



18 March 2021

Statement to UN Human Rights Council, 46th regular session (22 February to 23 March 2021)

Item 7: Human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories

This statement is supported by the General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW).¹

Despite the continuous efforts of Palestinian rights groups – including those of Palestinian women's groups and feminist activists – to document, and raise awareness about the gendered impacts of the Israeli occupation on women and girls in the occupied Palestinian territories, the international community still fails to address this issue. Today, the burden for Palestinian women and girls has even increased. Not only do they suffer from continuous violations of human rights resulting from Israel's expanding annexation and militarization, they are also suffering the most from the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Israel is not fulfilling its responsibility as the occupying power to provide vaccines to the Palestinian population, while about 60% of the West Bank is still not under full Palestinian control, and as Gaza is under continuous strict blockade.

This situation is further shrinking the spaces available for Palestinian women leaders and activists to improve the conditions of Palestinian women, and to promote the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda in Palestine. In spite of this, the National Coalition for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 headed by the General Union of Palestinian Women, as well as other civil society organizations worked closely with the government in the development of a new National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. However, these efforts will never be fully implemented until the continuous impunity enjoyed by the government of Israel is properly addressed.

We urge the Human Rights Council to:

- Adopt a gender-responsive approach in all deliberations about the occupied Palestinian territories in order to explicitly reflect and address the gendered impacts of the occupation in all relevant resolutions;
- Support civil society's efforts on the implementation of the new National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security and recognize that the occupation is a threat to Palestinian women's peace and security;
- Break the cycle of impunity of Israel and hold it accountable for its routine breaches of International Humanitarian Law and violations of International Human Rights Law through appropriate use of the range of actions available to the international community to facilitate justice and peace such as criminal investigation of human rights violations as well as effective and incremental countermeasures, including arms embargoes, as recommended by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967;²
- Call on Israel to fulfil its responsibility as the occupying power to provide vaccines to the Palestinian population.

¹ The GUPW, a Palestinian NGO established in 1965 as one of the leading bases of the Palestinian Liberation Organization, aims at organizing and reinforcing the participation of Palestinian women at the political, social and economic levels, and enhances women empowerment and development to enable them to participate effectively at all levels. This is done through working with the different political parties in the oPt.

² See Situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, report by the The Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 to the General Assembly, UN Index: A/74/507, paragraphs. 72-78, and paragraph. 80