



Gender Matters Bulletin

Photo: UN Women/Suad Nawaiha

Beyond the Crisis: Palestinian Women Leading Recovery, Reconstruction and Peacebuilding

November 2025

Introduction

Over the past two-years and beyond, the war in Gaza has inflicted devastating harm on women and girls, exacerbating long-standing gender inequalities and creating gender-specific vulnerabilities. Women's health, wellbeing, safety, and protection have been severely compromised, freedom of movement curtailed, access to food, water, sanitation, and essential services restricted, and their political, economic, and social rights systematically undermined. The Gaza ceasefire of 10 October 2025, backed by international diplomatic efforts and United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolution 2803 of 17 November 2025, presented an opportunity to cease hostilities and assess prospects for Gaza's recovery and reconstruction.

In Gaza, where all population groups have been profoundly affected by violence, loss, and displacement, all recovery, reconstruction, and peacebuilding efforts must be nationally led and grounded in the lived experiences of Palestinian women, men, girls, and boys, including those with disabilities. The principles of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security, and its subsequent resolutions, provide a critical framework for the Palestinian context. Its call for women's full and equal participation across all stages of conflict prevention, relief, recovery, and peacebuilding is not only relevant, but also essential.

Guided by the Women, Peace and Security agenda, recovery and reconstruction must adopt a gender-transformative approach that addresses the root causes of conflict, challenges structural injustices, upholds human rights, prevents violence, and ensures equitable access to and control over resources. Central to this is the meaningful involvement of Palestinian women in shaping governance and recovery in Gaza, particularly amid heightened militarization and rapidly evolving political arrangements.

This Gender Matters Bulletin offers actionable recommendations for a broad range of stakeholders, including the Palestinian Authority, transitional governance bodies, member states, donors, UN agencies, civil society, and the

private sector, to prioritize women-led humanitarian response, recovery, reconstruction, and peacebuilding, in line with the WPS agenda. The recommendations cover four key dimensions:

1. Women's and Girls' Leadership in and Access to Gender-Responsive Humanitarian Assistance and Essential Services
2. Women's Meaningful Participation and Leadership in Decision-making
3. Women's Access to Livelihoods and Economic Recovery Opportunities
4. Safety for Women and Girls through Protection, Security, and Access to Justice

This Gender Matters Bulletin, *Beyond the Crisis: Palestinian Women Leading Recovery, Reconstruction and Peacebuilding*, was prepared by the Palestine Gender in Humanitarian Action (GiHA) Working Group. It is informed by work on gender, recovery, and reconstruction in Gaza undertaken as part of the project "Palestinian Women Lead the Way: Strengthening a Localized and Gender-Responsive Approach to Peacemaking, Humanitarian Response and Recovery in the Aftermath of October 2023," implemented with the generous support of the Government of Norway.

In late 2025, UN Women Palestine conducted consultations with 16 women-led organizations (WLOs) in Gaza to discuss the meaningful engagement of women and girls in recovery and reconstruction. WLOs put forward concrete and practical recommendations spanning key thematic areas including cash assistance, governance, access to the legal system, and access to social and protection services. Recommendations to the Palestinian Authority, UN agencies, and donors included dedicated financial support and tax exemptions for WLOs, flexible funding to enable rehabilitation and continued service delivery at scale, and systematic representation of women in key decision-making bodies and processes. WLOs also called for greater support for the localization of humanitarian action and strengthened advocacy efforts to ensure that humanitarian response reflects the needs, dignity, and meaningful participation of women and girls.

Gender inequalities shaping women's lives before and after 7 October 2023

Prior to October 2023, decades of Gaza occupation and political conflict disproportionately impacted women and girls in Palestine, increasing their vulnerability to economic insecurity, social marginalization, and violence. Persistent barriers to leadership and decision-making were driven by political fragmentation, discriminatory laws, entrenched gender inequalities, unpaid care burdens, and restrictive social norms. These structural barriers also limited and continue to limit women's participation in formal political processes, peace negotiations, and internal reconciliation efforts.

Most women worked in informal or care-related sectors without fair wages or social protection; labour force participation stood at 19 per cent, with unemployment at 40 per cent.¹ Women owned less than 8 per cent of agricultural land but provided 87 per cent of livestock labour and 54 per cent of crop labour, playing a vital yet undervalued role in subsistence farming and food production.² Protection risks were compounded by restrictive legal frameworks blending Ottoman, Egyptian, Jordanian, and Shari'a laws and limited access to justice. Around 29 per cent of women and girls experienced gender-based violence (GBV) in their lifetime,³ and 11 per cent of girls were married before the age of 18 years,⁴ with access to GBV services severely constrained.

¹ <https://auspalestine.org/2023/05/27/labour-force-survey-2022-annual-report> ; <https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/post.aspx?lang=en&ItemID=4421>

² <https://www.fao.org/in-action/water-efficiency-nena/countries/palestine/en/>

³ <https://pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/Rainbow/Documents/MainIndicatorViolenceE.htm>

⁴ https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/statisticsIndicatorsTables.aspx?lang=en&table_id=3596&

According to UN Women's estimates, since October 2023 till December 2025, at least 38,000 women and girls have been killed, and thousands more have been injured.⁵ Those who did survive face daily threats to their lives, starvation, recurrent displacement, and deeply restricted access to essential services. The impact on their health, safety, and well-being has been devastating. Homes, schools, and even designated shelters were destroyed as a result of Israeli bombardment and ground incursions.

The war reshaped household composition and care roles in Gaza, imposing sustained social, economic, and protection burdens on women and girls. More than 16,000 women have lost their husbands, leaving one in seven households headed by women.⁶ This corresponds to an estimated total of 58,600 women-headed households across Gaza, many of whom now face heightened economic and protection risks. Up to 83 per cent of women have lost their ownership documentation,⁷ severely limiting their ability to exercise their housing, land and property rights. Over 318,000 school-age girls have lost two full school years, and many remain without access to education – placing an entire generation's future in jeopardy.⁸ The ongoing collapse of the education system in Gaza threatens to perpetuate cycles of vulnerability, reduce women's and girls' participation in public and economic life, and undermine long term recovery and social development. The destruction of the education system has also affected women's employment, as a large proportion of teachers and education workers in Gaza are women. Harmful coping strategies have become widespread, increasing the risks of child labour and child marriage and,⁹ with estimates indicating that in 2024, approximately 7,400 girls were married before the age of 18.¹⁰ More than 24,000 women have lost their jobs,¹¹ and an estimated 50 per cent of women-led agricultural enterprises have been destroyed.¹²

Despite some of the highest female literacy and university graduation rates in the region, women held only 19 per cent of political positions and 21 per cent of local council seats.¹³ Palestinian women have had limited representation in both internal reconciliation efforts, and ceasefire or peace negotiations. This exclusion poses a significant risk to their meaningful participation in the processes and structures that will shape the rebuilding of Gaza in the future.

The war has intensified the systematic exclusion of Palestinian women from decision-making in peacebuilding and governance, a pattern that predates October 7, 2023. During the Gaza war, the ceasefire proposals have included limited mentions of women,¹⁴ with the latest, October 2025 ceasefire agreement incorporating no provisions on women, their protection or participation. The continued marginalization of women can be seen currently repeated within emerging interim governance mechanisms, such as the Gaza technocratic committee. The forced disconnect between Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank has further deepened during the war, leaving Palestinian women and women's organizations with limited opportunity to convene and influence the fragmented national processes. In Gaza in particular, the shift of priorities toward immediate humanitarian needs has further constrained the ability of women's organizations to engage in development and political programming or decision-making spaces.

Women's organizations at the forefront of crisis response

Women-led and women's rights organizations (WLOs/WROS) in Palestine have been severely affected by ongoing hostilities, displacement, and restrictions on humanitarian aid. In Gaza, 89 per cent of WLO offices have been damaged or destroyed, resulting in the loss of vital equipment such as laptops and mobile phones.¹⁵ Several staff members of women-led organizations have also been killed, injured, or displaced during the hostilities, further constraining their

⁵ <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/press-release/2026/04/more-than-38000-women-and-girls-were-killed-in-gaza-between-october-2023-and-december-2025-un-women>

⁶ <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/press-briefing-un-women-17oct25/>

⁷ <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/joint-statement-housing-land-and-property-technical-working-group-and-shelter-cluster>

⁸ <https://arabstates.unwomen.org/en/stories/feature-story/2025/10/facts-figures-two-years-of-war-on-gaza-the-toll-on-women-and-girls>

⁹ https://arabstates.unwomen.org/en/stories/feature-story/2025/10/facts-figures-two-years-of-war-on-gaza-the-toll-on-women-and-girls#_ftn2

¹⁰ UN Women estimate

¹¹ IOM, Gaza Rapid Damage Needs Assessment estimates

¹² https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-06/gender-alert_palestine-wlos-en.pdf

¹³ [https://www.unescwa.org/sites/default/files/event/materials/9-](https://www.unescwa.org/sites/default/files/event/materials/9-%20Socioeconomic%20situation%20of%20Palestinian%20women%20and%20girls%202400592E.pdf)

[%20Socioeconomic%20situation%20of%20Palestinian%20women%20and%20girls%202400592E.pdf](https://www.unescwa.org/sites/default/files/event/materials/9-%20Socioeconomic%20situation%20of%20Palestinian%20women%20and%20girls%202400592E.pdf)

¹⁴ https://www.inclusivepeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/2025_Gendering_Ceasefires_MENA_Gaza_Lebanon.pdf.pdf

¹⁵ https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-06/gender-alert_palestine-wlos-en.pdf

operational capacity. Daily operations are hampered by fuel shortages, limited transportation, electricity cuts, and intermittent access to telecommunications and the internet. Women frontline workers face a triple burden, balancing professional responsibilities with household and caregiving duties under dangerous and highly stressful conditions.

WLOs/WROs participation in humanitarian response during crisis is a prerequisite for their engagement in early recovery. Through meaningful participation and leadership, WLOs/WROs gain access to information, capacity strengthening, and traditionally male-dominated decision-making structures, positioning them to both contribute to and benefit from economic recovery. Yet WLOs/WROs remain chronically underfunded and underrepresented in decision-making platforms, limiting their ability to provide lifesaving services and undermining their long-term institutional sustainability. Just 10 per cent of humanitarian coordination mechanisms include WLO participation, and WROs/WLOs are notably absent from humanitarian, recovery, and reconstruction decision-making platforms. In 2024, WROs/WLOs in Palestine received just 0.4 per cent (US \$10.4 million) of humanitarian financing under the Flash Appeal.¹⁶ Recent global funding cuts have further threatened financial stability, with 71 per cent of WROs/WLOs in Palestine being forced to reduce services, 64 per cent suspending or terminating programmes, and 78 per cent cutting staff, undermining immediate response and long-term recovery.¹⁷

Despite these constraints, women-led organizations continue to play a critical role in delivering assistance, protection, and essential services to crisis-affected populations, particularly women and girls, reaching the most marginalized communities, facilitating women's participation in local decision-making, and informing gender-responsive recovery and reconstruction planning.

Why Women's Participation in Recovery and Reconstruction Matters?

Women's full and equal participation in recovery and reconstruction is not only a fundamental human right but a proven driver of more inclusive, cohesive, and sustainable outcomes. Evidence shows that women's participation in crisis response and governance strengthens social cohesion, enhances community resilience, and delivers better results. Closing gender gaps in fragile contexts across the MENA region could boost GDP by almost 50 per cent, yet women's contributions remain systematically overlooked. Excluding women weakens peace and security efforts, entrenches inequality, and reinforces harmful stereotypes. Women's multifaceted roles as leaders, providers, technical experts, and caregivers make them indispensable for addressing immediate needs and driving transformative change. Women's organizations are equally critical, playing key roles in mediation, community reconciliation, and local peace processes, demonstrating time and again that inclusive recovery is more legitimate, more trusted, and more durable.

In Palestine, women's civil society organizations and community leaders have historically contributed to humanitarian response, mediation, social protection, and community dialogue, demonstrating their capacity to drive recovery and peacebuilding when meaningful opportunities for participation are created. Today, with Gaza's economy largely destroyed, rebuilding it in a fully inclusive manner is not optional but essential to any credible and sustainable recovery.

Alignment with National and International Gender Equality Commitments

Recovery, reconstruction, and peacebuilding efforts must be carried out in full alignment with national, regional, and international gender equality commitments. In conflict and crisis settings, humanitarian action represents the first line of response to protection risks, displacement, and livelihood disruption, all of which are deeply gendered. These efforts should be guided by global frameworks including the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 5 on Gender Equality and SDG 16 on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions. They should equally reflect the [IASC Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls in Humanitarian Action](#), the Grand Bargain's commitment to a "[Participation Revolution](#)" that shifts power to people affected by crises, and the [Humanitarian Reset's](#) emphasis on locally led response, including by local women's organizations.

¹⁶ <https://fts.unocha.org/>

¹⁷ <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2025/05/at-a-breaking-point-the-impact-of-foreign-aid-cuts-on-womens-organizations-in-humanitarian-crises-worldwide>

According to the IASC Gender Policy, gender-responsive humanitarian action should recognize and respond to the distinct needs, priorities, and capacities of women, men, girls, and boys in all their diversities, while actively addressing inequalities to ensure equitable access to protection and assistance. This requires collecting and analyzing sex-, age-, and disability-disaggregated data; designing programmes that reflect gender-specific risks and strengths; and ensuring the meaningful participation, including equal representation, of women and WLOs in decision-making.

The WPS framework complements humanitarian action by strengthening gender-responsive approaches, promoting women's leadership and participation in humanitarian decision-making, and addressing root causes of insecurity beyond immediate relief. It is crucial to align the recovery and reconstruction with both the UNSCR 1325 on WPS, together with its subsequent resolutions, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) [General Recommendation 30](#), which emphasizes women's protection and inclusion in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations.

Regionally, efforts should be guided by the Arab League's [Regional Action Plan](#) on Women, Peace, and Security (2015-2030), calling for protection of women in conflicts and reinforcement of their participation in the peacebuilding processes. Nationally, efforts should build upon the 2025-2027 National Development Pact for the Future of Palestine and the Palestine Third National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security for 2026–2028, adopted in December 2025. Advancing these commitments, especially through strategies and plans developed by the Palestinian Authority and national stakeholders will strengthen national ownership, uphold democratic principles, and ensure long-term sustainability.

Moving Forward: Key actions to promote women's leadership and participation across humanitarian action, recovery and peacebuilding

Recovery, reconstruction, and peacebuilding in Gaza must adopt rights-based approaches that empower women to claim their rights and hold duty-bearers accountable, while strengthening women's leadership, ownership, and influence over decisions that shape their futures. This critical phase presents an opportunity to embrace Build Back Better and Build Back Forward principles, delivering more gender-responsive, inclusive, and sustainable social, economic, and environmental outcomes.

Central to this is prioritizing local leadership and ownership by resourcing and partnering with WLOs/WROs and women leaders driving change in their communities. A gender-responsive and intersectional approach is essential to challenging systemic discrimination and unequal power relations, ensuring that no one is left behind, particularly the most vulnerable, marginalized, and at-risk groups. Gender-transformative approaches to recovery must actively challenge harmful gender norms and structural barriers, while promoting women's legal, political, and economic representation in governance, recovery planning, and peacebuilding processes.

All efforts should be conflict-sensitive, apply Do No Harm principles, and incorporate continuous monitoring of outcomes to prevent exclusion and mitigate unintended negative impacts.

The recommendations below are structured around three complementary frameworks: the WPS agenda, particularly United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and its Relief and Recovery pillar; the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with emphasis on SDG 5 on Gender Equality; and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) for Palestine, particularly Outcome 2 on equitable access to essential services. Together, these frameworks provide a coherent policy foundation for advancing gender-responsive humanitarian assistance, early recovery, and inclusive peacebuilding processes in Palestine.

1. Women's and Girls' Leadership in and Access to Gender-Responsive Humanitarian Assistance and Essential Services

Short term <6 months

1a. Women and girls participate in and benefit from humanitarian response efforts, ensuring that humanitarian assistance is gender-responsive and centers women's voices and priorities.

Humanitarian interventions should also support women's agency and participation in community decision-making structures related to aid delivery and local recovery priorities.

- ⇒ Humanitarian actors should ensure that women and girls have safe and equitable access to humanitarian assistance that is informed by their needs and priorities, meets their basic needs, enhances food security, and reduces reliance on harmful coping strategies.
- ⇒ WROs/WLOs and women frontline workers should be supported to deliver multi-sectoral support – including food, nutrition, shelter, water and sanitation services, and hygiene items – to the most vulnerable groups of women and girls – including women-headed households, adolescent girls, older women, women and girls with disabilities, pregnant and breastfeeding women, and GBV survivors.
- ⇒ Interventions should include clear and transparent vulnerability targeting criteria linked to national social protection systems. Area-based coordination models should be leveraged to ensure assistance is responsive to the specific needs of women, girls, and other marginalized groups in each community.
- ⇒ Registration and distribution processes should integrate gender-responsive measures including women-only days, gender-segregated queues, identifiable staff vests, female frontline workers, mobile outreach teams, safe travel arrangements, and daytime distributions.
- ⇒ Accurate and timely information should be communicated through trusted and accessible channels to ensure women and girls are informed of available assistance and services, protection risks, and safe and confidential complaints and feedback mechanisms.

In action: Between 1 January – 31 December 2025, UN Women Palestine together with over 25 WROs, WLOs and partners reached a total of 323,469 individuals directly (of whom 39% are in Gaza and 61% in the West Bank) with lifesaving humanitarian assistance through multi-sectoral protection information and services, emergency cash and livelihoods, and essential non-food items. This includes over 252,290 (78%) women and girls, including 11,829 (4%) women with disabilities. In addition, UN Women and partners reached over 600,000 people through widespread awareness campaigns.

Short term <6 months

1b. Women-led organizations play a central role in humanitarian and early recovery efforts and must be supported and resourced to sustain their operations.

Donors and international actors should prioritize direct, flexible, and multi-year funding to Palestinian WROs/WLOs and WROs in order to strengthen locally - led and gender responsive humanitarian and recovery responses.

- ⇒ Recovery actors should collaborate with WROs/WLOs to co-design and implement assistance and essential services, including mobile health units, crisis shelters, safe spaces, and the rehabilitation of public infrastructure such as health clinics, schools, and water and sanitation systems.
- ⇒ Support to WROs/WLOs and women community leaders, especially those in collective shelters and displacement settings, is vital to identify and assist the most vulnerable, marginalized, and at-risk groups. WROs/WLOs should be engaged to lead participatory consultations, share information, conduct awareness campaigns, and manage safe and confidential complaints and feedback mechanisms. They require flexible, predictable, multi-year funding to rebuild offices, replace equipment, secure transportation, hire staff, and

sustain programmes that deliver gender-responsive humanitarian assistance and essential services for women, girls, and other vulnerable groups.

- ⇒ Women frontline workers and human rights defenders should be protected from intimidation, harassment, civic space restrictions, and attacks, while WROs/WLOs also be provided with ongoing capacity development support to strengthen their institutional sustainability.
- ⇒ There is also a need to strengthen international solidarity among global, regional, and local WLOs, and to support opportunities for peer learning and exchange between Palestinian women and women from other conflict-affected contexts to enhance advocacy, share best practices, and amplify collective impact.

In action: The GiHA Working Group maintains a [Directory of Palestinian WLOs/WROs](#) including more than 30 organizations operating across Gaza and the West Bank. Together, they have more than 750 years of experience and a network of more than 2,350 frontline workers with expertise in delivering gender-responsive and inclusive assistance and services to women, girls and other vulnerable groups in their communities.

**Medium term
6-12 months**

1c. Women must be actively involved in rebuilding and repairing residential and public infrastructure and essential services, guided by gender-responsive urban planning. This participation should extend to planning committees, technical working groups, and oversight mechanisms guiding reconstruction, urban planning, and infrastructure development.

- ⇒ Humanitarian and recovery actors should ensure that women are actively involved in rebuilding and repairing residential and public infrastructure and essential services, guided by gender-responsive urban planning.
- ⇒ Recovery efforts should prioritize essential services for women and girls – including sexual and reproductive health, maternal health, gender-based violence prevention and response, mental health and psychosocial support, legal aid, child protection, childcare, eldercare, disability support, and rehabilitation – to ensure equitable access, protection, and restoration of dignity.
- ⇒ Essential services should be provided through a mix of static facilities, home visits, mobile clinics, and safe spaces to ensure access for hard-to-reach populations. Housing and public utilities such as energy, water, and sanitation systems should prioritize women's safety, accessibility, and privacy, and specific needs in their design, operation, and maintenance. Housing should uphold women's housing, land, and property rights.
- ⇒ Public services such as clinics, schools, markets, civil offices, and roads should also consider women's safety, privacy, and economic participation.
- ⇒ Women urban planners and WROs/WLOs should be meaningfully engaged in urban planning and reconstruction related decision-making. Women should be trained and employed as deminers, engineers, and safety officers, and play active roles in mine risk education and clearance to challenge and transform restrictive gender norms. Women frontline workers also require ongoing capacity development and psychosocial support to ensure effective and sustainable service delivery.

In action: UNDP and UN Women are collaborating on a community-centered debris removal initiative to ensure that women and other vulnerable groups are meaningfully engaged in both planning and implementation. As part of this effort, UN Women facilitated participatory consultations with displaced women living in collective shelters in Gaza City and Khan Younis and conducted training sessions for implementing partners focused on the mainstreaming of gender equality and human rights, GBV prevention, and risk education.

UNSCR 1325: Participation

SDG 5: Gender Equality

UNSDCF Outcome 3: Governance

2. Women's meaningful participation and leadership in decision-making

**Short term
<6 months**

2a. Women must be equally represented in all political and governance processes for early recovery, reconstruction and peacebuilding to ensure their voices shape decisions and priorities.

- ⇒ The Palestinian Authority, transitional justice bodies, and member states should ensure women's equitable representation across all peace negotiations, political dialogues, and governance structures, including but not limited to the Gaza Government Emergency Operations Room and Gaza Reconstruction Unit. forums should mandate 50 per cent women's participation with real decision-making authority, adequate resources, and the technical capacity to shape policy, planning, and implementation. Member states should reinforce these commitments by embedding gender participation quotas into binding agreements with the Palestinian Authority and transitional governance bodies, and by linking compliance to funding.
- ⇒ Women's and young women's leadership in grassroots peacebuilding should be strengthened through peacebuilding committees and networks that monitor community tensions, lead social cohesion and mediation initiatives to prevent inter-communal violence, and develop shared advocacy messages for policymakers.
- ⇒ In parallel, gender-responsive policies should be introduced, public awareness campaigns sustained, and targeted training and fellowship programmes developed to equip and empower women leaders.
- ⇒ The UN Resident Coordinator should consider establishing a time-bound Women's Advisory Group to provide strategic guidance to the Humanitarian Country Team, UN Country Team, and UN Department of Peacebuilding and Political Affairs.

In action: UN Women Palestine leads the Young Women Leader in Peacebuilding and Decision-Making Network which aims to develop the next generation of young women as peace mediators and negotiators. UN Women, together with the General Union of Palestinian Women, also convenes annual Open Days for Dialogue in support of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda. Additionally, Palestinian Working Women Society for development has established more than 100 women's shadow councils across various municipalities in the West Bank to support women's political participation and advocate for gender-sensitive local governance.

**Medium term
6-12 months**

2b. Women must have full and equitable participation in all coordination platforms for recovery, reconstruction and peacebuilding processes at the national, subnational and local levels.

- ⇒ The Palestinian Authority and transitional justice bodies, in collaboration with the UN Resident Coordinator and UN Country Team, should ensure that all formal and informal coordination platforms for decision-making and information sharing establish clear structures and protocols to engage and convene women, including pathways for regular consultation and joint agenda-setting. They should actively prioritize the inclusion of diverse women representatives from a wide range of backgrounds, such as WLOs, feminist groups, grassroots organizations, human rights defenders, and the Palestinian diaspora, across multiple sectors, including politics, civil society, media, and academia, supported by rotating seat allocation systems.
- ⇒ To foster an enabling environment for women's meaningful participation, practical support must be provided to women representatives, including flexible scheduling, transportation allowances, and childcare support. Simultaneous interpretation and translation should be available for all meetings, events, and key documents, while hybrid and digital platforms should be leveraged to facilitate participation for women in remote or displaced settings.
- ⇒ In addition, capacity-building opportunities, mentorship, and peer-learning networks should be offered to strengthen women's leadership and influence within these platforms.
- ⇒ Monitoring and accountability mechanisms should also be established to ensure meaningful participation, track progress, and address barriers that prevent women from fully contributing to decision-making processes.

In action: UN Women co-chairs the UN Country Team's Gender Task Force, which brings together UN agencies engaged in humanitarian and development programming in Palestine. In addition, UN Women co-chairs the GiHA Working Group alongside the Women's Affairs Centre and the Palestinian Working Women Society for Development. The GiHA Working Group includes over 50 national and international organizations involved in humanitarian action in Palestine, with more than half of its members representing WLOs. Through these coordination platforms, UN Women and partners promote women's participation in humanitarian coordination by facilitating consultations with WROs/WLOs integrating gender analysis and sex-disaggregated data into humanitarian planning and response

strategies, and advocating for the representation of women's organizations in cluster meetings, technical working groups, and inter-agency decision-making processes.

**Long term
12+ months**

2c. Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls must be systematically integrated across all phases of recovery, reconstruction and peacebuilding.

- ⇒ Recovery and reconstruction actors should ensure that gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are systematically integrated across all phases of recovery, reconstruction, and peacebuilding, including design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.
- ⇒ Post-conflict needs assessments, damage and loss assessments, and strategic early recovery frameworks should be guided by comprehensive gender analysis and use accurate sex-, age-, and disability-disaggregated data to capture the differentiated impacts of conflict and displacement on women and girls. The development of these documents should be carried out in close collaboration with key entities, including the Palestinian National Observatory, the UN Gender Task Force, and the GiHA Working Group, ensuring alignment with existing gender equality frameworks and involving gender specialists, WLOs, and women leaders from the outset. These documents should also incorporate gender-responsive budgeting, with multi-year and flexible funding earmarked for WROs/WLOs and utilize tools such as gender markers to monitor and track responsiveness to the specific needs of women and girls.
- ⇒ Mechanisms for the meaningful participation of women should be embedded in all decision-making processes and incorporated into all accountability measures to ensure that gender commitments are effectively implemented and outcomes for women and girls are systematically evaluated and reported.

In action: UN Women is leading the coordination of the gender equality section in the latest Gaza Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment to ensure that the document is fully gender-responsive and that gender considerations are systematically mainstreamed throughout the assessment. Additionally, the Middle East Nonviolence and Democracy, in partnership with Palestinian Centre for Peace and Democracy and Haider Abdel Shafi Centre for Culture and Development have developed a women-led National Reconciliation Roadmap for Palestine.

UNSCR 1325: Relief & Early recovery

SDG: Goal 5 – Gender Equality and SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth

UNSDCF: Outcome 1 – Economy

3. Women's Access to Livelihoods and Economic Recovery Opportunities

**Short term
<6 months**

3a. Scale up gender-responsive multi-purpose cash assistance and cash-for-work initiatives including targeted interventions for women-headed households and other vulnerable groups.

- ⇒ Humanitarian actors should ensure that women – particularly women-headed households, older women, women with disabilities, and GBV survivors – have access to multi-purpose cash assistance and cash-for-work initiatives to meet basic needs, reduce reliance on harmful coping mechanisms, and contribute to the rehabilitation of public infrastructure and essential services.
- ⇒ Cash assistance programmes should prioritize secure digital payment platforms to reduce transaction costs and ensure women can access funds independently and receive their full entitlements directly. They should also be paired with financial literacy training to empower women to manage resources effectively and make informed decisions for themselves and their families.
- ⇒ Targeted training, job placements and partnership initiatives should focus on increasing women's economic opportunities in recovery-related sectors, such as rubble removal, ICT, damage repair, renewable energy, and urban planning. At least 50 percent of cash-for-work positions should be allocated to women, offering diverse opportunities that challenge restrictive gender norms, such as operating community ovens and kitchens,

managing solid waste, and participating in the reconstruction and repair of residential and public infrastructure, including health clinics, schools, and roads.

- ⇒ Programmes should provide flexible working hours, safe transportation, and quality, accessible care services, while systematically integrating GBV risk mitigation measures. These initiatives should be integrated into broader social protection and women's economic empowerment strategies to promote sustainable income opportunities and long-term financial independence.

In action: UN Women, UNRWA, WFP, Oxfam, and the Young Women's Christian Association are implementing gender-responsive multi-purpose cash assistance and cash-for-work programmes that specifically support women-headed households, displaced women, women with disabilities, and GBV survivors. Notably, UN Women and WFP have previously partnered to deliver multi-purpose cash assistance to 14,716 women-headed households, benefiting a total of 73,582 individuals, and helping them meet their basic needs. The collaboration continues through Cash for Work (CFW) modality where UN Women refers women from vulnerable populations to WFP for CFW.

**Short term
<6 months**

3b. Expand women's access to economic recovery opportunities through employment, entrepreneurship, and equitable access to finance, markets and skills development.

- ⇒ Recovery and reconstruction actors should ensure that women, particularly women-headed households, women with disabilities, and GBV survivors, have access to equitable employment and entrepreneurship opportunities and benefit from women-led micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), in high-growth, climate-resilient sectors such as infrastructure, STEM, healthcare, digital services, care economy, green economy and renewable energy, as well as digital economy.
- ⇒ Recovery and reconstruction actors should assist women-led MSMEs in repairing shops, replacing lost assets, and implementing digital payment systems, while providing access to capital through cash grants, microcredit, and loan guarantees, complemented by business development services, mentorship, and training in financial literacy and digital skills.
- ⇒ Flexible work options, including mobile, digital, and home-based opportunities, should be actively promoted, while investments in childcare, eldercare, and community care services are essential to alleviate women's disproportionate unpaid care burden.
- ⇒ WROs/WLOs should also be supported to advocate for legal reforms on decent work, equal pay, and social protections, combined with public awareness campaigns targeting communities, including men and boys, to challenge discriminatory norms and advance women's leadership in business.
- ⇒ Preferential procurement and contracting quotas for women-led MSMEs in reconstruction supply chains should also be introduced to ensure equitable participation and long-term economic empowerment.
- ⇒ Financing modalities should prioritize direct, flexible, and sustained funding for WROs/WLOs while ensuring enhanced access to early recovery funding mechanisms, through simplified procedures and dedicated allocation windows. This should support both immediate livelihood recovery and long-term institutional sustainability, including core funding, operational costs, asset replacement, and capacity strengthening, enabling WROs/WLOs to expand women's access to employment, entrepreneurship, and local markets.

In action: UN Women, Aisha Association for Women and Child Protection, Business Women Forum, Culture and Free Thought Association, Palestinian Development and Women's Studies Association, Roles for Social Change, Rural Women Development Society, Save Youth Future Society, Stars of Hope Association, Women's Affairs Technical Committee, Women's Affairs Centre, and Young Women's Christian Association have a strong track record in supporting women's economic empowerment. The Bank of Palestine's Felestineya programme supports women entrepreneurs, while G-Gateway provides remote employment in digital services for women in Gaza.

UN Women's "Surging Women's Employment Flagship Initiative" (SWEI) is another working example of women's economic empowerment and expanding women's access to employment. The program aims to increase women's

labor force participation by 5% in Arab States by 2030, and outlines contextualized priorities for Palestine including STEM, caregiving, climate smart agriculture, green economy, digital economy.

**Medium term
6-12 months**

3c. Revitalize gender-responsive agricultural livelihoods and value chains, and ensure women's equitable access to finance, resources, markets and decision-making.

- ⇒ Recovery actors should ensure that women – particularly women-headed households – are supported with climate-resilient agricultural livelihood opportunities within women-led value chains to increase household income and strengthen local food production. Priority activities should include subsistence farming, small livestock rearing, food processing, seedling nurseries, and rooftop gardens.
- ⇒ Access to capital should be addressed through cash grants, microcredit, and loan guarantees with the provision of essential inputs such as seeds, tools, and animal feed.
- ⇒ Efforts should also expand women's market access through cooperatives, safe transportation, and digital sales platforms, while providing culturally sensitive training and extension services.
- ⇒ Critical infrastructure, including greenhouses, irrigation systems, storage, and processing facilities, should be restored and upgraded to support these initiatives.
- ⇒ Legal and policy reforms should also be promoted to remove structural barriers, including joint or female land titling, business registration, and inheritance rights, ensuring women can fully benefit from agricultural opportunities.
- ⇒ Public awareness campaigns should engage entire communities, including men and boys, to challenge discriminatory norms and advance women's leadership in agriculture.
- ⇒ Recovery programmes should incorporate climate adaptation and risk-reduction strategies to ensure long-term sustainability, while establishing monitoring mechanisms to track women's participation, income gains, and leadership outcomes across value chains.

In action: FAO, Gaza Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture Platform, MA'AN Development Centre, Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committee, Rural Women's Development Society, Union of Agricultural Work Committees, and Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling have extensive experience supporting women's economic empowerment in the small-scale agricultural sector and women-led enterprises.

UNSCR 1325: Protection & Prevention

**SDG 5 Gender Equality & SDG 16:
Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions**

UNSDG: Outcome 3: Governance

4. Safety for women and girls through protection, security and access to justice

**Short term
<6 months**

4a. Protect women and girls from all forms of violence and provide survivor-centred, comprehensive and multisectoral gender-based violence prevention and response services.

- ⇒ All actors should ensure that women and girls are protected from all forms of violence in full compliance with international humanitarian law and human rights obligations.
- ⇒ Strengthen survivor-centered, confidential, and accessible services for women and girls affected by conflict related sexual violence (CRSV) in Gaza, including healthcare, psychosocial support, and legal aid. Establish safe reporting pathways, strengthen protection measures, and reinforce accountability mechanisms, while investing in local women-led organizations to prevent, document, and respond to CRSV in Gaza.
- ⇒ Ensure that women and girls have access to survivor-centred, comprehensive, and multisectoral GBV prevention and response services, including safe and confidential reporting channels, crisis accommodation, safe spaces, clinical management of rape, legal aid, and mental health and psychosocial support.
- ⇒ Cash-for-protection interventions should be scaled up to provide targeted financial assistance to GBV survivors and individuals at risk, enabling them to meet urgent needs, remove themselves from immediate danger, and

access essential services in safety and dignity. These services should be delivered through safe and accessible ‘one-stop shops’ and mobile outreach teams, reaching women and girls in both urban and rural areas.

- ⇒ The capacity of service providers, including WROs/WLOs, should be strengthened on topics including survivor-centered approaches, case management, and referral pathways.
- ⇒ Public awareness campaigns should be implemented to challenge harmful social norms, reduce stigma, and promote community responsibility for protecting women and girls, while actively engaging men and boys to address the norms and behaviours that drive violence. GBV risk prevention and mitigation strategies should be integrated into broader social and economic initiatives.

In action: The Gaza Protection Cluster’s Emergency Protection Responders Network includes more than 400 frontline workers across 27 national and international organizations, including WLOs, who conduct protection monitoring, deliver essential non-food protection items, and identify and refer vulnerable individuals to specialized services. The GBV Area of Responsibility convenes more than 110 national and international organizations, including WLOs, to coordinate GBV prevention and response interventions across Palestine.

**Medium term
6-12 months**

4b. Ensure women have access to civil documentation to fully exercise their legal rights, access assistance and services, and participate equally in social, economic, and political life.

- ⇒ The Palestinian Authority and transitional justice bodies should prioritize rebuilding and repairing courts, civil administration offices, and other legal infrastructure, while streamlining civil documentation processes to ensure that women – especially women-headed households, displaced women, women with disabilities, and GBV survivors – can access essential civil documentation. This includes identity cards, birth, marriage and death certificates, as well as travel documents, which are critical for accessing assistance and services, securing inheritance, housing, land, and property rights, and participating equally in economic, social, and political life.
- ⇒ Male guardianship consent requirements should be reviewed, civil administration staff provided with gender-responsive training, and civil records digitized to allow for remote verification and reissuance.
- ⇒ Alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, including conciliation and mediation, should be prioritized to offer accessible, timely, and culturally sensitive pathways for resolving conflicts and addressing grievances.
- ⇒ Services should be delivered through safe spaces, mobile outreach units, and digital platforms to reach displaced communities. Service providers, including WROs/WLOs, should be supported to scale up free, safe, and timely legal aid, covering consultations, representation, mediation, and litigation, while leading public awareness campaigns to inform women of their rights, entitlements, and avenues for remedies and reparations.

In action: The Sawasya III programme is a joint initiative implemented by UN Women, UNDP, and UNICEF, that strengthens equal access to inclusive and responsive justice systems, particularly for women and children, across Gaza and the West Bank. It includes innovations such as the Feminist Legal Hub, which brings together Shari’a lawyers to promote gender-responsive jurisprudence in areas such as custody and inheritance.

**Long term
12+ months**

4c. Strengthen legal protections for women and girls by reforming discriminatory laws, improving coordination among justice actors, and expanding specialized support services.

- ⇒ The PA and transitional governance bodies should restore the rule of law and implement comprehensive reforms to advance gender equality. Priority legislative reforms should include the Personal Status Law, Family Protection from Violence Law, Election Law, Labour Law, and Penal Code, with consistent application across both Gaza and the West Bank.
- ⇒ Women’s leadership and representation in governance and transitional justice mechanisms should be promoted through targeted recruitment and capacity development initiatives.

- ⇒ Gender considerations should be fully integrated into policy frameworks, capacity development programmes for police, judges, and lawyers, and through the creation of dedicated gender units or focal points.
- ⇒ Public awareness campaigns should be conducted to inform women of their rights, entitlements, and avenues for remedies and reparations.
- ⇒ Alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, including conciliation and mediation, should be enhanced by establishing a clear legal framework, creating a national regulatory body, developing gender-sensitive guidelines, actively engaging and training women as mediators and legal representatives, and implementing robust monitoring, accountability, and awareness measures.
- ⇒ WROs/WLOs should be supported to advocate and engage with governance and transitional justice mechanisms to ensure reforms uphold women's needs and rights and are grounded in the lived experiences of women and girls and international standards.

In action: UN Women, the Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling, and the Centre for Women's Legal Research, Counseling, and Protection, together with networks such as the Palestinian NGO Forum to Combat Violence Against Women, the Amal Coalition, and the Fada Coalition of Palestinian Women Against Violence, are leading advocates for gender-responsive legal and policy reforms in Palestine. Together with the Ministry of Women's Affairs, the Centre for Women's Legal Research, Counseling, and Protection is leading a national dialogue to reform the Personal Status Law and has already secured approvals for several amendments.

Monitoring, Accountability and Learning

- ⇒ All actors should be accountable for ensuring gender-responsive, inclusive, and participatory processes, supported by robust monitoring, accountability, and learning mechanisms to track commitments to women's rights and uphold national and international frameworks.
- ⇒ Independent, survivor-centered monitoring and evaluation should actively involve WROs/WLOs and use sex-, age-, and disability-disaggregated data, along with other relevant factors, integrating gender analysis at every project stage to identify differentiated needs, risks, and outcomes. This ensures humanitarian, recovery, and reconstruction interventions respond to the priorities of women, girls, and marginalized groups and are continuously adapted based on emergency needs, evolving contexts, and community feedback.
- ⇒ The leadership, technical, and operational capacity of WROs/WLOs should be strengthened by resourcing them to monitor and report violations, and to support community protection monitoring systems that map and address risks to women and girls.
- ⇒ Gender-responsive budgeting is essential, including dedicated funding, public tracking tools, and independent monitoring mechanisms. Investments should also support inclusive media and civil society, while protecting women journalists, lawyers, and human rights defenders. This helps ensure that recovery, reconstruction, and peacebuilding efforts reflect women's realities, amplify their voices, and hold decision-makers accountable.

In action: Over the past two years, the Women's Affairs Center (WAC) has documented more than 740 testimonies from women and girls affected by the conflict in Gaza, with a particular focus on widespread and well-documented acts that may amount to violations under international humanitarian law, as well as gender-based violence experienced during the war. This work forms part of WAC's human rights and humanitarian journalism efforts, aimed at amplifying the voices of women and girls and shedding light on the gendered impacts of armed conflict. WAC has produced approximately 50 visual materials – including videos, reels, and short films – and around 30 audio productions, such as podcasts, addressing these issues.

References

1. Subsequent to United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), the Security Council adopted a series of Women, Peace and Security (WPS) resolutions, including 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013), 2242 (2015), 2467 (2019), and 2493 (2019), which together strengthen the normative framework on women's participation, protection from sexual violence, prevention, and relief and recovery.
2. <https://wps.unwomen.org/participation>
3. https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2021/07/gender-equality-and-fragility_8f6ca305/3a93832b-en.pdf
4. <https://www.un.org/en/peace-and-security/page/women-peace-and-security>
5. Abid
6. <https://auspalestine.org/2023/05/27/labour-force-survey-2022-annual-report>;
<https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/post.aspx?lang=en&ItemID=4421>
7. <https://www.fao.org/in-action/water-efficiency-nena/countries/palestine/en/>
8. <https://pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/Rainbow/Documents/MainIndicatorViolenceE.htm>
9. https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/statisticsIndicatorsTables.aspx?lang=en&table_id=3596&
10. <https://www.unescwa.org/sites/default/files/event/materials/9-%20Socioeconomic%20situation%20of%20Palestinian%20women%20and%20girls%202400592E.pdf>
11. https://arabstates.unwomen.org/en/stories/feature-story/2025/10/facts-figures-two-years-of-war-on-gaza-the-toll-on-women-and-girls#_ftn2
12. The data on food security and nutrition support needs is an UN Women estimate based on IPC Special Snapshot on the Gaza Strip [19 December 2025]
13. <https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipcinfo-website/countries-in-focus-archive/issue-134/en/>
14. <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/press-briefing-un-women-17oct25/>
15. <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/joint-statement-housing-land-and-property-technical-working-group-and-shelter-cluster>
16. https://arabstates.unwomen.org/en/stories/feature-story/2025/10/facts-figures-two-years-of-war-on-gaza-the-toll-on-women-and-girls#_ftn2
17. <https://arabstates.unwomen.org/en/stories/feature-story/2025/10/facts-figures-two-years-of-war-on-gaza-the-toll-on-women-and-girls>
18. https://arabstates.unwomen.org/en/stories/feature-story/2025/10/facts-figures-two-years-of-war-on-gaza-the-toll-on-women-and-girls#_ftn2
19. UN Women estimate
20. IOM, Gaza Rapid Damage Needs Assessment estimates
21. https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-06/gender-alert_palestine-wlos-en.pdf
22. https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-06/gender-alert_palestine-wlos-en.pdf
23. <https://fts.unocha.org/>
24. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2025/05/at-a-breaking-point-the-impact-of-foreign-aid-cuts-on-womens-organizations-in-humanitarian-crises-worldwide>