

The Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy

MIFTAH



ANNUAL REPORT 2014



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VISION

An independent, democratic and sovereign Palestinian state, which grants Palestinians their basic rights, preserves their dignity, and enjoys international recognition and respect.

MISSION

Established in Jerusalem in December 1998, **MIFTAH** seeks to promote the principles of democracy and good governance within various components of Palestinian society; it further seeks to engage local and international public opinion and official circles on the Palestinian cause. To that end, **MIFTAH** adopts the mechanisms of an active and in-depth dialogue, the free flow of information and ideas, as well as local and international networking.



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Who's who at MIFTAH

Lily Feidy	Chief Executive Officer
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Ghada Al-Araj	Services
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Farha Abu Al-Heja	Field Coordinator - Jenin
Raja' Sorgholi	Field Coordinator - Tulkerm
Rasha Mousa	Field Coordinator - Bethlehem
Maysoun Al-Qawsmeh	Field Coordinator - Hebron
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Najat Ermeleh	Field Coordinator - Jericho
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Abdallah Qadah	Intern - Youth Network
Najwan Abu Nejem	Intern - Youth Network
Rana Khatab	Intern - Amal Project
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Political Context

Year 2014 has brought political complications in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) and more challenges for the Palestinian Authority (PA). The continued siege imposed by the Israeli occupation on Gaza Strip, the continued Israeli occupation violations of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), the failure in advancing peace talks, and the deteriorating economic situation; all-in-all continue to hinder the social, economic and political development of the Palestinians.

The impact of the Israeli occupation aggression on Gaza on 8 July, 2014 has been widely researched with many reports confirming the state of deprivation and humanitarian crisis in Gaza. According to OCHA's revised overview of September 2014 "around 1,473 Palestinian civilians were killed, including 501 children and 257 women. Many fatalities involved multiple family members, with at least 142 Palestinian families having three or more members killed in the same incident, for a total of 739 fatalities. According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health, over 11,100 Palestinians, including 3,374 children and 2,088 women, were injured"¹.

The Israeli occupation including Israeli settlers' escalation of violence against Palestinians in the West Bank and east Jerusalem and the shocking emergence of voices within the Israeli society calling for rape and killing of Palestinian women have led to fear and psychological harm. Notwithstanding the occupying power's announcement to build 700 homes in east Jerusalem and the excessive use of force by Israeli forces in crowd control situations.

In the political process, Palestinian women have not been represented neither in reconciliation talks between Fatah and Hamas nor in peace negotiations held in Egypt. A unity government was announced in April 2014, bringing together Hamas and the PA and a technical cabinet was appointed with the expectations that this would be a precursor to possible elections in the oPt. Consequently, Israel decided to suspend peace talks with Palestinians after Fatah-Hamas deal, which, in fact, has not been materialized until present.

During this period, there has been an absence of responding to the special needs of women in relation to the application of International Humanitarian Law and UNSCRs for advancing a Palestinian Women, Peace and Security Agenda (WPSA). It has become obvious that The International Human Rights framework has failed to fulfil commitment to the WPSA. At the same interval, Israeli occupation continues to limit access to justice due to limited Palestinian jurisdiction over Areas B and C and over crimes perpetrated by Israelis.

Consequently, MIFTAH has developed advocacy strategy which prioritizes women, peace and security and calls on countermeasures to strengthen networking among human rights and women rights organizations working on Human Rights and International Humanitarian law at the local, national, regional and international levels, with a clear mission to report concerns to States Representatives to the Palestinian Authority and request actions taken to 'stop' violations. The collective actions of women's rights organizations at the national and global levels are important to demand full involvement and equal participation in the context of the occupation, promoting women's rights and international solidarity to ensure women's protection and security. These efforts are supported by the PA's joining International Human Rights Treaties in April, 2014, including, among others, CERD, CAT, CEDAW, CRPD, and CRC, which at the same time creates more challenges for women organizations and movements to make these commitments applicable.

With the failure of years of peace negotiations with Israel to achieve the Palestinian dream of an independent state, The Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, moved to join the international criminal court on 31 December, 2014. Abbas signed the Rome statute governing the court and 19 other international agreements, potentially opening the way to Palestinians to pursue Israel for war crimes in the court. This move by the PA has followed the rejection by the UN security council of a Jordanian-backed resolution on behalf of Palestine calling for the end to the Israeli occupation by 2017 and the establishment of a Palestinian state based on pre-1967 borders.

This overall system of distortion drove MIFTAH to adopt measures and policies that do not absorb the aberrant patterns of behavior generated by the occupation but to render the health of the society through rule of law and good governance as being paramount foundation of nation building and peace making.

¹ http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/gaza_crisis_appeal_9_september.pdf

Progress towards Strategic Goals

MIFTAH runs different programmes in the West Bank and Gaza Strip through 8 field coordinators located in 8 districts (7 in the West Bank and 1 in Gaza Strip). MIFTAH's programmes/projects deal with good governance and human rights perspectives along with long-standing endeavor in dealing with empowerment of women and youth and combating corruption. The programmes aim at generating knowledge and involvement in policy positions dealing with legislation, judiciary, law enforcement and recourse to law and justice. Fundamentally, MIFTAH adopts a broad-based approach, starting from civil society and grassroots and reaching decision-makers and practitioners. In this context, MIFTAH's attentiveness to security and justice is consistent with principles of Human Rights which focus on individual rights and freedoms as well as economic, cultural, social, territorial and political security.



6 This year, the Representative office of Norway, MIFTAH's long-term partner and core-funder, has initiated the process of an external evaluation of MIFTAH. The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the effectiveness of MIFTAH and to consider possible improvements to its structure, mandate, and operational modalities. The overall positive assessment and the recognition of the progress of the work achieved by MIFTAH so far have encouraged commitment to follow through the recommendations of the evaluation.

As part of MIFTAH's institutional development plan, MIFTAH has conducted strategic planning review for its Strategic Planning Document "2012-2016"; following the approval of the Board of Directors, an updated Strategy is being finalized for implementation during the period 2015 – 2016.

This year's report outlines MIFTAH's two major strategic objectives:

1. To empower effective leadership within all components of Palestinian society in order to enhance democracy and good governance and raise public awareness concerning the rights and responsibilities of good citizenship;
2. To influence policy and legislation to ensure their safeguarding of civil and social rights for all sectors and their adherence to principles of good governance.

Respectively, this Report² showcases achievements during the period 1 January - 31 December, 2014.

Summary of programs, operations and activities

1. Participation Enhancement Programme

Youth and Women Empowerment

This programme aims to assess the practicality of youth and women social, political and economic participation to adopt activities that foster meaningful and effective participation in informed, transparent, respectful, rights-based, accountable, youth-friendly, and inclusive manners. Following is an epigrammatic overview of the projects:

1.1 Enhancement of youth participation in civil society, politics and decision-making processes in Palestine



The results achieved in 2014 have witnessed greater integration of youth and young women into the socio-political systems and consequently enhanced their participation in societal development. MIFTAH has raised the capacities of “The Social and Political Palestinian Youth Network” through intensive trainings that

Mohammed Abu Ras: a success story that kept on going

Ramallah – Mohammed Abdallah Abu Ras is a man in the prime of his youth. From the village of Sawiyeh in the Nablus district, Abu Ras has a BA in political science and an MA in political planning and development from Al Najah University. He established and now heads the “Youth Center for Development and Creativity”, his own personal stepping stone towards the future. His journey has been a road paved with perseverance and hard work and MIFTAH was one of the main pit stops along the way. He became involved in MIFTAH’s Palestinian political and social youth network and remains an active member in the network today, just like many Palestinian youths who have been part of this experience on their own journeys of success.

MIFTAH, the first of many beginnings

Abu Ras’ first encounter with MIFTAH was when he was still a university student. His friend, Kareem Abu Kharroub, was already a member of the Youth Network and introduced him to MIFTAH. “I volunteered with many other organizations in the past, but what I found in MIFTAH was something completely different,” Abu Ras says, citing the organization’s focus on follow-up, sustainability and ongoing contact. “The training I received at MIFTAH made me think in a completely different way.”

Abu Ras gives credit to MIFTAH’s “Kumi” approach for this new way of thinking, which it employs in many of its youth trainings. He says Kumi had a major impact on him in various facets of his life. “I wrote a research paper on the Iraqi crisis based on this methodology,” says Abu Ras. “Even my university professors were surprised at this new method I employed.” Abu Ras says he adopted this same approach throughout his Master’s degree. “Then I started to think of setting up my own project, something I love. So I established the Youth Center for Development and Creativity in March, 2014. “ He explains that one section of the center is focused on public opinions and training research, while another focuses on women and youth issues.

Self-reliant

Until now, the center is completely self-reliant, says Abu Ras, explaining that they largely depend on a

pool of volunteers from the center itself. One project the center is hoping to achieve once it secures funding is setting up “fun rooms” in government hospitals. They received approval from all the relevant parties and officials but need the money to put the idea into action.

Despite the setback, Abu Ras is determined to push on. “We started thinking of an alternative, a training program we call ‘A smile of hope’.” Abu Ras explains that the center organized several activities that targeted various sectors of society, including psychological release training, which he conducted himself with the help of volunteers.

Cooperation and partnership

Abu Ras is hoping to establish some sort of cooperation and partnership with MIFTAH, saying he still benefits from the organization’s trainings, especially in the field of fighting corruption. He also trains others in this field, which he believes will help develop his center and push it towards more self-reliance.

Abu Ras says he feels indebted to MIFTAH for the moral support it has given him, granting the organization an honorary plaque in appreciation of its efforts and the changes it helped make within him. “The biggest impact MIFTAH left on me is self-confidence. It gave me that push towards achieving my dreams and reaching decision-making positions. My goal is to become an economy or local government minister one day. It is a dream I will not give up on.”

As to why he chose these two positions in particular, Abu Ras says it is an age thing. He says all the previous local government and economy ministers were middle age and therefore were not successful in achieving the aspired goals. “But with a younger man like myself, who is motivated and ready to work, we can reach these goals and youths will finally be able to actively participate in the decision-making process.”

In a final tribute to MIFTAH, Mohammed Abu Ras says: “I will never forget what MIFTAH did for me. It was my first real step on the road to success.”

employed, among others, the KUMI methodology³. The group comprise 55 active youth members from different universities and academic institutions in the West Bank. In 2014, 27 new members were recruited by MIFTAH in the network. Two intensive 'Kumi' training workshops, 2 book review sessions, 3-day youth camp, and 2 round table sessions, that were conducted throughout the year have raised the capacities of the network members on conflict transformation, participatory strategic planning, good citizenship, governance system and anti-corruption.

As a result of the MIFTAH's actions in 2014, The Network's internal structure has become institutionalized; internal committees were formed. The Network constitutes an important mechanism in giving the chance for young people to participate in MIFTAH's actions, allowing the voice of youth to be heard, engaging youth in discussions with officials and decision makers, and integrating young people's concerns and expectations into social, political and economic policies.

MIFTAH has also challenged the traditional forms of communication by using ICT to enhance youth engagement and participation especially in civic activities. The use of social media (i.e. Twitter and Facebook⁴) by members of the Youth Network has fostered the sharing of information and opportunities for members to express their ideas, expand their social networking, discuss the challenges they face, find common causes and act collectively.

1.1.1 Promoting the Role of Youth in Anti-Corruption Movements and Advocacy

MIFTAH aims to influence policy and decision-makers to engage Palestinian youth in the design, implementation and monitoring of anti-corruption national strategies and programmes.

This project has empowered a group of Palestinian youth to take action and move forward in anti-corruption efforts. Activities encompassed 6-day Training-of-Trainers (ToT) workshop for 27 members of the Youth Network whose capacities and knowledge were raised on anti-corruption national Laws and international

³ KUMI methodology was developed by MIFTAH and partner organizations as a tool within a larger approach to engage conflicts, an approach which we refer to as "Social Transformation in Conflict" (STIC).

⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/420687581312486/>

agreements, youth facilitation and leadership skills/techniques to conduct awareness campaigns to transform the knowledge on anti-corruption mechanisms for their young peers at universities. As a result, the group members became able to mobilize local communities and citizens to combat corruption through a public awareness campaign on anti-corruption in the West Bank. As a result: a) four awareness workshops were conducted and facilitated by the trained young activists in four main Palestinian universities; Birzeit University, Al Najah University, Hebron University, Bethlehem University. The workshops targeted around 112 university students; b) 30 network members managed one interactive 'in-the-street' day which conducted in 5 main cities in the West Bank (Hebron, Nablus, Bethlehem, Tulkarem and Ramallah), through which awareness was spread among citizens and people were encouraged to join national efforts to combat corruption. More than 200 citizens were interviewed by the Network members.



On the occasion of 2014 International Anti-Corruption Day (IACD),

- A. MIFTAH's Social and Political Palestinian Youth Active Network produced and broadcasted a short-film that portrayed the youth opinion on how corruption affects their lives and what roles they can play to combat corruption. The film

delivers clear messages that focus on corruption as a major crime that hinders national development efforts and its negative impact on the social structure, mainly affecting youth. The film-cast calls for national joint cooperation between relevant parties to draw an end to this crime, and the responsibility of youth and the public to take a leading role as advocates for anti-corruption reforms to achieve demonstrable results through promoting human progress and development. The film was broadcasted and published in “Al-Falastinieh Satellite Channel” and “Palestine Satellite Channel”, and on the websites of MIFTAH, PACC and UNDP/PAPP.

Short Film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QqGllve9nRc>
 Al-Falastenieh Interview: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=elsrEfuWaFw&app=desktop>
 Local Radio al Rabiah (4): <http://www.r4fm.ps/index.php?p=page&id=2&nid=4796>

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- B. Members of the Youth Network have jointly developed a creative idea using the first of its kind flash (smart) mob that aimed to promote the role of Palestinian youth in combating corruption. Given this new experience, members of the youth network worked together in an organized manner on a large scale to produce and perform a spontaneous performance which comprised of Palestinian traditional dance, known as the “dabkeh”. Around 60 young members in the Youth Network performed the traditional “dabkeh” to the music of “al-howara” and spread a very simple message: “the search for a corrupt free society starts with oneself”. The official performance of the flash mob took place in Birzeit University on 29 November, 2014, where around 60 young network members and students joined the performance inside the University. Around 500 students converged around the flash mob performance.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gdvIwZHhvPU>

1.2 Support Young Palestinian Women Political Leadership: Phase II: UNSCR 1325 in Action; Realizing UNDP’s 8 point Agenda

MIFTAH’s intends to advance the interests and enhance the capacities of young women in political influence and decision-making to become competent to assume higher positions. In 2014, MIFTAH and the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) implemented a mapping survey in academic institutions. The survey and a policy meeting held in December, 2014 with political leaders from different political factions held aimed to assess the Palestinian women and youth political narrative including records and statistics and identified obstacles and challenges

that hinder the Palestinian youth and women political participation. The sample study comprises 1,256 university and college students from the WB and GS. The survey was accomplished during the last quarter of 2014. The survey report is finalized by PCBS, shared with MIFTAH and ready to be announced by January 2015. An analytical report will be produced for advocacy with stakeholders and decision makers. Advocacy aims to change policies toward integrating women in the political processes.



In parallel, two groups of potential young women activists were formulated⁵ both in the West Bank (20) and Gaza Strip (25). The groups were intensively trained on “Advocacy and coalition-building”. Subsequently, and depending on the analytical report of the mapping survey, both groups will deliberately prioritize and identify topics for policy dialogue in order to highlight difficulties, and produce position papers in both the WB and GS to demand policy change.

A two-day stress relief session preceded the training of participants from Gaza Strip. The training was led by a psychodrama specialist to help the group overcome the stressful situation in Gaza Strip and the suffering from psychological repercussions left by the brutality of the 52-day aggression.

1.3 Development of local communities in the districts of the Jordan Valley and Jerusalem through income generation projects for women in rural areas

To contribute to the improvement of women's standards of living and economic status, increasing the level of women's productivity and enhancing women's social participation at the local community level, this project selected the most vulnerable areas in Palestine that suffer from increased poverty, high rates of women and youth unemployment, and the expansion of Israeli settlements and confiscation of lands. During the year 2014, 79 women from Jaba', Beit Sooriq and Bir Nabala in east Jerusalem (Area C) were supported with 13 small income-generating projects to help them fulfil their practical and strategic needs.

MIFTAH has bridged communication between the 79 women beneficiaries and the Ministry of National Economy. The Ministry has delivered awareness raising activities and training to those women on: a) how to ensure good quality of their products to become competitive and b) to become aware of official requirements and facilitating procedures made to register their projects in the chambers of commerce. The workshops and training sessions the women received on managing small projects helped develop their technical and vocational skills and raised their awareness of their rights as women. The increased awareness has empowered them socially and economically. The project also helped the women break away from the social and familial constraints imposed on them, which limit their ability to be involved in decision making at all levels. Their involvement in the projects helped change social perceptions of women in their communities and allowed for more acceptances of women in active roles, not to mention the obvious economic benefits reaped by these poorer families. Furthermore, the exchange of visits conducted by women from the Jordan Valley, Jericho and Tubas Local Councils helped promote networking between local communities, CBOs and local public institutes, and contributed to strengthening cooperation and integration of work in an orderly fashion.

⁵ MIFTAH's selection criteria: age (18-30 years old), level of participation and activism, level of political awareness and involvement, level of engagement in different community programs, initiatives and commitment, and geographical distribution

Amneh Abu Sbeitan: ‘What a difference it has made’

Amneh Abu Sbeitan from the village of Jiftlik in the Jericho and Jordan Valley district is amazed at the difference in herself, thanks to the skills she acquired from a training course entitled: “Communication and negotiations skills” organized by MIFTAH. The two-day course was offered to 16 women as part of MIFTAH's “Small income-generating projects for rural women” with funding from the Arab Fund.

Amneh, along with a group of women from her village, runs a chicken-raising project with the hopes that this project will help to economically empower them and depend on themselves so they can also support their families.

Now, months after their project was launched, Amneh and her colleagues say they can improve on their administration skills because of MIFTAH's workshop.

“Today I can run the project in a completely different way,” Amneh said. “When we first started, we really didn't know much, but now we have acquired the skills to run the project and how to communicate with people. Even if we wanted to think about starting a new project right now, we have a much clearer picture on how to go about it.”

Still, Amneh and her colleagues feel they need more training, namely in financial management, which she admits they have very little experience in.

Amneh and the other women however, said the communications and dialogue training had a huge impact on them, giving them an abundance of knowledge, skills and communication methods that they lacked in the past. They were even taught how to negotiate inside their own homes and in their communities and how to

connect with people. “The difference in us is incredible,” Amneh said.

MIFTAH coordinator in Jericho Najat Irmelieh said the participants learned ways of communicating and getting their message across successfully. They also learned skills for facilitating a discussion through a group of practical exercises. “Today they are much more convincing when addressing people whether inside their homes or in their community,” Irmelieh maintained.

Fida' Barghouti, the gender expert who gave the training, said the methods used were mostly based on the participatory approach and the ‘brainstorming method.’ It also included presenting photos and some case studies with the aim of better understanding the abilities and potentials of the groups so they could raise awareness and make social changes towards creating an equal-opportunity society.

Barghouti stressed on the importance of linking theoretical knowledge with training skills by following up with the participants in the field so that they could make progress especially on matters that take precedence in their lives. That is to say, the trainers adopted the methodology of learning through implementation to increase the effectiveness of the training courses' results.

The communications and negotiations skills training is a series of training courses given to 32 beneficiaries in the Jericho and Jordan Valley district. The training is also expected to offer the women additional communication skills between them as teams that promote team spirit and partnership ,with each group comprised of five to six women. The negotiations skills are expected to help the women in dealing with merchants and in the buying and selling process so they can secure their rights as producers without being exploited or marginalized.



1.4 Support Young Palestinian Women Leadership: Voices for Change

This project was completed in February 2014. It helped promote the importance of engaging the community decision-making, increasing community participation in promoting women's interests and bringing women's concerns to the social and political agenda. The project operated in 8 districts in the West Bank. Public meetings and awareness raising sessions have successfully contributed to bringing social issues, which are considered as sensitive by the conservative society, into public discussions at the local community level, especially in preventing and responding to gender-based violence in their communities. Other awareness raising activities, including billboards, murals, and broadcast TV and radio spots, helped promote social accountability and address actions to combat GBV, advocate for social justice and hold the government accountable towards its obligation under human rights laws to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights of girls and women.



1.5 Support Women's Transformative Leadership in Changing Times and Democratic Transition



MIFTAH has completed a number of interventions that aimed at empowering young political leadership role, including, among others, engaging youth activists in meetings with female political leaders. Around 430 citizens (75% females) were reached out through 44 awareness workshops led by 22 trained young activists, and 43 women participated in public meetings with the participation of only 7 men. Women issues were prioritized in public meetings; special concerns were given to Palestinian women working in settlements.

Training programmes, shadowing, exchange of visits, dialogue sessions with women political leadership, and 2 internship opportunities in other CSOs, helped increase the awareness of young activists to receive insight on how to follow-through and practice new leadership behaviours, information sharing, discussions, that provided opportunities to explore alternative strategies and building consensus, and increased capacities on civic participation, negotiations and advocacy skills.

Subhiyeh Zbeidat: 'If we women do not make a move, no one will do it for us'

Ramallah-- Upon her own initiative, Subhiyeh Zbeidat, a community leader from the village of Zbeidat in the Jericho and Jordan Valley district, decided to contribute to solving one of the problems in her remote and marginalized village: garbage.

This was not an easy task, but it was not impossible either, Zbeidat recounts. She said she realized that the training she received in courses offered by MIFTAH through- AMAL program "Supporting Women's Transformative Leadership in Changing Times – OPT" which is implemented in partnership with CSOs and Oxfam Novib and funded by SIDA - , to women in her region helped to deepen her understanding of her role as a community leader. "Before this, I never really realized that I could do anything for my community." Now, however, she does not hesitate in demanding her rights and the rights of the community in which she lives.

Zbeidat continues: "These training courses made us think about better ways to demand our rights, especially in regards to services and creative initiatives even if they are at the individual level," adding that these include advocacy and lobbying campaigns, writing petitions and participating in conferences and meetings. She says this has made women more influential in their communities overall. "It has also had an impact on me personally whether inside the home or outside of it through convincing others to participate in solving the village's problems and not wait for help from outside."

The village of Zbeidat is one of many that suffers from accumulated trash. While there is no designated garbage truck for the village, the Jericho Municipality volunteered one of its vehicles to come to the village to pick up garbage twice a week in exchange for a nominal fee of NIS10 per each family member. It is collected once every six months by the sanitation worker.

Zbeidat's mission along with several other women from the village is basically to collect the fees for garbage collection. It is an individual initiative, which she does perfectly. Not doing her job means that trash will accumulate in front of her house and the village will turn into a health disaster. "If we women do not make a move, no one will do it for us."

Zbeidat does not hide her excitement about what she is doing, especially since the people in her village have encouraged and cooperated with her. She says this initiative has reinforced her status and role as a women and a community leader, in addition to being able to translate all she learned in the training and meetings with decision-makers she attended into something real on the ground.

Nonetheless, one pending question remains about the problem of the tribal and familial structure in many villages and towns. This structure poses as an obstacle to accountability in addition to increasing the burdens and responsibilities on women who find themselves in between carrying out their reproductive roles, working in nearby settlements and creating initiatives to solve the problems in their communiti

1.6 Elections Support Programme

The equal engagement of Palestinian women in local political decision-making positions has far reaching implications for Palestinian society as it influences the Palestinian development agenda. The participation of women, together with men, serves a very significant objective for protecting the rights of women and girls through legislating democratic principles for their equal participation in the social, economic and political spheres. Empowering women in Local Government Units responds to one of the strategic objectives of MIFTAH that aims at empowering effective leadership to enhance democracy and good governance and raise public awareness towards the rights and responsibilities of active citizenship. This long standing programme has assisted elected women to reach decision making positions and their participation has been more visible in development processes in local councils and at the community level. As a result of this program, more women are better prepared to take on political roles and have become involved in political and community decision making. Also, communications and networking channels between women council members and officials have improved.

A national policy meeting was held in Ramallah with representatives of Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), political factions, the Central Elections Commission (CEC), mayors, female council members, and members of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC). The result of the meeting was to demand reactivating the Charter signed by political factions. The Charter's objective is to promote women's participation at the political decision-making level and within political factions. A major recommendation was to promote women's political inclusiveness through adopting a specialized capacity building programs to strengthen the capabilities of the candidates, and to confirm the role of civil society to empower and support the leadership role of women in the Palestinian society.

To provide a gender-based assessment of the management, control and decision-making power dynamics in these councils, MIFTAH held one policy meeting⁶ and produced one policy paper and one fact sheet⁷ on Women Political Participation in the Local Elections of 2012-2013. The Fact Sheet highlighted, documented and provided an initial review from a gender lens on the major indicators that are relevant to the elections process, before, during and after.

⁶ Recommendations highlighted in the annexed Semi-Annual Activity Report 2014.

⁷ Both published on MIFTAH's website: www.miftah.org

1.6.1 Improve the capacity of Local Government Units' Council Members in selected LGUs

MIFTAH aims at promoting democracy, gender-responsive governance and gender-sensitive leadership among female and male local council members. This project has raised the capacities of 142 members in 36 LGUs 11 governorates in the West Bank; namely, Tulkarem, Nablus, Jerusalem, Ramallah, Jericho and Jordan Valley, Jenin, Bethlehem, Hebron, Tubas, Salfit and Qalquilia.

The training strategy was based on a participatory approach. Feedback was received from participants on cases related to their field of work in the LGUs, and the challenges they faced at both the community and LGU management structure levels.

To ensure local ownership and sustain the work of MIFTAH, training activities involved representatives of the gender unit from the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG) branch offices from different districts in the training. Their developed capacities increase their support to female local council members.



1.7 Supporting Stability & Promoting Democracy in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (Tajaawob)

Diverse capacity building and training work, on strategic planning, code of conduct, citizenship, gender, accountability and transparency, budgeting and planning training workshops were conducted by MIFTAH in 5 target locations in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Trainings organized for around 90 community leaders, have helped strengthen analytical skills, communication and advocacy skills, strategic thinking, and gender concepts and roles. Around 48 community leaders in 5 target locations have contributed to developing advocacy plans and campaigns each in his own area to support the development of their local communities.

MIFTA supervised, monitored and facilitated the implementation of social accountability advocacy campaigns in Qalquilia District, namely: Azzoun 'Education with No Violence', Habla 'Protect our Children's Right to Play', and Qalquilia City 'Qalquilia the City of Tourism in 2015'.

Furthermore, analysis and assessment of the role and effectiveness of the Parent Councils (PCs) in the 5 target locations were conducted. The team along with community leaders identified gaps and weaknesses that are related to the role of PCs, developed interventions that will improve PCs roles, responsibilities and networking with the Ministry of Education (MoE), and presented the interventions to High Officials in the MoE. MIFTAH has therefore helped activate PCs in the 5 target locations and promoted engagement and communication mechanisms between PCs in target areas and the MoE.



2. Dialogue Enhancement Programme

MIFTAH aims to contribute to achieving more supportive policy environment for reform and democratization in Palestine, and to ensuring the responsiveness and transparency of the decision making processes and their outcomes. Policy dialogue meetings are one of MIFTAH's ongoing activities aimed at enhancing multichannel communication among all sectors of society including government, civil society organizations, and the private sector with a view of supporting policy formulation. The meetings address pressing issues by engaging academics, ministers, decision makers and politicians in open and candid exchange of information and ideas. From these meetings, a series of policy papers are published which formulate ideas, alternatives and strategies. The meetings and policy papers show the discernable impact MIFTAH has had on national decision making with many papers used by government officials as high up as the Prime Minister. In 2014 so far, two policy meetings were held with subsequent policy papers of the discussions and conclusions published:

- a. Making 2014 the year of solidarity with the Palestinian people⁸;
- b. National call on executive and legislative authorities to ratify Penal Code
- c. Promoting Political Participation of Women and Youth in Local Councils⁹,
- d. Promote national accountability on implementing the national referral system for battered women 'TAKAMOL'¹⁰ (policy paper is being finalized).

In addition, one public hearing session was held to "Review of Budget Statement Announced by the Ministry of Finance"¹¹.

Following is a short overview of projects achievements:

8 <http://www.miftah.org/Doc/PolicyPapers/Policy180214.pdf>

9 <http://www.miftah.org/Doc/PolicyPapers/Policy140314.pdf>

10 <http://www.miftah.org/Display.cfm?DocId=26270&CategoryId=36>

11 <http://www.miftah.org/Display.cfm?DocId=26229&CategoryId=36>

MIFTAH participates in a regional meeting of Women's Organizations to develop a regional strategy on women peace and security



Ramallah, Istanbul -At the beginning of December, MIFTAH participated in a regional meeting of women's organizations to discuss national plans for implementing women, peace and security agendas in the Middle East and North Africa – including UNSCR 1325, 2122, CEDAW and GR 30, and Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). Women's organizations from Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Yemen, Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco and Libya participated in the meetings, organized by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF).

Hanan Kaoud, MIFTAH's Director of Development, said the 4-day meetings that were held in Istanbul – Turkey, focused on the situation of women and the basic tools and mechanisms for the protection and prevention from violence caused by conflict in accordance with women's agenda for peace and security. The meetings, which ran through December 1-4, saw discussions on many important issues including increased violence against women, the main obstacles in confronting violence and the main strategies for promoting protection and prevention from violence against women and females in the Arab world. The participants further linked these topics to international tools for defending human rights and international humanitarian law. Moreover, focus was placed on ways to develop national plans for UNSC Resolution 1325 and subsequent resolutions in the Middle East and North Africa, in addition to the challenges and achievements at the national level and the international support from organizations working towards the implementation of Resolution 1325 in the Arab world.

The participants also discussed the importance of the reports presented to CEDAW committee regarding armed conflicts in Arab countries and within the context of the Israeli occupation. They discussed means of using General Resolution 30 from the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the importance of gender considerations, especially in reforming the security sector including possible activities in this regard.

In her address, Kaoud said that during the meetings, the Palestinian general framework for a lobbying and advocacy plan was showcased, "which MIFTAH, in partnership with the General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW), the National Coalition for Implementing Resolution 1325, seek to develop for immediate implementation". Kaoud added that a description of the status of Palestinian women under occupation was presented, especially in light of July 2014 aggression against Gaza and the continued assaults and siege imposed on the Strip, and the increasing oppressive measures against Jerusalemites and Palestinians by the Israeli army and settlers in east Jerusalem and the Palestinian lands. She noted the need to support the movement of regional women's organization that speaks out in one strong and united voice for the rights of Arab women and females. She also pointed out the need for lobbying to mobilize and recruit support and advocacy for the Palestinian people in terms of holding the Israeli occupation accountable for all its violations of International Humanitarian Laws and Human Rights in the occupied land of Palestine, in addition to the formation of an Arab women's movement that supports the cause of Palestinian women.

At the end of the meeting, the participants reaffirmed the importance of women's participation in peace processes and political transitions along with the need to determine priorities, exchange expertise and benefit from successful experiences. This is with support from the regional initiative towards the implementation of the strategic plan to enact UN Resolution 1325 to include women's, rights and media institutions in participant countries.

It should be noted that Iraq is the first country in the Arab region to have a national plan for the implementation of Resolution 1325 and an estimate budget to support the resolution's implementation. The plan, however, has not yet gone into effect.



2.1 Gender Equity and Protection Programme

MIFTAH promotes advocacy and lobbying for women, peace and security agenda through strengthening the capacities on reproductive rights and health services for community-based organizations, representatives of the Local Coalition for Implementing UNSCR 1325 (LC) in Jericho and the Jordan Valley district. CBOs became able to define their strengths and weaknesses and identify a set of priorities detailed in an action plan for implementation during the year 2014. Policy interventions included holding policy dialogue with key actors and policy makers accountable to promote women and girls' security and health rights.

Key activities for 2014 included: networking among the three Local Coalitions for Implementing United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR)1325 in Nablus, Hebron and Jericho and Jordan Valley; conducting exchange visits between Local Coalitions in Hebron Nablus and Tulkarem to exchange experiences and stand on most important challenges facing the work of the coalition and developing joint mechanisms and solutions; support the LC to develop and implement action plans; documentation and monitoring of cases of violence against women and girls perpetrated by the Israeli occupation through testing the developed questionnaires in the three districts; and support the implementation of the national Violence against Women (VAW) strategy through policy interventions to promote the enforcement of the referral system "Takamol" at the national level. Furthermore, media and advocacy activities were carried out to celebrate the International Woman Day and the 16 days Campaign for Combating VAW. A documentary was produced to highlight the experience of community leaders in eliminating VAW, and building the capacity of key community leaders in Jericho and Jordan Valley on gender equality and reproductive health.

2.2 Strengthening civil society initiative to advance the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in the oPt.

Activities demonstrate MIFTAH's interventions in advancing the capacities, outreach and influence of Civil Society and Women Organizations to address Women, Peace and Security Agenda (WPSA) at the national and local levels and to increase the understanding of support of both women and men for women's participation in peace and security processes. As a result of one year intensive work to contribute to advance WPSA, in partnership with the General Union of

MIFTAH takes part in Arab women's delegation in New York to enact UN Security Council Resolution 1325

Ramallah – Over the past three months, MIFTAH has actively participated both locally and internationally in efforts to enact UN Resolution 1325, particularly because MIFTAH is a member of the NGO forum to combat violence against women and the National Coalition to implement Resolution 1325 in Palestine.

In this context, MIFTAH's Program Director for Promoting Community Participation Lamis Shuaibi-Hantouli, participated in official meetings held in New York on September 8-11, which were hosted by Post – 2015 Women's Coalition KARAMA movement. The goal of the meetings was to provide strategic on the ground information to high level decision makers, activists and UN representatives engaged with women, peace and security issues in the region. The meetings were titled: "Women's Action for Peace: Prospects and Challenges for Women in the Arab region" and brought together an Arab delegation of women leaders from seven Arab countries: Palestine, Libya, Morocco, Syria, Somalia and Egypt, in addition to representatives from the UN, international missions, organizations and institutions. The women discussed issues such as building security and peace by promoting women's political participation based on UN Resolution 1325.

Shuaibi-Hantouli's contributions in these meetings focused on the challenges faced by Palestinian women due to the continuous violations of Israeli military authorities over the past several decades. These include killing, land confiscation, giving birth at checkpoints, forced exile and the arrest of women political activists and children. Shuaibi-Hantouli cited the most recent Israeli offensive on the Gaza Strip as the best example of these violations

against the Palestinians in terms of the scope of killing and displacement and the lack of any kind of international protection for them. Gaza was turned into an open field for human rights violations, especially those of women and children, she said. Other violent incidents such as the kidnapping and killing of Palestinian child Mohammed Abu Khdeir in Jerusalem by a group of settlers.

Shuaibi-Hantouli also presented a summary of the efforts made by the local Palestinian women's movement to develop a national political agenda for peace and security, which was based on the following four points: holding the Israeli occupation accountable for its human rights violations against women and girls in occupied Palestine; protection; political participation; and prevention. These were reflected in recommendations regarding the need to provide international solidarity for Palestinian women under occupation and to ensure international and UN measures are taken to hold the occupation accountable for violations against women and girls in Palestine based on Article 11 of 1325, which:

"Emphasizes the responsibility of all States to put an end to impunity and to prosecute those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes."

Shuaibi-Hantouli pointed to the role of civil society organizations in supporting the Palestinian women's movement. These include documenting human rights violations against women and girls in Palestine, raising awareness on UN resolutions and international treaties on human rights at the community level and developing operational national strategies and lobbying and advocacy campaigns at the national and international levels to demand an end to the occupation and to hold it accountable for the ongoing human rights violations. This is in addition to contribute in publishing reports to be presented to the UN Secretary General, calling for the necessary measures to be taken.



Palestinian Women (GUPW), and close coordination with Secretariat members of the National Coalition for Implementing UNSCR 1325 (NC) which functions under the umbrella of GUPW, the following were achieved:

1. A strategic advocacy plan for the NC to advance WPSA was developed and finalized by MIFTAH and GUPW.
2. A documentation methodology was developed by MIFTAH in GUPW to document human rights violations, especially against women and girls, covering the WB and Gaza Strip. A monitoring system is being developed in MIFTAH by using a set of indicators on WPSA, and lobbying and advocacy through employing national and international tools and mechanisms to communicate evidence-based reporting on GBV from the national to the international level.
3. MIFTAH conducted 3 local and 1 centralized training workshops which improved the capacities of 35 community leaders from community-based organizations and national networks in the West Bank. CBOs became able to better monitor and report on rights violations related to UNSCR 1325. Awareness of vulnerable population on mechanisms to access to justice was also improved.

Facilitated by Oxfam Novib, MIFTAH, partner civil society organizations, and public institutions in oPt participated in a joint conflict analysis workshop with the vision that conflict analysis can achieve greater impact when conducted in a participatory manner. The workshop aimed to support organizations to learn more about how to do a conflict analysis, identify key driving factors of and conflict actors and stakeholders, link analysis with strategies, identify strategic entry points based on the analysis and Women, Peace and Security (WPS) priorities, agree on common strategic interventions on UNSCR 1325 and common goals and develop key activity lines. The workshop was facilitated by Dr. Cordula Reiman (expert on conflict analysis, gender/WPS and conflict transformation).

2.3 Increasing Palestinian Women Participation in Labor Market

The overall project goal is to contribute to the elimination of gender-based discrimination in the labor market and the work place, and to contribute to establishing a gender perspective in policy development to ensure mainstreaming women's protective measures in legislations that respect women's economic rights and provide equal opportunities to access the labor market. Specifically,

Palestinian Women Call on Human Rights Council for Accountability towards Israel and Guaranteeing Internationally Recognized Rights to Human Security

Ramallah- By invitation from the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and the Women Peacemakers Program (WPP) in the Netherlands and Palestine Link (<http://www.palestinelink.eu/>),

a Palestinian women's delegation participated in a series of meetings held at the 27th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva, Switzerland, between the 16th and 19th of September. The participating organizations included: The Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue & Democracy (MIFTAH), the Women's Affairs Technical Committee (WATC), the Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development (PWWS), Oxfam Novib-Netherlands, and Women for Women in Sweden.

The events brought together Palestinian delegates, international law experts, European Union representatives, the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). The meetings highlighted the legal responsibility of the occupying power, as well as the obligations of member states in opposing recent war crimes in Gaza and ongoing human rights violations in Occupied Palestine. The UN Security Council Resolution 1325 was also addressed in light of the aggressions of the 8th of July, with reference to obligations towards the protection and security of women, as well as their participation in peace negotiations to end the conflict.

By invitation of the British Ambassador to the United Nations Karen Pierce, Friends of 1325, and in the presence of delegates from New Zealand, Brazil, the European Union, the State of Palestine, Canada, the United Arab Emirates, France, Finland, and Sierra Leone, the importance of holding Israel accountable to violations of international humanitarian law was highlighted. A change in European official

discourse also addressed, particularly the problem of speaking about the conflict as though it is a symmetrical one, and not a relationship between occupier and an occupied peoples, the former having due obligations towards the latter. There were also individual meetings between the delegation members and delegates of Norway, the Netherlands, and the United States.

The delegation called for commitment by the United Nations Human Rights Council to its charter, and to thereby increase efforts to end the Israeli occupation and uphold accountability through international mechanisms. It also demanded that the Human Rights Council works alongside states to facilitate a commission to carry out its work. It also emphasized the responsibility of States for holding Israeli accountable for its violations. The forth-coming work of an independent fact finding mission, set up at the Human Rights Council at its 21st meeting on July 24th was addressed, in which the Palestinian delegation emphasized the importance of providing a platform for the testimonies of women who are victims of Israeli attacks. The delegation also highlighted the importance of coordination between the Commission and Palestinian women's organizations. The delegation also met with civil society organizations from various countries and Mr. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Mr. Al Hussein emphasized the importance of the role of the Council in working with member states in protection of human rights. Amal Khreish, a Palestinian delegate and General Director of the Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development (PWWS), emphasized to Mr. Al Hussein the importance of protecting the rights of the Palestinian people and the necessity of ending the occupation, which constitutes a flagrant violation of the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people. She also addressed the importance of holding Israel accountable to its crimes against women and children in occupied Palestine, and the role of the Human Rights Council in safeguarding their security. She also invited him to visit occupied Palestine.

A documentary film produced by WATC on crimes against women and children in the latest aggression against the Gaza strip was presented at the open meeting between the Palestinian



MIFTAH works to establish a monitoring unit to, among others, document violations against women in labor market, with a focus on two sectors: small businesses and agriculture. The Monitoring is guided by the Palestinian Labor Law and fulfils female workers complaints and perceptions functions; it receives complaints relating to alleged women rights abuses in work place.

The project focuses on obtaining data, unbiased assumptions and conducting research on violations against women's rights in labor market with the aim of promoting policies that provide protection for women. Accordingly, MIFTAH conducted coordination meetings with the National Committee for Women Employment working under the umbrella of the Ministry of Labour. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between MIFTAH and the Ministry of Labor / National Committee for the establishment of a Monitoring System to document violations against women in the labour market, with a focus on small businesses and the agricultural sectors. This coordination mechanism will channel a national ownership to promote and scale up the work on achieving gender-equality in the workplace. Strong coordination creates a platform for policy dialogue with stakeholders and duty bearers to advocate for developing policies that guarantee the protection of women in labor market and advancing women's access to labor market.

In the 4th quarter of 2014, MIFTAH signed an agreement with the Development Centre at Birzeit University to conduct two specialized assessment surveys on the status of women in the labour market with a focus on agriculture and small-business sectors. The survey comprises a sample size of 800 women in the labor market in the West Bank.

Risks, risk mitigation and sustainability:

MIFTAH is aware of the risks associated with the implementation of the programs' activities, many of which are general and pertain to all development projects in Palestine while others are specific to projects that promote good governance. The main risks currently pertaining to the work of MIFTAH and means of risk mitigation are summarized below:

1. Postponed National Elections (Presidential and PLC). Paralyzed current PLC. Ongoing Palestinian political divide between WB and GS. Given the complex political context, this risk will need to be accepted. However the outputs of

delegates and members from various countries at the Human Rights Council and nongovernmental organizations. Afterwards, Hanan Kaoud a delegation member from MIFTAH presented a glimpse into the reality of human rights violations committed in the West Bank and Gaza Strip during the aggression. She cited the killings of Mohammad Abu Khdeir of Jerusalem, and Mohammad Abu Nawara of Ramallah, in the hands of settlers and soldiers of the Israeli occupation. She addressed the reality of Israeli aggression against women and children in Gaza, and its devastating impact on the civilian population, from the economic, social, and psychological standpoints. She reiterated Israeli violations of international humanitarian law, which calls for protection of civilian populations, especially women and children in times of war. She emphasized the importance of acting upon the results of a forthcoming investigation on the crimes committed in Gaza, and not to allow for impunity as happened with the Goldstone report on the aggression on the Gaza Strip. Samia Bamie from WATC also called on the Swiss government and all state signatories to the Four Geneva Conventions to hold a conference on Israeli's failure to comply with its principles. She also spoke about the vision of Palestinian women with regards to United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, and the security and protection of women, which Israel has not complied with. She called for member states and the United Nations as a whole to work towards an end to the occupation and an immediate international protection mechanism for the Palestinian people.

Amal Khreishe refuted Israel's claim that it has launched the war on Gaza for self-defense, as it continues to be an occupier. She emphasized the Palestinians' right to self defense according to international laws. She also called for boycott of Israel until it complies with international humanitarian and human rights standards. She highlighted the impact of the Palestinian peoples' rights to security and pointed out the interrelatedness of regional insecurity as a result of the Israeli occupation. She emphasized the historic role of Palestinian women in struggling for their national and civic rights, and their efforts to participate in negotiations. In addition, she called for an international conference held by the United Nations to discuss mechanisms of human rights protection for the Palestinian people, and for

the Human Rights Council to address protection of Palestinian women.

The delegates discussed mobilization strategies and made the following recommendations:

1. The only way to achieve sustainable peace is for Israel, to end its prolonged occupation of the Occupied State of Palestine, in accordance with international law and relevant United Nations resolutions. We, the Palestinian women organisations urge member states to use all necessary efforts to ensure the ending of the Occupation, including the provision of immediate international protection for all civilian population in the Occupied State of Palestine.
2. All High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention are under the obligation to respect and ensure respect for the obligations arising from the Convention in relation to the Occupied State of Palestine. We, the Palestinian women organisations urge the Government of Switzerland and contracting parties, to convene a Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention without delay, to discuss Israel's non-compliance with the Fourth Convention and First Additional Protocol, as well as agreeing on all necessary measures to be taken.
3. We welcome the establishment of the Independent, International Commission of Inquiry, appointed by the President of the Human Rights Council, as a crucial step towards investigating all violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law in the Occupied State of Palestine. We, the Palestinian women organisations, call on all member states of the Human Rights Council to ensure that the Commission of Inquiry has all the necessary support to fulfil its mandate effectively and ensure that the findings of the Commission form a base for developing immediate concrete adequate accountability measures.

We call the Commission of Inquiry to adapt a holistic gender perspective when investigating and documenting violations and to take into account the disproportionate



- MIFTAH's work result in an informed and organized cadre of mostly women and men who are politically aware and alert.
2. The escalating political situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, in addition to the restrictions on movements between districts imposed by the Israeli military forces in the West Bank and the closure of Gaza Strip constitute a major challenge against an efficient implementation of the planned activities. The uprising crisis in Gaza constitutes a major challenge alongside the timely accomplishment of the planned group meetings and training workshop.
 3. Lack of common understanding among partners on the notions of participation and engagement in HR and IHL advocacy campaigns and policy dialogues. MIFTAH's programme and media staff are experienced and well known in the field and have cooperated in similar activities in the past. Through capacity development and awareness raising programmes, the outcomes will establish a common set of terms and concepts that could lead the work in the field of HR and IHL.
 4. Intensive focus on addressing HR and IHL in the oPt among CSOs; there is a chance of overlap with other national programmes. MIFTAH will conduct assessment including mapping of other programmes as well as provide for intensive consultations with different stakeholders including CSOs. MIFTAH encourages regular coordination with national coalitions including Human Rights National and International Organizations.
 5. Dependency of Civil Society Organizations on international financial aid. The Palestinian Authority's financial crisis increasingly affects the Palestinian society and its citizens. The financial instability has been looming since 2011 and in 2012, 2013 and 2014. On several occasions the Government has not been able to pay the salaries of civil servants. MIFTAH will put in place a resource mobilization strategy to ensure that sufficient funding is in place, to ensure the sustainability of its operations, and will further contribute in promoting the private sector's social responsibility.
 6. Continued Palestinian youth and women's political underrepresentation. MIFTAH adopts policies, strategies, advocacy campaigns and programmes to promote the political role of youth including women to transform in the direction of leadership and create a stable ground for lobbying at the policy making level to enforce formulating gender responsive policies and regulations.

4. Palestinian women have great concern that the ceasefire will not hold unless the international community ensure that Israel lift the siege on Gaza and to secure the right of mobility, right for free access and movement from and to Gaza for people and goods.
5. Palestinian women have been excluded from any consultation or formal participation in the negotiated ceasefire to end the aggression in Gaza. We, the Palestinian women organisations, urgently call for the involvement and equal participation of women in the resolution of the conflict between Israel and the occupied State of Palestine and the integration of a women's rights and gender perspective in the resolution of the conflict and the collective responsibility of the international community to ensure women's protection and security in accordance with UNSCR 1325, 2122, and CEDAW GR30.
6. We, the Palestinian Women Organizations, call upon the United Nations Member States and the Human Rights Council to ensure immediate action for the reconstruction in Gaza, to hold Israel accountable for the destruction and to guarantee the prevention of any further destruction perpetrated by the occupying power. Israel must compensate all those who are affected. In the process of reconstruction, the international community should see to it that Israel would not profit from the reconstruction operation in any way. We also urgently call for the consultation and inclusiveness of women and a holistic gender perspective the reconstruction process.
7. We, the Palestinian women organizations, urge the Human Rights Council to support and to decide on a panel on the human rights situation of Palestinian women under occupation, during the 28th Session of the Human Rights Council.

MIFTAH holds policy meeting in partnership with UNFPA to promote national accountability on implementing the national referral system for battered women 'TAKAMOL'

Ramallah – As a result of intensive consultations with gender units in line-ministries, and in close coordination with the Secretary-General of the Council of Ministers Office, MIFTAH held a policy meeting with line ministries and civil society organizations on developments in the implementation of the “TAKAMOL” system at the national level. Discussions highlighted the challenges that face relevant institutions in implementing the system. The workshop was part of the “Protection and Equity from a Gender Perspective” project, being carried out by MIFTAH in partnership with UNFPA.

Preparatory stages:

Preceding visits to the gender units in the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Women's Affairs, concluded with the following obstacles that hinders the effective implementation of the TAKAMOL system: The lack of preparedness on the part of service-provider institutions in applying the system in terms of human resources and logistics; loopholes and gaps in the system after it was adopted on 10.12.2013, such as the inclusion of cases of battered girls under 18 in the system; and the absence of direct ruling mechanisms of forensic medicine within the system. The different parties brought up immediate needs for raising awareness on the TAKAMOL system through the provision of simplified guidelines for service providers in line-ministries and the need to review and develop the electronic database system in a way that would enable service providers to easily access dates/history through channels by which cases of violence against women (VAW) are treated. Partners further explored similar referral systems applied in other organizations such as UNRWA to link them together towards developing a unified national system. Another identified obstacle was the lack of clarity in implementation, communication and networking mechanisms when applying the system between ministries.

Hearing Session:

The hearing session, which was held at the Grand Park Hotel in Ramallah last week, was opened with welcoming remarks by Hanan Kaoud, MIFTAH Development Director. In her address, Kaoud cited MIFTAH's efforts in following up the implementation of the TAKAMOL system since it was approved by the

Cabinet. The goal of the system was to set ground rules, which would ultimately constitute a national covenant for dealing with battered women through achieving protection and care for women in the health, social and legal sectors. This would also be achieved through establishing foundations that govern a national charter toward professional handling of VAW cases, through protection mechanisms for women in the health, social and the justice sectors. It is as much important to lay the ground rules that govern and clarify the framework for a face-binding professional relationship with female beneficiaries.

The session was moderated by Shatha Odeh, Director General of the Health Work Committees and the expert who contributed to setting down the guidelines for the TAKAMOL system. Odeh emphasized the importance of the workshop, to hear relevant interventions and procedures from representatives of ministries, explore gaps and obstacles and set a plan to enforce the implementation of the system in accordance with agreed outcome recommendations.

Presentations

Dr. Mohammed Abu Hmeid, Deputy Minister of Social Affairs, reaffirmed that his ministry implements what is required of it. He said their role is to stand by women as a part of the Ministry's duty and not just as a job. Abu Hmeid affirmed that his ministry offers much attention to women and family issues, calling for an analytical study of the reasons behind violence against women in Palestinian society. He pointed out that the roots of this violence are primarily economic.

Abu Hmeid called for a collective plan that considers preventative measures for this problem, stressing on the importance of empowering women economically and promoting their well-being, especially in-light of the increasing percentage of poverty among vulnerable population.

Deputy Minister of Justice, Dr. Ziad Tayyem then stressed on the legal role of the ministry, which considers violence and abuse against women as a crime. He continued that the ministry is currently working to complete a legal guidebook that addresses this issue.

On her part, Lamia Shalalkeh from the Women's Center for Legal Aid Counseling (WCLAC) called for closing gaps in the current professional coordination procedures between relevant parties, saying it is imperative to realize and appreciate the dangers facing battered women and to know how to deal with the mental state of the victim. She added that mechanisms of protecting women and girls should not be dependent on short-

lived rescue, describing the current services provided to these women as partial and simplistic. Shalalkeh cited the case of a woman from Bethlehem who was killed by her husband in spite of the fact that she had gone to more than one party organization to complain about the horrible violence she was being subjected to.

Shalalkeh also called for enacting preventive laws to punish perpetrators and to set down clear policies on security and justice services that should be offered to the victims.

Dr. Khuloud Sayyed and Maha Awwad from the Ministry of Health affirmed the central role their ministry plays in offering the appropriate health services to battered women. Dr. Sayyed said her ministry is the first place battered women turn to, citing the various types of verbal, physical and sexual violence.

Deputy Secretary-General of the Council of Ministers, Aqab Abdel Samad said in his presentation that some ministries play a vital role in dealing with violence such as the ministries of social affairs, health and interior, the later through its civil police. He also cited the Council's decision in 2013 to approve the TAKAMOL system, saying he was keen on defining enforcing mechanisms that ensure its application.

Meanwhile, Sharif Jaradat, Director General of the Cabinet Affairs, called for ratifying a law to protect women from violence and to hold a broader workshop in which all government and civil society institutions participate. He also urged Muslim imams to take on more of a guidance role in pushing for a halt to violence against women.

Furthermore, Dr. Mahmoud Salah Eddin, Director of the Research, Planning and Development Administration in the Palestinian Civil Police - Ministry of Interior, said the civil police are willing to do whatever it takes to carry out procedures to combat violence against women and to cooperate with all parties involved.

Salah Eddin called on the media and institutions that combat violence against women, to maintain accuracy when showcasing findings and statistics on victims of violence.

Wafa' Muammar, Director of the Juvenile Department (PCP) warned against the problems that arise in dealing with violence against women from some institutions and commissions in this field, which tend to incite against the husband. She cited the same case of the woman from Bethlehem who was killed by her husband, saying exercising incitement, even if unaware, and not trying

to reach out to the husband, can eventually lead to a crime.

Meanwhile, Palestinian Legislative Council member and member of the founding committee of the Arab Forum for Population and Development, Sahar Qawasmi, called for the need to establish a regulatory body that coordinates relationships between the various parties that combat violence against women. She also said it was important to revive the counseling units with those charged with violence. Qawasmi do not encourage tribal male intervention in this regard, saying it is more ideal for the law to take its course against perpetrators.

Outcomes and actions

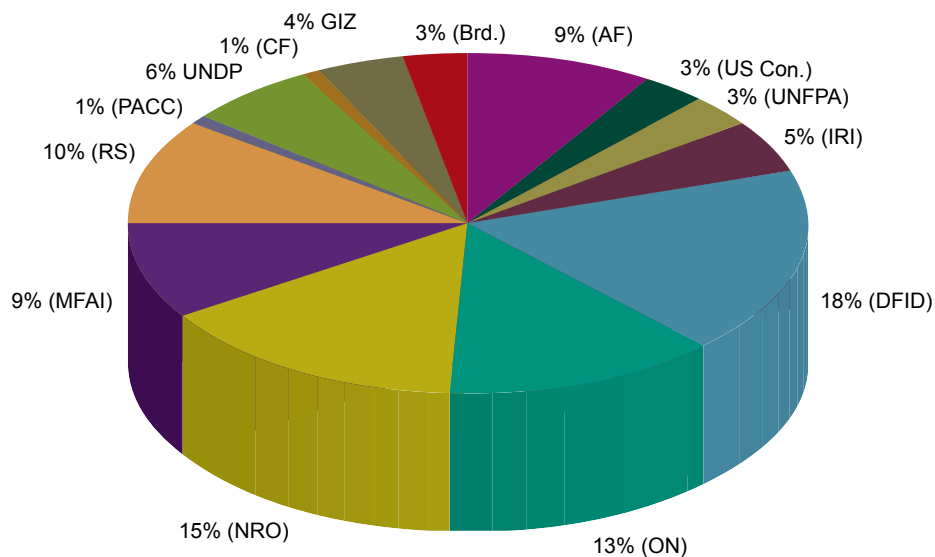
One of the most significant outcomes of the workshop is to promote actions at the level of the government. This was clearly represented in an immediate call for a follow-up session made by the Deputy Minister of Women's Affairs, Bassam Khatib to discuss the means by which the TAKAMOL system will be enforced. The mentioned meeting, held days after the current hearing session, concluded with the formation of a small technical committee responsible for implementing and ensuring the enforcement of the TAKAMOL system. The committee comprises ministries of health, social affairs, women affairs and civil police, with MIFTAH in the capacity of oversight role. It also stipulated support for offering training to service providers and raising awareness about the system in the field in addition to the role of the media. The committee will work to enforce the immediate implementation of the system within a period of three months. This will be a trial period to later gauge the needs of the ministries in order for the system's rescue plan to succeed.

The participants endorsed a number of recommendations, the most important of which are as follows: a call to build the capacities of the technical teams that deal with cases of VAW; adopt a comprehensive awareness program on violence which would also include spreading awareness among men in addition to women; a call to the Cabinet to pass a law to protect women from violence; to urge Muslim imams to take on more of a guidance and awareness roles in this regard; automate information on women protection against violence - the importance of building a database so that the necessary evaluation process could be carried out at a later stage; the need to review services provided by civil society institutions - assessment of these services in terms of quality and feasibility; take the Gaza Strip into consideration in all activities, plans and programs for combatting violence against women - a call on all partners to work in Gaza; and train cadres capable of dealing with cases of VAW.



MIFTAH
Restricted and Unrestricted Contributions
Until December 31, 2014

MIFTAH's Contributions 2014
Total 1,031,604 USD



92,284	Arab Fund (AF)
34,541	U.S. Consulate (US Con.)
31,016	United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
54,321	International Republican Institute (IRI)
188,655	The Department for International Development (DFID) / UK aid
131,994	OXFAM Novib (ON)
153,571	Norwegian Representative Office to the PNA (NRO)
95,144	Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Ireland (MFAI)
100,000	Human Rights & IHL Secretariat (RS)
11,690	Palestinian Anti-Corruption Commission (PACC)
57,640	UNDP
13,455	Canada Fund (CF)
42,293	GIZ
25,000	MIFTAH's Board Members (Brd.)

