Justice for Peace



Open Day on Women, Peace and Security

Palestine

10 November 2016

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This report summarizes the debate of the Open Day on Women, Peace and Security organized in Ramallah and Gaza on 10 November 2016, and its preparatory consultations for CSOs and political leadership on 22 August 2016. Recommendations, issues and messages raised at the Open Day do not necessarily represent the views of the European Union, UN Women, the United Nations or any of its affiliated organizations.

Special Thanks and Gratitude

UN Women Palestine Country Office extends gratitude to all partners who have contributed to the Open Day on Women, Peace and Security. A special thanks goes to the participants of the Open Day and more particularly to the children who presented their drawings expressing stories from their daily experiences while living under occupation.



Open Day participants watch a documentary entitled: “Palestinian Women’s Voices for Justice and Peace”

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From right to left: Sabine Machl, Robert Piper, and Alessandra Viezzer listen to the testimonies of victims of direct human rights violations

"UN Women is committed to promoting women's participation in peace and security. We will continue to listen to women's concerns and priorities and to carry their messages to UN leaders and UN Member States around the world. We will do whatever we can to translate this commitment into action in order to reach concrete results."

Sabine Machl, UN Women Special Representative



Open Day Participants

1. Executive Summary

At the heart of the landmark United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) passed in 2000 and the subsequent resolutions on women, peace and security, are commitments to enable women's engagement in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, peacebuilding and relief, and recovery efforts.

Globally, women's civil society organizations play a critical role at the grassroots level in order to prevent, mediate and transform conflicts, in addition to leading relief and recovery efforts, and mobilizing for peace in their communities. However, very few women leaders or women's organizations have participated in such formal processes. Unfortunately, women civil society organizations continue to be under-recognized for their contribution to international peace and security, and women leaders continue to face difficulties in making their voices heard in key national and international arenas and communicating their concerns to decision makers.

The Open Days follow a tradition set in 2010 in the lead-up to the commemoration of the 10th Anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security, to provide a platform for local women leaders and activists to speak directly with senior UN representatives at the country level to share their experiences, concerns and priorities as a contribution to national and regional efforts to resolve conflicts and build security relating to conflict prevention, conflict resolution, peacebuilding and relief and recovery. Open days on Women, Peace and Security also provide the opportunity to deepen local ownership of the resolution, share good practices in implementation and form strategic partnerships.

Open Day on Women, Peace and Security - Palestine

While Open Days on Women, Peace and Security are organized around the world to inform the Security Council's annual Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security and the Secretary General's Annual Report on the implementation of UNSCR Resolution 1325 (2000), the Open Day in Palestine aimed at communicating messages to senior UN Officials for inclusion of women's perspectives and concerns in regular Security Council Briefings on the Middle East.

Palestine has taken steps to advance the WPS agenda. The formation of the National Higher Committee by the Palestinian Cabinet of Ministers in 2012 was an important achievement. The cabinet then endorsed the Strategic National Framework for Implementing UNSCR 1325 in 2015, resolving that Palestine is

an extension of the international community that is affected by and affects the security of its members. On 24 August 2016, Palestine has adopted the National Action Plan (NAP) for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 to domesticate international obligations and promote accountability. The NAP focuses on protection of Palestinian women and girls. This means protecting them from human rights violations stemming from the Israeli occupation, holding Israel accountable, and increasing the participation of women in peacemaking and reconciliation efforts at all levels.



Ms. Layla Issawi, tells the Open Day participants about her story having three of her children, Samer, Shireen and Medhat, imprisoned by the Israeli occupation. "I have never fully experienced being a mother with all my children at home", she said.

Furthermore, the National Coalition for the Implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325)[1] in Palestine has completed its Strategic Advocacy Plan to promote Women, Peace and Security in Palestine through providing a framework for Civil Society Organizations and the Government to implement UNSCR 1325. The plan calls on the international community to counter violations of International Human Rights Law (IHRL) and International Humanitarian Law (IHL), and to hold Israel accountable to IHL and IHRL.

The UNSCR 1325 and subsequent resolutions (1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, 2122, and 2242) are taken together by the National Coalition as they comprise the Women, Peace and Security thematic agenda of the Security Council, and the international security policy framework. The obligations in the resolutions extend from the international to the local level, as well as from intergovernmental bodies, such as the United Nations, to national governments. The resolutions highlight women's role as peace builders and agents of change, and call on the UN and member states, civil society and the international community to ensure that women participate in conflict prevention, peace negotiations and all peace processes and reconstruction decisions and programs.

On 10 November 2016, UN Women, in close collaboration with UNSCO organized an Open Day on Women, Peace and Security in the State of Palestine that was attended by Mr. Robert Piper, Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and United Nations Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for the occupied Palestinian territory. In addition, Ms. Alessandra Viezzer, Head of Cooperation of the European Union and Ms. Sabine Machl, UN Women Special Representative in the State of Palestine participated. The Open Day was held in Ramallah concomitantly with Gaza through video conferencing and gave women activists and representatives of human rights organizations, as well as women, girls, boys and families who have been affected by direct human rights violations and who are all living under the Israeli occupation, an opportunity to share their experiences and voice their demands to the UN and the international community.

Shared Concerns and Key Priorities

The key concerns and priorities that came up during the open day and its preparatory consultations with CSOs, including human rights and women's organizations, were related to the Israeli occupation and the need to find a just and lasting solution that would include ending the occupation as a top priority. Meanwhile, the participants highlighted the need for the UN and its institutions to strengthen mechanisms to hold Israel accountable as a means to end the Israeli military occupation and the oppression of the people of Palestine. The participants highlighted the important development role of Palestinian women in society and the state building efforts and in realizing security and peace based on justice which will only be realized by ending the occupation.

Women and families of victims of direct human rights violations called on the UN to continue supporting civil society organizations in their efforts to safeguard the Palestinian Government's and civil society organizations' right for self-determination and freedom. This requires the UN System in Palestine to continue promoting the inclusion of Palestinian women in UN consultations and discussions, such as in Open Days on Women, Peace and Security and significant international forums. Civil society representatives demanded more support from the UN and

1. General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW), Woman's Affairs Technical Committee (WATC), The Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy (MIFTAH), The Culture and Free Thought Association (CFTA) – Gaza, Women's Center for Legal Aid and Counseling (WCLAC), Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), The Palestinian Working Women Society for Development (PWWSD), Women's Studies Center – Jerusalem (WSC), Women Media and Development (TAM), Falastinyat, Women's Affairs Center – Gaza, , and The Center for Women's Legal Research and Consulting (CWLRC) - Gaza.

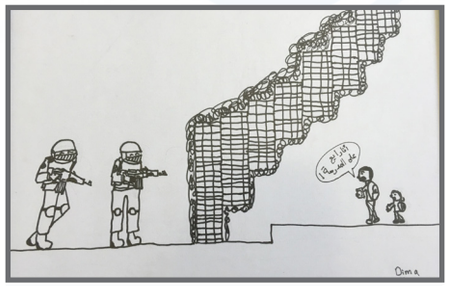
the European Union to civil society organizations in monitoring human rights violations to provide the needed evidence for developing and implementing national and global advocacy strategies. They urged the UN in Palestine to engender its humanitarian actions and invest more efforts in preventing Israel from committing violations of International Humanitarian Law as a main strategy.

"I am here not to speak on my own behalf but on behalf of all Palestinian boys and girls. Many school children witness their school besieged and have their schools exposed to firing by Israeli troops. We have witnessed killings of students from our schools. We are always ready to protect our mates when going to schools especially near checkpoints. We call upon the UN to intervene to protect our lives."

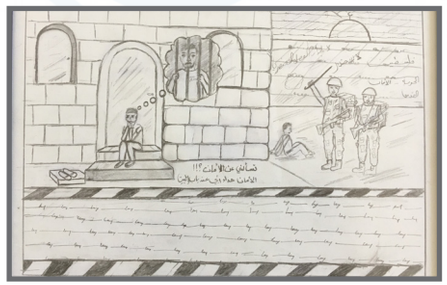
Mohammad Ziadeh / Grade 10, Ni'leen Boys School, Ramallah



Mohammad Ziadeh presents his daily suffering living under occupation through his own painting



Dima Ghanayem / Grade 5
Friends School, Ramallah



Illena Yousef Nawahda / Grade 8
Al Rayan Elementary Girls School, Hebron

2. The Open Day: Justice for Peace

The Open Day on Women Peace and Security followed the endorsement of the National Action Plan (NAP) on the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 (NAP) in the State of Palestine on 24 August 2016. The NAP focuses on promoting Palestinian women's participation in national priorities on peace and security, protection of women and accountability mechanisms for the implementation of UNSCR 1325.

" Gender equality is at the very heart of human rights and EU values. Women are critical to meet the challenges of poverty, inequality and the recovery of the communities hardest hit by conflicts. The European Union is proud to contribute to improving the lives of Palestinian women through different interventions. Our support to this project and to events such as the Open Day comes from our belief of the importance of UNSCR 1325. This resolution involves women just as men in setting the agenda of promoting peace and security."

Ms. Alessandra Viezzer, Head of Cooperation of the European Union

During the Open Day, women and families of victims of rights violations had the opportunity to articulate their cases and vision for peace and security to the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Palestine. The proceedings of the Open Day included testimonies on child detention, female prisoners, attacks and killings of minors by Israeli Security Forces (ISF), settler violence, discriminatory legal systems, and the Gaza blockade. The main recommendation to the UN was to provide immediate protection of and assistance to victims of human rights violations.

A documentary[2] was screened showing the increased obstacles in the daily lives of Palestinian women, men, young female university students and girls living under the occupation. The documentary was contributed by the Association of Women Committees for Social Work (AWCSW). The Open Day also was a platform for school students to present their drawings expressing stories from their daily experiences while living under occupation. The need to "give peace a chance" was the primary theme raised by students in the Open Day and emerged as an overarching concern of the dialogues.

The EU and UN representatives heard statements from the National Coalition on the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Palestine that summarized the continuous and un-addressed human rights violations that are experienced daily by the Palestinian people, as well as the more specific violations of Palestinian women's rights. An open dialogue with the participants representing women leaders and activists, women and human rights organizations and national partners followed.

2. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b0GroLPsRI4

3. Key Issues Raised By The Participants

There was a common understanding among the participants that the Occupation is the main obstacle that impedes women's attainment of their human rights, protection and full participation in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Participants expressed their dissatisfaction with inadequate efforts of international actors to ensure alignment of their positions and actions with obligations under international treaties, international and humanitarian law, and the basic tenants of the UN Charter. Dissatisfaction was expressed with the global review report of the implementation of UNSCR 1325 (October 2015) for its failure to make any reference to the Israeli military occupation of Palestine. Similarly, the report of the Middle East Quartet, which ignores the asymmetrical power relations between Palestine and Israel does not highlight the accountability of Israel as the occupying power nor the occupation as being the main driver of the conflict.

Participants highlighted that the failure to reach a lasting solution for the Palestinian cause feeds a discourse of hate, violence and extremism on both sides. Women and girls are the first to suffer increased militarized violence, extremism and occupation. Participants urged relief from the siege imposed on Gaza and called for ensuring accountability and justice for all violations of international law in oPt.



Ms. Amal Khraishe presenting the recomendations of the consultation meeting to UN and EU representatives and the audience

The Palestinian women in attendance categorized their messages in four areas:

- Ending the occupation is key to addressing all the humanitarian and development needs of Palestinian women and men, girls and boys.

The key messages and recommendations conveyed by the participants emphasized the priority to have an immediate end to the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian lands and underline the Palestinian people's rights to self-determination, independence, and sovereignty. The continuation of occupation and its associated policies and practices including the blockade of the Gaza Strip and restrictions of movement are affecting women directly and indirectly, as they absorb the effects of the conflict on their families and society. Furthermore, the continued Israeli violations against Palestinian women in Gaza, The West Bank including East Jerusalem and Area C, and the areas adjacent to the Separation Wall along with the annexation of the Palestinian lands and the expanding settlements are measures and policies that undermine any possibility for the full realization of the rights of all Palestinians including women.

> "Every time I walk down the streets of the Old City in Jerusalem with my 4-year old daughter, where we get harassed by Israeli settlers, my daughter asks: "Is this going to happen every time?"
>
> *Hadil Hamdan, AWCSW*

- Holding Israel accountable to rights violations in order for it to change its practices.

Accountability for violations of human rights lie with the occupying power, namely Israel. While the Palestinian Government has clear commitments to women's rights in Palestine, its ability to deliver on its obligations are largely constrained by the reality of military occupation. Whether in securing the fiscal policies to ensure financing for its obligations or in aligning national legislations with international standards, the Palestinian Government faces significant constraints. The fragmentation of the Palestinian population and land and the internal Palestinian political divide makes women's rights even more fragile and unrealized.

- Ensuring the protection and security of Palestinians, especially women and girls: The physical and mental health of Palestinian women and men, girls and

> "My son Nadim, 17 years old, was killed in cold blood by an Israeli soldier. His death was captured by cameras and broadcasted all over the world. Two Israeli snipers were shooting live rounds that day targeting teenagers with no respect to any international law. They treated our children as targets to practice their shooting skills. Another teenager was shot and killed within minutes of Nadim's shooting at the same location in Area A, which is under full control by the Palestinian Authority. The soldier who killed my son was identified but was not charged for murder in the Israeli Court. He was indicted for accidental killing and sentenced to house arrest limited to night hours."
>
> *Father of Nadim Nowara*

> "Mohammad was kidnaped early morning of July 2nd 2014 by Israeli settlers. His kidnappers drove a car to an area where they tied his hands and poured gasoline down his throat and set him on fire. Imagine if Mohammad was an Israeli little boy set on fire by a Palestinian. How would the world react to this especially that the perpetrators of this crime have not been brought to justice?"
>
> *Mother of Mohammad Abu Khdeir*

> "We live our lives preparing for the next military aggression against us by Israel knowing that while it did not happen today, it might happen tomorrow. What is the United Nations doing to prevent aggression against us by Israel?"
>
> *Zeinab Ghonaimi, Gaza*

boys and their safety must be guaranteed.

The participants expressed their appreciation of the role of the UN and the international community in responding to humanitarian needs resulting from the Israeli occupation, the primary message of the Open Day was that: "**The cost of responding to the humanitarian needs resulting from the Israeli occupation is much higher than the cost of implementing peace**". However, women requested the assurance of the UN that Israel will not repeat its aggression towards the Gazan population and the destruction of Gaza as witnessed in 2012 and 2014.

- Women's representation and leadership must be increased in formal and informal processes related to conflict resolution, prevention and humanitarian response.

Women participants at the Open Day emphasized the need for the effective participation of Palestinian women in decision-making processes at the local and national levels and in issues related to reaching a lasting and just solution to the conflict and ending the occupation. The Government of Palestine needs to translate its commitments to include women in the formal process of decision-making and international stakeholders must effectively involve Palestinian women in informal processes to ensure gender responsive planning and implementation of humanitarian and development interventions.



Batool Mohamad / Grade 9
Kharbatha Misbah Girls School, Ramallah



Batoul Mohammad presents her daily suffering living under occupation through her own painting

"We Palestinian children are deprived of our basic rights. We want to live a happy life. We want to feel the joy we deserve. We have witnessed wars, deaths, home demolitions, and we have seen what others in the world did not see. We want to play happily and smile like other children in the world."

Batoul Mohammad/ Grade 9

Kharbatha Misbah Girls School, Ramallah

4. Recommendations

The participants of the Open Day and its preparatory meeting for CSO and political leadership consultation provided the UN with the following recommendations and demands:

1. The United Nations should strengthen mechanisms to hold Israel accountable for the occupation of Palestine and its resulting violations of human rights since 1967 and 1948. As such, the Human Rights Council, the UN Security Council, the UN Secretary General and UN specialized agencies should ensure Israel's accountability to its obligations under International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Laws.
2. Call upon the Human Rights Council to ensure adoption of measures to implement decisions made in the 29th session of the Human Rights Council which focused on a) the accountability of the Israeli occupation to adhere to International Humanitarian Laws and International Human Rights Laws; and b) realizing self-determination for Palestinians (putting an immediate end to the occupation)[3].
3. Urge the United Nations to promote the inclusion of Palestinian women in consultations and discussions in various UN forums including the Security Council, Human Rights Council and others. As such, participants proposed organizing a thematic discussion during the regular Security Council briefings in 2017 to focus on the impact of 50 years of occupation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip on Palestinian women and girls, especially in the context of a compromised two-state solution because of the illegal Israeli settlement expansion in the occupied Palestinian territory.
4. Call upon the Security Council to make a priority the development of mechanisms of implementation and accountability for UNSCR 1325 rather than expanding the scope of women's peace and security agenda in the absence of such mechanisms, and funding.



The father of Mohammad Abu Khdair narrates how Mohammad was kidnapped, abducted and murdered by Israeli settlers

3. http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/29/L.35

5. Urge the United Nations, through its different agencies and forums, to adopt a comprehensive integrated framework that recognizes the barriers to the realization of women's economic, social, civil and political rights, including the continued violations of protection provisions under the International Humanitarian Law and the barriers to the implementation of Women, Peace and Security agenda in Palestine.
6. Request the United Nations to strengthen the focus on women's rights in monitoring and documentation of human rights violations in Palestine as a key instrument for strengthening accountability, including in the preliminary examination of the ICC. The responsibility to hold duty bearers accountable cannot lie with the victims in Israel's discriminatory legal system as is currently the case.
7. Call upon the United Nations to support and fund the implementation of priorities under the UNSCR 1325 National Action Plan (NAP) that was endorsed by the Government of Palestine in August 2016 with a key focus being on protection.
8. Call upon UN Women, ECOSOC and the Commission on the Status of Women to give more visibility and support to the SG report presented annually to the CSW on the Situation of and Assistance to Palestinian Women, and to change the SG report on the situation of and assistance to Palestinian women so that it would capture the situation of Palestinian women in Palestine, in exile, refugee camps outside Palestine and wherever they are.
9. Call upon the United Nations to expedite efforts for reconstruction in Gaza and ensure inclusion of women in reconstruction efforts and their access to aid especially with regard to the 60,000 IDPs who continue to be displaced since the 2014 Israeli war on Gaza.
10. Call on the United Nations to advocate for lifting Israel's blockade of Gaza and restore freedom of movement and access to the Gazan population, and mitigate the impact of those restrictions on women and girls.
11. Call on the international community to support UNRWA's mission, services and responsibilities towards the Palestinian refugees in Palestine, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria and increase funding towards gender equality and the empowerment of women refugees.
12. Call upon the United Nations to remind Third State Parties of their obligations under the International Law to ensure Israel's accountability for putting an end to its ongoing violations. The international community should demonstrate its commitment and accountability to ensuring Palestinian women's rights through specific actions and policies vis-à-vis arms trade with Israel, economic relations and political influence.
13. Regularly update the National Coalition for Implementing UNSCR 1325 on progress in addressing the above recommendations.

5. UN Response

In his response, Mr. Robert Piper, Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, and United Nations Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for the occupied Palestinian territory, expressed his deepest sympathy to all the women and men, girls and boys who spoke out in the Open Day about their own experiences living under occupation and expressed his utmost admiration for the resilience of Palestinians and their ability to live under occupation while producing the talent and capacity and the potential that exists within Palestinian society.

"I thank you for these moving testimonials of the anguish and suffering experienced by many in this room. It is humbling to witness the extraordinary resilience of so many Palestinians in the face of such adversity."

Mr. Robert Piper, Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, and United Nations United Nations Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for the oPt

Mr. Piper promised to pass on the concerns, messages, and recommendations made by the families of victims of rights violations, women representatives and human rights advocates to Mr. Nickolay Mladenov, the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, who was not able to attend the meeting due to his breifing of the security council at the UN HQ. Mr. Piper underlined that the UN will continue to work with women civil society organizations, to respond to the concerns and recommendations made at the Open Day.



Open discussions during the Open Day



Mr. Robert Piper responds to participants on the issues and priorities they have raised during the Open Day discussions

As a conclusion to the day's discussions, Mr. Piper highlighted the following:

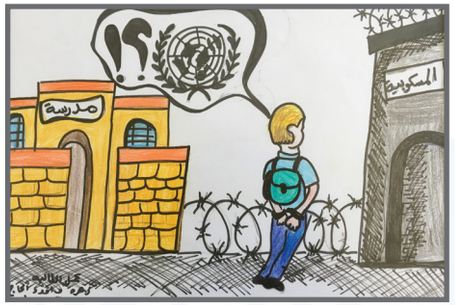
- The prolonged occupation remains the single biggest impediment to Palestinian development. The effect of occupation are felt in all walks of

life: in the denial of sufficient access to water; the denial to access to quality health care for Gazans; in the demolition of homes; in the limits to fishing grounds off Gaza, to mention just a few examples of the systematic suffering of Palestinian women and men under occupation. The solution must be a political one - a just and lasting solution - that cannot be substituted by a humanitarian response or the development efforts undertaken by the United Nations Country Team.

- The United Nations in Palestine invests extensive efforts and resources to promote accountability, but only Member States have the authority and mechanisms to ensure accountability for violations of international law. The United Nations can and does document violations of human rights in a systematic manner. The UN is also providing support to Palestinian institutions to strengthen its own compliance and reporting on the Treaty obligations it has ratified. And the United Nations will continue to work with the Palestinian Government and civil society organizations to promote greater accountability for violations of international law.
- Successive Palestinian Governments have succeeded in building strong institutions since Oslo and in so doing generated considerable domestic expectations, some of which are hard to meet while control of certain key domains, regions or resources have yet to be transferred to Palestinian control. Therefore, while the United Nations continues its development and humanitarian efforts and promotes the need for an urgent political solution, accountability for Palestine's development progress towards the SDGs effectively remains partially shared with the Government of Israel as the occupying power.



A woman from Hebron City tells the stories of Palestinian families whose rights are violated due to the presence and actions of Israeli settlers in Hebron Old City



Zahra Al Haj / Grade 9
Beit Sera Girls School, Ramallah



Sarah Hamdan / Grade 2
College des Freres, Jerusalem



Batool Daraj Mohamad / Grade 9
Kharbatha Misbah Girls School, Ramallah

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