



**A Vision for Palestinian Women’s Rights Organizations based on the
Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security
Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325**

(Ten strategies for tackling issues pertaining to Women, Peace and Security)

**The Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

United Nations resolutions on peace and security have assumed special importance this year. This is because this year marks the 100th anniversary of the Balfour Declaration of 1917, the 50th anniversary of the 1967 occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and the passage of nearly 17 years since the issuance of UN Resolution 1325.

A number of Palestinian women's rights organizations, along with the Palestinian Ministry of Women's Affairs, have taken part in several activities for raising awareness about this resolution, and a Palestinian women's coalition was formed to support its implementation. This has recently culminated by introducing the National Action Plan, which discusses the implementation of this resolution in Palestine. The plan examines three dimensions: Protection, Participation (Involvement) and Accountability.

The aim of this paper is to highlight the mechanisms for following up UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (S/RES/1325) at the Palestinian level while focusing on the priorities of international organizations, diplomatic missions in Palestine and the international community which supports the Palestinian cause. This was done in order to enhance solidarity with the Palestinian women who have lived under occupation for a long period of time.

The struggle of Palestinian women has significantly improved their involvement (participation) in issues pertaining to peace and security. Among the most important achievements in this regard is the Palestinian Women's Movement's adoption of UN Resolution 1325 and its mechanisms, activating this resolution early on, and establishing a broad national coalition to work towards implementing it.

In 2011, the Palestinian Women's Movement agreed to establish a unified national vision stipulating *"the importance of guaranteeing the protection of Palestinian women and girls living under occupation and in areas of refuge and displacement by focusing their efforts on actively participating in ending the occupation and establishing a sovereign independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital, and to guarantee the right of return for Palestinian*

refugees". Also, there was the issuance of Presidential Decree No. (24) of 2005 which affirms the support of the Palestinian National Authority and its institutions for the full and equal participation of women in all efforts of maintaining and enhancing peace and security. It is also worth noting that Palestine has adopted a number of procedures, decisions, policies, strategies and laws which coincide with the components of UN Resolution 1325, especially in terms of mobilizing the efforts of official parties for the empowerment, protection and involvement of women in order to have them reach decision-making positions. An example of this is the ratification of the Palestinian Reform and Development Plan (PRDP) of 2008-2011 whose main components are the economic empowerment of women, maintenance of safety, increasing the involvement of women in decision-making positions, the political participation of women, combating violence against women and adopting the National Strategy to Combat Violence Against Women (2011-2019). Due to the struggle of Palestinian women, Palestine has ratified a number of legislations which guarantee the representation of women in the presidential, legislative and local authority elections. An example of this is the quota given to women in the Legislative Council with a 20% proportional representation in the candidates' lists of 2005. Moreover, Palestine has signed a number of international agreements such as the "Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)", and the State of Palestine has prepared a preliminary official report regarding this convention after some consultations with the local stakeholder parties in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. It is also worth noting that the Palestinian women's rights organizations have prepared a shadow report under the leadership of the General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW). Nevertheless, the challenges remain substantial in the fields of Protection and Accountability at a time when the Israeli occupation is increasing its violations of Palestinian human rights in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

On the broader regional level, the Arab revolutions and protests have created a new reality of women's rights violations. This has led to the rechanneling of international attention and financing – including on the level of advocacy and support- towards other countries in the region. At the same time, women's rights groups in the Arab world joined forces and new alliances were formed to tackle the issues of Arab women, peace and security. This is quite important because it has the ability to build a strong lobbying force by Arab women on the

international level and to offer the chance to Palestinian women to share their valuable experiences and express solidarity with other Arab women who are suffering from the absence of security and peace in their countries.

The Global Study titled "*Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace*" was conducted, and is related to UN Resolution 1325 after some 15 years after its issuance. The study was recommended by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon who understood that the mere issuance of this resolution is not sufficient for its implementation, and that follow up and accountability are necessary in regards to what was and should be achieved in terms of implementing this resolution on the national levels.

A number of activities were held and advisory committees set up during this global study, and consultations were carried out with several countries, governments and civil society organizations. The State of Palestine, represented by Mrs. Maha Abu-Dayyeh, took part in the advisory study committee and a number of women activists responded to the international questionnaire. However, some Palestinian women activists criticized the Global Study because it did not specifically mention the suffering of Palestinian women under the Israeli occupation; neither did it denounce the measures of the Israeli occupation nor demand an end to it. These activists felt the shortcoming was due to global power relations, which consider Israel to be above international accountability with regard to their crimes perpetrated against women, children and the Palestinian people as a whole. In fact, this was also stated by the Global Study itself when mentioning the pressures faced by the International Women's Movement during the discussions on UN Resolution 1325. The Global Study was written in a way which takes the mediator's position between the different parties. At the same time, the Global Study mentions the importance of "hard work" and that the local defenders of women's rights must continue to push the agenda of women's rights, peace and security forward at the local, national and international level, and that the change in the balance of power requires the ongoing building of alliances and the raising of pivotal issues.

Another criticism of the Global Study was the omission of some local views about the types, reasons and ways of ending armed conflicts, whereas the Global Study adopted the western approach of solving conflicts through security and peacekeeping forces. Also, the Global Study ignored the solutions that could be

developed internally, including the developing trends inside the community, fact-finding committees, and reform in accordance with the local community's standards.

Also, some female participants criticized the international study for its disregarding of the issues which led to changes in the forms of violence against women (gang rape, eliminating the achievements of women, etc.), as well as the increased number of male and female immigrants, the mixing of religion with politics, flow of weapons in war and conflict zones and the weapons manufacturing countries' non-compliance with the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) of 2014.

The Ten Strategies for tackling issues pertaining to Women, Peace and Security

One: The occupation must be viewed as a colonial hegemony and this analysis should be used as part of an integrated system for human rights.

UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and its subsequent resolutions are part of an integrated system for human rights. However, the absence of international mechanisms and measures for ending the longest-standing occupation in the world and the weak international pressure on the official and popular levels have hindered international peace initiatives and neglected the suffering of civilians, particularly that of women and children. This necessitates diverse and multifaceted efforts to reinstate international legitimacy and put an end to the frustration and lack of trust towards the international parties of reference.

Raising a women's rights issue without analyzing it from the context of colonialism based on international humanitarian law and the system of human rights is considered a wasted effort and neglects the real reasons behind the suffering of people. This, in turn, prevents the natural progress of a society. This applies both to local women's rights organizations and international ones which should use the same kind of analysis when dealing with Palestinian issues. Also, understanding issues should shift from merely viewing them as humanitarian cases to tackling them as causes of struggle. This necessitates the engagement of Palestinian women activists in both local and international discussions and dialogues about the trends and priorities of support.

Two: The National Coalition and the National Plan are considered a great achievement which should be celebrated, and they must be constantly supported and activated.

The Women's Coalition for UN Resolution 1325 was an important initiative led by the General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW) with the participation of active local NGOs. The "National Plan for Implementing UN Resolution 1325" – which was prepared by the "Higher National Committee for Implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1325" – is considered the start of this integration and partnership between Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and governmental institutions. This National Plan is crucial for all stakeholder parties because it has

set a number of objectives to be achieved within specific timeframes and it makes a clear distribution of the roles and responsibilities of implementing/participating in the implementation of its objectives and activities by providing the necessary funding. It is also necessary to invite international organizations to take part in the financing and follow-up of this plan. Furthermore, efforts were exerted to formulate a “Follow-Up Plan”, which is also very important.

Three: The role of international organizations in pressuring international bodies, courts and international forums to try those responsible for human rights violations, hold the Israeli occupation accountable and adopt the necessary international measures for doing that.

Palestinian women activists and leaders have a common vision regarding the pivotal role of international donor organizations in promoting peace and security for Palestinian women. This can be achieved through international human rights organizations such as the United Nations Security Council and General Assembly, or through the funders and donors who are most capable of bringing about change through financing women’s rights, lobbying and advocacy activities. These international organizations have played a prominent role in supporting the Palestinian people in various cases involving human rights and humanitarian relief. However, the past experience proves that it makes no sense to merely adopt measures to “heal the wound” without addressing the reasons which caused the injury in the first place.

The ongoing violations and assaults and the fragile economic, political and social situation confirm the futile pattern of support for Palestinians at this point. Whereas we see growing solidarity with the Palestinian cause among different nations, it has become important to ensure that the patterns of support correspond with the will of the people in these nations.

The example of providing aid without taking a real stance towards the violations being penetrated is like a person chasing a mirage. This results in the squandering of available sources and resources and weakens the ability of all Palestinians – both male and female - to meet the ordinary needs of their society.

Supportive organizations have several ways of raising issues pertaining to women, peace and security in their official reports and also during their speeches in parliaments and other governing bodies. These organizations should raise global awareness on the suffering of the Palestinian people by taking part in different international forums and familiarizing foreign media agencies with the experiences and testimonials of those working in these organizations. Moreover, supporting organizations have the responsibility of delivering the real Palestinian narrative based on the cultural notions and concepts of other countries.

Four: To continue to support Palestinian women's contributions in their local communities in terms of documenting the perpetrated violations

Palestinian women can play an active role in the documentation of violations. They can also speak out to the world about their daily struggles and experiences in a language understood by all. This will help to highlight their suffering under occupation from a humanitarian and human rights perspective. Therefore, it is important to continue with documentation and raising awareness. However, we must remember that these women have received limited training; hence, haphazard efforts do not and will not lead to the creation of a social movement which is well-versed in issues related to peace and security. This is particularly true when the mention of Palestinian women and the reality of their daily lives is disregarded

Furthermore, raising awareness should not be limited to women at the grassroots level. Rather, the awareness-raising process must start with the women who work in women's rights organizations and whose daily work involves various decisions related to women, peace and security. Furthermore, women at the grassroots level should be actively involved in advocacy activities and awareness-raising campaigns as spokespersons and official representatives who speak about their daily suffering and the suffering of their families. This requires the building of trust and confidence in the capabilities of women at the grassroots level and the recruitment of new members and activists; in particular young Palestinian women who bring "new blood" and new ideas in terms of what can be achieved.

Five: The strong link between the various elements of the Human Rights System and the International Humanitarian Law from the perspective of women's rights

Palestinian women are well-aware that Resolution 1325 and its subsequent resolutions are considered a milestone in the global struggle for the recognition of women's rights. They are also aware of the presence of a direct link between these kinds of resolutions and the "Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women" (which was previously ratified by Palestine), whereas the international community must support the different efforts of local Palestinian women. Also, the international community should promote the visibility of these accomplishments and successes. At this point, the issue of violations is often discussed without providing any material or moral support to Palestinian women. Hence, these limitations prevent Palestinian women from gaining valuable experiences and proving themselves as local or national leaders.

Six: Raising the issues of women, peace and security in local, regional and international conferences.

At this point, Palestinians are actively participating in a number of regional and international conferences and meetings related to human rights/women's rights and more specialized subjects. These international meetings are beneficial in that they usually give them the opportunity to speak about the current reality in Palestine. However, these efforts are usually scattered because of a lack of coordination between the different delegations, different stances/viewpoints on several topics, and inaccurate statistics and information.

The coordination of efforts on the international level is also extremely important, and it is vital to give Palestinian women the opportunity to participate in international meetings and talk about the suffering of Palestinian women. It is also important to boost the representation of women by including young/emerging women leaders who can be trained and mentored by the current leaders. These young women should be encouraged to represent the women of Palestine through the use of their knowledge and personal

experiences. It is also worth noting that both popular and official representation is important, and that both require different kinds of skills which cannot be obtained except through practical experience.

Seven: Communication on various levels

The women's rights movement has a limited ability in using effective advocacy tools to promote their causes at the global level, such as the documentation of war crimes and report writing, which address Israeli violations against women. This weakness is due to several reasons including limited material capabilities and insufficient practical experiences.

We do not expect all organizations to have professional experiences in all of the issues related to lobbying and advocacy. Moreover, we cannot expect all of them to have a specialized legal experience in the documentation of violations and the preparation of lawsuits for international tribunals. Hence, it is important to have each organization specify the role/tasks that it can perform in the most proficient manner with the highest professional capabilities [i.e. the division of roles among organizations].

The discussion of the Palestinian cause in terms of women, peace and security presents a very strong argument. However, this discussion can have an even greater impact if it were communicated more effectively. At the same time, we must make sure not to generalize/standardize the message because one cannot assume that a single message will have a similar impact on everyone. For example, official bodies such as the UN General Assembly and UN Security Council have their own ways of communication, i.e. an official way of writing and specific mechanisms of communication. Therefore, such communication requires more preparation and time (sometimes more than a year). This in turn, requires the preparation of a list that includes all the important issues, the prioritization of these issues, and the preparation of a "Communication Plan" with specific dates and contents. On the other hand, when we communicate at the popular/grassroots level, it is important to use modern tools of communication such as information mapping for the monitoring of violations, different social media programs, and camera documentation to show the human side of people through pictures and videos.

Eight: To Involve human rights organizations in raising the issues of women, peace and security.

Up to this point, human rights organizations have not attached any importance to the particularity of issues pertaining to women when monitoring human rights violations. Also, these organizations fail to utilize women's rights-related tools for issues pertaining to peace and war; particularly Resolution 1325 and the subsequent resolutions despite their importance and impact. Therefore, human rights organizations must make sure to mention the issues of gender in all of their reports and to prepare special reports which cover the vital and urgent matters related to women's rights. At the same time, women's rights organizations and activists should partner with human rights organizations in all cases involving human rights and shoulder the responsibility of raising women's rights issues in all the reports and documents issued by these organizations by holding workshops and periodic roundtable discussions. They should also promote communication between the activists and other people concerned with the human rights and social justice issues.

Furthermore, one must ensure that the prepared documentation is eligible for use as a testimonial in international and regional courts and examined on whether it can be included as part of the written history of Palestine. Some human rights organizations have ample experience in this field and possess great knowledge in international humanitarian law. This shows us the importance of specialization and complementarity in the various functions.

Nine: The important role of the Palestinian diplomacy in raising the issues of women, peace and security

Until now, the Palestinian embassies and representative offices have not been sufficiently involved neither on the official level nor on the popular one. The Palestinian Diplomacy can do many things in this field, for example by providing information about the committed violations against Palestinian women or through the mobilization of official and popular support. Hence, the ambassadors of the State of Palestine must give the opportunity to Palestinian women to

inform the various peoples and governments about the things that these women experience on a day-to-day basis. This should include civil/non-governmental representatives in all official delegations and the assigning of suitable women to address these societies. These women must know very well the languages and cultures of the addressed people, as well as having valuable experiences which they can share with these societies.

Ten: It is crucial to continue working on internal issues.

We must never cease to work on involving women in the decision-making process, reconciliation commissions, peace negotiations and democratic representation whether on the level of political factions or local and legislative elections. Despite the fact that Palestinian women have made several achievements in the field of political participation (such as the quota system, the “factions document”, etc.), the greatest challenge faced by Palestinian women is their lack of representation in the national reconciliation and not including women leaders in negotiation teams. At the same time, we cannot focus on mobilizing external support without proving the merit of women in this regard while simultaneously working on internal matters. This is because internal security cannot be separated from the security issues related to the occupation.

Working on issues pertaining to women, peace and security is considered a common responsibility among the international parties working in the region, official Palestinian women’s rights organizations and local Palestinian human rights NGOs.

Therefore, **international parties need to do the following:-**

- Support for the national struggle of Palestinian women and the Palestinian people should be among the main priorities of international organizations. This is because the funding and material support which only focuses on relief is insufficient given that it encourages dependence and weakens the society.
- To mobilize international support, advocate for the causes of Palestinian women and support the representation of women in international forums.

- To ensure that all projects implemented in Palestine take into consideration the human rights standards mentioned in the international humanitarian law and human rights law, and to ensure that these projects are always gender-sensitive.
- Provide sufficient support for Palestinian women so that they can work in a sustainable and continuous manner on issues related to peace and security with the goal of ending the occupation. Also, international parties must constantly support and fund the activities of raising awareness about human rights resolutions, lobbying and advocacy activities and investing in programs which target young Palestinian women.
- Provide sufficient funding for the National Plan and to consolidate the efforts of specialization and complementarity between women's rights organizations and the Palestinian Ministry of Women's Affairs, in addition to highlighting the issues of Palestinian women, peace and security in various international forums.
- Provide more opportunities for Palestinian women to address the nations and governments of the world regarding their gender-related issues and national cause and to involve young women in these opportunities. Also, these international parties must always include occupied Palestinian women in the various provisions, documents and decisions related to women, peace and security.
- Promote lobbying and advocacy capacities among women by providing them with political support, funding and training.
- To support women's rights and human rights organizations by assessing their documentation of ongoing violations, and to learn from locally-produced reports and benefit from these reports in lobbying and advocacy activities inside their home countries.
- To take into consideration the locally-produced reports instead of always depending on international experts during the preparation of international reports. Also, the internal issues should be assigned to Palestinian organizations and activists because they have a better understanding of their current reality. Additionally, the disagreements and division on the

internal level should not be used as a pretext for not establishing partnerships related to the issues of women, peace and security.

- To promote partnerships between women's rights and human rights organizations, and to support the production of human rights reports which take gender-related aspects into consideration.

What do the Palestinian women's rights and human rights organizations need to do?

- Not to isolate women-related issues from the other issues of the Palestinian national struggle. Also, these organizations should focus on being more active in the media and must introduce new ways of lobbying and advocacy in order to mobilize more supporters both locally and internationally.
- Work on implementing the plan in a complementary manner between the various organizations, familiarize women at the grassroots level about this plan, and to follow up on its implementation.
- Formulate strategies for working with international women's rights organizations which are active and influential in their respective donor countries, as well as developing advocacy mechanisms in order to support donor organizations in making funding and political decisions in international forums to the benefit of Palestinian women and the Palestinian people in general.
- To work in accordance with human rights standards and international humanitarian law and to consider them as reference points for all activities carried out in Palestine. Also, women's rights issues must not be dealt with separately from the issues of human rights and the Palestinian people's right to self-determination.
- Unify the Palestinian women's discourse; provide training on public speaking to young Palestinian women and to give them the chance to present their cases in international forums.
- To become well-versed in the various levels of lobbying and advocacy and to distribute roles between official parties represented by the Palestinian

Ministry of Women's Affairs and NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) represented by women's rights and grassroots/community-based organizations.

- Palestinian women's issues cannot be raised without the continuous struggle for the recognition of women's rights at the internal Palestinian level. Also, these organizations should promote the participation of women in negotiations and their contribution in ending the internal division.
- Gain more experience in documenting violations in accordance with international standards, and increase their credibility vis-à-vis international parties by adopting robust research and documentation methodologies, committing to the principle of objectivity, avoiding the politicization of human rights issues and refraining from the use of emotive language in the documentation process.
- The need for specialization and complementarity in assumed roles, and to support the efforts of human rights organizations in order to properly tackle all issues from a gender-based point of view.

INTRODUCTION

Since the issuance of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, and despite its shortcoming in precisely describing the condition of Palestinian women under occupation, Palestinian women found it to be an outlet for tackling several issues which concern them. This resolution is considered a great victory for the Global Women's Movement and it speaks in a language which expresses the ambitions, concerns and challenges of Palestinian women as women who have been living under a long-standing occupation and suffer from flagrant human rights violations and the consequences of the military occupation's practices, both in their private and public life. These consequences include domestic violence, gender-based violence (GBV) and various forms of marginalization in their public life, such as preventing the participation of women in political and economic matters and hindering their involvement in all resolutions related to security, peace and the society. The United Nations resolutions on peace and security have a special importance this year which marks the 100th anniversary of the Balfour Declaration of 1917 and the 50th anniversary of the 1967 occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Hence, it is quite important to keep raising issues related to human rights violations against the occupied Palestinian people in general, and the Palestinian women in particular, as part of efforts which have been ongoing for more than a hundred years.

It goes without saying that, in general, the Palestinian people do not feel they have been treated fairly by the international community because of the failure to take suitable measures to end the Israeli occupation. For a long period of time, the Palestinians have been suffering from the absence of international monitoring mechanisms for implementing the international human rights law and the international humanitarian law represented by the Geneva Accords and protocols, as well as the failure to implement the international United Nations resolutions issued by the UN General Assembly (such as resolution 194) and the

Security Council resolutions (such as resolution 242, resolution 338 and resolution 2334 which condemned the settlements and demanded to put an end to them). Also, the ongoing international and regional changes have a great impact on UN resolutions related to these aspects¹. In fact, there is a long list of pressures faced by the United Nations and other international organizations in several issues such as the annexation and expansion wall, Goldstone's fact-finding report after the 2008/2009 Israeli aggression against the Gaza Strip, and other attempts to liberate the Palestinian people from the occupation and defend their right to self-determination. Such pressures are also exerted during the issuance of resolutions or the implementation of various measures which hold the occupation responsible. This shows the great challenges faced by the Palestinians in general, and these challenges cause the Women's Movement to resort to the policy of double standards in their agendas related to security and peace. Nevertheless, despite the absence of significant achievements on the international level, resorting to the international community is still considered one of the main strategies for the Palestinian struggle (including the struggle of Palestinian women).

A number of Palestinian women organizations and the Palestinian Ministry of Women's Affairs participated in awareness-raising activities regarding UN Security Council Resolution 1325, whereas a Palestinian women's coalition was formed to support the implementation of this resolution. This has recently culminated by introducing the National Action Plan which examines the implementation of this resolution on the Palestinian level, whereas Palestine is one out of only 54 countries (and only the second Arab country after Iraq) which introduced a strategic National Action Plan that tackles the themes of protection, participation (involvement) and accountability. These themes will be further elaborated at a later stage in the paper.

¹ During the preparation of this paper, the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) faced tremendous pressures to withdraw a report which described the Israeli occupation's practices as apartheid. This led to the resignation of ESCWA Executive Secretary Dr. Rima Khalaf. Afterwards, the UN Secretary-General issued orders to withdraw this report from the ESCWA website. Similar pressures have been exerted against any attempts to speak out against the practices of the Israeli occupation.

In the last 16 years since the issuance of this resolution, Palestinian women have been quite active, both on the local and regional level, in raising awareness about this resolution and using it as a mechanism for defending their rights and promoting security and peace on the ground. These activities focused on the themes of Participation and Protection. However, very few activities have been conducted in the field of accountability despite its great importance, hence the limited ability of the Women's Movement and organizations in this aspect.

With regard to advocacy and the mobilization of support for the Palestinian cause in general and Palestinian women's issues in particular, there has been a very limited use of Resolution 1325 (2000) and the related resolutions pertaining to women, peace and security matters such as resolution 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013) and 2242 (2015).² In the footsteps of the Global Study titled: "*Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace*", this study aims to highlight the mechanisms for international follow-up in relation to Security Council Resolution 1325 by becoming familiarized with what has been achieved thus far on the Palestinian level, as well as specifying the gaps and internal challenges; working alongside international organizations, diplomatic missions in Palestine and the pro-Palestinian international community; and finding out the emerging trends which strengthen the solidarity with the Palestinian women since they are women who have been living under occupation for a long time. This paper also aims to present some work priorities and practical suggestions for using UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and its related resolutions as a strong tool for exerting pressure to end the occupation, protect Palestinian women living under occupation, promote the enjoyment of their legitimate rights and adjudicate the officials who were responsible for the crimes committed by the occupation; whereas this adjudication must be done through international and human rights channels. This paper is mainly based on the Global Study of Resolution 1325 which did not specifically cover the situation of Palestinian women neither by mentioning their suffering under occupation nor by noting the various efforts exerted by the Palestinian Women's Movement with regard to this resolution. However, it should be noted that the Palestinian experience is somehow similar to the

² See Annex II which presents the most important points included in these resolutions.

experiences of other countries in the region and the world at large. Also, this paper was based on the themes which were highlighted in the National Plan and the women's coalition plan related to Resolution 1325 which resulted from a participatory process and a high level of agreement between the different stakeholders. The three main themes of the National Plan are protection, participation and accountability; and this paper mainly focuses on the themes of Protection and Accountability.

This paper neither provides details on the reality and suffering of Palestinian women nor does it mention their efforts to tackle the issues of peace and security on the local, regional and international level. This is because there are numerous valuable and specialized studies which tackle these issues in a detailed manner.³ Also, there are several studies and working papers which provide a legal analysis of this resolution in the Palestinian predicament.⁴ This paper provides a holistic, strategic and policy-based view of the things that were achieved until now, celebrates these achievements and presents a number of suggestions for the enhanced protection of women and the adjudication of war criminals. This paper is targeted towards the international organizations and diplomatic missions working in Palestine, as well as women's rights and human rights activists and the national coalition for Resolution 1325. This paper highly values the efforts that have been exerted thus far and presents suggestions for continuing these efforts and raising the level of effectiveness of this work. Also, the paper discusses the ways for enhancing and integrating the various efforts. Also, there should be the strengthening of diplomatic and popular efforts to pressure the Israeli government to end the occupation, and to hold this government responsible for violating the rights of Palestinians - and especially those of Palestinian women - and to demand that all international and judicial/legal parties would take the suitable measures against the Israeli occupation to prevent their violations against the Palestinian people in general and Palestinian women and young girls in particular.

³ See, for example, the "Strategic Plan" document of Security Council Resolution 1325 which includes a detailed analysis of the reality of peace and security of Palestinian women. Also, see the studies of Nader Sa'eed (2016), Fida' Barghouthi and Ashraf Hamdan (2015), and the study of "Eguiguren and Saadeh" (2014) which discusses the concept of protection in the Palestinian Territories.

⁴ See, for example, Zeina Al-Jallad (2012) (Arabic source), Randa Siniora (2012) (Arabic source) and Fatima Al-Mu'aqat (no publication date) (Arabic source).

METHODOLOGY

The work methodology of this paper includes the extensive review of the literature that has been published in the last 16 years, as well as the Global Study of Resolution 1325⁵ and a number of interviews with several Palestinian women leaders who are highly aware of the various developments, achievements and challenges and have played a prominent role for many years in tackling issues pertaining to women, peace and security. We also managed to conduct three focus groups with a group of second line leaders who are activists on the field level and have received specialized training on raising awareness and familiarizing people about Resolution 1325 and its subsequent resolutions for the purpose of building the capabilities of documenting violations. Moreover, we held some interviews with a number of male and female employees of human rights and international organizations which are active in this field in order to see what can be done in the upcoming future. It is also important to note that these interviews were mainly focused on what can be done in the future and not to assess the past experience which was quite enriching and witnessed a number of achievements and challenges.

⁵ Link of the Global Study: http://iknowpolitics.org/sites/default/files/global_study_on_1325_ar.pdf

**An overview of the most important issues of the Global Study titled:
“Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace”**

This global study came after a recommendation from former United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon who understood quite well that the mere issuance of a resolution is not enough for its implementation and that it is important to do accountability and follow-up on all the things that have been done in the past, as well as seeing what can be done in the future with regard to implementing this resolution on the national levels. This point is quite relevant in the Palestinian case, whereas the Palestinian Women’s movement, civil society organizations and the Ministry of Women’s Affairs agreed on the importance of following up the implementation of this resolution by adopting the National Plan and formulating a follow-up and assessment plan which will be used soon for following up the National Plan’s implementation. This was reaffirmed by one of the Palestinian female activists who stated that *“The mere fact of signing⁶ Resolution 1325 is considered an achievement. However, it is very important to introduce some mechanisms for implementing it, and to translate this resolution on the ground and overcome the various challenges and obstacles which stand in the way of its implementation”*.

The following is a quick overview of what was mentioned in the Global Study, as well as its main conclusions. It is also worth noting that there is a great level of similarity between its conclusions and the Palestinian experience. However, these issues will be elaborated at a later stage during the clarification of women’s vision in their regard; whereas the Palestinian women struggled on a number of social and national levels and against the occupation, internal division and the protection of the national and social fabric.

A number of activities were held and advisory committees set up during this Global Study, and consultations were carried out with several countries, governments and civil society organizations. The State of Palestine, represented by Mrs. Maha Abu-Dayyeh, took part in the advisory study committee and a number of women activists responded to the international questionnaire.

⁶ Researcher’s note: This quote is verbatim, whereas Resolution 1325 is a Security Council resolution which must be adopted and implemented; and the Palestinian Authority ratified this resolution.

However, some Palestinian women activists criticized the Global Study because it did not specifically mention the suffering of Palestinian women under the Israeli occupation; neither did it denounce the measures of the Israeli occupation nor demand an end to it. These activists felt that this shortcoming was due to global power relations, which consider Israel to be above international accountability. There was also the mentioning of the pressures faced by the International Women's Movement during the discussions on UN Resolution 1325. The Global Study was written in a way which takes the mediator's position between the different parties. At the same time, the Global Study mentions the importance of "hard work" and that the local defenders of women's rights must continue to push the agenda of women's rights, peace and security forward at the local, national and international levels, and that the change in the balance of power requires the ongoing building of alliances and the raising of pivotal issues.

Another criticism of the Global Study was the omission of some local views about the types, reasons and ways of ending armed conflicts, whereas the Global Study adopted the western approach of resolving conflicts through security and peacekeeping forces. Also, the Global Study ignored the solutions that could be developed internally, including the developing trends inside the community, fact-finding committees, and reform in accordance with the local community's standards.

Also, some female participants criticized the international study for its disregarding of the issues which led to changes in the forms of violence against women (gang rape, eliminating the achievements of women, etc.) and the increased number of male and female immigrants, the mixing of religion with politics, the flow of weapons in war and conflict zones and the weapons manufacturing countries' non-compliance with the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) of 2014.

The global study focused on the following:-

- 1. The nature of conflict has changed:** The Global Study noted that there have been some changes in the nature of modern warfare which came to involve advanced and extremely destructive technologies. For example, during the Israeli military assaults on the Gaza Strip, there was the use of modern military technologies and unprecedented levels of militarization that were totally incompatible with the reality of life in the Gaza Strip which is one of the most densely populated areas in the world. Also, modern wars started involving non-state actors; namely the armed groups which do not abide by any national consensus decisions, and this makes it quite difficult to reach to any truce, agreement or negotiations for preventing the outbreak of war. In the Palestinian context, we see a number of political factions and groups which have diverging or contradictory visions, ideologies and political programs. We can also see a wide spectrum of armed resistance groups. It is also worth noting that women are not sufficiently represented in the various structures of the Palestinian political system. Hence, they do not participate in any national efforts for introducing a common vision for the Palestinian national project. At the same time, the modern media outlets and social media have brought the stark reality of existing conflicts into people's households, hence causing some negative psychological and social effects among the people. This is the reality of Palestinian homes on a day-to-day basis as people from all over Palestine watch the news of their country and other Arab countries.
- 2. The nature of root causes has changed:** The Global Study noted that: *“While the practices of war have changed in some parts of the world, so have many of the perceived ‘root causes.’ While the wars immediately after World War II were nationalist wars or political wars based on political ideology, many of today’s wars are religious or ethnic in origin. They are firmly in the realm of identity politics and in their most extreme form, deeply conservative and reactionary toward women and their rights”*. Several activists also noted a great level of similarity between the Palestinian and international experiences, whereas the Palestinians

underwent various assaults and open wars⁷ from the Israeli occupation; the last of which was the Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip in 2014. Also, the ongoing military assaults and the tightened siege on the Gaza Strip have led to a surge in religious fanaticism, the loss of hope in peace, creation of a general culture which does not support women's rights, factional extremism, giving a higher priority to political parties instead of the national interest, the spread of internal divisions and tribalism, absence of community partnership, absence of a good model for leaders, marginalization of the grassroots, selection of elites who only promote personal interests, no new leaders in factional and popular parties, not implementing laws on the ground, absence of legislative bodies and the male domination over the various parts of society.

3. Fragility of States and the Rise of Non-State Actors, where the religious and ethnic groups emerge and impose their power over certain geographic areas. These groups neither recognize the international agreements between states nor the standards mentioned in the international humanitarian law and the human rights law, and they usually do not

⁷ According to Sara Roy (2005), during the 2014 War on Gaza, which followed the wars of 2008 and 2012, the Gaza Strip – whose area is only 365 square-metres – was bombarded by two tons of explosives whose effect was equivalent to a medium-scale earthquake. Also, about 170,000 houses were damaged or destroyed during the war; whereas 19,000 of them became uninhabitable while approximately 5,000 residential units had already been destroyed from previous assaults and had not been reconstructed. During the war, there were 50,000 homeless persons who were sheltered inside UNRWA facilities for a total of 7 days. In June 2015, about 100,000 persons (most of whom were children) remained homeless or “long-term displaced persons” who were living with their relatives or friends, or in temporary residence places or rented apartments and some of them returned to the ruins of their former dwellings. In terms of injuries, there were more than 11,200 injured persons including 3,500 women and 3,400 children (who together constituted 62% of the total number of injured persons). About 10% of all the injured persons became permanently incompetent and some people got injuries from collapsed buildings after they returned to their partially destroyed houses. Due to the nature of the war and the huge number of injured persons and the limited resources, doctors had to perform amputation operations in order to save time. As a result of this, many of the incompetent persons now have amputated parts as well. Moreover, a total of 1,500 Palestinian children became orphans. The burden of taking care of injured persons and orphaned children is carried by the family and extended family. However, these families have very few resources. It is also worth noting that at least 400,000 children in the Gaza Strip are in need for direct psychological support. Additionally, 26 schools were totally destroyed and 122 schools were partially damaged (including 83 schools belonging to the UNRWA). Furthermore, at least 11 higher education institutions were damaged; including the Islamic University of Gaza. According to the UNRWA, 90% of the schools in Gaza are obliged to work two shifts. The Medical Care sector also suffered from substantial damages, whereas 24 medical facilities were destroyed; including the al-Wafa hospital which is the only Gaza hospital that is specialized in the field of rehabilitation and Geriatrics. Moreover, a total of 17 out of 32 hospitals suffered damages, and 42 out of the 97 primary healthcare centers also suffered damages and 8 of them were completely destroyed. It must also be noted that the wide-scale destruction of Operation Defensive Shield caused further damages and threats as a result of at least 7,000 explosives which have not been detonated until now.

support women's rights even though they do not directly violate them. On the Palestinian level, the practices of the occupation – such as separating the West Bank from the Gaza Strip after the unilateral disengagement from the Gaza Strip in 2005 – have led to even a greater siege in the Gaza Strip and prevented the geographical continuity between the West Bank and Gaza Strip and also between various areas of the West Bank. The practices of the occupation also led to the annexation and expansion wall, the accelerated building of settlements, the ongoing siege on Palestinians and the increased number of military checkpoints. All of these caused the geographical division of Palestine and the prevention of geographic, social, economic and political continuity between the people of the same society, as well as the total isolation of the Palestinian areas. This also led to having two authorities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, thus weakening the Palestinian national project, disrupting the democratic process and empowering the authority of Hamas in Gaza, as well as the fragmentation of the Palestinian social fabric⁸ and the natural development of conflicting thoughts regarding critical issues.

- 4. Diversity:** The Global Study focused on the fact that the world is a diverse place and that the different groups of women face different challenges, hence requiring a real and not just a symbolic representation of women. Even inside the same state, there are various groups of women with different viewpoints, and all these groups must be represented in peace negotiations and in all issues related to peace and national security. On the Palestinian level, this element is of utmost importance because the women of Gaza can only be represented by the women of Gaza; and the same thing applies to the women of Jerusalem, Hebron, the Palestinian diaspora and the disabled young girls and women in Palestine. This shows us the great diversity of Palestinian society. Also, we must stay away from only symbolically representing women in various bodies such as official organizations, political parties, negotiations and agreements, international

⁸ Currently, a study is being conducted on the effects of the Palestinian internal division and the resulting damages on Palestinian women. The study is being prepared by “The Arab World for Research and Development” (AWRAD). This study examines a number of social effects, such as the increased rates of divorce, fragmentation of Palestinian families, the increased suffering of women and the spread of dangerous phenomena and behaviours such as a rise in the cases of suicide, homicide, theft, begging, consumption of drugs and addiction to the internet.

conferences and other frameworks. This requires the building of strong skills and capabilities, but even importantly, it requires a good understanding and acceptance of diversity in representation, as well as giving the chance for young and new leaders to assume higher positions.

5. **Nature of “Peace” has Changed.** The Global Study noted that *“For decades, peace meant mainly the silencing of guns and the renewal of formal politics as the way of governance. Ceasefires and demobilization were the main focus of peace processes. However, today it is recognized that peace is something far more than the ‘absence of violence’. Peace has increasingly meant an inclusive political process, a commitment to human rights in the post-war period and an attempt to deal with issues of justice and reconciliation”*. Perhaps Palestinian women from various areas also believe in these principles amidst the great violence inflicted on them by the occupation without necessarily using weapons against them in a direct manner. This is because the practices of the occupation include arrests, punishment, displacement, house demolitions, denial of passage through checkpoints, in addition to death and injuries. For this reason, it is not sufficient to merely prevent the use of weapons but there should be the imposition of restrictions on commerce and arms deals with the State of Israel, and to boycott this state until the elimination of all forms of occupation; including non-military forms of occupation such as the occupation’s closure of checkpoints, controlling the borders, economic hegemony and other forms of colonialist control.
6. **Transformative Justice⁹:** In the past, Transformative Justice used to mean accountability and the adjudication of criminals and had more of a punitive character by taking criminals to court and holding them legally responsible for the crimes that they have committed. However, in more recent years, this term became linked to the post-punitive phase and it

⁹ The topic of Transformative Justice was a major focus in the Global Study, and it is also a highly controversial topic in Palestine. One of the female activists noted that “the concept of Transformative Justice is not accepted on the Palestinian level because it can lead to normalizing the relations with Israel and accepting the other on the basis of peaceful compromises. This term means to make a compromise and adjudicate criminals in the framework of internal conflicts”. Another activist mentioned that “it is not possible to talk about Transformative Justice as long as we have the occupation and its flagrant violations. This topic is a bit early in the context of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict”. As a result of this, it was suggested that a more extensive study would be conducted regarding this topic; including a discussion of the international experiences such as the former Yugoslav experience, the Rwandan experience (International Criminal Court), the experience of South Africa and the Transformative Justice model based on the principle of Amnesty (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa). It is also beneficial to understand the current Palestinian trends, capabilities and challenges in order to develop a good position/stance for Palestinian women.

came to mean the process of reconciliation and the prevalence of peace and internal security. The Global Study stated that *“For centuries justice has been seen as the punishment of perpetrators who commit crimes against victims. Colonial legal regimes that form the basis of much of the law around the world also reinforced punitive notions of justice. Given the heinous nature of war crimes and crimes against humanity, one cannot move completely away from punitive notions since that would mean an acceptance of impunity. In the case of sexual violence, the international community has already spoken loudly and clearly with one voice. However, in recent times, punitive aspects of justice have been augmented by calls for reparations and reconciliation, including the collective search for truth and the preservation of memory. In civil wars, this type of approach is seen as essential for communities to recover and for justice to play a transformative role in the healing process”*.¹⁰ It is quite evident that this type of discussion has not been introduced yet in the Palestinian context. This is because the occupation is still ongoing and the capabilities of fact-finding committees are very limited; and even in cases where there are fact-finding committees, they are usually restricted on the international level. In the Palestinian context, it is crucial to have the Transformative Justice include “the lifting of immunity” and “lifting the cover” off from the practices of the long-term Israeli colonialist occupation, hence considering the practices of the occupation as “war crimes” according to the International Criminal Law.¹¹ At the same time, the national reconciliation efforts are still stumbling and the participation of women is insufficient. The subject of Transformative Justice and its application in the Palestinian context, as well as its vision pertaining to women, are in need of more specialized efforts and the specification of priorities.¹²

All Palestinian activists share the ambition of achieving Transformative Justice despite that there is no single agreed on definition of this term in

¹⁰ It is worth noting that the main obstacle is that the notion of justice is a subjective notion. This leads to a different understanding of this notion from one person to another. Even during the discussion of the first drafts of this paper, it was quite clear that different women activists saw this notion differently; and of course the differences are even greater between the various segments of the Palestinian people with regard to this notion.

¹¹ These violations were codified as war crimes by the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (beside the crimes against humanity, crimes of aggression and crimes of genocide), and this part of international law is regulated by the International Criminal Law.

¹² See the Working Paper issued by the Palestinian Center for Transitional Justice titled: “Transformative Justice is the Safety Valve of the Palestinian Reconciliation” [Arabic Source] (2014). This paper discussed the subject of fact-finding committees and listening to the victims of flagrant violations following the internal division of June 2017, as well as compensation and reparations and guaranteeing the treatment and rehabilitation of injured persons.

the Palestinian context. Currently, there are no internal Palestinian discussions (both on the national and women levels) about the modern notions of Transformative Justice and the absence of its implementation in Palestine. This is something that women can certainly initiate on the local, regional and international levels despite the fact that it requires lots of efforts, internal convictions and the ability to influence the public opinion. The National Plan of the National Coalition for Implementing UNSCR 1325 mentioned the *“mechanisms and methods for urging the member states to implement certain measures for confronting the culture of impunity¹³ and enhancing the level of engagement with the International Criminal Court in order to take the Israeli war criminals to court and strengthen the representation of this coalition in Arab regional networks that are concerned with women. The purpose of this is to achieve the strategic goal of holding the international community accountable for its role and legal responsibility towards the protection of Palestinian women from the violations of the occupation”*. However, this is not an easy task and it needs a specialized study on this subject as mentioned by some of the legal specialists in the field of international humanitarian law.¹⁴

- 7. An Emphasis on Prevention and a ‘No’ to Militarization.** The Global Study mentioned that *“Reliance on the use of force as the sole means of conflict resolution may, itself, actually create and perpetuate a cycle of violence. This is why women all over the world reiterated to us that military responses should be used sparingly. As was stated earlier, they argued that prevention and protection through non-violent means should be emphasized more by the international system, and more resources should be dedicated to this endeavor. If force is used, even for the protection of civilians, there must be clarity and clear, attainable objectives”*. *“Prevention and No Militarization”* is a very important concept in the

¹³ In the context of lifting the immunity and confronting the culture of impunity in the framework of the International Criminal Law, it is worth noting that there are several obstacles which prevent the attainment of justice. Despite the sufficient documentation of violations for meeting the standards of this court’s jurisdiction (condition no. 1 for opening an investigation), the other conditions mentioned in Article (53) of the “Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court” [i.e. the conditions for accepting a case and attaining justice] are an obstacle to achieving justice. This is because the conditions for accepting a case, as mentioned in Article (17) of the Rome Statute, include: 1) Opening an investigation by the Israeli courts with regard to violations; 2) Assessing the severity/graveness of the situation. Meanwhile, the attainment of justice was not considered by the court for taking a decision regarding the opening of an investigation. However, the opening of an investigation can be considered an obstacle for justice if the parties went back to the negotiation table. Another obstacle is the extradition of criminals since there is no international Police force which is authorized to arrest the criminals and sentence them (interview with Ms. Tamara Al-Tamimi).

¹⁴ See, for example: Al-Mu’aqat, Fatima (no publication date) (Arabic source), Siniora, Randa (2012) (Arabic source) and Al-Tamimi, Tamara (2016) (Arabic source).

Palestinian context, and it is a notion which can be linked to mobilization by Palestinian women's movement and organizations. Through this concept, it is possible to demand the adoption of the necessary measures regarding the arms deals signed between Israel and other world countries. Even though there might not be a consensus among Palestinian women with regard to this concept, this matter can be initiated by Palestinian women by opening a local and regional debate regarding this subject.

Changes in the Palestinian reality since the issuance of this resolution in 2000

Palestinian female activists and leaders always mention the shortcoming of UNSCR 1325 in failing to directly refer to occupation as one of the cases of armed conflict according to the international humanitarian law; and particularly in the four Geneva Accords. It should also be noted that the issuance of this resolution coincided with the beginning of the Second Intifada which constituted a state of ongoing conflict, escalation by the occupation, assaults on civilians, destruction of the infrastructure, disruption of the peace process, besieging of the Gaza Strip, the increased suffering of women on the checkpoints and areas close to the wall, the increased building of settlements, displacement and expulsion, and the demolition of houses in Jerusalem and Hebron. One of the female leaders noted the following regarding this matter: *“At that time, the Palestinian women activists did not understand the great value of this resolution by noticing the similarities between the situation and suffering of women in other conflict zones around the world and that of the Palestinian women living under occupation. The potential reason behind this shortcoming is that this resolution did not directly tackle the condition of women under occupation and it did not mention our struggle with the occupation whose goal is to violate the rights of the all Palestinians including Palestinian women. For this reason, we did not pay close attention to this resolution despite being in a serious crisis, and at that time we did not link this resolution with the practices of the Israeli occupation. However, at a later stage, the escalation of the occupation greatly affected our interest in this resolution”*. Nevertheless, Palestinian women did not stand idly but struggled to make serious achievements, the most important of which are the following:-

- The Palestinian Women’s Movement adopted UNSCR 1325 and its mechanisms, and they enforced and implemented this resolution in the early stages. This movement also created an expanded national coalition in order to work on implementing this resolution. The Women’s Movement agreed on a specific national vision in 2011 which stipulated *“the importance of guaranteeing the protection of Palestinian women and young girls living under occupation and in areas of refuge and dispersion, by developing their capabilities to effectively participate in ending the occupation and establishing the sovereign, independent Palestinian State with Jerusalem as its capital and guaranteeing the return of refugees”*.¹⁵

¹⁵ الملخص التنفيذي للخطة الاستراتيجية الفلسطينية لمتابعة تطبيق القرار الأممي 1325.

- There was the Presidential Decree No. (24) of 2005 which reaffirms the support of the Palestinian National Authority – along with its various institutions - for the equal and complete participation of women in all the efforts of preserving, enhancing and achieving peace and security.
- Palestine has adopted a number of procedures, resolutions, policies., strategies and laws which correspond with the themes of UNSCR 1325; and especially through the official bodies' efforts of empowering and protecting women and enhancing their access to decision-making positions. A good example of this is the ratification of the Palestinian Reform and Development Plan (PRDP) [2008-2011] whose main themes were the economic empowerment of women, the provision of safety, increasing the participation of women in decision-making positions, the political participation of women, confronting violence against women and adopting the national strategy for confronting violence against women [2011-2019].
- As a result of the efforts and struggle of Palestinian women, Palestine has ratified a number of legislations which guarantee the representation of women in the presidential, legislative and local council elections, such as the adoption of the Women Quota of 20% in the electoral lists of the Legislative Council in 2005.
- The signing of a number of international agreements; including the CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women) in April 2014, and the preparation of the preliminary official report of the State of Palestine regarding this convention following a number of national consultations with all the stakeholder parties in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. It should also be noted that women organizations under the leadership of the General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW) were the party which prepared the shadow report.
- In 2010, most of the Palestinian political parties signed a charter to pledge the strengthening of Palestinian women's participation in political decision-making positions by introducing a minimum women percentage of 30%. The aim of this was to increase the number of women in key decision-making positions inside the various political parties and organizations. This charter also pledged to increase the number of women in the electoral lists of legislative, local and municipality councils, as well as placing the names of women in the upper parts of the electoral lists in order to increase their chances of winning.

[Arabic Source] Executive Summary of the Palestinian Strategic Plan for Following up the Implementation of UNSCR 1325.

- The judicial authority witnessed a relative improvement in women's participation, whereas the number of female judges increased inside the religious and regular courts, as well as an increase in the number of female notaries. The total number of women judges was 11.7% in 2008 but it increased to 15.6% in 2013, whereas this percentage was 16.9% in the West Bank and 8.8% in the Gaza Strip. The increase in the number of women judges was higher in the Magistrates and First Instance courts and lower in the Supreme Court, whereas there is only one female judge in the Supreme Court of the West Bank and two female judges in the Supreme Court of the Gaza Strip. This shows that we have a noticeable increase in the number of female judges in comparison with previous years. For example, in 2006, the percentage of female judges was only 7% in the West Bank and 4.2% in the Gaza Strip. Also, there are three female judges in the religious courts (Sharia Courts) in the West Bank. Moreover, 2015 saw the appointment of the first two female marriage officiants in the West Bank. The Public Prosecution also saw a relative rise in female participation in comparison with other sectors; and especially in the West Bank where the percentage of female prosecutors in 2013 grew to about 16.4% compared to 83.6% of male prosecutors, whereas the percentage of women prosecutors in 2008 was only 5% in comparison with 95% male prosecutors. As of 2017, the number of female judges was 17.2% compared to 82.8% male judges.¹⁶ In 2014, there were 306 women working inside the Palestinian Police in comparison with 7,660 men, whereas the female staff of the Palestinian Police were only 256 in 2011. Out of a total number of 3,235 lawyers working inside the regular courts, there were 783 female lawyers, whereas the number of female lawyers in the Gaza Strip in 2015 was 139 out of a total of 890 lawyers working inside the regular courts.
- In the recent period, there was an increase in the number of women inside the consular and diplomatic corps and in international jobs in general. In 2013, the percentage of women working inside the Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs was 28% of the total number of employees. Moreover, the number of female diplomats in 2017 accounted for 5.8% of all diplomats.

¹⁶ الجهاز المركزي للإحصاء الفلسطيني، بيان صحفي، الثامن من آذار 2017. [Arabic Source] Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), Press Release, 8 March 2017.

Also, there are 44 women employees inside the embassies and representative offices of the State of Palestine, and there are two women ambassadors in the headquarters of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Palestine, as well as four Palestinian female ambassadors serving abroad. Additionally, the Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs organizes and conducts a number of training and qualification programs for professional diplomats; and this training targets women and treats men and women on equal footing and encourages women to join the diplomatic corps and assume high-ranking positions in international bodies.

- The National Coalition for Implementing UNSCR 1325 was established under the leadership of the General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW)¹⁷. In 2012, the Palestinian government issued a decision to establish the Higher National Committee which includes governmental organizations, women's rights organizations and human rights ones under the leadership of the Palestinian Ministry of Women's Affairs. This committee formulated the Strategic Framework and National Plan for 2017-2019. The National plan comprises three main themes: enhancing the protection of Palestinian women and young girls, and particularly in confronting the violations of the Israeli occupation; holding the Israeli occupation liable [i.e. "Accountability"] and the prevention of impunity, as well as reparations for Palestinian women and young girls based on the international and national mechanisms; and to enhance the participation of Palestinian women in decision-making positions on both the local and international levels. The National Plan also includes specific policies and work mechanisms for attaining these strategic goals. The interviewed women highly valued the participatory process during the preparation of this plan, as well as the presence of specific goals and a plan for following up its implementation. The theme of Participation includes strengthening women's participation on all levels; and especially in decision-making positions on the local, regional and international levels inside the conflict resolution and peace making committees, as well as inside the committees

¹⁷ It is a body which does coordination and implementation and exerts pressure. This body consists of the Palestinian women organizations, human rights organizations and influential and active persons who share the same vision as that of the Palestinian Women organizations with regard to UNSCR 1325. The membership of this body is open for all organizations, initiatives, popular committees and grassroots organizations involved in the struggle against the occupation.

which are concerned with achieving public order and social security and enhancing the role of women in issues pertaining to justice and fairness. As for the themes of Protection and Accountability: they are mainly concerned with curbing the military and other procedures of the occupation, prohibiting the use of force and threats, and disallowing the arbitrary use of force (as stipulated in the International Customary Law) by taking the necessary measures to prevent these procedures and establish the suitable mechanisms. The plan also includes the preparation of reports which document the violations and track their occurrence, as well as finding suitable mechanisms for presenting these reports to the stakeholder parties inside the United Nations for the purpose of guaranteeing legal accountability.¹⁸

These and other indicators show us that there has been a significant improvement in the participation of women in issues related to peace and security. However, the challenges remain substantial at a time when the Israeli occupation escalates its violations of Palestinian human rights in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, such as the fierce oppression and violence during the Second Intifada, the unilateral disengagement from the Gaza Strip which directly led to the Palestinian internal division, the great siege of the Gaza Strip, the almost total closure of the borders and the three violent wars of 2008, 2012 and 2014 which witnessed the destruction of Gaza's infrastructure and all the elements of survival in a number of local communities. Since the 2014 War on Gaza, the efforts of reconstruction have been meagre for several reasons, such as the lack of undertakings/pledges in comparison with the wide-scale destruction of the Gaza Strip, the Israeli pressures on the international committee to withdraw their pledges/undertakings, the pressures exerted on the international organizations working in the Gaza Strip, and the restrictions on the entrance of building materials. All of these impediments increase the social and national challenges faced by the Palestinian women.

¹⁸ الملخص التنفيذي للخطة الاستراتيجية الفلسطينية لمتابعة تطبيق القرار الأممي 1325.

[Arabic Source] Executive Summary of the Palestinian Strategic Plan for Following Up the Implementation of UNSCR 1325.

In the West Bank, the situation has exacerbated with the increased pace of settlement building (including the booming settlement activities in Hebron), the building of the expansion wall and the economic siege of the West Bank. It is also worth noting that, on the Palestinian national level, Legislative elections took place only once and no local elections were held. Also, the representation of women in the leadership positions of political parties remained quite low, whereas the efforts of national reconciliation have been ineffective until now despite the relentless efforts to achieve it.¹⁹

Changes on the Arab and Regional Levels

On the regional level, the Arab uprisings created a new reality of women's rights violations (and human rights violations as a whole). This led to redirecting the international concern and funding, along with the efforts of advocacy and support, towards other countries in the region. However, there was the joining of forces between different Arab women organizations, and new women's coalitions were formed to tackle the issues of Arab women, peace and security. A good example of this is the 'Karama' network and the 'MENA' Coalition related to UNSCR 1325, as well as the women's national alliances in Jordan, Iraq and Syria, respectively. The Arab League is also concerned with the issues of women, peace and security, whereas they adopted a regional strategy and an executive action plan in 2015 for 'Protecting the Arab Women: Peace and Security', as well as holding a regional conference titled "15 Years since UNSCR 1325: Scopes and Challenges" in the Jordanian capital Amman in the same year. This conference was attended by female civil society representatives from six Arab countries: Palestine, Jordan, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Egypt. These representatives agreed on several issues, the most important of which is to address the international community and point out to the issues of female refugees as a result of the "Israeli occupation" and "internal conflicts". The purpose of this is to put the issues of Arab women refugees on the international map and to call for the adoption of binding mechanisms and specific time-schedules for implementing UNSCR 1325, as well as monitoring its implementation and the obstacles which stand in the way. The conference also called for establishing the necessary

¹⁹ These efforts include the initiative of **MIFTAH** titled: "Women Call: One Country, One People, One Flag" which was launched in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in June 2015. Another example is the "Women against division in the Gaza Strip" campaign in 2012.

mechanisms for holding accountable all those who do not abide by the provisions of UNSCR 1325. Also, there was the holding of a ministerial conference on “Women and the Attainment of Security and Peace in the Arab Region” which issued an Arab declaration that calls for the international community and international organizations to work on protecting the Palestinian women and to hold the occupation accountable for its violations of international resolutions and its obligations towards the peace process, as well as its non-abidance by the international humanitarian law for protecting civilians in times of war, conflict and emergency situations.

The importance of these Arab alliances and demands lies in their ability to build momentum towards popular solidarity, as well as building a strong Arab women’s pressure force on the international level. These alliances give the chance to Palestinian women to transfer their experiences and know-how and express solidarity with other Arab women who are also suffering from the absence of security and peace in their respective countries. These alliances can also have a great impact on both the Arab and international levels and can help in obliging various countries to fulfill their commitments towards the attainment of security and peace for women.

The Ten Strategies for tackling issues pertaining to Women, Peace and Security

One: The occupation must be viewed as a colonial hegemony and this analysis should be used as part of an integrated system for human rights.

UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and its subsequent resolutions are part of an integrated system for human rights. This resolution clearly requires all member states to respect the international law in all things pertaining to the protection of women and children. In Section (IX) of this resolution, we see the affirmation of the need to completely respect the international law on the rights of women and young girls and their protection (and especially since they are civilians); including the “Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)” of 1979. In the footsteps of the Global Study titled “Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace”, this study comes as part of a natural development for enhancing the protection of women’s rights during armed conflicts and strengthening their participation in the process of peace making and peace keeping. There is a long list of historical achievements in the protection of women’s rights by the international law. This includes the United Nations Charter which guaranteed the rights and freedoms of all people without discrimination on any basis; including gender. These achievements also include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which guaranteed the rights and freedoms of all men and women on equal terms; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; as well as the conventions related to women, such as the Convention on the Political Rights of Women which entitles women “to vote in all elections and be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies, and to be entitled to hold public office and to exercise all public functions, on equal terms with men, without any discrimination”. Also, there is the Convention on the Nationality of Married Women, Convention on Consent to Marriage, the minimum Marriageable Age²⁰ and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)” [which was ratified in 1979] which, in spite of its failure to

²⁰ مركز الميزان (2012). "ورقة حقائق حول النساء والنزاع المسلح".
[Arabic Source:] Al-Mizan Center (2012) “Fact Sheet on Women and Armed Conflict”

directly link between conflicts and the rights of women, it stressed the importance of women's participation and leading role inside the society. There is also General Recommendation No. 19 of 1992 which emphasizes the elimination of all forms of violence against women, as well as General Recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations and outlines specific obligations to eliminate discrimination against women in conflict-affected settings²¹. We also have General Recommendation No. 32 on the gender-related dimensions of refugee status, asylum, nationality and statelessness of women, in addition to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

This long list of resolutions shows the presence of a wide and robust framework for supporting the rights of the Palestinian people and Palestinian women, and this framework confirms the illegitimacy of the Israeli occupation and the importance of putting an end to it. However, the absence of international mechanisms and measures for ending the longest standing occupation in the world today and the weak popular and community pressure on the international level impede the international peace initiatives and disregard the suffering of civilians; and especially women and children. This requires diverse and multifaceted efforts to restore the status of international legitimacy and eliminate the disappointment and lack of trust towards the international reference parties.

When we asked Palestinian women activists about their understanding of the notion of peace and security, they gave us highly discrepant definitions and explanations. However, despite their different views based on their personal experiences, gender, age²² and the different needs of protection in the various locations (whether inside the cities or in nearby villages, etc.), the hegemony of the occupation and its oppressive practices clearly violate the most basic standards of human rights and deny the presence of another people on the land. Also, it is completely unwise to scatter the various efforts by isolating the different forms of suffering because this would weaken the level of solidarity with these issues and will scatter the efforts and fragment the suffering so to speak. This wrong approach will also introduce solutions which are solely based

²¹ Global Study (2015).

²² Rafael Eguiguren and Luna Saadeh (2014).

on humanitarian [relief] interventions and individual assistance, such as removing a siege from one village, removing a checkpoint here and there, obtaining a medical permit for a woman, the marriage unification of only one family, etc. Focusing solely on the individual suffering portrays the Palestinian people and Palestinian women as victims and not as a people who are fighting for their national rights and their right to self-determination. Therefore, the main aim should be to achieve security and peace on the national level. It is also important to provide an integrated analysis of the occupation as one of the forms of colonization, and to show that the rejection of its practices are an essential part of an integrated system of human rights and social justice. This is because the occupation is the main problem, and its behavior manifests the colonialist practices and mindset which deny the presence of the occupied people and strip them from their humanity, hence denying their natural rights. For example, when women's rights are violated on the checkpoints and women are prevented from reaching their homes and agricultural lands, it is essential to reanalyze the general framework, i.e. the illegitimacy of the occupation and the importance of putting an end to it. The reason for integrating this analysis is to create different forms of solidarity on the internal and external levels because suffering is one despite its various forms. As noted by one of the female activists:

“The notion of women, peace and security is the same in the Gaza Strip, West Bank and Jerusalem, and it is not feasible to do further fragmentations beyond the 1967 borders and to occupy more lands in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Jerusalem. Therefore, our country is one under occupation and the way I see it that there cannot be peace without these three areas, i.e. the liberation of the Gaza Strip, West Bank and Jerusalem”.

However, this does not mean that there is no specificity in the various areas. For example, a women's rights activist from Gaza stated the following:

“When I asked some women if they feel safe, one of them replied: “No, because my house, or a nearby house or a nearby car might get bombarded at any moment. At any given moment, my son might get shot and at any moment I might be fired from my job. At any moment, my salary might be the last one I receive and I would need loans from the bank even if I were employed by the government. Therefore, the concept of stability and security does not exist in

the Palestinian context on all levels, but of course, the degrees of instability and lack of security vary from one place to another”.

An activist from Hebron mentioned the following:

“In the Areas ‘C’ of Hebron, the violence of the occupation is increasing. In the past, when the Committee for Monitoring Violations only had men inside of it, women were reluctant to speak out about their issues and about the violations that they were facing. However, when the international cooperation mission started including women, women started talking freely about the violations that they were suffering from”.

With regard to Jerusalem, a Jerusalem activist stated that:

“Jerusalemite women are suffering from the process of ethnic cleansing and the occupation’s intensive procedures of Judaizing Jerusalem. Also, we usually witness the ongoing break-ins of Al-Aqsa Mosque and the attempts to expel the original inhabitants of Jerusalem. Furthermore, the women who defend Al-Aqsa mosque are constantly humiliated and they undergo beatings and many violations, not to mention the suffering of the women who live on the lines of contact with the occupation and in the areas which are close to the wall, as well as the Jerusalemites’ limited sources of income, the confiscation of lands and the expansion of settlements. All of these problems have made women lose their sense of security, safety and protection and this had a major impact on their lives. These ongoing violations remove the protection of women, who undergo human rights violations on a day-to-day basis despite the presence of a resolution which calls for their protection”.

After analyzing all these issues together, it is quite clear to see that they are the consequences of the Israeli occupation, and that if we analyze any women-related issue [in the Palestinian context] without putting it in the context of colonialism (while taking into consideration the international humanitarian law and human rights standards) our efforts would go in vain and we would ignore the real reasons behind the women’s suffering and the prevention of the natural development of the society. This point is not only valid for women’s rights organizations but it also applies to international organizations which should use the same analysis to tackle the Palestinian issues and transform their understanding of matters from merely humanitarian issues to issues of national

struggle. This requires the participation of Palestinian women's rights activists in public discussions related to politicizing the obtained support and specifying the priorities in a manner which serves the interests of Palestinian women and Palestinian society as a whole.

When female leaders and activists were asked to define the notions of peace and security, we noticed that there were great differences between their answers, and that it is difficult to restrict this notion to only one definition or a number of specific points or sections. This is because 'security' means different things for different women based on their varying needs. For example, a woman who suffers from domestic violence might not see the role of the occupation in increasing the level of violence, and a woman who suffers from poverty and she and/or her husband cannot find a job might not see the occupation as the main reason behind her poverty. Also, the women who are besieged and imprisoned, the mothers of the martyrs, women who are prevented from accessing their land, and those who are prevented to participate in the elections, or are marginalized in their political parties and those who suffer from the lack of safety and security have not been viewed until now in the framework of an integrated analysis of a colonialist hegemony. At the same time, we see the fragmentation and dispersal of issues, hence weakening the struggle to tackle them and the isolation of women's rights issues in, for example, the Gaza Strip from the suffering of women in the villages of Nablus. This fragmentation also weakens the level of solidarity with the Palestinian struggle, as well as scattering the efforts and multiplying the issues which must be tackled. In the absence of specialization, distribution of roles, complementarity and participation, the discussion of these issues will simply become superficial without the ability to exert real influence as discussed later in this study.

The following actions are needed from the below-mentioned parties:-

<p>International Organizations</p>	<p>To mobilize international support, advocate for the issues of Palestinian women and support the representation of women in international forums.</p> <p>Provide sufficient support to Palestinian women in order to sustainably and continuously tackle the issues of peace and security for the purpose of ending the occupation.</p>
<p>Women and Human Rights Organizations</p>	<p>To link the issues of women with the issues of the Palestinian national struggle, and to focus on activating the role of the media and reintroducing the necessary work mechanisms to pressure and advocate for the mobilization of supporters both locally and internationally.</p>
<p>Palestinian Authority Organizations</p>	<p>To enhance the representation of women inside the committees, conferences and missions which seek to bring peace and security; including the negotiation and reconciliation committees and Arab and international conferences.</p>

Two: The National Coalition and the National Plan are considered a great achievement which should be celebrated, and they must be constantly supported and activated.

The Women's Coalition on Resolution 1325 started as a community action initiative under the leadership of the General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW). This coalition has wide representation from various Palestinian women frameworks with the participation of different Palestinian organizations and active female leaders. This coalition has been active on the community level in order to formulate a strategic plan and to implement it on the ground. With the joining of the Ministry of Women's Affairs in this coalition, ratification and commitment to UNSCR 1325 by the State of Palestine and the preparation of a national plan for its implementation, the role of this coalition became even greater. What was also beneficial is the participatory method which was used to prepare the National Plan. However, the main challenge of this coalition at this point is the lack of specialization in the implementation process. This means that it is important to have the organizations provide support in specialized areas in which they can provide valuable contributions to the coalition and to avoid competing on the same funding, as well as avoiding the duplication of efforts and preventing the exhaustion of women on the grassroots level by repeating the same activities and information over and over again.

The National Plan for Implementing UN Resolution 1325 – which was prepared by the Higher National Committee for Implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1325 – is considered the start of this integration and partnership between Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and governmental institutions. This National Plan is crucial for all stakeholder parties because it has set a number of objectives to be achieved within specific timeframes and it makes a clear distribution of the roles and responsibilities of implementing/participating in the implementation of its objectives and activities by providing the necessary funding. It is also necessary to invite international organizations to take part in the financing and follow-up of this plan, while taking into consideration that the National Plan provides a great opportunity for specifying the priorities of the funding parties in order to avoid the duplication of funding.

Furthermore, efforts were exerted to formulate a Follow-Up and Implementation Plan, which is also very important. However, it worth noting that the National

Plan cannot be an alternative to the Advocacy Plan related to the community-based women organizations on the local, regional and international levels. For this reason, it is important to develop the National Coalition Plan in order to do lobbying and popular advocacy on the international level in the footsteps of successful campaigns such as the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign.

The following actions are needed from the below-mentioned parties:-

<p>International Organizations</p>	<p>Provide sufficient funding for the National Plan, support the efforts of specialization and complementarity between the women’s organizations and the Ministry of Women’s Affairs and to highlight the issues of the peace and security of Palestinian women in the various international forums.</p>
<p>Women and Human Rights Organizations</p>	<p>To work on implementing the National Plan in an integrated manner between the various organizations, as well as familiarizing the women of the grassroots level about this plan and the ways of following up its implementation.</p>
<p>Palestinian Authority Organizations</p>	<p>The Ministry of Women’s Affairs must continue to support the requests of the women organizations and to support their efforts in implementing the strategic plan. Also, the ministry must nominate suitable women’s rights activists to participate in international forums in order to highlight the issues of the peace and security of Palestinian women.</p>

Three: The important role of international organizations in pressuring international bodies, courts and international forums to try those responsible for human rights violations, hold the Israeli occupation accountable and adopt the necessary international measures for doing that.

Palestinian women activists and leaders have a common vision regarding the pivotal role of international donor organizations in promoting peace and security for Palestinian women. This can be achieved through international organizations such as the United Nations Security Council, General Assembly and Human Rights Council (UNHRC) and international human rights organizations, or through the funders and donors who are most capable of bringing about change through financing women's rights, lobbying and advocacy activities. These international organizations have played a prominent role in supporting the Palestinian people in various cases involving human rights and humanitarian relief. However, the past experience proves that it makes no sense to merely adopt measures to "heal the wound" without addressing the reasons which caused the injury in the first place. As mentioned in a recently published study:

"Palestinians expressed the opinion - and their frustration - that international protection and humanitarian actors focus primarily on providing a minimum level of survival assistance, and to a lesser extent focus on mitigating the impacts of the occupation. Rather, Palestinians feel that protection and humanitarian actors have a responsibility to protect that involves primarily demanding accountability from Israel on its obligations under International Law".

This means that the vast majority of actors concerned with international protection/humanitarian intervention focus on the minimum levels of protection (including survival), whereas supporting the Palestinians' steadfastness and mitigating the severity of their situation distracts the attention from the main role that these actors must play inside the local communities, i.e. to demand accountability from Israel based on the international law.²³

²³ Rafael Eguiguren and Luna Saadeh (2014).

The ongoing violations and assaults and the fragile economic, political and social situation confirm the futile pattern of support for Palestinians at this point. Whereas we see a growing solidarity with the Palestinian cause among different nations, it has become important to ensure that the patterns of support correspond with the will of the taxpayers in the respective countries. The provision of aid without a serious stance against the committed violations is reflected on the level of foreign politics and it is like chasing a mirage and will lead to the squandering of available sources and resources, and will weaken the ability of Palestinians – both male and female - to meet the ordinary needs of their society. Supportive organizations have several ways of raising issues pertaining to women, peace and security in their official reports and also during their speeches in parliaments and other governing bodies. These organizations should raise global awareness on the suffering of the Palestinian people by taking part in different international forums and familiarizing foreign media agencies on the experiences and testimonials of those working inside these organizations. Moreover, supporting organizations have the responsibility of delivering the real Palestinian narrative based on the cultural notions and concepts of other countries; and especially the countries which consider UNSCR 1325 to be among their main priorities, such as Sweden and Norway.

One of the activists from the Gaza Strip mentioned the following:

“We need to stop viewing the UN organizations as merely donor parties because these organizations have certain responsibilities according to the international system. Therefore, they have the responsibility of supporting the Palestinian women and the Palestinian people as a whole. It is true that we need support in order to survive and the Palestinian society also has a role in this, but all the organizations of the UN (such as the UN Women, UNDP, UNICEF, etc.) have the responsibility of standing with the Palestinian women and making their voice well heard. For example, the UN Women organization prepares and disseminates reports, but their role remains weak and ineffective. Our women organizations must pressure the UN organizations to have them play a more effective role in supporting the Palestinian women and helping the Palestinian people be liberated from the occupation. Therefore, these organizations must have a political role.”

Another activist from the West Bank stated that:

“The European Union must take Resolution 1325 seriously when advocating for the issues of women, peace and security through the UN Security Council and the United Nations in general. In the previous years, the international advocacy was much stronger than it is today and this could be because of our weakness in gaining international sympathy. Therefore, this requires a much greater role from the Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Palestinian representatives inside the United Nations in order to strengthen the international solidarity with the Palestinian people”.

There must be the formulation of a permanent strategy for tackling the issues of women, peace and security and supporting the Palestinian women’s agenda pertaining to peace and security in all the international forums. It is also important for the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), Palestinian Authority, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, National Committee for Implementing UNSCR 1325 and the National Coalition for UNSCR 1325 to play a prominent role in using UNSCR 1325 and its subsequent resolutions as consistent work mechanisms in their cooperation with international organizations for the purpose of strengthening the international attention towards the Palestinian cause and pressuring to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people by ending the occupation.

Also, the presence of global women’s solidarity organizations which raise these issues in national forums, parliaments and governments is a highly essential matter and it requires the creation of a methodology for the international relations of women’s organizations. It is also worth noting that it is important to have honest, constructive and binding discussions between the various Palestinian women organizations in order to overcome the crisis of fragmentation and become a strong alternative voice of opposition. One of the female leaders noted that:

“No international mobilization took place until now by the international women’s organizations which advocate for achieving peace and security in the world”.

This point is pivotal because it means that there is a dual responsibility, and that the Palestinian women must contribute in this mobilization and should make this

a main priority in order to create and enhance an international mobilization for supporting Palestinian women and the Palestinian people as a whole.

The following actions are needed from the below-mentioned parties:-

<p>International Organizations</p>	<p>Supporting the national struggle of Palestinian women and the Palestinian people as a whole must be among the main priorities of international organizations. This can be done by influencing the public opinion in many countries, taking lobbying and advocacy initiatives inside national parliaments and opening discussions with parliamentarians with regard to such issues. This is because the funding and material support which focuses solely on relief and international aid is not sufficient because it promotes dependency and weakens the society.</p>
<p>Women and Human Rights Organizations</p>	<p>Formulate work strategies alongside international women’s organizations which are active and influential in the donor countries, and to develop advocacy mechanisms for supporting donor organizations in taking funding decisions as well as political decisions in international forums which support the Palestinian women and the Palestinian people as a whole.</p>

Four: To continue to support Palestinian women’s contributions in their local communities in terms of documenting the perpetrated violations.

Palestinian women on the grassroots level should not be seen as merely victims of an occupation. Rather, they can become active persons in the documentation of violations and in talking about their daily experiences to the whole world in a humane language which everyone can understand. These women can therefore contribute in showing the human rights abuses and the reality of human suffering under occupation. The ongoing activities of raising awareness are of utmost importance because some women’s rights activists think that UNSCR 1325 and its subsequent resolutions have already been tackled through several trainings and awareness and documentation activities. But this is not true because a large

percentage of women have not heard about this resolution yet, hence it is important to hold courses and workshops to raise awareness, publish the contents/provisions of this resolution and show the great importance of this resolution. It should also be emphasized that the majority of women learned about UNSCR 1325 after receiving the related training, hence the training gave them the chance to find out about this resolution and its provisions. One of the female leaders noted that:

“One of the main challenges is that the international community is ignoring what is happening on the ground”.

Therefore, it is important to proceed in raising the awareness of women on the grassroots level with regard to their rights and the ways of documenting and reporting the violations. Another activist from the Gaza Strip said the following:

“I do not think that the women on the grassroots level know about this resolution. I have been working in this field for 12 years and did not know about the presence of a plan and coalition related to this resolution. Therefore, there is no doubt that the women on the grassroots level do not know about it. I can confirm to you that about 85% of the women working in this field do not know about this resolution as well and do not know what it stipulates”.

This shows that limited training and scattered efforts cannot create a mobilized society which is aware of the issues related to peace and security; and especially if the discussed subjects were not relevant to women’s issues and things pertaining to their daily lives. There is definitely a need to continue the awareness-raising and trainings in various locations for different groups of men and women. However, it is important to have the training involve relevant and tangible issues and to enhance the capacities of trainees in monitoring and documenting violations.

Raising awareness should not be limited to women at the grassroots level. Rather, the awareness-raising process must start with the women who work in women’s rights organizations and whose daily work involves various decisions related to women, peace and security. One of the female activists said that:

“The organizations must work on enhancing the capabilities of their staff. Many organizations do not know about Resolution 1325, have not discussed it

internally and did not train their staff on it. Therefore, one of the main priorities is to train the employees of civil society organizations –and especially women’s rights ones– on this resolution and other international resolutions. We as Palestinians have the interest of holding on to this resolution and we do not have another option but to hold on to it [the person then used the analogy of a ‘fire escape ladder’ to describe the importance of resorting to this resolution].

Also, we should avoid being limited to awareness-raising, and women must not be given repetitive and irrelevant information which has no impact on their daily lives. Rather, the women on the grassroots level should be actively involved in advocacy activities and awareness-raising campaigns as spokespersons and official representatives who speak about their daily suffering and the suffering of their families. This requires the building of trust and confidence in the capabilities of women at the grassroots level and the recruitment of new members and activists; in particular young Palestinian women who bring “new blood” and new ideas in terms of what can be achieved.

The following actions are needed from the below-mentioned parties:-

<p>International Organizations</p>	<p>To continue in supporting and funding the activities of raising awareness about human rights resolutions, as well as lobbying and advocacy activities.</p> <p>To invest in programmes which target young women.</p>
<p>Women and Human Rights Organizations</p>	<p>To unify the women’s movement based on the mutual interests of women and not on the basis of factional representation, and to introduce a unified women’s agenda for all the issues of Palestinian women; and especially the issues of security and peace.</p>

Five: The strong link between the various elements of the Human Rights System and the International Humanitarian Law from the perspective of women's rights, peace and security.

The Global Study robustly notes that “Resolution 1325 is a human rights mandate. It must not be forgotten that Resolution 1325 was conceived of and lobbied for as a human rights resolution that would promote the rights of women in conflict situations. Any policy or programme on women, peace and security must be conducted with this in mind. Attempts to ‘securitize’ issues and to use women as instruments in military strategy must be consistently discouraged”.²⁴ Also, this system is linked to the international resolutions related to the Palestinian cause.

Palestinian women are well-aware that Resolution 1325 and its subsequent resolutions are considered a milestone in the global struggle for the recognition of women's rights. One of the women activists from Gaza noted that:

“Resolution 1325 is not alien to the international resolutions, international law, international human rights law and the international humanitarian law. On the contrary, this resolution is an integral part of the international system but it specifically deals with the issues of women. Hence, this resolution focuses on women and their protection and participation, and supporting them to become decision-makers for the sake of peace and security since it is the men, and not women, who start the wars and cause internal divisions. Therefore, this resolution particularly deals with women in order to enable them to assume decision-making positions, and this is what distinguishes this resolution from the other resolutions whose primary focus is to improve the condition of women at times of war, ways of covering the health and educational needs of women, and the provision of services to women at times of war”.

The women activists are also aware that UNSCR 1325 and similar resolutions are directly related to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) which was ratified by Palestine. As stated by a women's rights activist from the West Bank:

“The CEDAW was not enforced and implemented on the ground. Despite the ratification of this resolution by His Excellency the President of Palestine, the General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW) and the women's organizations did not work on it on the grassroots level, and this work was only limited to the first line leaders of the political parties and organizations”.

²⁴ Global Study titled “Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace”, 2015

Therefore, working on the issues of peace and security is an integral part of the human rights system, and these rights are indivisible but they must always be enhanced and enforced.

The international community must support the different efforts of local Palestinian women. Also, they should promote the visibility of these accomplishments and successes. At this point, the issue of violations is often discussed without providing any material or moral support to Palestinian women. Hence, this limitation prevents Palestinian women from gaining valuable experiences and proving themselves as local or national leaders.

The following actions are needed from the below-mentioned parties:-

<p>International Organizations</p>	<p>To have all the projects that are implemented in Palestine be based on human rights in accordance with the standards of the international humanitarian law and human rights law, and to guarantee that all the projects are gender-sensitive</p>
<p>Women and Human Rights Organizations</p>	<p>To work in accordance with the standards of human rights and the international humanitarian law, and to consider these are the point of reference for all activities carried out in Palestine. Also, these organizations must not deal with women’s issues separately from human rights and the Palestinian people’s right to self-determination.</p>
<p>Palestinian Authority Organizations</p>	<p>To integrate the concepts of human rights inside the national legislations and in the adopted policies and procedures by incorporating the notions of Participation, Protection and Accountability in accordance with UNSCR 1325.</p>

Six: Raising the issues of women, peace and security in local, regional and international conferences

At this point, Palestinians are actively participating in a number of regional and international conferences and meetings related to human rights/women's rights and more specialized subjects. These international meetings are beneficial in that they usually give them the opportunity to speak about the current reality in Palestine. However, these efforts are usually scattered because of a lack of coordination between the different delegations, different stances/viewpoints on several topics, and inaccurate statistics and information. The coordination of efforts on the international level is also quite vital, whereas it is important to unify the international discourse in order to do mobilization and advocacy on the international level to serve the needs and vision of the Palestinian people.

It is vital to give Palestinian women the opportunity to participate in international meetings and highlight the suffering of Palestinian women. It is also important to boost the representation of women by including young/emerging women leaders who can be trained and mentored by the current leaders. These young women should be encouraged to represent the women of Palestine through the use of their knowledge and personal experiences. It is also worth noting that both popular and official representation is important, and that both require different kinds of skills which cannot be obtained except through practical experience. Some activists mentioned that a small percentage of women leaders have a monopoly over the opportunities of traveling and receiving training abroad, hence preventing the younger women leaders from the opportunities of growth and development and hindering their progress in the political realm. Another obstacle is the inability of those who have been trained to pass on their experience and knowledge and train others on the local level. One of the activists confirmed the importance of active and professional participation and noted that:

“The funding parties and international organizations can invite the Palestinian women to participate in international conferences to talk about their cause and make presentations related to women. We are in need of empowerment, such as practical training on how to write reports, a consultant who reviews and amends the reports, and to receive some training on the mechanisms of advocacy”.

The following actions are needed from the below-mentioned parties:-

<p>International Organizations</p>	<p>To provide more opportunities to Palestinian women to address the peoples and governments of the world with regard to their women-related and national issues, while providing the opportunity to young women leaders to participate in international activities. Also, these organizations must always mention the Palestinian women, as women living under a foreign occupation, inside the various provisions, documents and resolutions pertaining to the agendas of women, peace and security.</p>
<p>Women and Human Rights Organizations</p>	<p>To unify the Palestinian women’s discourse, provide training to young women on how to address large and international audiences and present their issues in international forums, as well as training them on how to monitor and document the Israeli occupation’s violations against women.</p>
<p>Palestinian Authority Organizations</p>	<p>The Ministry of Women’s Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs must communicate with the various Palestinian embassies and diplomatic missions to provide the opportunity to Palestinian women to address the different peoples and governments on issues pertaining to Palestinian women, peace and security.</p>

Seven: Communication on various official and popular levels

The women's rights movement has a limited ability in using effective advocacy tools to promote our just cause at the global level, such as the documentation of war crimes and report writing, which address Israeli violations against women. This weakness is due to several reasons including limited material capabilities and insufficient practical experiences. We do not expect all organizations to have professional experiences in all of the issues related to lobbying and advocacy. Moreover, we cannot expect all of them to have specialized legal experience in the documentation of violations and the preparation of lawsuits for international tribunals. Hence, it is important to have each organization specify the role/tasks that it can perform in the most proficient manner with the highest professional capabilities [i.e. the division of roles among organizations]. This can be related to reaching an extensive and global mailing list, issuing international reports, and being active on social media and reaching people all over the world through Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and other modern communication programs.

The discussion of the Palestinian cause in terms of women, peace and security presents a very strong argument. However, this discussion can have an even greater impact if it were communicated more effectively. At the same time, we must make sure not to generalize/standardize the message because one cannot assume that a single message will have a similar impact on everyone. For example, official bodies such as the UN General Assembly and UN Security Council have their own ways of communication, i.e. an official way of writing and specific mechanisms of communication. Therefore, such communication requires more preparation and time (sometimes more than a year). This in turn, requires the preparation of a list that includes all the important issues, the prioritization of these issues, and the preparation of a "Communication Plan" with specific dates and contents. For example, in order to make sure that the voice of Palestinian women is well-heard in the report of the CSW (Commission on the Status of Women), it is important to coordinate with the UN Women (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women), make early preparations and avoid making any preparations in the last moment. This includes the selection of the visiting delegation and training them for a sufficient period of time before their participation. Successful lobbying and advocacy

activities also require the Palestinian women's support for important international and regional issues to build an extensive solidarity network which can become a "safety and support network" to tackle sensitive issues and vote on various resolutions.

When we communicate at the popular/grassroots level, it is important to use modern tools of communication such as information mapping for the monitoring of violations, infographics and other modern methods for presenting information in a clear and expressive manner, in addition to various social media programs and camera documentation to show the human side of people through pictures and videos. There are good examples of this on the Palestinian level, such as the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign which successfully addressed large audiences with crystal-clear and convincing messages, and provided the concerned people with precise facts and consistent information. Therefore, it is possible to benefit from all the success stories and reproduce them in issues which concern the Palestinian society in general and the Palestinian women in particular. As stated by one of the women's activists from the Gaza Strip:

"Our women organizations must be well-prepared, and we must prepare reports which have a good documentation including numbers [i.e. statistics] and pictures. We must also enhance our communication (unfortunately, until now we do not have an observatory²⁵ and correct information). We sometimes give conflicting information from different sources, and Israel takes advantage of this defect and makes people doubt our provided numbers because of their differences and varying sources. This is why we need an observatory in order to precisely document the perpetrated violations and provide truthful information and prepare our own reports (it is also worth noting that the UN prepares reports for itself). The civil society realizes now that there should be the preparation of a shadow report and governmental report. It is worth noting that we do have information but they are totally scattered among the various women and human rights organizations and the General Union of Palestinian Women, and there is no party to collect all the information and documents".

²⁵ The creation of a Palestinian observatory for monitoring violations is also part of the National Plan for Implementing UNSCR 1325.

The following actions are needed from the below-mentioned parties:-

<p>International Organizations</p>	<p>Enhance the capacities of women in doing lobbying and advocacy by providing political support, funding and training.</p>
<p>Women and Human Rights Organizations</p>	<p>To learn about the various levels of lobbying and advocacy and to distribute roles between the official parties –represented by the Ministry of Women’s Affairs– and the community-based parties represented by the women and grassroots organizations.</p>

Eight: To Involve human rights organizations in raising the issues of women, peace and security.

After following the work of Palestinian human rights organizations, it became clear that they made great achievements in terms of their presence on the local and international levels and in influencing a number of policies and resolutions.²⁶ These organizations have a long experience in documenting violations and preparing reports in a manner which corresponds with the international standards. Such experiences are limited among Palestinian women’s organizations despite their ongoing desire to have that knowledge. The human rights organizations can also develop specialized units for women and gender issues. Furthermore, it would be great to develop the capabilities of Palestinian women and women’s organizations on the ways of documenting violations and preparing reports. However, the building of strong alliances between human rights organizations and women’s organizations can be seen as the most practical solution for the current challenges. It is also important for the women’s coalition to work on institutionalizing a gender-sensitive approach inside the various human rights organizations. This can be done through a long-term cumulative process and clear and systematic phases, and it would also require an agreement

²⁶ For example, during the preparation of this paper, the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) ratified a resolution titled “The situation of, and assistance to, Palestinian Women” on the margins of the 61th session of the CSW. This resolution is concerned with the Palestinian women living under occupation. A total of 30 countries voted in favor of this resolution and 12 countries abstained from voting, whereas Israel was the only party which voted against it.

regarding the broad lines of implementation. The success of the women's coalition in preparing the National Plan for Implementing UN Resolution 1325 can be seen as the beginning of these phases, and this coalition uses a participatory platform of action which can also be used by human rights organizations.

Up to this point, human rights organizations have not attached any importance to the particularity of issues pertaining to women when monitoring human rights violations. Despite the multiplying effects of human rights violations on Palestinian women, these organizations fail to utilize women's rights-related tools for issues pertaining to peace and war; particularly Resolution 1325 and the subsequent resolutions despite their importance and impact. Therefore, human rights organizations must make sure to mention the issues of gender in all of their reports and to prepare special reports which cover the vital and urgent matters related to women's rights. At the same time, women's rights organizations and activists should partner with human rights organizations in all cases involving human rights and shoulder the responsibility of raising women's rights issues in all the reports and documents issued by these organizations by holding workshops and periodic roundtable discussions. They should also promote communication and synergy between the activists and other people concerned with the human rights and social justice issues.

Several organizations from the women's coalition document the Israeli violations against women in a consistent and periodic manner, in accordance with a well-designed system for documenting violations. These documentations do not only include numbers but they also present well-explained cases, demonstrate the perpetrated violations and document the violations by using pictures and images. Despite the importance of these activities in the documentation process, it is important to ensure that the prepared documentation is eligible for use as a testimonial in international and regional courts and examined on whether it can be included as part of the written history of Palestine. Some human rights organizations have ample experience in this field and possess great knowledge in international humanitarian law and human rights law. This shows us the importance of specialization and complementarity in the various functions (as noted in other sections of this paper). A women's rights activist from the Gaza Strip noted the following:

“I wish that the largest possible number of women would receive training on how to write reports in a robust manner. This is because reports are ignored if they do not follow certain standards. We are still in the beginning phase, and in order to succeed in the lobbying activities, we must have information, numbers, statistics, witnesses and to have open communication networks with international organizations in regional and European countries. This is highly crucial for the purpose of sharing our women’s testimonies with the United Nations with regard to the violations that are perpetrated against them”.

Another women’s rights activist talked about what is needed from international organizations:

“We need them to take into consideration the reports of women’s organizations and to train the women (because we still have limited experiences in the writing of reports to the United Nations, hence we are interested in presenting good reports to the UN). In the past, the UN gave a Report Writing training course in Gaza and another in Jericho but these were not enough”.

The following actions are needed from the below-mentioned parties:-

<p>International Organizations</p>	<p>Provide the women’s organizations and human rights organizations its assessment of the current activities of documenting violations, and explore the ways of benefiting from the locally-produced reports in lobbying and advocacy activities in their respective countries.</p> <p>To take into consideration the locally-produced reports instead of always relying on international experts during the preparation of international reports.</p>
<p>Women and Human Rights Organizations</p>	<p>To strengthen their experience in documenting violations in accordance with international standards, and to increase their credibility in the eyes of international parties by following robust research and documentation methodologies, committing to objectivity, avoiding the politicization of human rights issues and refraining from using emotive language in the documentation by drawing upon the international agreements and resolutions related to women, peace and security.</p>

Nine: The important role of the Palestinian diplomacy in raising the issues of women, peace and security

Until now, Palestinian embassies and representative offices have not been sufficiently involved, neither on the official level nor on the popular one. Palestinian diplomacy can do many things in this field, for example by providing information about the committed violations against Palestinian women or through the mobilization of official and popular support. Hence, the ambassadors of the State of Palestine must give the opportunity to Palestinian women to inform the various peoples and governments about the things that these women experience on a day-to-day basis. This should include civil/non-governmental representatives in all official delegations and the assigning of suitable women to address these societies. These women must know very well the languages and cultures of the addressed people, as well as having valuable experiences which they can share with these societies. Activating the role of the Palestinian diplomacy requires political and material support and a good experience in the mechanisms of influencing public opinion and working through official channels. This also entails working with various governmental levels and multilateral international organizations.

Palestinian women activists have a sense of frustration and the need to have specialized knowledge of the ways of activating the required mechanisms and tools; including the documentation of violations and the ways of reaching out to the international forums in an acceptable and convincing manner. It is also worth noting that funding and material support are not available for many issues related to women, peace and security, and there is no access to any funding on how to prepare cases before the international courts and tribunals. As stated by one of the female activists: *“The material support is insufficient because neither the Palestinian Authority nor the Palestinian political parties have sufficient capabilities”*.

Political and moral supports are also limited. As expressed by another activist: ***“Moral support is also insufficient and the Palestinian Authority has not performed its assigned role. For example, the Central Council decided to allocate 30% of the decision-making positions to women but the conference did not have more than 5 women. This clearly shows that the political system has defects. The political parties have also failed to support women. For example,***

when the Culture and Free Thought Association (CFTA) held a training titled “Youth Leadership”, the young women of the political parties wanted to receive training and experience outside the realm of their political parties but this did not happen. Even the Palestinian Authority, which ratified Resolution 1325 and CEDAW, failed to harmonize its laws, regulations and legislations with these conventions. Unfortunately, it seems that all they do is to sign these conventions and then do nothing on the ground”.

The following actions are needed from the below-mentioned parties:-

<p>International Organizations</p>	<p>To enhance the partnership between women’s organizations and human rights ones, and to support the reporting of human rights issues from a gender perspective in order to present these reports to the international courts and tribunals.</p> <p>To give the chance to Palestinian women to participate in all the official delegations to spread the Palestinian narrative on women, peace and security.</p>
<p>Women and Human Rights Organizations</p>	<p>To have strong coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to communicate with the Palestinian embassies and representative offices, and to develop the needed mechanisms for exchanging information related to the violations faced by Palestinian women.</p> <p>To empower the Palestinian women leaders by enabling them to acquire the necessary skills to participate alongside the official delegations which address various peoples and governments around the world.</p>

Ten: It is crucial to continue working on internal issues.

We must never cease to work on involving women in the decision-making process, reconciliation commissions, peace negotiations and democratic representation whether on the level of political factions or local and legislative elections. Despite the fact that Palestinian women have made several achievements in the field of political participation (such as the quota system, the “factions document”, etc.), the greatest challenge faced by Palestinian women is their lack of representation in the national reconciliation and not including women leaders in negotiation teams. At the same time, we cannot focus on mobilizing external support for Palestinian women’s issues without the ongoing efforts of women in internal issues and increasing their representation in all national organizations and committees and reconciliation and negotiation commissions. As stated by one of the female activists from Gaza:

“Women are considered an integral part of the Palestinian people. Therefore, the security of women is the security of the Palestinian people. It is impossible to achieve peace for women without achieving peace for the Palestinian people as a whole and establishing a state just like all other people around the world. We must be safe from the occupation. Community safety is directly related to the security of the country and safety from occupation. These elements are inseparable because women cannot have community safety at times of war. Therefore, we need peace and stability in order to enjoy security like many other nations around the world”.

A number of issues related a women, peace and security – including the activities of international advocacy – are actually the responsibility of the Palestinian Authority (PA). The international agenda cannot move forward without the PA’s work on internal issues in terms of participation and representation. This is clearly recognized by the Palestinian women’s rights activists. For example, one of the female activists noted that:

“The government must hold Israel accountable for its general violations - and its violations against women in particular - based on the section of “Accountability” in Resolution 1325. The Palestinian government must demonstrate to the International Criminal Court (ICC) all the violations that were perpetrated by Israel, and to take all the corroborating evidence with

them since the eyewitnesses are there, the reports have been published and the violations have been well-documented. Not holding Israel accountable will lead to many more assaults from their side. Israel even prevented the Fact-Finding Committee from visiting Gaza to examine the situation there, and the Palestinian Authority did not take any steps of protest on the global level to expose Israel’s heinous violations. Our voice as a people and a government must reach the United Nations on various issues, such as Israel’s prohibition of the Fact-Finding Committee to visit Gaza in order to prevent their witnessing of the crime scenes there”.

The following actions are needed from the below-mentioned parties:-

<p>International Organizations</p>	<p>The work on internal issues should be assigned to the Palestinian organizations and activists since they have a better understanding of their current reality. Additionally, the disagreements and division on the internal level should not be used as a pretext for not establishing partnerships related to the issues of women, peace and security.</p>
<p>Women and Human Rights Organizations</p>	<p>It is impossible to make the voice of Palestinian women well-heard (and to familiarize others with women’s rights issues) without an ongoing struggle for the recognition of women’s rights on the Palestinian level, stressing the importance of women’s participation in national-level dialogues, the representation of women in all negotiations and to have women play an active role in ending the internal Palestinian division.</p>

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Palestinian women play an active role in the struggle against the occupation and the struggle for the recognition of their rights and enhancing their participation in the decision-making process. These women have succeeded in making a number of significant achievements. However, they need more recognition on the international level, as well as the need to build on their achievements by boosting the level of support and advocacy to end the Israel occupation, which is the greatest threat to their achievements and puts Palestinian women in danger on a day-to-day basis. The Global Study Titled “Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace” notes some trends on the international level and mentions a number of achievements and challenges. This confirms the great similarity between the Palestinian experience and other experiences around the world. Moreover, the Global Study mentions some success stories which received international support and advocacy, whereas the women-related issues were dealt with as human rights issues and their sufferings were highlighted as human rights violations.

From this point of view, the paper calls for close and ongoing cooperation between the various organizations of the coalition in order to enhance the level of participation, protection and accountability in the various issues of women, peace and security, as well as implementing the National Plan to ensure some great achievements in all these themes.

At the same time, the paper calls upon the international organizations to continue supporting the struggles of Palestinian women - and especially in the international arena - and to highlight their achievements and mobilize the required support and advocacy to make their voices heard at the international level.

What do international organizations need to do?

- Support for the national struggle of Palestinian women and the Palestinian people should be among the main priorities of international organizations. This is because the funding and material support which only focuses on relief is insufficient given that it encourages dependence and weakens the society.
- To mobilize international support, advocate for the causes of Palestinian women and support the representation of women in international forums.
- To ensure that all projects implemented in Palestine take into consideration the human rights standards mentioned in the international humanitarian law and human rights law, and to ensure that these projects are always gender-sensitive.
- Provide sufficient support for Palestinian women so that they can work in a sustainable and continuous manner on issues related to peace and security with the goal of ending the occupation. Also, international parties must constantly support and fund the activities of raising awareness about human rights resolutions, lobbying and advocacy activities and investing in programs which target young Palestinian women.
- Provide sufficient funding for the National Plan and to consolidate the efforts of specialization and complementarity between women's rights organizations and the Palestinian Ministry of Women's Affairs, in addition to highlighting the issues of Palestinian women, peace and security in various international forums.
- Provide more opportunities for Palestinian women to address the nations and governments of the world regarding their gender-related issues and national cause and to involve young women in these opportunities. Also, these international parties must always include occupied Palestinian women in the various provisions, documents and decisions related to women, peace and security.

- Promote lobbying and advocacy capacities among women by providing them with political support, funding and training.
- To support women's rights and human rights organizations by assessing their documentation of ongoing violations, and to learn from locally-produced reports and benefit from these reports in lobbying and advocacy activities inside their home countries.
- To take into consideration the locally-produced reports instead of always depending on international experts during the preparation of international reports. Also, the internal issues should be assigned to Palestinian organizations and activists because they have a better understanding of their current reality. Additionally, the disagreements and division on the internal level should not be used as a pretext for not establishing partnerships related to the issues of women, peace and security.
- To promote partnerships between women's rights and human rights organizations, and to support the production of human rights reports which take gender-related aspects into consideration.

What do the Palestinian women's rights and human rights organizations need to do?

- Not to isolate women-related issues from the other issues of the Palestinian national struggle. Also, these organizations should focus on being more active in the media and must introduce new ways of lobbying and advocacy in order to mobilize more supporters both locally and internationally.
- Work on implementing the plan in a complementary manner between the various organizations, familiarize women at the grassroots level about this plan, and to follow up on its implementation.
- Formulate strategies for working with international women's rights organizations which are active and influential in their respective donor countries, as well as developing advocacy mechanisms in order to support donor organizations in making funding and political decisions in

international forums to the benefit of Palestinian women and the Palestinian people in general.

- To work in accordance with human rights standards and international humanitarian law and to consider them as reference points for all activities carried out in Palestine. Also, women's rights issues must not be dealt with separately from the issues of human rights and the Palestinian people's right to self-determination.
- Unify the Palestinian women's discourse; provide training on public speaking to young Palestinian women and to give them the chance to present their cases in international forums.
- To become well-versed in the various levels of lobbying and advocacy and to distribute roles between official parties represented by the Palestinian Ministry of Women's Affairs and NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) represented by women's rights and grassroots/community-based organizations.
- Palestinian women's issues cannot be raised without the continuous struggle for the recognition of women's rights at the internal Palestinian level. Also, these organizations should promote the participation of women in negotiations and their contribution in ending the internal - division.
- Gain more experience in documenting violations in accordance with international standards, and increase their credibility vis-à-vis international parties by adopting robust research and documentation methodologies, committing to the principle of objectivity, avoiding the politicization of human rights issues and refraining from the use of emotive language in the documentation process.
- The need for specialization and complementarity in assumed roles, and to support the efforts of human rights organizations in order to properly tackle all issues from a gender-based point of view.

Suggestions for Future Studies

During the preparation of this paper, reference was made to several topics which can be more thoroughly examined and discussed with Palestinian activists. Among the most important of these topics are the following:

1. Transformative Justice in the Palestinian context from a women's rights perspective. This topic is important in terms of the role that Palestinian women can play in promoting the issues of Transformative Justice and clarifying the legal, social and political notions and considerations at the national, regional and international levels.
2. An Emphasis on Prevention and a 'No' to Militarization in the Palestinian national and women's rights context, and to establish an agreed general framework related to the demands of the women's movement in this respect.
3. Peace and security for Palestinian female refugees in the refugee camps of the Occupied Territory and the diaspora, in terms of the notion and implementation.
4. To specify the priorities and mechanisms of international advocacy for Palestinian women, and to formulate an action plan which covers the various levels and priorities of advocacy.

ANNEX I: List of interviewed organizations

Location	Date of Interview	Organization
Gaza Strip	8/2/2017	Women's Affairs Technical Committee (WATC)
	9/2/2017	General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW)
	15/2/2017	Culture and Free Thought Association
	6/2/2017	Addameer (Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association)
	4/2/2017	Palestinian Center for Human Rights PCHR
	1/2/2017	Al-Mezan Center for Human Rights
	15/2/2017	UN Women
Ramallah	9/2/2017	Deputy Secretary-General of the Palestinian Democratic Union "FIDA"
	8/2/2017	Women's Affairs Technical Committee (WATC)
	9/2/2017	Ministry of Women Affairs
	8/2/2017	Union of Palestinian Women's Committees
	6/2/2017	The Palestinian Ministry of Interior
Hebron	2/2/2017	The Women's Activities Association in Hebron
	2/2/2017	Women's Studies Center (WSC)- Hebron Branch
	12/2/2017	
Jerusalem	9/2/2017	The Women's Studies Center (WSC)
	7/2/2017	Women's Forum of Sheikh Jarrah
	8/2/2017	The Popular National Conference for Jerusalem
		nemoW NU
		APFNU
		Rosa Luxemburg Foundation
		Heinrich Boell Foundation

Advisory Committee in the West Bank

NO.	Name
1.	Rima Nazzal
2.	Randa Siniora
3.	Wafa' Abdurrahman
4.	Fida' Barghouthi
5.	Lamis Shoaibi Hantouli
6.	Najwa Yaghi
7.	Tamara Tamimi

Advisory Committee in the Gaza Strip

No.	Name
1.	Zainab al-Ghoneimy
2.	Hidaya Shamoon
3.	Dunia al-Amal Ismail
4.	Andalib Odwan
5.	Mariam Shaqoura

Focus Group in Hebron on the date of 2/2/2017:

No.	Name
1.	Inas Abu Rmouz
2.	Suheir Akram
3.	Naseem Kashour
4.	Suna Younes
5.	Sara Daoud
6.	Sumayya Manasra
7.	Ghadeer Ma'qoud
8.	Muna Daoud

Focus Group in Jerusalem/Ramallah on the date of 11/2/2017:

No.	Name
1.	Mona al-Sharif
2.	Niveen Abulrub
3.	Samah Bsharat
4.	Ruba Sharaf
5.	Siham Ghazawneh
6.	Salam Abul-Huda
7.	Nisreen Amro
8.	Nisreen Abu-Ghosh
9.	Wafa' Ghazawneh
10.	Ghada Madmouj

The Participants of the Focus Group held in the Gaza Strip on the date of 08/02/2017

No.	Name
1.	Marsel Masri
2.	Reem Akhras
3.	Wisal Abu-Odeh
4.	Khitam Sharrafi
5.	Asma' al-Hasanat
6.	Dina Kheiry
7.	Huwaida Dremly
8.	Rose Masri
9.	Shireen Shobaky
10.	Hanan Saleh
11.	Filisteen Aabed
12.	Azhar Abu-Shaabab

ANNEX II:

United Nations resolutions related to the agenda of women, peace and security

Resolution Number	Year of Issuance	Content
1325	2000	This resolution urges the member states to guarantee the increased representation of women at the various decision-making levels in organizations, and it specifies the national, regional and international mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution.
1820	2008	This resolution tackles sexual violence in the cases of armed conflict, and it calls all parties to refrain from it and demands them to protect civilians.
1889	2009	This resolution reaffirms the commitments which were adopted in Resolution 1325 and it focuses on the importance of increasing the number of female employees in peace building and peace keeping forces, along with the need to monitor and assess the various initiatives for women, peace and security by using specific indicators.
1888	2009	The appointment of a Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General to tackle the cases of sexual violence at times of conflict.
1960	2010	This resolution consolidates and reaffirms the past resolutions; and especially UNSCR 1888.
2106	2013	This resolution enhances the efforts of ending impunity in cases of sexual violence during armed conflicts.
2122	2013	This resolution requests from the Secretary-General and his envoys and special representatives to report to the UN Security Council the achieved progress with regard to the issues of women, peace and security after making various consultations with the civil society.

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