



GENDER-BASED ***VIOLENCE*** at Great March of Return Protests

PALESTINIAN CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
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Executive Summary

The Israeli occupation forces (IOF) persisted on the use of excessive force against Palestinian civilians participating in the peaceful Great March of Return (GMR) protests, the international Commission of Inquiry into the protests in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), appointed by the United Nations Human Rights Council, asserted the peaceful and civilian nature of the protests. The Commission condemned IOF's excessive use of force against protestors, which rendered 214 Palestinians killed and injured 14,706, the injuries of 208 among the wounded rendered them with permanent disabilities, including 41 children. Additionally, the Commission criticized the rules of engagement adopted by the Israeli military regarding GMR protests, and it suggested IOF may have committed war crimes.

Israeli soldiers stationed along the Gaza- Israel border fence targeted men, women, and children during GMR across its five encampments distributed across the Gaza Strip governorates. IOF's excessive use of force doctrine has put women in harm's way, as they were targeted directly with live and rubber bullets and tear gas canisters, and they sustained indirect harm in cases where a member of their families' were shot and killed or injured.

According to the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights' (PCHR) statistics, IOF stationed along the border fence killed three women at GMR, including 3 women, including a paramedic, who was providing first aid for those injured

during the protests, and a 15-year-old girl. Also, IOF wounded 477 women; 127 of them were targeted by live bullets and 5 others, including a child, suffer from permanent disability. Among those wounded, 128 women were in serious health condition after being wounded in the upper parts of their bodies while 224 others in their lower limbs. Also, 36 women working with medical crews were wounded; some of them sustained multiple wounds on multiple occasions. Furthermore, 7 female journalists were injured while covering incidents in the GMR protests. There are common factors among these women; most prominent of which were that they did not pose any threat or danger to soldiers' lives and they were an exceptional case during the GMR protests whether in aiding those injured or confronting IOF by several means adopted by the Supreme National Authority of the GMR protests.

Despite the formation of the International Commission of Inquiry by UN human rights council which made findings in March 2019 that IOF committed war crimes and crime against humanity against Palestinian civilians participating in the GMR protests, including women, the Israeli legal bodies procrastinate in bringing the perpetrators of these crimes to justice. This facilitates the work of the International Commission of Inquiry by referring the grave violations committed by IOF against Palestinian civilians in the GMR protests to the International Criminal Court (ICC). It should be noted that on 20 December 2019, the ICC issued a statement stating that an investigation will be opened into IOF violations in the oPt, including violations committed in the GMR protests.

The injuries of many women participating in the GMR protests were described serious. These injuries caused permanent disabilities and deformation for those women, in addition to causing serious social and economic impacts on their life as many of them suffered from psychological pressure due to deformation that they were exposed to or due to blame by their families because they participated in the protests. Other women were exposed to violence by their families, as they expelled from their houses or got divorced. Also, many families lost their source of income after the woman was wounded and became unable to work.

As we mentioned above, violence practiced by IOF during the GMR protests had indirect impact on the Palestinian women, as each injury or assault during these protests adversely affected the Palestinian women. Also, the Israeli violence during the GMR protests has a negative impact on the Palestinian society culture as it increases pressure in the society. Moreover, woman, whether she is a wife, a sister, or a daughter, suffers mentally and financially due to the injury of her breadwinner. Some women lost their husbands who were the sole or primary breadwinners for their families, and other women lost their sons or brothers, which caused serious psychological and social effects on those women.

Furthermore, women live or work in border areas were exposed to direct and indirect violence due to the excessive use of force by IOF against Palestinian protestors. These practices caused direct danger to women's lives by firing

live bullets and teargas canisters at them by IOF. Also, women in border areas suffer from restrictions on their movement, in addition to other burdens related to caring their children and cleaning their houses due to dust and firing teargas canisters. Moreover, female farmers whose agricultural lands located near the border fence, sometimes become unable to reach their lands and face many difficulties while collecting and transferring the crops.

Recommendations:

PCHR stresses that IOF is responsible for direct and indirect violence committed against Palestinian women due to the excessive use of force against Palestinians participating in the GMR protests. Thus, PCHR calls upon:

1. ICC to open an urgent investigation into crimes committed by IOF against Palestinians participating in the GMR protests.
2. Human Rights Council and High Contracting Parties of international conventions, especially the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, to follow up and reveal the Israeli crimes and abuses committed in the GMR protests and clarify its devastating impact on women.
3. International community, especially the European Union (EU), to put pressure on Israel to stop its crimes and violations committed against Palestinian civilians participating in the GMR protests.
4. International community to put pressure on Israel to lift the closure imposed on the Gaza Strip, facilitate the travel of those injured and allow the entry of medicines needed for their treatment.
5. International non-governmental organizations to exert more efforts in monitoring and revealing the Israeli crimes committed against Palestinian civilians participating in the GMR protests, and showing its effects on the Palestinian women.
6. Authorities in the Gaza Strip to form social committees to follow up the health, material and social problems resulted from the death and the injury of some participants in the GMR protests.
7. Authorities in the Gaza Strip to provide effective protection mechanisms for women from

violence, and not tolerate domestic violence committed against them.

8. Ministry of Health to provide treatment needed for those injured in the GMR protests in order to reduce the costs of treatment, which women usually bear.
9. Authorities in the Gaza Strip to provide financial assistance for citizens, who live in border areas and have agricultural lands there, in order to protect them from the negative impacts of violence committed by IOF in these areas, to enable them to enjoy their privacy and to protect their properties as thousands of Palestinian protestors flocked to the areas of their residence and work.
10. Civil society organizations (CSOs), especially media and human rights organizations, to raise and enhance awareness of women's political participation in the society, on equal terms with men and without any discrimination.

Introduction:

The Great March of Return (GMR) protests that started in March 2018 in the Gaza Strip has raised many issues and deduced many consequences, including the Gender-Based Violence (GBV) which the Palestinian woman may be exposed to in the Gaza Strip due to the GMR protests. This issue is mainly linked to IOF's excessive use of force against the protesters, including women, on the one hand and relevant to the social stereotypes and circumstances prevailing in the Gaza Strip on the other hand that would increase the burdens on women and inflict harm more than that inflicted on men either due to her direct participation or participation of one of her family's, who might be killed, wounded, or arrested during their participation.

It should be noted that an international commission of inquiry established by the Human Rights Council (HRC) started its mission between 22 February and 22 March 2019 to investigate all alleged violations and abuses of international humanitarian law (IHL) during GMR protests. In its report published on 30 March 2019, the commission found that the protests were civilian in nature and that the legal framework applicable to the protests and events should be based in international human rights law (IHRL) and not IHL; thus, the commission stressed that the rules of engagement should be complied with the principles of distinction and proportionality and that lethal force should be used only in self-defense when protesters pose imminent danger to the Israeli soldiers' lives.¹ This was not respected by IOF during the GMR protests as they targeted protesters, including women and children, with live and rubber bullets as well as teargas canisters, without the latter posing any threat to the soldiers' life.

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) identifies GBV in the General recommendation No. 19 as “*violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women*

¹ Human Rights Council, Report of the independent international commission of inquiry on the protests in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, 25 February–22 March 2019 (A/HRC/40/74).

disproportionately. It includes acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty.” Violence against women has many forms and manifestations which vary according to the social, economic, cultural, and political conditions surrounding women. Violence against women can be divided into 5 parts: domestic violence, social violence, violence by public authorities, violence during armed conflict, and compound violence. Violence might be physical, mental, sexual, social, economic, or political.

GBV is one of the main obstacles to achieve gender equality in societies. Violence against women and all of its forms prevent women from gaining their basic human rights. This has been confirmed by the International Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women in its preamble “... violence against women constitutes a violation of the rights and fundamental freedoms of women and impairs or nullifies their enjoyment of those rights and freedoms, and concerned about the long-standing failure to protect and promote those rights and freedoms in the case of violence against women ,Recognizing that violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of the full advancement of women, and that violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men.”²

Both Palestine and Israel are States Parties to CEDAW as Palestine has acceded to the Convention on 02 April 2014 and to the Optional Protocol on 10 April 2019, while Israel has acceded to the Convention on 03 October 1991. Thus, both countries are committed to work on elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, including eradication of GBV. The Convention mandates that states parties ratifying the Convention should “take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and

² https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocity-crimes/Doc.21_declaration%20elimination%20vaw.pdf

practices which constitute discrimination against women.” States ratifying the Convention must also “to adopt appropriate legislative and other measures, including sanctions where appropriate, prohibiting all discrimination against women.” States Parties shall “take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to ensure the full development and advancement of women, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men.”

■ Report Objectives:

1. To shed Light on all forms of GBV resulting from the Israeli violations during the GMR protests in order to urge the competent authorities to work for ending it.
2. To present suggestions and recommendations to decision-makers in order to activate protection of women against GBV in GMR protests.
3. To develop PCHR’s work in terms of providing protection for women who are victims of violence.

■ Report methodology:

This report uses the descriptive analytical approach to respond to the main following question: how much have IOF’s violations against the GMR protesters contributed to GBV against women in the Gaza Strip?

The report also uses previous studies, research, and reports on this subject to identify the possible forms and manifestations of GBV resulting from GMR protests in the Gaza Strip from March 2018 to September 2019. The report has used these references to provide information on GBV types in the Gaza Strip and the economic, social, and cultural causing such violence.

The report also uses initial references to respond to the first four questions:

1. Conducting in-depth interviews with 60 women of those affected by the GMR protests from the five Gaza Strip Governorates (Rafah, Khan Younis, Central Gaza Strip, Gaza City, Northern Gaza Strip), according to the following categorization:

- » 10 women injured at the GMR protests; 2 women from each governorate: one is married and the other is unmarried.
- » 10 women widowed by the GMR protests; 2 women from each governorate: one has kids and the other does not.
- » 10 women, whose husbands were wounded at the GMR protests; 2 women from each governorate: one's husband has become with permanent disability and the other has not.
- » 10 women, who lost one of their children at the GMR protests; 2 women from each governorate: one's income is below the minimum income standard and the other with average income.
- » 10 women, whose son was injured at the GMR protests; 2 women from each governorate: one's income is below the minimum income standard and the other with average income.
- » 10 women living or working in the areas adjacent to the GMR protests; 2 women from each governorate: one is married and the other is unmarried.

Most prominent cases of women who were exposed to different forms of violence have been chosen as the report addresses 18 study cases of women who were exposed to direct or indirect violence due to IOF's targeting of those participating in the GMR protests. The report presents the cases under assumed names, with due care for the victims' privacy, except for those killed by IOF. The report distributes the cases as follows:

- » 3 study cases for women who were killed at the GMR protests to identify the circumstances of their death and Israeli occupation's denial of justice.
- » 5 study cases for women injured at the GMR protests; one woman from each governorate, to show the direct and indirect violence they have been exposed to due to their injury by IOF's fire.
- » 2 study cases for women whose husbands were killed at the GMR protests and the GBV they have been exposed to due to the death of their husbands.
- » 2 study cases for women whose husbands were injured at the GMR protests and the GBV they have been exposed to due to the injury of their husbands.
- » 2 study cases for women whose children were killed at the GMR protests and the GBV they have been exposed to due to the death of their children.
- » 2 study cases for women whose children were injured at the GMR protests and the GBV they have been exposed to due to the injury of their children.
- » 2 study cases for women living or working in the areas adjacent to the GMR protests and the GBV they have been exposed to due to this.



Chapter 1

Gender-Based Violence

Introduction:

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a disproportionate violence mainly committed against women. Studies indicate that there is a relationship between armed conflicts and the potential for gender-based violence, especially domestic violence, as it has a role in increasing the frequency of such violence. Also, studies prove that the long-term accumulated pressures, especially those resulting from economic insecurity, increase the risk of domestic violence. Further, deteriorating economic situation, which is marred with the negligence of women's health and the lack of access to adequate health care, reflects on women's health condition³.

Numerous studies conducted in the Gaza Strip have confirmed that Gaza's population is subjected to accumulated traumatic experiences, economic pressure, frustration, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which directly affects their mental health and all aspects of life⁴. This chapter provides an overview of the study and addresses three main axes: GBV and relevant international standards; overview of the economic, social, cultural, and political environment in the Gaza Strip; and patterns of GBV in Gaza.

■ Section 1: What gender-based violence is and relevant international standards

GBV is one of the most prevalent forms of violence in societies, as some of which coexist with different forms of violence and consider it as part of acceptable community culture. The risk of GBV increases during disasters and

³ Catherine Müller and Laila Barhoum, Violence Against Women in The Gaza Strip After the Israeli Military Operation Protective Edge 2014, (2015)

⁴ Catherine Müller and Laila Barhoum, Violence Against Women in The Gaza Strip After the Israeli Military Operation Protective Edge 2014, (2015)

armed conflicts, where women are the most targeted and exposed to suffering.

GBV concept is one of the evolving concepts that change with time, place, culture, and the social, economic, and political status of individuals and communities, as emphasized by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in his report on violence against women:

“Forms and manifestations of violence against women vary depending on the specific social, economic, cultural and political context. Some forms of violence may grow in importance while others diminish as societies undergo demographic changes, economic restructuring, and social and cultural shifts. For example, new technologies may generate new forms of violence, such as Internet or mobile telephone stalking. Consequently, no list of forms of violence against women can be exhaustive. States must acknowledge the evolving nature of violence against women and respond to new forms as they are recognized.”⁵

GBV is violence directed against a person because of that person’s gender. Both women and men experience GBV, but the majority of victims are women.

Many international documents have addressed violence against women, most notably: The 1993 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, and General Comment No. (19) issued by the Committee on the Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

The declaration defined violence against women as “ *any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts,*

⁵ General Assembly, In-depth Study on all Forms of Violence Against Women, Report of the Secretary-General, sixty-first session, A/61/122/Add.1, (2006)

coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.”⁶

General recommendation No. (19) defines GBV as: *“violence that is disproportionately directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately. It includes acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty.”*

Definitions mentioned above show that the Declaration’s definition was broader as it considered the possibility of the harm’s occurring is a violence. Conversely, the committee’s definition was broader as it simply considered violence in general is a gender-based violence, because it is “disproportionate”, regardless of whether it was directed against women.

The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women listed four forms of violence:

- (a) *“Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation;”⁷*
- (b) *“Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution;”⁸*
- (c) *“Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs;”⁹*

⁶ United Nations General Assembly, Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution 48/104 of 20 December 1993.

⁷ United Nations General Assembly, Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution 48/104 of 20 December 1993.

⁸ United Nations General Assembly, Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution 48/104 of 20 December 1993.

⁹ United Nations General Assembly, Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution 48/104 of 20 December 1993.

(d) *“Domestic violence is violence that occurs within the private sphere, generally between individuals who are related through blood or intimacy.”*¹⁰

On the other hand, general recommendation No. (19) considered domestic violence the most severe form of violence against women and mentioned various forms of it, as it stated: *“Family violence is one of the most insidious forms of violence against women. It is prevalent in all societies. Within family relationships women of all ages are subjected to violence of all kinds, including battering, rape, other forms of sexual assault, mental and other forms of violence, which are perpetuated by traditional attitudes. Lack of economic independence forces many women to stay in violent relationships. The abrogation of their family responsibilities by men can be a form of violence, and coercion. These forms of violence put women’s health at risk and impair their ability to participate in family life and public life on a basis of equality.”*

*“Traditional attitudes by which women are regarded as subordinate to men or as having stereotyped roles perpetuate widespread practices involving violence or coercion, such as family violence and abuse, forced marriage, dowry deaths, acid attacks and female circumcision. Such prejudices and practices may justify gender-based violence as a form of protection or control of women. The effect of such violence on the physical and mental integrity of women is to deprive them the equal enjoyment, exercise and knowledge of human rights and fundamental freedoms. While this comment addresses mainly actual or threatened violence the underlying consequences of these forms of gender-based violence help to maintain women in subordinate roles and contribute to the low level of political participation and to their lower level of education, skills and work opportunities.”*¹¹

¹⁰ Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 22 December 2003.

¹¹ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, General Recommendation No. (28), the equality of rights between women and men.

■ Section 2: overview of the economic, social, cultural, and political environment in the Gaza Strip

The Gaza Strip, which is one of the most densely populated areas in the world, with 5,453 individuals per km² and a population of 1.9 million¹², has been suffering from the Israeli-imposed closure since 2006, collective sanctions and fabricated economic crises. The Israeli-imposed closure on the Gaza Strip has intensified after the Palestinian division in June 2007, which almost completely separated the Gaza Strip administration from the West Bank. Since 2007, the Gaza Strip has been de facto governed by a party, which is not recognized by the international community. This has been disastrously reflected on all aspects of life in the Gaza Strip, whether political, economic, or social, and the strip has become mainly dependent on international relief assistance after destroying its economic infrastructure. This situation was exacerbated after the Gaza Strip was exposed to numerous Israeli military operations in 2008, 2012 and 2014. As a result, thousands of civilians were killed, tens of thousands were injured, hundreds of thousands of houses were totally or partially destroyed, thousands of families were displaced, and unemployment rate was significantly increased, reaching 54% in the Gaza Strip and 13% in the West Bank¹³. Consequently, the family life directly affected, especially women who usually bear the brunt of these situations because of the patriarchal nature of the Palestinian society.

The poverty rate in the Gaza Strip has reached (53%); (68.5%) of its population lives in extreme poverty and cannot provide food¹⁴. The difficult economic conditions were marred with a serious deterioration in health and education services, frequent electricity outages for long hours, water pollution, late or unpaid salaries, and difficulties of traveling to and from the Gaza Strip. These conditions have had manifest negative effects on family relations, particularly affecting the most marginalized and vulnerable groups like women, especially in the Gaza

12 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, Palestinian Statistics reviews the conditions of the population in Palestine on the occasion of International Population Day, 11/07/2019 <http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/postar.aspx?lang=en&ItemID=3502>

13 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, Palestinian Statistics announces the results of the labor force survey, for the year 2018, a slight decrease in the unemployment rate in the West Bank compared to a sharp rise in the Gaza Strip <http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/postar.aspx?lang=en&ItemID=3382>

14 Food Security Sector, Socio-Economic Food Security Survey 2018 Preliminary Results, (2018) <https://fscluster.org/sites/default/files/documents/sectsec_2018_-_food_security_analysis_preliminary_results.pdf>

Strip. Statistics and studies indicate that women in Gaza Strip certainly face more challenging realities compared to their peers in the West Bank¹⁵.

A study conducted after Israel's aggression on the Gaza Strip in (2008-2009) indicates that 88% of the Gaza's population consider that suffering is a fundamental part of their lives; 85% of them stress that they feel threatened by themselves, 45% feel unsafe, and 50% suffer from chronic stress. In another survey conducted in 2011, (90%) of Gaza's population confirmed that they had felt "broken and destroyed", 77% had different levels of depression, and 70% had experienced traumatic events. In a third survey in 2016, 73% of the Gaza Strip's population affirmed they had experienced different levels of depression; 50% of them had no hope for the future, and 5% had attempted suicide.¹⁶ Additionally, 60% of Gaza's men expressed extreme fear for the safety and future of their families, and 40% expressed deep concern that they could meet their families' essential needs¹⁷. It should be noted that various surveys confirm that the Israeli aggressions and closure imposed on the Gaza Strip are the main reasons for the suffering, frustrating and pressure exerted on the Gaza Strip population, in addition to the deterioration of their mental and psychological health and the absence of their human security¹⁸.

All these conditions were the main cause of launching the Great March of Return (GMR) protests on 30 March 2018 in the Gaza Strip. The organizers of the GMR protests declared that these protests aim at lifting the Israeli-imposed closure on the Gaza Strip and alleviating the Gaza's population suffering in a peaceful way.

The Supreme National Authority of the GMR protests, a coordination body responsible for organizing these protests, pledged to maintain the peaceful nature of the protests, which later turned from daily into weekly protests. The protests were organized in 5 border areas across the Gaza Strip, including eastern Rafah, eastern

¹⁵ UNFPA, Women and Girls with Disabilities: Needs of Survivors of Gender-Based Violence and Services Offered to Them, (2019)

¹⁶ UN Women, IMAGES, Masculinity and Gender Equality Survey: Palestine Report (2017)

¹⁷ UN Women, IMAGES, Masculinity and Gender Equality Survey: Palestine Report (2017)

¹⁸ UN Women, IMAGES, Masculinity and Gender Equality Survey: Palestine Report (2017)

Khan Yunis (Khuza'ah), eastern al-Burajj refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip, eastern Gaza City (al-Shuja'yia neighborhood), and eastern Jabalia refugee camp in northern Gaza Strip.

From the first moment of announcing the intention to launch the GMR protests, the Israeli occupation authorities threatened to target the participants. Indeed, for more than a year and a half, IOF deliberately targeted protesters with live and rubber bullets and tear gas canisters. As a result, 214 civilians were killed and 14706 others were wounded; most of them were deliberately targeted by Israeli snipers.

It is worth noting that patriarchal authority in Palestinian society has a great deal of control over social behavior and marginalizing Palestinian women in all aspects of life. Furthermore, Palestinian society suffers from a culture that devalues women, impedes their ability to integrate into all aspects of life and intervenes in their virtual space¹⁹.

With regard to political participation, it is considered one of the human rights under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and under Article 26 of the Palestinian Basic Law.

Many segments of Palestinian society, male, and female, believe that political participation is exclusively for men, while others consider that it is not appropriate for women. In addition, a segment of the Palestinian society believes that women's political participation is usually marginal because it is inconsistent with customs and traditions and with women's gender stereotypes²⁰. Although there are some prominent female models that have had an impact on Palestinian political and historical scene, the women's political participation is still weak and marginal, even in the virtual space. The latest statistic issued by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics on women's participation indicates very low rates of women's participation in decision-making positions. For example, no woman had ever served as under-secretary in the Gaza Strip, only two women in the position of

¹⁹ Shahrazad Odeh, Gender-Based Violence Against Palestinian: Women in Virtual Space, The Arab Center for the Advancement of Social Media (2018)

²⁰ Shahrazad Odeh, Gender-Based Violence Against Palestinian: Women in Virtual Space, The Arab Center for the Advancement of Social Media (2018)

assistant undersecretary out of 21, and two women in the position of Director General out of 31. Furthermore, these are only 5 female judges out of 39 in the Gaza Strip and 4 female ambassadors out of 92²¹.

A study shows that only 6% of Palestinian women participate in political discussions on social media, and 66% do not participate at all because they believe that political participation is exclusively for males²².

Also, women in the Palestinian society refuse to engage in politics, especially working in the field, for fear of exposing them to social criticism and accusing them of deliberately mixing with males. Additionally, women's father or brother are arrested to put pressure on them and undermine their right to freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of expression²³.

Unfair views of gender are still common in Palestine. For example, about 80% of men and 60% of women agree that the most important role for women is to manage the household responsibilities, whereas the educated and materially wealthy men – whose parents have been involved in the household chores – often became more fairer than others²⁴. Also, 20% of men believe that the involvement in household chores is a disgraceful act²⁵, noting that women are primarily responsible for the daily care of their children. The study also indicates that one in five men has admitted to committing a kind of physical abuse against his wife²⁶. In addition, the study confirmed that there are differences in attitudes toward gender between younger and older adults²⁷, as the latter are more conservative than younger adults on their attitudes towards gender.

Public opinion surveys for three quarters of the women and half of the men have shown that while a woman

21 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, Women and Men in Palestine, Issues and Statistics, (2013) <<http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Downloads/book2015.pdf>>

22 Shahrzad Odeh, Gender-Based Violence Against Palestinian: Women in Virtual Space, The Arab Center for the Advancement of Social Media (2018)

23 Shahrzad Odeh, Gender-Based Violence Against Palestinian: Women in Virtual Space, The Arab Center for the Advancement of Social Media (2018)

24 UN Women, IMAGES, Masculinity and Gender Equality Survey: Palestine Report (2017)

25 UN Women, IMAGES, Masculinity and Gender Equality Survey: Palestine Report (2017)

26 UN Women, IMAGES, Masculinity and Gender Equality Survey: Palestine Report (2017)

27 UN Women, IMAGES, Masculinity and Gender Equality Survey: Palestine Report (2017)

is married, she has the right to work outside the house, just as her husband does. Most respondents of both sexes rejected the idea that boys' education is more important than girls' education if their financial capability is limited²⁸.

In the absence of men due to political detention at the Israeli prisons, Palestinian women have exceptional ability to bear the burdens of the house and family expenses, and this increases the respect of the woman in the family. Also, the man who went through this experience may endure duties that were classified as feminine roles²⁹. There is a strong consensus between men (75%) and women (87%) that gender equality has not yet been achieved in Palestine³⁰. Furthermore, 59% of women and 42% of men believe that there should be greater representation of women in politics, as well as 25% of men and 22% of women said that their mothers were beaten by a husband or a male relative during their childhood³¹.

■ Section 3: patterns of GBV in Gaza

Statistics show that 35.6% of women around the world have been physically or sexually abused at some point in their lives; most of these cases are classified as domestic violence.³² Women in Palestine suffer relatively high rates of GBV, as latest statistics on violence in Palestine indicate that one in three women have experienced a form of violence by the husband (29.4%): 17.8% physical abuse, 56.6% mental abuse, 8.8% sexual violence, 32.5% social violence, and 41.1% economic violence³³. Gaza Strip suffers from high rates of GBV, as different types of it prevailing in most segments of society, especially the lower classes. Most of the GBV forms are rooted in the society's customs and traditions that devote male authority and try to confine women in the domestic

28 UN Women, IMAGES, Masculinity and Gender Equality Survey: Palestine Report (2017)

29 UN Women, IMAGES, Masculinity and Gender Equality Survey: Palestine Report (2017)

30 UN Women, IMAGES, Masculinity and Gender Equality Survey: Palestine Report (2017)

31 UN Women, IMAGES, Masculinity and Gender Equality Survey: Palestine Report (2017)

32 Catherine Müller and Jean-Pierre Tranchant, Tackling violence against women and girls in Gaza, UNFPA (2017)

33 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, Preliminary Results of the Violence Survey in Palestinian Society (2019) <<http://pcbs.gov.ps/Downloads/book2480.pdf>>

space; while other forms of GBV are also rooted due to laws applied in the Gaza Strip, especially the Personal Status Law.

Furthermore, Gaza's political, economic, and social situation has exacerbated GBV. A study published in 2015 showed that 39.6% of women in the Gaza Strip were subjected to one or more types of domestic violence. Among this percentage, 86% were subjected to psychological violence, 48% subjected to economic violence, 36% subjected to physical violence, 35% subjected to arbitrary control, and 19% were subjected to sexual violence³⁴. In addition, another study indicates that 20% of Gaza's women experienced some form of psychological disorder following the 2014 Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip. A study conducted in 2014 also indicates that 35% of women believe that the second intifada increased psychological and emotional violence against women³⁵. The latest statistics of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics in 2019 on violence indicate that 37.5% of married or divorced women have experienced one of the forms of domestic violence; 63.5% experienced psychological violence, 26.4% experienced physical violence, 10.6% experienced sexual violence, 46.7% experienced social violence, and 55% experienced economic violence³⁶.

Violence can generally be divided into physical abuse, psychological violence, sexual violence, domestic violence, economic violence, political violence, and social violence. It should be noted that domestic violence is the most prominent and widespread type in the Gaza Strip, where societal customs and traditions reconcile with this type of violence, and law enforcement officials also condone it.

First: physical abuse

Physical abuse is one of the most dangerous forms of violence that women may be subjected to, as it seriously

³⁴ Catherine Müller and Jean-Pierre Tranchant, Tackling violence against women and girls in Gaza, UNFPA (2017)

³⁵ Catherine Müller and Laila Barhoum, Violence Against Women in The Gaza Strip After The Israeli Military Operation Protective Edge 2014, (2015)

³⁶ Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, Preliminary Results of the Violence Survey in Palestinian Society (2019) <<http://pcbs.gov.ps/Downloads/book2480.pdf>>

endangers her life, and may lead to permanent disabilities or deformation. Also, physical abuse may take several forms, including murder, wound, beating, burning, pushing and etc. Additionally, physical abuse is closely related to the cultural patterns prevailing in the Gaza Strip, which considers male violence to be a right for father and husband against women. The latest GBV statistics conducted by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics show that 34.8% of women in the Gaza Strip were subjected to physical abuse by the husband while 43.2% of females were subjected to physical abuse by one of the parents³⁷.

Second: **psychological violence**

Psychological violence against women is one of the most widespread forms of violence around the world, and in Palestine as well. Psychological violence is defined as any act causes severe psychological harm to women. Psychological violence may take many forms such as scolding, cursing, degrading treatment, preventing women from going out, breaking women's self-confidence of themselves, and verbal threat. Also, it may be happened through practices and actions such as maltreatment, emotional deprivation, and threat of divorce. Moreover, psychological violence has negative effects on a woman's psyche, which may lead to severe mental illnesses and symptoms. The latest statistic conducted by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics shows that 57% of married or divorced women in Palestine experienced at least one form of psychological violence, reaching 64% in the Gaza Strip³⁸.

Third: **sexual violence**

Sexual violence can be divided into two parts, the first is practiced within the family, and it falls within the concept of domestic violence; while the second is practiced outside the family, and it falls within the concept of social violence. Women in the Gaza Strip suffer from various forms of sexual violence, such as marital rape, incest and refuse using birth control. Women are also subjected to other forms of sexual violence outside the family, such as rape, physical

37 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, the main indicators of violence: http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/_Rainbow/Documents/vio%20%20main%20_a.htm

38 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, Preliminary Results of the Violence Survey in Palestinian Society (2019) <http://pcbs.gov.ps/Downloads/book2480.pdf>

and verbal sexual harassment. According to statistics conducted by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics on violence in Palestine in 2011, 14.9% of Gaza's women had experienced sexual violence by the husband, and 0.9% of unmarried women (18-64 years) in the Gaza Strip had experienced sexual violence by the family³⁹.

Fourth: **political violence**

Women suffer from various forms of political violence, some of which are committed by the Israeli occupation forces (IOF), and others by the Palestinian society or political authority. Women have been directly exposed to political violence by IOF, as hundreds of women in the Gaza Strip have been killed or injured, or through imposing restrictions on freedom of movement by IOF. Furthermore, at least 456 women were killed and over 1464 others were wounded during the Israeli military operations on the Gaza Strip since the year 2008-2009. In addition, women are subjected to other forms of political violence practiced by the Palestinian society or authority, such as depriving them of political participation due to the customs and traditions prevailing in the society and arresting them or one of their male relatives for exercising their freedom of expression or peaceful assembly⁴⁰. Moreover, women are usually unable to express their opinions, especially if these opinions are contrary to their husbands' ones⁴¹. Further, some studies consider that political violence in Palestinian society is one of the most important causes of domestic violence, as political violence leads to family pressures and leads to an increase in violence against women⁴². It should be noted that the insistence of the legislative bodies in Palestine to apply laws that are unfair to women, most notably the Personal Status Law, which contains many aspects of discrimination against women, is also considered a form of political violence.

39 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, the main indicators of violence
http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/_Rainbow/Documents/vio%20%20main%20_a.htm

40 Catherine Müller and Jean-Pierre Tranchant, Tackling violence against women and girls in Gaza, UNFPA (2017)

41 Catherine Müller and Laila Barhoum, Violence Against Women in The Gaza Strip After The Israeli Military Operation Protective Edge 2014, (2015)

42 Catherine Müller and Jean-Pierre Tranchant, Tackling violence against women and girls in Gaza, UNFPA (2017)

Fifth: domestic violence

The monitoring of domestic violence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (oPt) has started since the early 1990s. Moreover, the first unprecedented study in the region on domestic violence was carried out in 2005 in the oPt. The most notable achievement of this study was that it raised “domestic violence” issue in the Palestinian society after it was one of the very special issues that was unacceptable to interfere with. Domestic violence includes various forms of violence such as killing, wounding, beating, sexual assault, cursing and insulting, restrictions on freedom of movement and economic restrictions. According to a 2015 study on violence against women in the Gaza Strip, a sample of 440 women over the age of 17 showed the following: 28.2% were humiliated and cursed by husbands or fathers, and 10.9% were physically assaulted, 3.9% were sexually harassed or abused, and 3.9% were threatened to take their children away. Furthermore, the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) monitored 29 cases in which women were killed on ground of the so-called “family honor” since 2007⁴³. Early marriage is one marital and domestic violence causes in the society, according to a study⁴⁴. Also, the refusal of using birth control, which is common in the Gaza Strip, is considered as a domestic violence⁴⁵.

Sixth: economic violence

Economic violence includes imposing restrictions and obstacles on women to prevent them from engaging in economic activities, such as deprivation of work, compulsion to quit work and deprivation of property or inheritance⁴⁶. A study indicates that 32.5% of women working in the Gaza Strip are subject to exploitation and discrimination, under poor working conditions and long working hours. Additionally, 68% of the women surveyed confirmed that they do not have control over their salaries, and when they ask for a salary increase, the employers threaten to dismiss them⁴⁷. Economic violence has several forms: refusing to provide enough means for household expenses even if there is enough money available, property damage; the threat of withdrawing

43 Catherine Müller and Jean-Pierre Tranchant, Tackling violence against women and girls in Gaza, UNFPA (2017)

44 Catherine Müller and Laila Barhoum, Violence Against Women in The Gaza Strip After The Israeli Military Operation Protective Edge 2014, (2015)

45 Catherine Müller and Laila Barhoum, Violence Against Women in The Gaza Strip After The Israeli Military Operation Protective Edge 2014, (2015)

46 Catherine Müller and Laila Barhoum, Violence Against Women in The Gaza Strip After The Israeli Military Operation Protective Edge 2014, (2015)

47 Catherine Müller and Laila Barhoum, Violence Against Women in The Gaza Strip After The Israeli Military Operation Protective Edge 2014, (2015)

financial support, and exploiting a woman's inheritance⁴⁸. A study indicates that women whose husbands have lost their jobs are more vulnerable to violence than women whose husbands did not lose employment⁴⁹. Moreover, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics indicates that 88.3% of women have experienced economic violence by their husbands in the Gaza Strip⁵⁰.

Seventh: social violence

Social violence takes many forms, including social stigma that may persecute women in society because of particular behavior or practice, which is inconsistent with customs and traditions. Social violence is one of the most dangerous forms of violence against women, as it may lead to other forms of violence such as honor killing, loss of opportunity to form a family, and exposure to physical or verbal abuse, divorce, or expulsion. Furthermore, refusal to marry because of political affiliation is a form of social violence motivated by political reasons⁵¹. It should be noted that women over the age of 18 are usually subjected to violence for the sake of preserving family honor and for fear of being criticized by the society⁵². In many families, a wife may be prevented from having friends or contacting her friends, neighbors, or relatives, under the pretext of customs and traditions⁵³. Statistics show that 78.9% of women have been subjected to social violence by their husbands in the Gaza Strip⁵⁴.

48 Catherine Müller and Laila Barhoum, Violence Against Women in The Gaza Strip After The Israeli Military Operation Protective Edge 2014, (2015)

49 Catherine Müller and Laila Barhoum, Violence Against Women in The Gaza Strip After The Israeli Military Operation Protective Edge 2014, (2015)

50 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, the main indicators of violence,
http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/_Rainbow/Documents/vio%20%20main%20_a.htm

51 Catherine Müller and Laila Barhoum, Violence Against Women in The Gaza Strip After The Israeli Military Operation Protective Edge 2014, (2015)

52 Catherine Müller and Laila Barhoum, Violence Against Women in The Gaza Strip After The Israeli Military Operation Protective Edge 2014, (2015)

53 Catherine Müller and Laila Barhoum, Violence Against Women in The Gaza Strip After The Israeli Military Operation Protective Edge 2014, (2015)

54 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, the main indicators of violence,
http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/_Rainbow/Documents/vio%20%20main%20_a.htm

Chapter 2

GBV Related to GMR Protests

Introduction

GBV has several forms, some of which are directed against women and others are state-directed violence against women. Violence may take many forms, as we have already explained, including political, economic, social, physical, sexual, and psychological violence. The protection of women from gender-based violence is an international obligation on the Israeli occupation authorities, as well as on the Palestinian National Authority, as both are parties to the Convention against Forms of Discrimination against Women, as we have already mentioned. Moreover, International humanitarian law also obliges the Israeli occupation authorities not to target civilians, including women, as long as they have not been directly involved in hostilities. This is the status of those who have participated in the GMR protests, and who must be protected by international humanitarian law and international human rights law. It is worth noting that IOF targeted protestors participating in the GMR protests with live and rubber bullets and tear gas canisters, despite posing no imminent threat to the lives of soldiers who stationed behind sand berms and barbed wires along the border fence. As a result, thousands of participants, including women, were killed, and wounded. PCHR considers that all injuries resulted from live and rubber bullets and direct tear gas canisters fired by Israeli snipers along the border fence are deliberate crimes⁵⁵. In addition, PCHR classifies violence committed by IOF against women in the GMR protests as GBV, according to the 1993 Declaration on the Elimination of violence against Women, article 2 (c) of which states that: “Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs.”

⁵⁵ IOF targeted protestors participating in the GMR protests with direct tear gas canisters, killing some of them after tear gas canisters penetrated their skulls.

It should be noted that an international commission of inquiry established by the Human Rights Council carried out an investigation, between 22 February - 22 March 2019, on violations of international humanitarian law committed during the GMR protests.

The UN Commission of Inquiry emphasized in its report published on 30 March 2019 that the demonstrations were civilian in nature stressed that international human rights law, not international humanitarian law, should be the applicable legal framework in the GMR protests. Moreover, the commission confirmed that the shooting should be adhered to the principles of proportionality and necessity, and that that the use of lethal force in self-defense should be only used if the demonstrators posed a real and imminent threat to the soldiers. The commission also affirmed its rejection of the shooting instructions used by IOF and clarified that authorizing that targeting of main instigators and individuals associated with armed groups violates international standards and may constitutes war crimes⁵⁶.

Women bear the brunt of the IOF's excessive use of force against civilians participating in the GMR protests. Women participating in the GMR protests were directly killed and wounded by Israeli soldiers stationed along the border fence. Further, women were also subjected to indirect violence resulting from the IOF criminal behavior against the participants, as women were badly affected after losing or wounding their husbands or sons. Some women have been also subjected to political, economic, social, and physical violence. Numerous families refused their daughters 'participation in the GMR protests, due to the IOF's excessive use of force against the demonstrators, and when they were injured, they were held responsible and severely assaulted. In addition, some women have also experienced economic, social, psychological, and physical violence after losing or injuring their husbands, either from the husband's family or from the injured husband, or because of cutting salary. Women were also subjected to severe psychological, social, and economic violence after their children were

⁵⁶ Human Rights Council, Report of the independent international commission of inquiry on the protests in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, 25 February–22 March 2019 (A/HRC/40/74)

killed or wounded by IOF in the GMR protests. Women living or working in areas adjacent to the border fence suffer from the IOF's continued shooting and firing of tear gas canisters, as well as their inability to access their agricultural lands, which were affected by the crowds participating in the protests.

PCHR monitored many cases in which some women have been treated well by their families. All the injured women who were interviewed said that they participated in the protests of their own free will and without physical or moral coercion. Also, some women insisted to participate in the protests despite their family's refusal and they managed to do so. PCHR also monitored other cases in which some women were received support from their families after being injured.

It should be noted that the common factor that all women have experienced in the report sample was psychological violence, as all of them were badly affected after IOF killed or wounded their husbands or sons. In the sample of the study, all women also suffered from economic violence resulting from the poor economic conditions caused by the Israeli-imposed closure and the inability of their families to provide remedies for them.

This chapter presents GBV in the GMR protests in two sections; the first deals with the direct impact of the IOF's excessive use of force against those participating in the peaceful GMR protests, and the second presents the indirect effect of IOF's excessive use of force against participants in the GMR protests on women. Further, the first section provides statistics on the civilian women killed and injured by IOF during their participation in the peaceful GMR protests, and then presents three case studies on the women killed during the protests and other five case studies on women injured.

The second section presents the indirect effect of the IOF's excessive use of force against demonstrators in the GMR protests on women in five axes: Women who lost their husbands after being targeted by IOF in the GMR

protests; women whose husbands were injured after being targeted by IOF in the protests; women who lost one of their children after being targeted by IOF in the protests; women whose children were injured after being targeted by IOF in the protests; and women who live or work in areas adjacent to the border fence.

This section presents two case studies for each of the mentioned axes, highlighting the suffering of women due to the Israeli violence in the return marches, and its implications on the reality of women in the family and society.

■ **First Section: Direct impact of the IOF's excessive use of force on women**

Women were subjected to GBV by IOF while participating in GMR protests, as IOF intentionally killed some women and wounded others, simply because of their active participation in the protests. In addition, women killed or injured during the protests were also denied access to justice, as Israeli occupation authorities procrastinated holding perpetrators accountable. Furthermore, despite exposing women wounded in the protests to direct violence, they were also subjected to indirect violence by their families due to the economic, social conditions and cultural patterns prevailing in society.

Following are cases of women who were killed and injured in three sections; the first provide statistics on women killed and injured as of 01 October 2019; the second presents case studies of women killed in the GMR protests, and how Israeli occupation authorities are trying to deny their right access to justice; and the third presents case studies of women wounded in the GMR protests, and how their injury caused GBV within the family and society.

A. Statistics on women killed dead and injured in the GMR protests:

IOF stationed along the border fence targeted Palestinian protestors, including men, women, and children, while heading to the five GMR encampments in the eastern Gaza Strip. In addition, women were directly targeted by IOF stationed along the border fence. As a result, 3 women, including a paramedic and a 13-year-old child, were killed. Moreover, 477 girls were wounded; 127 were shot and injured with live bullets: 5 suffered permanent disabilities, including a child, 128 sustained serious wounds in the upper parts of their bodies and 224 sustained wounds in their lower limbs. Furthermore, 36 female health workers were wounded; some of whom sustained multiple wounds on multiple occasions. Also, 7 female journalists were wounded while covering the GMR protests.

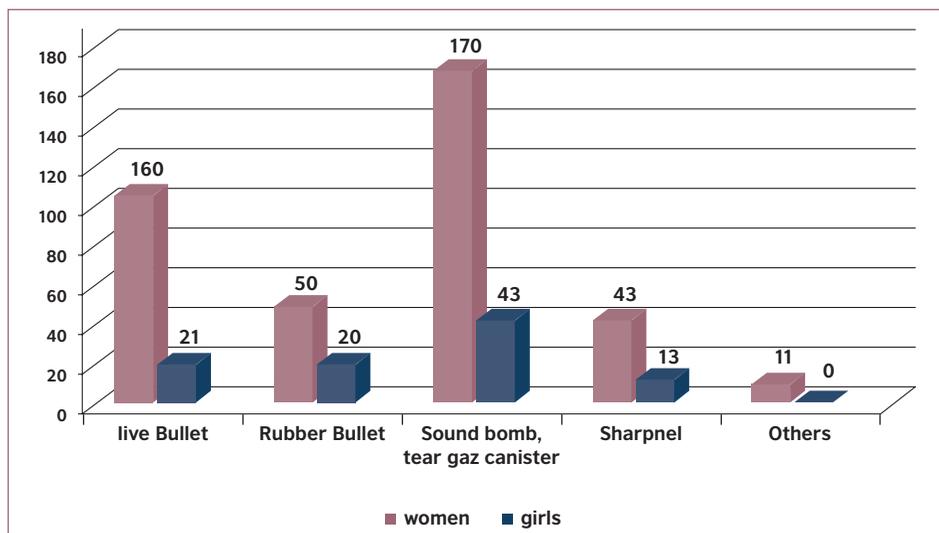
Below are tables and graphs showing the size, nature, and location of injuries:

1. Women killed

location of injury	Women	Girls	Total
Chest	2	1	3

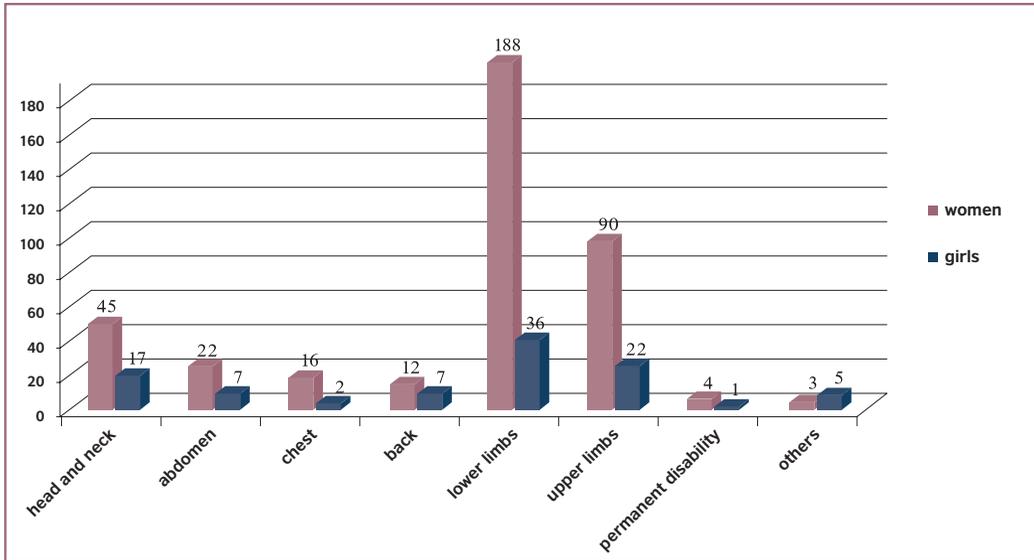
2. Injuries according to the type of weapon used

Weapon used	Women	Girls	Total
Live bullet	106	21	127
Rubber bullet	50	20	70
Sound bomb and tear gas canister	170	43	213
Shrapnel	43	13	56
Others	11	0	11
Total	380	97	477



3. Injuries according to the location of injury

Location of injury	Women	Girls	Total
Head and neck	45	17	62
Abdomen	22	7	29
Chest	16	2	18
Back	12	7	19
Lower limbs	188	36	224
Upper limbs (arms and shoulder)	90	22	112
Others	3	5	8
Permanent disability	4	1	5
Total	380	97	477



b. Case studies on women killed by IOF in the GMR protests

Since the outbreak of the GMR protests, IOF killed 3 women, including a 15-year-old child, for their active participation in the protests, whether during their provision of medical care to the participants or through their symbolic opposition to the Israeli occupation, such as raising flags and making victory signs, throwing stones (which do not reach the soldiers, because they stationed behind the sand berms), and cutting the first fence (there are 2 barbed wires and high sand berms separating between the protestors and soldiers).

Following are the presentation of the 3 cases, in which we will show the injury circumstances and the Israel's attempts to evade its responsibility and deny victims' access to justice. This section presents three murder cases: Wesal al-Sheikh Khalil, Razan al- Najjar and Amal al-Taramsi.

Case Study

Murdering Child **Wesal Sheikh Khalil**

IOF stationed at the border fence, east of al-Burajj refugee camp, killed Wesal Sheikh Khalil (15), from al-Maghazi refugee camp, while participating in the GMR. According to PCHR's investigations, Wesal was shot dead with a live bullet in her head at approximately 10:30 on 14 May 2018. PCHR's investigations affirm that when she was shot, Wesal did not pose any threat to the lives of Israeli soldiers taking cover behind sand barrier and many barbed wire fences. PCHR believes that IOF intended to execute Wesal as a punishment for her constant participation in the GMR. Execution is one of standards declared by IOF and approved by the Israeli Supreme Court⁵⁷ since the start of GMR stating that IOF will target the so-called "Main Instigators". PCHR took affidavit of Wesal's friend, who was with her when she was targeted by IOF. Wesal's friend stated that IOF executed Wesal, who was about 100 meters away from the border fence, as a punishment for her constant participation in the GMR as she did not at all pose any threat to the lives of Israeli soldiers, particularly when she was targeted:

"Wesal Sheikh Khalil (15), from al-Maghazi refugee camp, and me headed to the border fence area to participate in throwing stones at Israeli soldiers and setting tires on fire, adjacent to the border fence area. I met Wesal at the GMR activities in eastern al-Burajj where she used to participate in the GMR since its start on 30 March 2018, and we became friends. We approached the barbed wire fence where a large number of Israeli soldiers taking cover behind 4 sandy hills, 30 – 50 meters away from the security fence, as we can see their heads, and pointing their

⁵⁷ Human Rights Council, Report of the independent international commission of inquiry on the protests in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, 25 February–22 March 2019 (A/HRC/40/74).

weapons at the protestors. In addition, an Israeli military vehicle was also stationed in the area. Wesal started cutting the wire fence with a wire cutter that she took from one of the young men while I was few meters behind her. In the meantime, a number of women approached the barbed wire fence while young men were protesting 50 meters away from our place. Israeli soldiers fired live bullets at us, wounding 2 girls with live bullets in their feet while being present about 10 meters away from the wire fence. Wesal, 3 women and me carried them 30 meters to the back where the young men were present and the latter transferred them to ambulances on Jakar street, which is 250 meters away from the border fence. We returned to the barbed wire fence as I was carrying a tire and Wesal was holding a gasoline bottle to set the tire on fire and use it as a cover. Israeli soldiers severely fired tear gas canisters at us, so I suffocated and had to move about 100 meters back. At approximately 13:30, Wesal said that she wanted to return to the barbed wire fence, but I told her to wait until the shooting stop. I suddenly heard a sound of gunfire and saw Wesal falling down on the ground and severely bleeding from her head. I was shocked and stayed in my place. A number of young men came and carried her to an ambulance. Half an hour later, I learnt through a phone call that Wesal died.”

On 16 May 2018, the victim’s family gave PCHR power of attorney in which on 17 May 2018, PCHR filed the civil complaint to the Israeli Ministry of Defense so that PCHR could initiate a civil lawsuit for compensation. On 08 July 2018, PCHR filed a criminal complaint to the Israeli Military Advocate General (MAG) to open investigation into the incident. The Israeli Military Prosecution opened an investigation into the incident on 18 July 2018. PCHR sent some documents relevant to the incident in

October 2018, yet was not informed of any developments, despite sending a request of that. It should be noted that Israeli occupation authorities do not usually charge their soldiers of killing or wounding Palestinian civilians, but they only charge, in rare cases, disobeying the orders. Consequently, PCHR do not expect Israeli authorities to be fair or be accountable for killing Wesal. This is considered a form of gender-based violence as defined in the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, Article (2/C): *“Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs.”*

Therefore, Israel is responsible for a gender-based violence according to the evidence.

Case Study

Killing Paramedic Razan Ashraf al-Najjar

On 01 June 2018, IOF killed **Razan Ashraf al-Najjar** (21), a volunteer paramedic working for the Medical Relief Society, while evacuating and helping the wounded civilians in the GMR in Khuza'ah village in eastern Khan Younis. According to PCHR's follow-up, at approximately 18:30, IOF stationed along the border fence with Israel opened fire at a group of paramedics, though they were wearing a flak jacket with "PRESS" clearly imprinted on it, while they were about 100 meters away from the border fence in Khuza'ah village. As a result, a number of civilians were wounded, including Razan, who was shot with a bullet that entered her chest and exited her back. Razan was wearing a distinctive medical uniform marked with the PRCS and ICRC insignias. Doctors declared Razan's death at 19:00 after her arrival at the Gaza European Hospital in Khan Younis.

According to PCHR's investigations, Razan was the first female volunteer in the GMR and she formed "**Rowad El-Salam Medical Team**". Razan also had a great role in encouraging many female paramedics to volunteer in the GMR. One of her colleagues said about her:

"Razan was unique on the field and in treating the wounded civilians and she was bold to advance far distances that no one dared to reach in order to offer aid to wounded civilians or trapped protestors. Razan was never absent or late although her work was voluntary. I firmly believe that IOF intentionally targeted Razan because of her presence and boldness that provoked Israeli soldiers and to send a message to medical personnel that: "None of you is safe and you must stay away and stop helping the wounded."

Razan's father said that:

“Razan was doing the work she loved and believed in since her childhood. Despite our difficult financial burdens, she has endeavored to learn and develop herself on the field of first aid and nursing and everything related to humanitarian and volunteer work. We were proud of her participation in the GMR and aiding and rescuing the wounded civilians' lives, but never thought that IOF would kill her. We believed that medical personnel are protected and not are not targets under the law. Razan was keen to wear her medical uniform and fearing of being shot as she insisted to continue her humanitarian work. I never imagined losing Razan, who added live to this house, she was like a mother to her sisters and everyone loved her.”

About the circumstances of Razan's injury, PCHR obtained an affidavit of a paramedic, who was with Razan at the incident day when Razan was shot dead:

“At approximately 18:25, I saw 2 wounded civilians near the barbed wire fence taking cover behind a sand hill and screaming for help. My colleagues and I, including Razan Ashraf al-Najjar, who was ahead of us. We raised our hands so that IOF know that we are in a humanitarian mission and we are unarmed as we were wearing our distinctive medical uniform marked with the PRCS and ICRC insignias. I saw 2 Israeli soldiers stepping out of their military vehicle near the border fence and one of them pointed his weapon towards us. I screamed at my colleagues to lay down on the ground when I felt that the soldier will open fire at us. Few minutes later, I heard a sound of gunfire as many tear gas canisters fell on our area. My colleagues and I suffocated

due to tear gas inhalation and saw our colleague Razan falling down on the ground. A group of young men approached her and took her to an ambulance.”

It should be noted that this affidavit is similar to many other affidavits obtained by PCHR. On 03 June 2018, Razan’s family give power of attorney to PCHR to pursue both civil and criminal procedures before the Israeli justice system. PCHR submitted 2 complaints; one to the Israeli Ministry of Defense to reject the civil suit for compensation, and a criminal complaint for the Israeli MAG. After months of procrastination in which the same evidence and information were requested twice, Israeli authorities declared that they opened investigation in killing Razan al-Najjar on 13 March 2019, which is nine months later. Investigation is still going on according to the Israeli allegations, but PCHR received no updates related to the investigation by the Israeli Military Prosecution, though PCHR has the power of attorney from the victims’ family. It should be noted that PCHR submitted more than 174 complaints about killing crimes committed by IOF against protestors, but only received 4 responses and all of them were negative and brief stating that: *“Case file closed for lack of reasonable suspicion.”* As we mentioned before, Israeli occupation authorities do not usually charge their soldiers of killing or wounding Palestinian civilians, but they only charge, in rare cases, disobeying the orders. Consequently, PCHR do not expect Israeli authorities to be fair or be accountable for killing paramedic Razan. This is considered a form of gender-based violence as defined in the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, Article (2/C): *“Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs.”*

Therefore, IOF is responsible for gender-based violence, where, according to evidence, it is likely to commit a murder against a Palestinian woman, as Israel is delaying the proceedings, which is likely to be an intent to overlook the perpetrators' felony.

Case Study

Killing Civilian Amal Mustafa al-Taramsi

On 11 January 2019, IOF killed Palestinian civilian **Amal Mustafa al-Taramsi** (44), a divorced woman who only finished high school, by a live bullet in her head while participating in the GMR. According to PCHR's investigations, Amal was among a group of unarmed civilians practicing their right to participate in a protest held near the perimeter fence in Malakah area, east of Gaza City. Amal was at a distance of about 200 meters away from the fence when she was shot with a live bullet that penetrated her neck at 16:00. She was transferred immediately by an ambulance to al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City, but Amal died before arriving at the hospital. Medical examinations shown that Amal's injury was horizontal rather than vertical, which was likely the result of a direct targeting.

According to an eyewitness's testimony:

"Each Friday, Amal and I participate in the GMR in Malakah area, east of Gaza City. I believe that IOF know the persons who always participate in the GMR, so they attack them. When Amal was targeted, we were in a far distance from the security border fence, as a soldier called us and ordered us to leave the area. Amal refused to leave the area and raised the "Victory" sign by her hands, so a soldier directly shot her. We peacefully participate in the GMR and even do not throw stones, we only raise the victory signs by our fingers and chant slogans against the Israeli occupation."

On 13 January 2019, the victim's family gave PCHR power of attorney, and on 23 January 2019, PCHR

filed a civil complaint to the Israeli Ministry of Defense so that PCHR could initiate the civil lawsuit for compensation. On 11 February 2019, filed a criminal complaint to the Israeli MAG to open investigation into the incident. The Israeli Military Prosecution asked PCHR to send information and the affidavits and requested to meet with PCHR to discuss a number of cases, including Amal's case on 26 June 2019. Yet, PCHR was not informed of any developments related to the initiative investigations. Even if IOF will open investigation, the case will be closed for no reasons, like hundreds of other cases that were similarly closed. Therefore, PCHR also does not expect that IOF will be fair or be accountable for killing Amal.

This is considered a form of gender-based violence as defined in the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, Article (2/C): *“Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs.”*

Consequently, the Israeli occupation State is responsible for gender-based violence, where, according to evidence, it is likely to commit a murder against a Palestinian woman, as Israel is delaying the proceedings, which is likely to be an intent to overlook the perpetrators' felony.



c. Women Wounded during the GMR protests

More 477 women were shot and injured with live and rubber bullets, sound bombs and tear gas canisters by IOF while participating in the GMR. Some of these injuries were classified serious and some of them caused permanent disability or mutilation for injured women as we clarified previously. Some families suffered serious social and economic consequences. Also, some of the wounded women said that they were under many psychological pressures due to the deformation they had of their injury. Other women said that they suffered from blaming them because they went to the GMR and got injured. This, in some families, was developed into violence and some married women were expelled or divorced. Some families further lost all or part of their financial income due to the injury of their women. On the other hand, PCHR documented some cases in which women did not suffer any social problems due their injuries. However, the common between all the injured women that they suffered a very bad psychological condition due to their injuries, especially the injuries that left a visible mark on their bodies. Following are 5 of the most prominent cases documented by PCHR:

Saja: Her Injury Made Her Lose Everything

On 09 November 2019, Saja (32), divorced and a mother for two children, participated in the GMR in al-Buraij eastern area. Saja said:

"I was about 7 meters away from the security fence when I was shot and injured as I threw stones at Israeli soldiers. One stone fell near a female soldier, so she fired a rubber bullet at my left hand, causing a fracture in one of my fingers, and bounced back to hit my left eye."

Saja underwent 4 months of treatment, but her injury caused her a permanent disability in her left eye with a disability of 70%, and the injury left her with visible scars.

Saja said:

"After five days of being hospitalized, I went home and was surprised that my husband filed a divorce lawsuit against me, while I was at the hospital (he aimed at divorcing her without paying her the deferred dowry and the house furniture). He said to me: "You are sick, you should go to your parents' house, so that they will take care of you. Saja was shocked of her husband's position as he blamed her for her injury although he used to encourage her to participate in the GMR. Sajad added:" after my divorce, I was separated from my children, the girls is 6 years old and the boy is 11 years old. My children's custody remained with their father and I can see them once every 2 weeks. In fact, I cannot have my children's custody because I do not own a place or have a source of income, so, I am not disturbed of that."

When asking her about the care received by her, Saja, who now lives at her parents' house, said:

"I did not receive the adequate rest or nutrition due to having problems with my parents, because I was blamed for being injured. My parents are angry of me because they used to tell me not to participate in the GMR, but I insisted to go and my husband encouraged me. When I was injured, my parents treated me as if I am guilty, not the victim."

Regarding her psychological condition after her injury, Saja said:

"after the divorce, I suffered a lot, as I was shocked, and I used to sit alone, and unable to sleep. My parents' position made me feel worse because instead of providing psychological support for me, they blamed me for my injury and my divorce. They neglected me, and cursed me, and beat me."

Saja went to an association that provided several sessions of psychological support to her, but she still suffers from her injury in addition to deterioration of her psychological condition after losing her husband and her parents' tenderness and attention

Regarding her vision of future after her injury, Saja said:

"my future ended when I was injured and my husband divorced me. I am now 32 and divorced for the second time, I live in my parents' house where I do not feel comfortable and face problems as I daily undergo violence by my parents. I feel upset and psychologically tired of this life. After my injury, I monthly receive NIS 600 for those wounded in the GMR on which I depend, but it is not enough for my treatment. My fate is unknown."

Angham: Constant Suffering Since Her Injury

On 23 August 2019, **Angham** (28), a single woman from Rafah, was hit with a shrapnel in her head after IOF stationed at the security fence shot her with an explosive bullet while participating in the GMR as a volunteer paramedic, east of Rafah. Angham was offering aid to the wounded protestors as she was about 10 meters away from the Israeli security fence. Due to her injury, Angham stayed in the hospital for 3 days and was informed that she needs 8 months to be cured. The shrapnel left clear signs in her head as Angham always suffer from a headache and a severe pain in her ears.

About the circumstances of her injury, Angham said that:

“IOF deliberately targeted me. An Israeli soldier stepped out of his military vehicle, shouted at me, and opened fire around me. The protestors witnessed this incident. IOF usually target me and my colleagues with live bullets and tear gas canisters while offering help for the injured civilians. I once saw IOF directly shooting my volunteer colleague, Saqer al-Jamal, when he approached the barbed wire fence while raising his hand to offer help to a wounded protestor. Saqer was shot with a live bullet in his neck. I know how dangerous my work is, but it is a human duty. I participate in the GMR because I fell it is necessary to aid the protestors, including women and children and I feel sorry for them when they are targeted by IOF’s live and rubber bullets.”

Regarding the healthcare received by her after her injury, Angham said:

“I was discharged from the hospital while I still need more healthcare as my father used to tell me: you are a woman, women should not stay at hospitals for a long time. My parents severely blamed me for my injury as they fiercely rejected my going to the GMR. My brother once beat

me, insulted, and cursed me to deter me from participating in the GMR, but I refused that. My parents prevented me from participating in the GMR in a certain period, but because I insisted on going to the protests, they allowed me to go provided that I don't be late and return home with buses carrying the protestors and not to meet or work with other young paramedics."

Asking her about the economic consequences, Angham, who is a volunteer paramedic, said:

"Due to my injury, my father incurred some expenses related to purchasing my medicines that are unavailable in the government hospitals."

About her psychological suffering due to the injury and her vision for the future:

"I still suffer from my injury and I need a psychological support, especially after my face was deformed, but I did not receive it until now, weather by my family or anyone else. I think that I don't have a future after my injury for I suffer a permanent pain and deformation in my face."

Mona: I cannot move anymore and lost my Job

Mona (35), a mother for 6 children from Khan Younis who works as a housewife, was shot, and injured twice by IOF stationed at the security fence in eastern Khan Younis while participating in the GMR. On 08 March 2019, Mona was shot with an explosive bullet in her thigh that caused laceration in the bones and a cut in its nerve, which caused a permanent disability in the knee joint. Mona was about 100 meters away from the security fence when she was shot by IOF.

On 26 October 2018, Mona was shot by IOF while participating in the GMR as she was rising the Palestinian flag. IOF fired a barrage of tear gas canisters at the area. While attempting to warn a group of civilians, who were adjacent to her, Mona felt something strongly hit the right side of her body. She fled from the area until she reached a sand hill where a group of civilians were behind it and laid down on the ground. She noticed a swelling and blood in the right side of her body. Mona started screaming in pain, so a group of paramedics approached her and took her to an ambulance.

Regarding her health condition after her injury, Mona said:

“due to my new injury, platinum was fitted into my thigh. I suffer recently from infections in the area where the platinum was fitted due to the poor health care I receive and my inability to purchase proper treatment because I have no income. The bullet that hit me still exists in my abdomen near my spine, causing me severe pain, as doctors decided not to remove the bullet.”

Mona said about her economic condition:

“my husband’s financial conditions are very difficult, and he faces consecutive prison sentences

due to financial liability cases. I do not have enough money to purchase my medicine that I used to obtain from charities. Our source of income is a small stall that my son runs near Abdul Qader School. After my injury, I was paid NIS 600 from the Qatari scholarship. As for my husband's salary, who is a PA servant, it goes to pay off his financial debts. I also have a son who was wounded in the GMR as a live bullet penetrated his abdomen and he recently receives NIS 300 from the Qatari scholarship."

She Added:

"my husband severely blamed me for my injury and he insulted me badly. He once attempted to pour Nitric acid on me as he was often sharp-tempered."

Talking about the economic impact of her injury, Mona said:

"I used to make some food products at home and sell it for the neighborhood, but after my injury, I can't do it. However, I receive a monthly grant after my injury that save me and my family from hunger as my work was mainly covering the household needs."

When asking her to whom she would resort when facing family problems, she said:

"My parents are dead and I do not resort to any one as I don't need help, because I will not be satisfied if I complained my husband or allowed anyone to interfere between us."

Asmaa: Her Injury Ruined her Life

On 12 October 2018, **Asmaa** (28), from Gaza City, was seriously injured after IOF stationed on the security fence shot her with an explosive bullet while participating in the GMR, east of Gaza City. Nesma, who was about 100 meters away from the security fence, said that Israeli soldiers targeted her after ordering her via loudspeakers to leave the area. When she did not respond to IOF's orders, they shot her with a live bullet that penetrated her chest and exited her back. Asmaa's injury led to a laceration in her lungs and the rib cage's bones. Many of her rib cage's bones were replaced to bones made of platinum. Asmaa's injury caused her permanent disability as she cannot walk for long distances and suffers permanent pains. The injury also caused deformation in place of stitches, especially in the back area.

Regarding the healthcare she received after the injury, Asmaa said:

"I received full medical care by doctors and nurses, but my parent had to purchase the required medicine on their own expenses as the treatment was not available at the governmental hospitals. One of the charities provided a medical care for me after I left the hospital by checking my wound and providing the needed medical treatment."

About the economic consequences of her injury, Asma said:

"our economic conditions are difficult as we depend permanently on the Ministry of Social Development's aid. At first, relatives and beloved ones used to visit me and offered me money instead of gifts to buy my medicines. We do not have an income as my father is dead and my brother is the bread winner of the house. I receive NIS 600 from the Qatari scholarship, but this

is not enough to bear the costs of life and treatments and I face a big problem in providing the treatment.”

Regarding the social impact of her injury, Asmaa said:

“I was blamed by my mother, brothers and sisters, and my uncles, who did not visit me in the hospital. My mother even said: I wish you were dead rather than being injured, no one will ever want to marry you. These words greatly affected me and I cry every day for what happened to me as my parents treat me as if I have done something bad not being injured IOF. In an attempt to explain why her family, treat her like this: “my family is angry because they attempted to ban me several times from participating in the GMR as they used to beat me. They threatened me that if I got hurt, they would not even visit me at the hospital, and that is what really happened. I recently severely suffer from my injury and from my family’s treatment. I lost my because future people like me can’t get married.”

Raghdah: her Husband Died in Grieve

On 27 April 2018, **Raghdah** (46), a mother for one daughter from the northern Gaza Strip, was seriously injured after being shot with an explosive live bullet by an Israeli soldier stationed behind the security fence while participating in the GMR. Raghdah was 30 meters away from the security fence.

Her injury resulted in bone laceration that lost him 5cm of highest in one leg, aiding him a permanent disability. Raghdah emphasized that she unworn 14 different surgical operations that included arterial ligation cleansing and bone connections and an internal leg bone transplant. She also needs a number of surgeries in the future according to doctors.

In regard to receiving proper medical care, Raghdah said:

"I did not receive proper health care, because most of the operations I went through during my treatment were not useful and the hospital did not pay my case high attention. In the first 5 months of my injury, some associations provided healthcare by sending a number of persons to follow-up my health condition, but later the visits stopped. When I was at the hospital, I did not feel comfortable and did not receive good feeding, which was on our expenses. After I left the hospital, I could not take care of myself, especially when preparing food and cleaning the house. The injury left me feeling lethargic and painful."

The injury affected Raghdah's daily life and future:

"my injury made me lose the ability to walk or practice my life normally. I underwent several surgeries and I will have another one on 26 October 2020 in which my leg's bones will be

separated and amended. I don't know if I will have my life back again after this surgery or not?"

Regarding the social damage resulting from the injury, Raghda said:

"My injury caused me great harm, as my husband died. During my treatment in Egypt after the injury, my husband could not accompany me because he was staying with our only daughter, and because he was suffering from severe hearing impairment and weak heart muscle, he died out of grief for being able to support me and be with me. I was severely blamed by my family neighbors and friends due to my injury and I used to hear lots of blaming such as: why did you go to the border; you should stay home."

About economic circumstances of her injury, Raghdah said:

"my husband was unemployed and we depended on the Ministry of Social Affairs' salary, which is our only income. We depended on aids due to our very bad financial condition. I currently receive NIS 600 from the Association of the Wounded and Martyrs' Families (which is affiliated with Hamas Movement) after my injury. Without it, I would have had no source of income. I suffer a constant pain due to my injury in addition to psychological harm due to my husband's death."



Section II.

Indirect Impact of Direct Violence by Israeli Authorities against Women at GMR



IOF's violence against women participating in the GMR indirectly affects Palestinian women. Any injury or attack in the GMR was borne by some woman as the Israeli violence affects the society's culture and increase pressure and bickering. The closest women, whether she was a mother, wife, sister, or daughter, suffers the consequences males' injury both physically and psychologically. Some women lost their breadwinner, and some others lost their sons or brothers, causing them serious psychological and consequences. According to most studies, as we have already explained in the first chapter of this study, political violence directly effects relationships within the family, have indirectly contributed to the increase in domestic, social, and economic violence against women in the Gaza Strip. Following are the most prominent cases documented by PCHR of direct violence by the occupation authorities against the protestors in the GMR, which led to serious economic and social consequences against women in the Gaza Strip, whether they are participating or not, in six axes: women injured in the GMR; women who lost their husbands in the GMR; women whose husbands were injured after being targeted by IOF in the GMR; women who lost one of their children after being targeted by IOF in the GMR; and women who live or work adjacent to the confrontation areas in the GMR.

1. Women Who Lost their Husbands after being Targeted in the GMR

In the GMR, IOF killed 176 civilian males. Due to the nature of the Patriarchal society in the Gaza Strip, most of married women depend on male members of the family as main source of income for the family and in some cases, males are the only source of income. This Israeli targeting has therefore caused direct harm to women, who became widow after losing the only source of income, which is their husbands. Some women could find economic and social support in the society, among their parents and their husbands' family. However, in some families, women face many problems like: losing the breadwinner, bad treatment by the husband's family, attempts to deprive women their right of the heritage, kicking women from their house, and attempts to force women marry their brothers in law. Following are 2 cases documented by PCHR, clarifying the most prominent problems, in which widows, who lost their husbands due to IOF targeting them in the GMR, are facing them.

Wardah: After IOF Killed her Husband, She Lost Social Security

On 30 March 2018, Abdul Qader, husband of **Wardah** (35), a mother for 6 children from central Gaza Strip, was killed after being shot with a live bullet in his abdomen by Israeli soldiers stationed along the security fence. Abdul Qader was killed while participating in the peaceful GMR in eastern al-Burajj refugee camp. He died 3 hours after he was injured as the live bullet directly targeted his liver. Medical crews could rescue him to his serious injury.

Wardah said: by my husband's death, who was the family's breadwinner supporter, we lost any source of income for 8 months, as my husband was a civilian servant in the PA, and procedures to receive his retirement pension took a long time. During that, my father in law helped us financially. I used to deprive my children and myself of many things so my father in law will not be burdened. After eight months of my husband's death, his retirement pension, which about NIS 1700, my father in law forced me to sign a paper giving him power of attorney to receive money instead of me. He takes NIS 300 of the money, which is their share of it, and gives me the rest of the money.

About social impact, Wardah said:

“after my husband's death, his father attempted to kick me out of the house several times for the house was his. He used to humiliate me by saying: this house is mine. My father in law also receives all financial aid for us as a martyr's family and deposit it in my children's bank accounts and never allows us to use it. My husband's family treat me badly, except for my mother in law, and keep telling me that they allow me to stay to take care of my children, making me feel as a servant. Wardah added that the neighbors interfere in her personal life report everything to her

family in law such as who visits her to cause troubles between us.”

Regarding psychological impact of losing her husband, Wardah said:

“treating me badly by my husband’s family has a great psychological impact as I became introverted, depressed and lost my appetite and constantly cry as I did not receive any psychological support. My husband’s death also affected my children, who always cry when remembering him and they miss many things in which their father used to bring to them. My 8-year daughter became aggressive since the death of her father as she has a hearing problem due to lack of oxygen during childbirth. Her disability is 90%, and she needs about \$100 a month to buy a headset battery and a transportation to see her doctor at Hamad Medical Corporation.”

About her life and future, Wardah said:

“my children and I do not feel secure and I had to bear a big responsibility, which is raising my children and providing their needs. I suffer fear due to my family’s harassments regarding the property of the house, which causing me a psychological pressure. Their bad treatment occurred after the death of my husband.”

When asking her about to whom she would resort at the previous problems, Wardah said:

“I don’t complain to anyone because I know that it will increase the problems rather than solving them. I also do not want my parent to fall into troubles because of me. I only want peace for me and my children.”

Lubna: IOF killed her Husband Leaving her to Cruel Reality

On 14 May 2018, Ahmed, husband of **Lubna** (30), who have one daughter, was killed after Israeli soldiers stationed along the security fence shot him with an explosive live bullet in his abdomen while participating in the GMR in eastern al-Burajj area. Ahmed, as a result of that, died half an hour later in the hospital.

About the social impact of her husband's death, Lubna said:

"I received a martyrs' salary by the PA in addition to a monthly aid by Association of the Wounded and Martyrs' Families affiliated with Hamas Movement. I used this salary in paying my husband's debts, but that was not good enough for his parents, who kicked me out of my apartment. After the funeral ended and I spent the waiting period in my parents' house, my father in law phone called my father and asked him to come to take the furniture, except for the fridge and he took the apartment. I currently live in my parents' house and save my share of the martyrs' salary, which is NIS 2000 in my daughter's bank account. My parents take care of all what we need."

About the psychological impact of killing her husband by IOF, Lubna said:

"I severely shocked when my husband was killed and suffered severe depression and constant crying jags and I became introvert after Israeli soldiers killed my husband. I only received a psychological support by my parents. One month after my husband's death, my daughter constantly remembering him and missed him and she used to ask us to see him."

As for the social impact, Lubna said:

“after a period of my husband’s death, people began interfering our personal life and I heard rumors about me. Some people even asked me to wear a robe and niqab because I am a martyr’s wife. Some relatives and friends also attempted to convince me to get marry while other brought me some persons to propose to me, though I repeatedly refused to do so. My father in law further spread rumors that I deprived him from seeing his grandchild despite that he never asked to see her.”

Asking her to whom she would resort when facing troubles, she said:

“when I face a problem, I resort to my parents, who headed several times to social counselors to solve the misunderstanding between me and my father in law.”

2. Women whose Husbands were injured after IOF Targeted them in the GMR

The number of injured civilians in the GMR reached 11,566 civilian adult males, including 3,646 married persons, who were directly targeted by Israeli soldiers stationed along the security fence after participating in the GMR. Some of these injuries have resulted in permanent disabilities that lead to losing the family's main source of income and affected their stability and balanced relationships. This has affected women in many families in which their husbands were injured and women had to bear many additional responsibilities over their basic burdens. Some women also were subjected to violence due to the psychological suffering resulted from their husbands' injury and some other were subjected to social violence by the husband's family. On the other hand, there are some families where women have not experienced any kind of domestic or social violence as a result of the husband's injury. Following are two cases of women who have experienced family and social violence because their husbands were shot and injured by IOF.

Nada: Her Husband's Injury Caused her Permanent Fear and Weakness

On 30 March 2018, Omer, husband of **Nada** (30), a mother for 3 children, was directly shot by Israeli soldiers stationed along the security fence while participating in the GMR in eastern Rafah area. Due to his injury, Omer has a permanent disability leaving him half-paralyzed and difficulty in speech.

Nada said:

“Since my husband’s injury, I’ve been providing him a full health and household care such as bringing his medicines, taking him to the doctors, taking him to the bathroom, and taking care of him, where he can’t move easily, in addition to the burden of the house, and taking care of my three children.”

Regarding economic consequences of her husband’s injury, Nada said:

“We lost the only source of income due to my husband’s injury, so I had to sell my jewelry and my brothers helped me provide the necessary medicines for my husband in addition to the needs of the house. After that some organizations helped me and I received a salary from the Association of the Wounded and Martyrs’ Families and I receive NIS 600 from the Qatari scholarship.

About social impact of the husband’s injury, she said:

“After my husband was injured, his family treated me badly, prevented me from reaching him when he was injured and tried to isolate him from me when he was in the hospital so I did not know anything about him. They also restrict me when I leave the house. My husband became nervous and angry after his injury as he often insulted me for silly reasons. He even once beat

me. I still suffer from social problems as my brothers demanded my husband to return the money they helped me with during my husband's injury. In addition, many problems occurred between my husband and his brothers because they treat me badly."

Asked what psychological impact this situation had, she answered:

"I currently suffer a severe psychological pressure as I suffer from constant crying, constant sadness, a constant feeling of fear and weakness, and a feeling that I am often monitored by the husband's parents, because of what happened to my husband. What makes my psychological condition worse is that I do not know anything about my husband's injury. I also did not receive any psychological support from anyone."

Asking her about to whom she would resort when facing such problems, Nada said:

"If I could not deal with a problem my parents or I resort to my families dignitaries, who attempt to intervene amicably to solve problems, and I think that is enough to deal with my problems."

Najwa: my husband's injury put us in financial difficulty

On 27 April 2018, **Najwa's** husband, Mazen, a mother of 7 children, was exposed to a direct live bullet to his leg, by the Israeli occupying forces stationed at the border fence, during the peaceful demonstrations at GMR in "Malaka", east of the Gaza Strip. The shot penetrated his two legs and caused a temporary disability for 12-months.

Najwa said:

"I'm doing my best to look after my husband since his injury, such as taking care of his health, cleaning his wounds, and giving him adequate consideration in all aspects".

Referring to the economic impact of the injury, Najwa said:

"My husband lost his ability to work after his injury, he was working in a bakery beside his work as a paramedic because his monthly salary, which is (1200 NIS), was not enough. However, I went through many problems and difficult conditions to provide the necessary medical treatments to my husband and the house needs, so I borrowed money from my parents, sister, and some relatives". She added: "many institutions refused to provide a financial help to us because my husband was employed, I cannot deny that I received (200 USD) once, and (600 NIS) from the Supreme Authority for the GMR then they decreased it to (300 NIS) before they cut it. Moreover, I am still suffering to provide the medical treatment and house necessities, so I referred to many medical institutions to provide my husband's medical treatments; they approved my request twice before they apologized".

When Najwa was asked about the social impact, she said:

“my husband became irritable, stressed, angry, and he keeps shouting at my face by saying “Get away from me, do not ask me for anything!”. And he becomes angrier, as long as we cannot provide the medical treatment and house necessities”. Najwa also talked about the bad treatment of her mother in law who blamed Najwa for letting her husband go to the GMR, and that she supposed to prevent him from going.

Referring to Najwa’s psychological state, she said:

“I’m suffering from severe psychological depression, because I am shocked about what happened to my husband, and his psychological damage reflected on all of us. I am already suffering from ‘Bahjat⁵⁸ Disease’, and my health condition deteriorated due to the psychological pressure, severe grief, and lack of sleep, I am thinking seriously to participate at the GMR to die there. I am completely out of power, with a devastated mental state, and I have not received any psychological support from any institution”.

⁵⁸ Bahjat Disease, also known as ‘Bahjat Syndrome’, is a type of inflammatory disorder which affects multiple parts of the body. The most common symptoms include painful mouth sores, inflammation of the eye, and rash.

3. Women who lost a child due to IOF attacks against the GMR

IOF stationed at the border fence killed 46 children while attending the GMR. Obviously, the death of children and young men reflect and affect the family negatively, especially for women. The loss of the children affects the mothers mostly, as the psychological effects are severe on her, and she may also be attached to many unaffordable economic consequences for poor families that could not provide medical treatments for the children that cannot be provided by the governmental hospitals. On the other hand, in many families the only or important source of income, may be the son who was injured, and this injury may also result in a disability that require lifetime treatments.

Following are two cases monitored by PCHR for mothers who lost their children, after killing by IOF while participation in the peaceful GMR:

Saja: suffered a brain stroke after losing her son

On 14 May 2018, Mohannad (20), **Saja's** (58) son, from the Central Gaza Strip, was killed after being targeted with an explosive shot to the head by the IOF while present at the GMR, east of al-Burajj refugee camp. Mohannad died after 10 days of suffering at al-Shifa' Hospital, then he was referred to the Ahli Hospital in Hebron where he announced dead as soon as he arrived.

Referring to the economic impact of the injury, Saja said:

"my son was a student and did not have a source of income, so I did not incur any expenses but the governmental authorities paid for his treatment and we receive martyr salary from the PA, but I'm already spending it at my medical treatment as I am suffering a brain stroke after the death of my son".

When Saja was asked about the psychological state, she said:

"I still suffer from Dacrystic seizure, lack of sleeping, breath difficulties, introversion, and mind fugue. My husband and sons tried to help me to overcome the death of my son but I am still suffering. I did not take psychological support sessions, and I do not need them because my family is by my side".

Doa': losing her son broke her heart and deprived her of an important source of income

On 14 September 2018, IOF targeted Mohammed (25), Doa's (60) son, a mother of 10 children from Rafah, with an explosive bullet to the abdomen while participating at the GMR, east of Jabalia (Abu Safiya), which killed him immediately.

Doa' talked about the economic impact of losing her son by saying:

"I did not incur any expenses but the death of my son affected our income, because he was working in a "tires maintenance shop" and helps with the house monthly income, and that we are living without my husband because he got married with 2 other women and does not give us money. Two months after my son's death, we started to receive a martyr salary of (1,400 NIS) for 7 months from the PA, and suddenly they cut it. Meanwhile, we started to receive (1,200 NIS) from the Foundation for the Care of the Families of Martyrs which is not enough to fulfill our needs because my three married sons are living in my house".

Referring to the social impact, Doa' said that:

"My husband keeps blaming me as I am the one who is responsible for losing our son. I am suffering from my husband's abuses even before the death of our son, as he does not care about our situation and we do not see him for months, he spends all his time with his other wives".

When Doa' was asked about the psychological state, she said:

"I am suffering severe psychological damage and still cannot believe this great loss. I feel like

I can see him every morning in my room during al-Fajr prayer which makes me feel insomniac, and I did not receive any psychological support from any institution". She added: "when I face any problem, I do not know where to go, so I return only to my sons".

4. Women with children injured by the IOF at the GMR

IOF stationed at the border fence target the peaceful protestors at the GMR with live and rubber bullets, and teargas canisters. Dozens of children and young men was exposed to severe wounds resulted in permanent disabilities. However, the available statistics indicated that 204 males, including 41 children, were subjected to permanent disabilities after targeting them while participating at the GMR, and that reflected negatively on their families' psychological and economic states. Obviously, mothers are the most who suffer terribly from the pain of their sons' injuries, as they have to take care of their health, endures the difficult psychological damage, and in poor families, mothers are the ones who are responsible to provide medical treatment from various institutions.

Following are two cases monitored by PCHR for targeting children and young men's impact on mothers, at the peaceful GMR:

Sana': My son's injury disrupted my life

On 14 May 2018, Abdulrahman (18), Sana's (45) son, who is a mother of six children from Khan Younis, was injured after being targeted by the IOF stationed at the border fence while participating at the GMR, east of Khan Younis. Abdulrahman was hit with a live bullet to his chest that penetrated his spinal cord and caused partial paralysis.

Sana' said that:

"my family and I are taking care of my son since he was injured, such as cleaning the wounds, providing food, taking him to the bathroom, taking care of his personal hygiene, and helping him in walking and moving. I carry him every day, with the assistant of one of my family members, from the second floor to the ground floor and vice versa, several times a day, because Abdulrahman is a high school student, and he's taking private lessons at home, which caused pain in my joints".

Referring to the economic impact of the injury, Sana' said:

"I went through many financial problems, so I borrowed money from my parents and relatives to provide the necessary medical treatments and needs to my son. However, I resorted to charity institutions to provide medical treatments to my son, and now I am receiving (600 NIS) from Association of the Wounded and Martyrs' Families, and martyr salary from the West Bank government".

When Sana' was asked about the psychological impact, she said:

"my son became very nervous after the injury, and he keeps vending off at me, but he is improving

with time and became quieter". She added: "I suffered a psychological damage because my sisters in law kept blaming me and accused me of negligence, resulted in a family dispute". Sana' confirmed that she received psychological support from one of the charity institutions.

About the social impact, Sana' said:

"I can't get out of the house and leave my son, as I was before; I think I have completely lost my life and I will never be able to return to my natural life".

Warda: worried about my son's future after amputating his leg

On 26 October 2018, Salah (16), **Warda's** (37) son, a mother of 4 children from the Gaza Strip, was injured after being shot with a live bullet to his left leg by IOF stationed at the border fence while participating at the GMR, in Malaka area, east of the Gaza Strip. Salah suffered from a permanent disability after the amputation his left leg below the knee, even though he was standing 150 meters away from the border fence.

Warda said that:

"Since my son was injured, I was following up with the institutions that provided therapists for my son's treatment, who taught me how to take care of my son's injury and health. I considered that my life was put on hold because I have to accompany him everywhere. However, focusing with my son was my biggest suffering because he is a child, so he took all my time and no power left for my other responsibilities".

About the economic burden, Warda said:

"his medical treatment did not cost us anything except the transportations to the various institutions that gave our son the priorities because he is a child. We also put aside an amount of the martyr's salary to buy medicines that are not provided by those institutions". She added: "we fulfill the house needs from a food parcel by the UNRWA, along with my husband's salary which we receive every 50-days, as works as an assistant in one of Hamas Movement's institutions".

About the psychological state, Warda said:

“I am suffering from his unbearable actions, he always shout at my face even for the simple reasons, as he thought that his future was ruined”. Warda added: “I suffered a psychological damage since I heard that my son was injured, and that continued for several months; at that time I became introverted; I refused to see or talk to anyone, and I suffered lack of sleeping due to thinking of my son, and my psychological state reflected on my family”.

5. Women who live and work near the border areas of GMR

The oppressive actions carried out by the IOF stationed at the border fence at the GMR caused direct and indirect damages for Palestinian residents and farmers living or working adjacent to the border fence, and of course, women are the most who suffer in such cases. Women are exposed to direct dangers caused by the IOF as hitting them with live bullets and teargas canisters, and its consequences. Furthermore, women who live in houses adjacent to the border fence suffer from explosions that occur from time to time, firing live bullets and teargas canisters which resulted in breaking windows, difficulty of controlling children, and increasing burdens on women related to cleaning the house due to dust and gas. Moreover, restrictions imposed on women's movement as she may be prevented from going out of the house due to deploying men in the area, especially on Fridays. Women also suffer lack of privacy due to living in damaged domiciles that are not locked. Even though, female farmers who work in border areas cannot reach to their lands and they suffer a lot to protect the crops from the steps of the participants of the GMR.

Raghda: the Israeli oppression of the GMR burdened her

Raghda (30), a mother of 3 sons and a daughter, living in the east of al-Buraij, her family owns 3 acres agricultural land of olive, almond, and fig trees, 700-meters away from the border fence. Raghda and her husband work at their land and sell its goods which contribute to providing an important income for the family.

Raghda said that:

“We face difficulties to reach to our lands due to the Israeli oppression of the GMR, which prevented us from working in it, especially, when they set up sit-in tents in our land”. Raghda added: “every Friday a quarrel occur between me and my sons while I am trying to prevent them from going out of the house to visit their friends and relatives living near us, for fear of firing or the teargas inhalation”.

Raghda talked about the impact of the GMR on their daily life by saying:

“sometimes, quarrels occurred between me and my sons and some children who gathered to attend and watch the GMR, which exhausted me a lot and made me nervous all the time. On Fridays, my husband prevents me from stepping out of the house due to firing live bullets or the teargas inhalation at the participants of the GMR”.

When Raghda was asked about her house duties, she replied:

“we covered the roof of the corridor of the house with a fabric (بشادر), to prevent the participants of the GMR from revealing or watching us inside the house, which caused heat in the house in

the hot summer days". She added: "since the outbreak of the GMR, I am obliged to clean the house frequently and intensively from the dust and teargas canisters".

Sojoud: my house is uninhabitable now due to the Israeli oppression

Sojoud (47), a mother of 8 children, living in al-Buraij, (700-800) meters away from the border fence. She sometimes participates at the GMR under some conditions set by her husband that is to stay in the women's tent and never approach to the border fence.

Sojoud said that:

"I lost the control over my sons since the outbreak of the GMR, as I cannot prevent them from participating there. Every Friday they attend there and throw stones at the Israeli soldiers, which made their behaviors aggressive against each other, and that is exhausting me. The biggest problem that I am suffering is that my 11-year old son who permanently exists in the border area, I am afraid that the IOF may shot him as they did with many children at the GMR". Sojoud added: "On Fridays, my husband prevents me from stepping out of the house, because the area becomes rush and also fearing of firing live bullets or the teargas inhalation at the participants of the GMR".

The impact of the Israeli oppression, Sojoud said:

"our windows were broken down due to the explosions that often occurred on the border fence, causing too much dust to clean daily in the house, and that we are directly exposed to teargas canisters". She added: "we covered the door of the house with a fabric until we installed a new door to prevent the children from going out of the house to participate at the GMR. We also put tin plates on the windows to prevent the dust and teargas from entering the house."

When Sojoud was asked about the institutions she have resorted to, she replied:

“I turned to several official institutions to provide financial assist or to repair our house, but they refused due to the lack of fund, so I decided not to go to any other institution afterwards to not to be subjected to the same situation”.



Section III.

Interventions and mechanisms needed by officials and civil society to combat GBV during the GMR



The responsibility of protecting women from GBV at the GMR is mutual by the IOF and the PA, as the Israeli occupation is directly and indirectly responsible for GBV at the GMR. The consequences of the violence by the occupying authorities, which is reflected at the Palestinian society in general and the Palestinian women in particular, who suffer various kinds of GBV, are the PA's responsibility of providing women with the necessary protection. Consequently, both the Israeli occupation and the PA must provide the necessary mechanisms to protect Palestinian women from GBV in the GMR.

This chapter is divided into three topics; the first one deals with the available official mechanisms to combat GBV during or on the occasion of the GMR, the second topic deals with the available civil society's mechanisms to combat GBV during or on the occasion of GMR, the third research addresses the interventions to combat GBV during or on the occasion of the GMR.

First:**The available official mechanisms to combat GBV during or on the occasion of the GMR.**

There are several methods in which women can protect themselves from GBV or equity if subjected to violence, including the legal mechanisms that provided by the Israeli occupation authorities for Palestinians to file complaints and prosecutions, even if they were not effective. These mechanisms also include means provided by the PA to support and redress GBV against women. Following is the Israeli justice system and the Palestinian justice system into two separate parts:

First: Israeli justice system

Palestinians can resort to Israeli justice mechanisms in case they were attacked by the IOF, even if the history of these means confirmed that they are not effective or just, but at least they are a spare way of reaching international mechanisms to prosecute war criminals, particularly the ICC. Palestinians can file civil suits against the Israeli courts for compensating them for their injuries and sufferings, under certain conditions only. Submitting complaints could also be filed with the Israeli military prosecution urging it to investigate the IOF's attacks against Palestinian civilians. These means can be used for the GMR's victims, including women, to seek redress and compensation theoretically, but actually there are several obstacles that shall impede the Israeli justice and its ineffectiveness.

The Israeli B'Tselem Foundation has commented on the Israeli justice system that provides the Palestinians with the following "Israel has created a system that produces only a fake image of the law's enforcement - both criminal and civil. As a result, officials are not punished and victims are not compensated for their damage. This is

the situation only in a few exceptional cases used to exaggerate the implication that the law enforcement system is functioning properly”.

Victims usually resort to human rights organizations operating in the Gaza Strip, the most prominent of all is PCHR, to achieve justice mechanisms. Following is the Israeli justice means that women can resort to for compensation.

1) Israeli military prosecution:

The Israeli military prosecution is responsible for holding the excesses committed by the Israeli occupation soldiers accountable, including the attacks against Palestinians. Therefore, the Israeli military prosecution's duty is to monitor and prosecute such abuses, by opening investigations into such incidents and referring to the competent court to prosecute soldiers in case they were involved in committing offenses or crimes, especially against Palestinians. Victims have the right to file complaints to the Israeli military prosecutor's office concerning the violations they have suffered, usually through a lawyer or a human rights center, the latter is the most recommended in these cases.

PCHR is one of the most recommended complaint centers for Palestinian victims in the Gaza Strip, including victims of the GMR. The human rights centers often face many obstacles and procrastinations to activate a complaint before the Public Prosecutor's Office, the most noticeable of which are: The prosecution ignores most complaints without response; the responses are usually negative, stating that there is no need to open an investigation; if the investigation is opened, it ends without charges; prolonged procrastination may reach years, always ending without rectification for victims; restrictions on the freedom of movement of Palestinians and their detentions, leaving witnesses unable to testify before the courts.

2) Israeli judiciary

Israeli authorities imposed several restrictions on resorting to their civil jurisdiction to be compensated for the Israeli occupation's damages in the oPt. The Israeli law requires filing a complaint to the Israeli Ministry of Defense before filing suits to the Israeli courts against IOF to be compensated. The Israeli authorities created and imposed series of Israeli legal and physical obstacles to obstruct their right to receive justice and redressing, even if it was literally impossible. The most prominent of these obstacles is that Palestinians have continued to be denied from their right to justice and compensation. In this context, on 16 July 2012 the Israeli Knesset approved Amendment No. (8) to the Israeli Tort Law (State's Liability) of 1952, which amendment exempts the State of Israel of any liability arising from damages caused to a resident of an enemy territory during a military operation.

However, this contradicts directly with international law standards which prevent any state from exempting itself from any responsibility incurred of serious attacks against Palestinian civilians. The States Parties to the Rome Statute of the ICC to work hard to hold the war criminals accountable.

Additionally, on 16 December 2014, the Israeli Supreme Court approved the aforementioned amendment; Israeli authorities have worked on preventing victims from the Gaza Strip from filing complaints, appearing before courts, and imposing unbearable financial court guarantees. As a result, thousands of victims found it impossible to file complaints of compensation and redress.

Second: Palestinian justice system

The Palestinian justice system can be divided into two main sections: formal and informal mechanisms of justice. All these mechanisms have an obligation to undertake the necessary interventions to redress injustice and equate victims, while in reality, these means are influenced by the patriarchal culture that is still prevailed in society, especially the informal mechanisms of justice, that mostly imposed by customs and traditions.

1) Formal justice:

1. Police:

The police considered as the right hand of the executive authority that aims at providing security and tranquility, preventing crime and deliver perpetrators to the justice, and implementing orders and judgments of the judiciary. The police services has several departments but the most important is Provincial Police, that receives complaints from citizens and public relations in the police, to address problems through “reform”, especially in family matters, before filing complaints to the Public Prosecutor. Resorting to the police station is one of women’s options when subjected to violence, especially beatings, which is one of the crimes stipulated in the Penal Code No. 37 of 1936, stipulated in the Gaza Strip, especially Articles (248-250), which allows the police to detain the perpetrator and refer them to prosecution.

The police service also includes a special section for public relations and public outreach, so that section has the power to intervene in order to reform the parties, especially in family disputes. It may also offer the parties to reform committees, mayors, or the Tribal Affairs Department to solve the problem. However, these illegal methods usually contribute to losing the women’s right and perpetuate violence against women.

2. The Public Prosecution:

The duty of the Public Prosecution is that it has the power to investigate, make accusations, and initiate criminal proceeding. The police assume that they refer any beating attack to the public prosecution to bring the perpetrator to justice, but in spousal or family abuse cases, this becomes the last option for the police after the failure of reformers' efforts. The prosecution is also considered one of the authorities to receive complaints regarding to any violations of the Penal Code, Judicial control is also practiced over the work of law enforcement agents.

The prosecution usually fails to initiate proceedings if they involved domestic violence of the assault, in their point of view, or there is reconciliation between the parties. So that they are based on a circular issued by the Attorney-General, Article 152 of the Code of Procedure, paragraph 5; that allows for the preservation of papers if "the circumstances entail that the case be dismissed for lack of importance, he issues an order to that effect. The problem is that reconciliation is usually done at the expense of women's rights.

3. Courts:

The judiciary law sets out three systems of justice: Constitutional Court, Regular Court, and Sharia Court⁵⁹. The regular Courts are composed of three separate levels, but the Constitutional Court is out of the framework of this report. The work of the courts is regulated by several laws, most prominent of which: is the Palestinian Basic Law of 2003, The Judicial Authority Act 2002, The Civil and Commercial Procedure Act 2001, as amended in 2005, The Law on the formation of the regular Courts of 2001, as amended in 2005, The Criminal Procedure Act 2001, the due process law of 1965, and the Legal Justice Act of 2011. The following is a brief explanation of the Regular and Sharia courts in the light of the abovementioned laws.

⁵⁹ The Judicial Power Act No. 1 of 2002, Article 6

a. Regular Courts:

The regular judiciary consists of three levels: Magistrate Courts, Court of First Instance, and Court of Appeal. The Magistrate Court, which is held as the first instance; The courts of First Instance may be a first instance court or sit as an appeals court, depending on the type and value of the case; the Court of Appeal, appeals the judgments issued by the Court of Appeal as a first instance. And finally came the Supreme Court, which is divided into High Court of Justice and a Court of Cassation that deals with administrative decisions. Women can resort to regular courts to defend their financial rights, such as the right to inheritance, or when women's property is taken, such as the house furniture or the marital house after the husband's death. However, women's access to regular courts is obstructed by two things: customs and traditions, that consider resorting to justice in family disputes as unacceptable; the high costs of such issues which many women cannot afford court's fees; and such issues prolonged periods reaching years sometimes.

b. Sharia Courts

The Sharia Courts are considered to be a system that is totally independent from the regular courts in administrative and organizational terms, as they have a higher Sharia Judicial Board independent of the regular Judiciary. The Sharia courts are competent in matters of Muslims' personal status, including marriage, divorce, alimony, dowry, custody and seeing children, but the inheritance issues is excluded, because it would be required from the regular courts. The legal judiciary is based on Hanafi doctrine in addition to the Family Rights Act of 1954, Legal procedures Act of 1965, and Legal Justice Act of 2011⁶⁰. The Judicial Office issues binding judicial circulars, which are considered as an explanation for the Hanafi doctrine, that represent one of the most prominent methods in developing the existing legal rules and attempts to push it to keep up with social developments⁶¹. The Sharia courts hold their sessions in

⁶⁰ This law is considered as one of division laws, which the Change and Reform Bloc issued, although it is enforced in the Gaza Strip

⁶¹ Norwegian Council for Refugees, "The Shari'a Courts and Personal Status Laws in the Gaza Strip" (2012)

public, only if the parties request holding secret sessions, or even if the public morals obliged to hold secret sessions, and the verdict is pronounced in a public hearing in any case⁶². The Sharia Courts are composed of three levels: The Sharia Court of First Instance, the Sharia Court of Appeal, and the Sharia Supreme Court⁶³.

Women can resort to legal courts in all the family matters, including denial of custody or seeing the children, according to one of the circulars issued by the Sharia Judicial Board, marital violence is one of the main reasons for the separation of spouses, the request of the wife, which is called: separation on grounds of a dispute or discord.

Several things impede the ability of women to do so, the most prominent are: Customs and traditions that consider marital violence acceptable; or not a sufficient justification for divorce; difficulty to proof; difficulty of procedures for differentiation. Even though, the Family Code of 1954, in article 97, forces parties to arbitration, which takes a year to be adjudicate; the relatively high fees of these issues, ranging from 500 to 1,000 Jordanian Dinars.

4. Al-Aman Shelter for Women Subject to Violence

Al-Aman shelter was established in June 2011, to protect the abused women affiliated to the Ministry of Social Affairs, particularly, the General Administration for Family and Children. Usually the inmates of the shelter are women who are exposed to violence or abuse by their families. However, women receive several services as shelter, rehabilitation, and crafts. Director of the General Administration for Family and Children in the Ministry of Social Affairs announced through their website that the shelter aims at “modifying women’s behaviors using a treatment plan with educational, psychological and professional intervention

62 Sharia Law No. (3) of 2011, Article (52).

63 Sharia Law No. (3) of 2011, Article (57).

programs”, in addition to protection and rehabilitation.

The shelter receives women who subjected to violence in one of four methods: who referred by government departments or police; or by human rights centers or NGO service providers; or by reformers and mayors; or come by themselves. They initially accept some women who come seeking protection/accommodation, so she undergo medical examination to ensure that she meets the reforming conditions, then the director of the shelter receive the transfer request warrant to sign that she was admitted to the shelter. Meanwhile, the inmate hands all her belongings to the safe-deposit box and fill the entry form after confirming the instructions.

Al-Aman shelter receives only four categories of women, who are: “women who were victims of family and marital disputes that threaten the family entity; women subjected to torture, physical, sexual and psychological abuse; women who do not have families; and women seek protection against delinquency, their ages exceeded 13”. It also should be noted that “al-Aman shelter does not admit women who suffer chronic mental or physical illness, mentally and physically handicapped, former prisoners, morally perverted, or drug addicts”.

Regarding to the shelter’s instructions, it is not allowed to leave the shelter without a previous permit, and in case of drug addiction or prostitution she will be expelled. The shelter admits all the cases referred from the official bodies, then they hold a “case conference session” every Monday to consider the new cases whether she could be admitted or not. The shelter’s staff include: a director, a lawyer, and a reformer, who try to solve the women’s problems by utilizing means of law or the Association of Muslim scholars, where the last is mostly recommended.

2) Informal justice

The informal justice system is practiced through four categories of active persons, who are the tribal judges, reformers, mayors, and arbitrators, as we have already explained. Sometimes, they work independently through parties resorting to them directly, or they work through reform and arbitration associations in the Gaza Strip, or work by coordinating with the formal bodies established to coordinate with informal justice. There are many criticisms of informal justice methods oriented in dealing with women that accused of dedicating the male mentality in society. Studies indicated that the reformers usually blame women who came to complain about abusing her by her husband or her family. However, if the reformers or mayors find that the woman has made a mistake, she will be subjected to reproofing, so that women always hesitate to complain to the reformers or the mayors if she was beaten after making a mistake. In their point of view, women abuse can be justified, because it is part of the right to reprimand from the husband or the father.

Regarding to the financial issues, such as inheritance and property, the mayors and reformers are supportive of the position of women, as it is a religious issue and duty to that obliged them, especially in inheritance matters. In cases which a woman ask for divorce from her husband, she is usually faced with repulsion by the reformers as they consider her as she wants to destroy her family, especially if she does not have a convincing reason related to a serious behavioral deviation in her husband. Usually, women afraid from resorting to reform men if she felt that customs and traditions are not in her favor, as reformers require the presence one of her family if she wanted to file a complaint, except in special cases.

Second:

Available civil society mechanisms to combat GBV during the GMR

Civil society organizations, especially human rights institutions in the Gaza Strip, work in two parallel directions which are the violations of the Israeli occupation, and violations committed by the Palestinian Authority. As we already explained, the Israeli violations at the GMR have dimensions at the law level and Palestinian local mechanisms, which are presented in two parts:

1. Mechanisms of working on the Israeli violations' file
2. Mechanisms of working on the Palestinian violations' file

Part one: Mechanisms of working on the Israeli violations' file

Human rights organizations work permanently in following-up the Israeli violations in the Gaza Strip, especially during the GMR. These institutions issue reports about Israeli violations, and file complaints to the Israeli public prosecutor to open investigations into the Israeli attacks against the protestors at the GMR, including attacks against women. These centers also submit civil suits to redress the victims in some cases after filing complaints to the Ministry of Defense as required by the Israeli law. These centers also file complaints to various United Nations bodies to expose the Israeli violations. These institutions also send documents to the International Criminal Court (ICC) about those violations committed at the GMR, as the court has begun preliminary investigations into what is happening during the GMR.

Part two: Mechanisms of working on the Palestinian violations' file

Many international and national NGOs in the Gaza Strip are working to promote the protection of women from local violence, through their basic mechanisms, which could be divided into two main parts: pressure and

advocacy and representing victims before jurisdiction. These institutions work to reach victims by receiving complaints, following-up violations and connecting with victims through fieldworkers and researchers, or dealing with prominent phenomena in the society. These institutions use many pressure procedures and advocacy, such as various methods of awareness, issuing studies and reports, negotiating with decision-makers, exposing violations, and mobilizing people to put pressure on them. Despite the importance of those institutions' role, they are considered as the last option that women can resort to, regarding to domestic violence.

There are a dozen of institutions in the Gaza Strip that offer free legal aid services to women. PCHR is in the leading and the first institution that continuously provided free legal assistance to women without interruption since 1997 in personal status issues, especially alimony and custody issues. However, "Sawasiya" program, which is a joint of United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the United Nations Women (UN Women), is one of the most international programs that targeted and provided free legal services to vulnerable groups in the Gaza Strip, especially women since 2014 until 2017. Furthermore, several other institutions provide free legal services to women in personal status issues, based on the availability of projects, such as the Palestinian Centre for Democracy and Conflict Resolution (PCDCR), Aisha Association for Woman and Child Protection, and Center for Women's Legal Research & Consulting (CWLRC). Some volunteering groups also provide different services for participants at the GMR, including medical, psychological, and physical therapy services.

Third:**The interventions to combat GBV during or on the occasion of the GMR.**

The Israeli occupying State and State of Palestine are both responsible for GBV against women, because both are obliged in protecting, respecting, and implementing relevant international standards. According to the Israeli occupation commitments under CEDAW, it must respect and protect women's rights, including protection from GBV in the oPt considering it an occupying region. Obviously, the Committee on the Application of CEDAW confirmed that in their final notes of the Israeli report:

The Committee recalls its previous recommendation that the State party gives full effect to the provisions of the Convention and implements its obligations under international humanitarian law with regard to all persons under its jurisdiction or effective control. The Committee recommends that the State party provide comprehensive information in its seventh periodic report on the implementation of the Convention in the Occupied Palestinian Territory over which it exercises jurisdiction or effective control.⁶⁴

The aforementioned indicates that the Israeli occupying State is obliged to apply the international standards related to women's rights, including the right to not subjected to violence according to CEDAW agreement and the International Humanitarian Law on preventing and combating violence against civilians in general. The Committee expresses concern that Palestinian women and girls continue to be subjected to excessive use of force and abuse by the State party's security forces and Israeli settlers, including physical, psychological, and verbal abuse and sexual harassment and violations of their right to life⁶⁵.

Three main commitments should be implemented under CEDAW agreement: the first commitment is that the

64 (CDDAW/C/ISR/CO/6)

65 (CDDAW/C/ISR/CO/6)

Palestinian State has to take measures to harmonize the Palestinian legislations or remove any provisions that dedicate to violence against women or tolerate with the perpetrator. The second one is that the Palestinian State should provide protection to women of GBV, through providing effective complaint mechanisms. The third commitment is to combat the prevailing ideas, stereotypes, and reactionary ideas about women, which would enhance violence against them. Therefore, PCHR presents the necessary recommendations to enhance the women's protection during the GMR, and calls upon the:

1. ICC to open an urgent investigation into crimes committed by IOF against Palestinians participating in the GMR protests.
2. Human Rights Council and High Contracting Parties of international conventions, especially the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, to follow up and reveal the Israeli crimes and abuses committed in the GMR protests and clarify its devastating impact on women.
3. International community, especially the European Union (EU), to put pressure on Israel to stop its crimes and violations committed against Palestinian civilians participating in the GMR protests.
4. International community to put pressure on Israel to lift the closure imposed on the Gaza Strip, facilitate the travel of those injured and allow the entry of medicines needed for their treatment.
5. International non-governmental organizations to exert more efforts in monitoring and revealing the Israeli crimes committed against Palestinian civilians participating in the GMR protests, and showings its effects on the Palestinian women.
6. Authorities in the Gaza Strip to form social committees to follow up the health, material and social problems resulted from the death and the injury of some participants in the GMR protests.
7. Authorities in the Gaza Strip to provide effective protection mechanisms for women from violence, and not tolerate domestic violence committed against them.
8. Ministry of Health to provide treatment needed for those injured in the GMR protests in order to reduce the

costs of treatment, which women usually bear.

9. Authorities in the Gaza Strip to provide financial assistance for citizens, who live in border areas and have agricultural lands there, in order to protect them from the negative impacts of violence committed by IOF in these areas, to enable them to enjoy their privacy and to protect their properties as thousands of Palestinian protestors flocked to the areas of their residence and work.
10. Civil society organizations (CSOs), especially media and human rights organizations, to raise and enhance awareness of women's political participation in the society, on equal terms with men and without any discrimination.



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Annex: Questions posed by PCHR to the report's targeted group**Form (1)****Injured women**

Name:

Age:

Marital status:

Number of children: Males Females

Economic status:

Work:

Address:

1. What is the nature and type of injury? (wound location, did it cause a temporary or permanent disability, the healing time, did it leave a scar, etc.)
2. Did she receive adequate health care, physical and mental?
3. Did she get the necessary rest and nutrition?
4. Was there any objection to receiving medical care from male nurses or physicians? Was she discharged from the hospital before healing completely for that reason?
5. Was she blamed by her family for her injury? What was its mental cost? (humiliation, talk about losing the ability to get married)
6. Did the injury result in family and social harm? (divorce, explosion from the house, break-up, abuse to the mother, etc.)
7. Did the injury affect income? How did she adapt?
8. Were you forced to participate at GMR?
9. Did anyone ban you from attending GMR, was your participation conditioned?
10. Where can a woman go if subjected to any of the above-mentioned problems, official or unofficial bodies? Was there an intervention and how? If she did not resort to any entity, why?

Form (2)**Widows**

Name:

Age:

Marital status:

Number of children: Males Females

Economic status:

Work:

Address:

1. What is the nature of the injury that the husband suffers, and whether it caused death directly? (Injury type in brief, and the duration between the injury and death)
2. Did the woman incur any health care expenses for the husband before his death? And how did she cover those expenses?
3. Did the death of the husband led to cut the household income? How did the widow deal with it?
4. Did the wife deprive of inheritance after the death of her husband?
5. Has the wife's pension been paid, and how is the pension distributed and spent?
6. How the husband's family acted with her? and were there attempts to expel her from the house or did they expel her already?
7. Did the wife deprive of her children custody?
8. Did the widow forced (or attempted) to marry a relative of her husband?
9. What are the psychological effects of losing the husband? Did she receive psychological care?
10. What is the daughter's psychological and financial impact of losing their father? Such as opportunities that will be lost or experiencing psychological trauma that led to a change in personality, or that led to early marriage? (Expand on this question)
11. What are the other family problems that the woman faced?
12. Where should she turn to when she encountered the abovementioned problems, official or unofficial bodies? Did they intervene and how? If she did not resort to any side, why?

Form (3)**Women whose Husbands Wounded**

Name:

Age:

Marital status:

Number of children: Males Females

Socioeconomic status:

Occupation:

Place of residence:

1. What is the nature of the injury suffered by the husband, and did it cause temporary or permanent disability? (Type of injury, nature of disability, and did it lead to loss or disruption of work).
2. Is the wife providing health care to her husband during his injury?
3. Did the woman incur any medical expenses to care for her husband, and how did she get them?
4. Did the husband's injury lead to income outage? How did the wife behave?
5. Has the husband's treatment of his wife changed after the injury? (Losing control over his emotions.)
6. Has the family received any assistance or compensation for the injury?
7. How did the husband's family deal with her, and was the husband's injury used in any way to harm her?
8. What are the psychological effects of the husband's injury? Did the woman receive psychological care?
9. Did the woman experience other family problems?
10. Did the woman resort to official or unofficial bodies when she experienced the problems mentioned above? Did they intervene or not? If she did not resort to any bodies, why?

Form (4)**Women lost one of their sons**

Name:

Age:

Marital status:

Number of children: Males Females

Socioeconomic status:

Occupation:

Place of residence:

1. What is the nature of the son's injury, and did it lead to death directly? (The type of injury briefly, and the time between it and death)
2. Did the woman incur any medical expenses to care for her son, and how did she get them?
3. Did the son's death lead to income outage? How did her mother behave?
4. Was the wife deprived of inheritance after her son's death?
5. Was a pension paid to the mother, and how is this pension distributed?
6. How did the husband deal with his son's death and did he blame his wife? (Abuse, divorce, expulsion)
7. What are the psychological effects of the son's death? Did the woman receive psychological care?
8. Did the woman experience other family problems?
9. Did the woman resort to official or unofficial bodies when she experienced the problems mentioned above? Did they intervene or not? If she did not resort to any bodies, why?

Form (5)**Women that Have Inured Sons**

Name:

Age:

Marital status:

Number of children: Males Females

Socioeconomic status:

Work:

1. What kind of injury you son have, and did it cause a temporary or permanent disability? (Type of injury, nature of disability, and whether it led to losing or disruption of work)
2. Did the wife take care of her son's health during his injury? (Clarify the suffering resulting for that)
3. Did the woman paid any health expenses for her son or contributed to providing it? (Selling jewelry, borrowing money, begging, and so on...)
4. Did the son's injury led to suspending the income? And what did the mother do?
5. Did the son change his treatment for his mother after his injury? (Did he vent anger on his mother)
6. Did the family receive any aid or compensations for the injury?
7. How did the husband treated his wife and did he hold her responsible for the son's participation? (Divorce, expulsion, abuse)
8. What are the psychological effects resulting from the son's injury? And did he receive a psychological care?
9. What are other family problems did the mother face?
10. To whom did the mother resort to when facing the abovementioned problems, official or unofficial authorities? Was there any intervention? And if she did not resort to anyone, why?

Form (6)**Women Work or Live in Areas adjacent to the GMR**

Name:

Age:

Marital status:

Number of children: Males Females

Socioeconomic status:

Work:

Place of residence:

1. Do you participate in the GMR? Did you set conditions on you participation? (Having a male with you when participating) and if you did not participate, were you prevented from participation?
2. Did the GMR led to losing the family's source of income? How did that affect the woman? (Inability to reach agricultural land for example)
3. Did the GMR make you lose control of your children? (If you were living in areas adjacent to the GMR protests)
4. Did the GMR add additional burdens in the housework? (If you were living in the area adjacent to the GMR protests)
5. Have you been verbally abused by the GMR participants?
6. Have you been exposed to any form of sexual harassment by the GMR participants? (Touching, sexual gestures, or suggestive signals)
7. Have you been prevented by the house owner from leaving the house or reaching the workplace in the area adjacent to the GMR protests due to the spread of men in that area?
8. Did the woman take special security measures in the house since the start of the GMR, which made her bear additional burdens? (If she was living in the areas adjacent to the GMR)
9. Were you attacked in any means by the police or authorities organizing the GMR? (Verbal, psychological, or sexual abuse)
10. To whom did the woman resort to when facing the abovementioned problems, official or unofficial authorities? Was there any intervention? And if she did not resort to anyone, why?