

Israeli Occupation Violence Against Palestinian Women in Gaza Strip

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**Woman security can't be achieved
only in a safe society, and safe society
can't be achieved under occupation
and in the absence of democracy.**

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Executive Summary

Wessal Network in cooperation with CFTA and with donation from OSI is implementing a project “Protection of Women and Girls”, this project aims to achieve number of specific objectives, including highlighting issues related to women protection, raise awareness and advocacy related to violence resulting from Israeli occupation, and involve women who are victims of violence. The project also aims to build women’s capacities with required tools and skills to launch their own campaign, and promote their creative tools to pressure and defend their cases locally and regionally. Within the framework of the implementation this project, mapping activities had been proposed about violence resulted from occupation against women and girls in Gaza. CFTA conducted this survey to present women views on the issues of violence related to Israeli occupation in the period from 2000 till 2012. Several focus groups discussions and different research methods had been conducted to collect the information from the victims.

Women in the Palestinian society suffering from Israeli occupation and the conservative patriarchal society. The negative consequences resulting from Israeli occupation intersect with conservative patriarchal society in Palestine. The relation between occupation and other problem such as gender based violence, increasing poverty, instability under sever living conditions that leads to psycho pressure on households and extended families.

The study focused on the roles and responsibilities of families and additional burden roles on women as a result of Israeli attacks as killing, wounded, and homes demolitions, arrests, borders, limits of movements, and prevent reunification of families, and other barbaric practices against women and their families. Women talked about family relations and their roles to face the different forms of Israeli violence.

One of the most important recommendations monitored by the study is the need for awareness and educational interventions for women, in addition to urgent and focused psychological interventions to help them to express their views and discharge pressure they exposed due to the occupational violence. The study recommends on the importance of organizing media campaign in the aim of disclose the occupation crimes and reveal all kinds of violence resulted from the occupation.

1- Introduction:

Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) forced Palestinian women since 1948 to live a different life from the rest of the women in the world. Palestinian women living inside Palestine and outside in diaspora forced to live with Israeli constraints on their movement and their access to health and education facilities. The IOF turned Palestinians to refugees living under conditions they did not use to, loaded with heavy burdens and responsibilities that overweight her ability and capacity of absorption. Women in Gaza are suffering from IOF since 1948 which intensified during the first Intifada in 1987 and the second Intifada in 2000 till now. IOF imposed policy of closure and continuous siege to Gaza Strip as practice method through controlling borders and prevent free travel to get education, and medical treatment. This made the situation getting worse day by day, as the violence of IOF in all its policies lead to expansion of violence and poverty which reflected directly on the situation of women and their children. This situation increased the negative effects on women, especially the social, economic, and psychological conditions. According to the international law there is multiple definition of violence by the occupational forces and criminal acts of the occupier. The study cited several definitions in UN council resolutions and international conventions, not only the definition of violence against women as a result of occupation as murder, detention, corporal punishment, mutilation but also any other measure such as siege, restriction of public freedom, mobility, and prevention of families reunification. The study addresses the suffering of Palestinian women from the abuses committed by the IOF as killing the innocents, house destruction and land confiscation. IOF denied basic rights of the Palestinian women to access education, health care and healthy environment. Add to that using her to practice a pressure on her husband, son, and brother who are affiliated with the national resistant movement.

Palestinian women as well as being a mother, wife and sister in a society suffer daily because of the occupation neglect the morals, custom, and law. Palestinian women are playing many roles as mother taking care of her children, playing her domestic role, political role and educational role, and from suffering she became stronger and more empowered. In her difficult daily life with demolished house, confiscated land, sick child, prisoned husband, martyr father, sieged cities, she planted flowers of hope and resistance, and knee to participate effectively in the political, social, and cultural life. The Israeli occupation authorities tightened the procedures siege imposed on Gaza since 2007, and turned Gaza to a large prison in which all population imprisoned, and the economy is strangled. The negative effects of this are affecting every aspects of the Palestinian women lives of these women a unique model different from other worldwide, a model harder and harder, mixed as the rest of women to turn back her robbed rights by her struggle against IOF. This study documented many cases of victims and their families to show the effects caused by the violence resulting from crimes of IOF on the situation of Gaza women.

2- Research Problem

Palestinian women lived all or most their lives under Israeli occupation, and faced a challenge in establishing their rights as Palestinians living under IOF who controls every aspect of their lives, lives for decades under guns of Israeli occupation, that dramatically limited the opportunity of development. Palestinian people and increase violence and discrimination against Palestinian women¹. Women in Gaza Strip are suffering from direct and indirect IOF's violations, represented in killing, injury, detention, home demolition, and frequent military incursions.

3- Study Questions:

The IOF's policy of continued siege and closure as a collective punishment through the controlling borders and prevent freedom of travel, education, and medical treatment which is reflected negatively on social, economic, and psychological situations of Gaza's population in general and women in particular: The following are the main questions for this study:

1. To what extent Gaza women are suffering from repeated IOF's aggressions, and whether the family lost one of its members because of siege and aggression, and how this impact on the rest of the family and the roles among the family members?
2. To what extent Gaza women or any member of her family are suffering from injury or disability caused by IOF. How women responsibilities changed to take care of those disabled members?
3. What is the impact of family displacement and houses demolition caused by IOF. Where these families are living, and who is responsible of reconstruction of the house? The effect of demolished houses (partially or completely) on the family relations and the role of women inside the house? And the impact of moving to a temporary house on the size and form of violence against women?
4. The impact of arresting one of her family? What are the new responsibilities according to that?
5. What is the impact of Israeli blockade on women, and how this affected receiving basic services (water, electricity, and health) and how women adapted with that? How women deal with economic blockade. And the impact of electrical cut because of the occupation bombarding to electrical power plant in Gaza and preventing of fuel on the reality of families specifically women?
6. How the unemployed Palestinian workers affected lives of Gazan women? and what is the impact on family relationships and roles between the head of family, and their children? Is domestic violence increased and how? How families face the poverty and unemployment? Does the family receive any assistant, if yes, how this assistant is distributed.
7. The impact of Israeli violations on the Palestinian families in terms early marriage, divorce, and the denial of women basic needs as (food, drink, clothes, medication and education). How have the Israeli practices (occupation, war, invasions, bombardment, closure, prevention of travel, prevent prisoners families to visit them, prevent family reunification and other oppressive measure) on the psychology of women. What are the difficulties women faced with regard to health care and treatment abroad? How women deal with these difficulties? And what is the impact (direct and indirect) of the occupation on women with chronic diseases.
8. The ability of media to document occupational crimes against women, children, properties and livelihoods.

¹-Human Rights and Democracy Center (2012). Press release by the center for human Rights media and Democracy (Shams) in the international day for eliminating the violence against women 25/10/11/.

4- Aims of the study:

The study aims to:

1. Highlight women suffering in Gaza Strip as a result of continuous IOF's attacks since the year 2000, and provide a clear picture of the impact on the Palestinian women economic, and social situations. Raise awareness of violence resulting from Israeli occupation.
2. Identify forms and effects of violence against women resulting by Israeli occupation violations. Shed light on other burdens incurred by the Palestinian women of additional responsibilities to their families and their children.
3. The impact of IOF crimes against Palestinian women in Gaza.

5- Methodology:

This study targeted women who are subjected to violence direct and indirect due to the continues violations of the IOF since 2000 in Gaza Strip. Therefore the study adopted a participatory research methodology covering the full scope including direct and indirect causes, and problems that reflect the situations of women and the effects of violence against them as a result of this occupation.

Literature review, conducting various focus groups with women from different places of Gaza governorates and direct meetings with experts in women issues are methods used in this study. The research team visited number of women and human rights institutions in order to obtain relevant documents and studies on women. Documents were obtained via internet. All gathered information were examined and classified according to the aim if the study; so we will review during the next part of this chapter literature by:



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Part 1: Literature Review

The Situation of Women in Gaza Strip

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1.1 Introduction:

The social, political, and economic situation that Gaza population suffered and still, especially after the imposition of Israeli blockade on Gaza since Sep. 2007 which has contributed seriously in the deteriorating of human rights situation in Gaza especially economic, social, and cultural rights. This deterioration threw a dark shadow over the lives of Palestinian women in Gaza, and increase burdens on her, and reaches the disaster especially after the war against Gaza on Dec. 2008 till Jan. 2009, according to statistics from Al Mezan for Human Rights Center, 110 women and 335 children were killed by IOF. The war against Gaza that were for 22 days led to displacement of 107330 of the population living in these homes.²

²- AL-Mezan for Human Right center 2009

1.2 International Conventions:

International conventions that issued from UN and International organizations criminalizing violence resulting from the occupation such as

- UN resolution 1325 that issued from UN Security Council³
- The Fourth Geneva convention⁴
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- The Universal Declaration Against all Forms of Violence against Women CEDAW.

The data on the phenomenon of violence in Palestinian society are inadequate in terms of quality and quantity; for example available quantitative data on domestic violence through the survey that was conducted by Central Bureau of Statistics PCBC in 2005, there is not enough data to indicate the forms of violence against women as a result of occupation. There have been many studies that dealt with violence against women as a result of occupation as:

1.3 Socioeconomic situation of women in Gaza

Following the imposed siege on 2007 the socioeconomic situation had been deteriorated dramatically. This deterioration is obvious in social, psychological, economic and human rights. More than 110 women had been killed by IOF during the war on Gaza 2008-2009 where 763 houses had been totally destroyed and more than 10356 houses had been partially destroyed. This situation reflected on the socioeconomic situation of women in Gaza.

1.4 Israeli Violations – Facts & Events:

There are 4550 Palestinian prisoners detained by Israeli occupation forces (10.3%) of them are from Gaza Strip, still there are 6 female prisoners captive the oldest one is Leena Aljarboni from territories occupied in 1948 and detained for more than 10 years in the prison.⁵ It is not doubted that women and children are the most weak in crisis and infighting, but people are sometimes they are used as a tool of pressure, a study from WAC (Women Affairs Center) in 2008 shows that the political conciliation affected every Palestinian family, and left negative effects on the family social relations, but cracks in relations with social network with friends, and neighbors, and this reflected on the Palestinian women to become more vulnerable to domestic violence and threat of social community from all parties, also a result of a mess left by political and security situation in Gaza.⁶

A study done by Ministry of Women Affairs (MOWA) in 2012 about the impact of Israeli occupation on the reality of Palestinian women, confirmed that Israeli attacks increased violence against women in the community due to psychological pressure that men received on borders and crossings or as a result of unemployment.

Another study that was prepared by Center of Media and Information of Palestinian Women about the reality of violence against women in 2009, Israeli occupation authorities exercise all forms of violations against women as physical, psychological, economical, legal, social, political, and cultural.

In a study conducted by Ibrahim Abu - Lughod Institute for Strategic Studies in 2008 confirmed that if the women are not killed during the armed conflict, the suffering that she is very huge.

3- UN Security Council Resolution No. 1225 dated 31/2000/10/

4- The Fourth Geneva Convention issued on 1949 with its protocols and be in active 21/1950/10/

5- The International Human Rights declaration authenticated by the General assembly of UN on 10/1948/12/

6- The International Declaration on eliminated the violence against women No. 48/104/ by the General assembly of UN on 20/1993/01/

Another study for MOWA in 2009 within the submitted national report to Beijing+15 conference and immediately after the war against Gaza, confirms that the war was too harsh as a result of destruction homes, and destruction of water and electricity networks, placing a heavy burden on women in taking care of their children.

A study of the General Union of Palestinian Women in 2011 on the impact of colonial violence against Palestinian women confirms that the last Israeli war against Gaza Strip led to the destruction and damage to more than 763 homes headed by women, and completely or partially destroyed 107330 homes headed by men, and war against Gaza that was not exceed more than 22 days to displacement of 107330 of the habitants of these homes.



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Part 2: Violence as
a result of occupation according
to International Law

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2.1 Introduction:

Humanitarian International Law and International conventions addressed violence against women as a result of occupation and conflict resolution.

The following is a review of the most important decisions and international conventions of violence against women:

2.2 Resolution No. 1325 issued by UN Security Council:

According to the definition of resolution no. 1325 issued by the UN Security Council that civilians, particularly women and children represent the majority of adversely affected by armed conflict including describing them as refugee and internally displaced, and increasingly are the target of combatants and armed conflict. The resolution stresses the responsibility of all states to put an end to impunity and prosecute those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. Including those relating to what women and girls faces of sexual violence and other forms of violence, in this regard confirms the need to exclude these crimes from amnesty provisions and relevant legislations where possible.

2.3 The Fourth Geneva Convention:

This convention is specialized on the protection of civilians especially women in the event of armed conflict, emphasize that protected persons in all circumstances, to respect for their persons and honor, their family rights, their religious convictions, their customs, and traditions. And should be treated all times humanely, and should be protected especially against all acts of violence or threatened, and against insults and public curiosity.

2.4 International Declaration against All Forms of Violence against Women:

According to the Universal Declaration of all forms of violence against women there are multiple definitions of violence because of occupation, violence is any aggression against women based on sex, and which cause an injury or pain physical, sexual, or psychological for women, and includes the threats of attacks, or pressure, or attacks or arbitrary deprivation of freedoms whether within private or public life¹ according to the convention on the elimination all forms of discrimination against women that said violence against women includes acts that inflict harm and suffering physically, mentally, or sexually, and threats of such acts and other deprivation of liberty.²

2.5 International Declaration of Human Rights:

The convention issued on a group of principles which constitute the pillars of women's health rights, these principles include the following: everyone has the right to life, liberty, and personal security, and establish these premises to a wide range of rights (civil, political, economic, social, cultural, and health), include the right to social security and employment, equal pay, education, and standard of living provides access to health services, cultural, and recreational. This International declaration is part of the international legitimacy that have different relationship to women's rights including the right to health, the Israeli occupation intensified its repressive practices against all Palestinians after explosion of Al Aqsa Intifada. And follow deep methodology of land confiscation, property, killing, and displacement to the point to go to war against unarmed people in Gaza especially women and children,



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Part3: Events & Facts

Gaza women witnesses

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3.1 Introduction:

This part of the study handle different forms of occupational violence that women faced in Gaza as a result of Israeli repeated and continuous attacks since the year 1998, and increased after 2000. The Israeli occupation authorities practiced all forms of violence against women, represented in physical, psychological, sexual, economical, legal, political and cultural. This part consists of impacts of attacks on families in general and women in particular. This section focuses on the testimonies of women through their participation in a focus group discussion in the period between Julys to August 2012. So Israeli attacks were classified to forms as:

1. Indirect killing of women and their families.
2. Injury and disability to women and their family members.
3. Detention for women or family members.
4. House demolitions and land leveling.

3.2 Vulnerability of women and their family members to direct killing:

IOF are using excessive military power that killed more than 5112 Palestinian martyrs during the period since the beginning of second Intifada in July 2000 till the end of 2011 nearly 8% of them are women. The women witnessed the death of their family members by IOF. The recent Israeli war in January 2009 against civilians in Gaza are the most sever, where the total number of martyrs of Israeli war was 1410 Palestinians, 110 of them are women and girls, also 110 women were killed in Gaza as a result of attacks by the invasions and bombing in the period of January to November 2008.

Results of a study for Hadeel Gazaz in (2005) about violence one out of every five of women in Gaza suffered direct harm in money and lives as a result of Israeli attacks. Also three of four women were be victims of fear and terror because of Israeli attacks in the past years.

Frame (1) A mother lost one of her sons and take care her family members.

I am a mother of a martyr and my husband divorced me before my son killed by IOF at the age of 17 years, he was martyred by a shot while playing with my nephews in 2004, they were in the school and it was the first day of the mid-year holiday, playing in the land I rented from my son to cultivate after an agreement to divide earnings between me and my son (owner), when my husband divorced me I cultivate the land me and my son, my son waits beside the water well to reveal on the strawberry for irrigation, as we have consolation to one of our family, my son told me to go and I will irrigate the plants then I will follow you, I went on the morning to the consolation and as I was there I heard bombs in the area beside the water well, I heard people saying the sons of Azara martyred, I said my son with them as he was beside water well, Thanks Godwhat can I say. After that the money that dedicated to martyrs family his father took them, and after I went to the court they ruled me to have 190 Shekels every 3 months, I donated a greenhouse from Tatweer association for me I work with it, and later my son decided to build a house instead and noted on his name, and left for girls quarter acres. (lady from BeitLahia)

The loss of the main breadwinner of the family made the women between overnight breadwinners for their families, in which number of women headed houses raised, another thing is to deal with the loss as it is a result of violence of occupation, some family members may have seen the direct destruction and martyrdom. A lot of women mentioned in the held focus groups mentioned that the father, husband, or son was a source of protection for women and losing him means to lose the protection as this enshrined in the society culture, and women is an individual associated with physical and psychological presence of man, and his presence at her side is the source of her protection. So most of the women included in this survey are suffering from psychological problems, in addition to escalation hatred and non-acceptance of the others, and orientation of isolation, depression, and the break of family relationships.

Frame (2) a woman lost her son

We are in the line of Kosofeem east of Asalga valley, my son heard bombing and escaped out of the house as I was in the bathroom, as I went out of the door he was shot and killed in his head, people hold him to rescue, at the moment I can't go out of the house because of severe shelling and bullets on the door of the house, when I tried to go out of the house I saw the red bullet on the door my response is to go inside. At last I decided to go out never matter of what will happen, as I went out I surprise as I saw the blood of my son in front of me on the door, at the moment I knew that my son was martyred. (Lady from WadiAsalKa)

The direct killings led to many social and psychological phenomena, which greatly affected the lives of women. Women who shared in the focus groups mentioned the social and psychological problems that followed the death of their family members. Some of them forced to work to provide the needs of their family members, or frequently visited relief and social institutions to ask for a help to their families, another were forced to marry one of their husband's brother after his martyrdom in a short period.

Frame (3) a lady forced to marry the brother of her passed husband

I married my husband's brother after the martyrdom of my husband, till now I suffered from epileptic and the salary of the martyr in the bank for the son use till now. (lady from North BeitLahia)

It is true that the Israeli actions impacted negatively on the total of Palestinian people, but had more severe impact on the border areas in general and women in particular. Where the percentage of families living under the poverty threshold is raised, and females headed houses are poorer. These have led the inability of these families to provide livelihood. And at the same time additional responsibilities lay on the burden of women shoulders as a result of the loss of the head or breadwinner of their family. These conditions make the possibility of freedom of the control of the family very complex especially if they contradicted her political, economic, and social activity.

Frame (4) Women suffering living in the boarder areas

My daughter martyred at the first day of the war, we live near the borders, there was heavy shelling and military airplanes in the sky, an airplane shot our region with 6 rockets I a desert land, and we were in the house when we went out children shouted (Pilot hit), a seventh rocket on our house door as my daughter was on the door, she was shot on her shoulder and martyred at the moment at the age 22 years, all of us escaped and took the daughter to Al Aqsa hospital, but she martyred. As a result of that my oldest son suffered psychological of what he saw and what he saw of his sister accident (she was good and affectionate), after eight months of ending the war fighters shot rockets on the Israeli soldiers, at the moment Israeli soldiers shot on them, rockets fall on our house my son injured and a daughter of his uncle martyred. (lady from Al Buraij camp)

3.3 Women's injury or disability caused by IOF:

Statistics from the Ministry of Health in Gaza MoH indicates that 24698 persons from all Gaza governorates were injured since 2000 till the end of 2011, 11% of those were girls and women. This great number of injuries confirms the result of HadeelGazaz study in 2005, that insures that one of every five women suffered direct harm by the occupation represents the injury of life.

Frame (5) Daily injuries among residents of border areas

I was in the border area in Al Atatra and the IOF's tank was above us and we were shot in house, on the door of the house my husband's brother and two sons were injured, they said go to school, but to live in schools is very difficult, so we went to my sister in law house, then transfer to schools, but my husband can't live there and go back to my sister in law, there was no water, no cooking stove, our children bought potable water from the shop, my son feel afraid and suffered psychological condition, began vomiting, they decided to make medical operation to him. And my other son who took us to the hospital went back to our home to regain our things; he was shot while trying to pull a cow from our farm. (Lady from BeitLahia village – Atatra area)

3.4 Women or one of their family members arrested in IOF jails

Through the years 2000 – 2011, 97 women were imprisoned in Israeli jails, 4 of them from Gaza Strip. But after a prison exchange deal in 2011, Israeli authorities kept 6 of prisoners from West bank and Jerusalem and the occupied territories in 1948. Through the period of their prisoning they suffered a lot of torture and deprivation and prison them inhumane conditions and threatening violation their symptoms, exposed them to strip searched, and denial of visiting families.

There are many painful incidents that have occurred for women during prisoning, many of them gave birth as they handcuffed and legs and keep their babies birth in the prison. Despite being exposed to different kinds of suffering captivity, they are proud of being defenders for getting freedom, and share in the man in the battle for the struggle of liberation in order to free from the occupation slavery.

The IOF prevent prevented residents of Gaza from visiting their relatives at IOF prisons since 2007, due to hunger strike of those prisoners in 2012 for 2 months, where Israeli authorities relented to the prisoners' demands to end the isolation and allowed prisoners visits and put an end to what so-called administrative detention. And allowed a limited number of families for visit most of them are women. And this added to the burden of women as visiting prisoners is exhausted process pass to multiple checkpoints that is humiliating to human dignity and exposed to insults at the crossing of Israeli soldiers, travel long distances up to hundreds of kilometers to reach the places of the prisons of their sons. In a painful accident as Waed society documented that Aisha Islieh (72 years) from Khan Younis died while she was in her way to visit her arrested son since 5 years as she was deprived to visit since his arrest, as he was convicted for 12 years, this elderly mother was eager to see her son but she dies inside the bus.

3.5 Confiscation the right to stay and family reunification

The relationship between members of the same family are affected by many social, economic, cultural, political, and environmental factors connected with productive and social roles of men and women, one of the most challenges faced the family members connected with freedom of mobility whether inside or outside the opt, In case of limitation of women's mobility – despite its limitation – internal mobility in the place where she lives, or external forced mobility to get health services for her or for a family member, as a result to restrict their freedom of movement challenges emerged such as social and spatial networking between one family and with relatives. And because of the siege and closure imposed on Gaza since 2000, there are number of women who are from West bank or Jerusalem who married in Gaza and can't be able to visit their families, and this affected those women as some of them their parents died without seeing them, another feel powerless as she faced any problem with her husband as she can't find a family to intervene to solve the problem this leads her to accept the status without the ability to change. On the other side there are women from Gaza who married in West Bank and can't visit their families since more than ten years because of the prevention of occupation to have permits for that. Israeli procedures to prevent reunification of families is a serious violation of human rights and international connections, many families are dispersed among Gaza and abroad the country as they can't have identity card to travel or to come back to their country. Many woman indicated that applications for many families reunifications takes very long time exceed ten years, the occupation authorities issued limited lists of approved applications as one women in focus group said that her brother had obtained the approval of reunification after his death five years later.

As a result of restriction of their freedom of movement, ether challenges appeared as social and spatial between family members and the relatives.

Frame (6) Preventing family visits between Gaza, Jerusalem and West Bank

My family is in West Bank and I can't visit them since 15 years, every year I try to get a permission from IOF but it was rejects, I go to human rights organizations, but nothing happened, and I am waiting Gogwill help me. (lady from Rafah)

Frame (7) Prevent freedom of movement and travel

Number of women from Jerusalem were married in Gaza, those women prevented o visit their families more than 10 years, and if they want to visit they go with a permit of limited period, and if this permit date is expired, her Jerusalem identity will withdraw her Jerusalem identity or prevent her prevented to go to her family, another go to Erz boarder many times to have meetings to get a permit and come back without nothing. The final decision to prevent Gazan families from living in WB, in this case a lot of people who escaped from Hamas referring to security issue can't have their families with to live with them there. (Nadia Abu Nahleh from WATC - Gaza)



4.1 Introduction:

According to women's testimonies there are many impacts results by the IOF violations, however the imposed blockade by the IOF impacts are mentioned below:

- Death, if not severe injuries, to family members who worked in the tunnels between Gaza and Egypt resulted by the economic pressure due to blockade and unemployment caused by the IOF collective punishments.
- Death during alternative power supply usage due to disability of the partially destroyed electric generation company.
- Suicide cases due to the invincible circumstances surrounded by poverty and unemployment.
- Random killing in unclear circumstances due to misuse of weapons.
- Women's killing or their health deterioration after being not allowed by IOF to reach medical healthcare centers.

Women bear serious psychological pressure and stress since their beloved joined the tunnels business out of being anxious after them. Tunnels construction killed 188 people including 18 kids.

Frame (8) A woman's suffering referring to loss of her beloved work in the tunnels:

*My children went to join the tunnels due the poverty we face (a woman from Rafah).
My son fell down in the tunnel, he had his leg fractured and can't work now. He failed in the high school; this is why he joined the tunnels for 30 Shekels a day. He works at night. I swear his life was saved twice; two of his colleagues died (a woman from Rafah).*

Woman's suffering in the period 2000-2005; especially with the check points in Gaza governances intensifies the daily suffering for women. Some of them give birth on the check points, other women passed away on the check points while transported to the hospital. These cases have been always memorized and reflect psychological suffering every time they flash back with their diaries.

Frame (9) Giving birth and death on the checkpoints for 2000-2005:

*I gave birth on the check point with help of my mother-in-law; my son died immediately (a woman form ALMAWASI).
My sister died on ABO HOLI check point while returning, none knew about her neither attended her death ceremonies (a woman form ALMAWASI).*

4.2 Bearing the burden of the injured family members:

The Palestinian woman had beard additional burden by taking care of their injured family members, specially the handicaps members where women spoke about the severe suffering around the clock including managing the needs of their injured beloved. Their priorities have been changed just by having a handicap at home.

The participating women in the study assured that the financial compensation they get is not enough for their daily expenses. They reported that they denied working or getting married in order to take care of their injured beloved at home.

The woman's role in taking care of the injured MALES of their families exceeds the man's role; it is not limited to securing the food and cloths only but involves escorting them to the healthcare centers and providing the psychological support for them.

Frame (10) the doubled suffering for mothers- terrifying stories:

*My son was trying to affix the flag, he fell down on the electricity wire, now he is left with no ends. I am serving him around the clock (a woman from Northern Gaza).
My son of 27 was injured during KARNI crossing; I paid 1500 Shiekels for medical surgeries; now is jobless and cannot afford getting married. His younger brother flied a kite on the roof along with his cousin; they were hit during the attacks, now they are without ends too. He does not receive any financial compensation. I can neither walk with him neither escorts him from the third floor for going out. My daughter is ill; she devoted herself for serving her brother (A woman from eastern Gaza).
Known that women are the weakest in the society; meaning that they are the handy supporting hands when it is a disaster at home, it is women's' responsibility to serve the ages, injured and handicaps at our society while they are ignored if they are the people in need, simply they would be expelled a side, their husbands would marry over them (Mrs.Nadia Abu Nahla, WAC Staff manager).
My daughter was shocked during the war resulting impair at her legs nerves. She can neither walk nor sit on the chair. We need private car every single time we move around since we live in the buffer zone. Now she and I suffer, being impaired hinders her marriage also(a woman from ALBURAIJ camp).*

In general, the Israeli occupation lead to holistic reliance on the family support including relatives, it also empowered the family authorization to women; it enhanced their reproductive role- especially makes- as a form of the future security. That adds to the home responsibilities burden on women appearing in the large family form under the less secured family.

This acts burdens women; they encounter complicated status of violence which is resulted from the Israeli occupation, family violence and the inherited traditions socially. These components were strengthened in the political, social, economic and cultural structure along the decades.

4.3 Women ruining and houses demolition during the Israeli violations:

Resulted of the recent war on Gaza in December 2008- January 2009 by the IOF killing machine, numerous number of women encountered complicated sufferings where they lost all their properties and houses which contain more than a family generally. Apparently families seek shelter in their relative's houses or renting house paid by their limited budget. Some families moved to live temporarily on many jumps during the past four years.

Family violence had increased between the families whom lost their houses. Families' moves to rent houses or accompanied by relatives that lead to many negative social practices which eventually influence the psychological situation. Most of the participating women in the study reported that there are large differences in their daily life after they lost their house. Some of them subjected to family violence in its different forms by the husband, the father and the husband's family. Some also subjected to psychological problems caused by the psychological pressure during the past four years. Some other segment of women lost their savings and belongings even some have been fatigued seeking the helping charity organizations which are expected to reconstruct their houses. They long a miracle from the sky.

Frame (11) Ruining statues hit the homeless women:

*I moved my house seven times. I rented an apartment paying 700 shekels for the first month then I could not afford paying later then I moved to my mother-in-law's house for 14 months, they did not bear us anymore. Problems were generated with my brother-in-law forcing us to move to my husband's aunt's house. We had access for a single room of 3m*3m dimension with common restroom. I broke down nervously and they transferred me to a hospital. My husband wanted to return to the demolished house, we applied for shelter from ALRAHMA committee; they provided us only walls.*

Now I live in a metal tent since 20 months without the basic facility of tiles; we have hard time in winter and summer facing scorching sun and extreme coldness. Our papers were also lost in the demolished house; after I managed to find my ID copy I could restore the property registrations. My husband is a poor man, we together thrive for living (A woman from Gaza).

In return of additional burdens on women which caused of houses destruction the women suffered of deprivation from participating in decision making at the community level and the family frame as well.

Frame (12) complicated suffering for women:

When my house was destroyed and stayed in a store for 3 years I fell tired and in trouble impacting losing my husband to another wife. My husband used to pay the store rent which did not have any livable privileges. No air vents, no sun rays even. My husband used to pay my brothers in law the rest of their rent amount too. My youngest son suffers from health problems and weakness in bones due to the lack of sun and fresh air for the two years after birth period. These three years were very painful (a women from ALBURAIJ camp)

Mrs. Nadia Abu Nahla (Women affair center staff manager) in Gaza mentioned the pain of four thousand families in JOHR ALDIEK village only without shelter during the war since 2009. Those families became disputed travelling from a place to another.

It has been a major rapture for the family caused diffusion between the family members to many places. Some of them force their wives and brothers to live in tents for 6 months to avoid losing the right of return or rebuilding their destroyed houses.

Many of the families rejoined their extended families houses which do not have space except for a small family, apparently the women powers were captivated by their seniors and they got deprived of practicing their roles which they used when they were on their own. Eventually they could not make their decisions in eating, dressing up and moving freely.

The frame (13) the psychological impact of house destructions and agro-land bulldozing:

We had olive trees yard, goats and bees cells around our houses before it was shelled. The house was burned. Bulldozers demolished the trees and the bee cells. It affected us psychologically and economically. My husband turned to a nervous man with short temper picks fight every time. (a women from ALBURAIJ camp)

Some of the families were forced to leave their houses after their husbands were killed by IOF, returning to the former house which they used to live in before marriage. That is because they were subjected to extort by their husbands' relatives who be responsible for their children and the financial compensation too.

Frame (14) the compound loss and its consequences:

Women lost houses and husbands in ALSAMMONI and AL-ATATRA areas caused to be more aggressive. Apart of those women returned to their husbands' former houses to live with no right of keeping their babies. We received cases during the war such as wives kicked off the house right after their husbands martyred and they were deprived of the financial compensation too. (Mrs. Nadia Abu Nahla, Women Affair Center Staff manager)

4.4 Preventing women of visiting their family members at IOF's prisons:

Depriving mothers from visiting their detained sons adds a new suffering on them since most of them did not visit their beloved detained since 2007. Women participated in all of the activities for the solidarity with detainees such as sitting in weekly in front of the red cross headquarter win winter and summer where they sit in at inconvenient facility in order to show solidarity with their beloved sons. Another form of solidarity also is their practice on hunger strikes for few days leaving their houses seeking the solidarity with detainees.

4.5 Threatening women and the continues feelings of scariness:

The IOFare threatening the political prisoners by attacking their family members mainly wives. This fact has been witness in many sexual harassments on female detainees and calling their parents. During the uprising the IOF used this approach against the women and during the war on Gaza they practiced this verbal harassment against women too.

Frame (15) Permanent feeling of fear:

Once the Israeli army invaded my house when I was alone, they humiliated me and spoke in bad manners. I felt I am gone and prepared myself for death. I felt very scary (a women from DIER Albalah, WadiAlsaqqa)

4.6 Israeli occupation trials to involve Palestinians in spying activities:

The IOF used the hard economic situation for very limited number of Palestinian people including women by seeking security information from them and having them involved in spying activities.

4.7 The blockade impact on the basic services(Health-Education-Water-Electricity):

Referring to UNESCO's report in 2010, the occupation's acts contributed in retrograding the knowledge community, since the rate of joining primary schools in the oPt has been reduced from 97% in 1999 to 73% in 2007 due to the conflicts, military operations and restrictions in goods and individuals move.

Frame (16) lack of reaching the treatment and medical services:

The occupation crimes affects all life aspects according to Mr. Salah AbdAlati' The Israeli practices complicated the Palestinian life and left many negative symptoms on our daily life, on the Palestinian human specially women. Lack of the treatment and medical services caused by higher focus on treating the occupation consequent impact rather than the normal cases. The occupation demolished building and institutions. In some cases the Israeli occupation complicated the unique services in the Palestinian community.

Women also suffered the impact of the blockade, the deterioration in humanitarian situation such as medical supplies shortages, electricity shortages and the food shortages. According to the story of the participating women in the study, they confirmed that they suffer a lot from the electric supply shortage; apparently the destruction of Gaza electrical plant forced many families to search for another source for electricity mainly the generators.

Frame (17) electric power outages impact:

When I used to sleep after being tired of the day duty at home, and when the electric power resumes at night I have to use the opportunity for baking and washing. I am ill and tired, I fell down for 5 months but still I had to synchronize with the electric power supply whenever it is available (a women from the middle of Gaza Strip)

Frame (18) electric power outages impact:

I used to cancel my social visits due to the power outages; I had to utilize the electric supply in order to bake bread and wash clothes. I used to fight with my husband due to the electric power outages. We enjoy TV entertainment when it is available but with the outages it is always trouble. My husband gets very nervous. My daughter faces difficulty in breath and psychological affect when she inhales the electric generator's smokes. When we start the generator I send my daughter to our next door neighbor's house. (a lady from ALBURAIJ camp)

Frame (19) electric power outages impact:

I used to start the electric generator myself manually, It is very aggressive, I became nervous and scream out when it starts. I got pain in my spine too due to that work, my husband threatens me to get married over me if I do not show that I am well. I do not sleep properly at night, I take the side position to avoid the spine pain (a lady from ALBURAIJ camp)

Women reported that they heard about many accidents caused death by alternative power suppliers either by burning or strangling. Alternative power supplies are presented in candles, electric generators, wood or even burning the paper or plastic waste for cooking purposes.

In this field women mentioned that they endured additional burdens in looking for alternative power supplies and they commute long distance in order to buy the fuel or to fetch for wood. They are subjected to those contaminating materials and the continuous noise from operating the generators.

Frame (20) electric power outages impact:

My brother's room was completely burnt out caused by candles' fire. Luckily we could manage to avoid the massive burn for the complete house; my sister in law woke up to save the one year baby before getting strangled of the smokes. The room was burnt later. We do not use the alternative power any more. (A lady form ALBURAIJ camp).

In the period 2000-2005, the Israeli occupation meant to divide the Gaza governances into two sections on the point called 'ABO HOLI CROSSING'. During this period most of Gaza governances populations suffered from restrictions on movement, specially the people from the south. It has been for KhanYounis and Rafah residents to reach Gaza when the crossing is closed. The university female students suffered a lot from this crossing causing deprival of education, through few student had to rent apartments in Gaza city leading to higher economic burden on the family.

Frame (21) the university education for girls:

In the period (2000-2005) we had the lowest rate of female education at the universities since most of the girls used to be subjected to live away from home due to the crossing and checkpoints beside having less chances in employment at Gaza city (Mrs. Nadia Abu Nahla- WAC Manager).

The IOF imposed restrictions on travelling for men who could not accompany ill person to the hospitals in the West Bank or Jerusalem, for this reason, women had the responsibility to take over this mission and withstand the burden of travelling and residing in the hospitals beside the ill person of her family.

Frame (22) Resections on reaching the health organizations outside Gaza governances:

I gave birth for a child with congenital malformation at the heart. He was transferred to Israel for heart surgery. The doctor recommended an immediate transfer after diagnoses but it was the war on Gaza. The occupation refused transferring him with me escorting him, hi grandma had to escort him instead. She also was ill and old enough not to be able to provide help. We got a call later says that the grandma's conditions deteriorated in Israel. (a lady from ALBURAIJ Camp).

4.8 Increasing unemployment and poverty as a result of the imposed blockade and siege by the Israeli forces:

Gaza governances witness dramatic increase in the poverty since 2007 where IOF intensified the blockade policies on Gaza governances where poverty rate reached up to 50% and the individual share of the total local productions in 2010 less by 33% comparing to 1999.

According to the Gaza women, the poverty is related to the ability to cover the basic requirements of the life. It is also related to frustration and being desperate. Increasing poverty rates weakens the Palestinian families especially women where it affects the group of dimensions involve the welfare. Poverty generates lower education levels, harder living conditions, more restrictions and higher unemployment.

Most of the participating women in the study assured that a part of the direct caused for women issues in Gaza is poverty which they live in and try their best to manage it in a way they search for a

security sources and protection for their families though securing the basic needs of living. Also they expressed their feelings in social isolations despite the Israeli withdrawal from those areas. They still suffer from the psychological impacts left by the Israeli occupation, settlers, check points , searching and violating to their dignity and rights.

Frame (23) Unemployment and family violence:

My husband started beating me since he stopped working in Israel, before that he ever practiced such behavior (a lady from ALBURAIJ Camp)

Frame (24) Unemployment and family violence:

Before I get married to my husband, he used to work in Israel, after he stopped working in Israel, he started the agriculture business locally but later our economic situation deteriorated which pushed him to work in tunnels. We practiced hardship with managing the big family having 5 children from his ex-wife and another child from me.

During his work in the tunnels, he died in an accident. Now I take care of the children. I have a sewing machine and work for the neighbors and relatives. Out of the earning I manage the house expenses at the simplest way, my neighbors help us. My step son joint the tunnels work for some time and he fell in an accident having severe pain in the spine. Now he take medical treatment in Israel (a Lady from ALBURAIJ camp).

Many women encounter the family violence especially by the husband due to the bad economic circumstances and unemployment which disables spending on the family.

Frame (25) Unemployment and family violence:

My husband is unemployed, we live on the aid by the ministry of social affairs. I have little kids and trade some cloths within the neighborhood. I can make 10 shekels a day in order to manage the family stipends.

As a result of my husband's unemployment, he got stressed and nervous so that he beats me and my kids. I try to leave him sometime running a way to my neighbor's house (A lady from DIER AL BALAH)

Many women assured that they were subjected to violence in different ways. According to them, the violence caused by poverty, unemployment, traditions and political circumstances.

Frame (26) Unemployment and family violence:

My husband is an unemployed fisherman, we used to receive the aid coupon from CHF. They help us through a weekly support coupon valued 39 Shekels from a supermarket. I did not try to learn any profession since we had no chance. My son is a fisherman of 22 and unable of settling down with a proper life. (a lady from Gaza City)

Some women disclosed the conditioning strategies with the lower poverty fact which hit their families because of the occupation; some of them had to force his daughter to stay at home without education seeking earlier marriage as a solution during the war and to reduce the economic burden on the family.

Mrs. MariyamZaqout (Free thoughts and culture association's general manager) mentioned inALFASLIYA Magazine in May 2010 that the blockade destroys all what woman achieved during the struggling years, also it adds on violating her rights at every aspect. So woman, under the blockade

and division situations, provides priority for the political circumstances before seeking her rights considering the political fractions' effects on the social textile for the Palestinian family in Gaza governances on the economical consideration.

4.9 The Israeli violations impact on the Palestinian families:

Women showed that the level of the directed violence against woman in the society differs based in number of variation whether it is the woman age, education level, the family attitude or the living area where violence is practiced on younger women and , educated women, women who live in joint families and rural areas women.

But the participating women in the focus groups did not justify the men's violence as consequences of the IOF violations, violations hit men and women, nothing justifies the family violence however some women assured that the imposed blockade on Gaza governances since 2007 and its consequences of unemployment, poverty and freedom restrictions had the psychological impact on their husbands who became more aggressive and nervous against the mother and sons triggered by disability to manage the family finance for the man. On the other hand women suffer from severe frustration and anxiety due to the deteriorated economical situation for the family and unemployment man's staying at home all the time.

Frame (27) Unemployment and family violence:

My husband belongs to the former government and he is at home after Hamas take over recently. He became nervous and so critical. Instead of doing useful act during his free time, he got nervous and crude. My daughters and I changed our behavior so that he got married over me aged 25 years. Many problems were developed later which provoked us to separate twice due his critical behavior being free at home. (A lady from ALBURAIJ)

Most of the participating women in this study assured that the rate of violence against women and children increased during the blockade period. Also women mentioned the worry and nervousness in the families. On the educational situation; the failure ratio has increased among the students, on the other hand some student score very low and others bunk classes in the schools.

In addition women assured that the revenge and anger feelings beside not accepting the other are still standing in the sad mothers' hearts; they have mixed feelings towards their children's' killing but they are proud of their kids who sacrificed for the freedom.

Frame (28) Violence forms:

Mrs. Nadia Abo Nahla (WAC staff manager) assures the violence forms and the psychological and spoken violence are existing in our culture during the history but the physical and sexual violence increased with the hike of poverty and unemployment in the climate that restricts the freedom involving frustration and political argument which enriched the violence dramatically, this is clear from the complaints and women seeking protection.

Among the dangerous symptoms which has been recorded is the early marriage in Gaza governances; specially in the buffer zones which are subjected to invading, for instance ALSALATEEN Area and the eastern border areas at Rafah and the eastern high way. Apparently they are deprived from practicing their rights in education, participation and decision making in finding their soul mates.

The buffer zones are marginalized; they are left without any national plan for developing it. They are classified as dangerous and remote areas. At JOHR AL DIEK the highest death rate is caused by pregnancy response due the hard access for the ambulance when it is called. The ambulance needs special coordination in order to make it through, however people need a short transport before the ambulance using an animal (donkey cart) or the three wheelers in additions to that it is undeveloped area, it lacks the roads infrastructure apparently they have high risks in these areas. These areas lack school facilities therefore girls have to walk from 5 am in order to reach schools since they do not afford to pay the transportation.

We at women affair center have taken the measures to intervene in this field in order to secure the transportation for the girls in those areas. But this plan was not sustainable since it should be under a government plan. (Nadia Abu Nahla, WAC staff manager).

Frame (29) Violence forms:

Once I was on the check point when I was 16 years old, the Israeli army searched me and they don't allow me to pass, they wanted me to take off my shirt. I did not make it but they forced me. I stayed in my relative's house for a month later. Once later they invaded our house while we sleeping, they stand on the house walls and point the guns at us. I swear that I have a brother works in the tunnels and had been injured resulting a cut in finger (A lady from Rafah).

The most negatively influencing factor on the Palestinian women is the internal division which negatively impacted the Palestinian community and the Palestinian woman. It leads to increase the discrimination against woman referring the political affiliations and retrograding the women freedom. Also the women participation negatively affected in the general life; the division affected the woman's right in work due to the political affiliations reference, after Hamas took control over Gaza Strip, it employed their loyal staff and dismissed the existing employees in ministries and government bodies and institutions.

On the other hand, referring to the woman's right in education, the division deepened the imposed siege on Gaza governances which lead hindering hundreds of women to travel abroad for medical treatment caused by the imposed blockade on the governances or even the scarcity of medicine.

Adding to the fact that the right of move is faded almost, the right of education too and other basic human rights. In spite of what the Palestinian women endures of burdens, they are seeking empowering the forgiveness culture between the community members and to contribute in ending the division.

4.10 The media ability on documenting IOF's crimes against women

Women complain of the Palestinian media disability in general and specially for female media specialists in highlighting the suffering women in Gaza governances as result of the Israeli violations against them and their families specially the consequent impacts of these violations. Also they criticized the weakness of media in documenting , recording and outraging the occupation crimes against women, families, properties and living sources.

Frame (30) Limitation for the media in the marginalized zones:

We, Almawasi residents, are away from the media and community outreach. We encounter many accidents but none reports it.

On the other hand women appreciated the civil society's role in developing the Palestinian woman but they picked on the civil society's role in focusing on the needs of healthcare, relief and daily life requirement ignoring the developing sense and contributing to the re-construction of the war damages and provision of psychological support for woman. In addition to the fact that the civil society did not play its role in lifting the violence impact which targets the woman, child and the deteriorated economical situation for the Palestinian family.

Many women benefited from the annual loan associations in finding the fund to start small project but they all agreed that those projects do not meet the family needs which provoked them to quit the small projects.



5.1 Result:

This study assures that it is not possible to secure the women unless the whole society is safe. This safe society cannot be achieved under occupation and lack of democratic and political system. This type of the basic system cannot be achieved without assuring the equal rights for citizens of both genders without being released from a major rules briefs that the national security for the states is not achieved without the state security assurance so that the humanitarian security is achieved for the citizens. It has to be sure that the humanitarian security cannot be achieved without the assuring the women rights, not for being the basic block in the society, but for being a human being has the basic human rights of living dignified.

The study concludes that women empowerment and enhancing their roles, enforces the national security. That is because of the proportional relationship between the humanitarian security and the national security. Also to spread the stability and peace in the region.

5.2 Recommendations:

It remains on ending the occupation and sparing the Palestinian people of violence.

Also lifting the blockade is one of the most demands by the Palestinian women in Gaza governances. Women sought empowerment from the international NGOs which is concerned about the human rights highlighting the following requirements:

- 1- Contributing in all the activities concerned about lifting the blockade, initiating activities to condemn the Israeli violations against women and men in Gaza governances, violating to human rights, international laws, SEDAW convention and ignoring women protection during conflicts and crises.
- 2- The necessity to document all the Israeli violations against the Palestinian people through releasing records in English, Arabic and Hebrew. And conducting international and regional campaigns to unveil these violations.
- 3- Securing appropriate health and education services for the marginalized areas and buffer zones to lift the suffering of the people who live there.
- 4- Push to solve the basic infrastructure services issues such as water supply, electricity which has severe psychological impact on women.
- 5- Working on limiting the child labor specially in the tunnels which causes death for many innocent kids leaving severe psychological trouble for their mothers.
- 6- Listening to women and let them communicate to express their needs and problems, not talking about their issues without referring to them. Also considering political and social changes surround the women.
- 7- Motivating the international legal networks to contribute in recording the Israeli violations against women and children, which contradicts to the international conventions and UN decisions pertaining armed conflicts and women protection.
- 8- Intensify the psychological support and call the women organizations to start small projects can empower women independently. Poverty subjects women to different sort of violence and force them to accept lower level of labor in order to survive. It makes them busy in collecting their families food only.
- 9- It is important to organize media campaigns to explain the violence and its forms and the necessity of respecting women. Also to assure that woman is half of the society and needs the family and community support in addition to support women in understanding their rights and opportunities in participating in the society. As well rehabilitating them through training and other intensified programs to empower the leadership and decision making among women.
- 10- It is necessary to establish a network and cooperation with the civil society for the sake of creating job opportunities to girls and women and training each according to their career needs. It is important to create job opportunity to women specially in the small projects to enable them to start their own earning business.
- 11- The women organizations must intensify their efforts to show the women issues through the media and creating women lead media centers to avoid the biased media against women. It is important to update the studies on the publish media. Also it is important to set a strategic plan for women issues media to be implemented by activists for highlighting the women issues in the Palestinian society.
- 12- Organize a program to erase the violence culture against women and finding better methods to reach the marginalized areas.
- 13- The necessity of building the NGOs' capacity to gain more trust of the beneficiaries.
- 14- The necessity involves men in community-based issues since they are participating in decision making at the family level. Apparently they should be involved in the workshops and training related to women.
- 15- To speed up implementing a strategic plan to empower the women against violence in the Palestinian territories for (2011-2019) and medium scale plan (2011-2013) which is set by the national committee to confront violation against women lead by the women affair ministry.