

# WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY IN PALESTINE - HOW CAN SWEDEN MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

The following recommendations have been developed by Operation 1325 with support from the Palestinian civil society organisation Wi'am.

## SITUATION ANALYSIS

- Palestinian women are marginalized in formal and informal peace processes, and are hindered from meaningfully participating in conflict prevention, management, and resolution.
- Palestinian women are dependent on the international community for service delivery and protection; however, women are not included in service delivery programming design.
- Although Palestinian civil society is a vital actor in ensuring democratic, free, and equal societies, they lack access to funding, low numbers of women leaders and suffer from fragmentation.
- Due to the prolonged conflict there are currently more than 6 million Palestinian refugees, residing in Palestine and in neighbouring countries. Women refugees suffer from considerable economic, psychological, physical, and social hardship.

## RECOMMENDATIONS IN SHORT

- Advocate for Palestinian women's meaningful participation in defending international and humanitarian law, through representation on national and international arenas.
- Empower and support Palestinian civil society to continue to contribute to a democratic, equal, and free Palestinian society.
- Ensure the participation and protection of Palestinian women in relief and recovery.
- Support the protection of Palestinian women refugees.

## ADVOCATE FOR PALESTINIAN WOMEN'S MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION IN DEFENDING INTERNATIONAL AND HUMANITARIAN LAW

Throughout the ongoing occupation and prolonged conflict, women have continuously been marginalized in formal and informal peace negotiations. To achieve sustainable peace, it is important that Palestinian women are meaningfully included and empowered to participate in upholding international and humanitarian law, both at the international and national level. Although there are currently several mechanisms which aim to increase women's participation in these areas, including the UN Women high level dialogue on Women, Peace and Security in Palestine and the current national gender quota of 20 % women in politics, there is a tendency that the voices of women are not listened to and that recommendations are ignored. Furthermore, the national 20 % quota for women's political representation tends to be considered a maximum limit and is used as an excuse to not increase women political participation further.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Swedish Consulate in Jerusalem should actively communicate about the importance of including women in peace negotiations and use its platform to lift the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda and women's participation, particularly in regard to women in politics and the 20 % quota.
- Sweden should advocate to further ensure women civil society participation in UN Security Council briefings and debates on the situation in Palestine.
- Sweden should advocate that the UN fulfils its commitments in regard to UNSCR 1325, by supporting the appointment of Palestinian women mediators and negotiators and ensuring the meaningful participation of women in all future peace negotiations between Palestine and Israel.



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## EMPOWER AND SUPPORT PALESTINIAN CIVIL SOCIETY TO CONTINUE TO CONTRIBUTE TO A DEMOCRATIC, EQUAL, AND FREE PALESTINIAN SOCIETY

Palestinian civil society has a paramount role to play in contributing to the implementation of the Palestinian National Action Plan for UNSCR 1325 and ultimately creating a democratic, equal, and free Palestinian society. In the Palestinian context, civil society suffer from chronic underfunding, fragmentation, and lack of women leadership, which hinders civil society from fully contributing to this end.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- In line with the Swedish National Action Plan for Women, Peace and Security, Sweden should support and resource Palestinian women at the grassroots level to be actively involved in advocacy and awareness-raising campaigns regarding UNSCR 1325 and women's rights.
- Sweden should continue to support Palestinian women's civil society platforms which aim to empower, ensure the participation, and train future Palestinian women leaders.
- Sweden should advocate that the EU, in line with its Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, provides further support to Palestinian women's organizations to monitor acts of violence and provide regular updates to the UN and other international human rights organizations. To this end, Women, Peace and Security should be one of the five pillars of EU engagement with Palestine.

## ENSURE THE PARTICIPATION AND PROTECTION OF PALESTINIAN WOMEN IN RELIEF AND RECOVERY

In light of the grave humanitarian situation in Palestine due to the Israeli occupation, Palestinians rely to a large extent on international actors, including Sweden, the EU and the UN, for service delivery and protection. Although the long-term goal is that the Palestinian state is able to deliver on these responsibilities, the current situation requires that international actors include Palestinian women in the planning, budgeting and implementation of service delivery and ensure that gender specific requirements, particularly in regard to gender-based violence, are met. In regard to protection, a particularly vulnerable group is Palestinian women detainees in Israel who are allegedly are subjected to abuse, threats of sexual violence, and lack access to legal services.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Sweden should, in line with the relief and recovery pillar of UNSCR 1325, engage with local women's organizations in humanitarian and development planning processes, including discussions on prioritization, costing and resource allocations across different clusters and sectors. Sweden should furthermore advocate that other significant donors such as the EU and UN organisations and agencies do the same.
- Sweden should support the development of appropriate processes and measures to ensure that women can report Gender Based Violence confidentially and seek suitable services and solutions in a timely manner, especially under the current COVID-19 emergency.
- Sweden should demand that Palestinian detainees access legal services, special provisions to avoid contamination of COVID-19 and are treated with dignity and respect, acknowledging gender specific requirements.



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## SUPPORT THE PROTECTION OF PALESTINIAN WOMEN REFUGEES

There are currently more than 6 million Palestinian refugees residing in Palestine and neighbouring countries. Women refugees suffer from considerable economic, psychological, physical and social hardship. The main UN-body responsible for Palestinian refugees in Palestine and in neighbouring countries, UNRWA, currently lacks funding and is unable to provide vital resources for Palestinian refugees, which negatively impacts the protection of women refugees.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Sweden should provide resources for the UNRWA and advocate that more funding is allocated by other international donors.
- Sweden should, in line with the Swedish National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, ensure that service delivery to Palestinian refugees is sufficiently gender mainstreamed, particularly in regard to services to women who have experienced sexual abuse and provide sexual and reproductive healthcare.
- Sweden should in dialogue with countries currently hosting Palestinian refugees highlight the importance that they are protected, given legal status and that the rights of women refugees are respected.



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