



Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development Statement

On the Epidemic of Murdered Women

Palestinian women are still being killed while the Family Protection from Violence Law continues to be delayed

In Palestine, there has been a significant increase in cases of murdered women compared to previous years. Cases of murdered women reached 26 in 2019, and a further 26 women have been murdered since January 2020.

A recent murder case part of this epidemic of violence targeting women, took place on Wadi Al-Nar street north-east of Bethlehem. Q woman, her husband, and her sister-in-law were killed, while a fourth person was left in critical condition. The details of the case, including who the perpetrators and victims are, the murder weapon, and the motives behind the crime have all been widely publicized. The murderers have outright stated that they view this crime to be justified and in the interest of the public, as they were merely defending their so-called "family honour."

As a society, we can no longer stay in denial of the extent of violence against women and treat the violation of their rights and discrimination against them as acceptable. The killing of women cannot be viewed as a part of cultural heritage. Justifications for the view that women belong to their male relatives or significant others, who then have the right to trample over their rights or even end their lives are not based in law or religion. It is imperative to prevent the crimes that women have been exposed to on one hand and to prevent the tearing of the fabric of

society on the other, all taking place within the connection between societal and settler-colonial violence.

In most cases where women are killed, “honour” is the murderer’s excuse, and it is one seen as sufficient towards helping them evade punishment for their crime. This is the inevitable result of the Palestinian political system and decision-makers persistent delays in passing the Family Protection from violence bill into law, particularly within the context of an absence of legislation and a strong rule of law due to the 2007 suspension of the Palestinian Legislative Council following partisan divisions between Fatah and Hamas. This has in effect given various clans the green light to practice their own traditional laws and customs which consistently marginalize women. Overall, Palestinian society is underpinned by patriarchal structures and discourses, which in turn allows more crimes against women.

We at the Palestinian Working Women Society for Development, from the standpoint of defending the rights of women and girls and on the basis that these rights are indivisible human rights, not up to interpretation or compromise, call on all decision-makers to:

- Immediately pass the Family Protection from violence bill into law
- Approve the draft Palestinian Penal Code in order to hold accountable those who commit or incite crimes of violence against women and to deter future perpetrators
- Work to fundamentally change curricula, societal discourse and social norms to become more protective and inclusive of the rights of women and girls, including education on human rights and gender equality and the abolition of regressive stereotypes of women and girls