



The Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy

MIFTAH

2020 Annual Report

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## 1. Situation Analysis

The year 2020 has witnessed significant political, health, economic, legal and social developments on both the international and national stage. Early in 2020, the Israeli government signed an agreement containing an article allowing the annexation of one third of the already illegally occupied West Bank the West Bank territories. The formal annexation was to start on the 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2020, but later it was suspended after Israel signed a normalization deal with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) with no guarantees on this suspension. Israel received domestic and international criticism towards the annexation. The Palestinians consider this Israeli move a contradiction of signed agreements and understandings and a violation of international law and resolutions, which call for an end to the occupation and for the establishment of a Palestinian state on all Palestinian territory within the 1967 border.

In response to the annexation plan, the Palestinian Authority (PA) declared that it is no longer bound by understandings and agreements signed with Israel and the US Administration. This declaration resulted in a seven-months halt to all forms of cooperation and contact with the Israelis, including security coordination, transfer of the clearance revenues and maintenance of the civil record to name a few. However, in December 2020, the PA decided to restore ties with Israel after Israel “froze” its annexation plan, the latter transferred \$1.14 billion of clearance tax revenues to the PA. These political transitions were supported by US electoral victory of Joe Biden, who pledged to push for the return of negotiations over the two-state solution and resume US aid to the Palestinian.

All the while Israeli policies of dispossession and territorial expansion continued apace and the human rights situation of Palestinians in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza continues to be grim. 2020 saw the highest number of home demolitions in more than four years, with nearly 900 Palestinians<sup>1</sup> displaced. At the same time, Israel approved over 12,000 West Bank settler homes<sup>2</sup>, the highest on record for eight years. The United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967 highlighted several issues of concern in his report to the 44<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Human Rights Council, focusing on collective punishment targeting the Palestinian people. This report emphasizes Israel’s failure to uphold its legal obligations under international law, and considers Israel’s reliance on collective punishment as a “prominent instrument in its coercive toolbox of population control.”

Moreover, Palestinians were left virtually defenceless in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic with Israel controlling all of occupied Palestine’s borders and potentially infected Israeli settlers and soldiers entering unimpeded. While Israelis, including settlers living illegally on occupied

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<sup>1</sup> [In pandemic, of all times: Number of Palestinians Israel has left homeless hits four-year record | B'Tselem](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Israeli settlement approvals hit record high \(alaraby.co.uk\)](#)

Palestinian land, were among the first to receive vaccines to protect against Covid-19, millions of Palestinians living under Israeli military rule are still waiting. Human rights groups condemned Israel for failing to live up to its legal obligations as an occupying power by refusing to vaccinate Palestinians under its control. The pandemic also devastated the Palestinian economy<sup>3</sup>, already suffering under restrictions imposed by Israel's occupation regime. According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the GDP per capita of the occupied Palestinian territories was projected to decrease by 3% to 4.5% in 2020-2021, even before the pandemic.

During 2020, MIFTAH continued to follow up on the public spending on social sectors; the actual governmental spending reached 39.5%<sup>4</sup> of the estimated emergency budget. In addition, the social sector enjoys a very good percentage of public spending, as it provides services for citizens, which was as follows until June 2020: NIS 1,387.06 Million of public budget was spent on education, NIS 659.37 million for the MoH, and NIS 510.50 million for the MoSD<sup>5</sup>.

The economic damages to women who work under economically insecure conditions cannot be ignored, especially those working in services, trade, restaurants, nurseries and kindergartens sectors. These women, along with the families who lost their source of livelihood due to the pandemic, which is estimated to around 53 thousand families, have been included in the list of "new poor". According to the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD), their number is increasing.<sup>6</sup>

Additionally, social conditions have further deteriorated, particularly among women. Since the beginning of the pandemic, several civil society organizations have reported an increase in violence. For instance, as per the data shared by SAWA, there is an increase in 57 per cent in calls related to violence received by SAWA's help line compared to pre COVID-19 emergency state. The Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) has issued a report on 21 April 2020 on cases of women victims and survivors of violence that have been received by the Ministry during the first quarter of the year, has revealed that a total of 70 cases were received from the beginning of the crisis on 5 March until 10 April 2020, of which 48 per cent were received during the emergency state that has started on 22 March 2020<sup>7</sup>.

Furthermore, Palestinians endured their thirteenth year living under Israel's suffocating siege and blockade in Gaza, which is a form of collective punishment that has been condemned as illegal by the UN and human rights organizations. In 2020, Israeli authorities actually tightened the blockade further<sup>8</sup>, including denying Palestinians the ability to travel to attend funerals and weddings of immediate family members. In November, the UN released a report that found the

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<sup>3</sup> [COVID-19 devastates Palestine's shattered economy | UNCTAD](#)

<sup>4</sup> The actual public spending on key ministries within the social sectors, 6,2020, MIFTAH.

<sup>5</sup> The actual spending on key ministries within the social sectors, 6,2020, MIFTAH

<sup>6</sup> Al Deek: Social development starts the listing of the new poor in Palestine, See: <https://bit.ly/3jeezxZ>

<sup>7</sup> <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/impact-covid-19-crisis-access-women-victims-and-survivors>

<sup>8</sup> [Israel & International Law: The Siege & Blockade of Gaza | IMEU](#)

blockade has cost Palestinians in Gaza as much as \$16.7 billion in economic losses<sup>9</sup>, causing poverty and unemployment to skyrocket, and severe shortages of clean water and electricity, stating, “The result has been the near-collapse of Gaza’s regional economy and its isolation from the Palestinian economy and the rest of the world.”

On a more positive note, the International Criminal Court (ICC) Prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, announced that she is satisfied that there is a reasonable basis to initiate an investigation into the situation in Palestine under article 53(1) of the Rome Statute, and that the scope of the Court’s territorial jurisdiction comprises the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza (“Occupied Palestinian Territory”). While the Prosecutor deferred the final determination on the scope of the territorial jurisdiction to the Pre-Trial Chamber, it is the Prosecutor’s view that the Court has jurisdiction over the situation in Palestine, extending to the Occupied Palestinian territory, namely West Bank, including East Jerusalem and Gaza. On 30 April 2020, the Prosecutor reiterated her position on the scope of the Court’s territorial jurisdiction.

The United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) passed a resolution in September 2020, which was co-sponsored by Cuba, North Korea, Syria and Venezuela. The resolution expressed “grave concern about the continuing systematic violation of the human rights of the Palestinian people by Israel, the occupying power, and its impact on women and girls.” It also stated that “the limitations on Palestinian jurisdiction in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), including East Jerusalem undermine the ability of the Palestinian Government to protect Palestinian women and girls in certain areas. The resolution called on Israel “to immediately cease all measures contrary to international law, as well as discriminatory legislation, policies and actions in the OPT, including East Jerusalem, that violate the human rights of the Palestinian people, and stresses that Palestinian civilians, particularly women and children, account for the vast majority of those adversely affected by the conflict.”

## 2. Introduction

**MIFTAH Vision:** A sovereign, independent, democratic, tolerant and inclusive Palestinian state, which grants Palestinians their basic rights, preserves their dignity, and enjoys international recognition and respect.

**MIFTAH Mission:** Established in 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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<sup>9</sup> [UN agency: Israel's Gaza blockade has devastated economy - ABC News \(go.com\)](#)

MIFTAH's strategic objectives

## **1. To Enhance Good Governance in Palestine**

- ❖ Specific Objective 1: To advance policy advocacy and lobbying to ensure social justice and equality;
- ❖ Specific Objective 2: To enhance women and youth participation in policy and decision-making within the public sector and local government organizations;

## **2. To Strengthen National Unity and International Awareness of the Palestinian Narrative**

- ❖ Specific Objective 1: To enhance internal dialogue to reach consensus on key political positions imperative to the Palestinians;
- ❖ Specific Objective 2: To promote the Palestinian narrative as a just and fair cause;

In line with the above strategic objectives, MIFTAH works on the following thematic areas:

- Women Political Participation
- Youth Empowerment
- Women Peace and Security
- Women Protection from GBV
- Women Economic Empowerment
- Fiscal Justice
- Promotion of Human Rights
- Palestinian Narrative
- Political Dialogue

MIFTAH was able to achieve the following results during 2020:

## **3. Results by Objective**

### **I. To Enhance Good Governance in Palestine**

#### **1.1 Women Political Participation**

##### **1.1.1 Enhancing the legal framework of local and national elections**

MIFTAH continued its efforts in advocating for reforming national and local elections legislations to supporting women and youth political participation and representation in decision making levels. To that end, MIFTAH launched a media and online campaign calling for reforming national and local election laws. The campaign focused on adopting the principle of equality and pluralism in the electoral process and the messages focused on raising the women quota to 30% as

minimum and removing restrictions on the age of candidacy. The campaign was built on a [“facts and figures”](#) sheet that was prepared by MIFTAH and tracked the representation and participation of women and youth in both local and national elections over the last 25 years. This fact sheet was designed in an audio [visual info-graphic](#) format and published on MIFTAH website and [YouTube channel](#). MIFTAH considers this [fact sheet](#) as a reference document in the town hall meetings and round table discussions MIFTAH continues to hold to enhance the public awareness towards women and youth political participation. Earlier to this, a session was held in coordination and cooperation with the Central Elections Commission, targeting MIFTAH’s filed coordinators on the general elections. The session focused on the Presidential Decree No. (1/2007) which stipulates that council members (PLC) are elected via direct elections according to the complete proportional representation system (list system) which treats the whole Palestinian Territory as one electoral constituency. Additionally, the session touched on the other demands put forward by civil society pertaining to women quota and age of candidacy.

#### **1.1.2 Enhancing public awareness on women political participation within the Election System, CEDAW (articles 1,2 and 7)**

MIFTAH as part of its strategic direction to enhance citizens’ and public awareness about principles of democracy and good governance including the concept of civic engagement, active citizenship, the importance of women and youth political participation and the principle of peaceful transfer of power through the ballot box. During 2020, MIFTAH, despite the lock-down, successfully conducted around 90 outreach town hall meetings with the participation of more than 1500 citizens the majority of which are women and university students in the different governorates of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. During these meetings, the main topics related to motivating youth and women to participate in elections, and linking them to principles of democracy, citizenship rights in order to bring about change in favor of youth and women demands and aspirations. MIFTAH, in coordination with the Central Elections Commission, continues to familiarize the public with electoral laws, registration and participation mechanisms, and candidacy criteria.

#### **1.1.3 Capacity building of potential women candidates in PLC elections**

MIFTAH supported building the capacity of 83 (66 from the West Bank and 17 from Gaza) potential women and young women candidates through specialized training workshops, on "Supporting women's participation in national elections". The trainings targeted several women activists in the West Bank and Gaza Strip who represent the various political factions. The objective of the trainings was to contribute to the capacity-building and empowerment of women activists within Palestinian factions and parties and to prepare them for running in the upcoming legislative elections. The training workshops aimed at providing the women with information about national election laws and the electoral system in Palestine, the importance of elections, means of submitting candidacy applications to the Central Elections Commission (CEC), the role and nature of the CEC, mechanisms for the lists and constituency system and the difference between them and the electoral systems including proportional and mixed representation. The



trainings also included ways of strengthening skills for communicating with the public and the media, creating electoral platforms, the use of the media for networking with journalists and recruiting financial support for election campaigns.

The trainings included various activities geared towards promoting the concept of political participation and women's involvement in politics, culminating in a number of recommendations including: the need to continue cooperation with activists and provide supportive platforms for them in their political and social activities in order to revitalize the democratic process. These training workshops come within the framework of MIFTAH's efforts to prepare women and young leaders ready to enter public and political life and to guarantee their just representation in decision-making bodies by supporting the candidacy of youth and women in local and national elections.

## **1.2 Advocating for the realization of the Palestinian Women Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda at the National and International Level**

### **1.2.1 Enhancing women participation in reconciliation and peace-building efforts**

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of November 2020 MIFTAH fostered the launch of "SHUFUNA Reconciliation Bus" initiative which was carried out in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The Bus reconciliation initiative reflected the steadiness of SHUFUNA platform members<sup>10</sup> in holding political leaders, general secretaries and bureau members, government officials and governorates accountable for the under representation of women and youth in decision making levels and in national reconciliation dialogues. This under representation is coupled with the lack of public policies and legislation that support women and youth representation and contribution in leading public institutions.

Additionally, SHUFUNA members succeeded in collecting verbal commitments by political leaders and officials for the reform of internal bylaws, laws and legislations for securing women and youth representation at decision making levels and in national reconciliation efforts. MIFTAH conducted the SHUFUNA activities in parallel to the different meetings and reconciliation talks that were held between Fateh and Hamas delegations in Istanbul, Damascus, Beirut and Cairo. These meetings resulted in no progress towards achieving national reconciliation and with no representation of women or youth in the closed door meetings. MIFTAH supported SHUFUNA members to follow these meetings and present their positions through different initiatives especially during the talk-shows and meetings with general secretaries and bureau members held during the Reconciliation Bus.

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<sup>10</sup>SHUFUNA Platform is an interactive space for over 250 youth, women, activists, and political and social actors from Gaza and the West Bank, including Jerusalem

### **1.2.2 Empower the role of Palestinian women in lobbying and advocacy**

MIFTAH supported "Shufuna" platform in the development of the [SHUFUNA Strategic Plan](#) which entailed the strategic directions, vision and proposed activities of the Platform for the period 2020-2023. The plan had a major focus on advocating towards women's inclusion in national dialogues, enhancing public awareness towards women political participation and representation through democratic process and national and local elections. MIFTAH, under the auspices of The Minister of Women's Affairs, Dr. Amal Hamad, launched "Shufuna" strategy for integrating women and youth in decision-making positions and at the national dialogue during an organized open day meeting on November 26.

### **1.2.3 Developing the 2021-2024 Advocacy Strategy with a one-year action plan for the Women Coalition for the Implementation of UNSCR**

MIFTAH in coordination with PWC launched the second generation of the [Strategic Framework for Lobbying and Advocacy 2021-2024](#) to advance the coalition's role in lobbying and advocacy at both the national and international levels. This comes within the framework of the PWC as a Palestinian women task force against the racial policies of the Israeli occupation and towards an equitable women representation in the Palestinian national reconciliation.

The strategy was framed in line with the relevant UN resolutions, including those related to the WPS and the Palestinian's right to self-determination and right of return. The advocacy strategy is supported with an M&E framework and a one-year action plan with clear identified interventions at the national, regional and international levels. The Strategy is considered a basis for creating joint advocacy efforts and to widening channels of networking in terms of solidarity at the regional and the global level for supporting the Palestinian women movement demands to end occupation and to hold perpetrators accountable for the IHL violations against Palestinian women under occupation. Moreover, the strategy will contribute in advancing mobilization towards women's participation in peacebuilding efforts including reconciliation and prioritizing women's agenda at the national dialogues.

The advocacy strategic included four strategic directions that stemmed out of the results of the [rapid needs assessment study](#) which was drafted and discussed widely among the PWC members under MIFTAH's supervision during the second quarter of 2020. The assessment study covered the priorities and needs of Palestinian women within the framework of UNSCR 1325 pillars; protection, participation, accountability and prevention, in addition to CEDAW's General Recommendations 30 and 32 in relation to the political, social, economic context of the Palestinian women and girls, in West Bank, Gaza and Diaspora (Lebanon and Jordan).

### **1.2.4 Review of the Personal Status Law; policies and procedures in relevance to CEDAW article 16**

MIFTAH continued following up on the reform policy recommendations related to applied personal status laws and the patriarchal religious judicial systems in Palestine. Thus, MIFTAH

drafted two policy proposals based on the identified gender gaps that were highlighted in the specialized research MIFTAH prepared on [“Human Rights Gaps in the Applied Policies and Procedures of Sharia and ecclesiastical courts in the West Bank and Gaza Strip”](#).

MIFTAH opened dialogue on the two drafted policy proposals in coordination with the NGO Civil Coalition for the Personal Status Law, which is headed by the General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW). MIFTAH pointed to the obstacles that prevent women’s access to justice in both the Sharia and ecclesiastical courts, which included; the age of marriage, alimony and inheritance and the conflict and discord between the husbands. MIFTAH prioritized these four challenging issues facing women at these courts by presenting alternative policy proposals that guarantee protection measures for women’s rights and support women’s access to justice. These proposals included the call for a unified personal status law that preserves the human dignity and freedom of women. This was envisioned through advocating towards creating options for women including the availability of a contemporary, civil family law to contribute to enhancing a civil legal framework for the coming generations.

#### **1.2.5 Supporting the non-Governmental Women Coalition for the Implementation of CEDAW in preparing the Shadow Report**

MIFTAH contributed to the preparation of the shadow report led by the Palestinian NGO CEDAW Coalition, which was shared with the CEDAW committee in Geneva. The report responded to the gaps within the “follow up” state report submitted by the State of Palestine to the CEDAW committee after 2 years of the official submission for the CEDAW state report in 2018. MIFTAH prepared a well-organized [report](#) reflecting on the latest developments and achievements realized nationally in view of article 7 of the CEDAW convention; including the screening of possible modifications, reforms, ratifications of laws and legislations, policies and governmental procedures in favor for enhancing women political participation and representation in decision making levels in the State of Palestine.

The report included information following the main structure of the general recommendations of CEDAW Committee on the state report provided in 2018. The recommendations obligated Palestine to put in place mechanisms to stand up to its responsibilities in ensuring equality and non-discrimination in laws, policies and procedures in respect to CEDAW articles.

#### **1.2.6 Documentation report on the situation of Palestinian women in light of the COVID-19 outbreak and the Israeli Violations**

MIFTAH prepared [a documentation report](#) that monitored and documented Israeli human rights violations against Palestinian women during the state of emergency imposed during the coronavirus pandemic. The documentations were conducted in the districts of Jerusalem, Hebron and the Jordan Valley. The documented human rights violations were the result of the Israeli military measures and settler violence which has had an adverse impact on women in terms of their access to resources and curtailed ability of their movement and their freedom of choice and expression.

The report showed that violence against Palestinian people by the Israeli occupation forces and the settlers violent attacks had remarkably increased during the pandemic outbreak and the lockdown. The report also demonstrated that all areas – especially the areas the Israeli government is threatening to annex- suffer from lack of economic growth, minimal educational and health services.

MIFTAH advocated for including the report's recommendations in the action framework for implementing the UNSCR1325 (2021-2024), and to follow up the implementation in the marginalized areas in terms of protection, and service provision that would contribute in alleviating the everyday hardships and challenges facing Palestinian women under occupation especially the identified remote areas; Jordan valley, Hebron and Jerusalem.

### **1.2.7 Advocate on the International level through addressing Women, Peace and Security Agenda relevant to UNSCR 1325 and Beijing +25**

MIFTAH initiated a dialogue on the draft parallel report to the Beijing Platform for Action 25 years after its announcement. The dialogue brought together a group of women's and human rights organizations in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in order to validate and enrich the data presented in the report, which was prepared in collaboration between MIFTAH and the Women Center for Legal Aid and Counseling. The report addresses six main areas: 1) Gender-based violence. 2) Women and poverty. 3) Peaceful societies. 4) Women's political participation and representation in decision-making positions. 5) Women and work. 6) Women and the environment.

### **1.2.8 Coordinating WPS programs in Palestine**

MIFTAH succeeded to bring together different local NGOs working within the framework of UNSCR 1325, to discuss the identified gaps, setbacks and challenges facing advancing WPS in Palestine. MIFTAH addressed key findings resulted from [a prepared diagnostics study](#) on aid effectiveness towards the realization of WPS in Palestine over the last 15 years.

MIFTAH fostered dialogue on the results of the diagnostic study as part of its sponsorship in leading several dialogue sessions on Palestinian women's issues related to UNSCR 1325 in a bid to identify approaches for strategic action and consensus on concepts regarding the localization of Resolution 1325 and to shed light on the levels of violence to which Palestinian women under occupation endure in addition to the exclusion exercised against women on the Palestinian political scene and their lack of visibility in decision-making positions.

MIFTAH based its study on several key criteria: realizations of results, achievements and gaps, alignment of donor funding with priorities and objectives of NGOs; ownership of Palestinian NGOs to objectives and strategies; harmonization of work among NGOs and donors; and mutual accountability between the donors and the NGOs.

The study offered courses of action and ways of moving forward on the one hand, and also proposed what is needed to strengthen coordinated efforts among national and international actors within the framework of WPS agenda in Palestine.

### **1.3 Youth Empowerment**

#### **1.3.1 Promoting the intellectual and cultural awareness of Palestinian youth**

MIFTAH, in response to the state of emergency in Palestine after the COVID19 outbreak, redesigned the activities that targeted Youth Network members to activate their political participation and their engagement in the public sphere. MIFTAH held four virtual meetings to engage youth in discussions tackling important topics especially the political situation and the implication of the COVID 19 on the Palestinians. The youth were provided with a dialogue platform to discuss and share information regarding “the impacts of the Coronavirus pandemic on the political participation of women and youth” and human rights violation since the declaration of the state of emergency on the 5<sup>th</sup> of March 2020.

Thus, two of the discussion sessions were on the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic on the political participation of women and youth. Participants from MIFTAH’s “Political and Social Active Youth Network” explained that the repercussions of the pandemic had surpassed its direct health impacts and negatively affected socioeconomic conditions as well. They maintained that over and above the hindrances already limiting youth participation before the pandemic, the changes that came in tandem with it resulted in an even more complicated situation with tools such conferences, marches and direct campaigns no longer available.

The other remain two sessions were focused on the violations of freedom of opinion and expression during the state of emergency. During these sessions, the youth expressed their resentments of the authorized powers during this state of emergency and the restrictions and powers pertaining to freedom of opinion and expression. These meetings aimed at shedding light on the direct impact of emergency legislation on civic spaces and the exercise of freedom of opinion and expression, given the increase in violations and restrictions imposed on these freedoms whether by individuals or state institutions.

The virtual meetings widened the space of participation among Palestinian youth from the West Bank and Gaza Strip through hosting public figures and human rights defenders and professionals that enrich the discussion and increase the level of acquired knowledge and information among these youth regarding freedoms of expression and opinions, the protection towards the role of human rights defenders, and to share knowledge about youth initiatives and challenges youth faced and observed within their local communities during the pandemic.

#### **1.3.2 Reforming the General Union of Palestinian Students (GUPS)**

Within its Youth Empowerment program, "MIFTAH" worked on expanding dialogue sessions aimed at reviving the General Union of Palestine Students. These sessions were held with representatives from the union’s branches in the diaspora: Lebanon, Syria, Turkey, Egypt,

Tunisia and Algeria. The sessions discussed the proposed amendments to the union's constitution and called for the coordination of activities in a way that serves to accelerate the convention of its general conference. This was based on the premise of renewing the legitimacy of the union and preserving unity of the youth given that GUPS is the national youth platform for all youth groups in factions and parties within the PLO.

## **1.4 Women Protection from Gender Based Violence**

### **1.4.1 Gendered evidence-based data is available for advocacy purposes**

MIFTAH provides evidences on gaps in protection services in Seam Zones through a mapping study of institutions working with women and girls subjected to gender-based violence in Tulkarm, Jenin, Tubas and Qalqilya districts. The mapping results showed that services provided by institutions catering to battered women and girls are directly related to the needs of women and girls in each of these districts, but do not cover all of their complementary needs such as health, social and economic needs. Discrepancies between the institutions were also apparent in their focal points regarding integrative intervention to ensure women's access to services and protection. What's more, the study pointed to the weak abilities of government institutions due to the political situation and military occupation, to the meagre financial resources for following up on GBV cases and in taking the necessary measures to protect women, especially in Area C.

The mapping also indicated that women's options regarding institutions for protection are made according to factors such as safety, trust and alternative venues in the absence of any guarantee for legal protection. This often results in women remaining silent about the violence and allowing customs (familial and tribal) to play a role in filling the gap resulted from the lack of institutions or the weak financial capabilities of others. This impacts the response to the scope of cases of GBV against women and girls and the repercussions of the various types of violence against women and their families. Moreover, the economic factor, according to the services provided by these institutions, has the most impact on women's ability to combat violence against them.

### **1.4.2 Multifaceted participation in the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence**

As part of its role to shed light on the situation of Palestinian women and the multilayered violence against them by the Israeli occupation and society, MIFTAH held a number of interventions during the second half of 2020. These interventions included participation in the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence with a special focus on the Family Protection Bill; [#OrangetheWorld #Together for homes free of violence #Youth Against Violence](#)

MIFTAH produced [a series of television episodes](#) that were aired on "Wattan" Network, in which discussions were opened on several topics related to the adoption of the Family Protection Bill, the official position, the position of religions, the law as a means of protection and prevention and the law between the human rights identity and the societal outlook.



MIFTAH also prepared a factsheet entitled [“Annexation plan of the Jordan Valley.”](#) which showcases the most important facts and figures on the Israeli annexation plan for the occupied Palestinian lands and projects the expected effects of this annexation on Palestinian women.

Additionally, MIFTAH [prepared multi-media productions](#) explaining the spread of GBV in Palestine in an attempt to raise awareness on the importance of passing of the Family Protection Bill. MIFTAH [staff also supported](#) the campaign's activities.

## **1.5 Fiscal Justice**

### **1.5.1 Increasing transparency of Public Budget**

MIFTAH provided data and evidences through publishing comparative actual spending reports for the three line ministries within the social sector for the years 2019-2020. These data enabled civil society organizations and the budget teams within the ministries to identify gaps in actual spending. Following that, MIFTAH fostered the dialogue between civil society organizations and budget teams to reach consensus on the demands and prepared demand papers for three main programs within the three ministries that provide essential services to marginalized and vulnerable groups. Based on this, MIFTAH will submit the three demand papers to the Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Finance to take these demands into account while preparing the Public Budget 2021.

### **1.5.2 Monitoring the actual spending rates on the social sector**

As part of MIFTAH's continued work in monitoring and tracking actual spending on the social sector, which includes spending on education, health and social development programs, MIFTAH published three specialized reports that monitored actual government spending on the three ministries; [Education and Higher Education](#), [Health](#), and [Social Development](#) during 2019. Additionally, MIFTAH published [the semi-annual report on actual spending for the first 6 months of 2020](#). According to the semi-annual actual spending report for the year 2020 issued by the Ministry of Finance, the actual expenditure allocated to the line ministries within the social sector reached (3.545,2) million NIS out of (4,440.6) million NIS which constitutes a 5.39% of the total expenditures compared to (8.734,2) million NIS, out of (3.068.7) million NIS actual expenditures during the first half of the 2019 constituting a 7.38% of the total expenditure.

### **1.5.3 MIFTAH submits demand papers to the Ministry of Finance to support social justice**

MIFTAH submitted demand papers to the Ministry of Finance that request an increase in budget allocations to specific programs in line ministries within the social sector. This would contribute to increasing citizens' access to social, health and educational services in a way that enhances social justice in fiscal policies. The demand papers were a result of a series of consultations and dialogue sessions that included representatives of official and civil society institutions in addition to monitoring of government spending in line ministries within the social sector. They also fall within the framework of following up on the fiscal policies of the Palestinian government during

the state of emergency, in addition to carrying out an economic and social analysis of these policies.

These demand papers called for an increase in budget allocations for the vocational and technical training program at the Ministry of Education, which is considered an important entry point to reduce the high unemployment rates among women and youth, which stood at 52%, and to increase allocations for the integration and protection program at the Ministry of Social Development, which receives about 6% of the total budget of the ministry. This program is designed to enhance the protection of vulnerable community groups including women victims of GBV. The papers also called for an increase in allocations to the secondary and tertiary health services and care program at the Ministry of Health, through which the ministry seeks to provide comprehensive and sustainable health services.

## **1.6 Emergency Response:**

### **1.6.1 Analytical Study: The reality of political participation and economic implications for Palestinian women during the state of emergency**

MIFTAH finalized its report entitled ["Political participation and economic repercussion on Palestinian women during the state of emergency"](#). MIFTAH was the first organization to highlight the gender gaps in the official governmental discourse and enacted measures during the state of emergency. It also showcased the nature of the challenges and policies of exclusion against women's participation during this period and displayed the nature of the programs directed towards supporting women during the state of emergency and home quarantine. MIFTAH provided an informative document supplemented with figures and graphs that shed light on the status of Palestinian women during the emergency period, with focus on the reality of their political participation in terms of existing discrepancies between the relevant discourse and procedures in place during the emergency period where only 123 women were engaged in the 400 emergency committees.

Additionally, MIFTAH reflected on the impact of the lockdown on the decline in economic conditions, affecting the situation of women who work in unsafe economic conditions in addition to families that lost their livelihood due to the pandemic and who were added to the list of "the new poor." There was also a noticeable rise in the rates of discrimination, exclusion and marginalization against women in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in addition to a spike in unemployment and poverty rates. This forced women to face socioeconomic challenges that pointed to the increased fragility of their situation and the growing discrimination between men and women. Ultimately, this contributed to the weakening and marginalization of women and to discouraging them from participating in emergency committees, which reflected the declining situation of women at the level of political participation, starting from their limited participation in emergency and guidance meetings and excluding female local council members from combatting the pandemic alongside their male peers.



### **1.6.2 Providing women heads of households with nearly 2,000 care and food packages during the state of emergency**

MIFTAH completed the distribution of approximately 2,000 food packages in the Hebron, Nablus, Tulkarem, Jenin, Jerusalem, Jericho and Jordan Valley, Ramallah, and Bethlehem districts in addition to Gaza Strip districts. The endeavor falls within MIFTAH's efforts to support and empower women and to promote the leadership role of Palestinian women's organizations and local council members.

The initiative was launched by MIFTAH at the beginning of March 2020 in parallel with the declaration of a state of emergency in Palestine and as a quick response to the growing needs of a number of poor families. It also took into consideration the rising levels of domestic violence and increased absence of women from public discourse and emergency committees established because of the state of emergency. MIFTAH therefore, sought to promote the visibility of women by distributing care packages to poor families in various districts in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to meet their needs which resulted from the Covid-19 pandemic. The packages were distributed over two stages between March and June 2020. MIFTAH's coordinators in the various districts played an important role in identifying the needs of the targeted sectors and formulating distribution plans to guarantee that packages reach women and families in need. They worked in coordination with local council members in the West Bank and with women leaders and organizations in both the West Bank and Gaza.

## **II. To Strengthen National Unity and International Awareness of the Palestinian Narrative**

### **2.1 Promotion of Human Rights**

#### **2.1.1 Young Human Rights Defenders propose recommendations to duty bearers**

As part of MIFTAH's efforts to disseminate the Palestinian narrative based on human rights conventions, MIFTAH held a meeting to present its [analytical report](#) on documentations of Palestinian youth human rights defenders(YHRDs). The report contains the most prominent results of the youths' documentation during 2019-2020 and its legal analysis under international law. The meeting was attended by senior representatives from international and national human rights institutions. Among the most prominent recommendations is urging WHO to commit to following-up the establishment of scientific laboratories for soil testing for contaminates in the Access Restricted Area in the Gaza Strip caused by Israeli weapons.

Despite lockdown phases that accompanied the outbreak of COVID 19 during March –May in West Bank and towards the end of 2020 in Gaza, MIFTAH project team continued supporting the YHRDs in documenting HR violations. The YHRDS were able to document around 1500 violation by the end of 2020 including new identified HR violations. Moreover, and as a mean of raising the voices of the YHRDs, enhancing their representation and empowering their active engagement in dialogues with national and international organizations, the five organizations

that are hosting the youth in Jerusalem, Gaza and Hebron supported the youth groups in conducting nine round table discussions with different duty bearers and decision makers.

### **2.1.2 CEDAW Implementation in Jerusalem**

As part of MIFTAH's efforts to disseminate the Palestinian narrative as a just cause, based on human rights conventions, including the implementation of "CEDAW" in Jerusalem, MIFTAH has begun working with a group of Palestinian civil institutions to document the complex situation of Jerusalemite women due to the multiple challenges and discriminatory practices in the city. This imposed reality is characterized by a decline in rights, widening legal gaps and an increase in the discriminatory policies against Jerusalemite women. MIFTAH releases specialized reports based on "CEDAW" that document evidences related to the daily struggles of Jerusalemite women in their confrontation with the occupation and with the conflict in terms of the legal, social and economic structures this reality imposes. These policies constitute constant hurdles for Jerusalemite women in accessing protection and justice.

## **2.2 Enhance internal dialogue to reach consensus on key political positions imperative to the Palestinians**

### **2.2.1 Lead dialogue on key political and timely issues**

#### **A public policy session on Israeli policy vis-à-vis the current government and the Palestinian cause**

Within the context of the unfavorable international developments currently taking place -- the nature of the populist, rightist takeover in many western countries, the inability of the EU to counter Israeli policies, Russia's preoccupation with other affairs, the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on the agenda of several countries and the Arab world's regional conflicts, which in turn has weakened the international structure for holding Israel accountable – MIFTAH held a public policy session, which brought together Palestinian political and national leaders. The session resulted in a policy paper that summarizes the main ideas discussed in the meeting in a bid to find grounds for developing a national agenda, followed by more dialogue and discussion. *For a copy of the policy paper, please follow the link below:*

<http://www.miftah.org/Doc/PolicyPapers/Policy200520.pdf>

## **2.3 Palestinian Narrative**

### **2.3.1. Credible Discourse on Palestine and Palestinians**

In partnership with the Palestine Institute for Public Diplomacy, MIFTAH continued its work on promoting the Palestinian narrative as a just and fair cause. This joint effort enabled us to reach millions of people and engage new audiences through a discourse on the values of freedom, justice equality and rights. It was able to raise awareness about the core issues and reflect the reality of life in Palestine through humanizing campaigns and videos. PIPD has launched Tetaís Kitchen, which is a travel and cooking series that explores the culture and political reality around

Palestinian Food, while providing a cinematic and educational experience for the viewer. We choose the name of tetaís to show their experience and secrets in cooking methods and recipes with Palestinians grandmothers tetaís with Chef Fadi Kattan who is presenting all the episodes with his experience in cooking with his tetaís kitchen. Every episode will be in different country of Palestine to show the different in customs and traditions in each country. PIPD focus for the micro targeting in Tetaís Kitchen for reaching peoples all over the world. [Rabet - YouTube](#)

### 2.3.2 “Hosted by MIFTAH”

MIFTAH publishes interviews with political and prominent personalities to discuss the current developments in the Palestinian political arena, the changes in international political tracks and their impact on the Palestinian cause.

Throughout 2020, the following interviews were published:

**Political pundits: Dr. Ghassan Al Khatib, Khalil Shahin, Dr. Honaida Ghanem:** the recent US presidential elections and Democratic candidate Joe Biden’s victory will have repercussions on the relationship of the new US administration with both Palestinians and Israelis. They also say these results will generate tangible changes to US policies, to the Biden administration’s international relations and to domestic American affairs. The observers predict that the Biden administration will shift priorities in handling several domestic and foreign files, including the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

<http://www.miftah.org/Display.cfm?DocId=26661&CategoryId=34>

**Zakariya Odeh:** Coordinator for the Civil Coalition for Palestinian Rights in Jerusalem: Israel’s policies on the social, health and economic rights of Jerusalemites, in particular towards housing, have escalated in the recent period; he cited the spike in the number of demolished homes, whether by Israeli municipal teams or coerced self-demolitions.

<http://www.miftah.org/Display.cfm?DocId=26647&CategoryId=34>

**Jerusalem personalities: Hatem Abdel Qader, Rasem Obeidat, Ismail Maslamani, Madhat Deeba, Mazen Ja’bari, Ziad Hammouri and Fouad Abu Ahmad:** the coronavirus pandemic was exploited to further Israel’s racist policies towards Jerusalemites through the preventative measures against Covid-19 which were employed in the service of the occupation.

<http://www.miftah.org/Display.cfm?DocId=26651&CategoryId=34>

**George Giacaman:** Professor at Birzeit University, political analyst and Board of Directors member of Muwatin Institute for Democracy and Human Rights: he discussed the developments that followed the official announcement of the “Deal of the Century” and the Palestinian, Arab and international stances prompted by this declaration. He also touched on several issues, most

notably the decision of the International Criminal Court [to open an inquiry into Israeli war crimes], the continuous pursuit of the BDS movement, the Palestinian division and the importance of holding Palestinian elections.

<http://miftah.org/Display.cfm?DocId=26613&CategoryId=34>

**Mazen Jabari:** Director of the Arab Studies Society's Youth Development Institute in Jerusalem: he discussed the Israeli occupation's new approach against the Palestinian presence in Jerusalem by boosting Israeli municipality-affiliated community centers and allocating millions of shekels to prompt the Palestinian Jerusalemite community into accepting the occupation. Additionally, the views of some Jerusalem activists on these centers and how to deal with this new policy are included in the interview.

<http://miftah.org/Display.cfm?DocId=26615&CategoryId=34>

**Daoud Al Deek**, Deputy Minister of Social Development and **Basri Saleh**, Deputy Minister of Education: In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the two discussed their respective ministries' plans under the state of emergency, in addition to diagnosing the reality of marginalized groups and the education sector in light of the pandemic. They also talked about the programs their ministries are looking to implement to reduce risks.

<http://miftah.org/Display.cfm?DocId=26620&CategoryId=34>

**Muayyed Afana:** Economic Expert and **Refaat Sabbah**, head of the Palestinian Education Coalition: Mr. Afana reviewed the financial and budgetary situation, economic repercussions and the sectors most affected while Mr. Sabbah discussed the civil society crisis, during the state of emergency, concluding that civil society organizations have been forced to contemplate this new reality facing them.

<http://miftah.org/Display.cfm?DocId=26619&CategoryId=34>

**Fadi Hidmi:** Minister of Jerusalem Affairs, showcased the ministry's work and developments in the city in spite of the huge challenges and impediments imposed by the Israeli occupation. These impediments are manifested in the continuous arrest and pursuit of young activists, the shutting down of health facilities and the undermining of Palestinian official and civil society institutions in the city.

<http://www.miftah.org/Display.cfm?DocId=26623&CategoryId=34>

#### 4. Documentary and Advocacy Films

- A number of videos and info-graphic audio visual material were produced for awareness and advocacy purposes on Fiscal Justice and the Public Budget as follows:

Facts and Figures on Wakfet Iz Fund [حقائق وأرقام حول صندوق وقفة عز - YouTube](#)

Facts and Figures on Cash Transfer Program within the MOSD [حقائق وأرقام حول برنامج المساعدات الاجتماعية - YouTube](#)  
[والتأمين الاقتصادي/ وزارة التنمية الاجتماعية 2018](#)

Facts and Figures on Protection Program within the MOSD [حقائق وأرقام: موازنة برنامج الإدماج والحماية في وزارة - YouTube](#)  
[التنمية الاجتماعية 2018 - 2019](#)

Semi-annual Report on Spending of Line Ministries within the Social Sector [التقرير النصف سنوي للإنفاق الفعلي - YouTube](#)  
[المقارن لمراكز المسؤولية ذات العلاقة بالقطاع الاجتماعي 2019 - 2020](#)

Government Spending on the Ministry of Education [الإنفاق الحكومي على وزارة التربية والتعليم العالي 2018 2019 - YouTube](#)

Government Spending on the Ministry of Health [الإنفاق الحكومي على وزارة الصحة الفلسطينية للعام 2018/2019 - YouTube](#)

- A video on Women's Political Participation in National Elections [الانتخابات العامة في فلسطين وواقع - YouTube](#)  
[مشاركة المرأة](#)
- A video on the General Union of Palestinian Students [شبابنا لتفعيل اتحادنا - YouTube](#)
- An animation video was prepared that demonstrates the gaps and realities of the National Referral System for Battered Women with Disabilities.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DLAwQQdCw3c>
- In the context of supporting partner ministries, especially the ministries of health, labor and social development during the COVID-19 outbreak, MIFTAH worked on producing a number of awareness videos about the dangers of the virus and ways of prevention. The messages targeted the different social groups that benefit from the services of these ministries.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FAex-Ti14nl&feature=youtu.be>  
<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=845973865868854>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vfE03eV4mCE&feature=youtu.be>  
<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=830587790762216>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DwV7qKjdLjc&feature=youtu.be>  
<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=219441749118291>

## 5. MIFTAH's Publications in 2020:

### Guidebooks:

- [Training Manual on UNSC Resolution 1325 which includes CEDAW recommendations 30, 32, 35](#)
- [Guidebook on Civic Peace and Women's Participation in Peace and Security Efforts](#)

### Strategic Plans:

[Strategic Framework for Lobbying and Advocacy \(2021-2024\) - Palestinian Women's Coalition for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325](#)

[Shufuna Strategy: Towards the Integration of Palestinian Women and Increasing their Representation in National Reconciliation Dialogues and Decision-Making Positions](#)

### Special Studies

[Human Rights Violations against Palestinian Women in the West Bank during the State of Emergency Declared in the Wake of the COVID-19 Outbreak](#)

[A Diagnostic Study on International Funds for Women, Peace and Security Agenda](#)

[Protection of Women from Violence in Times of Armed Conflict: Palestinian Women as a Case Study](#)

[Analytical Report to Assess Palestinian Women's Needs and Priorities within UNSCR 1325](#)

[Status of Palestinian women political participation – Follow-up on the implementation of CEDAW committee recommendations related to Article](#)

[The reality of political participation and economic implications for Palestinian women during the state of emergency](#)

[Comparison between the Contributions of the Private Sector and Large Companies Regarding Tax Exemptions During Coronavirus Pandemic 'Waqfet Izz'](#)

[Government Spending on Antipoverty Policies During COVID-19](#)

[Government Spending on Remote Learning at the Ministry of Education During COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

[Analytical Report on the Violations of Social and Cultural Rights as monitored by the Young Human Rights Defenders in 2019](#)

[The Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Public Health Services](#)

**Factsheets:**

- [Distribution of the Tax Burden and Progressivity 2018-2019](#)
- [The reality of women and youth political participation in the Palestinian context: local and national electoral laws](#)
- [Fact Sheet on Wkfet Izz Fund](#)
- [The Actual Spending on Key Ministries within the Social Sector in 2019 & 2020](#)
- [Actual spending report on the social sector during 2019](#)
- [Actual spending report on the Ministry of Social Development during 2019](#)
- [Actual spending report on the Ministry of Education and Higher Education during 2019](#)
- [Actual spending report on the Ministry of Health during 2019](#)
- [Marking the 72nd anniversary of the Palestinian Nakba: Palestinian refugees](#)
- [International Labor Day: Labor market indicators in Palestine](#)
- [Palestinian Prisoners Day: Palestinian Prisoners in Israeli Jails](#)
- [Locked in: Israel's house arrest policy against Palestinian children](#)
- [Palestinian Land Day: Israeli Settlements](#)
- [Palestinian Refugees: Facts and Figures](#)