

Twenty-Five Years Later

UNSCR

1325

in Palestine

-Between Reality and Ambition-



Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development

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Analytical Study from a Feminist Perspective

Prepared by: Dr. Luna Shamieh

Reviewed and Edited by:

**Amal Khreishe
Diab Zayed**

**Samar Hawwash
Mustafa Al Qut**

Publications of the Palestinian Working Women's Society for Development

web: www.pwwsd.org

email: pwwsd@pwwsd.org

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- 6.1 Conclusion**
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Acknowledgment

While approaching a quarter of a century since the issuance of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, regarding Women, Peace and Security, the daily and political situation of women in the Middle East and many other regions in the world reveals the absence of a political will to implement the given resolution. Additionally, it uncovers the deficit of the resolution to protect women in areas of conflict and areas under foreign colonialism. For Palestinians, mainly women, a twenty-five-year experience of international discourse about peace and security highlights the deep gap between the content of the resolution and the content of the United Nations resolutions and the International Humanitarian law, with all the obligations for protection and security, on one hand, and the adversary practices and contexts that include crimes against humanity and profound violations that threaten the international peace, on the other.

Since the first day of the current Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip, which has been going on daily for more than a couple of years, the Israeli occupation has committed one of the worst forms of colonial violence. The Israeli aggression includes the toughest form of structured violence: genocide, massacres, using internationally prohibited weapons, imposing systematic famine policies, destroying hospitals/health services facilities, destroying the infrastructure, and transferring the entire Gaza Strip into a burnt area, inappropriate for human living. The Israeli crimes were also extended to the West Bank to embody another form of violence to reach a case of ethnic cleansing of Palestinians. In the West Bank, the Israeli occupation intensified the daily incursions of the Palestinian localities as well as the extra-judicial killing of Palestinians while, at the same time, expanding the existing settlements and building new ones. Moreover, the Israeli army continued the policy of home-demolishing and forcible displacement against Palestinians. Special focus was on Judaizing Jerusalem and isolating it from the rest of the Palestinian Territory. The Israeli policies and crimes reflect a clear long-term colonial ideology that deprives women and their families of the basics of human security.

In the Gaza Strip, the Israeli occupation dealt with women and their bodies as if they were military targets, as many reports released by neutral liable bodies, including UN Agencies, have shown that approximately two-thirds of the victims in the Gaza Strip were women and children, in clear violation of the internal humanitarian law and all international conventions, treaties, and human values.

Despite the genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes committed by the Israeli occupation, the United Nations Security Council remained powerless, with no steps to activate the principle of accountability of the Occupation State for its crimes to ensure that the Israeli leaders do not escape punishment. The Security Council did not take any steps to activate Chapter VII of the United Nations' Charter and other tools of the international justice system. On the contrary, the Security Council remained controlled by the Imperialist Colonial Powers, led by the USA, which embodies, and is still embodying, the policy of double standards in dealing with Palestinians' right to self-determination, freedom, and liberation from the occupation. At the time, there were resolutions issued by the United Nations General Assembly and the International Court of Justice, emphasizing the illegality of the occupation and demanding its end within a one-year duration (with the support of 121 states voting in favour), this legal, political, and values consensus remained ink on paper. The military and financial support, as well as political coverage in the UN Security

Council, for the occupation continued. The deficit of the United Nations reveals the structured colonial nature of the international regime. Additionally, it reproduces the oppression and slavery of the nations in the south of the globe. Women and girls pay the biggest price as a result of the military and economic policies that harmonize with the spread of Gender- Based Violence, in addition to harmonizing with class and race violence, leading to the creation of a structured system of abuse with multi-layers. Yet, this internationally fragile, cracked frame did not stop Palestinian women's struggle. Palestinian women were and are still a main element within the national struggle process through accomplishing noticeable national, economic, and social roles. In light of this accumulated struggle, a resolution from the United Nations Economic and Social Council was issued during August 2010, urging for protection of Palestinian women and providing them with needed support as women living under Israeli colonialism and occupation. The given resolution is an advanced international step, which indicates that Palestinian women can place themselves within the international agenda despite the attempts of exclusion and marginalization. The given resolution stands as an additional tool that could be utilized to lobby the United Nations to take measures to ensure the respect of Palestinian women to live in peace and dignity. Lobbying the United Nations should be based on the critical women's perception that rejects militarization. The women's critical perception does not address peace mechanically, as if it were only ending the war, but goes towards the human, legal, and values sphere that ensures justice, equity, and respect of identity, political, legal, and cultural diversity; a sphere that ensures women's right to peace and dignity based on a comprehensive development approach.

In light of the above context, PWWSD puts on the table the current study to evaluate the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda after 20 years since the issuance of the UNSCR 1325. The study analyzes the Agenda from a critical feminist point of view rooted in the Palestinian experience. The applied approach in developing the study is a critical one that accords with the experience of women in the countries of the South, who struggle to restructure the international power relations map. The purpose is not to document the international failure in protecting women, but to redefine peace and security based on the outcomes of the struggle of Palestinian women and women all over the world. Peace should be a tool to liberate from all forms of colonial and power abuse, and this message should be delivered to the United Nations to fulfil its commitments in applying WPSA and ensure that the Agenda contributes to changing the existing circumstances in the region and ending oppression.

The organization would like to express deep gratitude to the researcher and all parties who contributed to accomplishing the study. Special thanks go to the women leaders who were interviewed to enrich the content, whose contributions have significant value in highlighting the aspects of WPSA within the Palestinian context. PWWSD also thanks the representatives of the Civil Society Organizations, political parties, and academies, as well as the representatives of the student blocs in the Palestinian universities and youth activists who participated in the round table session to validate the draft of the study. These contributions all played a vital role in enhancing the study and developing it in its current form.

Amal Khreishe
Director-General.

1.1. Introduction

The UN Security Council's adoption of Resolution 1325 in October 2000 marked a significant milestone in global efforts to address the gendered dimensions of conflict and peacebuilding.

UNSCR 1325 is not just another resolution—it is “inherently political before it is feminist. It addresses directly the role of women in contexts of armed conflict and state violence, and in that sense, it holds the potential to address the lived experiences of Palestinian women under Israeli settler-colonial occupation. What makes it significant is that it recognizes women not merely as passive victims of war, but as political actors, agents of peace, and participants in shaping security.

But the resolution's limitation is also deeply structural: it is designed as a post-conflict tool—its mechanisms assume a transition from war to peace, from instability to reconstruction. In Palestine, we are still living the reality of an ongoing occupation, apartheid, and military aggression. You cannot implement 1325 in a vacuum, nor without dismantling the very systems that produce insecurity—namely, the Israeli occupation. It cannot be separated from other international legal frameworks that continue to be denied or ignored. The impotence of the International Court of Justice to halt the assault on the Gaza Strip is a stark reminder of this gap between normative promises and political realities.

We are under no illusion—implementing this resolution, under occupation, is nearly impossible. How can you talk about protection when the very source of violence is entrenched, legitimized, and shielded by global powers? Still, we insist on using 1325 as a political tool—to expose the daily realities of Palestinian women: poverty, structural deprivation of services, childbirth at checkpoints, the bombing of maternity hospitals, births in tents, and an utter absence of safety in every aspect of life. These are not humanitarian incidents—they are the deliberate outcomes of a policy of ethnic cleansing and genocide waged by Israel against the Palestinian “people as a whole.”

Rima Kittaneh Nazzari —
Member of the General Union of Palestinian Women,
Secretary and Coordinator of the Civil Coalition for
the Implementation of UNSCR 1325

Through this resolution, the United Nations sought to formally recognize the vital roles women play in preventing war, advancing peace, and rebuilding societies, while aiming to dismantle the patriarchal structures that have historically excluded women from decision-making positions.

However, in contexts marked by prolonged settler-colonial occupation, political fragmentation, and systemic gender-based discrimination—such as the Palestinian context—the application of this resolution exposes a fundamental contradiction between global aspirations for gender equality and the lived reality of a people denied their right to self-determination and freedom.

Resolution 1325 and its related resolutions, which together comprise the Women, Peace and Security Agenda (WPSA), have been strategically utilized by Palestinian feminist institutions and coalitions not as a neutral tool of inclusion, but as a mechanism for demanding accountability. These actors have employed the resolution to expose Israel's violations—not only of 1325 itself, but also of international humanitarian law, international criminal law, and international human rights law—as

part of a broader feminist liberation struggle. This struggle is inherently linked to their collective resistance against Israeli occupation, settler colonialism, and the structural and societal patriarchal constraints embedded within Palestinian society itself.

This study examines how the framework of Resolution 1325 intersects with Palestinian women's aspirations for liberation. It offers a critical lens on the gendered dynamics of power, and on the complicity of international institutions—particularly the Security Council—in maintaining double standards in their handling of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The resolution, from its inception, failed to account for the nature of settler-colonial occupation. It was not designed to contend with contexts of genocide, forced displacement, erasure, and starvation—realities that

have defined the lives of women in the Gaza Strip since October 7, 2023, nor with the policies of ethnic cleansing ongoing in the West Bank.

Moreover, it disregards a structural feminist analysis of violence rooted in militarized power and neoliberal economic domination—elements that constitute the very foundations of the global patriarchal regime.

Accordingly, this research also reflects the ongoing efforts of the Palestinian women movement to reinterpret and recontextualize Resolution 1325 within the lived political and colonial realities of Palestine. It advocates for a vision that moves beyond integrating women into hegemonic structures, toward one grounded in human security, holistic peace, and a liberation-centered framework that prioritizes justice and dignity as the real measures of peace.

Palestinian Historical and Political Context

For more than 76 years, Palestinian women have endured the harsh realities of forced displacement, dispossession, and continuous military occupation by Israel. Since the Nakba of 1948, when over two-thirds of the Palestinian population were forcibly uprooted and hundreds of towns and villages were destroyed, women have lived under the weight of structural violence and political exclusion. The subsequent Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem in 1967 further entrenched a complex system of military control—marked by restrictions on movement, the demolition of homes, illegal settlement expansion in defiance of international law, and recurrent military aggressions that have persistently disrupted the rhythms of daily life.

Within this matrix of systemic oppression, Palestinian women have been both central actors in resistance and targets of violence. During the First Intifada (1987–1993), women mobilized through grassroots networks, supported mass strikes, organized community protection bodies, and held the social fabric intact in the face of Israeli incursions. In contrast, the Second Intifada (2000–2005) ushered in a period of intensified repression—arbitrary arrests, economic strangulation, and widespread brutality—yet the role of women in sustaining societal resilience remained unshaken.

Nevertheless, despite their crucial and sustained contributions to collective survival and national resistance, women's leadership has consistently been marginalized within formal political arenas. This marginalization is not unique to Palestine; it reflects a global phenomenon in which women's roles in liberation movements are acknowledged rhetorically, but systematically excluded from political power and institutional decision-making. The gap between recognition and representation continues to undermine the transformative potential of feminist leadership in contexts of protracted colonial domination.

The year 2007 marked a critical turning point for Palestinian women, ushering in

The resolution is intrinsically linked" to the historical role of Palestinian civil society in resisting occupation through various means. In the context of colonialism, civil society had its own referential frameworks—especially the grassroots feminist institutions with strong political foundations. These organizations anchored their work in the Fourth Geneva Convention, demanding accountability for the occupation, an end to the politics of double standards, and the implementation of all relevant international resolutions related to the Palestinian context. By 2005, there was growing awareness of UNSCR 1325, and the feminist movement began to use it as a tool for accountability and for expanding regional and ".international networks
Amal Khreisheh —
General Director, Palestinian Working Woman Society for (Development) (PWWSD)

a period of dual pressure: one imposed by the deepening Israeli occupation, and the other stemming from internal political paralysis and stagnation. In 2017, the Palestinian Authority adopted its first National Action Plan for the implementation of UNSCR 1325, with stated goals focused on women's participation in peacebuilding and reforming the security sector. Yet in practice, these efforts remained largely symbolic and disconnected from realities on the ground—realities shaped by Israel's ongoing blockade of the Gaza Strip, the accelerated expansion of settlements in the West Bank, and frequent military attacks targeting civilians, particularly women and children.

The year 2023, however, constituted a watershed moment in the lived experiences of Palestinian women. Against the backdrop of escalating Israeli violence and economic deterioration, conditions sharply worsened following the genocidal war launched after October 7. In the Gaza Strip, after more than 16 years of suffocating blockade, the situation became unbearable. Unemployment soared

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— Amal Khreisheh

General Director, Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development (PWWSD)

beyond 60%, and the healthcare and social support systems collapsed entirely under the weight of the aggression.

In the West Bank, the Israeli government enabled and armed settler militias, granting them full impunity to carry out killings, intimidation, and terror against Palestinians, including women. When the full-scale war was unleashed, women bore the brunt of the catastrophe. Israeli forces systematically targeted women, and according to official statistics, women and children made up nearly two-thirds of the victims.

The war devastated entire neighborhoods and displaced nearly 1.9 million people. For Palestinian women, this meant enduring crisis after crisis: the loss of homes, family members, livelihoods, and access to basic services. Their bodies, labor, and resilience became the frontlines of survival in a context where protection was absent, and international silence prevailed.

Direct targeting of women by Israeli army: Palestinian women have faced mass killings, arbitrary detention, and gender-based violence, including sexual abuse. Maternal and child health centers have been systematically bombed and destroyed, depriving more than 50,000 pregnant women of access to vital medical care during one of the most vulnerable stages of their lives.

Displacement and starvation: Families displaced to UNRWA schools and other public facilities turned into shelters—and those forced to live in tents—endured conditions of famine under the suffocating Israeli siege. In many cases, mothers gave up their own food rations to keep their children alive.

Erasure of women's agency in media narratives: Dominant media portrayals have reduced Palestinian women to passive victims, while erasing their roles as caregivers, community leaders, and frontline activists who are documenting war crimes and resisting with dignity.

The war has also reignited critical debates around the implementation of UNSCR 1325. While the United Nations called for a ceasefire, many Western governments invoked the resolution to condemn Hamas, all while ignoring Israel's disproportionate and indiscriminate violence—particularly against women and children in the Gaza Strip. This selective application of the resolution has exposed the double standards inherent in its implementation to the extent that, in some cases, it is weaponized to legitimize occupying powers rather than to hold them accountable.

In the aftermath of the war, Palestinian women have been confronted with a devastating reality:

- Over 70% of Gaza's infrastructure has been destroyed, including schools, hospitals, homes, cultural institutions, and civilian infrastructure—among them, women-led organizations and centers. It has become painfully clear that reconstruction is impossible amid ongoing aggression and siege.
- Escalation in the West Bank: Israeli military violence and settler attacks have intensified, forcibly displacing over 500 Palestinian families during 2023 and 2024. Women activists who document these crimes face arrest, smear campaigns, and systematic harassment by the Israeli forces.
- Fragmentation of the global feminist response: While many prominent Western feminist movements have remained largely silent in the face of Palestinian suffering, transnational feminist alliances—such as the Palestinian Feminist Collective and Jewish Voice for Peace—have mobilized to connect gender justice with anti-colonial resistance, demanding an immediate end to the aggression and the occupation.

Relevant Agreements

The Women, Peace and Security Agenda (WPSA), enshrined in United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), has long been seen as a beacon of hope—particularly in contexts marked by systemic violence and injustice such as Palestine. Decades of occupation and structural violence have fundamentally shaped the experiences of Palestinian women in both conflict and resistance. Subsequent resolutions—UNSCR 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), and 2242 (2015)—have sought to build upon this framework by addressing sexual violence in conflict, establishing monitoring mechanisms, and integrating gender perspectives into counterterrorism efforts.

Yet the application of this framework in Palestine—especially in the aftermath of the genocidal war, launched after October 7, 2023—exposes profound contradictions between international standards and the lived realities on the ground under the Israeli occupation. These inconsistencies raise urgent questions about the political will to implement the WPSA in colonial contexts, and about the selectivity of international accountability mechanisms.

UNSCR 1820 (2008), which recognizes sexual violence as a weapon of war, intersects with Resolution 1325 by calling for the prosecution of perpetrators and the protection of survivors. However, its implementation in the Palestinian context has been marred by politicization and glaring double standards.

During the Israeli military aggression on the Gaza Strip, Palestinian women reported systematic sexual torture, including forced stripping, degrading body

<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessions-regular/session58/a-hrc-58-crp-6.pdf>

https://www.btselem.org/sites/default/files/publications/202412_unleashed_eng.pdf

searches, and threats of rape by Israeli soldiers—accounts documented by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in 2025. In the West Bank, strip searches and sexual harassment during arrest and detention remain routine methods of intimidation (B'Tselem, 2024).

Yet, Israel continues to dismiss these reports as “ Hamas propaganda,” while the International Criminal Court faces significant political and logistical barriers in launching a credible investigation. These dynamics stand in stark contrast to the swift international condemnation of alleged sexual violence against Israeli women on October 7, whereas the testimonies of Palestinian survivors have been largely ignored or sidelined.

This selective application of UNSCR 1820 reveals how the resolution can be weaponized to legitimize occupation while rendering Palestinian suffering invisible. It underscores a broader pattern in which international legal instruments are used not to uphold justice universally, but to serve geopolitical interests—further entrenching structural impunity for colonial violence.

UNSCR 1888 (2009) was designed to prevent sexual violence in conflict through the appointment of a Special Representative and the establishment of monitoring mechanisms. However, in the Palestinian context—particularly in the Gaza Strip—implementation is obstructed by Israel’s ongoing blockade, which restricts access for UN agencies such as UN Women. This has severely hampered efforts to monitor, document, and ensure accountability for gender-based violations.

The humanitarian catastrophe resulting from mass displacement and the destruction of infrastructure has also significantly increased the risks of sexual exploitation and child marriage. According to estimates by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), more than 71% of girls in the Gaza Strip are now subjected to early marriage due to extreme poverty—a practice that constitutes an indirect violation of the spirit of Resolution 1888.

UNSCR 1889 (2009), which was intended to accelerate the implementation of Resolution 1325, faces substantial challenges in Palestine due to the Israeli-imposed restrictions on movement that obstruct the collection of gender-disaggregated data. Additionally, the dominance of political and security agendas in international discourse around the conflict continues to marginalize the voices and leadership of Palestinian women in decision-making processes. Meanwhile, local civil society organizations—particularly organizations—struggle with limited resources and are unable to meet the reporting standards demanded by international frameworks.

UNSCR 1960 (2010) established a system of accountability for conflict-related sexual violence, yet its application in the Gaza Strip remains severely impaired. Israel’s systematic denial of access to international monitors has rendered field-based documentation nearly impossible. Further complicating matters is Israel’s non-recognition of the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court (ICC), which deepens the already entrenched culture of impunity. Social stigma within the community also prevents survivors from reporting incidents of sexual violence, further silencing the gendered dimensions of the occupation’s brutality.

UNSCR 2122 (2013): Gender Equality and Global Security Amid Humanitarian

Collapse: Adopted to address gaps within the Women, Peace and Security Agenda (WPSA), UN Security Council Resolution 2122 (2013) aimed to more directly link gender equality with international peace and security. However, the worsening humanitarian crises in the occupied Palestine—most notably the collapse of the healthcare system in the Gaza Strip—have shifted attention away from women's empowerment toward mere survival. Israeli practices such as arbitrary detention, settlement expansion, and the proliferation of military checkpoints continue to weaken the operational capacity of Palestinian women organizations. At the same time, the absence of coordinated international pressure on Israel undermines any meaningful enforcement of the resolution's provisions.

UNSCR 2106 (2013): Legal and Political Barriers to Prosecuting Sexual Violence as a War Crime

While UNSCR 2106 (2013) affirms that sexual violence in conflict constitutes a war crime, its enforcement in the Palestinian context remains fraught with legal and political obstacles. Despite Palestine's accession to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in 2015, deep political complications have hindered the submission and advancement of cases related to occupation-linked sexual violence. Internally, the political division between Fateh and Hamas further fragments efforts to systematically document and prosecute these violations under a unified national framework.

UNSCR 2242 (2015): Counterterrorism as a Tool to Suppress Palestinian Women's Political Participation: Originally introduced to integrate gender perspectives into counterterrorism strategies, Resolution 2242 has, in practice, been used to suppress Palestinian women's political engagement. Israel frames its occupation as a counterterrorism effort, using this rationale to justify mass arrests of Palestinian women—over 300 have been detained since October 2023—and to criminalize civil society organizations such as Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights and Defense for Children International – Palestine. Women activists involved in documenting war crimes or organizing protests are often labeled as “terrorists,” a tactic designed to silence their participation in .peacebuilding, in direct violation of the spirit of UNSCR 1325

Further, ceasefire negotiations following October 7—led by the United States, Egypt, and Qatar—have completely excluded Palestinian women, despite Resolution 2242's explicit call for their inclusion in all peace processes. In response to this systemic exclusion, a broad array of grassroots and women-led initiatives stepped in to fill the vacuum—offering legal aid, psychosocial support, and war crimes documentation. These community-based efforts represent feminist alternatives to state-centric WPSA frameworks and affirm the centrality of decolonial and .justice-oriented approaches to peace and security

The interaction of these resolutions in the context of Palestine reveals methodological flaws within the Women, Peace and Security Agenda (WPSA). Selective implementation prioritizes Israeli narratives at the

expense of Palestinian realities, as clearly illustrated in the United Nations report issued in March 2024 on the events of October 7, which completely overlooked the voices of Palestinian survivors. Moreover, Israel's occupation policies—including settlement expansion, military checkpoints, and territorial fragmentation—strip the principle of participation under Resolution 1325 of any real meaning. Palestinian women cannot meaningfully engage in peacebuilding while their communities are under bombardment. These analyses highlight the dialectical relationship between Resolution 1325 and the broader corpus of UN resolutions related to gender, conflict, and accountability. The obstacles to implementation in Palestine do not arise merely from the complexity of the conflict itself, but from Israel's entrenched policies—such as siege, forced displacement, and starvation tactics—that transform humanitarian crises into tools of domination, exacerbating the precarity of Palestinian women. At the same time, the international community's silence on these violations effectively normalizes gender-based violence as a component of occupation. To address these gaps, it is essential to strengthen alternative monitoring mechanisms through support for Palestinian civil society organizations, develop binding international legal pathways to hold perpetrators of sexual and gender-based violence accountable, and link international aid to Israel with an end to its violations of Security Council resolutions.

National Action Plan NAP

The Palestinian Authority officially adopted the Palestinian National Action Plan (NAP) for the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (Women, Peace and Security) in 2017, as a strategic framework to promote gender equality under the conditions of Israeli military occupation and the limited jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority. This approach is rooted in the lived realities of Palestinian women, who endure systematic violence under occupation alongside patriarchal constraints within their own society.

The National Action Plan emerged from decades of advocacy by civil society organizations and was developed through extensive consultations between relevant government ministries, civil society actors, and international partners such as UN Women and UNDP. While aligned with the four pillars of UNSCR 1325—Participation, Protection, Prevention, and Relief & Recovery—the Palestinian NAP was uniquely adapted to the specific challenges of the Palestinian context, most notably by incorporating accountability for Israel's crimes and violations as a central and added pillar.

Between 2014 and 2016, a coalition of civil society organizations, government representatives, and international agencies collaborated to draft the plan, which was formally launched in 2017 under the leadership of the Ministry of Women's Affairs. The first generation of the NAP (2017–2019) prioritized increasing

women's political representation, enhancing legal protection against gender-based violence, and integrating gender perspectives into humanitarian responses. The second generation of the NAP (2020–2024)—which has been extended through 2025 due to the unprecedented escalation of Israeli aggression—broadened its scope to include emerging priorities such as digital advocacy and youth engagement. In preparation for this extension, a concept paper was developed, which is now guiding the development of the third-generation strategic plan, currently under discussion at the time of writing this report. Since 2017, progress under the National Action Plan has been gradual but insufficient, particularly regarding women's political participation. The representation of women in local councils increased from 12% to 20%, and legal reforms have been introduced to criminalize the so-called “honor crimes.” Sixteen protection centers have been established across the West Bank and Gaza Strip to support survivors of gender-based violence. In addition, over 1,200 police officers, judges, and healthcare professionals have received gender-sensitive training on case management.

The NAP has also helped facilitate gender-responsive humanitarian aid during times of crisis, including the Israeli assaults on Gaza in 2021 and 2023, where maternal health services and trauma counseling were prioritized.

The 2024–2025 priorities of the National Action Plan focus on accountability for gender-based crimes, youth empowerment, and policy integration—including a proposed national strategy addressing gender and climate change. Success in this phase will depend on strengthening grassroots leadership, securing sustainable funding, and aligning international advocacy with a decolonial resistance framework.

While the NAP has contributed to advancing women's presence in peacebuilding and enhancing legal protections, its full potential remains constrained by the ongoing occupation and political paralysis. For Palestinian women, genuine empowerment cannot be reduced to technical reforms; it requires a transformative vision that links gender justice and democratic transitions to the broader goal of national liberation.

Since 2017, the National Action Plan has contributed to gradual yet insufficient progress in advancing women's political participation. Women's representation in local councils increased from 12% to 20%, and legal reforms were enacted to criminalize the so-called “honor crimes.” Sixteen protection centers have been established across the West Bank and Gaza Strip to support survivors of gender-based violence, in addition to training programs targeting over 1,200 police officers, judges, and healthcare workers on gender-sensitive case management. The National Action Plan has also facilitated the delivery of gender-responsive humanitarian assistance during crises, including during the Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip in 2021 and 2023, where maternal health services and trauma counseling were prioritized in response efforts.

The 2024–2025 priorities of the Plan now focus on accountability for gender-based crimes, youth empowerment, and policy integration, including the development of a national strategy on gender and climate change. The success of this phase will hinge on strengthening grassroots leadership, ensuring sustainable funding, and aligning international advocacy with anti-colonial resistance narratives.

While the NAP has made important strides in expanding women's roles in peacebuilding and enhancing legal protections, its transformative potential remains severely constrained by the realities of military occupation and entrenched political paralysis. For Palestinian women, genuine empowerment cannot be achieved through technical reforms alone—it requires a transformative feminist vision that links gender justice and democratic transformation to the broader struggle for national liberation and self-determination.

Women Participation

Despite relative progress in official policies aimed at enhancing Palestinian women's participation in decision-making, a wide gap remains between theory and actual practice. This disconnect is rooted in structural challenges such as the ongoing Israeli occupation, internal political fragmentation, entrenched patriarchal norms, and a persistent lack of genuine political will.

The National Action Plan for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 (2021–2024) aimed to increase women's representation in decision-making positions to 30%, in line with the resolutions of the Palestinian National Council and the Central Council. Article 5 of the Palestinian Electoral Law also mandates a 20% quota for women, yet in practice, this is

applied only at the local level—not at the national level. Women remain absent from formal negotiations and reconciliation initiatives to end the division. While numerous women organizations are actively leading community dialogues, their recommendations are rarely adopted in official policy frameworks. The chart below illustrates women's representation across selected key sectors.

"Women in Gaza are treated solely as victims. There is no space for participation—not even in political struggle. No one here believes we can be part of the process. We are completely absent from the political scene, marginalized by a patriarchal society and the refusal of political parties to accept our presence.

Patriarchy undermines women's economic and social empowerment, stripping us of the ability to participate meaningfully. Add to that the complete absence of protection mechanisms—leaving women exposed to violence without any recourse. During wartime, legal frameworks and women's rights simply do not exist. This makes the challenges women face not only severe but deeply compounded, despite the immense burdens we carry and the multiple roles we play, especially now.

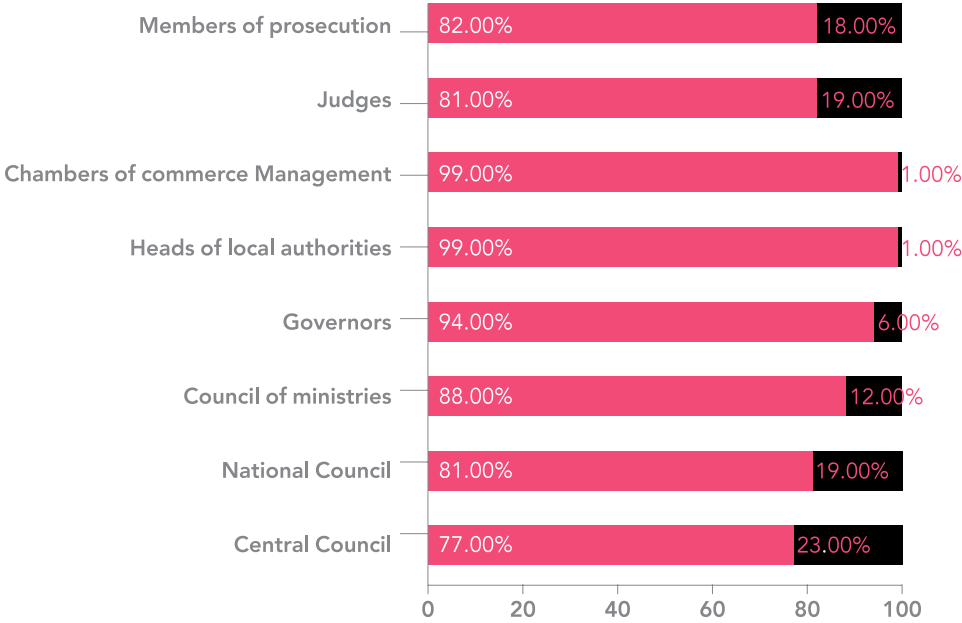
Early marriage has become widespread under the illusion that it offers girls protection, when in fact it only entrenches their vulnerability.

Right now, women are unable to access aid. They cannot compete with men for relief, and if a woman is not the official head of household—if she is unmarried, widowed, or without a family—she is simply not counted. The relief systems don't recognize her needs. She disappears from the eligibility lists altogether."

— Howeida Al-Dreimli,

Culture and Free Thought Association

Women Participation Percentage



2. Objectives and Methodology

The researcher adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining in-depth qualitative interviews with systematic analysis of secondary data to critically examine the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, with particular attention to the interplay between the National Action Plan (NAP) and broader political dynamics—especially in light of the escalation following October 2023. The interviews included key stakeholders such as the Ministry of Women’s Affairs, representatives of civil society organizations (including the Women’s Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling and the General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW), officials from international bodies (such as UN Women), and grassroots activists operating in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip. These interviews were designed to capture firsthand perspectives on the successes, limitations, and adaptations of the NAP within the fragmented and crisis-ridden Palestinian context, shaped by occupation, political division, and systemic emergency.

The study is further grounded in a comprehensive review of secondary data, including policy documents, strategic papers, and publications issued by the Palestinian Authority, UN agencies, and non-governmental organizations.

This paper aims to explore the challenges and opportunities facing the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Palestine, with a particular focus on three core objectives:

- To identify the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders involved in the resolution’s implementation;
- To analyze the role of official institutions, civil society, and political parties in advancing the WPSA (Women, Peace, and Security Agenda);
- To provide tangible recommendations for strengthening and operationalizing the resolution within the Palestinian context.

This paper also engages with critical feminist and decolonial perspectives that challenge the limitations of mainstream Women, Peace and Security (WPS) frameworks when applied to contexts of prolonged occupation and settler-colonial violence. While UNSCR 1325 and its accompanying resolutions offer a global normative agenda for gender equality in conflict settings, their application in Palestine is fraught with contradictions. The framework tends to presuppose the existence of a functioning state apparatus and post-conflict environment, thereby failing to address the structural violence of military occupation, apartheid policies, and ongoing settlement expansion. In the Palestinian context, gender-based oppression cannot be disentangled from the broader project of colonization. As such, this paper calls for a reimagining of the WPS agenda—one that is rooted in context-specific struggles for decolonization, social justice, and sovereignty, and that recognizes Palestinian women not only as victims of conflict, but as political agents confronting intersecting systems of patriarchal and colonial domination.

Stakeholder Analysis: .3

The Higher National Committee for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 comprises representatives from relevant ministries, media institutions, and civil society organizations. These include the Office of the President, the Secretary General of the Council of Ministers, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, the Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, the General Union of Palestinian Women, Women Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling (WCLAC), Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development (PWWSD), and the Chairperson of the Gender Advisory Committee in the Security Forces Sector. The committee is chaired by the Ministry of Women's Affairs and includes experts from institutions in the Gaza Strip.

This section presents a detailed analysis of the key stakeholders involved in the implementation of UNSCR 1325—examining their interests, contributions, challenges, and institutional needs.

1. The Palestinian Authority (PA)

The Palestinian Authority (PA) holds a dual interest in implementing the National Action Plan (NAP) for UNSCR 1325. On one hand, it seeks to promote women's rights and gender equality, and on the other, to strengthen its political legitimacy in a fragmented and occupied context. As the governing body in parts of the West Bank, the PA is keen to align with international obligations, including UNSCR 1325, as a mean of asserting its role as a legitimate and responsible authority.

However, its operational capacity is significantly undermined by Israeli control over 60% of the West Bank (Area C), where Palestinian institutions are denied access. This structural limitation is compounded by internal political division between Fateh and Hamas, which has resulted in the effective exclusion of the Gaza Strip from most NAP-related initiatives and planning.

Despite the absence of a coherent national framework and limited political will to dismantle systemic discrimination against Palestinian women, the PA has recorded incremental gains—increasing women's representation in local councils from 12% in 2016 to 20% by 2023. Yet, sustaining and expanding these gains in alignment with both national aspirations and international standards requires a clear political commitment, long-term financial support, and external pressure on Israel to lift restrictions on freedom of movement, which directly obstruct policy implementation and service delivery.

2. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

Civil society institutions—such as Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling (WCLAC), General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW), and Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development (PWWSD)—play a central role in advocating for gender justice and providing protection services for survivors of gender-based violence.

These organizations have developed context-specific, feminist strategies for implementing UNSCR 1325 that reflect the lived realities of Palestinian women. However, they face severe operational barriers, particularly in the Gaza Strip, where Israel's tight blockade and frequent military attacks have made access to over

2.3 million people—including more than one million women and girls—extremely difficult. The shrinking civic space, financial dependency on international aid, and risks of political repression further constrain their ability to scale up impact. CSOs require not only protection and funding but also a platform within the national policy-making space. Their localized knowledge and grassroots connections are essential to ensuring that UNSCR 1325 is not merely symbolic, but a living framework for accountability, protection, and resistance.

3. Palestinian Women as Rights-Holders and Beneficiaries

Palestinian women, who make up approximately 49% of the total population, continue to endure a dual system of oppression—as women in a patriarchal society and as an occupied population under Israeli military control. An estimated 37% of Palestinian women face economic insecurity, largely due to structural unemployment exacerbated by the occupation and ongoing military aggression. Women have borne the brunt of the most recent escalations in violence, experiencing multiple and intersecting forms of abuse—including psychological trauma, displacement, and heightened exposure to gender-based violence. In the Gaza Strip in particular, the lack of privacy in overcrowded shelters has contributed to an alarming rise in incidents of verbal and sexual harassment, including by some service providers themselves. These violations are reportedly increasing, deepening the sense of insecurity among women and girls.

As the aggression continues, Palestinian women's needs have become more urgent and complex—including the demand for safe spaces, economic recovery opportunities, and genuine participation in the management of displacement shelters, humanitarian aid committees, and decision-making processes. Yet, their representation in such structures remains limited or absent—most notably in negotiations related to the Gaza Strip's humanitarian situation and ceasefire discussions.

This systemic exclusion reflects a broader pattern of marginalization, where women's voices are sidelined even as they carry the heaviest burdens of survival, care, and resilience amidst a deepening humanitarian catastrophe.

4. Political Parties: Between Rhetoric and Structural Resistance

In the Palestinian context, political parties—particularly the dominant factions Fateh and Hamas—play a decisive and often contradictory role in either advancing or obstructing the implementation of the National Action Plan (NAP) on UN Security Council Resolution 1325. Their influence stems from deeply entrenched governance structures, ideological priorities, and control over resources and policymaking spaces.

Fateh (Palestinian National Liberation Movement)

As the leading party within the Palestinian Authority (PA), Fateh has offered implicit support for the NAP and has adopted symbolic measures to promote women's political participation. However, the gap between policy declarations and actual implementation remains stark:

- **Quota System:** Fateh has endorsed decisions issued by the Palestinian National and Central Councils in 2015 and 2018 to increase women's representation to 30% across all decision-making bodies. Yet, practical implementation

<https://www.un.org/unispal/document/blockade-of-aid-will-have-far-reaching-consequences-for-women-and-girls-in-gaza-warns-unfpa-arab-states-regional-office/>

[https://www.pCBS.gov.ps/post.aspx?lang=en&ItemID=4706#:~:text=Women%20are%20half%20of%20the,1.13%20million%20in%20Gaza%20Strip\).](https://www.pCBS.gov.ps/post.aspx?lang=en&ItemID=4706#:~:text=Women%20are%20half%20of%20the,1.13%20million%20in%20Gaza%20Strip).)

<https://palestine.actionaid.org/news/2024/actionaid-palestinian-women-face-increased-violence-and-missing-justice>

falls short. In the 2021/2022 local elections, women's candidacy reached approximately 25%, while actual representation, whether through election or acclamation, did not exceed 20.8%.

- Legislative Reform: The party supported amendments to the Penal Code in 2021 to criminalize the so-called "honor crimes."
- Representation within the PLO: Fateh pledged to raise women's share to 30% in all institutions of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), but this remains more of an aspiration than a reality.
- Internal Party Leadership: According to Fateh's 7th General Congress (2016), only one woman was elected to the Central Committee (out of 21 members, i.e., 4.8%), and 11 women to the Revolutionary Council (out of 80 members, i.e., 13.8%), illustrating the enduring marginalization of women in party leadership.

Hamas (Islamic Resistance Movement)

Since the political division in 2007, Hamas has controlled the Gaza Strip independently from the Palestinian Authority, operating within a conservative ideological framework that often clashes with the rights-based principles of UNSCR 1325.

The movement's most recent internal elections (2020) marked a modest shift, with two women appointed to the 16-member Political Bureau—a first in the party's history, amounting to 12.5% representation. Similarly, in its Shura Council, women's representation across the last three cycles reached 13.6% (11 out of 81 members).

Despite this relative progress, women's presence within Hamas structures remains minimal, and the party maintains gender-restrictive policies, such as mobility limitations for women without a male guardian, which contradict the empowerment principles enshrined in UNSCR 1325.

Moreover, Hamas continues to reject initiatives led by the Palestinian Authority, including the National Action Plan, as part of the broader political rift. As a result, the Gaza Strip remains excluded from over 85% of the NAP's programs, including gender-based violence (GBV) shelters, legal reforms, and protection mechanisms.

Other Political Parties: Marginal Gains, Structural Gaps

While some Palestinian political parties have taken incremental steps to include women in leadership structures, most continue to fall significantly short of parity. Internal party elections and congresses reflect persistent gender imbalances, despite long-standing commitments to democratic representation and national liberation principles.

- Arab Liberation Front: The party's most recent congress in 2018 revealed no female representation in the 15-member national leadership. In the Central Committee, only one woman was elected out of 18 members, representing 5.6%—a figure that highlights the continued exclusion of women.
- Palestinian Popular Struggle Front (PPSF): At its June 2021 conference, the Political Bureau included three women out of 18 members (17%), marking the first-ever inclusion of women in this body since the party's founding. The Central Committee witnessed a modest improvement, with 27 women out of 113 members (23.9%), up from 6 out of 43

[https://www.masarat.ps/article/5926/%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%82%D8%A9-%D8%AD%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%A6%D9%82-%D8%A8%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%B7%D9%8A%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%AB%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%87%D8%A7-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D9%85%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%B9-%D8%B5%D9%86%D8%B9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%AD%D8%B2%D8%A7%D8%A8-%D8%AF%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AF%D8%A9-\(2018-2021\)](https://www.masarat.ps/article/5926/%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%82%D8%A9-%D8%AD%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%A6%D9%82-%D8%A8%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%B7%D9%8A%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%AB%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%87%D8%A7-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D9%85%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%B9-%D8%B5%D9%86%D8%B9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%AD%D8%B2%D8%A7%D8%A8-%D8%AF%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AF%D8%A9-(2018-2021))

- (14%) in the previous 2005 conference.
- **Palestinian Democratic Union (FIDA):** The 2019 congress witnessed a decline in women's representation, with 4 women in the 21-member Political Bureau (17%), down from 6 women (28.6%) in the 2011 congress. The Central Committee also witnessed a regression, with 27 women out of 92 members (29%), compared to 30 out of 75 (40%) in 2011.
- **Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP):** In the last national congress held in 2013, women secured 3 seats out of 18 in the Political Bureau (16.7%), and 18 out of 75 in the Central Committee (24%).
- **Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP):** The party's 2024 congress resulted in 22% representation of women in the Political Bureau and 20% in the Central Committee, reflecting gradual but insufficient progress.
- **Palestinian People's Party (PPP):** At its 2008 national conference, 4 women were elected to the 19-member Political Bureau (21%), and 11 women out of 37 members to the Central Committee (29.7%).
- **Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine (PIJ):** A women's affairs division was formally established in 2010. However, the coordinator was a man who also represented the division in the movement's leadership. In the 2019–2020 elections, the structure evolved, and two women (a director and her deputy) were included in the second-tier leadership (High Committee) out of 11 members (18%). Nonetheless, no women serve on the Political Bureau, highlighting the continued exclusion of women at the highest level.
- **Palestinian National Initiative (al-Mubadara):** The 2017 congress resulted in 2 women out of 7 members in the Political Bureau (28.6%), and 2 out of 17 in the Central Committee (11.8%).

5. International Institutions

United Nations agencies have worked to align Palestine's National Action Plan (NAP) with the broader global Women, Peace, and Security Agenda (WPSA). However, they continue to face significant logistical and political obstacles. For instance, UN Women has been denied access to the Gaza Strip since 2023, severely limiting its ability to monitor gender-based violence trends or deliver targeted assistance. Meanwhile, UNDP has prioritized emergency relief over long-term gender equality programming in response to the escalating humanitarian crisis.

International organizations urgently require greater cooperation from the Israeli authorities to access affected areas and implement mandates effectively. In addition, there is a critical need for funding models that are more context-sensitive and conflict-aware. At the heart of the problem lies the double standards exhibited by some international institutions, which have weakened monitoring and accountability mechanisms under UNSCR 1325 in the Palestinian context. As a result, these institutions have largely failed to protect Palestinian women, undermining the core principles of the WPSA .

6. Donor Countries

Donor countries often attempt to balance gender equality goals with the preservation of diplomatic and economic ties to Israel. For example, Sweden pledged €27 million in humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip by 2025, while ~~simultaneously maintaining an arms trade~~ with Israel that reached €2.7 billion

in the same year. This discrepancy starkly undermines the credibility of the WPS framework, as the same donors funding shelters for survivors of gender-based violence are also enabling the destruction of Gaza's civilian infrastructure. Moreover, donor-driven constraints and political conditions have increased, often in an attempt to avoid friction with Israeli authorities. This has resulted in funding cuts and the cancellation of several donor-supported projects in Palestine. Donors must uphold transparency in fund allocation and align funding priorities with local feminist agendas, instead of reinforcing power imbalances.

7. Global Feminist Movements

Global feminist coalitions such as "Feminists for Palestine" and "Jewish Voice for Peace" have leveraged UNSCR 1325 to demand sanctions against Israel and expose the militarization of gendered violence. For instance, the "Stop Arming Israel" campaign in 2023 highlighted that EU arms exports to Israel—worth €400 million that year—have directly fueled gendered violence, particularly during attacks on the Gaza Strip. These efforts reflect a commitment to the "prevention" pillar of UNSCR 1325 by addressing the root causes of violence.

Transnational feminist actors have also collaborated with Palestinian organizations to document and amplify women lived experiences. Campaigns such as "Gaza Under Attack" were launched during the 2023 war to spotlight the disproportionate impact of Israeli aggression on women.

However, pro-Palestinian feminist movements face increasing repression and accusations of antisemitism, especially in Western countries. In 2023, for example, the German government withdrew funding from feminist conferences under the banner "Feminist Perspectives on Palestine", citing claims of anti-Israel bias. These tactics aim to silence feminist resistance rooted in anti-colonial solidarity and obstruct global accountability mechanisms.

Stakeholders	Interest	Challenges	Contribution	Need	Role in implementing UNSCR 1325
Internal Stakeholders					
Palestinian Authority	Implementation of the National Action Plan (NAP) to advance women's rights and fulfill international obligations.	Limited sovereignty under Israeli occupation; internal political divisions (notably between Fatah and Hamas); resource constraints.	Policy formulation, inter-ministerial coordination, and diplomatic engagement to secure international support.	Sustained external support; internal unity; international pressure on Israel to ease movement and access restrictions.	Prevention: Address root causes, such as unemployment (with female unemployment at 37%). Protection: Strengthen gender-based violence legislation; expand access to shelters and safe spaces. Participation: Ensure meaningful inclusion of women in peace negotiations and political decision-making processes. Relief & Recovery: Increase budget allocations for services supporting women survivors of violence.
Civil Society	Advocating for gender justice; protecting survivors of gender-based violence.	The blockade on the Gaza Strip; chronic underfunding; patriarchal and conservative forces promoting incitement and hate speech against women.	Providing legal aid, documenting violations, mobilizing communities, and holding authorities accountable.	Safe operational space; long-term, flexible funding; international advocacy partnerships.	Prevention: Community education on gender-based violence and social norms. Protection: Ensuring safe spaces and shelters for displaced women. Participation: Amplifying grassroots women's voices in policy development. Relief & Recovery: Deploying mobile clinics for mental and physical healthcare, and offering psychosocial, economic, and social reintegration services.
Palestinian Women	Access to protection, economic opportunities, and political representation.	Dual layers of oppression: Israeli occupation and the influence of patriarchal and conservative forces; lack of safe spaces; protracted humanitarian crises.	Engaging in national action programs, advocating for rights, and supporting families in crisis.	Protection from gender-based and militarized violence; equitable access to resources; platforms for empowerment and leadership.	Prevention: Build grassroots feminist coalitions to raise awareness about economic and social vulnerabilities and challenge exclusionary narratives. Protection: Develop community-led mechanisms to monitor and safely report violence, particularly in displacement contexts. Participation: Form representative women's committees in shelters, emergency response structures, and reconstruction efforts; demand inclusion in all levels of decision-making. Relief & Recovery: Advocate for fair and transparent distribution of humanitarian aid; launch women-led initiatives for food security, mental health, and economic recovery.
Political Parties (Hamas)	Consolidating governance and political control in the Gaza Strip.	International isolation, conflicting agendas with the Palestinian Authority; resource scarcity due to the ongoing blockade.	Limited implementation of gender-sensitive policies in the Gaza Strip, such as partial education reforms. Despite structural constraints, some institutional measures have been adopted, though they remain inconsistent with international frameworks on gender equality.	Recognition as a governing authority; access to humanitarian assistance; reconciliation with the Palestinian Authority to enable coherent policy implementation, including within the framework of the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda (WPSA).	Prevention: Align local governance policies with UN Security Council Resolution 1325 by removing movement restrictions and ensuring institutional inclusion of gender perspectives. Protection: Collaborate with civil society organizations to strengthen service provision for survivors of gender-based violence and ensure equitable access to protection mechanisms. Participation: Promote the political inclusion of women within party structures and in broader governance processes, including during reconstruction and post-conflict negotiations. Relief & Recovery: Establish effective partnerships with UN agencies and humanitarian actors to ensure gender-responsive aid delivery and recovery planning, especially for displaced women and girls.
Political Parties (Fatah)	Reinforcing the Palestinian Authority's control over governance and maintaining political legitimacy in the West Bank and internationally.	Limited sovereignty under Israeli occupation; chronic resource constraints; competing governance structures in the Gaza Strip.	Implementation of modest gender reforms, including amendments to the Penal Code and quota systems for women's political participation. However, progress remains uneven and insufficient to meet the demands of women movements and international obligations under UNSCR 1325.	Enhanced international support to sustain governance and ensure the protection of women under occupation and patriarchal constraints; deeper political will to advance gender justice.	Prevention: Reallocate public spending to reflect human security priorities by reducing the disproportionately high security budget (26%) and increasing the women's sector allocation (currently only 0.5%). Protection: Enact and enforce comprehensive legislation criminalizing all forms of gender-based violence, including marital rape, in accordance with international human rights standards. Participation: Institutionalize a mandatory 40% gender quota across leadership structures at national and local levels to ensure women's full and meaningful political inclusion. Relief & Recovery: Increase the share of national budgets dedicated to women's programs, including psychosocial support, economic recovery, and access to justice mechanisms.
External Stakeholders					
International Organizations	Supporting the implementation of the Palestinian National Action Plan (NAP) on UNSCR 1325 and aligning it with global Women, Peace and Security Agenda (WPSA).	Limited access to the Gaza Strip due to Israeli restrictions; shifting donor priorities; pressures to maintain neutrality while operating in an asymmetric context marked by military occupation and systemic discrimination.	Provision of technical expertise, funding, and capacity-building programs—including gender-sensitivity training for civil servants, security actors, and service providers.	Coordinated cooperation from both the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli government; tailored approaches that explicitly address the structural impacts of occupation on women's rights and security.	Protection: Exert diplomatic pressure on Israel to lift access restrictions and allow full humanitarian entry into Gaza, particularly for gender-based violence (GBV) response services. Participation: Invest in leadership development programs for Palestinian women, particularly in the security sector and political institutions, to advance equitable decision-making. Relief & Recovery: Ensure humanitarian aid directed to the Gaza Strip is channeled to women-led initiatives, with accountability mechanisms to monitor gender impact and local ownership.
Donor Countries	Advancing human rights and gender equality while safeguarding diplomatic interests and maintaining strategic alliances in the region.	Navigating political sensitivities, particularly backlash or accusations of bias when Israel is criticized, balancing feminist foreign policy goals with geopolitical constraints.	Financial support to gender-based violence (GBV) shelters and services, public advocacy campaigns, and women's economic empowerment programs; support for civil society initiatives promoting gender justice.	Greater transparency in how funds are utilized; measurable impact on women's lives; closer alignment with local feminist priorities and national policy frameworks.	Prevention: Condition development and humanitarian assistance on the meaningful inclusion of Palestinian women in peace and negotiation processes. Protection: Fund independent forensic documentation of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) as a foundation for international accountability and justice. Participation: Provide sustained support to women's leadership and political participation, especially in conflict-affected and marginalized areas. Relief & Recovery: Move toward multi-year, flexible funding for GBV services, and ensure that implementation of UNSCR 1325 is not undermined by short-term donor cycles or depoliticized programming.
Global Feminist Movements	Advancing global gender justice and strengthening international accountability frameworks for women's rights, particularly in conflict and occupation contexts.	Geopolitical bias—especially the entrenched support for Israel by Western governments—hinders the universality of feminist solidarity; fragmentation among feminist movements weakens collective advocacy.	Strategic legal pressure (e.g., through international criminal proceedings), global awareness campaigns, and transnational feminist organizing that amplifies Palestinian women's voices and demands.	Access to grassroots testimonies from Palestine; enhanced diplomatic leverage to ensure enforcement of international legal frameworks, including UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions.	Prevention: Amplify global awareness of the intersection between militarized violence, occupation, and gender-based oppression through media, advocacy, and academic discourse. Protection: Advocate internationally for the safety, rights, and protection of Palestinian women under occupation. Relief & Recovery: Mobilize global feminist solidarity in humanitarian advocacy to ensure that recovery efforts in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank are feminist-informed, inclusive, and rooted in justice.

4. Reframing UNSCR 1325 in Post-October 7 Palestine

Since its adoption in 2000, United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security has served as a cornerstone reference for feminist and human rights movements in conflict areas, particularly in contexts shaped by occupation and militarized colonialism. However, in the Palestinian context, the implementation of UNSCR 1325 has remained largely symbolic, institutional, and procedural—relegated to the realm of diplomatic discourse rather than acting as a transformative tool for accountability or structural change.

Critically, the resolution has not meaningfully addressed the systemic violence produced by Israeli settler-colonial occupation—the very architecture that perpetuates gendered oppression, displacement, and war crimes against Palestinian women.

In the aftermath of October 7, 2023, the feminist discourse in Palestine has shifted. The central question is no longer how to implement UNSCR 1325, but whether the resolution retains any liberatory potential at all under conditions of international complicity, the normalization of mass atrocities, and the framing of Palestinian women as collateral victims, rather than as deliberate targets of a broader system of annihilation and political erasure.

The genocide in the Gaza Strip has exposed the hollowness of global mechanisms that claim to protect women in conflict. It forces us to revisit a fundamental question: Can UNSCR 1325 still serve as a feminist tool for liberation in Palestine? Or has it been fully emptied of its emancipatory content?

The Practical Exposure of UNSCR 1325's Failure 4.1

At a moment when violations against the bodies of Palestinian women and girls are intensifying, and international human rights discourse fails to hold perpetrators accountable, UN Security Council Resolution 1325 has proven neither sufficient nor effective as a tool for protecting women in armed conflict.

After October 7, it wasn't only the humanitarian infrastructure of the Gaza Strip that was destroyed—it was also the symbolic trust in the resolution itself as a potential framework for justice. This is not a matter of technical failure in implementation, but rather a deep structural failure to align the resolution with the reality of protracted colonial occupation, ongoing genocide, and a context that actively resists conventional legal tools.

In the Palestinian experience, UNSCR 1325 has always collided with the international political-legal deadlock, rooted in the refusal to recognize the Palestinian situation as one of military settler colonialism. While the resolution was adopted locally through a National Action Plan and promoted globally as a testament to Palestine's commitment to governance and gender equality, the ground quite literally collapsed beneath its text.

It was not the war that failed the resolution—it was the technical logic of the resolution itself that unraveled when stripped of its political substance. There was no protection, no meaningful political participation, and no real empowerment.

What was meant to be a liberatory process of localization became a hollow bureaucratic exercise detached from the devastation women face under rubble and siege.

We have seen, with our own eyes, the transformation of UNSCR 1325 from a framework for empowerment and participation into a tool for managing the “remnants of women” post-massacre. We watched international organizations issue generic statements referencing 1325 two weeks after thousands of women had been killed—not to hold Israel accountable, but to call for a “recalibration of discourse,” as if the issue were language, not mass atrocity.

The resolution was intended to guarantee Palestinian women’s participation in negotiations, to protect them from violence, and to ensure accountability for gender-based violations by occupying forces. But its adaptation to the Palestinian context remained superficial -applied within an international framework that continues to frame Palestine as a “humanitarian crisis” rather than a case of settler colonialism.

This is the root of the dilemma: the international system continues to treat Palestinian women as victims of conflict in need of protection, rather than as political actors engaged in a liberation struggle. And so, when the world collapsed after October 7, the tools of UNSCR 1325 failed to activate in their defense. Their experiences were erased, tucked beneath the table of political settlements and “balanced” statements.

It is a painful paradox that the very resolution meant to protect women in conflict repeatedly fails when the victim is Palestinian and the perpetrator enjoys immunity. Women who gave birth under bombardment, buried their husbands with their own hands, fled displacement multiple times, and lost their children—did not see UNSCR 1325 as a shield. To them, it remains a symbolic document that has failed to shift the political equation in any meaningful way.

This is why we do not call for the resolution to simply be “reactivated” in its current form—but for a complete redefinition of what “localization” and “alignment” truly mean in the Palestinian context.

Localization does not mean embedding 1325 into ministerial work plans—it means pulling it out of drawers and asking the hard questions:

- What protection has it offered women under aerial bombardment?
- What role did it play when women’s bodies became military targets?
- And can a resolution design in a complicit international system ever be a tool for liberation under colonial rule?

We are not calling for the abandonment of 1325—but for its radical repurposing. For it to move beyond legalistic rhetoric and become a political platform—a feminist agenda grounded in decolonial resistance and collective liberation.

We suggest that any realignment process must begin with the following urgent questions:

- How do we redefine “protection” in the context of occupation?
- How do we frame gender-based and colonial violence not as parallel issues, but as structurally intertwined?
- How do we reshape the resolution to recognize us not merely as survivors, but as political actors in our own right?

- And how do we evaluate past localization efforts—not by how well they met international indicators, but by whether they transformed lived realities?

4.2 Failures in the Implementation of UNSCR 1325: Between International Paralysis and Local Inertia

In the aftermath of October 7, the failures surrounding the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Palestine could no longer be dismissed as technical gaps or coordination shortcomings. They emerged as symptoms of a dual structure of dysfunction: one international—rooted in the politicization of international law—and the other local, represented by a paralyzed bureaucracy and a feminist discourse increasingly detached from the realities on the ground. In both cases, the result was the same: absence of protection, evasion of accountability, and the collapse of all promises of
 “.“Women, Peace, and Security

First: International Failure – A Resolution Frozen in an Exceptional Context

In the Palestinian context, UNSCR 1325 has never functioned as a comprehensive tool for justice. Rather, it has been reduced to an administrative document, consistently constrained by the logic of "balance", "neutrality", and "engagement with both sides." But the political truth is that what has occurred—and continues to occur—in Gaza is not a "conflict between two parties." It is a military aggression by an occupying colonial power targeting a defenseless civilian population. In this aggression, women were not incidental victims; they were deliberately targeted as bearers of life, not merely as collateral damage. Although the resolution explicitly calls for the protection of women in armed conflict and accountability for crimes committed against them, none of its mechanisms have been meaningfully activated:

- The UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women did not conduct an emergency visit or initiate a field investigation into the testimonies of the thousands of Palestinian women who survived bombardment, or those who were forcibly displaced into overcrowded shelters devoid of basic necessities or safety.
- The UN Commission of Inquiry, despite being established in 2021, failed to prioritize gender-based violence or violence against women in its recent analytical reporting on the war.
- Even official UN statements deliberately omitted any reference to UNSCR

To be honest, 1325 wasn't there for" us during the bombing. No protection committees, no lawyers, not even an international voice speaking up for us. All the trainings we had, all the workshops where we talked about empowerment and protection — none of that stood by us when we were giving birth under fire, or when the children were being displaced from .one school to another We knew how to speak about the resolution, but the resolution didn't know how to reach us. It started to feel like it wasn't written for us or wasn't .meant for our context We need tools that come from our own experience, from our own wounds — not distant texts that only move when ".protocol says so Nawal, 35, feminist activist –

1325 in the context of violations against women in the Gaza Strip, opting instead for vague language around “civilian protection” and “humanitarian suffering.”

This is not merely a technical gap—it is a systemic bias that has excluded Palestinian women from their right to justice, and rendered UNSCR 1325 a muted, symbolic framework. The bodies of women—supposed to be at the center of protection—have been erased from the human rights equation in favor of a “balanced” discourse that equates the occupier with the occupied and replaces accountability with expressions of “concern.”

Second: The Local Failure – Reducing 1325 to Short-Term Programming

At the local level, the tragedy was no less profound. After more than a decade of engaging with UNSCR 1325, the resolution was gradually stripped of its political weight and reduced to a training tool — often limited to awareness-raising workshops and promotional materials. No legal or political framework was built to guarantee institutional protection for women, and the resolution was not embedded in deterrence mechanisms or national emergency response systems. After October 7, it became painfully clear that:

- Women who had received training on the resolution found no institutions to protect them during the aggression.
- Governmental focal points responsible for the WPS agenda were completely absent from the emergency response scene.
- The National Action Plans, despite all the efforts invested in their design, were unable to respond to the real, lived experiences of women under bombardment or in situations of forced displacement.

This disconnect was not accidental. It stemmed from a deeper structural gap between those who produce policies and those who live through the consequences. The resolution was often implemented through the lens of donor priorities — driven by funding cycles rather than political accountability. There was little focus on building genuine protection mechanisms, enforcing accountability, or ensuring that women are meaningfully included in humanitarian and security decision-making spaces.

Moreover, internal fragmentation within the feminist movement, the divide between state institutions and grassroots civil society, and the dominance of a technocratic gender narrative — one that frames gender as a sector rather than a political cause — all contributed to emptying the resolution of its emancipatory potential.

Third: Beyond Failure – The Urgent Need for Structural Accountability

When thousands of women are killed, stripped of their most basic means of safety, and neither international nor local protection mechanisms are activated, what we are witnessing is not merely a failure — but a profound moral and political collapse. One that demands a fundamental rethinking of the system itself.

The issue is not simply that the resolution was silent on the Gaza Strip, but that it was never equipped to speak in the first place. The tools it offers were designed for conventional conflicts, not for colonial contexts where women are bombed under the pretext of “counterterrorism.”

Equally, local structures failed to develop a political understanding of the resolution. Rather than transform it into a tool of resistance, they adapted it into a bureaucratic instrument for institutional survival. In doing so, they betrayed its original promise — not as a checklist for compliance, but as a framework for justice, agency, and collective liberation.

4.3 Monitoring UNSCR 1325: Institutionalizing Colonialism and Systematic Whitewashing of Violence Against Women

4..3.1 First: Indicators Without Memory: A Palestinian Feminist Critique of International Monitoring Systems and the Illusion of Israeli “Progress”

While Palestinian women — particularly in the Gaza Strip — face some of the most egregious collective violations, including mass killings, forced displacement, enforced disappearances, and siege, international monitoring systems linked to UNSCR 1325 continue to rank Israel among the “progressive” states implementing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda (WPSA). This glaring contradiction is not a mere technical flaw in evaluation tools; rather, it exposes a deeper structural crisis in global measurement frameworks that are entirely detached from colonial realities. Far from serving as accountability mechanisms, these tools often function as instruments of political whitewashing for oppressive regimes

1. The WPS Index: When “Peace” Becomes a Contextless Digital Metric

The Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Index — developed by Georgetown University’s Institute for Women, Peace and Security in collaboration with the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) — is one of the most cited global tools used to assess women’s status across different contexts. The Index is built around three pillars: Inclusion, Justice, and Security, and includes indicators such as parliamentary participation, economic empowerment, discriminatory laws, and intimate partner violence.

Despite its apparent statistical rigor, the Index is analytically and politically hollow. It entirely omits measures related to colonial violence, military occupation, and structural racial discrimination, which are at the core of the violence experienced by Palestinian women.

In doing so, it reduces complex political realities into sanitized metrics. It measures “inclusion” without reference to power structures, “security” without identifying the source of threat, and “justice” without naming the victims. The result is a depoliticized tool that erases the very systems that perpetuate violence, while offering states like Israel a pathway to international legitimacy.

2. Israel’s Classification as an “Advanced” WPS State: Whitewashing Through Indicators

The WPS Index consistently ranks Israel among the top-performing states in implementing UNSCR 1325, based on the presence of several formal conditions:

- The existence of a National Action Plan (NAP) for UNSCR 1325.
- High levels of women’s representation in parliament and the military.
- Legal frameworks addressing domestic violence and gender equality.
- Relative freedom in access to education, healthcare, and public services.

However, these metrics fail to account for a fundamental truth: Palestinian women are excluded from — and victimized by — this very system.

The index makes no distinction between “women of the occupying state” and “women under occupation.”

It evaluates Israel as a neutral democratic actor, rather than as a settler-colonial regime, and consequently erases the structural violence endured by Palestinian women.

What the index fails to measure:

- That the same military force celebrated for including women is the very institution bombing Palestinian women and children in the Gaza Strip.
- That Palestinian women are routinely denied access to healthcare — including emergency obstetric care and trauma services — due to Israel’s military checkpoints, blockades, and targeting of infrastructure.
- That the political representation of Israeli women often does not translate into protections for Palestinian women — and, in some cases, is used to legitimize policies of oppression under the rhetoric of “strong women in security.”

In this context, indicators cease to be tools for accountability and become instruments of epistemic distortion— allowing Israel to present itself as a “gender-just” actor while perpetrating acts of mass violence against Palestinian women.

3. Erasure of Palestinian Women from the Global Data Landscape

One of the most disturbing patterns is the systematic exclusion of Palestinian women — including refugees, activists, and human rights defenders — from these international indices.

Their suffering is not measured, their expertise is not acknowledged, and their voices are not recorded.

They are rendered invisible — mere passing “victims in the frame” of temporary reports — while the occupying power enjoys praise and high scores.

This is not just a failure of representation. It is a structural erasure— an institutional act of silencing Palestinian women from global political and statistical recognition. And it reinforces an international narrative that equates occupier with occupied, and normalizes complicity through bureaucratic language.

4. After October 7: The Moral Collapse of International Monitoring Systems

Since the beginning of Israel’s genocidal war on the Gaza Strip following October 7, 2023, more than 10,000 women and girls have been killed, and thousands more subjected to severe and targeted violations.

And yet:

- Not a single international monitoring mechanism has reclassified Israel’s WPS standing.
- There has been no emergency revision of any index or scoring system.
- No tools have been activated to track the gendered impacts of aerial bombardment, forced displacement, or the systematic denial of healthcare and humanitarian aid.

Instead, Israel continues to advance on paper as a “model implementer” of UNSCR 1325 — even as it annihilates the very foundations of women’s peace and security on the ground.

4.3.2 Second: The Epistemology of Indicators: When Measurement Tools Manufacture Reality and Erase Truth

International indicators do not merely generate technical data — they construct political realities. Through these tools, the image of states and societies is shaped, reordered within global hierarchies of power, and embedded in a matrix of standardized norms. Measurement is never neutral; it carries an embedded epistemology — a philosophy of knowledge — that defines what counts as “truth,” who is considered an “agent,” and what is made visible versus what is rendered invisible.

Nowhere is this epistemological distortion more evident than in the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Index, produced by Georgetown University in partnership with the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO). This index exemplifies the most dangerous form of knowledge production — when an occupying power is granted the badge of gender progress. At the same time, the women it oppresses are entirely erased from representation.

The WPS Index assumes that the modern nation-state — sovereign, institutionalized, and bureaucratically organized — is the natural unit of analysis. Israel is thus assessed based on its legal frameworks, parliament, civil institutions, and statistical records — earning high scores accordingly.

Palestine, on the other hand, is not treated as a fully sovereign state. The enduring reality of occupation is not recognized in the index’s methodology, and Palestine’s structural vulnerability is treated as a result of “internal dysfunction,” not as a consequence of systematic dismantling by a colonial military regime.

As a result, Palestinian women are recast — not as victims of a system of domination, but as indicators of local failure. At the same time, Israel is rewarded for its bureaucratic and administrative “efficiency,” with no interrogation of how such effectiveness sustains and perpetuates daily violence against women under its occupation.

These knowledge systems privilege quantifiable indicators — such as women’s parliamentary representation, educational attainment, income, legal protections, and perceptions of safety. But they systematically exclude embodied knowledge: the lived experiences of women enduring war, siege, and colonial violence.

The Palestinian woman who gives birth at a checkpoint, who buries her children under rubble, who shelters in a tent after being displaced from the northern Gaza Strip — she is absent from the index. She is not a “measurable number,” and her reality does not conform to standardized surveys. What cannot be measured is excluded from policy. Thus, the most entrenched forms of violence disappear from texts and maps — even if they are central to women’s lives.

When Israel is ranked as a top performer in “women’s empowerment” — on the basis of education levels or women’s participation in the military — the index is not describing an objective reality; it is constructing an entire political narrative.

That narrative says: “Israel respects women’s rights, is a viable partner for peace, and offers a model worth emulating.”

But this narrative fails to interrogate who these “empowered women” are, or what kind of system they are integrated into. The index counts a female soldier in a West Bank suppression unit as a marker of “gender equality,” while ignoring the fact that she is enacting the very violence that UNSCR 1325 was designed to prevent.

When the situation of women in Palestine is compared to that of women in Sweden, Norway, or Singapore — without accounting for the effects of military domination — Palestine will always appear at the bottom. It is recast as a “backward” society in need of “development,” while the root causes of this condition are erased, including:

- The systematic dismantling of physical and institutional infrastructure.
- The denial of protection, care, and education due to occupation.
- The absence of sovereignty — the very foundation for any gender empowerment architecture.

These index results do not remain confined to academic reports. They are used in international policy decisions, in the design of donor frameworks, in the selection of “eligible” feminist partners, and in determining funding priorities. The index not only grants Israel moral legitimacy, but it also contributes to the marginalization of Palestinian feminist actors — often pressuring them to adopt “neutral” language and frameworks to access funding.

Meanwhile, their Israeli counterparts are given space and resources to promote a version of “women’s empowerment” situated within military and security institutions — turning the very structures of violence into platforms for gender celebration.

5. The Reality of Implementing UNSCR 1325 in Palestine

5.1 Official Institutions

The Ministry of Women’s Affairs is the official body responsible for leading the implementation of the National Action Plan (NAP) on UNSCR 1325 (2017–2025). The Ministry oversees the execution and monitoring of the NAP and coordinates inter-ministerial efforts. As part of its institutional approach, the Ministry has established Gender Units in 12 ministries to integrate gender perspectives into national policies. Additionally, it works in partnership with civil society organizations to advance gender equality and women’s rights.

Despite these efforts, the Ministry faces substantial challenges. Israeli occupation policies continue to restrict its access to 60% of the West Bank (Area C), where the establishment of governmental service centers is prohibited by Israeli authorities. Moreover, the Ministry’s work is hampered by unstable external funding, as less than 1% of the Palestinian Authority’s budget is allocated to issues related to women.

Before the suspension of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) in 2007 due to internal political division, the Council played a central legislative role in driving legal reform. Since then, legislative authority has shifted to the executive branch, with laws enacted through presidential decrees in the West Bank and by the "Reform and Change Bloc"—an entity linked to the dissolved PLC—in the Gaza Strip. However, both frameworks suffer from limited legitimacy. Security institutions, particularly the Civil Police, have taken on responsibilities for the protection of women through specialized units. Notably, Family Protection Units were established in Ramallah and Nablus to respond swiftly to cases of gender-based

violence. Yet, these efforts are hindered by multiple constraints. Israeli authorities prohibit the Palestinian police from operating in Area C, which constitutes 60% of the West Bank. As a result, women residing in these areas are often forced to resort to informal tribal mediation ("urf-based reconciliation") rather than accessing formal justice mechanisms.

Compounding the challenge is the persistence of patriarchal attitudes within the police force itself. A 2022 survey revealed that 40% of police officers believe certain forms of domestic violence are justifiable, reflecting deep-seated cultural norms that undermine institutional responses to violence against women.

Legal Guarantees for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 Criminalizing "Honor Crimes": Prior to 2021, Article 98 of the Jordanian Penal Code—still in effect in the West Bank—allowed for reduced sentences in cases of the so-called "honor crimes," if the perpetrator claimed the act was committed to "restore family honor." In many cases, this resulted

The government has not allocated" dedicated funding for the implementation of UNSCR 1325. Since October 7, only three meetings have been held—despite the fact that meetings were previously conducted more regularly. A concept note was developed to extend the current plan, and it is now being used to draft the third-generation National Action Plan. There is a clear shift in focus toward the occupation and its expansionist policies. However, monitoring mechanisms remain largely inactive—"indicators are still ink on paper
Randa Siniora, Director of the —
Women's Centre for Legal Aid and
(Counselling) (WCLAC)

The current war has exposed the fragility of" the entire protection system. What we are living through now is a genocide. Every day brings new waves of displacement. But what does displacement actually mean? It means packing your entire life into a single suitcase. Women are forced to leave their homes without any of their personal belongings and take shelter in schools—if you can even call them shelters. Are schools truly equipped to receive entire families? For those who can afford it, they find themselves in tented displacement centers, where a tent is just a piece of fabric offering no protection from .the cold of winter or the searing heat of summer In these overcrowded shelters and tents, women face especially harsh conditions—particularly when it comes to shared bathrooms. Women are forced to stand in long lines just to relieve themselves. Many have begun limiting their food and water intake so they don't have to endure that humiliating wait more than once a day. This has already caused serious health consequences. Displacement, for women, means the collapse of
"privacy and dignity
Mirvat Al-Zaqzouq, Gaza —

There has been deliberate stalling“
in passing the Family Protection Law
under the pretext of maintaining social
cohesion and civil harmony—despite
the fact that other contentious laws
have moved forward, even in the face
“of significant public resistance

Rima Kattanah Nazzal —
Member of the General Secretariat,
General Union of Palestinian Women
Coordinator of Civil Coalition for the
Implementation of UNSCR 1325

in lenient penalties, often not exceeding six months in prison.

Following amendments to Article 98, these mitigated provisions were removed. Honor killings are now treated as premeditated murder, with penalties ranging from 10 years to life imprisonment. According to the Women’s Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling (WCLAC), reported honor crimes decreased by 30% between 2021 and 2023. However, enforcement remains uneven—particularly in rural areas—due to

entrenched social norms and limited legal awareness.

Pending Legislation: Key legislation that remains stalled includes the Family Protection Law, first proposed in 2016. This draft law would introduce protective orders to remove abusers from the home, obligate the state to fund shelters and psychosocial support for survivors, and criminalize psychological abuse and economic deprivation.

Another major pending reform is the Personal Status Law, which still contains numerous discriminatory provisions against women. Although a 2019 presidential decree raised the minimum legal age for marriage to 18 in areas under the Palestinian Authority’s jurisdiction, broad exceptions remain, leaving girls vulnerable to early marriage under certain conditions.

Even though core Palestinian legal references—such as the Palestinian Basic Law and the Declaration of Independence—explicitly affirm the principle of equality, and despite Palestine’s accession to multiple international treaties and conventions, national laws remain largely misaligned with both domestic frameworks and international obligations pertaining to women’s rights.

One striking example is the Palestinian Labor Law and its executive regulations, which still impose legal restrictions on women’s employment in certain so-called “hazardous” industries or roles—categories which remain undefined and are left to the discretion of the Minister of Labor. This ambiguity continues to constrain women’s economic participation under the guise of protection.

The Penal Code criminalizes certain forms of unwanted sexual conduct under Article 305, which addresses harassment of women in public spaces. However, the Labor Law does not include any explicit prohibition of workplace harassment. While the 2000 Labor Law formally bans discrimination between men and women in the workplace, it lacks clear provisions addressing sexual harassment or other forms of gender-based violence (GBV) within employment settings—leaving a significant protection gap unaddressed.

Palestine’s 2014 accession to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) obligated the state to undertake legislative reform and eliminate institutional and legal discrimination. This includes

aligning national legislation with the core principles of the Convention and regularly submitting reports to the CEDAW Committee documenting progress and remaining challenges. However, the last report submitted was in 2020. In practice, implementation remains well below expectations—particularly in the area of women’s political participation. Women’s representation in local councils stagnates at around 20%, while ministerial representation remains just 2%, a figure that starkly reflects systemic exclusion.

Palestine’s accession to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) represents a significant legal milestone in pursuing accountability for war crimes and grave violations, including conflict-related sexual violence. Under Articles 7 and 8 of the Statute, sexual violence may be prosecuted as a crime against humanity or a war crime—particularly relevant in the context of the Israeli occupation. A notable development occurred in 2021, when the ICC launched an investigation that included testimonies from over 100 Palestinian women who reported sexual violence at the hands of Israeli forces during the 2014 aggression on Gaza and the "Great March of Return" protests (2018–2019).

However, these efforts face significant geopolitical resistance. Israel, with the backing of its ally the United States, rejects the Court’s jurisdiction. In 2020, the U.S. imposed sanctions on ICC officials to obstruct investigations—demonstrating how the pursuit of international justice for Palestinian women continues to be hindered by global power asymmetries.

National Action Plan

The first Palestinian National Action Plan (NAP) was launched in 2017 as a collaborative effort between the Palestinian government and civil society organizations. It aimed to align domestic efforts with international standards on women, peace, and security. The strategy was grounded in the vision of the General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW) for implementing UNSCR 1325. It was structured around four central pillars, in line with United Nations recommendations:

- **Accountability:** Holding the Israeli occupation accountable for violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, including war crimes and crimes against humanity committed against the Palestinian people.
- **Participation:** Recognizing the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land as the primary root cause of insecurity and rights violations against Palestinian women, particularly through the socio-economic consequences of Israel’s racist policies and its practices on the ground.
- **Protection:** Addressing the multi-layered patterns of violence that threaten Palestinian women’s human security, stemming from the long-standing military occupation, including direct assaults and systemic violations.
- **Prevention:** Developing mechanisms to prevent further violations against Palestinian women, including the establishment of early

warning systems at the international level to detect and respond to threats in a timely and effective manner.

Implementation Focus Areas

The NAP's operational framework was built upon four strategic tracks:

- **Legislative Reform:** Amending national laws to ensure alignment with CEDAW principles, including the proposed Family Protection Law aimed at combating domestic violence.
- **Institutional Capacity:** Establishing gender units within ministries and security agencies to integrate gender perspectives into policies and operations.
- **Community Engagement:** Conducting awareness campaigns to challenge and dismantle harmful gender stereotypes and social norms.
- **International Advocacy:** Documenting and reporting violations committed by the occupation against Palestinian women and submitting them to relevant UN bodies.

Target Groups of the Strategy

The strategic vision of the NAP prioritized women most vulnerable to systemic oppression and violence, including:

- **Women in Jerusalem:** Facing a matrix of discriminatory legal systems, forced displacement, and restrictions on freedom of worship under the Israeli occupation.
- **Women prisoners:** With a focus on monitoring and documenting the conditions of female detainees, who face cultural erasure, medical neglect, and denial of fair trials—especially in light of recent escalations.
- **Women living near the Separation Wall and settlements:** Whose freedom of movement is severely restricted, affecting their access to healthcare, education, and livelihoods.
- **Women in the Gaza Strip:** Subjected to siege, systematic killing, and a campaign of annihilation; their bodies militarized and politicized as a form of collective punishment.
- **Displaced women:** Victims of forced displacement aimed at ethnic cleansing and demographic engineering, particularly amid the recent genocidal assault on Gaza.
- **Palestinian women displaced to Egypt:** Recently, growing attention has been paid to women forcibly displaced into Egypt, including those enduring loss, statelessness, and denial of basic rights in exile.

The Role of the Ministry of Women's Affairs in Implementing and Monitoring the National Action Plan (NAP)

The Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) is the primary governmental body responsible for the implementation and oversight of Palestine's National Action Plan (NAP) for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS). Its role is central in coordinating efforts among national and international stakeholders, ensuring alignment with WPS priorities, and localizing

global standards to meet the specific needs of Palestinian women.

- The Ministry's core responsibilities include:
- Inter-Agency Coordination: Leading partnerships with civil society organizations, liaising with United Nations agencies, and fostering collaborative efforts with relevant government ministries and institutions.
- Policy Development and Review: Drafting the NAP, initiating revisions to align with evolving realities, and reviewing legislation to ensure consistency with international human rights and gender equality standards.
- Program Implementation: Rolling out capacity-building initiatives and protection programs, including support for the establishment of shelters for survivors of gender-based violence, particularly in marginalized areas.
- Promoting Political Participation: Convening community dialogues with political parties to advocate for the nomination and inclusion of women in political decision-making processes.
- Monitoring and Evaluation: Establishing performance indicators, tracking progress, and producing periodic reports to assess the implementation of the NAP.

Despite these institutional mandates, the monitoring and implementation process suffers from notable weaknesses, especially due to the absence of an effective institutional mechanism, such as the National Observatory on Social and Gender-Based Violence. Originally envisioned as a central tool for data collection and violation tracking, the observatory remains inactive, undermining efforts to ensure accountability,

The failure to launch the observatory" is inexplicable. The ministry claims the reason is a lack of funding, but immediate action is needed to resume monitoring the National Action Plan .and activate the observatory Initially, we envisioned the monitoring process to rely on collecting sectoral data based on clearly defined indicators. However, we reached the conclusion that much of this data is already being produced by specialized institutions such as the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. Therefore, we shifted our focus toward compiling comprehensive narratives. These narratives are essential, not only for documenting violations, but for understanding their root causes and ".long-term impacts

,Rima Nazzal —
Member of the General Secretariat
of the General Union of Palestinian
(Women (GUPW
and Coordinator of the Civil Coalition
for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325

Incidents of sexual and physical" violence have dramatically increased under the current conditions, as reported by many women. But the situation is so dire that we are unable to intervene or offer support — our capacity to stand with women is severely restricted. The compounded violations of women's rights during this assault are beyond description. Women are being subjected to harassment, violence, denial of aid, and unbearable burdens of responsibility amid unlivable conditions. What we are witnessing now — we have neither seen nor heard .of anything like it before Official institutions are completely incapable of providing support, and civil society is powerless in the face of ".this crisis

Mervat Al-Zaqzuq, Gaza —

transparency, and data-driven policymaking.

Role of Official Institutions in Implementing UNSCR 1325

The near-total collapse of human security in the Gaza Strip, compounded by the widespread destruction of essential infrastructure — including hospitals, government institutions, and public services — and the tightening of Israeli restrictions on the West Bank, has created a context of fragmentation in which survival has overtaken all other priorities. Despite these dire conditions, some official institutions have attempted to deliver protection and relief services and implement elements of UNSCR 1325.

Relief Efforts

According to testimonies from women in Gaza, the Ministry of Social Development established temporary shelters in schools and public facilities, offering limited food support in coordination with UNRWA and the Palestinian Red Crescent. However, relief programs largely failed to prioritize the most vulnerable groups — including widows, survivors of sexual violence, and pregnant women.

"The cases we're seeing are complex — we never studied them in books, and we've never encountered anything like them before."
— Psychologist from Gaza

Psychosocial support was notably absent from government relief plans. In response, a number of civil society organizations — such as the Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development and the Women's Affairs Center — stepped in to provide what limited mental health services they could under the circumstances.

The Ministry of Health attempted to deliver basic medical services for women, particularly in cases of emergency childbirth. Yet these efforts were largely untenable due to the ongoing destruction of primary healthcare facilities and the severe shortage of essential supplies for women's health — including contraceptives, sanitary products, medications, and hygiene materials.

Following the events of October 7, the Palestinian Council of Ministers established a Joint Emergency Operations Room to coordinate immediate interventions in the Gaza Strip. This coordination mechanism brought together most ministries, national bodies, and select international institutions. Humanitarian aid was routed primarily through the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS), the officially mandated entity to receive international assistance via the Rafah crossing.

Under this mechanism, the Ministry of Social Development set the priorities for aid distribution, with the PRCS overseeing the logistics and mobilizing a vast volunteer network of thousands of youths and women. The efforts focused particularly on the most severely affected areas, such as the Shuja'iyya neighborhood.

Beyond its role in aid distribution, the PRCS also undertakes documentation of violations committed by Israeli forces against civilians—men and women alike—including acts of sexual violence. These documented cases are submitted to international forums as part of broader accountability efforts.

Protection

The Ministry of Women's Affairs issued statements and memos condemning the Israeli occupation's violations against Palestinian women, including the deliberate targeting of displaced and injured women. However, the Ministry was unable to establish any effective mechanisms for immediate protection or support safe hotlines for women in areas under bombardment.

Women's protection units were not effectively activated during the crisis, largely due to the collapse of the protection system in Gaza and movement restrictions in the West Bank. This severely undermined direct field-level monitoring of cases of forced displacement, violations, arrests, enforced disappearances, and sexual violence against detained women.

In major displacement sites—such as UNRWA schools—women were subjected to both physical and sexual violence in the absence of any institutional response to document or address these abuses.

"Women were expected to be included in crisis management, but they were completely absent from emergency and decision-making committees. If women had been fairly represented in these emergency structures, the response would have been far more gender-sensitive. Women understand the specific needs of women better than men do.

There was also a lack of coordination between official bodies, civil society organizations, and international agencies, which created chaos in the distribution process. Some organizations had access to significantly more resources than others—resulting in some individuals receiving aid from multiple sources, while others received nothing at all. This led to widespread disorder in relief and recovery efforts."

— Mervat Al-Zaqzuq, Gaza

Implementing UNSCR 1325 Under Occupation: The Failure to Hold Israel Accountable for Gendered War Crimes

Despite public commitments to implementing UNSCR 1325, particularly in the aftermath of escalating Israeli aggression, the Palestinian official response to crimes committed against women remains largely symbolic and politically rhetorical, falling short of meaningful legal action.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates has submitted files to the United Nations and called for the activation of international protection mechanisms. However, these efforts have largely remained within the realm of diplomatic discourse, press statements, and political positioning—without being translated into binding legal procedures or sustained international advocacy strategies aimed at accountability.

Similarly, the Ministry of Justice has compiled preliminary files documenting violations committed by the Israeli occupying forces, including those against women. Yet, these files have not been developed into legal cases supported by survivor testimonies, nor have they included comprehensive documentation of gender-based violence, including rape, sexual torture, and the targeting of women in displacement shelters. To date, no specialized legal unit exists within the government to pursue accountability for war crimes and crimes against humanity from a gender perspective.

This systemic gap reflects a broader institutional failure to embed gender-responsive accountability mechanisms in national responses to occupation-related violations. The absence of survivor-centered legal strategies and the lack of integration between ministries, legal institutions, and civil society actors have significantly weakened Palestine's capacity to utilize UNSCR 1325 as a tool for justice. In practice, the resolution has not yet functioned as a framework for prosecuting gendered war crimes or advancing reparations for Palestinian women.

Prevention

The Palestinian National Strategy for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 outlined several key objectives under the prevention pillar. These included strengthening the legal framework by aligning national laws with international standards for the protection of women and girls, as well as the development of a National Referral System for survivors of gender-based violence. This referral system aimed to coordinate services across the health, social, and security sectors to ensure comprehensive support for survivors.

Additionally, awareness-raising and training programs were implemented for members of the security, judicial, and health sectors, focusing on issues related to gender-based violence and women's rights. The formation of gender units within ministries was also intended to support this preventive approach.

"Gender units exist only on paper. Their transformative or emancipatory role is virtually nonexistent. At best, they carry out minor procedural tasks within ministries but have no real impact on the services these ministries deliver. To make matters worse, not a single budget line is allocated to support their work."

– Rima Kittaneh Nazzal, Member of the General Secretariat of the General Union of Palestinian Women and Coordinator of the Civil Coalition for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325

However, despite these efforts, the impact of these units remains limited. They are often under-resourced and lack the political influence needed to drive meaningful transformation. With no dedicated budget, these units struggle to fulfill their intended role as agents of change and enlightenment, and instead remain largely symbolic structures unable to influence the services provided by ministries substantively.

The Official Discourse on the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda

The official Palestinian discourse on the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda reveals a complex interplay between fragmented internal realities—namely, the political and geographic division between the West Bank and Gaza—and the external pressures imposed by Israeli occupation and international legal obligations. This discourse varies between domestic governmental rhetoric and international representations, often resulting in inconsistencies between stated commitments and actual implementation.

At the core of this official narrative, the Palestinian woman is depicted as a symbol of "resistance and steadfastness," with her participation in the struggle against occupation framed as a form of empowerment. This narrative is evident in several official statements, including that of former Minister of Women's Affairs Amal

[\[https://wafa.ps/Pages/Details/35126\]](https://wafa.ps/Pages/Details/35126)

Hamad, who referred to Palestinian women as “guardians of national identity.” The Palestinian Authority (PA) formally adopts a rights-based discourse aligned with international frameworks such as United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). In the second National Action Plan (NAP) for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 (2020–2024), the PA identifies the Israeli occupation as the primary barrier to women's empowerment, stressing the need to include women in future peace negotiations—affirming that gender justice is inseparable from broader social justice. However, in practice, women have remained completely absent from all formal negotiations since the Oslo Accords and are still excluded—or symbolically included at best—in reconciliation talks aimed at ending the political split.

In contrast, the Hamas-led government in Gaza employs a religious-nationalist discourse that links women's empowerment to “resistance and resilience,” while simultaneously imposing significant restrictions on individual freedoms under the pretext of preserving cultural and religious identity. For instance, on International Women's Day in 2023, Hamas spokesperson Abdel Latif al-Qanou' described women in Gaza as “mothers and fighters who carry the message of resistance through raising the next generation.” Despite such rhetoric, the humanitarian consequences of the blockade have led to a sharp rise in child marriage—now reaching 35%—and Hamas continues to restrict the work of independent feminist organizations, while promoting affiliated women's groups focused more on ideological messaging than rights-based advocacy.

The PA also utilizes international platforms to spotlight Israeli violations against Palestinian women. During a 2023 Security Council session, Palestine's Permanent Representative to the UN, Riyad Mansour, accused Israel of violating UNSCR 1325 daily through the arrest and torture of women detainees, citing the case of Israa Jaabis, who was subjected to sexual harassment in detention. This statement referenced the 2022 Human Rights Watch report documenting 15 cases of sexual violence against Palestinian women by Israeli forces.

In leveraging international mechanisms, the PA has sought to hold Israel accountable under instruments such as UNSCR 1325 and CEDAW. Palestine acceded to CEDAW in April 2014 without reservations and submitted its initial report to the CEDAW Committee in July 2018, during the Committee's 70th session in Geneva. However, this remains the only voluntary report submitted to date, raising concerns about the consistency and sustainability of national efforts to align domestic frameworks with international gender equality obligations.

Table 2: Discrepancy Between Official Discourse and Ground Realities

Dimension	Official Discourse	Field Reality (Based on Independent Reports)
Political Participation	Women are represented "in all institutions at a rate of 30%" (as stated in the Palestinian National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325)	In reality, women's participation in decision-making positions remains limited and disproportionate compared to men. During the 2021–2022 local elections, only 21% of elected or appointed representatives were women, compared to 79% men. As of 2021, women held approximately 23% of seats in the Palestinian Central Council, 19% in the Palestinian National Council, and only 12% of cabinet positions. Just one woman serves as a governor out of 15 nationwide. Only 1% of heads of local councils are women. In leadership roles within chambers of commerce, industry, and agriculture, women's representation is also just 1%. Among judges, women constitute around 19%, and they account for 18% of public prosecutors.
Protection from Violence	Development of shelters for "survivors" (Government Report, 2022)	All protection centers in Gaza have been destroyed
Criminal Justice	Prosecution of perpetrators "of sexual violence" (Family Protection Law, 2021)	No available data on sexual violence cases reaching the courts

The official Palestinian discourse on women's political participation frequently adopts a rhetorically supportive tone, echoing phrases such as "empowering women in decision-making positions," and "increasing women's representation in public life," or even "affirming women's roles in peace and security." However, a critical examination reveals that this discourse remains largely symbolic and detached from real structural commitment.

Women are often portrayed as passive recipients of empowerment rather than as active political agents shaping policy and decision-making. The discourse consistently lacks reference to measurable indicators—such as the proportion of women in cabinet formations, negotiation delegations, or emergency committees. Additionally, it fails to acknowledge the realities and needs of marginalized groups, including rural women, women with disabilities, and refugee women.

The characteristics of this discourse can be summarized as follows:

Table 3: Palestinian discourse on women’s political participation

Dimension	Evaluation
Rhetorical, symbolic, and non-binding	Rhetorical, symbolic, and non-binding
Normative Framework	Occasionally references CEDAW and UNSCR 1325, but lacks practical implementation
Main Actors	Ministry of Women’s Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Prime Minister’s Office (occasionally)
Crisis-Responsive Rhetoric	Nearly absent; no mention of women’s participation in post-October 7th crisis management or decision-making

This reveals a discursive gap between official commitments and lived realities. Phrases like “We value the role of women” are routinely repeated without any accompanying mechanisms for political empowerment. At times, gender-sensitive language is employed as a form of international diplomacy, aimed at securing donor confidence or meeting global expectations, rather than driving genuine political transformation.

Following the events of October 7th, no substantive women’s leadership committees were established, nor were women included in key negotiation files, emergency governance structures, or post-conflict reconstruction plans. Across most official government statements concerning the war, women’s political voices were conspicuously absent, aside from limited inclusion via the Ministry of Women’s Affairs or civil society advocacy.

Ultimately, the discourse surrounding women’s political participation in Palestine remains symbolic and disconnected from practice. There is currently no institutionalized political architecture that meaningfully integrates women into decision-making during crises or within strategic policy frameworks. The result is a form of discursive tokenism that obscures, rather than addresses, the systemic exclusion of women from the political sphere.

In the realm of protection, the prevailing official Palestinian discourse acknowledges the existence of violence but remains narrowly framed. Common phrases include “We condemn the crimes of the occupation against women,” and “We are committed to combating domestic violence,” or even “We protect abused women through our social and legal programs.” Yet this language tends to reduce the concept of violence to political violence perpetrated by the occupation, while consistently neglecting issues of domestic and sexual violence, especially in emergency and displacement contexts.

The official rhetoric often uses evasive or sanitized language when addressing sexual violence or violations occurring in displacement shelters, avoiding direct

terminology or acknowledgment of such incidents. Furthermore, it fails to establish clear linkages between violence and the legal or preventive protection systems. The characteristics of this discourse can be summarized as follows:

Table 4: Palestinian discourse on Palestinian women's protection

Dimension	Evaluation
General Nature	Defensive, limited in scope, repetitive
Normative Framework	Occasionally refers to the Basic Law; rarely cites CEDAW
Main Actors	Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Women's Affairs, Civil Police
Rhetoric Post October 7	Focused solely on occupation-related violence; failed to document or address internal violence during displacement and crisis

This reflects a lack of a comprehensive protection approach, one that should include shelters, legal safeguards, psychological support, and emergency response mechanisms. Since October 7th, the dominant narrative has been overtaken by a nationalist, resistance-oriented tone, overshadowing gender-based rights discourse. As a result, gender protections have been politicized rather than expanded. No official statement has explicitly condemned sexual harassment, abuse within shelters, or the hardships faced by women detainees. The failure to acknowledge or act on these violations not only undermines the credibility of official commitments to protection but also erases the lived experiences of women navigating the compounded trauma of war, displacement, and systemic neglect. The prevailing official discourse around criminal justice for women remains largely superficial and disconnected from real structural reform. Common statements such as “We hold perpetrators accountable under the law”, “Our penal code criminalizes violence”, or “We are aligning national laws with international standards” project an image of political will, yet offer no substantive evidence of implementation or results. These declarations are rarely accompanied by hard data—such as rates of investigation, prosecution, conviction, or women’s access to legal remedies. Critically, there is no official discourse that explicitly embraces transitional justice, reparations, or the right to redress for women survivors of violence—particularly under occupation. The concept of gender-sensitive justice, rooted in the lived realities of Palestinian women, remains absent from legal and institutional frameworks.

"In Gaza, even reconstruction fails to recognize women’s right to property. In previous reconstruction efforts, women were systematically excluded from the right to register rebuilt homes in their names. No one acknowledges a woman’s ownership of a house; if her husband is deceased, the property is often claimed by his family, leaving her homeless. While everyone is preoccupied with who will govern the day after, no one is asking how women will reclaim their right to housing, security, and dignity."
— Mervat Al-Zaqzouq, Gaza

مشاركة النساء في صنع القرار، 2020، 25% مقابل 21% للرجال. <https://info.wafa.ps/pages/details/29807#:~:text=2079%25%20مقابل%2021%25%20للرجال>

Table 5: Official Discourse on Criminal Justice for Women

Dimension	Evaluation
General Nature	Defensive, institutional, focused on formal structures rather than lived experiences
Legal Reference	Primarily local law; rarely anchored in UNSCR 1325 or CEDAW
Key Actors	Ministry of Justice, Public Prosecution, Police
Post-crisis Positioning	Extremely weak; no engagement with issues of impunity or access to redress mechanisms for women

In practice, no coherent state-led strategy has emerged to address gender-based crimes in the context of armed conflict. No official body has issued a legal or human rights file dedicated to documenting the experiences of Palestinian women subjected to bombing, forced displacement, arrest, or sexual violence during war. Despite mounting evidence of sexual harassment and torture during detention and displacement, these violations are excluded from national legal narratives. The failure to frame sexual violence as a weapon of war—and to integrate such framing into international justice mechanisms—reveals a deep institutional and political void. The Palestinian official discourse on criminal justice remains shallow, ungendered, and devoid of any serious engagement with accountability frameworks under UNSCR 1325. It also lacks a visionary approach to building legal protections for women through existing judicial structures. What emerges is a hollow rhetoric of legality that bypasses the real demands of justice for Palestinian women.

Structural Gaps and Implementation Challenges

The implementation of Palestine’s National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace, and Security faces deep, multi-layered structural challenges. The Israeli occupation continues to obstruct institutional development and service delivery, particularly in Gaza, where the ongoing blockade severely limits access to resources, movement, and humanitarian aid. Political fragmentation between Fateh and Hamas further undermines governance coherence and excludes Gaza from many NAP-related initiatives. Fluctuating donor support weakens the capacity of government bodies to sustain services related to protection, prevention, and relief.

In particular, official institutions face the following critical gaps:

- **Absence of Gender-Responsive Crisis Planning:** There is no pre-established, gender-sensitive emergency response framework. This has resulted in fragmented and ad-hoc reactions to mass displacement and bombardments, particularly after the events of October 7.
- **Weak and Unequal Partnerships with Civil Society:** Instead of empowering experienced civil society organizations—particularly those specializing in women’s protection—some government bodies sought to centralize and

monopolize the response, limiting coordination and reducing effectiveness.

- **Security-Centric Over Human-Centered Approach:** In the face of ongoing field-level security threats, the state's response has prioritized security objectives over humanitarian needs, especially those specific to women and girls.
- **Politicization of Rights-Based Work:** While the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Women's Affairs have issued statements condemning Israel's crimes, their engagement with international WPS mechanisms (such as CEDAW Committees or the UN's 1325 Working Group) has remained superficial and reactive, rather than strategic and systemic.
- **The Influence of Patriarchal and Conservative Forces:** Persistent patriarchal and conservative discourses continue to undermine gender equality efforts, often weaponizing hate speech and inciting backlash against women's rights defenders.

Together, these challenges reveal not only operational weaknesses, but a deeper structural crisis—one that necessitates a shift from symbolic commitments to transformative, rights-based, and gender-responsive governance rooted in accountability and justice.

5.2 Civil Society Role

Distribution and Role of Civil Society Institutions in Implementing the NAP

Palestinian civil society organizations (CSOs) are essential partners in the implementation of the National Action Plan (NAP) for the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda and UN Security Council Resolution 1325. These institutions are geographically and thematically dispersed to address the diverse needs of women in a context shaped by military occupation and internal political fragmentation. Their distribution and focus areas vary between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, with particular attention to regions most affected by compounded violence.

In the West Bank, CSOs are primarily concentrated in major urban centers such as Ramallah, Nablus, and Hebron, where they operate on two main fronts: political advocacy and direct service provision. For instance, the Women's Centre for Legal Aid

and Counselling (WCLAC), based in Ramallah, documents violations committed by the Israeli occupation—including arbitrary arrests and land confiscations—while also providing legal and psychosocial support to survivors of gender-based violence.

In Gaza, where the blockade has deepened humanitarian crises, CSO efforts are more heavily oriented toward emergency relief and trauma response. Organizations such as the Palestinian Red Crescent manage the distribution of food and medical supplies through networks of trained local volunteers, while grassroots associations like War Child operate mobile clinics to offer psychosocial support to women and children affected by recurrent military assaults.

In East Jerusalem and Area C—where Palestinian presence is under constant threat of displacement or criminalization—smaller field-based organizations work under precarious conditions to document settler violence against women and to provide clandestine medical aid, often through informal networks.

Beyond service delivery, civil society institutions play a pivotal role in advocacy and accountability. Many lead national campaigns to ensure the inclusion of women in reconciliation and unity negotiations, which remain largely male-dominated. These organizations also produce critical evidence-based reports on the gendered impacts of the occupation, leveraging them as advocacy tools in international forums.

Capacity-building is another central pillar of civil society engagement. Initiatives such as the “Women as Leaders” project—implemented in partnership with UNDP—have trained hundreds of Palestinian women in leadership, negotiation,

“Civil society—not the state—is the one actually implementing UNSCR 1325. I would argue that at least 75% of the National Action Plan is being carried out by women's organizations, whether through advocacy at the Security Council, engagement in the annual WPS Week, submitting shadow reports to CEDAW, or coordinating with UN investigative committees. Since October 7, our main focus has been documenting Israeli violations against Palestinian women and demanding accountability.”

— Amal Khreisheh, Director-General-Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development

and mediation skills to enable their effective participation in local conflict resolution processes and decision-making spaces.

The Role of Civil Society in Advancing the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda Globally

Palestinian feminist civil society organizations actively engage with the United Nations Human Rights Council, whether through direct participation in its sessions or by submitting reports and statements documenting the human rights violations faced by Palestinian women under occupation. These organizations highlight the intersection between the feminist and national struggles, particularly in areas such as gender-based violence in the context of occupation, arbitrary detention, restrictions on freedom of movement, and the impact of siege and military aggression on women and children. Their advocacy focuses on the dual systems of oppression faced by women—both the Israeli occupation and patriarchal societal norms. Issues raised include the targeting

of female activists, the use of administrative detention against women, and the compounded discrimination women face in marginalized areas. They also draw attention to women's rights in humanitarian contexts, such as the lack of access to healthcare due to military checkpoints.

Notably, during the 69th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69), the Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling (WCLAC) and the Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development participated in an open meeting with UN Secretary-General António Guterres. Civil society representatives expressed their concerns regarding the need to revitalize CSW and ensure a more inclusive process that allows for greater civil society engagement in direct negotiations.

Similarly, on the sidelines of the 56th session of the Human Rights Council, WCLAC held a side event on Friday, June 2, addressing sexual violence committed against Palestinian women by Israeli occupation forces in both Gaza and the West Bank. The event featured the participation of the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, Reem Alsalem, and the Community Action Center at Al-Quds University.

"The feminist movement participated in international conferences with a unified message that consistently linked Palestinian women's liberation to national liberation and the dismantling of settler colonialism, calling for the application of international humanitarian law to guarantee the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and the return of refugees. This vision intersects with the internal struggle against patriarchal structures and institutions that continue to reproduce discrimination through legal frameworks, legislative gaps, and entrenched social practices."

— Amal Khreisheh
Director-General, Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development

Participation of Palestinian Feminist Institutions in the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and CEDAW Mechanisms

The participation of Palestinian feminist organizations in United Nations mechanisms—particularly the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)—is a core component of a strategic feminist struggle that seeks to document Israeli occupation violations against women and to link gender justice with the broader national liberation agenda.

In relation to the CSW, feminist organizations engage through the following mechanisms:

1. **Submission of Parallel Reports:** Organizations such as the General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW), the Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling (WCLAC), and the Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development submit detailed reports during annual CSW sessions. These reports highlight:
 - The impact of military checkpoints and the occupation on women's access to healthcare and education.
 - The rise in gender-based violence in the context of armed conflict, including settler violence and arbitrary detention.
2. **Organization of Side Events:** In partnership with international networks such as the International Women's Alliance, Palestinian organizations hold events that address:
 - The relationship between settler-colonial violence and economic insecurity for women.
 - The effects of forced displacement on family stability in areas threatened by settlement expansion, such as the Jordan Valley and East Jerusalem.
3. **Advocacy through Alliances:** Joint statements are issued with international human rights organizations, calling for the inclusion of occupation-related violations in the global women's rights agenda, particularly under UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security.

These efforts have contributed to the inclusion of Palestinian women's experiences in UN reports—such as the 2023 report of the UN Secretary-General on Women in Armed Conflict—and fostered solidarity with global feminist movements, including Palestinian membership in the UN Women's Peace and Security Network.

As for engagement with the CEDAW framework, this has included:

4. **Shadow Reports:** Following Palestine's accession to the CEDAW Convention in 2014, feminist organizations submitted parallel reports assessing the State's compliance, with a focus on:

- Gaps in national legislation, including the absence of a definition of discrimination and the failure to explicitly criminalize so-called "honor crimes."
 - The impact of occupation on the Palestinian Authority's ability to implement the convention, such as restrictions on women activists' mobility and access to judicial services.
 - The intersection of occupation and systemic discrimination, documenting how Israeli policies (e.g., home demolitions, land confiscation) exacerbate social discrimination against women, particularly in rural and marginalized areas.
 - The need to publish the full CEDAW text in the Palestinian Official Gazette.
5. Follow-Up on International Recommendations: Feminist institutions use recommendations issued by the CEDAW Committee (such as Recommendation No. 40/2018) to advocate for international monitoring of Israeli violations under the Fourth Geneva Convention.

These efforts have yielded tangible outcomes: in 2020, the CEDAW Committee issued recommendations to Israel urging an end to violations against Palestinian women, including administrative detention of girls. Additionally, they pressured the Palestinian Authority to reform policies—such as raising the legal age of marriage to 18 in proposed legislation.

Despite these gains, feminist advocacy faces multiple challenges, both external and internal. Israeli-imposed restrictions on movement—particularly the denial of exit permits for Gaza-based activists—impede access to international platforms, as do visa obstacles to countries hosting UN events, such as the United States. The political context also poses serious barriers, especially Israel's efforts to delegitimize Palestinian feminist discourse by accusing organizations of "politicizing" women's rights. Furthermore, the lack of international consensus in classifying occupation as a primary barrier to Palestinian women's rights weakens advocacy efforts.

Conditional donor funding and limited resources also threaten the sustainability of these movements, especially when donors require depoliticization of feminist work, undermining the Palestinian narrative that fundamentally links gender-based oppression with settler-colonial occupation.

The Role of Civil Society in Advancing the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 and the Women, Peace and Security Agenda

Capacity Building and Women's Empowerment: Palestinian civil society organizations play a central role in enhancing women's leadership and participation in peace and security through targeted training programs. According to the 2024 report by the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF), more than 8,765 Palestinian women across the West Bank and Gaza Strip have been trained in leadership, negotiation, and community conflict resolution, with a strong focus on rural and marginalized areas.

Enabling Environment and Legal Reform: Civil society organizations also work to

foster an enabling environment for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 by advocating for legislative reform and raising public awareness. The 2023 report by the Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling (WCLAC) highlights that sustained advocacy campaigns have led to partial amendments to the Palestinian Penal Code to criminalize domestic violence, although the reforms remain misaligned with the standards of the CEDAW Convention. At the same time, these efforts continue to face deep-rooted societal resistance. A 2022 field study conducted by Al-Haq revealed that 55% of women in rural areas reported that their families opposed their participation in community-based peace activities due to "traditional norms."

Participation in National Policy Formulation: In 2021, the Palestinian government launched the "National Action Plan for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 (2021–2024)," in partnership with 40 civil society organizations. The plan aims to increase women's representation in peace and security decision-making bodies to 30%, with an emphasis on mainstreaming gender in national security strategies. The plan was largely shaped by the General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW), which serves as an umbrella body for a coalition of Palestinian civil society organizations. This coalition is currently developing a new strategic vision to guide the next phase of national planning.

"Civil society contributes through organizing workshops, awareness campaigns against violence—particularly in displacement shelters—delivering urgent aid such as food parcels, clothing, dignity kits, and providing essential health and psychosocial services (multi-sectoral support).

Yet despite all these interventions, we continue to see a lack of women's representation. Even when seeking women leaders, political parties claim there are no qualified women to participate. When radio stations request female speakers, it's always the same voices—as if there are no active women in Gaza. Everyone acts as though the pool of qualified women is extremely limited—if they consider them qualified at all."

— Mervat Al-Zaqzouq / Gaza

"UNSCR 1325 has failed to protect Palestinian women on all fronts. The Israeli occupation bears direct responsibility for this failure, while the Security Council remains incapable and unwilling to enforce its own resolutions. As for civil society, its engagement is largely reactive and seasonal, lacking long-term strategic direction."

— Rima Nazzal

Member of the General Secretariat, General Union of Palestinian Women Coordinator of the Civil Coalition for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325

The draft vision reads as follows:

"To ensure the protection of Palestinian women and girls wherever they reside—within historic Palestine and in the diaspora—while advancing accountability for the Israeli occupation's continuous crimes, including genocide, apartheid, and Judaization policies. The coalition calls on the international community to uphold and implement international humanitarian law and international human rights law across all Palestinian territories, and to strengthen global grassroots solidarity with the Palestinian people's just struggle. The vision also aims to empower Palestinian women to participate equally and meaningfully in peacebuilding, reconstruction, reconciliation, relief, and transitional justice efforts, while ensuring that women's needs and priorities are fully integrated into these processes."

Documentation of Violations Against Women by the Occupation: Palestinian civil society organizations—including the Women’s Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling (WCLAC) and the Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development (PWWSD)—have played a critical role in documenting violations committed against women by Israeli occupation forces. According to the 2023 report by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 67% of Palestinian women in East Jerusalem and Area C experienced physical or psychological violence by Israeli soldiers or settlers in 2022 (OCHA, 2023, para. 29). B’Tselem, the Israeli human rights organization, reported in its 2023 annual review that 45 Palestinian women were detained without trial under “administrative detention,” highlighting that “this practice serves as a tool of collective punishment that exacerbates the suffering of Palestinian families” (B’Tselem, 2023, p. 8).

Building International Alliances: Palestinian civil society actively forges international alliances to promote the Women, Peace, and Security agenda. For example, the Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development leads the implementation of a regional program on WPS across four countries—Palestine, Iraq, Jordan, and Lebanon—in collaboration with a coalition of five organizations: the Euro-Mediterranean Women’s Initiative (EFI), the Women Empowerment Organization (WEO) in Iraq, the Arab Women Organization (AWO) in Jordan, and Najdeh Association (AN) in Lebanon. This strategic partnership stems from PWWSD’s active membership in EFI and reflects a regional feminist solidarity aimed at embedding WPS principles into both national and international advocacy frameworks.

document or how to document. The scale of loss is far beyond our ability to capture.”
— Huwaida Adreimly
Culture and Free Thought

مقابلة مع رندة ناصر

https://cdn1.ichr.ps/cached_uploads/view/2022/06/12-2022-1655016341الهيئة-المستقلة-2021-السابع-والعشرين-التقرير-السنوي-2022-1655016341.pdf

Gaps and Challenges

Palestinian civil society operates within a deeply entrenched web of challenges that reflect the complex political and social context in which it functions. Foremost among these is the Israeli occupation, which severely restricts the mobility of women activists. According to the 2023 report by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 73% of travel permit requests submitted by women activists to attend international events were denied. In parallel, the Israeli military has systematically targeted civil society infrastructure, including the demolition of 15 women's centers in Jerusalem and the Jordan Valley between 2022 and 2023, as documented by Human Rights Watch. Additionally, the Al-Dameer Association for Human Rights reported that 45 Palestinian women activists were detained in 2023 under administrative detention, without charge or trial.

Internationally, restrictive donor conditions have further constrained civil society operations. Many organizations have been forced to modify their activities to avoid any explicit link between their work and resistance to the occupation. The situation has worsened following Israel's designation of several Palestinian civil society organizations as "terrorist" entities, which has led to the freezing or withdrawal of international funding in many instances. Internally, the political division between the West Bank and Gaza has significantly undermined the sector's ability to coordinate and mobilize effectively. The Palestinian NGO Network (PNGO) reported that even prior to October 7, civil society activity in Gaza had already been reduced by 50% due to challenges in coordination and access.

Patriarchal cultural norms also present formidable barriers. A 2022 study by Birzeit University revealed that 60% of rural women face familial opposition to their participation in community-based initiatives, especially those related to peacebuilding and public affairs.

At the international level, accountability mechanisms remain largely ineffective. Despite documented evidence of more than 120 cases of conflict-related sexual violence, the International Criminal Court has yet to take any concrete action. This paralysis highlights a stark double standard: while the global discourse on women's rights continues to expand, there remains a deafening silence when it comes to Israeli violations against Palestinian women.

"Although the Palestinian Authority has developed plans on this issue, they remain ink on paper. At our organization, we submit our demands incrementally, so they are not all rejected at once. We started by advocating around the legal age of marriage, then moved forward step by step. Now, our efforts have stalled due to the political situation, the internal division, and the ongoing targeting of Gaza. Civil society in the West Bank stands paralyzed in its ability to truly support women, despite all the activities and interventions it continues to carry out."

— Lubna Abdelhadi
Academic and Feminist Activist /
Muwatin Institute for Democracy and
Human Rights

5.3 Political Parties' Role

Domestic Policies Ensuring Participation: Between Legislation and Implementation
Genuine political participation is considered a cornerstone of internal democratic governance within Palestinian political parties. However, the practical implementation of this principle remains obstructed by structural challenges rooted in a complex political context—namely, the Israeli occupation, internal political division, external pressures, patriarchal norms, and weak accountability mechanisms.

Most Palestinian political parties formally endorse policies that advocate for fair representation of marginalized groups, including women and youth, within their internal structures. For example:

- **Fateh:** Article 12 of the amended internal charter (2016) mandates a minimum 20% quota for women in leadership positions, in addition to allocating seats for youth in the Revolutionary Council.
- **Hamas:** The "Political Vision Document" (2017) affirms the importance of "youth involvement in decision-making" and "supporting women's role in the national struggle," though largely confined within a socially conservative Islamic framework.
- **Leftist Parties:** The internal regulations of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (2020) call for "30% representation of workers and farmers" in central leadership bodies.

Despite these declarative policies, the gap between legislation and implementation remains wide and persistent:

Dominance of Historical Elites and Marginalization of New Generations: While formal commitments to representation exist, historical elites continue to dominate decision-making spaces. Founding-generation members occupy roughly 70% of the seats in Fateh's Central Committee. Meanwhile, youth under the age of 35 hold only 12% of these positions—despite an official quota. In the case of Hamas, strategic decisions—such as ceasefire agreements with Israel—are often made outside of formal party structures, in opaque processes controlled by the Political Bureau abroad.

Women's Participation: Between Symbolic Quotas and Structural Barriers: The actual presence of women in top leadership positions—such as Fateh's Central Committee or Hamas' Shura Council—remains below 8%, despite the existence of formal quotas. Several interlinked factors account for this gap:

- **Structural Constraints:** Lack of institutional support mechanisms (e.g., dedicated resources for women's leadership training)
- **Social Pressures:** Persistent patriarchal norms discourage women from engaging in political life
- **Tokenism:** Women's participation is sometimes instrumentalized to improve party image internationally without granting them real influence, as noted in civil society monitoring reports (e.g., Palestinian NGO Network)

External Political Context: Occupation as a Deterrent to Implementation

The Israeli occupation further impedes the realization of participatory policies through:

- **Systematic Arrests:** According to a 2023 report by Al-Dameer Association for Human Rights, Israel detained 120 members of Palestinian political parties in 2022—including 25 women—under vague “security” pretexts aimed at stifling political activity.
- **Movement Restrictions:** The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reports that 60% of politically active individuals from Gaza were denied travel permits to attend internal (West Bank) or international political gatherings between 2020 and 2023.

“Men perceive reconciliation as a male-dominated issue and therefore do not believe that women's participation in this domain is worth the effort.”

— Lubna Abdel Hadi
Academic and Feminist Activist / Muwatin

The Fateh Youth Quota: A Model of Systemic Exclusion

Despite allocating 20% of Revolutionary Council seats to youth under 35, interviews conducted by the Palestinian Journalists' Network (2023) with 50 young Fateh members reveal that 80% felt their voices were not taken into account in any meaningful decision-making processes.

Hamas and Women: Between Religious Rhetoric and Political Exclusion

While Hamas promotes a discourse of “women's empowerment” within the realm of social welfare (e.g., charitable associations), women remain largely excluded from core political decision-making.

Official Discourse on Implementing the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda
Secular National Discourse and Leftist Factions (Fateh, Leftist Fronts): This discourse emphasizes the notion of “dual liberation”—from both Israeli occupation

“There is a serious issue with the numbers and percentages—figures are unclear, and the composition is not transparent to the public. In the most recent session of the Central Council, it was claimed that women's representation would reach 30%, but in reality, the total number of participants had already decreased due to boycotts. We no longer know the exact number or even the names. In any case, the figures are contradictory. Women's representation in the Palestinian National Council does not exceed 12%, and this is the body from which members of the Central Council are drawn—rendering the structure itself meaningless. The delay in progress is not only due to patriarchal norms at the grassroots level but also deeply embedded in leadership circles.”

— Rima Kattanah Nazzal
Member of the General Secretariat, General Union of Palestinian Women
Coordinator of the Civil Coalition for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325

and the patriarchal system—framing gender equality as an integral component of the broader national liberation project. **This is evident in President Mahmoud Abbas’**

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Islamic Political Discourse (Hamas, Islamic Jihad): Rooted in religious references, this discourse portrays women as the “guardians of identity” and “partners in resistance,” yet confines their roles to traditional frameworks—primarily as nurturing mothers or contributors to charitable work. Hamas’ 2017 political document states that “women’s role in resistance does not contradict Sharia.” In a 2021 statement, Ismail Haniyeh praised “the resilience of women in confronting aggression,” but failed to mention their political rights or agency.

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“The image of women here is reduced to that of victims in need of care. I don’t deny that we are victims—but we are also fighters, protectors of our homes and families. The war on Gaza exposed the fact that all the projects and capacity-building initiatives failed to change our reality. We are still seen only as victims. Leadership forgets that we manage our households, support our families, and persevere equally—women and men alike. They speak of women’s participation, yet in times of crisis, they expect us to remain silent in our suffering, without involving us in any solutions. The patriarchal system has never allowed us to engage in reconciliation processes, even though a feminist perspective could actually facilitate real solutions—ones that are grounded in the needs of the community, not in political entitlements or power-sharing outcomes.”

— Mirvet Al-Zaqqouq, Gaza

"essential partners in the struggle." However, despite this rhetorical commitment, women continue to be sidelined in practice.

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Gaps and Challenges

A. Internal Factors

- **Patriarchal Structures:** Clan-based and familial networks continue to dominate political nominations, particularly in rural areas, marginalizing independent or feminist voices.
- **Lack of Transparency:** Internal election results and leadership meeting minutes are rarely published or made accessible to the public, undermining accountability.
- **Palestinian Political Division:** The persistent rift between the West Bank and Gaza weakens coordination between parties, impeding collective efforts to strengthen women's participation.
- **Separation Between Organizational and Women's Structures:** Women's units within parties often operate in isolation from the central decision-making bodies, limiting their influence and access to power.

"At times, women themselves relinquish rights-based demands in the name of so-called national priorities. But the divide runs deeper than political disagreement—even women have not approached reconciliation with a feminist lens. If we look at the Cairo Agreement on Reconciliation, we find no mention of the identity or structure of the future Palestinian state. The conflict is societal, yet dialogue remains confined to factions, excluding both women and civil society from shaping political cohesion. Women in Fateh mirror the men in Fatehh; there is no room to act from a feminist position because political subordination extends to women as well."
— Rima Nazzal, General Secretariat Member, General Union of Palestinian Women; Coordinator, Civil Coalition for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325

B. External Factors

- **Israeli Occupation:** While the occupation remains, the primary structural barrier facing Palestinian women, it is frequently used as a pretext to delay necessary internal reforms—such as national elections—under the banner of "unity in the face of aggression."
- **Conditional Funding:** According to the Euro Med Rights Network (2023), some international donors' condition financial support to political parties on avoiding criticism of specific international policies, thereby restricting political maneuverability and compromising ideological independence.

5.4 The Feminist Reality in Gaza Post October 7

The widespread killing of women and children in Gaza since the onset of the current assault and genocidal war cannot be dismissed as "collateral damage" in a conventional conflict. Rather, it must be analyzed through a feminist, decolonial lens—one that repositions the Palestinian body, particularly the female body, as a central site of ongoing colonial violence.

The targeting of Palestinian women represents an advanced form of compounded violence—where military occupation intersects with gender-based violence. Palestinian women are not only physical targets but symbolic ones as well, embodying continuity, life, fertility, and motherhood.

Women are not being targeted solely in their capacity as "civilians," but as embodiments of life itself. Their bodies are rendered legitimate military targets—just like land, homes, and hospitals. This logic manifests not only in physical extermination but also in systemic attempts to dismantle survival mechanisms: destroying homes, killing mothers with their children, targeting pregnant women, decimating reproductive health facilities, and mutilating the bodies of women martyrs.

Feminist and human rights organizations have documented harrowing testimonies from women who watched their husbands and children be killed before their eyes or were pulled from beneath rubble after losing entire families. Many were found dead clutching their children, or were discovered lifeless while fleeing bombardment. These are not merely horrific images—they are evidence of a deliberate policy to annihilate collective life by targeting its foundational pillar: women.

Moreover, this killing was not incidental. It was accompanied by systematic deprivation of protection. No warnings were issued in most attacks. No safe corridors were provided. Shelters, schools, and hospitals—places where women and children sought refuge—were bombed. Women were forced into impossible choices: to stay and risk death with their children, or to flee and face bombardment end route. Every option carried the likelihood of death.

What deepens the gravity of the crime is the disturbing international silence—and in many cases, complicity. Some global powers provided political and military cover for this targeting. Meanwhile, the legal protections afforded under international humanitarian law, the Fourth Geneva Convention, and UN Security Council Resolution 1325—which mandates the protection of women in armed conflict—remained absent. No effective international accountability mechanism was activated. The mass killing of women was not treated as a war crime or a crime against humanity, as it should have been under the law.

From a liberation feminist perspective, the targeting of women cannot be separated from the colonial project itself, which seeks to dismantle Palestinian society from within. The Palestinian female body is not treated as an individual body but as a collective space—one that holds identity, culture, and continuity. To target it is to target the national existence in its entirety.

The Militarization of Daily Life and the Female Body

As a direct extension of the systematic killing that has ravaged women and children in every home, camp, and shelter across Gaza, the machinery of aggression has not stopped at the point of ending life. It has gone further—into full control over the intimate details of daily survival. The war on Gaza is not limited to the skies or city outskirts; it has seeped into the senses and skin, into the footsteps of women navigating narrow corridors, into their weary eyes searching for a space that offers even a modicum of privacy or access to a toilet that preserves their dignity. In this war, the female body is no longer an incidental casualty—it has become a direct battlefield, a daily site where domination is reproduced.

In a context defined by forced fragility, collapsing infrastructure, and relentless bombardment, the female body has become an object of surveillance, a site of violation, a field upon which power and control are tested. Women are not only being bombed—they are being displaced, searched, monitored, and compelled to normalize every bodily threat as part of daily life. Under this colonial condition, women's everyday existence in Gaza has ceased to be routine. It has become a series of silent confrontations, where loss, exposure, and vulnerability repeat themselves without any guarantee of dignity or protection.

Privacy is no longer a guaranteed right. Women have been forcibly displaced from their homes with no time to gather necessities. Many fled wearing only their nightclothes, carrying children in one arm and whatever belongings they could manage in the other. In overcrowded UNRWA classrooms turned shelters, tens of thousands now live with no doors, no windows, no personal space. The female body here is constantly exposed—not only to death, but to surveillance, judgment, and indirect violations. Even natural bodily functions have become dangerous: menstruation, breastfeeding, bathing—all now require extraordinary courage, repeated self-humiliation, and emotional depletion.

In the absence of social and legal protection systems, women have had no choice but to become pillars of survival for their families. They carry the burdens of provision, care, and psychological support without securing the bare minimum of safety for themselves. In every tent, there is a woman hiding her pain so her daughter does not see her cry. In every line for water or bread, a woman stands for hours—not only to survive, but out of loyalty to a role that was imposed on her without consent. Displacement has been aggressively feminized: women have become the sole holders of the lost home,

"We were not waiting for death—but it came, slowly. In a shell that collapsed our roof. In a breadline. In the haunted silence of night, where there are no doors to lock, no lights to guide the way. We weren't just killed; our days were dismantled, piece by piece. Women were forced to flee—not once, but over and over—carrying the guilt of surviving. Their bodies no longer belonged to them. We are searched at checkpoints like suitcases, we bleed in tents without water, we breastfeed starving children with no milk, no privacy, no dignity. A woman no longer knows if she's living or merely performing life. The war invaded our bodies, clung to our skin, tested our endurance, and bargained with us—our dignity for our survival.

And yet, women did not surrender. They gathered the fragments of motherhood within them, stitched the tent with their tears, and sang to their children under open skies so that fear would not learn their names. Women are not just survivors—they are the voice of silence, the guardians of what dignity remains, the frontline that has not yet fallen."

— Mervat Al-Zaqzouq, Gaza

the fractured memory, and the fragile shelter.

And yet, Palestinian women have not relinquished their agency. Despite militarization, despite the loss of space, privacy, and control, the female body continues to carry its political and moral dimensions. Women have redefined resilience—not simply as endurance, but as the act of rebuilding life, transforming pain into quiet acts of care, dignity, and resistance. In the face of a system that seeks to reduce them to passive victims, they have redrawn the contours of their existence—as agents at the margins of catastrophe, as survivors writing their own narratives in the ruins of cities.

The Care and Service Burden on Women

The tragedy of women in the Gaza Strip did not end with direct targeting, forced displacement, or the militarization of daily life. Once homes had collapsed, electricity was cut, water and sanitation networks crumbled, and thousands of families crowded into makeshift shelters, Palestinian women once again found themselves on the frontlines. But this time, not only as survivors or victims—but as caregivers, organizers, nurses, and educators in a reality that neither guarantees protection nor honors sacrifice.

Women bore an unbearable burden of care and service work in an environment devoid of even the most basic conditions for dignity or gender-responsive support. In the absence of institutions, the suspension of services, and the scarcity of resources, women were expected to manage the exhausting minutiae of survival, as though it were a natural duty requiring neither support nor recognition.

In every hastily erected tent, a woman was trying to reassemble a broken world. She organized sleeping arrangements on rubble, improvised primitive methods for cooking and heating water, and transformed the most fragile corners into safe spaces for children. This was not simply “housekeeping”—it was a form of resistance, carried out with fragile tools in the midst of total chaos.

Women carried the primary responsibility of caring for traumatized children—not only those who lost their homes, but those who had lost siblings, parents, or entire families. Mothers held their children through the night—not only to shield them from airstrikes, but to protect them from fear itself.

The wounded—numbering in the thousands—became a daily burden on women in the absence of medical personnel. Women with no prior experience in nursing found themselves cleaning wounds, tending to bleeding bodies, and offering their own body warmth to soothe the pain of an injured person who had no access to pain relief.

These roles were neither voluntary nor optional. They are the product of a socio-political structure that consistently offloads the responsibility of resilience onto women in the absence of a functioning state. It assumes in them a superhuman ability to organize, care, and sustain—even when the body and soul are collapsing. This invisible, unacknowledged burden was described with bitterness by one woman as:

“Everyone says we are strong. Yes, we are strong—but not because we chose to be. We are strong because we were given no other option.”

— Fatima Rukbeh, Gaza

Marginalization in Media and Fragmented Representation

Alongside the direct violence that targeted Palestinian women in their bodies, presence, and dignity, there existed another, quieter form of violence—no less brutal or consequential: the violence of narrative, the violence of erasure. Amid the expansive media coverage of the Israeli assault on the Gaza Strip, it became starkly evident that Palestinian women were not represented in global or regional media as active agents, holders of political opinion, or participants in shaping their own destinies. Instead, they were overwhelmingly portrayed as voiceless victims or symbolic images of collective suffering—stripped of political consciousness and historical depth.

Women did not appear in the media as community leaders, defenders of life, or political actors amidst the massacres. Rather, the focus was on devastated mothers, wailing women, and lifeless female bodies pulled from the rubble. While such images were painfully real, their repeated use often served to reinforce the reduction of women to passive victims—without giving space for their voices, their political awareness, or their demands to be heard.

The feminist voice was glaringly absent from news bulletins, analytical panels, and field reporting. No woman was asked for her opinion on the ceasefire, on the international community's failure, or on crisis governance. There were no interviews with women questioning the global narrative that rationalizes killing, or deconstructing the language of occupation. Visuals spoke louder than voices—deliberately so—because a crying woman's image soothes the conscience of the world more than her rage or demands ever could.

This produced a form of "media normalization" that cemented the portrayal of Palestinian women as eternal victims. Scenes of tears, fear, and embraces under bombardment were used as emotionally charged symbols—but ones devoid of political depth. No one asked: Who is this woman? What has she lost? What does she demand? What does she believe in? What is her anger? How does she analyze her reality? She was silenced—despite being alive.

"Each time our images appear in the news, our voices are erased. We become tearful faces in broadcast reports—not agents in a nation under bombardment, not martyrs with political vision, not mothers dreaming of return. The media only sees the Palestinian woman as broken; it never shows how she rebuilds a home from rubble, how she comforts her neighbors, or how her fingertips preserve the memory of besieged cities. Reducing us to a single image is yet another form of erasure—an act of silent, symbolic violence. We want to be heard, not just seen. We want to be understood, not merely mourned."

— Fatima Rukbeh, Gaza

"In the tents, there are no doors to close, no laws to protect us, and no one who listens when we say we are in pain. When the world stops hearing the sound of explosions, we remain here, hearing a different kind of scream. It is not only bombs that leave bruises. There are words, glances, hands that know no gentleness—they fall upon us when no one is watching. Yesterday, we were bombed. Today, we're told to stay silent—this is not the priority. But we, the survivors, know this truth: violence does not need warplanes; silence alone is enough for it to thrive."

— Fatima Rukbeh, Gaza

Reframing Feminist Discourse: When Survival Becomes a Political Priority

In a context defined by loss, where open-ended aggression targets daily life, infrastructure, and the body itself, Palestinian feminist discourse can no longer—nor should it—remain confined to its previous frameworks. The tools once crafted during what was termed the “state-building phase” are no longer viable when the state itself has collapsed and the conditions for basic life have disintegrated.

The recent assault has exposed the limitations of familiar development language—“economic empowerment,” “labor market integration,” “capacity-building for young leaders.” These goals are not irrelevant, but the current reality has shifted drastically, forcing women to confront priorities rarely found in development literature: survival. Protecting children from death. Securing water under bombardment. Giving birth without anesthesia. Breastfeeding in tents. Mourning silently in mass graves.

Women are no longer simply demanding equal opportunities—they are demanding the right to survive under occupation, and the bare minimum of human dignity. In this sense, the current reality necessitates a redefinition of feminist priorities—not as a retreat from empowerment discourse, but as a shift toward a liberation-centered approach that recognizes the struggle for life itself as both political and gendered.

From Empowerment to Survival: A Forced Yet Conscious Shift

Palestinian women have been pushed into a new position—one not found in training manuals or programmatic indicators. The question is no longer, “How many women hold decision-making positions?” but “How many women are still alive?” Not “Did women receive funding for their small businesses?” but “Do they have a safe place to feed their children?”

These are not tactical regressions—they are forced transformations that demand a critical reassessment of conventional feminist programming and a reckoning with both local and international frameworks that have failed to align fully with

“Before the war, I was running a small business selling traditional flatbread. I had learned entrepreneurial skills, completed a training in digital marketing, and I was proud to have a stable income. I used to dream of opening a bakery where the girls from my neighborhood could work.

But when the bombing started, the first thing that was destroyed was the flour shop. Then my home. Then the school where my daughter studied.

I started standing in line for hours just to get water. That was the first time I truly felt I had lost everything—even myself.

But after a week, I decided to start baking again—not for the business, but for the neighborhood. I borrowed a pot from the tent next to ours, gathered wood, and started baking on a small fire.

A few days later, a young woman came and helped me. Then another girl brought some za’atar from her home.

We began baking together—not to sell, but to survive. That’s when I realized that empowerment isn’t just about trainings or donor-funded projects. Empowerment is knowing you are strong, even under bombing, even in the face of death, even after you’ve lost everything. Strength is choosing to go on.

I’m not just a mother, or an entrepreneur, or a victim. I’m a woman from Gaza—and I have a voice, not just needs.”

—Doaa, 38, graduate of an economic empowerment program, displaced from Beit Lahia

the lived priorities of women under occupation.

“We used to talk about economic empowerment. Now we talk about finding a diaper, a can of formula, and a house that’s not rigged to explode.”

— Feminist activist from Al-Bureij Refugee Camp, in a closed discussion, January 2024

A Liberation Feminism That Refuses to Separate Gender from National Struggle

What Gaza’s experience after October 7 reveals is that the separation between feminist struggle and national liberation is no longer possible—nor is it morally defensible. Deconstructing gender-based violence today necessarily requires an analysis of the occupation as a colonial structure that produces and reproduces such violence—rendering any conversation about empowerment hollow if it does not confront this foundational reality.

There is no woman who can be considered safe under siege. There can be no talk of legal protection for women in the absence of law itself—or when the law is subordinated to a military regime that targets everything civilian. And there can be no political participation while entire families are being annihilated at the roots.

In this context, liberation feminism is now required to generate its own language from within this lived experience—not from outside it. A language that resists rather than pleads, demands rather than appeases. One that connects sexual violence with political violence, displacement with the absence of legal protection, and the refugee tent with the international community.

The coming phase demands that the Palestinian feminist movement move away from domesticated discourses that reproduce notions of “empowerment from within the system,” and instead build a new narrative that situates women as political agents in the national liberation struggle—not as “target beneficiaries” of donor-monitored development programs.

This does not mean abandoning protection tools or support mechanisms. It means liberating them from their narrow frameworks and tying them back to the root causes: colonialism, loss of sovereignty, and the collapse of communal protection systems.

What is needed today is a discourse that recognizes women not only as victims, but as defenders, organizers, resisters, and guardians of collective memory. A discourse that values their roles not merely as symbols of endurance, but as holders of political clarity—connecting gender to colonialism, institutional collapse to systemic survival.

The experience of this assault, despite all its pain, has also opened a space for reorganization and rebuilding alliances—locally, regionally, and globally. It is an opportunity to reframe Palestinian feminist identity as a political project, not as a byproduct of international development programming. This requires feminists to listen—not to project documents, but to what women are saying in shelters, schools, and at checkpoints.

As this chapter closes, it must be said clearly: this is not merely a moment of crisis—it is an opening for the articulation of a new, radical, courageous Palestinian feminist discourse. A discourse that places women at the center of the struggle, not at its margins, and places justice—not services—at the heart of the movement.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusion

In the complex Palestinian context, the roles of key actors—including civil society, political parties, and the government—intersect in efforts to implement the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda (WPSA) under UN Security Council Resolution 1325. Despite limited progress made by these stakeholders, structural challenges—most notably the Israeli occupation and internal political division—threaten to reduce these efforts to mere rhetoric, lacking meaningful practice.

Civil Society: A Force for Pressure and Innovation

Palestinian civil society has played a pivotal role in advancing the WPSA by documenting violations against women—including arbitrary arrests and sexual violence—and submitting these findings to international bodies. Organizations such as the General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW), the Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling (WCLAC), and the Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development have successfully produced shadow reports that expose the gap between official commitments and actual implementation. These institutions have also provided direct services, including shelters for survivors of violence and training programs in leadership and negotiation skills.

However, these efforts face distinct challenges—chief among them, dependence on conditional international funding that often compels organizations to avoid linking gender-based violence to Israeli occupation practices. Moreover, Palestinian women human rights defenders are subject to severe restrictions on movement, targeted demolitions of women's centers, and widespread surveillance. Community resistance also remains a barrier; public awareness campaigns advocating for structural reform are often accused of “undermining traditional values.”

Political Parties: Between Symbolic Discourse and Complex Realities

Political parties—including Fateh, Hamas, and others—have shown a nominal commitment to the WPSA through symbolic policies, such as the adoption of quota systems to ensure women's representation in leadership structures. Fateh, for instance, allocated 20% of Revolutionary Council seats to women, while Hamas promotes the role of women in “popular resistance.” Yet women's actual participation in decision-making—particularly in the security and military spheres—remains marginal. Within Fateh, for example, women hold only a small percentage of Central Committee positions. A key challenge lies in the dominance of historic male elites who control nomination mechanisms and sideline capable women leaders.

The political division between the West Bank and Gaza further complicates the development of a unified vision for women's empowerment, as each governing authority implements separate, uncoordinated programs. Most concerning is the political instrumentalization of women's participation, often used as a tool to gain international legitimacy without granting them real power.

The Government: Between International Commitments and Lack of Sovereignty

The Palestinian government—particularly through the Ministry of Women’s Affairs and its international partners—has sought to translate global commitments into policy actions, such as the launch of the National Action Plan to implement UNSCR 1325 (2021–2024), which aimed to increase women’s participation in peace processes by 30%. It also succeeded in training hundreds of women in mediation and established gender units in some ministries.

However, the government faces existential challenges, first and foremost the Israeli occupation, which restricts its ability to operate in both Gaza and the West Bank. A suffocating blockade impedes humanitarian aid and paralyzes service delivery. The loss of control over border crossings and the absence of legitimacy in Hamas-ruled Gaza further weaken governmental capacities. On the legislative front, efforts to pass a Family Protection Law have stalled due to opposition from conservative blocs in the defunct Palestinian Legislative Council—highlighting the contradiction between progressive discourse and societal realities.

Shared Challenges: Israeli Occupation and Patriarchal Norms

Despite differing roles, all three sectors share overlapping challenges stemming from the broader Palestinian context. Chief among them is the Israeli occupation, which systematically deploys gendered violence as a means of repression, including house demolitions and arbitrary arrests. The internal division between Fateh and Hamas continues to fragment efforts, as disjointed programs unfold in the West Bank and Gaza. Moreover, entrenched patriarchal norms reinforce stereotypical gender roles and resist the inclusion of women in “security matters” and decision-making spaces.

The Way Forward: Strategic Partnerships and International Pressure

Meaningful progress on the WPSA requires a tripartite strategic partnership among civil society, political parties, and the government. This partnership must embrace bold legislative reforms—such as the ratification of the Family Protection Law—and tie governmental funding to the achievement of gender quotas. At the international level, pressure must be applied to sanction Israel for its violation of UNSCR 1325, and donors must be urged to condition aid on transparency and compliance with gender equality standards.

At the grassroots level, widespread awareness campaigns targeting men and youth are essential, alongside the inclusion of women in the design of security policies—steps necessary to break the cycle of impunity.

Conclusion: Feminist Willpower as a Catalyst for Transformation

Despite the immense difficulties, Palestinian feminist will remain a powerful engine of transformation. Success hinges on converting discourse into practice—through partnerships that recognize that women’s liberation is not a luxury, but a prerequisite for national liberation and the realization of a just peace.

6.2 Recommendations

First: Recommendations for Palestinian Civil Society Organizations

1. Establishing an Alternative Feminist Epistemic Front Civil society organizations must go beyond their operational role to play a strategic intellectual and conceptual role by:
 - Constructing a Palestinian feminist knowledge framework that challenges international indicators, integrates gender with national liberation, and rejects the separation between gender-based violence and colonial violence.
 - Producing an annual shadow report from a Palestinian feminist perspective in response to global indicators such as the WPS Index—exposing how Palestine is excluded while Israel is rewarded—and proposing alternative indicators that center the occupation as a structural form of violence.
 - Creating a Feminist Monitoring and Analysis Unit to collect both qualitative and quantitative data locally, using women’s testimonies as sources of knowledge, not merely as narrative fragments.
2. Developing Accountability and Advocacy Tools Rooted in Women’s Lived Experiences
 - Systematically archive violations through women’s voices, documenting forms of colonial-political violence unrecognized by international institutions—such as births under bombardment, forced displacement, and denial of mobility and care.
 - Launch a collective campaign to hold international actors accountable—especially those who rank Israel as a leader in women’s rights—by formally addressing GIWPS, UN Women, PRIO, and others, demanding the inclusion of colonial contexts in global assessments.
 - Advocate for the creation of a regional feminist coalition resisting misleading indices—connecting the struggle of Palestinian women to women in the Global South who face similar colonial or authoritarian structures.
3. Reframing Engagement with International Partners through a Rights-Based, Liberation-Oriented Agenda
 - Redefine relationships with international institutions: partnerships should go beyond funding and program implementation to include negotiating discourse and policy priorities.
 - Palestinian organizations must publicly demand that international indicators and reports reflect the context of occupation and its impact on women.
 - Engage mechanisms such as the Human Rights Council, CEDAW, and UN

Special Rapporteurs, using clear political language that links gender to sovereignty, self-determination, and liberation.

- Utilize tools like the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process—but only through reports aligned with a critical, decolonial feminist vision that rejects false neutrality and "both sides" narratives.

4. Building a Counter-Cultural Feminist Narrative

- Launch media campaigns that deconstruct the global narrative of "Israeli progress", highlighting the contradiction between Israel's liberal image in indices and its violent colonial practices on the ground.
- Support the production of podcasts, short films, and art exhibits that expose the intersection of gender-based and settler-colonial violence—placing women's voices at the center as live testimony.
- Design and implement an educational project in schools and universities titled: "What the Indicators Don't Measure: Gender Under Occupation"—aimed at teaching youth how data and knowledge production can serve exclusionary power structures.

5. Building Strategic Capacity Within the Feminist Movement

- Train feminist leaders in critical data analysis and in deconstructing international indicators to avoid uncritical use of politically biased metrics.
- Conduct workshops on epistemic sovereignty and knowledge security and develop Palestinian-led evaluation tools capable of capturing reality as it is—not as it is described by donor-driven international frameworks.

Second: Recommendations for the Palestinian Government

In light of the structural challenges exposed by the post-October 7 reality—particularly the fragility of protection systems, the escalation of Israeli aggression, and the complicity of the international order—the Palestinian government is now urged to conduct a comprehensive reassessment of its role in implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1325. This requires moving beyond procedural or legitimacy-based engagement with the women, peace, and security agenda, toward embracing a liberation-centered vision grounded in epistemic sovereignty, effective protection, and political-gender justice.

1. Comprehensive Legislative Reform for Gender Justice

- Immediately enact the Family Protection Law, ensuring it criminalizes all forms of violence, including economic and psychological violence, and guarantees comprehensive and effective protection for survivors.
- Engage feminist civil society organizations and legal aid centers in drafting the law, promoting an alternative version rooted in women lived realities—not in formalistic or donor-driven frameworks.
- Review personal status laws to ensure justice and gender equity, through an inclusive societal dialogue involving progressive religious scholars and female and male judges, aiming to dismantle patriarchal legal structures without descending into symbolic clashes with conservative actors.

2. Establishing Sovereign Feminist Institutional Structures

- Establish a National Observatory on Gender-Based Violence as an independent body tasked with monitoring violations committed both within Palestinian society and by the Israeli occupation. It should have the authority to publish periodic reports and use them for local and international advocacy.
- Expand the Observatory's mandate to:
 - Collect and analyze data from high-risk areas such as Gaza, Jerusalem, and lands under threat of confiscation.
 - Submit evidence-based files to international legal forums including the Human Rights Council and the International Criminal Court (ICC).
 - Activate gender units in all ministries and equip them with real oversight authority over the National Action Plan (NAP) implementation. Tie ministry funding in part to measurable targets, such as reaching 30% female representation in decision-making positions.

3. Aligning the National Action Plan with the Colonial Context

- Thoroughly revise the NAP on UNSCR 1325 to shift it from a technical document into a political and rights-based tool of resistance that recognizes gender insecurity as a structural outcome of settler-colonialism—not merely internal cultural violence.
- Redraft the plan to:
 - Explicitly name the Israeli occupation as a primary and ongoing source of violence against women.
 - Link implementation indicators to tangible changes in women's lives under occupation, rather than generic international benchmarks.

- Focus on community protection, psychosocial support, and political accountability mechanisms.

4. Recalibrating International Partnerships through a Rights-Based Lens

- Establish a permanent coordination body with UN agencies and international mechanisms—such as OHCHR, CEDAW Committee, and the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women—to systematically document and follow up on Israeli violations against Palestinian women.
- Use this documentation to:
 - File formal complaints to the ICC.
 - Launch advocacy campaigns at the UN General Assembly and Security Council.
 - Leverage Resolution 1325's tools, including fact-finding missions and accountability frameworks.
 - Reevaluate cooperation agreements with donors, ensuring:
 - No imposition of "political neutrality" as a condition for funding.
 - Full respect for Palestine's right to define its narrative as a colonized people.

5. Safeguarding the Feminist Infrastructure from Security Overreach and Institutional Discrimination

- Develop emergency protection protocols for women's shelters and services, in coordination with the Ministry of Interior and local authorities.
- Train security forces on gender-sensitive approaches to GBV cases, and ensure accountability for rights violations within state institutions.
- Allocate dedicated resources in the national budget to support feminist protection structures, especially in Gaza, Jerusalem, and marginalized areas.

Third: Recommendations for Political Parties

Despite the presence of nationalist rhetoric in the literature of most Palestinian political parties, women remain marginalized within party structures—either as electoral figures, symbolic representations, or passive adjuncts rather than active agents. After October 7, the need became urgent to deconstruct the roots of women's political marginalization, the entrenchment of patriarchal discourse in party institutions, and the separation between gender justice and national liberation. Any meaningful liberation framework must begin with an internal reckoning by political parties regarding their role in excluding women and redefining the relationship between gender justice and resistance identity.

1. Structural—not superficial—internal reform

- All Palestinian parties, across the political spectrum, must commit to a minimum 30% gender quota in their leadership and executive bodies. This representation must not be symbolic or externally imposed, but

rather rooted in transparent internal democratic processes overseen by independent committees.

- No party should be exempt from this obligation—regardless of size, ideology, or whether it is in power or opposition. Liberation is indivisible and cannot be postponed in the name of "greater priorities."
- Establish internal gender monitoring committees within each party, mandated to:
 - Monitor party compliance with the principles of UNSCR 1325.
 - Issue periodic public reports on actual representation, gender sensitivity in political discourse, and budget allocations for women's participation.
 - Create confidential complaint channels to address discrimination, harassment, or exclusion within party environments.

2. Integrating Women as Political Decision-Makers

- Move beyond symbolic inclusion of women in negotiation and dialogue committees, and ensure their substantive and professional participation in all political, security, and societal negotiations—whether inter-factional or international.
- Train female party activists in negotiation, mediation, and conflict resolution, preparing them to take on leadership roles in any forthcoming political transition.
- Make women's presence a precondition for party representation in any future negotiations, and affirm this stance publicly in the party's official political statements.

3. Linking National Liberation to Gender Justice

- Go beyond reducing women's issues to the "social" or "humanitarian" sphere. Recognize that national liberation is incomplete without dismantling the patriarchal structures that perpetuate marginalization within political organizations themselves.
- Embed women's rights within the core political narrative of the party, through:
 - Documenting crimes against women in conflict zones as part of electoral platforms and political mobilization campaigns.
 - Adopting political language that highlights the systematic targeting of Palestinian women as a colonial strategy aimed at unraveling the social fabric—not a byproduct of war.
- Allocate permanent party budgets for gender justice initiatives, including:
 - Establishing campaign funds for female candidates in local and national elections.
- Funding feminist research on the impact of siege, bombardment, and displacement on women, and integrating this research into political messaging.
- Supporting grassroots feminist initiatives affiliated with the party—without co-opting or instrumentalizing them for partisan image-building.

4. Dismantling Patriarchal Discourse Internally

- Parties must critically review their media, structural, and educational discourse, which continues to portray women as symbols of sacrifice, dependents, or guardians of honor—instead of as political actors.
- Convene internal dialogues on “Gender Justice within the National Project,” involving both men and women, and build upon these conversations to produce a new party-level commitment charter.
- Confront the internal culture of patriarchy through:
 - Clear and enforceable mechanisms to process complaints.
 - Investigations into exclusionary or harassing practices.
 - Public accountability for gender-based misconduct within party ranks.

Fourth. General Recommendations: Toward a Feminist Political Project of Liberation and Accountability

In the face of the international system’s consistent failure to hold Israel accountable for its crimes against Palestinian women—and amid the fragmentation of the Palestinian national front and the marginalization of women’s voices within both political and human rights spaces—partial, piecemeal responses are no longer sufficient. What is urgently required is the formation of a transnational, feminist-political front rooted in the Global South and grounded in Palestinian lived experience: a collective that repositions Palestine not as a perpetual victim or aid recipient, but as a producer of knowledge, an agent of accountability, and a center of feminist political mobilization.

1. Confronting Colonial Violence through Feminist South–South Alliances

The time has come to move beyond traditional channels of engagement with UN institutions and toward the creation of a broad-based feminist human rights coalition, built upon:

- Liberation-oriented feminist movements from the Global South, particularly those resisting occupation, settler colonialism, and militarized state violence.
- UN-based mechanisms and offices that have taken clear stances against colonial structures and apartheid regimes.
- Independent feminist voices in the Global North who reject the double standards of the international human rights system and are willing to challenge its complicity.
- This alliance must work collectively to:
 - Submit legal files on Israel’s systematic violations against Palestinian women to:
 - The UN Human Rights Council.
 - The International Criminal Court (ICC).

- The CEDAW Committee and the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls.
- Produce politically conscious and legally rigorous shadow reports, exposing how Israeli policies result in gendered forms of violence including starvation, forced displacement, epistemic erasure, and the deliberate targeting of mothers as societal anchors.

This is not merely advocacy. It is a form of internationalist feminist resistance, led from the margins, that reclaims legal and moral discourse from the grip of colonial impunity.

2. Ending Internal Fragmentation: Building a Unified Feminist Front

The ongoing Palestinian political division has deepened the fragmentation of the feminist narrative and created openings for the instrumentalization of women's issues within factional agendas. A national feminist platform for dialogue and joint action must now be established—an inclusive space that brings together:

- Official women's institutions.
- Independent grassroots organizations.
- Voices of women from Gaza, the West Bank, and the diaspora.
- Leaders from diverse political, religious, and social backgrounds.

The platform should be mandated to:

- Draft a unified Palestinian feminist political document that reflects the realities of women post-October 7.
- Develop decentralized coordination mechanisms for feminist emergency response.
- Cultivate a new gender discourse that links dignity, sovereignty, survival, and political justice.

This must be more than institutional alignment—it must become a collective feminist process of reimagining liberation from within.

3. Democratizing Gender Justice as a Tool of Resistance

Democracy and gender equality must no longer be framed solely as development goals but as pillars of national resilience and resistance.

Therefore:

- Gender equality education should be integrated into the national curriculum as a tool of liberation, not merely civic development.
- In partnership with the Ministry of Education and civil society organizations, the following should be implemented:
 - Curriculum content on the historical and political struggles of Palestinian women.
 - Teacher training programs on gender-based discrimination and structural inequality.
 - Short films and documentaries on women leaders, shown in universities and schools.
 - Media campaigns amplifying stories of resistance from:
 - Grassroots feminist organizers.
 - Survivors of Israeli violence.
 - Women health workers operating under siege and bombardment.

This is how collective memory is built, not only to honor the past but to arm the future.

4. A Collective Political Dialogue on UNSCR 1325: A National Responsibility
UNSCR 1325 can no longer be implemented as a technical framework, seasonal training program, or donor-funded checklist. It must be repositioned as a national political commitment, rooted in collective deliberation and grounded in Palestinian sovereignty.

This entails:

- Facilitating open and inclusive dialogue between political parties, official institutions, and independent feminist activists.
- Mobilizing all stakeholders to advocate for the immediate ratification of the Family Protection Law, alongside progressive amendments to personal status laws.
- Ensuring women's effective participation in decision-making is mandated by clear political commitments—not symbolic pledges.

This political dialogue must be grounded in the following pillars:

- Equality as a political principle.
- Economic empowerment as a survival mechanism.
- Political participation as a prerequisite for liberating the national discourse from patriarchal norms.
- Centering Palestinian women's resistance as both historical memory and a demand for the future.