



Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development

Position Paper on Gender Based Violence in Light of the Absence of the Family Protection Law

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Website: www.pwwsd.org

Email: pwwsd@pwwsd.org

The paper was prepared by Amin Inabi

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Introduction:

This paper comes as part of continuous efforts exerted by the Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development (PWWSD) to exact policies and legislations to form a legal and societal environment against Gender Based Violence in general, and domestic violence in particular. This paper focuses on the importance of developing a family protection legal framework consistent with the 'Palestinian social contract' based on equality, as stipulated in the Palestinian Declaration of Independence and in the Palestinian Basic Law. In accordance with international standards for human rights in general and women's rights in particular. indivisible and inalienable in the international human rights system, especially those contained in the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Universal Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women and United Nations Security Council resolutions related to women's right to protection against all forms of violence.

The ratification of the State of Palestine of international conventions entails legal obligations to address the rights of women and girls to protection, and to human security in both the private and public spheres. This no doubt requires a political will to address domestic violence using penal, preventive, and remedial measures through enforcing non-impunity for perpetrators of violence.

Progress in family protection legislations and policies in Kuwait, Lebanon, Jordan, Tunisia, Morocco, and Egypt through the creation of laws dedicated to addressing domestic violence. The most prominent of which is the Arab Model Law, which has contributed towards the maturation of the process of developing the Family Protection Act in Palestine. It was a long process that witnessed cooperation and coordination among civil society organizations, some governmental ministries, and official committees. However, violence against women reached unprecedented levels, especially during the Covid19 pandemic especially in light of the intensification of the Israeli occupation's violence, which no doubt contributes towards exacerbating all forms of community violence.

The Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development (PWWSD) presents this paper as added value to the efforts of the feminist movement working against violence in Palestine. The paper reflects the voices and visions of women survivors of violence, and women who resorted to the safe house in the Governorate of Nablus. The paper also provides input from the guidance work groups, and reflects their will to work towards putting the Act into force. This will form the basis for a community debate that engages women survivors of violence, and official and civil bodies to mobilize pressure and lobby for issuing the law. The outcomes and recommendations of the dialogue will feed into the roadmap related to countering Gender Based Violence through achieving human security by combating Gender Based Violence at the legislative level.

Concepts and content

Gender:

Gender refers to a socially constructed range of characteristics pertaining to, and differentiating between, femininity and masculinity. This includes norms, behaviors and roles and responsibilities associated with being a woman, man, girl or boy. The disparity in the definition between masculine and feminine is significant, proving that it is of a social origin, as each society sets its classifications based on its own logical criteria and justifications.¹

Gender Based Violence:

There are many terms used in various parts of the world under various political, social, economic, cultural and historic contexts. This variance in meaning becomes evident in feminist theories and in the various social, economic, and psychological sciences. There is a global trend that violence against women should be dealt with as Gender Based Violence, regardless of the place it occurs since it comes as a result of inequality and arbitrariness (unfairness). Gender based inequality leads to an imbalance in power relationships and roles and social engineering between women and men in both the private and public spheres. Societies tend to persist in controlling choices and paths, and even the existence of women from the standpoint of men's ownership over women from which violence derives its "illegal legitimacy". Violence comes in many forms, such as sexual violence, physical and domestic violence, human trafficking, forced marriage or early marriage, forced prostitution, sexual abuse and assault, economic abuse, deprivation of opportunities and services, and the deprivation of rights provided for by the human rights system. Additionally, the Israeli colonialism directly and indirectly oppresses women as part of the oppression practiced on the entire Palestinian people. Furthermore, the United Nations' definition of violence against women adopted by the legal community is as follows: "violence against women" means any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life".²

This paper pertains the definition of both gender and violence in accordance with social and human sciences, especially those linked to forming societal and individual awareness. This comes as part of PWWSD's role as a defender of women's human rights, particularly in combating Gender Based Violence and achieving societal change. This position paper focuses on the importance of legal protection in countering Gender Based Violence. The paper also focuses on messages, voices, and experiences of social workers, counselors and women survivors of violence. Moreover, it sheds a light on the legal and cultural frameworks in regional experiences of other Arab countries to

¹. Brugelo Cromer, Equality Education Handbook. UNESCO 2005.

². United Nations Website, Human Rights, Office of the High Commissioner.

develop an environment conducive to the security of women, which naturally leads to the protection of the family as a whole against violence.

Paper's objectives:

- 1- To highlight the importance of passing the Act which will in turn contributes to the reduction of domestic violence from the perspective of women who managed to exit the vicious cycle of violence.
- 2- To Support civil society organizations and service providers working on gender based equality by clearly identifying the legal parameters and definitions’.
- 3- Keypoint of entry to support legal protection against violence for women.

Background of the draft law:

- 1- The idea to work on a law for the protection of Palestinian families against violence stemmed from the feminist movement’s related efforts. There were several contributions by the Women’s Center for Legal Aid and Counseling in 2005 which were embraced by organizations working in psychological, legal, and social counseling fields including but not limited to PWWSD alongside other member organizations of the Palestinian Non-Governmental Organization against Domestic Violence against Women in the West Bank, and Amal Coalition in the Gaza Strip. Consciously organizing efforts to promote a legal environment free of discrimination including legal texts, procedures, laws, regulations, and policies to drive social change, to particularly address issues of Gender Based Violence aimed against women, children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities within a family. This effort coincided with an Arab, regional, and international movement countering violence against women which culminated in the promulgation of laws protecting families against violence in several countries.
- 2- The Ministry of Social Development’s Non-Sectoral Strategic Development Plan 2011-2013 included in its objectives; reduction of the percentage of violence directed at women, protection of women against all forms of domestic violence, and seeking the adoption of a Palestinian Family Protection law.
- 3- The National Strategic Plan for combating Violence against Women 2011-2019 stressed out the importance of adopting the Palestinian Family Protection Law to promote the legal framework by replacing and amending the outdated discriminatory laws which were issued over seventy years ago in Jordan and Egypt. These laws were enforced in the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967 following annexation by Jordan and Egypt.
- 4- The National Commission for Combating Violence against Women was established in 2014 by the Ministry of Social Development and the Ministry of Women’s Affairs and women’s organizations of the Palestinian civil society which submitted the draft law to the cabinet\Council of Ministers.
- 5- The draft law was put on the government’s 2013 legislative plan, and was disseminated to the competent ministries such as the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Women’s Affairs, and

the Ministry of Social Development. A national conference was held for the discussion of the draft law.

- 6- The Council of Ministers completed the law after three readings, and agreed to submit it to President Mahmoud Abbas for adoption in its final form in 2016. However, the law has not been adopted till this day.

The law addresses a set of issues in form of articles, most prominent of which are:

- The concept and determinants of domestic violence.
- Departments tasked with enforcing the law.
- Responsibilities of women protection guidance counselors (and any other family member victim to domestic violence).
- Protection and legal aid services.
- Protection orders and procedures.

7- Issues with adoption of the Family Protection Law:

The Family Protection Draft Law addresses a set of issues within the Palestinian community. There is a clear split in society between those opposing and supporting the content and terms of references of the draft law. The various interviews, working groups, and literature reviews facilitated on July 2021 by the researcher revealed both points of view. Below are some examples of these views:

- Several points of view emerged during the discussion on the draft law. And despite the importance of this law, and the necessity to enforce it in order to achieve protection for victims and rehabilitation for offenders, there were several opposing and supporting views.
- The supposition related to the importance of the adoption of the law as a significant factor that will reduce the number of battered women still needs to be ascertained, especially in light of the dominant narrative in the Palestinian society which is brought about by the patriarchal, social, and cultural structure in the society. The importance of including an indicator concerning this supposition in relevant future surveys by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics must be reiterated.
- Violence against women is linked to the patriarchal culture dominant in the Palestinian society. This culture is based on discrimination against women, and was previously reflected, and remains very prevalent in laws and regulations in force in Palestine till this day. This despite the developments to civil, economic, social, and cultural rights' system, and despite the ratification by the Palestinian Authority of the international conventions dealing with these rights. However, the Palestinian Authority's failure to publish them in the official gazette hinders the actual implementation of their provisions and articles at the national level, in addition to the lack of consistency of Palestinian laws, or laws in force from various sources with these conventions. By contrast, there are many religious interpretations by the political Islam community which strengthen the patriarchal system and resist comprehensive change of all articles discriminating against women.

- The draft law did not address the violence resulting from the Israeli occupation’s practices, and kept it separate from Gender Based Violence in society. The Israeli occupation’s violence and its impact leave clear traces on society as a whole and on women in particular, and could be addressed in the law through articles that remedy the impact of occupation on the dynamics of gender relations in the family through articles and provisions that address prevention and protection.
- The reference of the draft law is international conventions related to the eradication of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW), which the Palestinian Authority had ratified in 2014 but has not published in the official gazette. This signifies the lack of the political will to truly implement it on the ground.

Important statistics and numbers related to Gender Based Violence

- The draft law relies on the reality of statistical indicators published by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, and percentages documented by the police force.

The following table contains the number of femicide cases in the West Bank and Gaza Strip

Year	Number
2014	15
2015	23
2016	29
2017	24
2018	23
2019	23 ³
2020	37 ⁴
2021	20 ⁵

These numbers in the various years show the size of the phenomenon in the Palestinian society which stem from various motives related to violence against women.⁶

- Additionally, women’s organizations’ hotlines (PWWSD) registered increasing numbers of reporting cases of violence against women. The PWWSD working group put together a paper on the cases of violence, detailing in numbers the size and level of violence against women in 2019 by governorate. The paper was issued by PWWSD.⁷

³Palestinian center for policy research and strategic studies (MASARAT. Jerusalem

⁴Palestinian Non-Governmental Organization Against Domestic Violence Against Women. Unpublished statistic.

⁵Ibid

⁶“Discrimination and Violence against Women”, a statistical report on the cases of femicide documented by the Women’s Center for Legal Aid and Counseling during the years 2016-2018/2019.

⁷Fitna Khalifa. Report on cases of violence in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development (PWWSD), 2019

- The percentages of the spread of Gender Based Violence from records of PWWSD for 2019.
- **Table (1): Cases of violence by governorate**

Governorate	Number	Percentage
Gaza	104	27%
Ramallah	45	12%
Hebron	44	11%
Bethlehem	31	8%
Jenin	2	1%
Nablus	63	16%
Tulkarm	102	26%
Total	391	100%

- During the Covid19 pandemic, an importance emerged to provide protection and means of safety and legal references to service providers as indicated in a report issued by PWWSD in 2020 and published on its official website.
- The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics conducted a study on violence in the Palestinian society which produced data worth review. The results showed a decrease in the levels of violence compared to the years between 2011 and 2019 by approximately 27%. Most prevalent forms of violence in the Palestinian society will be addressed in following pages.⁸

The reason for this decrease is that more than half the women (61%) exposed to violence by their husbands remained silent. We believe that social norms and upbringing patterns are directly responsible for this behavior.

Below are some of the factors contributing to these low numbers:

1. The fear of the victim for her own safety from even more violence if she reports it to anybody.
2. Fear of the feeling of shame should her story spread in the community of her abuse, and hence the fear of stigmatization. In most cases the victim is blamed rather than the offender who eludes punishment.
3. The feelings of guilt some women have, and the feeling that they have somehow done something wrong, and that punishment is a deserved and a natural behavior by the husband.
4. Fear of some women of the abandonment by the offender whom which she and her children depend on financially in a society that lacks the basis for social protection.
5. The belief of some women that violent behavior is a natural thing that occurs to women during their life.

⁸Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, "The Preliminary Results of the Survey on Violence in the Palestinian Society", November 2019.

6. Fear of not receiving support by family and relatives for herself and her children should she decide to report the violence, as victims' children are not generally welcome by family and relatives.
7. There is a perception, though limited, yet it does exist in the Palestinian society that affords respect to a woman who keeps silent when exposed to violence, and endures these conditions for the sake of her children and home for fear of societal blame. Sometimes society justifies the violence, and even forgives the offender.

Statistics have shown that:

- 48% have spoken to their spouses and asked them to stop assaulting them.
- 24% resorted to their parents' home, or the home of a sister or brother.
- 20% did not leave home, but spoke to parents or other members of the family.
- 6% spoke to a coworker for advice and guidance.
- 3% filed a law suit against the husband.
- 1% went to a police station or a family protection unit to file a complaint against the husband, or to seek help or protection from the husband.
- 1% sought psychological, social, or legal assistance at relevant organizations.

The study conducted by the Central Bureau of Statistics showed that the most prevalent type of violence was physical violence. Table below shows the percentages:

Area	2011	2019
West Bank	%17	%12
Gaza Strip	%35	%26

Economic violence⁹

Area	2011	2019
West Bank	%42	%29
Gaza Strip	%88	%47

There is a need to study the reasons behind the drop in the percentage of economic violence in the Gaza Strip from 88% in 2011 to 47% in 2019.

These statistics underscore the importance of the existence of a Family Protection Law. Despite its importance, the draft law was subject to a set of supporting and opposing points of view during the period of its discussion. There was considerable debate over the draft law between women's

⁹Economic violence means here the deprivation of her inheritances, exploitation of women in work with wages less than men and long working hours compared to wages given, deprivation of women ownership whether in terms of family property or ownership of their wages or salaries, and other such infringements on women's economic rights.

organizations and pertinent ministries for its adoption. While other bodies such as some Hebron clans, Hizb-Ut-Tahrir (Islamic Party of Liberation), and some Share a professors at some universities and other clans applied pressure to try and stop the adoption of this law. Mosab Abu-Arqoub, spokesperson for the Liberation Party stated to the Al-Arabi Al-Jadid magazine that the party has reviewed the draft law and rejects it. He said: “our rejection is because the draft law is merely an extension of the implementation of the CEDAW convention which contravenes with Islamic provisions governing relations between men and women, and personal status in general. These provisions are the religious provisions related to men’s (father and brother) guardianship over women. These laws, including the Family Protection Law aim to abolish this guardianship, and make it a matter related to laws derived from CEDAW”.¹⁰

Identifying the problem

The failure to enact the law is linked also to the onslaught by what is called “the Mass Mobilization to Overthrow SEDAW”, and by the conservative community that works to keep the social engineering related to the gender power balance compliant to customs and traditions lined out by the patriarchal system, and works to revive discriminatory legislations.

These powers and community settings neglected the fact that the levels of violence against women are still high, and that the phenomenon of femicide is still ongoing constituting a constant violation and premeditated crime to extract the right to life, and infringes on women’s rights. This adds another compounded layer of suppression that only increases the suffering of women, and deprives them of attaining their full and equal rights to education, health, and inheritance, in addition to the right to work and earn equal pay, rights of ownership and housing, and rights incurred by marriage or divorce.

The issue is that all the above stated forms of violence reaffirm that internal societal violence is still rooted in the community’s rhetoric, and intersects with the violence of the Israeli occupation to produce a heavy burden shouldered by women who form half of the society in a country which’s main asset is human resources. According to all social and humanitarian studies, no homeland can be built, and no sustainable development can be achieved when women are repressed and enslaved through compounded violence inflicted by the society and the Israeli occupation. The Israeli occupation practices violence against members of the Palestinian society as a whole, and women, being part of this society suffer just as other members of the society from all sorts of violence inflicted by the occupation such as: murder, injuries, arrest, in addition to violation of an array of rights such as the right to housing, right to movement, deprivation of access to health and educational services, access to land and production resources. Types of violence extend to include the negative impacts of other actions committed by the Israeli occupation such as blockades, military incursions, land confiscation and building of settlements, destruction of property and

¹⁰*Family Protection, a Palestinian Dispute on the Family Protection Draft Law*, Fatima Mishellah, Al-Arabi Al-Jadid 2020.

houses which all have detrimental psychological and economic impacts on society as a whole, and leaves even more visible scars on women and their stability and various rights in life due to the roles women play under gender divisions, particularly roles of prevention and protection through absorbing the physical and psychological outcomes of violence inflicted by occupation and community, and which are faced by each and every member of the family due to disability, martyrdom, arrest, or unemployment, etc.

Another issue is community violence resulting from the patriarchal system prevalent in society, and which controls the life, thought, behavior, choices, and appearance of women, in addition to some laws and regulations in place such as the Jordanian Personal Status Law of 1976, and negative social practices that discriminate against women.

Gender Based Violence is a manifestation of an imbalance in power relationships between men and women throughout history. This led to the dominance of men over women, and led to discriminatory practices against women preventing their advancement, because violence deprives women of their human rights as citizens, including the right to life, work, movement, personal safety, and the right to freedom and physical and mental protection, and the right to protection against torture or abuse. When talking about equality and justice for women, and though the State of Palestine unreservedly ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 2014, and despite the expanding of legal benefits for women in several policies, including minor amendments which took place on the Jordanian Personal Status Law No. 16 of 1960, all this remains limited, and is in large part a mere formality due to several factors, most prominent of which is the existence of the discriminatory Personal Status Law and Penal Law which are based on a patriarchal philosophy that is non-committed to equality.

To prevent the spread of the phenomenon of violence in the Palestinian society, women's access to legal justice must be ensured. This requires states to draft and implement policies which promote equality between men and women and eliminate discrimination.¹¹

- The right to access justice and legal protection in general is crucial, as laws as a whole are considered to be the corner stone for good governance and democracy. This requires the achievement of equality between genders where all are equal before the law which is considered a key element in the social change process. This necessitates efforts to bring about the Family Protection Law into the realm of reality, and to adopt it regardless of the different points of view formed around it.

Laws contribute towards the development of mechanisms for conform national and local trends with international criteria pertaining to human rights.

11The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Article (2).

Laws are considered the guarantee for individuals and institutions to practice individual and collective rights, and prevent the use of oppressive authority in all its forms, whether inside the community as a whole, or inside the family in particular.

The Family Protection Law, a national and legal entitlement

The importance of the Family Protection Law stems from the fact that it expresses entitlements of citizenship rights within their legal, social, and political aspects. This makes it incumbent upon all legal institutions and organizations working in the field of rights of children, women, the elderly and the disabled to work towards its adoption. Palestinian Authority areas still operate under laws issued by the British Mandate such as the Palestinian Penal Law No. 74 of 1936 enforced in the Gaza Strip, and the Jordanian Penal Law No. 16 of the year 1960 enforced in the West Bank. These laws are outdated and don't take into consideration the current developments that have taken place on the structure of the Palestinian society. It has become necessary to review these laws in light of the developments that have taken place in the world in terms of human rights and public liberties. In light of the international criteria related to human rights as contained in international treaties and conventions including, and as a result of Palestine's ratification of international treaties and conventions including CEDAW, as it has become necessary for Palestine's laws and regulations to take into account the international criteria to which Palestine is now party to. Therefore, it has become imperative to enact the Family Protection Law as a modern law with which takes on a binding nature that takes social resilience into account and considers the particularities of the Palestinian family.¹²

The significance of the adoption of this law lies in the following:

- Bridging of existing gaps between men and women in society, and to enhance rights of women and children and the Palestinian family.
- Providing protection for women against violence and discrimination and identifying legal mechanisms and procedures for the referral system and for coordination and networking between organizations working in this field. And though a draft law and referral systems do exist, they have yet to be officially published. There is a need for revision and development of the current referral system, as this system contains several gaps and shortcomings which became evident during the state of emergency declared to contain Covid19.
- There is a need to impose deterrent punishments and penal provisions against violators of women's rights which are included in the last version of the draft law which was approved by the government and civil committees, and which are in relative harmony with what was

¹²Policies' paper on the Family Protection Law, Women's Center for Legal Aid and Counselling 2017.

stipulated in international conventions, and which's legal essence does not contravene with Palestinian societal values linked to freedom, justice, and dignity.

- The law will bridge the gaps in the old legal and legislative environment, especially those that exists in the Penal Law which is supposed to be issued as a Palestinian legislation that enhances national sovereignty.
- Remedying the phenomenon of violence practiced on children and the disabled in marginalized segments of society.

Reasons for opposition to the Law:

Reservations on the idea of enacting a dedicated law for dealing with domestic violence

- The Law came from the top to the bottom and not the reverse, as it was the result of elitist action, and did not come as a result of community debate.
- Religious scholars were not consulted prior to starting work on the law.
- The law goes against elements in the societal culture and threatens family unity and privacy, and that domestic violence should be viewed as a private matter.

Reservations on content:

- The criminalization of gender-based discrimination contravenes with clear religious legislations related to guardianship over women, inheritance, divorce and alimony.
- Infringement on the privacy of sexual relations between married couples.
- Fiscal relations between father and son, husband and wife.

These are examples of the reservations which we include here as examples of the views justifying the opposition to the issuance of this law. These reservations can be debated as they are not life issues nor do they contravene with religion, especially since the opposing segments view themselves as keen on preserving social cohesion and family unity. This however does not absolve them from bestowing legitimacy on violence. This rigid stance on the law and the constant attack on the feminist movement are considered to be the toughest challenges facing the adoption of the law.

Religious parties, especially the Islamic Party of Liberation and some clans and leadership figures in the Palestinian Authority led the opposition to the adoption of the draft law. Palestine's Chief Justice Mahmoud Al-Habash stated: "according to the Palestine Constitutional Court ruling in 2018, international conventions ratified by Palestine are to be considered binding as long as they do not contradict with the national, religious, or cultural identity, otherwise Palestine is not obliged to implement them". The Chief Justice went on to say: "Islamic Sharia's stature is higher than that

of the law and higher than any political commitments, including commitments to international laws or conventions”.¹³

Reasons why the law remained suspended for over fifteen years without adoption:

Women’s organizations have been since 2005 pushing in the direction of the adoption of the Family Protection Law. This law will provide protection and achieve justice for battered women. Achievements of the various activities accumulated, and the demands escalated through a set of national activities which were able to commit the pertinent ministries to work with the Council of Ministers towards issuing the law. A national committee was formed to review and inform the draft law, and to engage the various sectors in society in debate around the draft law to provide feedback and suggestions regarding its formulation. The draft law was finally produced in its final form and came into light for commencement of the procedures necessary for its adoption by the Palestinian President. This took place in 2018 after the draft was discussed at the Council of Ministers in two readings. At the time, several activities were held in support of the law and others against it under various excuses such as that the law contradicts teachings of Islam, or goes against community values. Some members of clans and conservative religious parties and other figures scurried to disrupt adoption of this 22 page law with its 52 articles.

Summary and recommendations

Despite the importance of the Family Protection Law, it remains tucked into the drawers of the Council of Ministers, with no intention to submit it to the President for promulgation via a presidential decree law which has been common practice in the past few years due to the disruption of the work of the Legislative Council. Some government entities claim that the delay is due to the high cost of the law, since adoption of the law will entail an increase in the number of safe houses for victims of violence, and an increase in the number of guidance counselors for dealing with battered women, in addition to all the extra supplies needed to implement the law properly. The undeclared reason however, which is the true reason, is that there is no consensus on it by all segments of the Palestinian society, and the government is not about to place controversial laws that will cause society to rise up against for abolishment such as what took place with the Social Welfare Law which was abolished despite its great importance and the great need of society for it. In the political sense this is considered a political compromise at the expense of social issues, and at the expense of the marginalized segments which consider the law their only savior and primary guarantor of the rights system. Political compromises and bowing to the will of a political faction or party has an adverse impact on the government’s policy in following up on citizens’ issues, and encourages procrastination in many issues.

¹³*The Family Protection Draft Law Crisis in Palestine, a Reading in the Factors for Acceptance and Rejection, What Next*, Hassan Imran, Al-Quds website, 2020.

Below are a set of recommendations that must be worked on in order to reopen debate on the law, and to exert pressure on the political level of government for its adoption and enforcement:

- Pressure and advocacy need to be increased to push for the adoption of the law. Alliances must be formed in participation, and under the umbrella of the competent ministries and civil society organizations.
- A serious democratic dialogue must be opened with those working against adoption of the law to hear their perspective and reservations with regards to the Family Protection Law and its content.
- Workshops and meetings must be held with the public in all areas to explain the law, and to explain its philosophy and significance, and also to disprove what has been said about it by those opposing the law, especially what was said about it contradicting Islamic teachings. This of course requires the enlistment of the help of all women's organizations and the help of international organization to help fund this effort.
- Competent official government bodies and ministries (Ministry of Social Justice/Ministry of Women's Affairs) must be asked to open an in-depth and serious dialogue with opposing political figures with influence over decision making to persuade them not to intervene in the work of the said ministries, and to try and understand their reasons for rejection and the reservations they have against the law.
- Due to the government's weakness and the lack of the political will to adopt and enforce the law, it is necessary to form societal forces to exert pressure and hold public activities to pressure the government to adopt the law. This task should be initiated and led by women's organizations and backed by political parties supporting the adoption of the law.
- There is clear confusion noticeable in the Palestinian Authority with regards to the Family Protection Law. This was manifested in its failure to adopt it, and its return to the government despite the fact that the law had already gone through two readings. This is a sign of weakness on part of the Palestinian Authority in face of the strong attack on the draft law. This will require an increase in demands for adoption, in addition to activities to counter this fear and confusion, and to demand the government to assume its role in the legal protection of women against the ever-increasing violence.
- Poor awareness and lack of awareness raising activities in the community with regards to violence within the Palestinian society requires increased awareness campaigns on domestic violence, its impact on Palestinian families, and the negative psychological, social, and economic impact it has on women.
- It is imperative to maintain momentum in dealing with the Family Protection Law. The Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Ministry of Social Justice must make it their number one priority on their agendas.
- It is crucial to help women survivors of violence and battered women to present their case in cooperation with women's organizations.

- The existence of a procedures manual clarifying mechanisms for dealing with the law and explaining its articles is a must.

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