

## Biannual MIFTAH Newsletter - Sixth Edition (July – December 2019)

### A proposed vision for conciliatory elections to restore the unity of the West Bank and Gaza Strip

MIFTAH held a closed session, during which political leaders, political analysts and specialists discussed a proposed vision on conciliatory elections to restore the unity of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The vision was presented by member of MIFTAH's Board of Directors, Dr. Azmi Al-Shuaibi. The vision focused on the assumption that the stage of national liberation and confronting the Zionist settlement colonial project requires abandoning the idea of using the election results to monopolize power by any party without the participation of others, and respecting the principle of partnership, by agreeing that the direct election goal must be to restore the unity of the West Bank and Gaza. This means unity for a single geographic and demographic entity with an elected Legislative Council, exercising its oversight and legislative role, and a government of national unity to be formed through partnership, which will facilitate the reform and activation of Palestine Liberation Organization institutions. This unity will also facilitate the role of the Palestinian Authority and its institutions in the service of the Palestinian national project. The vision also called for the development of a document of general principles to achieve the primary goal of national elections as a mechanism to revive democratic life within national institutions, primarily the Palestinian Legislative Council and one partnership-based government.

MIFTAH's sixth biannual newsletter highlights the most significant achievements and accomplishments of the organization over the past six months, and offers our friends and partners a snapshot of our activities and accomplishments.

### Continued efforts to reactivate the General Union of Palestine Students

MIFTAH continues to lead dialogue on ways to reactivate the General Union of Palestine Students (GUPS) with representatives from Palestinian factions and parties within the PLO, the Popular Mobilization Department, the GUPS Executive Committee, and the student union councils. The dialogue aims at supporting youth in pressing the relevant parties to ensure the political representation of youth within the PLO's relevant authorities and to reactivate GUPS which is considered one of the most important national platforms for youth within the PLO.



The dialogue sessions concluded the following:

- 1) The commitment of the parties and factions to set the stage for holding the General Conference during the first half of 2020 and to overcome any obstacles preventing its convention: namely, allocating the budget required by the PLO, and agreeing on the venue of the conference.
- 2) The message of the parties to the popular federations and the executive body of the general union, which includes stressing the need to maintain political representation, representation of universities in a balanced way, and requesting the PLO and the executive body of GUPS to set the date of the conference.
- 3) Forming a committee composed of political parties to assume responsibility for following up on the arrangements for holding the general conference.



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### Development of the National Strategy for Increasing Participation of Women in National Reconciliation and Decision-Making and the launch of the "Shufuna" platform



Within MIFTAH's efforts to press for the integration and involvement of women and youth in dialogue circles and national decision-making to influence the formulation of public policies, MIFTAH launched the "Shufuna" platform, which includes more than 250 participants representing all social sectors including political parties, athletes / artists, journalists, activists within social media platforms (socialists), young men and women, and representatives of civil society organizations.

MIFTAH managed to formulate strategic directions that support the representation and participation of women in the national dialogue to end the division and achieve national reconciliation. It then framed them in a strategic plan that includes the directions and goals resulting from consultations and workshops with participants from all West Bank governorates, including Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip.



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

As part of MIFTAH's work in monitoring and tracking actual spending on the social sector, which includes spending on education, health and social development programs, reports indicated that as of November 2019, spending was as follows: The Ministry of Education: 19.5% of the total public spending for 2019, followed by the Health Ministry at 11%, and finally the Ministry of Social Development at 7.1% of the total public actual spending.

### 'Right to Health' campaign launched

In line with national efforts to support and promote the stability of Palestinians on their land through improving health services, a coalition of Palestinian civil society organizations (MIFTAH, ARIJ, AMAN) recently launched a campaign entitled, "Right to Health (R2H)". The R2H campaign seeks to increase the budget allocations of the Ministry of Health to re-insure the right of all citizens to health care in accordance with international human rights treaties and conventions. The organizers of the campaign call on citizens to join the campaign and sign the petition to support their efforts:



<https://www.facebook.com/r2hpal>



<http://www.right2health.ps>



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### Practical proposals and recommendations that contribute to improving the response of the vocational and technical training sector to the needs of youth and women

MIFTAH presented practical proposals and recommendations to improve the response of the vocational and technical training sector to the needs of youth and women, which were discussed with representatives from youth and civil society institutions and a number of ministers. The recommendations were formulated based on figures and data from official parties, highlighting the most significant gaps in this sector. These include the shortage of vocational and technical institutions in most districts and the absence of legislation for advancing vocational and technical training in Palestine. This is compounded by the absence of fiscal policies for the allocation of specific government budgets, whereby part of each ministry's general budget is earmarked for this sector instead.



According to the figures presented, the number of male and female graduates for 2018/2019 was 1,610; 83.7% of these graduates were male while female graduates did not exceed 16.3%. MIFTAH presented these data and recommendations to the Prime Minister's Office as contribution to official efforts in developing plans and strategic directions to support the development of this sector and the empowerment of women and youth.

### MIFTAH continues to economically empower women to help them break the cycle of violence

MIFTAH targeted 54 women in the Jenin and Hebron regions, who are in safe spaces supported by centers specialized in the field of support for women victims of violence and where MIFTAH assessed the reality of these women and monitored their economic and social needs. The results of the needs assessment concluded the need to intervene in the empowerment of targeted women and their economic support to contribute to improving their economic and social conditions. In turn, this will help them break



free from the cycle of violence and dependence on the other. Women were supported by grants for productive, crafts and career-oriented projects. The grants also included registering some women in centers and institutes to receive the necessary technical and vocational training based on their needs. Many of these women went on to receive education and training in non-traditional professions, including photography and thermal printing on clothes.

### Providing a vision for reconstruction from a Palestinian women's perspective

Within MIFTAH's efforts to promote women's role in decision making, strengthening the social fabric and achieving national reconciliation in addition to integrating women in following up on the reconstruction file through hearing and dialogue sessions with decision makers, a discussion of a concept paper entitled "Reconstruction from a women's perspective" took place. MIFTAH seeks through this paper to highlight the lack of women's participation in the reconstruction plans since the beginning and with the various parties following up on the file. The paper also highlights the outstanding and problematic issues in dealing with this file in terms of the lack of real data, which indicates lack of integrity and transparency in managing this file.





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### MIFTAH's Publications in 2019

#### Guidebooks:

- \* Executive Internal Regulations to Activate Institutionalization of the Gender Charter in Local Councils and Manual of Procedures and Regulations to Support Implementation of the Charter.
- \* Guidebook of Monitoring and Evaluation Indicators for the Performance of LGUs in Implementing the Gender Charter
- \* Concepts and steps for preparing the public budget, budget cycle, budget proposal, accountability, and international transparency standards



#### Policy papers:

- \* Education and vocational and technical training in the West Bank from a gender perspective

#### Special studies:

- \* Report on the Gender Charter in Local Government - Developing Gender Policies in Local Government
- \* A Rapid Assessment of the National Referral System: implementation, challenges and gaps
- \* Analytical Study: CEDAW General Recommendations 30, 32 and 35



### Op-Eds

MIFTAH believes that political participation can take many forms, including the writing of essays especially by young people. Hence, MIFTAH has devoted a section of its biannual newsletter to publish several articles by young writers. The articles in this issue focus mainly on unemployment among youth and ways of lowering it through investing in vocational and technical training. This interest and focus coincides with Prime Minister, Dr. Mohammed Shtayeh's declaration of 2020 as the year of Palestinian youths.

- \* 2020: The year of Palestinian youth....and unemployment is still the biggest challenge

By: Laila Badawi



- \* Palestinian youth, between the system of the free market and the strategy of promoting steadfastness

By Nihal Barghouti



- \* The future of jobs in the labor market...and challenges in Palestine

By: Yousef Hilal



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#### Factsheet:

-  \* Demolished Lives: Israel's policy of home demolitions and its impact on women
-  \* Women and Vocational Training in the West Bank - availability, challenges and gaps
-  \* The Reform of the PLO as a National Necessity
-  \* The Impact of the Political Division on National and Social Reconciliation
-  \* Fundamental Freedoms in Palestine in light of the Political Division
-  \* Social Assistance and Economic Empowerment Program Budget / Ministry of Social Development for the year 2018
-  \* Inclusion and Protection Program Budget / Ministry of Social Development 2018-2019

#### Leaflet:

- \* The Constitution - Introductory Bulletin



#### Workshop proceedings:

- \* Constitutional Principles in Palestine- Expanded Workshop Proceedings - 25 June 2019



#### Documentary and Advocacy Films:

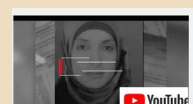
\* The production of an advocacy film that addresses the documentation of information and data pertaining to the structure of the General Union of Palestine Students. It also included facts and figures about GUPS conferences, its role throughout the course of the Palestinian struggle and in the dissemination of the Palestinian narrative through its various branches around the world, in addition to the reasons that contributed to its shrinking role.



\* The production of a short film about the cases of five women victims of domestic violence aimed at influencing public opinion, forming social awareness around the protection of women, combatting violence that threatens women and families and also focusing on civic peace in Palestinian society. The films revolves around five women who were killed by family members for various reasons, most of which point to the absence of protective laws for women and the gaps in litigation procedures for perpetrators of homicides against women.



Wafa Ghazawnih



Nivein Awawdih



Isra'a Gharib



Suha Deik



Aya Barad'eyih



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### 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 2019, the following interviews were published:

Ambassador Amal Jadou; Undersecretary of the Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, talked about the decision by the European Court of Justice to label Israeli settlement products and the political and economic implications of this decision. Jadou also talked about the possibility of this decision to pave the way for other achievements at the political level, whether in the European Union or in other international arenas.



Dr. Jad Ishaq; Director of ARIJ [The Applied Research Institute - Jerusalem] talked about the consequences of the statement of US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Israeli settlements in the West Bank and the practical mechanisms the Palestinian leadership can use to confront the US administration, which is financially and politically embargoing the leadership.



Knesset member Aida Touma-Suleiman; member of the Joint List for the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality, talked about the repercussions of the results of the latest Israeli elections on Palestinian citizens inside the Green Line, especially after the Joint List emerged as the third largest power in the elections, in addition to the repercussions of these results on the Palestinian political scene.



Dr. Ghassan al-Khatib; Lecturer in Cultural Studies and Contemporary Arab Studies at Birzeit University, discussed the repercussions of recent political developments, including those pertaining to the "Deal of the Century" and the Bahrain workshop on the economic dimension of the deal. He also discussed the possible options for the Palestinian leadership to address these developments, in addition to several developments at the regional and local levels.



Dr. Ammar Dweik; Director General of The Independent Commission for Human Rights - ICHR, discussed the legitimacy of the decision of the Constitutional Court to dissolve the Palestinian Legislative Council, as well as its decision regarding the superiority of international conventions and treaties over national legislation in keeping with the national, religious and cultural identity of the Palestinian Arab people.



Dr. Nasr Abdulkarim; Professor of Finance and Economics at the Faculty of Graduate Studies of the Arab American University in Ramallah, discussed the repercussions of the decision by Israeli occupation authorities to withhold Palestinian clearance revenues, the PA's financial crisis and its impact on the various social groups in Palestinian society, especially vulnerable and marginalized families who receive monthly allocations from the government.

