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Palestinian police launch its gender strategy

Ramallah, 23 February 2017 – Major General Hazem Atallah, Chief of the Palestinian Civil Police, launched today the Palestinian Civil Police Gender Strategy. The 5-year strategy – first of its kind in the Arab States and in the Palestinian security sector – is a culmination of the past years' efforts of the Palestinian police to promote gender equality in the police and in its services to the society.

Developed with the participation of the PCP related departments and national stakeholders, under the supervision of the project's steering committee, and in coordination with UN Women – under the UNDP/UN Women Sawasya Programme,* and with technical support from EUPOL COPPS, the comprehensive and innovative action framework proposes a clear and budgeted work plan to tackle recruitment and retention policies, design of facilities, training, and enhanced cooperation to promote more women in the police career.

Major General Atallah stressed the police's belief in the importance of having more women accessing their services, and their commitment to provide responsive services to the needs of the different segments of the society, enhancing trust and credibility of the institution. Believing in the positive role of women in all sectors, PCP considers women as key partners in efforts to achieve security in the Palestinian society as stressed by their historical role along men towards independence and freedom.

Dr. Sabine Mach, UN Women Special Representative in Palestine, said that "*the PCP gender strategy is a milestone, which reaffirms our commitment to gender equality and increasing the number of women in the police work. The ultimate goal of this strategy is to improve policing services to communities, especially the vulnerable population*" adding that "*as we celebrate this achievement, UN Women already looks forward to future successes that will result from the implementation of this strategy.*"

EUPOL COPPS' Deputy Head of Mission, Ms. Lena Larsson, "*praised the Chief of Police General Major Hazim Attallah for showing commitment and leadership for continuing to put gender equality high on the agenda of the Palestinian Civil Police. By supporting the gender unit and approving the new PCP Gender Strategy, the Chief of Police is advancing the idea that integrating a strong gender perspective in the services provided and increasing the number of women within the police to facilitate this objective, is an absolute necessity for establishing a modern Palestinian Civil Police*."

Currently at 3.75%, increasing the rate of women in the police force has long been a priority of the Palestinian Civil Police. Global evidence demonstrates that both male and female victims of certain types of crimes, such as sexual violence, are more likely to file a report to a female officer. Informed by the 2016 gender analysis carried out by the PCP Gender Unit with UN Women support, the strategy identifies policies and procedural challenges to promoting gender equality within the Palestinian police institutions. Concrete steps have already been taken to address these challenges such as integrating aspects of the Strategy in key PCP departments' work plans, the development and adoption of job descriptions and a formal structure for the PCP Gender Unit, and appointing 11 gender coordinators across districts and headquarters.

Note to editors:

1. "Sawasya" is the UNDP/UN Women Joint Programme "Strengthening the Rule of Law: Justice and Security for the Palestinian people" (2014-2017). Launched in May 2014, the Programme aims at strengthening the capacities of, and public confidence in, rule of law institutions in improving access to justice, security and protection services for the Palestinian people, with a particular focus on women and children. Sawasya partners with 13 official institutions related to justice and security as well as more than 50 civil society organizations and universities throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The Joint Programme is generously funded by the Government of Netherlands, and the Swedish International Development Cooperation