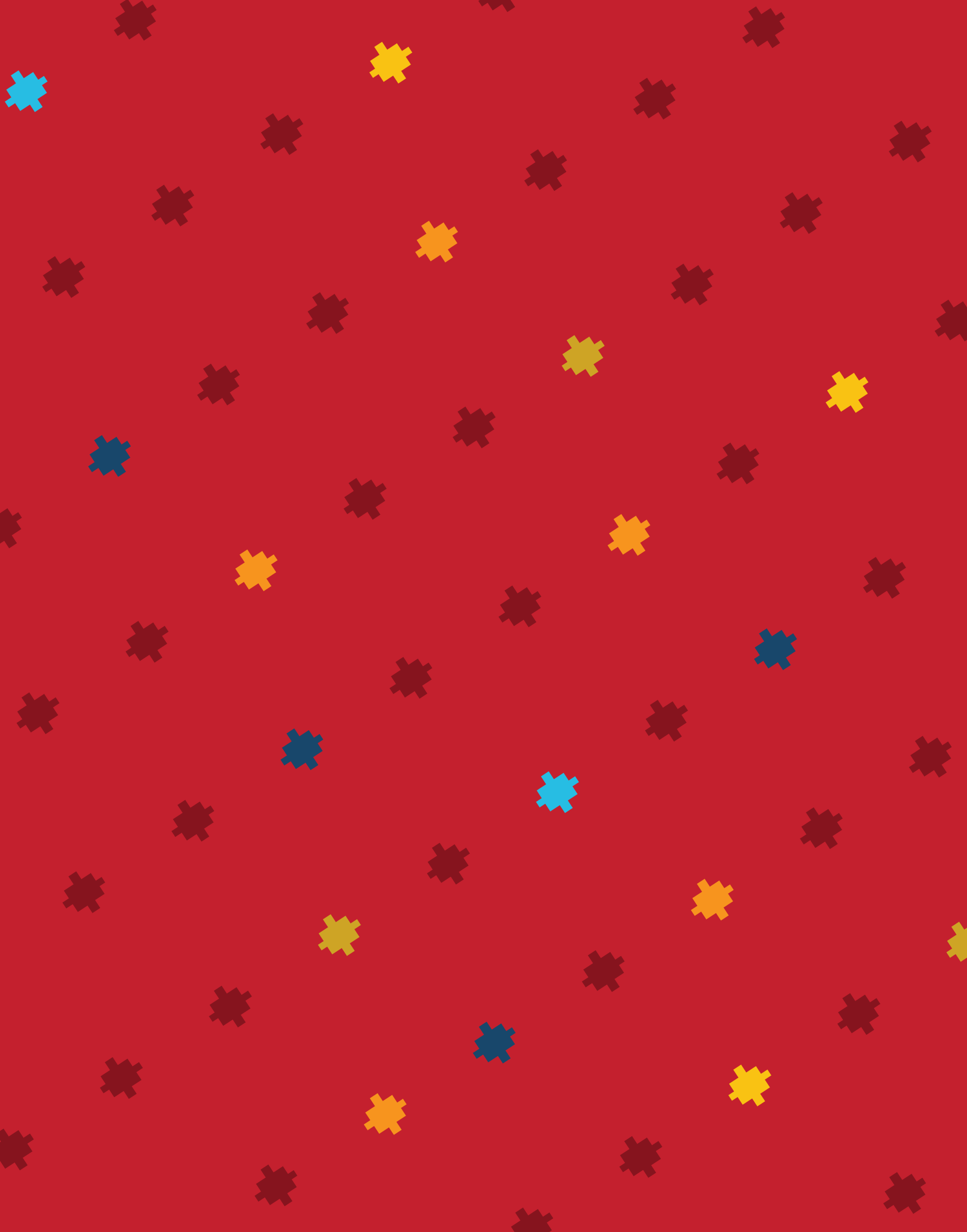
Women remained underrepresented in the Palestinian media sector during the reporting period. Through its gender unit, the Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation supports the production of programmes aimed at promoting positive roles for women. However, discrimination against women based on stereotypical attitudes about the roles and responsibilities of women and men in family and in society persist, perpetuating gender inequality and contributing to GBV and harmful practices, such as child marriage.²⁰⁸

Women are also underrepresented in decision-making bodies in media institutions, including the Palestinian Journalists' Syndicate, where female representation is only 20 per cent.²⁰⁹ There are also strong barriers to women's entry and career progression; women's unemployment rate in the mass media and information sector was 26.5 percentage points higher than that of their male counterparts in 2019. The average daily wage for women was 79.3 per cent of what equivalent men earned.²¹⁰

I. Girl child

Leading Palestinian civil society and human rights organizations have been calling for an end to child marriage. During the reporting period, there was major legislative reform to advance the rights of the girl child. On 21 October 2019, the Government of Palestine in its cabinet session agreed to amend the Palestinian law regarding the age of marriage.²¹¹ In November 2019, a presidential decree was issued to set marriage age at 18 years for both sexes. Previously, the minimum age in the West Bank (under

Jordanian Personal Status Law No. 16 of 1976) was 14.5 years for girls and 15.5 for boys, while in the Gaza Strip (Egyptian Family Rights Law No. 303 of 1954) it was 17 and 18, respectively. However, the presidential decree allows for specific exemptions to be decided by the chief of judges with shari'a courts, therefore, allowing marriage under the age of 18 years.²¹² Further, while the West Bank-based government changed the legal age to 18, the same does not apply to Gaza, under de facto Hamas control.²¹³



4. POLITICAL AND SOCIAL PARTICIPATION, LEGAL FRAMEWORKS AND THE RIGHTS OF PALESTINIAN WOMEN

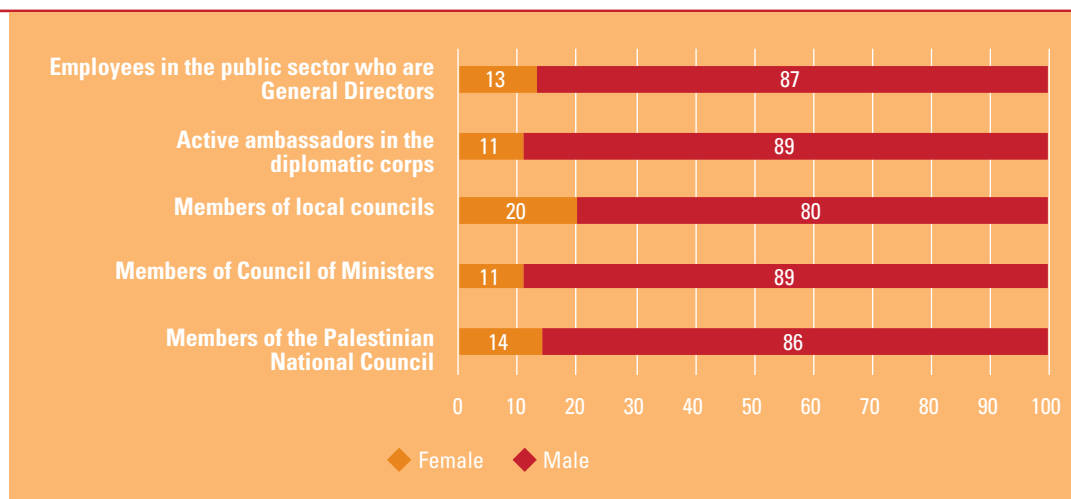
4. Political and social participation, legal frameworks and the rights of Palestinian women

A. Political participation and processes

Palestinian women have the same right as men to stand for public office. Their political participation is promoted through legal quotas. Each party list must include at least one female candidate in the first three names, among the next four names and then in each set of five names that follow. Further, a minimum of two seats must be attributed to women in local councils comprising 13 seats or more. The law on local elections goes further, stipulating that a local council seat vacated by a woman must be replaced with a woman. The Central Elections Commission sanctions any non-compliance with formal requirements, and will reject candidate lists.²¹⁴

Despite these legal provisions and a history of activism dating back to the early twentieth century, when women's associations organized themselves into the Arab Women's Congress, Palestinian women continue to face political marginalization and underrepresentation.²¹⁵ National indicators related to their political participation show no real progress. In 2019, only 5 per cent of Palestinian Central Council members, 11 per cent of Palestinian National Council members and 14 per cent of the Council of Ministers were women.²¹⁶ Further, less than one in five local council members were women, including five women council leaders.²¹⁷ Just 13 per cent of women civil

Female participation in political life, 2019 (percentages)



Source: PCBS, 2020a, p. 19.

Box 7 Women speak out

“My back is broken with burdens of having to do everything. Life is very hard, between poverty, trying to make ends meet, taking care of the children, having to stay home embracing for attacks by settlers or soldiers, working in the farm and taking care of my disabled kids. Why would I want to do more?
(Woman, Jiftlik, 51 years old).

“Why would anyone want to participate in political activities? ... How does my life in this area change when we are surrounded by settlements, land expropriation and checkpoints? (Woman, Bardala, 61 years old).

“It is so hard to move from my home as I live very near the settlement. It is very hard to feel safe in going and coming, so I just don’t.
(Woman, old city of Hebron, 45 years old).”

Source: UN Women, 2018a, pp. 39–40.



servants hold the rank of director general or above, despite constituting 44 per cent of total employees in the public sector.²¹⁸

Women’s presence in the judiciary also remains low. In 2018, 20.5 per cent of public prosecutors and 18 per cent of judges in the occupied Palestinian territory were women, with a notably higher rate in the West Bank (19 per cent) than in Gaza (10.5 per cent).²¹⁹ However, as ESCWA commented in a 2019 report: “Against this backdrop, it is noteworthy that in the State of Palestine, the Chief Prosecutor for the Personal Status Law is a woman.”²²⁰ Contrary to other Arab States, women have been appointed as judges in shari’a courts, where matters related to personal status such as marriage, divorce and child custody are adjudicated, and to military courts that, until the past decade, were an exclusively male judicial branch.²²¹ Women, however, are still excluded from the Constitutional Court and starkly underrepresented in fields such as military and criminal justice. Female judges report that the difficulties they encounter in terms of career progression are related to their care obligations, which place them under greater pressure compared with men.²²²

Representation in the security sector continues to be low. In 2019, according to Ministry of Interior statistics, 6.2 per cent of law enforcement personnel were women (93.8 per cent were men). The Government of Palestine is working on establishing a strategy to increase women’s representation in the sector to 30 per cent in the coming years.²²³

Women’s restricted representation and participation in political and public life is attributed to complex social and political factors. Perceptions on gender roles are a contributory factor. For example, a youth public opinion survey in the Arab region found that in the occupied Palestinian territory, while the majority agree with the quota system to achieve fairer representation, about seven out of 10 believe that men are better at political leadership than women.²²⁴ A UN Women study on diverse communities within marginalized areas in the West Bank (Area C and H2) illustrated that on the one hand, most ordinary women already have a full range of care and economic responsibilities, including home care, looking after children and persons with chronic illness or disabilities,

and home-based income generation activities, as well as contributing to household agriculture/livestock production. Yet for such overburdened women it is hard to “see any utility in participation in political activities and decision-making positions”.²²⁵ On the other hand, women lack opportunities for participation, a result of the weak political institutions in these communities embedded in tribal relations and impacted by occupation-related human rights violations.

Despite their crucial role as front-line care and health workers, women’s participation in emergency, financial and other COVID-19 response committees has been minimal, with implications for the reach and impact of any progress.²²⁶ A rapid assessment by UN Women found that 52 per cent of men said they volunteered in their community against 24 per cent of women, rendering Palestinian women’s voices mostly unheard and their perspectives ignored in the response to the pandemic.²²⁷

B. The national women’s machinery and other institutions

The Ministry of Women’s Affairs is the national machinery for the advancement of women. Created by decree in 2003, it is responsible for frameworks and policies promoting gender equality, including the National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women, applying the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda, enhancing women’s economic empowerment and political representation, and gender mainstreaming in government institutions. It is the lead institution for implementing the Cross-Sectoral National Gender Strategy covering the period 2017–2022, developed in line with the National Policy Agenda 2017–2022 and its Putting Citizens First message, and reflecting the State of Palestine’s international commitments. Prepared on the basis of the 2030 Agenda, specifically SDG 5 on gender equality, the strategy envisions a “Palestinian society in which men, women, girls and boys enjoy equal rights and opportunities in both public and private spheres”. This will be achieved through five strategic objectives, 30 policies and 300 policy interventions, to be implemented by the end of 2022.²²⁸ A national technical team has been established to lead on SDG 5 with the support of UN Women.²²⁹

The lack of human and financial resources has limited the ministry in its effective implementation and coordination of policies and strategies, including those relating to the implementation of 2030 Agenda and the empowerment of disadvantaged groups of women, in particular older women and those with disabilities, and women and girls affected by conflict.²³⁰

Other ministries, namely the Ministry of Social Development, provide direct services to Palestinian women and girls, including for protection.²³¹ Throughout the reporting period, the ministry continued to deliver services to vulnerable women, in line with its Social Development Sector Strategy for 2017–2022. These included psychological, social and legal counselling, protection, vocational rehabilitation, and training for women survivors of GBV, in addition to strengthening the socioeconomic integration of marginalized women and girls, especially those with disabilities, and those living in refugee camps or communities where Israeli restrictions are most visible (East Jerusalem, Area C and H2).²³²

C. Aligning national legislation with international frameworks

1. *The Sustainable Development Goals*

In 2018, the State of Palestine presented its first voluntary review on implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the United Nations High-level Political Forum, reporting that the National Policy Agenda “has adopted 75 of the SDG targets, taking into account the impediments of the Israeli occupation, the dire fiscal situation of the Government of Palestine and the sharp decline of donor aid to Palestine”.²³³ In 2019, PCBS launched a national database of SDG indicators.

The 2019 Arab Region SDG Index and Dashboards Report states that, regarding SDG 5, the State of Palestine’s performance was stagnating, with major challenges remaining for achieving the targets,²³⁴ including the ratio of female to male labour force participation and the ratio of estimated gross national per capita income, and mandatory paid maternity leave.

2. *Harmonization of laws with CEDAW*

Israel, as an occupying power, has responsibilities under international law for the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in the occupied Palestinian territory. The State of Palestine is party to the Convention, which means that it is also responsible for its application as it seeks to build a more gender-equitable State with legislation and policies in line with international standards. During the reporting period, the CEDAW Committee reviewed the initial report of the State of Palestine on the Convention, which was presented in March 2017, its first to a human rights treaty body.²³⁵ The Non-Governmental Women Coalition for the Implementation of the CEDAW in the Occupied State of Palestine, under

the leadership of the General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW), submitted a shadow report along with the State of Palestine’s report in 2018.

The CEDAW Committee issued its concluding observations in July 2018.²³⁶ Many of the recommendations have yet to be fully implemented, including harmonizing legislation in line with the Convention and repealing discriminatory laws that allow for the continued violation of women’s rights in matters of marriage, divorce, child custody and inheritance. Progress to align national legislation – including the Penal Code, Personal Status Code and Rights of Persons with Disability Law – with CEDAW, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, among others, is slow. In 2019, the Council of Ministers adopted a decision to provide for the formation of a team to review the 2011 Draft Palestinian Penal Code.²³⁷ The review, in consultation with CSOs and national bodies, has moved slowly and has been further delayed with the Coronavirus outbreak. During the reporting period, there was also limited progress on adopting the Family Protection Law, despite a recommendation by the Council of Ministers to the President in December 2018 to pass the law.²³⁸ Further, the Government of Palestine has yet to publish CEDAW in the Official Gazette in order to make it legally binding, despite stating that human rights treaties would be published as soon as the laws were harmonized.²³⁹

3. *Beijing+25*

The year 2020 marked the 25th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the Beijing Platform for Action, referred to as Beijing+25. The Ministry of Women’s

Affairs' National Report on Beijing+25: Accomplishments, Challenges and Procedures was issued in April 2019. It outlines the State of Palestine's achievements on gender equality, including: the promulgation of 36 gender-related presidential decrees; endorsement of gender budgeting; establishment of gender units; accession to international conventions and treaties related to gender equality; and establishment of the High National Committee for implementing United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) on women, peace and security. With regard to violence against women, successes include establishing the National Referral System for women victims of violence (Takamul), a planned national observatory to monitor anti-women violence cases, and a forthcoming study on costing the economic impact of marital violence. According to the ministry report, the priorities are to increase women's participation in economic life, reduce violence against them in all its forms, strengthen their political participation and decision-making power and positions, enhance their access to all basic services without discrimination, and integrate and mainstream gender issues in ministries.

4. Women, Peace and Security

In 2016, the State of Palestine adopted a National Action Plan (NAP) to implement UNSCR 1325. The NAP (2017–2019) was developed through national efforts led by the Ministry of Women's Affairs as head of the High National Committee for the Implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 that was composed of ministries, State institutions and CSOs, and supported by UN Women. The National Civil Society Coalition on UNSCR 1325, led by the GUPW, also played an instrumental role.

The three strategic objectives of the NAP were to: enhance protection of Palestinian women and girls, especially from the violations of the Israeli occupation; hold the Israeli occupation accountable nationally and internationally for violations against Palestinian women and girls; and increase the participation of Palestinian women in local and international decision-making processes.²⁴⁰

The NAP was not adequately funded, and the national observatory to collect data has not been established.²⁴¹ Women remain underrepresented in international negotiation processes and national reconciliation processes, both as official negotiators and as technical advisors, despite, in the opinion of Palestinian human rights activist Randa Siniora, "clear evidence that they have often been critical to working across political divides, building grass-roots support for peace, and providing essential expertise".²⁴²

According to a UN Women research paper, women's rights organizations have also questioned the effectiveness of the NAP framework while the Israeli occupation continues: "... there is a lack of mechanisms to apply 1325, as well as a lack of disciplinary actions to guarantee the commitment of different parties to the resolution ... even though Israel has endorsed CEDAW and should be bound by the Security Council resolutions."²⁴³

The Government of Palestine expressed a commitment to a second-generation NAP and to submitting a report on the implementation of the first, which was completed in 2019.²⁴⁴ The Ministry of Women's Affairs is working on NAP 2, which has yet to be adopted.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5. Conclusion and recommendations

As Israel maintains its occupation of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza, it employs practices that are in violation of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. These practices continued to adversely impact women and girls during the reporting period. Israeli military operations and human rights violations have persisted, and even intensified, amid the pandemic, increasing Palestinians' vulnerability to COVID-19. The pandemic, the "defining global health crisis of our time",²⁴⁵ as well as the resulting economic shock, is exacerbating Palestinian women and girls' poverty and vulnerability, and heightening protection risks.

While women and girls will only fully realize their rights if the military occupation ends and international law is applied throughout the occupied Palestinian territory, the Government of Palestine must do more to advance their status in line with international standards and conventions, including CEDAW, the Beijing Platform for Action, the SDGs and the WPS agenda. Unified national laws on gender equality that are implemented uniformly, and the removal of discriminatory legislation and policies are essential for advancing women's rights. In partnership with CSOs, and with the support of donors and the international community, the government must expedite the adoption of gender-equitable legislative and judicial reforms and invest in implementing socioeconomic policies that advance and protect the status, rights and well-being of women and girls, particularly given the impacts of COVID-19.

The following recommendations are proposed, building on previous ESCWA reports, aligned with national planning and commitments to human rights instruments, conventions and treaties, and reiterating the concluding observations of the CEDAW Committee and recommendations made by CSOs in the occupied Palestinian territory.

1. *Harmonization of legislation with international frameworks*

- ◆ The State of Palestine should immediately publish the CEDAW text in the Official Gazette, which would make it binding as domestic law, as recommended by the Independent Human Rights Commission (IHR) and women's rights organizations. In cooperation with CSOs, information campaigns, including seminars and conferences, should be escalated, to promote CEDAW and counter conservative opposition to its implementation.
- ◆ The Government of Palestine should allocate sufficient human and financial resources to implement the Concluding Observations of the CEDAW Committee before submission of its next periodic report and with the full engagement of CSOs.
- ◆ The Government of Palestine should expedite efforts to harmonize laws with international treaties and conventions ratified by the State of Palestine, and implement them nationally, as recommended by the CEDAW Committee. Further, a clear time frame

should be set for the Harmonization Committee and communicated to the wider public to enable effective monitoring by civil society.

- ◆ The promulgation of the Family Protection Law should be expedited, incorporating revisions proposed by CSOs to ensure it is gender sensitive and consistent with international human rights standards. The national team mandated to review the Penal Code should accelerate its efforts, ensuring that CSOs are fully engaged in the review process. The review and adoption of the Penal Code should be in full compliance with CEDAW, and support and complement the Family Protection Law.
- ◆ In consultation with CSOs and civil society networks, the personal status laws should be aligned with international standards, paying specific attention to issues of male guardianship, inheritance, marriage, divorce and child custody.
- ◆ Legal exemptions related to the presidential decree increasing the minimum age of marriage for girls to 18 years should be repealed, with legal efforts matched by awareness raising on the law and socioeconomic measures to deter child marriage.
- ◆ Efforts to raise awareness of women's rights among both men and women should be intensified, including through media campaigns, and accompanied by targeted capacity building for judges, prosecutors, lawyers, police officers and other law enforcement officials.

2. National machinery for the advancement of women

- ◆ The Ministry of Women's Affairs should be allocated sufficient human, technical and financial resources to implement

the Cross-Sectoral National Gender Strategy in coordination and collaboration with national bodies and CSOs, and to lead on the monitoring, evaluation and updating of the National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women, with the full engagement of women's rights organizations and networks.

3. Women, peace and security

- ◆ The Ministry of Women's Affairs should, in consultation with CSOs and national bodies, expedite its efforts to finalize and ensure the adoption of NAP 2 on UNSCR 1325. In parallel, the government should endeavour to promote the participation of Palestinian women in formal national reconciliation processes and negotiations.

4. Economic and political participation

- ◆ To enhance women's economic participation, labour regulations should be revised to explicitly prohibit discrimination in hiring, promotion and pay. Legislation against sexual harassment in the workforce should also be introduced, parental leave policies designed and home-based businesses, freelancing and microwork promoted, accompanied by measures such as access to safe transport and affordable childcare.²⁴⁶
- ◆ Women's political and economic participation should be strengthened through raising awareness on women's rights, investing in education and using the media to question public perceptions on the gendered division of labour and compel more men to take an equal role in care responsibilities. The State of Palestine should adopt more affirmative measures to implement change at all levels, including investing in programmes to enhance the political and social empowerment of young women in Area C, East Jerusalem and Gaza.

5. *Gender-based violence*

- ◆ The State of Palestine should expedite the adoption of the Family Protection Law, taking into account CSO recommendations, to ensure that women and girls are protected from GBV. It should intensify efforts to ensure perpetrators of GBV, particularly femicide, are prosecuted, and invest in gender-sensitive training for judges, police and law enforcement officials. Convictions and sentencing should be monitored to ensure that judges are not using legal provisions to reduce penalties.
- ◆ GBV protection, prevention and response services need to be expanded according to harmonized standard operating procedures, and through coordinated and efficient national referral systems. These include legal aid and representation, mental health and psychosocial services, economic empowerment programmes and shelter services. Particular focus should be given to the rights of the most marginalized women and girls, including those with disability and those in

vulnerable communities in Gaza, and Area C, H2, seam zone and East Jerusalem in the West Bank.

6. *COVID-19 response*

- ◆ Gender equality considerations must take centre stage in the COVID-19 response and economic recovery efforts. The participation of women in response planning and decision-making should be enhanced at all levels, including local emergency committees.
- ◆ As part of the response, GBV survivors' access to services, including during the pandemic state of emergency, must be protected and strengthened, including through a multisectoral coordination plan with the Ministry of Health and the Family and Juvenile Protection units. Measures should be put in place to ensure that women can report GBV confidentially and get the right support at the right time. Women's health care, including psychosocial and mental health, and maternal and reproductive health, should also be prioritized during the COVID-19 crisis and in its aftermath.

Bibliography

- Action against Hunger (2018). Study on Masculine Identities and Men's Roles in the Gaza Strip, Palestine. Available at https://www.accioncontraelhambre.org/sites/default/files/documents/aah_gaza_masculinities_study.pdf.
- Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association (2019). International Women's Day ... 43 Palestinian women in detention. Available at https://www.addameer.org/sites/default/files/publications/international_womens_day.pdf.
- _____ (2020). Statistics: June 2020. Available at http://www.addameer.org/statistics?field_date_of_statistics_value%5Bvalue%5D%5Bdate%5D=07%2F01%2F2018&field_date_of_statistics_value_1%5Bvalue%5D%5Bdate%5D=06%2F30%2F2020.
- Aisha Association for Woman and Child Protection (2020). Impact of COVID-19 health crisis on psychosocial conditions of women in the Gaza Strip: gender-based violence. Available at <https://aisha.ps/public/files/1602012326.pdf>.
- American Near East Refugee Aid and others (2020). International agencies warn Israeli annexation will deepen suffering and poverty. 22 June. Available at <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/NGOS-Warn-Against-Annexation-062220-FINAL.pdf>.
- Amnesty International (2019). Destination: Occupation. Digital Tourism and Israel's Illegal Settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. London: Amnesty International. Available at <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/MDE1594902019ENGLISH.PDF>.
- Arab Barometer (2019a). Sexual harassment and domestic violence in the Middle East and North Africa. Wave V, Topic Report. Available at <https://www.arabbarometer.org/wp-content/uploads/Sexual-Harassment-Domestic-Violence-Arab-Citizens-Public-Opinion-2019.pdf>.
- _____ (2019b). Youth in Middle East and North Africa. Wave V, Topic Report. Available at https://www.arabbarometer.org/wp-content/uploads/ABV_Youth_Report_Public-Opinion_Middle-East-North-Africa_2019-1.pdf.
- Association for Civil Rights in Israel (2019). East Jerusalem: facts and figures 2019. May. Available at https://fef8066e-8343-457a-8902-ae89f366476d.filesusr.com/ugd/01368b_20dc66c3a088465286ce4c6d5a87c56c.pdf.
- _____ (2020). So the police failed? Let's send in the army. 11 January. Available at https://www.english.acri.org.il/post/___165.
- Baloushah, Suha, and others (2019). A whole life of threats: a qualitative exploration of lived experiences of Palestinian women suffering from intimate partner violence. *International Journal of Women's Health*, vol. 11, pp. 547–554.
- B'Tselem (2019). Playing the Security Card: Israeli Policy in Hebron as a Means to Effect Forcible Transfer of Local Palestinians. Available at https://www.btselem.org/sites/default/files/publications/201909_playing_the_security_card_eng.pdf.
- _____ (2020a). This is Jerusalem: Violence and Dispossession in al-'Esawiyah. Available at https://www.btselem.org/sites/default/files/publications/202005_this_is_jerusalem_violence_and_dispossession_in_al_esawiyah_eng.pdf.
- _____ (2020b). During the Coronavirus crisis, Israel confiscates tents designated for clinic in the Northern West Bank. 26 March. Available at https://www.btselem.org/press_release/20200326_israel_confiscates_clinic_tents_during_coronavirus_crisis.
- CARE (2020a). Gendered impact of COVID-19 in Palestine West Bank/Gaza. Available at http://www.ldf.ps/documentsShow.aspx?ATT_ID=45121.
- _____ (2020b). Rapid Gender Assessment: Early Gender Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Available at <http://www.careevaluations.org/wp-content/uploads/CARE-Palestine-WBG-RGA-Main-Report-04052020.pdf>.
- Child Protection Working Group (2019). A Review of the Humanitarian Mental Health and Psychosocial Needs and Gaps in West Bank and Gaza. Available at <https://www.unicef.org/sop/media/1031/file/MHPSS%20Rapid%20Review%20Palestine%202019.pdf>.
- Civic and Women Coalition for the Implementation of CEDAW in the Occupied State of Palestine (2020). Report on the violence against women and girls during COVID-19 in the State of Palestine. Available at <https://www.hwc-pal.org/files/server/Publications/VAW%20report-%20English%20version.pdf>.
- Education Cluster (2020). Education Cluster Strategy, Palestine 2020–2021. Available at https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/education_cluster_strategy_9.4.2020_final.pdf.
- Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor (2020). Gaza: The Dead-Zone. Geneva. Available at <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Gaza%20The%20Dead-Zone%20en.pdf>.
- FADA – Palestinian Women Against Violence (2020). FADA: Palestinian Women Against Violence concludes its campaign We Are Your Voice. Statement. 30 June. Available at <https://pwwsd.org/single-news/17/en>.
- Gisha – Legal Center for Freedom of Movement (2020). Gaza up close. Available at https://gisha.org/UserFiles/File/publications/Inside_look_at_gaza/Gaza_up_close_En.pdf.
- Hamad, Shoroq, and others (2020). Exploring the impact of COVID-19 on adolescents in the Gaza Strip. Briefing Papers. London: Overseas Development Institute. Available at <https://www.odi.org/publications/17036-exploring-impact-covid-19-adolescents-gaza-strip>.

- Harsha, Nouh, Luay Ziq and Rita Giacaman (2019). Disability among Palestinian elderly in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt): prevalence and associated factors. *BMC Public Health*, vol. 19, issue 432. Available at <https://bmcpubhealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-019-6758-5>.
- Hawari, Yari (2019). The political marginalization of Palestinian women in the West Bank. *Al Shabaka – the Palestinian Policy Network*. 28 July. Available at <https://al-shabaka.org/briefs/the-political-marginalization-of-palestinian-women-in-the-west-bank/>.
- Health Cluster (2020). *Health Cluster Bulletin, occupied Palestinian territory, April 2020*. Available at https://www.un.org/unispal/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/HCAPRILBUL_040520.pdf.
- Human Rights Watch (2019a). *Born Without Civil Rights: Israel's Use of Draconian Military Orders to Repress Palestinians in the West Bank*. Available at <https://www.hrw.org/report/2019/12/17/born-without-civil-rights/israels-use-draconian-military-orders-repress#:~:text=Born%20Without%20Civil%20Rights,-Israel's%20Use%20of&text=Israel%20should%20grant%20Palestinians%20in,with%20no%20end%20in%20sight>.
- _____ (2019b). *The deadly toll for Palestinian women*. 19 September. Available at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/09/19/deadly-toll-palestinian-women>.
- _____ (2020). *World Report of 2020: Events of 2019*. Available at <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2020#>.
- Human Rights Watch, Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling and Equality Now (2018). *Joint submission to the CEDAW Committee on the State of Palestine 70th session*. June. Available at https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/supporting_resources/hrw_palestine_cedaw_submission_final.pdf.
- International Labour Organization (2019). *The Situation of Workers of the occupied Arab territories*. Paper for International Labour Conference 108th Session. ILC.108/DG/APP.
- _____ (2020). *The Situation of Workers of the occupied Arab territories*. Paper for International Labour Conference 109th Session. ILC.109/DG/APP.
- Ir Amim (2017). *Revival of dormant private settlement plans in East Jerusalem continues*. Available at <https://www.ir-amim.org.il/en/node/2101>.
- Isaac, Jad, and others (2019). *Study of Higher Education and Research in Palestine*. Available at http://www.arij.org/files/arijadmin/2019/uni_2019.pdf.
- Juzoor for Health and Social Development (2020a). *Gender-based violence during COVID-19 pandemic: Palestine – May 2020*. Policy Paper. Available at <http://www.juzoor.org/images/activity/COVID19/COVID19-GBV-Policy-Paper-EN.pdf>.
- _____ (2020b). *The Palestinian healthcare system during the COVID-19 pandemic*. Available at http://www.juzoor.org/en/about-juzoor-for-health/juzoor-publications/details?path=Research%252FPalestinian_Healthcare_Sytem_and_COVID-PolicyPaper-EN.pdf.
- Juzoor for Health and Social Development and the Palestinian Child Institute, An Najah University (2020). *COVID-19 and early childhood development in the State of Palestine*. Policy Paper. Available at https://portals-assets.najah.edu/pci/media/filer_public/08/44/0844d1a0-2a68-43fb-bf02-7cd6357c64ad/covid19_ecd_policy.pdf.
- Khader, Ali, and Bassam Abu Hamad (2018). *A Much Neglected Service: Assessment of Family Planning Services in Palestine – Challenges and Opportunities*. United Nations Population Fund. Available at <https://palestine.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/FP-Study-Final-Ver-Sept19.pdf>.
- Luomi, Mari, and others (2019). *Arab Region SDG Index and Dashboards Report 2019*. Abu Dhabi and New York: SDG Centre of Excellence for the Arab Region/Emirates Diplomatic Academy and Sustainable Development Solutions Network. Available at https://s3.amazonaws.com/sustainabledevelopment.report/2019/2019_arab_region_index_and_dashboards.pdf.
- The New Arab (2020). *Exclusive: UN's Guterres vows to back Palestinians on 'Deal of the Century' issue*. 5 February. Available at <https://english.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2020/2/5/guterres-un-committed-to-palestinian-state-on-pre-1967-lines>.
- Odeh, Shahrazad (2018). *A Violent Network: Gender-Based Violence against Palestinian Women in Virtual Space*. 7amleh and Kvinna till Kvinna. Available at https://7amleh.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Report_GBV_-_KtK.pdf.
- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (2020a). *Israeli annexation of parts of the Palestinian West Bank would break international law: UN experts call on the international community to ensure accountability*. 16 June. Available at <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25960#:~:text=Israel's%20stated%20plans%20for%20annexation,settlements%20in%20the%20West%20Bank.&text=The%20annexation%20of%20this%20territory,released%20in%20late%20January%202020>.
- _____ (2020b). *COVID-19: Israel must release Palestinian prisoners in vulnerable situation, say UN experts*. 24 April. Available at <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25822>.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2019). *Social Institutions and Gender Index: West Bank and Gaza Strip 2019*. Available at <https://www.genderindex.org/wp-content/uploads/files/datasheets/2019/PS.pdf>.
- Oxfam (2019). *Participatory Vulnerability Analysis in the North of the Gaza Strip*. Available at <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/participatory-vulnerability-analysis-in-the-north-of-the-gaza-strip-620627/>.
- _____ (2020). *Violence and Impunity in the West Bank During the COVID-19 Pandemic*. Briefing Note. Available at <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/violence-and-impunity-in-the-west-bank-during-the-covid-19-pandemic-the-failure-620985/>.

- Oxfam and Institute of Women's Studies, Birzeit University (2019). Addressing the Needs of Palestinian Households in Area C of the West Bank: Findings of the First Comprehensive Household Survey. Available at <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/addressing-needs-palestinian-households-area-c-west-bank>.
- Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (n.d.a). Median age at first marriage in Palestine by sex and governorate: 2018. Available at http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/_Rainbow/Documents/VS-2018-05e.html.
- _____ (n.d.b.). Crude divorce rate in Palestine by governorate (1997–2018). Available at http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/_Rainbow/Documents/VS-2018-07e.html.
- _____ (2019a). On the occasion of the International Population Day. 11 July. Available at <http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/post.aspx?lang=en&ItemID=3503>.
- _____ (2019b). H.E. Ms. Awad highlights the Palestinian children's situation on the eve of the Palestinian Child Day. 5 April. Available at <http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/post.aspx?lang=en&ItemID=3438>.
- _____ (2019c). On the occasion of the International Youth Day, the PCBS issues a press release demonstrating the situation of the youth in the Palestinian society. 12 August. Available at [http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/post.aspx?lang=en&ItemID=3528#:~:text=In%20this%20press%20release%2C%20the,\(18%2D29%20years\).&text=The%20percentage%20of%20youth%20\(18,105%20males%20per%20100%20females](http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/post.aspx?lang=en&ItemID=3528#:~:text=In%20this%20press%20release%2C%20the,(18%2D29%20years).&text=The%20percentage%20of%20youth%20(18,105%20males%20per%20100%20females).
- _____ (2019d). On the occasion of the International Day of Older Persons. 1 October. Available at <http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/post.aspx?lang=en&ItemID=3563>.
- _____ (2019e). Preliminary results of the violence survey in Palestinian society. Ramallah. Available at <http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Downloads/book2480.pdf>.
- _____ (2020a). Palestine in Figures 2019. Available at <http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Downloads/book2513.pdf>.
- _____ (2020b). H.E. Ms. Awad highlights the situation of the Palestinian women on the eve of the International Women's Day. 8 March. Available at <http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/site/512/default.aspx?lang=en&ItemID=3679>.
- _____ (2020c). Labour Force Survey: Annual Report 2019. Available at <https://auspalestine.files.wordpress.com/2020/05/pcbs-lfs-2019-annual-report.pdf>.
- _____ (2020d). Labour Force Survey preliminary results first quarter. Available at <http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/site/512/default.aspx?lang=en&ItemID=3748>.
- _____ (2020e). Women and men in Palestine: issues and statistics (Arabic). Available at <http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Downloads/book2528.pdf>.
- Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations Network (2019). The impact of current situation on women protection in the Gaza Strip. June. Available at <https://www.socialwatch.org/sites/default/files/2019-Palestine-PNGO-WOMEN-PROTECTION.pdf>.
- Palestinian Working Women Society for Development (2020a). Violence against Palestinian Women in the occupied Palestinian territory in the Context of COVID-19. Available at <https://pwwsd.org/uploads/15930829742134507294.pdf>.
- _____ (2020b). Progress update: COVID-19 emergency situation 22 March–4 April 2020. Available at <https://pwwsd.org/uploads/15861970731104770065.pdf>.
- Parke, Anna, Vanessa Farr and Laila Alodaat (2019). Eighteen years on: assessing the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 Women, Peace and Security agenda in the Arab States region. Cairo: UN Women. Available at <https://arabstates.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2019/01/eighteen-years>.
- Peace Now (2020a). Settlement Construction Report 2019. Available at http://peacenow.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/2019-Construction-Report_Peace-Now.pdf.
- _____ (2020b). Construction in settlements in the Jordan Valley in 2019. Available at <https://peacenow.org.il/en/construction-in-jordan-valley-2019>.
- Premiere Urgence Internationale (2020). Uninterrupted Israeli human rights violations increase Palestinians vulnerability to COVID-19. 9 April. Available at <https://www.premiere-urgence.org/en/uninterrupted-israeli-human-rights-violations-increase-palestinians-vulnerability-to-covid-19/>.
- Schuster, Roseanne C., and others (2019). Measuring community norms around women's empowerment in the West Bank: opportunities and challenges of a novel approach using cultural consensus. *SSM – Population Health*, vol. 9. Available at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6978481/>.
- Siniora, Randa (2018). Statement to UN Security Council open debate on Women, Peace and Security, 25 October. Available at <https://www.peacewomen.org/resource/statement-ms-randa-siniora-un-security-council-open-debate-women-peace-and-security-25>.
- State of Palestine, Council of Ministers (2020a). Cabinet session No. (26) 21 October 2019. Available at <http://www.palestinecabinet.gov.ps/portal/Decree/DetailsEn/fea8e17b-4a57-408b-8e03-08677d9f2924>.
- _____ (2020b). Cabinet session No. (37) 13 December 2019. Available at <http://www.palestinecabinet.gov.ps/portal/Decree/DetailsEn/d99c1bdf-5177-494d-9ecd-cc419f6e5eeb>.

State of Palestine, Ministry of Health (2018). National Reproductive and Sexual Health Strategy in Palestine 2018–2022. On file with authors.

State of Palestine, Ministry of Health (2019). Health Annual Report Palestine 2018. Available at http://healthclusteropt.org/admin/file_manager/uploads/files/1/Health%20Annual%20Report%20Palestine%202018.pdf.

State of Palestine, Ministry of Social Development (2017). Social Development Sector Strategy 2017–2022. Available at <http://extwprlegs1.fao.org/docs/pdf/pal179885.pdf>.

State of Palestine, Ministry of Women's Affairs (2017). The National Action Plan for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325: Women, Peace and Security – Palestine 2017–2019. Available at https://www.peacewomen.org/sites/default/files/170515Pln_MoWA_e.pdf.

_____ (2019). National Report on Beijing+25: Accomplishments, Challenges and Procedures. Available at https://www.unescwa.org/sites/www.unescwa.org/files/page_attachments/palestine_en_1.pdf.

State of Palestine, Prime Minister Office (2020). State of Emergency: Palestine's COVID-19 Response Plan. Available at <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/state-emergency-palestine-s-covid-19-response-plan>.

United Kingdom, Home Office (2020). Report of a Home Office Fact-Finding Mission: Occupied Palestinian Territories – Freedom of Movement, Security and Human Rights Situation. Available at https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2026262/OPTs_-_FFM_report_PDF.pdf.

United Nations (2020a). Key players reject proposed United States peace plan as failing to meet minimum rights of Palestinians, Special Coordinator tells Security Council. 11 February. Available at <https://www.un.org/press/en/2020/sc14103.doc.htm>.

United Nations (2020b). US Middle East peace plan 'lopsided', says independent UN rights expert, 31 January. Available at <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/01/1056412>.

United Nations Children's Fund (n.d.). Health and nutrition. Available at <https://www.unicef.org/sop/what-we-do/health-and-nutrition>.

_____ (2018). State of Palestine: Country Report on Out-of-School Children. Available at <https://www.unicef.org/sop/reports/state-palestine-country-report-out-school-children>.

United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women (2019). Situation of and assistance to Palestinian women. 8 January. E/CN.6/2019/6.

United Nations, Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2019). Concluding observations on the Fourth Periodic Report of Israel. 12 November. E/C.12/ISR/CO/4.

United Nations, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (2018a). Concluding observations on the initial report of the State of Palestine. 25 July. CEDAW/C/PSE/CO/1.

_____ (2018b). Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women considers the report of the State of Palestine. 11 July. Available at <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23377&LangID=E>.

United Nations, Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (2020). Concluding observations on the combined seventeenth to nineteenth reports of Israel. 27 January. CERD/C/ISR/CO/17-19.

United Nations, Committee on the Rights of the Child (2020). Concluding observations on the initial report of the State of Palestine. 6 March. CRC/C/PSE/CO/1.

United Nations Country Team in the occupied Palestinian territory (2012). Gaza in 2020: A Liveable Place? Available at <https://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/file/publications/gaza/Gaza%20in%202020.pdf>.

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2018). State of Palestine's main message to the 2018 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. 6 July. Available at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/memberstates/palestine>.

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (2019a). Tracking Food Security in the Arab Region. E/ESCWA/SDPD/2019/4.

_____ (2019b). Women in the Judiciary in the Arab States: Removing Barriers, Increasing Numbers. E/ESCWA/ECW/2019/2.

_____ (2019c). Women in the Judiciary in the State of Palestine. E/ESCWA/ECW/2018/TP.1.

_____ (2020). Impact of COVID-19 on Money Metric Poverty in Arab Countries. E/ESCWA/CL2.GPID/2020/TP.10.

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, London School of Economics and Political Science and the Institute for Women Studies at the Lebanese American University (2019). Cultivating Resilient Institutions in the Arab Region: National Women's Machineries in Challenging Times. E/ESCWA/ECW/2019/4.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and State of Palestine, Ministry of Women's Affairs (2020). Bridging the Gender Gap: Mapping and Analysis of Gender Policies in Palestine (2011–2017). Available at https://www.un.org/unispal/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/UNESCOSTUDY_140120.pdf.

United Nations Environment Programme (2020). State of Environment and Outlook Report for the Occupied Palestinian Territory 2020. Available at <https://www.unenvironment.org/resources/report/state-environment-and-outlook-report-occupied-palestinian-territory-2020>.

United Nations, General Assembly (2019a). Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and the occupied Syrian Golan. 20 September. A/74/357.

United Nations, General Assembly (2019b). Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories. A/74/356.

United Nations, General Assembly (2020). Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan. A/75/86–E/2020/62.

United Nations, Human Rights Council (2020). Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan. 30 January. A/HRC/43/67.

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (2018a). Humanitarian Needs Overview 2019. Available at <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-needs-overview-2019>.

_____ (2018b). East Jerusalem. December 2018. Available at https://www.ochaopt.org/sites/default/files/wb_thematic_9_0.pdf.

_____ (2018c). The Monthly Humanitarian Bulletin: July 2018. Occupied Palestinian territory. Available at https://www.ochaopt.org/sites/default/files/hummonitor_august_08_08_2018.pdf.

_____ (2019a). Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020: OPT. Available at https://www.ochaopt.org/sites/default/files/hno_2020-final.pdf.

_____ (2019b). The humanitarian situation in the H2 area of Hebron City: findings of needs assessment. April. Available at https://www.ochaopt.org/sites/default/files/h2_spotlight_april_2019.pdf.

_____ (2019c). Gaza crossings' operations status: monthly update – November 2019. Available at https://www.ochaopt.org/sites/default/files/gaza_crossings_operations_status_november_2019.pdf.

_____ (2019d). Fewer permits granted to access land behind barrier. The Monthly Humanitarian Bulletin: February 2019. Available at <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/fewer-permits-granted-access-land-behind-barrier>.

_____ (2019e). Mothers at risk: limited access to medicine and family planning services compromises maternal health in Gaza. The Monthly Humanitarian Bulletin: September 2019. Available at <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/mothers-risk-limited-access-medicine-and-family-planning-services-compromises-maternal>.

_____ (2020a). Data on Casualties Gaza – 7/1/2018–6/30/2020.

_____ (2020b). Data on Injuries Gaza – 7/1/2018–6/30/2020.

_____ (2020c). Data on Casualties West Bank – 7/1/2018–6/30/2020.

_____ (2020d). Data on injuries West Bank – 7/1/2018–6/30/2020.

_____ (2020e). Attacks/trespass by Israeli settlers against Palestinians in the West Bank. Available at <https://www.ochaopt.org/page/settler-related-violence>.

_____ (2020f). The Humanitarian Bulletin: January–February 2020. Available at <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-bulletin-january-february-2020>.

_____ (2020g). Occupied Palestinian territory (oPt): COVID-19 emergency – situation report No. 12. Available at https://www.un.org/unispal/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/sitrep_12.pdf.

_____ (2020h). How COVID-19 measures affect women, girls, men and boys differently. 4 May. Available at <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/how-covid-19-measures-affect-women-girls-men-and-boys>.

_____ (2020i). The Humanitarian Bulletin: March–May 2020. Available at <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-bulletin-march-may-2020>.

_____ (2020j). West Bank demolitions and displacement: an overview. Available at https://www.ochaopt.org/sites/default/files/demolition_monthly_report_june_2020.pdf.

_____ (2020k). Data on demolition and displacement in the West Bank. Available at <https://www.ochaopt.org/data/demolition>.

United Nations Population Fund (2019a). Women and Girls with Disabilities: Needs of Survivors of Gender-based Violence and Services Offered to Them. Available at <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/women-and-girls-with-disabilities-needs-of-survivors-of-gender-based-violence-and-services-offered-to-them-unfpa-report/>.

_____ (2019b). Assessment of In Vitro Fertilisation Services in Palestine. Executive Summary. Available at <https://palestine.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Assessment%20of%20IVF%20Services%20in%20Palestine.pdf>.

_____ (2020). Demand for counselling services spikes in Palestine amid COVID-19 lockdown. 2 June. Available at <https://www.unfpa.org/news/demand-counselling-services-spikes-palestine-amid-covid-19-lockdown>.

United Nations Population Fund, Juzoor for Health and Social Development, Haya Programme and GBV Cluster (2020). Impact of the COVID-19 outbreak and lockdown on family dynamics and domestic violence in Palestine – June 2020. Research Paper. Available at <https://palestine.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Impact%20of%20COVID19%20outbreak%20and%20lockdown%20on%20family%20dynamics%20and%20domestic%20violence%20in%20Palestine.pdf>.

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (2019). How Does She Cope? Women Pushed to New Limits in the Gaza Strip. Amman, Jordan. Available at <https://www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/how-does-she-cope-women-pushed-new-limits-gaza-strip>.

- _____ (2020). Annual Operational Report 2019. Available at https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/content/resources/aor_2019_eng.pdf.
- United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (2018a). Caught Up Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Occupation, Patriarchy and Gender Relations: A Case Study of Palestinian Women in Area C and H2. Available at <https://palestine.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2019/02/a-case-study-of-palestinian-women-in-area-c-and-h2>.
- _____ (2018b). Assessment of the Services of Anti-violence Centres and Shelters in Palestine. Available at <https://palestine.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2018/10/assessment-of-sheltering-services>.
- _____ (2019). Gender Alert: Needs of Women, Girls, Boys and Men in Humanitarian Action in Palestine. Available at <https://palestine.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2019/02/gender-alert-needs-of-women-girls-boys>.
- _____ (2020a). COVID-19: Gendered Impacts of the Pandemic in Palestine and Implications for Policy and Programming. Available at <https://arabstates.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/05/covid-19-gendered-impacts-of-the-pandemic-in-palestine>.
- _____ (2020b). Impact of COVID-19 on women-led micro, small, and medium enterprises in Palestine. March. Available at <https://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20palestine/attachments/publications/2020/4/impact%20of%20covid19%20on%20womenled%20msmes%20in%20palestine%20english.pdf?la=en&vs=5706>.
- _____ (2020c). Rapid Assessment on COVID-19 and Domestic and Family Violence Services across Palestine. Available at <https://arabstates.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/05/rapid-assessment-on-covid19-and-domestic-violence-services-in-palestine>.
- _____ (2020d). Impact of COVID-19 Crisis on the Access of Women Victims and Survivors of Violence to Justice and Security Services in Palestine. Available at <https://arabstates.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/05/brief-impact-of-covid19-crisis-on-evaw-victims-in-palestine>.
- Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling (2019a). WCLAC Annual Report 2018. Available at http://www.wclac.org/files/annual_reports/2018/o8w1xrico0azfytkhklpv1.pdf.
- _____ (2019b). WCLAC's Shadow Report for the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 66th session: Israel Review. Available at <http://www.wclac.org/files/library/19/10/yekz3kqu2vf4q0o3xolozc.pdf>.
- _____ (2019c). Women of Jerusalem: On the Frontline Facing Occupation. Available at <http://www.wclac.org/files/library/19/12/I979axy3hq0fs1p7csotlj.pdf>.
- _____ (2020a). Women and COVID-19: Israeli violations of international humanitarian law. 19 May. Available at <http://www.wclac.org/files/library/20/05/uwvvdhhrw9yfghezoya6e.pdf>.
- _____ (2020b). COVID-19 and women's rights violations in Palestine: Weekly Response Report 14–20 May 2020. Available at <http://www.wclac.org/files/library/20/05/jqjpiyh0k1awst2wonkxv.pdf>.
- _____ (2020c). WCLAC Annual Report 2019. Available at https://www.wclac.org/files/annual_reports/2019/v43mxreenhbors4l5ty4f.pdf.
- _____ (2020d). COVID-19 and women's rights violations in Palestine: Weekly Response Report 16–23 April 2020. Available at http://www.lacs.ps/documents/Show.aspx?ATT_ID=45153.
- _____ (2020e). May in numbers: COVID-19, violence against women and post-lockdown interventions in Palestine. Available at <http://www.wclac.org/files/library/20/06/87fdh36qwt4jufhqzvkcf.pdf>.
- World Bank (2018). Economic Monitoring Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee. 27 September. Available at <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/413851537281565349/pdf/129986-REVISED-World-Bank-Sept-2018-AHLC-Report-final.pdf>.
- _____ (2019a). Enhancing Job Opportunities for Skilled Women in the Palestinian Territories. Available at <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/977921537274068902/pdf/129981-WP-PUBLIC-Enhancing-Job-Opportunities-for-Skilled-Females-in-the-Palestinian-Territories-Final-Report.pdf>.
- _____ (2020a). Palestinian Territories Economic Update: April 2020. Available at <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/394981554825501362/mpo-pse.pdf>.
- _____ (2020b). Economic Monitoring Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee. 2 June. Available at <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/844141590600764047/pdf/Economic-Monitoring-Report-to-the-Ad-Hoc-Liaison-Committee.pdf>.
- _____ (2020c). Women, Business and the Law 2020. Available at <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/32639/9781464815324.pdf>.
- World Food Programme, United Nations Children's Fund and Save the Children (2019). Gaza Strip nutrition multi-sectoral assessment. Executive Summary. Available at <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/gaza-strip-nutrition-multi-sectoral-assessment-executive>.
- World Health Organization (2019a). Right to Health 2018. Available at http://www.emro.who.int/images/stories/palestine/documents/who_right_to_health_2018_web-final.pdf?ua=1.

_____ (2019b). Health conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan. 14 May. A72/33.

_____ (2020a). Health access: barriers for patients in the occupied Palestinian territory. Monthly Report June 2020. Available at http://www.emro.who.int/images/stories/palestine/documents/WHO_June_2020_Monthly_Report.pdf?ua=1.

_____ (2020b). Health infographics: Gaza patient referral – 2019. Available at <http://www.emro.who.int/pse/information-resources/health-infographics-main-page.html?format=html>.

_____ (2020c). WHO Director-General's opening remarks at the media briefing on COVID-19. 16 March. Available at <https://www.who.int/dg/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-opening-remarks-at-the-media-briefing-on-covid-19---16-march-2020>.

World Health Organization and Health Cluster (2019). Situation report: occupied Palestinian territory, Gaza 1–31 August 2019. Available at http://www.emro.who.int/images/stories/palestine/documents/sitrep_aug_2019_v0_sh_rev_gro.pdf?ua=1.

Yesh Din (2020). Data sheet, December 2019: Law enforcement on Israeli civilians in the West Bank. Available at <https://www.yesh-din.org/en/data-sheet-december-2019-law-enforcement-on-israeli-civilians-inthe-west-bank/>.

Endnotes

- 1 The occupied West Bank is divided into three areas – A, B and C – as part of the Oslo Accords, signed by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel in 1993 and 1995, see https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/IL%20PS_950928_InterimAgreementWestBankGazaStrip%28OsloI%29.pdf.
- 2 This report employs the following terminology: Government of Palestine is used to describe the legal entity governing the State of Palestine; State of Palestine is used to describe the government's engagement in the international sphere as a State recognised by the United Nations; and occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) is used to describe the geographical space and division of the territory under Israeli occupation.
- 3 United Nations, 2020a, p. 1.
- 4 The New Arab, 2020.
- 5 United Nations, 2020b, p. 1.
- 6 OHCHR, 2020a, p. 1.
- 7 American Near East Refugee Aid and others, 2020.
- 8 A/74/356, p. 7.
- 9 Peace Now, 2020a, p. 2.
- 10 Ir Amim, 2017, p. 1.
- 11 World Bank, 2020a, p. 1.
- 12 OCHA, 2020a, p. 1.
- 13 OCHA, 2020b, p. 1.
- 14 A/74/356, p. 10.
- 15 OCHA, 2019a, p. 11.
- 16 A/HRC/40/74, para. 68, 71, 74, 76, 94, 97, 99, 101, 102.
- 17 Women's Affairs Center – Gaza and United Nations Population Fund, The Women and Great Return March "GRM" in the Gaza Strip (2018), p. 7. On file with author.
- 18 OCHA, 2019a, p. 20.
- 19 Oxfam, 2019, p. 10.
- 20 A/75/86-E/2020/6, para. 124.
- 21 OCHA, 2020c, p. 1.
- 22 OCHA, 2020d, p. 1.
- 23 OCHA, 2020e, p. 1.
- 24 Premiere Urgence Internationale, 2020, p. 1.
- 25 Yesh Din, 2020, p. 1.
- 26 Oxfam, 2020, p. 6.
- 27 A/73/410, paras. 2, 14–25, 57, 63–64.
- 28 WCLAC, 2019a, p. 13.
- 29 Oxfam and Institute of Women's Studies, Birzeit University, 2019, p. 17.
- 30 B'Tselem, 2020a, pp. 1–2.
- 31 ACRI, 2020, p. 1.
- 32 As per the 1997 Hebron Protocol, Israel handed over control of 80 per cent of Hebron city (H1) to the Palestinian Authority. The remainder, occupied by Israeli settlers, is referred to as H2.
- 33 OCHA, 2020f, p. 9.
- 34 TIPH began in Hebron following the Cave of the Patriarchs massacre by settler Baruch Goldstein in 1994, in accordance with Security Council resolution 904, which called for measures to be taken to guarantee the safety of Palestinian civilians, including by a temporary international presence.
- 35 OCHA, 2019b, p. 5.
- 36 OCHA, 2020f, p. 2.
- 37 A/HRC/43/67, p. 11.
- 38 State of Palestine, 2020, p. 3.
- 39 OHCHR, 2020b, p. 1.
- 40 B'Tselem, 2020b, p. 1.
- 41 Premiere Urgence Internationale, 2020, p. 1.
- 42 Juzoor for Health and Social Development, 2020a, p. 10.
- 43 CARE, 2020a, p. 8.
- 44 OCHA, 2020g, pp. 2–3.
- 45 Ibid.
- 46 OCHA, 2020h, p. 1.
- 47 CARE, 2020a, p. 2.
- 48 UN Women, 2020a, p. 15.
- 49 The Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations Network, 2019, p. 1.
- 50 Gisha – Legal Center for Freedom of Movement, 2020, p. 3.
- 51 Ibid., p. 2, 3.
- 52 OCHA, 2019b, p. 1.
- 53 WHO, 2019a, p. 37.
- 54 A/75/86-E/2020/62, p. 9.
- 55 UNRWA, 2019, p. 6.
- 56 OCHA, 2020i, p. 1.
- 57 OCHA, 2020i, p. 1.
- 58 A/75/86-E/2020/62, para. 62.
- 59 OCHA, 2018b, p. 1.
- 60 WCLAC, 2019b, p. 14.
- 61 United Kingdom, Home Office, 2020, p. 16.
- 62 OCHA, 2019d, p. 1.
- 63 UN Women, 2019, p. 7.
- 64 E/CN.6/2019/6, p. 4.
- 65 Oxfam and Institute of Women's Studies, Birzeit University, 2019, p. 9.
- 66 OCHA, 2018c, p. 11.
- 67 Amnesty International, 2019, p. 27.
- 68 E/C.12/ISR/CO/4, p. 8.
- 69 CERD/C/ISR/CO/17-19, p. 8.
- 70 OCHA, 2020j, p. 1.
- 71 Human Rights Watch, 2020, p. 303.
- 72 OCHA, 2020k, p. 1.
- 73 OCHA, 2020k, p. 1.
- 74 Ibid.
- 75 A/74/357, p. 8.
- 76 B'Tselem, 2019, p. 24.

- 77 A/74/357.
- 78 WCLAC, 2019b, p. 6.
- 79 OCHA, 2019a, p. 17.
- 80 E/CN.6/2019/6, p. 3.
- 81 Human Rights Watch, 2019a, p. 48.
- 82 Addameer, 2020, p. 1.
- 83 Addameer, 2019, p. 1.
- 84 United Kingdom, Home Office, 2020, p. 84.
- 85 OHCHR, 2020b, p. 1.
- 86 UN Women, 2018a, p. 56.
- 87 A/75/86-E/2020/62, para. 120.
- 88 WCLAC, 2020a, p. 1.
- 89 WCLAC, 2020b, p. 4.
- 90 WCLAC, 2019c, p. 13.
- 91 PCBS, 2020a, p. 8.
- 92 PCBS, 2020b, p. 1.
- 93 UNRWA, 2020, p. 13, 14.
- 94 UNEP, 2020, p. 46.
- 95 PCBS, 2019a, p. 1.
- 96 UNRWA, 2019, p. 42.
- 97 PCBS, 2019b, p. 1.
- 98 PCBS, 2019c, p. 1.
- 99 PCBS, 2019d, p. 1.
- 100 Ibid.
- 101 Harsha, Ziq and Giacaman, 2019, pp. 5–6.
- 102 PCBS, n.d.a., p. 1.
- 103 Khader and Hamad, p. 31.
- 104 PCBS, 2020b, p. 1.
- 105 UNRWA, 2019, p. 19.
- 106 UNRWA, 2019, p. 22.
- 107 PCBS, n.d.b., p. 1.
- 108 PCBS, 2019c, p. 1.
- 109 Women's Affairs Center – Gaza and United Nations Population Fund, *The Reality of Divorced and Suspended Women in the Gaza Strip* (2020), p. 4. On file with author.
- 110 PCBS, 2019b, p. 1.
- 111 Oxfam and Institute of Women's Studies, Birzeit University, 2019, pp. 8–9.
- 112 World Bank, 2020b, p. 3.
- 113 Ibid.
- 114 Ibid., p. 7.
- 115 ESCWA, 2020, p. 21.
- 116 CARE, 2020b, p. 6.
- 117 ESCWA, 2019a, p. 52.
- 118 WFP, UNICEF and Save the Children, 2019, p. 1.
- 119 ACRI, 2019, p. 1.
- 120 PCBS, 2020a, p. 31.
- 121 UNICEF, 2018, p. 25.
- 122 Oxfam and Institute of Women's Studies, Birzeit University, 2019, pp. 8–9.
- 123 OCHA, 2018a, p. 3.
- 124 PCBS, 2020b, p. 31.
- 125 PCBS, 2020b, p. 32.
- 126 Isaac and others, 2019, p. 21.
- 127 Juzoor for Health and Development and Palestinian Child Institute at An Najah University, 2020, p. 9.
- 128 Hamad and others, 2020, p. 6.
- 129 A/75/86-E/2020/6, para. 115.
- 130 Ibid., para. 116.
- 131 OCHA, 2019a, p. 49.
- 132 A/75/86-E/2020/62, p. 19.
- 133 Education Cluster, 2020, p. 7.
- 134 ILO, 2020, p. 12.
- 135 PCBS, 2020c, p. 52.
- 136 ILO, 2020, p. 6.
- 137 PCBS, 2020c, p. 26.
- 138 PCBS, 2020c, p. 56.
- 139 ILO, 2019, p. iii.
- 140 PCBS, 2020d, p. 17.
- 141 PCBS, 2020c, p. 55.
- 142 PCBS, 2020c, p. 101.
- 143 World Bank, 2019a, p. 12, 17.
- 144 Action against Hunger, 2018, p. 15.
- 145 Ibid., pp. 21–22.
- 146 PCBS, 2020c, p. 93.
- 147 ILO, 2019, p. 16.
- 148 Oxfam, 2019, p. 9.
- 149 ILO, 2020, p. 35.
- 150 World Bank, 2020c, p. 48.
- 151 OCHA, 2020h, p. 1.
- 152 UN Women, 2020b.
- 153 CARE, 2020b, p. 9.
- 154 WHO, 2020b, p. 1.
- 155 State of Palestine, Ministry of Health, 2019, pp. 30, 90.
- 156 WHO, 2019a, p. 8.
- 157 Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor, 2020, p. 41.
- 158 CN.6/2019/6, p. 3.
- 159 Child Protection Working Group, 2019, p. 15.
- 160 OCHA, 2019e, p. 1.
- 161 WHO and Health Cluster, 2019, p. 3.
- 162 OCHA, 2020f, p. 5.
- 163 WHO, 2019a, p. 60.
- 164 UNFPA, 2019a, p. 26.
- 165 CEDAW/C/PSE/CO/1, p. 13.
- 166 State of Palestine, Ministry of Health, 2019, pp. 16–17.
- 167 UNICEF, n.d., p. 2.
- 168 UNFPA, 2019b, p. 6.
- 169 Juzoor for Health and Development, 2020b, p. 5.
- 170 Ibid., 2020b, p. 9.
- 171 WHO, 2019b, p. 5.
- 172 UNFPA, 2020a, p. 1.
- 173 Health Cluster, 2020, p. 5.
- 174 OCHA, 2018a, p. 22.
- 175 UNEP, 2020, p. 37.
- 176 WCLAC, 2019b, p. 9.
- 177 OCHA, 2018a, pp. 22–23.
- 178 OCHA, 2019a, p. 42.
- 179 PCBS, 2019e, p. 21.
- 180 PCBS, 2019e, p. 20.
- 181 Action against Hunger, 2018, p. 34.
- 182 OCHA, 2018a, p. 19.
- 183 Human Rights Watch, 2019b, p. 1.
- 184 WCLAC, 2019a, p. 12.
- 185 WCLAC, 2020c, p. 14.
- 186 The Civic and Women Coalition for the Implementation of CEDAW in the Occupied State of Palestine, 2020, p. 10.
- 187 Tamleh – The Arab Centre for the Advancement of Social Media with Kvinna till Kvinna, 2018.
- 188 UN Women, 2019, p. 12.
- 189 Arab Barometer, 2019a, p. 8.

- 190 WCLAC, 2020d, p. 1.
- 191 UN Women, 2020c, p. 2.
- 192 Juzoor for Health and Social Development, 2020a, p. 4.
- 193 FADA, 2020.
- 194 PCBS, 2019e, p. 23.
- 195 Schuster and others, 2019.
- 196 Baloushah and others, 2019.
- 197 UN Women, 2018b, pp. 45-46.
- 198 PCBS, 2019e, p. 23.
- 199 UNFPA, Juzoor for Health and Social Development, Haya Programme and GBV Cluster, 2020, p. 19.
- 200 UNFPA, 2019a, p. 31.
- 201 UN Women, 2018b, p. 21.
- 202 UNFPA, 2019a, p. 26.
- 203 UN Women, 2020d, p. 2.
- 204 PWWSD, 2020b, p. 3.
- 205 UN Women, 2020c, p. 3.
- 206 UN Women, 2020d, p. 2.
- 207 UN Women, 2020a, p. 20.
- 208 CEDAW/C/PSE/CO/1, p. 7.
- 209 Based on information provided by the Palestinian Journalists' Syndicate.
- 210 PCBS, 2020c, pp. 101-102.
- 211 State of Palestine, Council of Ministers, 2020a, p. 1.
- 212 CRC/C/PSE/CO/1, p. 4.
- 213 UN Women, 2020a, p. 10.
- 214 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2019, p. 9.
- 215 Hawari, 2019.
- 216 PCBS, 2020b, p. 1.
- 217 PCBS, 2020e, p. 119.
- 218 PCBS, 2020b, p. 1.
- 219 PCBS, 2020e, pp. 122-123.
- 220 ESCWA, 2019b, p. 35.
- 221 ESCWA, 2019c.
- 222 ESCWA, 2019b, p. 43.
- 223 State of Palestine, Ministry of Interior, "Staff of the security institutions in Palestine disaggregated by security institution and sex 2019" (Arabic). On file with authors.
- 224 Arab Barometer, 2019b, p. 16.
- 225 UN Women, 2018a, pp. 39-40.
- 226 CARE, 2020b, p. 7.
- 227 UN Women, 2020a, p. 18.
- 228 UNESCO and State of Palestine, Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2020, p. 37.
- 229 State of Palestine, Ministry of Women Affairs, 2019, p. 14.
- 230 CEDAW/C/PSE/CO/1, p. 7.
- 231 ESCWA, London School of Economics and Political Science and Institute for Women Studies at the Lebanese American University, 2019, pp. 33-34.
- 232 State of Palestine, Ministry of Social Development, 2017.
- 233 United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2018, p. 1.
- 234 Luomi and others, 2019, pp. 68-69.
- 235 E/CN.6/2019/6, p. 13.
- 236 CEDAW/C/PSE/CO/1.
- 237 State of Palestine, Council of Ministers, 2020b, p. 1.
- 238 WCLAC, 2020c, p. 4.
- 239 CEDAW Committee, 2018b.
- 240 State of Palestine, Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2017.
- 241 CEDAW/C/PSE/CO/1, p. 5.
- 242 Siniora, 2018.
- 243 Parke, Farr and Alodaat, 2019, pp. 23-24.
- 244 In run-up to the 20th anniversary of UNSCR 1325, UN Women hosted a High-level Dialogue on Women, Peace and Security in Palestine, 21 July 2020.
- 245 WHO, 2020c, p. 2.
- 246 World Bank, 2019a, p. 12.



The present report reviews the situation of Palestinian women and girls during the period July 2018 – June 2020, focusing on political, social, economic and human rights developments. Building on research by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) on the status of Palestinian women and girls, and drawing upon the most recent data, the present report highlights the complex situation of women and girls, revealing both progress and setbacks in the context of the Israeli military occupation of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the blockade on Gaza.

