



PWWSD: Protecting Families from Violence Requires Political Will for the Respect and Implementation of Women's Rights

Just a few days ago, on June 19th, the world commemorated the [International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict](#). Despite all the related awareness raising campaigns, psychosocial counselling services, and continuous efforts to demand safety and security, conditions on the ground still indicate more challenges in confronting and eliminating violence against women and girls. The Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development (PWWSD) along with key official and civil society institutions as well as the media, have documented [increasing cases of violence](#) against women and girls, including rape and murder, as well as physical, verbal, psychological, economic, social, or sexual, in both the private and public spheres. Simultaneously, Palestinians continue to directly or indirectly suffer from violence of the Israeli military occupation; another factor that increases the burdens imposed on Palestinian women and girls and the violence they are exposed to in particular under a patriarchal system.

To this end, PWWSD demands the immediate passage of the Family Protection Bill by the Cabinet of Ministers, an urgent necessity in light of the continued violence against women and girls. This is especially crucial in the cases of women and girls exposed to sexual violence, as this form of violence is usually unreported by women and girls due to the social stigma attached, and thus the often dire consequences for the victims who do choose to report. The passage of the Bill into a “Law by Presidential Decree” alone will not be sufficient in addressing gender-based violence and its consequences on women and girls, unless the legislation also includes a clear definition of violence, specific provisions guaranteeing the protection and security of women and girls, and mechanisms to monitor their economic, social, and psychological conditions to ensure their continued protection and recovery. Furthermore, PWWSD demands the imposition of the most severe legal penalties on those who commit acts of sexual assault and rape as a deterrent to other perpetrators of this and other heinous gender-based violence crimes.

It is time for Palestinian men and women alike to take immediate action for radical systemic change through the abolition of the outdated, discriminatory patriarchal legal system. Legislation borne out of this system provides the philosophical, textual, and contextual basis for the reproduction of violence against women and girls, and sanctifies this violence in a Palestinian society plagued with reactionary social values. This ultimately hinders and impedes the development of Palestinian society based on respect for the humanity and dignity of Palestinians especially women and girls.

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