

Denying Palestinian women the right to justice creates an impediment to bring justice and peace worldwide.

A delegation from the Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development participated in the 39<sup>th</sup> Human Rights Council in Geneva, as part of the lobbying and advocacy programme aimed at enhancing women's rights laws based on peace and security and in accordance with International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law, to provide the Human Rights Council with detailed information of the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. General Director of PWWSD, Amal Khreisheh and Ms. Summar Rasras, Lobbying and Advocacy Officer at PWWSD, attended this event along with a side event organized in cooperation with Euro-Mediterranean Women's Foundation and the Swedish association Kvinna Til Kvinna, to discuss the status of Palestinian women under occupation. During this event, Ms. Khreisheh took the opportunity to disseminate information concerning Israeli violations committed against the Palestinian people which has left a seeming effect on women's rights and is in serious violation of the foundations and benchmarks laid out for human rights laws, with special infringement upon the 4<sup>th</sup> Geneva Convention, CEDAW and UN Security Council Resolution 1325 established to provide peace and security to women under occupation. Ms. Khreisheh also highlighted some of the most prominent issues occurring in Palestine: the reality of women living in the Gaza Strip and which has been under siege for 11 years; Israel's settlement policy and its Judaization of Jerusalem, Hebron, and Jericho; furthermore, she referred to Israel's reinforcement of its Apartheid policy through its recently established National Law which does not recognize the existence of the Palestinians, denying the Palestinians the right to self-determination; in addition, Israel has imposed segregation laws that prohibit Palestinians from accessing roads and tunnels allocated to Israeli settlements only, nor are Palestinians allowed access to most public transportation systems such as the buses that have been designed for Israeli citizens; these laws can be dangerously compared to the South African Apartheid and enslavement laws carried out in recent US history (Alabama).

The Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development called on the International community to hold Israel accountable for its war crimes and violations committed against Palestinians, and to cease all weapons sales to the Occupying State. Moreover, the organization stressed the importance of ratifying UN Security Council Resolutions previously founded to end the Israeli occupation, and for the fulfillment of peace for the Palestinians in line with human rights Laws.

Antonia Molvi, General Director of Legal Action Worldwide, indicated the significance of utilizing international provisions and instruments in mobilization and awareness-raising events to demand the amendment, and protection, of women's rights laws, most notably the CEDAW Conventions, in addition to the operationalization of international instruments in order to ensure gender equality amongst our, and all, communities.

Lillian Halls, General Director of Euro-Mediterranean Women's Foundation, relayed Israel's recurring violations against the Palestinians, particularly women, and its ongoing impunity, which has led to Israel's undermining of the Two-State Solution through its expansion of illegal settlements along the Palestine borders creating major threats to the lives of Palestinians and to the lives of women from all aspects.

Carolina Wolfon, Gender-Based Violence Specialist – OHCHR, signified the relationship between social violence and war-based violence and its effect on women and girls, with reference to the Special Rapporteur on Violence published by Ms. Dobravka Simonivik, at the UN to the Human Rights Council.

The symposium was moderated by journalist and global activist against nuclear arms race, Ariela Denis.

Several country directors and fact-finding bodies attended the symposium, in addition to a number of CBOs and members of UN bodies.

The delegation conducted meetings with several country directors from Sweden, France, and with the EU Ambassador, and engaged in a dialogue with the gender-based violence specialist to relay facts of Israel's ongoing violations against peaceful demonstrators during the March of Return demonstration in the Gaza Strip. Additionally, the delegation engaged in panel discussions between the UNHCR, UN Women, CERD, and the International Office for Migration, to discuss the status of Palestinian women refugees, and requested that the International bodies document Israel's violations against women. The delegation also requested that special field coordinators be sent to obtain first-hand knowledge of the situation of refugees in Palestine and neighboring countries.