

**NGO ALTERNATIVE PRE-SESSIONAL REPORT ON ISRAEL'S  
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE  
ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN  
(CEDAW) IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES (OPT)**

**Submitted in January 2005 to the Pre-Sessional Working Group**

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**The Occupied Palestinian Territories**

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## Preface

The prevailing notion of “national security,” as applied in the Israeli context, places the interests of the Jewish nation-state at the center of the discourse and accepts militarization and armed conflict as necessary methods to advance the goals of Israel. This Israeli military security system in fact has created great insecurities for all Palestinian people within the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) with women, men, and children targeted in specific ways.

Women and children bear specific consequences of the Israeli Occupation. Due to the pressures on Palestinian society to deal with the more immediate humanitarian issues as a result of the conflict, women’s needs are either ignored or set aside. This occurs, even as the absence of male members of their families due to prolonged incarceration, often without trial, and/or extra-judicial killings, require them to take on more responsibilities in the home and for their families. Women and children also constitute the largest proportion of refugees and displaced persons due to disproportionate use of force and wanton destruction of property to achieve political objectives. This physical, psychological, and economic insecurity is exacerbated by the lack of will of the Israeli government to take responsibility for the Palestinian civilian population, and also alleviate the effects of the Occupation even as International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law require that it do so. The information contained in this report will demonstrate this.

This document represents a short summary of issues based on the research of **Al-Haq**, a human rights organization based in Ramallah; **Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR)**, a human rights organization based in Gaza; and the **Women’s Centre for Legal Aid and Counseling (WCLAC)**, a women’s rights organization based in Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup> This document does not raise the full range of our concerns. However, we hope that it can help the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW Committee) develop a “List of Issues” prior to the committee’s full consideration of Israel’s report in July 2005.

The following is a list of issues discussed and the Articles of the Convention to which they apply:

- Articles 1, 2, 15                      Violence Against Women
- Articles 2, 12, 15                    Palestinian Women Prisoners
- Articles 10, 12                        Restriction of Movement
- Articles 2, 5, 9,11, 12,15,16      Family Unification
- Article 14                                Rural Women
- Articles 2,5                              House Demolitions

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<sup>1</sup> See Annex I for a description of the partners

## **Applicability of the Convention to the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT)**

Israel has again omitted any reference to the OPT in its 3<sup>rd</sup> Periodic Report to the CEDAW Committee. This lack of attention to the OPT represents a grave omission by Israel especially in light of the Concluding Observations made by the CEDAW Committee in its review of Israel's combined 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> periodic reports (CEDAW/C/ISR/1-2), which stated that the Government of Israel should ensure that the Convention was implemented throughout the territory under its jurisdiction (A/52/38/Rev.1, Part II, para.170, 1997).<sup>2</sup>

### **1. The Israeli Position**

Since Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967, successive Israeli governments have rejected the applicability of human rights treaties to the OPT, including East Jerusalem, on the grounds that the relationship between occupier and occupied is fundamentally different from that between a government and its people during peacetime. The signing of the Interim Agreements between Israel and the Palestinians in 1995, thereby providing for the preparatory transfer of a total of 14 civil spheres to a Palestinian National Authority (PNA), has been used by Israel as additional grounds for rejecting the applicability of international human rights laws. Furthermore the dominant tendency of the Israeli High Court of Justice rulings has been that of the non-application of international law to the OPT. However since this would imply that rights would not be applied where safeguards would be needed the most, UN bodies and legal experts have rejected this position.

### **2. The Applicability of Customary International Human Rights Law**

Customary human rights norms are applicable in all situations, including times of war and peace, even in the absence of a binding treaty. Furthermore, they apply not just to persons living under the jurisdiction of their own national authority, but also to "persons living in territories under belligerent occupation." As noted by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the *Barcelona Traction case*<sup>3</sup>, obligations derived from the principles and rules concerning the basic rights of the human person are obligations which are owed towards the international community as a whole (also known as *erga omnes* obligations). In this regard, the majority of scholars have considered the human rights provisions of the UN Charter to embody customary law and, therefore, to be universally applicable. These provisions include the prohibition against torture, certain basic due process guarantees and the principle of non-discrimination. It has also been suggested that other principles such as permanent sovereignty over natural resources and self-determination may also have attained this status.

### **3. The Applicability of Conventional Human Rights Law**

Many international human rights conventions to which Israel is a state party, such as the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD); the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT); the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC); and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), stipulate that the obligations under these conventions do not apply only to the territorial area of a specific state, but to all persons brought under the jurisdiction or effective control of that state. This has been upheld by the European Court of Human Rights in the *Loizidou case*, which stated that the existence of a partly autonomous area in an occupied territory does not affect the overall responsibility of the occupying power if the latter exercises effective overall control of the territory.<sup>4</sup> While non-state actors, such as the PNA, must also be expected to respect human rights norms, Israel continues to exercise *de facto* authority in the OPT. Therefore, it is bound to apply these human rights conventions and instruments and remains answerable to all of them. Furthermore, as the ICJ emphasized in the *Legal Consequences of the*

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<sup>2</sup> In 1967, Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza Strip, including East Jerusalem. In 1980, this eastern part of the city was annexed by Israel through a Basic Law proclaiming all of Jerusalem as its capital, in contravention of the international community consensus that this action is null and void and is not to be recognised. Nevertheless, even in the case of East Jerusalem, which Israel claims to be part of its territorial jurisdiction, its authorities have failed to report on the implementation of CEDAW vis-à-vis Palestinian women in the city, and have pursued discriminatory policies against them, most notably in the area of family unification.

<sup>3</sup> *Barcelona Traction, Light and Power Company, Limited Case (Belgium v. Spain)*, 1970 I.C.J. (Feb 5).

<sup>4</sup> *Loizidou v. Turkey*, 23 E.H.H.R.513 (1997)

*Construction of a Wall in the OPT* case, where competence has been transferred to the PNA, Israel remains “under an obligation not to raise any obstacle to the exercise of such rights” (para. 112).<sup>5</sup> The opinion also explicitly stated that the ICCPR applies in the OPT during both times of peace and war (paras. 105, 109), and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and CRC all apply to the OPT and Israel's actions therein (paras. 112, 113). It is thus evident that Israel should be considered bound to apply the Convention not merely within its national borders, but to the OPT as well.

In addition, UN treaty bodies, independent experts and working groups charged with monitoring the human rights situations within their mandates, have all repeatedly reaffirmed that Israel is considered legally responsible to implement human rights treaty provisions in the OPT.

**Possible Questions:** The CEDAW Committee would like to reiterate its view that Israel is responsible under international law for the application of the Convention in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. We are gravely concerned with the increasing extent of violations of the Convention in those territories. Would the State party please explain why the Third Period Report does not address the status of Palestinian women in the OPT and East Jerusalem? In light of the State party's position that East Jerusalem falls within its territorial jurisdiction, the CEDAW Committee would like the State party to explain specifically why the report does not include a discussion on the status of Palestinian women in this area.

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<sup>5</sup> Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, 2004, I.C.J. (July 9) (advisory opinion). Retrieved January 13, 2005 from <http://www.icj-cij.org/icjwww/idocket/imwp/imwpframe.htm>.

## **Articles 1, 2, 5, 15- Violence Against Women**

While the Convention has no explicit provision for violence against women, CEDAW clarified that “Gender-based violence, which impairs or nullifies the enjoyment by women of human rights and fundamental freedoms under general international law or under human rights conventions, is discrimination within the meaning of Article 1 of the Convention (para.7).”<sup>6</sup>

It is clear that violence against women and the state’s responsibility to prevent and punish such acts, as well as to ensure reparations, are under the domain of CEDAW. The state’s inaction against the Israeli occupying forces, Border Police, and settlers who harass or incite acts of violence against women based on their gender reflects the state’s complicity in the violence and demonstrates Israel’s failure to comply with the Convention.

### **1. Sexual Harassment**

Palestinian women are routinely harassed, intimidated, and abused by Israeli soldiers and Border Police occupying their homes, and monitoring checkpoints and gates. These women are subject to threats of sexual violence in public spaces and humiliated in front of their families. One graffitied wall in Hebron reads, “Watch out Fatima, we will rape all Arab women.”<sup>7</sup> The consequences of a woman’s refusal of sexual advances can be far-reaching. In one case, a Palestinian woman attempting to cross a gate in the Wall in Zeita (Tulkarm District) was stopped by a Border policeman who, when his advances were refused, ‘punished’ her whole family, preventing them from passing through a gate in the Wall which separates them from their greenhouse and their livelihood.<sup>8</sup> The use of, or threats of, violence against women is also used against Palestinian men who are prisoners or are administratively detained as punishment for not giving information.<sup>9</sup>

**Possible Questions:** Please provide information regarding what steps are taken to monitor and appropriately discipline members of Israeli military who sexually harass Palestinian women, including whether there is an official complaint mechanism, what guidelines are available in handling complaints on this issue, and statistics regarding the number of complaints which have resulted in disciplinary action. Has the State party established a system which will encourage Palestinian women to report to its officials incidents of harassment or violence?

### **2. Israeli Settler Violence**

While the exact number of settlements is difficult to pinpoint, it is estimated that there are anywhere between 145 to 198 settlements located in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem). Approximately 390,000 Israeli citizens or settlers live in settlements in the West Bank; more than half of the settlers, between 220,000 and 250,000, live in East Jerusalem.<sup>10</sup> Since September 2000, settlers in the OPT have killed at least 54 Palestinian civilians, including a 14-year-old girl in Hebron. Settlers attack and vandalize property by burning fields and agricultural lands. Settlers in the OPT routinely pose serious threats to the safety and security of Palestinian women and their children, who tend to be home alone during the workdays and are more vulnerable to incidents and threats of violence.

In Hebron, the only city where settlers live amongst the Palestinian population and where there are 532 settlers with 100 Israeli soldiers to protect them, reports of harassment and violence by settlers are most

<sup>6</sup> Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, General Recommendation 19: Violence Against Women. (Eleventh session, 1992). Compilation of General Comments and General Recommendations Adopted by Human Rights Treaty Bodies. U.N. Doc. HRI\GEN\1\Rev.7 (2004).

<sup>7</sup> Salam, K. (photographer) (n.d.) Graffiti on a wall in Hebron. In *Special Section: Settlements and Settler Violence*. Retrieved January 13, 2005, from [http://www.palestinemonitor.org/settlements/settler\\_violence\\_cover.htm](http://www.palestinemonitor.org/settlements/settler_violence_cover.htm)

<sup>8</sup> B'Tselem. (n.d.) Sexual Harassment of Palestinian woman by Border Police in Zeita Tulkarm District. Retrieved January 13, 2005 from [http://www.btselem.org/English/testimonies/030802\\_sexual\\_harassment\\_in\\_zeita.asp](http://www.btselem.org/English/testimonies/030802_sexual_harassment_in_zeita.asp).

<sup>9</sup> Affidavit taken by Ma'moun Hasheem, Prisoners Club, 11 January 2005.

<sup>10</sup> Dugard, J. (2004, December 7). Report of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights, John Dugard, on the Situation of Human Rights in the Palestinian Territories Occupied by Israel since 1967, UN DOC E/CN.42005/29, p.15, para. 33.

severe. Settlers assault women at all times, pushing them, throwing stones, or shooting at them and their children. Gas bombs are also thrown into their windows. Israeli soldiers fail to protect these women, rather, taking part in the harassment and assaults. In one case, Israeli soldiers had sexual intercourse in a women's garden, under a window of the children's room. One pregnant woman in her 7<sup>th</sup> month was pushed down by a soldier in front of 10 settler women who watched and laughed. Complaints made to soldiers and police are either ignored or the complainants are targeted by soldiers and settlers in revenge. As a result, most Palestinian women who are subjected to acts of harassment and violence do not report such incidents.

In East Jerusalem, reports of harassment by Israeli settlers describe the use of tear gas against Palestinian women and their children, as well as psychological violence and pressure through shouting profanities and breaking objects. In one case, a woman in Bab al-Selsela related how her child was hit with an iron door that was thrown down by settlers who insisted that the door stay in their courtyard. Another woman in Aqbat Al-Khaladiyyeh related how settlers threw garbage at her home, slaughtered cats at her door and raided her house without any justification. She was subsequently attacked with tear gas and her child threatened when she attempted to make public the settlers' aggression. A police complaint was withdrawn after further threats by settlers.<sup>11</sup> Even when complaints are made, police responses to such acts of violence in East Jerusalem are less than adequate. Israeli police, as well as the municipality, do not consider Arab East Jerusalem a priority in terms of services or expenditure (p. 43).<sup>12</sup>

**Possible Questions:** Please provide information regarding what measures the State party is taking to prevent violence by Israeli settlers against Palestinians, including statistics regarding how many settlers are tried for such violence, how many convicted, and sentences given to those convicted. The State party is asked to include information regarding what instructions and procedures are given to members of the Israeli military, in particular those in Hebron, in dealing with settler violence. Please discuss in clear terms how the State party provides protection to Israeli settlers in the Occupied Palestinian Territories whilst not providing a comparable protection to Palestinian women and children who are subjected to attacks by the settler population.

### **3. Domestic Violence**

In a visit to the OPT by Yakin Ertürk, the Special Rapporteur of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights on Violence Against Women, Its Causes and Consequences, she noted that the "atmosphere of legitimized violence as a method of conflict resolution" has pervaded every aspect of women's lives.<sup>13</sup> In 1998, there were 8 cases of "femicide" in Gaza and the West Bank while in 2002, there were 31 cases.<sup>14</sup> The number of sexual assault and gender-based violence cases that WCLAC handled increased from 108 cases in 1996 to 546 in 1999. In 2003, only 133 cases were handled by WCLAC. This decrease in cases at WCLAC does not reflect an actual decrease in the incidents of gender-based violence as is evident by a 2002 poll in which 86% of respondents stated that violence against women had "significantly or somewhat increased as a result of changing political, economical, and social conditions in the Palestinian Territories."<sup>15</sup> In general, the rise in "femicide" reflects the consequences of the Occupation. Moreover, women choose to put the immediate humanitarian concerns of their families over their own needs. Even if they wanted to report an incident of violence, movement restrictions due to closures make it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to reach a help center.

<sup>11</sup> Jerusalem Center for Women. (2001) Israeli Settler Attacks Against Palestinians: Through the Eyes of Palestinian Women in Jerusalem. Retrieved January 13, 2005 from [http://www.j-c-w.org/Israel\\_settler.htm](http://www.j-c-w.org/Israel_settler.htm).

<sup>12</sup> Shalhoub-Kevorkian, N. (2004) Mapping and Analyzing Femicide in Palestinian Society. Jerusalem: Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counseling.

<sup>13</sup> UNIFEM. (n.d.) Gender Profile of the Conflict in the OPT. Retrieved January 13, 2005 from <http://www.womenwarpeace.org/opt/opt.htm>.

<sup>14</sup> "Femicide" includes instances of a woman/girl being threatened with death by a husband/boyfriend or male relative who perceives that she has committed an act violating the 'honor' of the family or male interest. See Supra, Note 10.

<sup>15</sup> Refugee Women's Resource Project. (2002). Rise of Domestic Violence against Palestinian Women. *Women's Asylum News*, Issue 26 October, Retrieved January 13, 2005 from <http://www.asylumaid.org.uk/New%20RWRP/WAN/Oct02%20email.doc>.

Fewer incidents have been reported also in part due to the lack of trust and faith in the Palestinian police and the PNA, whose abilities to enforce the law are undermined by the Occupation. Police are virtually immobilized by closures and curfews, and are prohibited from carrying weapons in order to instill law and order. Due to the Occupation, neither the police nor other PNA institutions, such as the Ministry of Social Welfare, are able to develop in a systematic way their sections dealing with gender-based domestic violence. Furthermore, any legislation dealing with the protection of women is stalled due to the immediate, more “important” concerns of the PNA whose priorities do not include social issues. As a result, the use of tribal systems, which rarely document or deal with cases of gender-based violence properly, to resolve disputes has become more common.

**Possible Questions:** Please indicate what measures are being taken to ensure that Palestinian women are not subjected to domestic violence, in particular addressing the number of instances of coordination between Israeli and Palestinian police in dealing with such cases, as outlined in the Oslo agreements. Do Israeli military authorities facilitate the movement of Palestinian police in order to assist them in addressing women victims of violence? What instructions are given to Israeli soldiers in how to deal with Palestinian women victims of violence?

## **Articles 2, 12, 15- Palestinian Women Prisoners**

Since the outbreak of the current *Intifada* in September 2000, the number of Palestinian females arrested and imprisoned per year has increased from 1 arrest in 1998 to an unprecedented 65 arrests in 2004. To date, there are approximately 129 Palestinian women prisoners being held in 3 Israeli prisons: the Telmond Hasharon Prison, the Nevi Tretza (al-Ramleh) Prison, and the Jalameh Prison. Of these prisoners, 11 women are being administratively detained (without charge or trial),<sup>16</sup> 74 are being held pending a trial, and 44 have been sentenced. Twelve of these women prisoners are under the age of 18.<sup>17</sup>

### **1. Prison Conditions**

The conditions in which women are held raise concerns for their health and well-being. Palestinian women prisoners continue to suffer from poor conditions of detention, inadequate access to health care and food, severe shortage of clothing, and lack of on-site medical doctors or social workers. Furthermore, private needs, such as their sanitary needs particularly during menstruation, are neither respected nor taken into consideration. Prisoners are deprived of family visits, and are subject to verbal abuse as well as invasive inspections. Lawyers are forced to interview the detainees through three layers of metal netting and a plastic barrier. Such conditions continue to have grave repercussions on their physical and mental integrity, and reflect a systematic breach of the right to health of Palestinian women in Israeli custody.

Moreover, some newborns continue to live with their mothers in the prison amid unbearable conditions. The prison administration fails to respond to their psychological and physical needs, including clothing and food, and denies their husbands contact with their children during visits.

### **2. Harassment, Torture, and Ill-treatment of Palestinian Women Prisoners**

In addition, Israeli prison and detention authorities subject Palestinian female prisoners to various forms of torture and ill-treatment during investigation and detention periods, including beating and solitary confinement. Israeli investigators continue to systematically threaten Palestinian female prisoners in a manner that perpetuates gender-based violence that is founded on the perception of women as inferior to men. Israeli prison authorities threaten Palestinian women prisoners, especially younger ones, with rape during investigation to force them to provide information or to plead guilty. One other particularly degrading form of treatment includes the use of strip searches, a practice which is directed solely against Palestinian women prisoners, and is not used with Israeli women detainees. In cases where prisoners have refused to comply with orders to take off their clothes, they have often been forcibly tied up and stripped. There have also been allegations of Palestinian female prisoners being verbally insulted in a manner that degrades their status as women. In addition, prison authorities are reported to allow male jailers to enter and search female prisoners' rooms any time and without prior notice.

Although political and criminal prisoners must so far as possible be detained in separate institutions, only a narrow path separates Palestinian political prisoners from Israeli criminal ones. As a result, the former are continuously exposed to acts of harassment and intimidation by Israeli criminal prisoners; Israeli prison officials fail to put an end to these actions, despite repeated complaints. Moreover, these authorities deny Palestinian women many of the rights granted to their Israeli counterparts in terms of medical care, food (both quantity and quality), and family visits.

Due to the importance that many Palestinian female prisoners attach to their families' visits, Israeli authorities allegedly exploit their ability to allow or deny such visits to extract confessions or punish them. In cases in which visits are allowed, families are forced to wait for long hours before being allowed to meet with them. A glass partition and iron bars separate the prisoner and the family, strictly limiting direct

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<sup>16</sup> Administrative detention is used as a means of exerting pressure on their husbands or other male relatives to turn themselves in. Many of these detention orders have been repeatedly renewed.

<sup>17</sup> Ministry of Prison Affairs. (2005, Jan 1) Report: Palestinian women prisoners in Israeli prisons. Ramallah, Palestine.

contact. This restriction particularly affects prisoners who are mothers, by denying visits by their children and are prevented from touching or holding them during these visits.

### **3. Withholding the Right to a Fair Trial**

Unlike Israeli women prisoners, Palestinian women prisoners in the OPT are denied their right to equal protection under the law. The Israeli military court system fails to meet minimum international standards on rights to a fair and regular trial. Palestinian women detainees in the OPT are subjected to failure or delays in notifying legal counsel of the location, date and timing of court hearings; reliance on evidence presented by the prosecution but to which the defense is denied; and lack of effective appeals procedures. In addition, Israeli authorities make access of Palestinian lawyers for visits increasingly difficult. Lawyers are often subjected to harassment and intimidation by prison authorities aimed at discouraging them from carrying out visits by forcing them to wait for long hours before allowing them to meet their clients, and barring them from direct contact with detainees during such meetings.

### **4. Other Applicable International Legal Standards**

Although Israel has suspended its obligations under Article 9 of the ICCPR, it is clear that even in times of emergency, Israeli policies of detention must still conform to international minimum standards of fair trial and be based on grounds and procedures established by law. In addition, the Fourth Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilians in Time of War also affords civilians in occupied territories with general protection against violence of any kind, adverse discrimination, coercion, corporal punishment and torture, and provides detained persons with fundamental guarantees of a fair trial and the rule of law.

<p><b>Possible Questions:</b> What steps has Israel taken, in order to meet the obligations outlined under Article 2, to eradicate the use of gender-based threats of violence against Palestinian women prisoners and detainees? What measures has Israel taken to respect the integrity of Palestinian women under interrogation?</p>
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## **Articles 10, 12- Consequences of Restriction of Movement**

Roadblocks, patrols, curfews, checkpoints, and the construction of the Wall have had serious negative impacts on the health, education, and economic security of Palestinians in general. Restriction of movement due to the Occupation has severely impeded Palestinian women's access to education and health.

Israel restricts or completely prohibits Palestinians from traveling on 41 roads and sections of roads throughout the West Bank, totaling more than 700 kilometers of roadway, on all of which Israelis can travel freely. As of November 2004, there were more than 719 checkpoints and other physical obstacles across roads, including 71 permanent checkpoints and 102 roadblocks.<sup>18</sup> Nine control towers monitor the movement of people below. Rather than using main roads and risk being stopped, most of the Palestinian population use Alternative Palestinian Mobility Routes (AMPRs) thus altering their normal routine with regards to economics, education, health, social and family life.<sup>19</sup> In contrast, Israeli citizens, settlers, and foreigners benefit from the building of bypass roads and normally pass through checkpoints without being stopped.

Curfews, in which residents are prohibited from leaving their homes, are of the most extreme measures enacted by Israel to restrict movement. Area H-2 in Hebron, in which 35,000 Palestinians and 532 settlers live, has been subject to an almost total curfew since the beginning of the second *Intifada* (September 2000). Israeli Occupying Forces prohibit Palestinian movement on the streets and ordered the closing of shops and businesses. In addition, Area H-2 is under closure, preventing movement in and out of the area. Before the current *intifada*, the H-2 area accommodated a vegetable market, thousands of shops, and an industrial zone. These have moved to the H-1 area, while 73 families (totaling 43%) have left their homes. As a result of the curfews and closures, unemployment and poverty in the H-2 area has increased.<sup>20</sup>

In June 2002, the Israeli government began construction of the Wall, the bulk of which intrudes into the West Bank. As of September 2004, the structure was 255 km long and consists of fences, eight-to-nine-meter-high concrete slabs, ditches, razor wire, groomed trace sands, electronic monitoring system, patrol roads, and a no-go buffer zone. The total length is estimated to extend to 630 km.<sup>21</sup> Fifty-five gates were built into this wall in order to control the movement of Palestinian citizens. Out of these, 21 gates are open to Palestinians with permits at certain times and 34 are permanently closed.<sup>22</sup>

According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), women's movement decreased to about 85.7% in the western part of the Wall, and to 63.3% in the eastern part of the Wall.<sup>23</sup> In one survey conducted in October 2003, 78.1% of respondents stated that the Wall has restricted the movement of women. Such restriction of movement limits the opportunities for Palestinian women's independence and

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<sup>18</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in the OPT. (2005, January) Humanitarian Information Fact Sheet.

<sup>19</sup> AMPRs are usually long and difficult roads created and used by Palestinians in order to avoid checkpoints and other restrictions to movement. See B'Tselem, "Forbidden Roads Regime: The Discriminatory West Bank Road Regime", See Internet at [<http://www.btselem.org>]

<sup>20</sup> B'Tselem. (2003, August). Status Report: Hebron, Area H2, Settlements Cause Mass Departure of Palestinians. Retrieved January 13, 2005 from [http://www.btselem.org/Download/2003\\_Hebron\\_Eng.doc](http://www.btselem.org/Download/2003_Hebron_Eng.doc).

<sup>21</sup> Humanitarian and Emergency Policy Group (HEPG). (2004, March). The Impact of Israel's Separation Barrier on Affected West Bank Communities: Construction of the Barrier, Access, and its Humanitarian Impact. Retrieved January 13, 2005 from <http://www.reliefweb.int/hic-opt/docs/UN/OCHA/Barrierupdate7mar04.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). (2004, Sept 1). Update #4: The Humanitarian Impact of the West Bank Barrier on Palestinian Communities. Retrieved January 13, 2005 from <http://www.reliefweb.int/hic-opt/docs/UN/OCHA/Barrierupdate7mar04.pdf>.

<sup>23</sup> Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS). (2004, April-June) Impact of the Israeli Measures on the Economic Conditions of Palestinian Households. Ramallah, Palestine.

will decrease the number of women seeking formal education or employment.<sup>24</sup> Restriction of movement also prevents Palestinian women from meeting with their families who play a crucial role in supporting and protecting their women.

### **1. Harassment of Students and Teachers**

Female students and teachers are disproportionately affected by roadblocks and checkpoints. Israeli soldiers injure and harass Palestinian women students who then decide not to go to school out of fear of harassment or because they are unable to endure the long walks to schools which are designed to avoid settlers or soldiers. Female teachers are also routinely harassed through body searches and are, as a result, more likely than male teachers to stop working.<sup>25</sup> In a paradigmatic example of harassment, a young female student in the Nablus area reported that Israeli soldiers stopped her and her cousin with rude language, took her ID, and proceeded to comment on her cousin's "adult body and big breasts." The experience was so traumatizing, the girl stated, that they "could not do a thing."<sup>26</sup>

In Gaza, female students are subject to similarly long waits and harassment at the Abu Holi checkpoint, which is the only way to travel between north and south Gaza. Checkpoints add more waiting time and opportunities for potential harassment, thus preventing female students from going to university in Gaza City where most universities are located. Moreover, due to total restrictions of travel in place since 2000, Gazans are prohibited from studying in the West Bank while Gazan students already studying in the West Bank are denied the right to travel to visit their families in Gaza.

### **2. Reproductive Health**

The number of Palestinians receiving proper health care has decreased due to their inability to reach health centers. On many occasions, doctors are unable to reach health centers in order to provide these services because of checkpoints, prevention by soldiers, or both.<sup>27</sup> Prior to March 2002, 10% of patients needing medical attention required more than one hour to reach health facilities. After March 2002, 22% required more than one hour.<sup>28</sup> In a survey carried out by the Palestinian Ministry of Health and Al-Quds University, mobility restriction was the most common reason reported for not seeking medical assistance (35%).<sup>29</sup> 88% of households changing health facilities cited reasons related to mobility restriction as the main reason of their change.<sup>30</sup>

Pregnant Palestinian women seeking medical help are especially vulnerable to long waits at checkpoints. Normally preventable medical situations become emergency situations, often resulting in death. A number of unsafe deliveries, in which both mothers and their infants die, have occurred at checkpoints. Pregnant women also face psychological and physical threats to their well-being, through incidents of gas inhalation, shelling, and shooting, which threaten both mother and fetus.

- From the beginning of the second *Intifada* to March 2004, 55 Palestinian women gave birth at checkpoints and 33 newborns were stillborn at checkpoints, due to delays or denial of permission to reach medical facilities.<sup>31</sup> One pregnant woman was shot by Israeli soldiers at a checkpoint in Nablus.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Hass, A. (2004, Feb 2). A Barrier that Casts a Long Shadow. *Ha'aretz*. Retrieved January 13, 2005 from <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/pages/ShArt.jhtml?itemNo=389653&contrassID=2&subContrassID=1&sbSubContrassID=0&listSrc=Y>

<sup>25</sup> Ministry of Higher Education. (2004, April-June). Impact of Israeli Measures on Economic Conditions of Palestinian Households. Ramallah, Palestine.

<sup>26</sup> Documented by Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counseling, 1/2003, Nablus

<sup>27</sup> B'Tselem. (n.d.) Testimonies on the Infringement of the Right to Medical Treatment. Retrieved January 13, 2005 from [http://www.btselem.org/English/Obstructing\\_Medical\\_Treatment/Testimonies.asp](http://www.btselem.org/English/Obstructing_Medical_Treatment/Testimonies.asp).

<sup>28</sup> Ministry of Health. (2003) Access to Health Services in the West Bank and Gaza Strip: Facts and Figures. Ramallah, Palestine.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Supra, Note 12.

<sup>31</sup> Ministry of Health. (2004, March). Statistics published in a conference.

<sup>32</sup> See Internet at [<http://www.wclac.org/stories/checkpoint.html>]

- Between 2000 and 2002, births supervised by skilled health workers decreased from 97.4% in 2000 to 67% in 2002. Over the same period, home deliveries increased from 3% in 2000 to 30% in 2002 due to movement restrictions. Infants and mothers have died as a result.<sup>33</sup>
- Due to movement restrictions, there has been a near five-fold increase in the number of pregnant women (15-49 years old) who received no prenatal care, from 4.4% in 2000 to 19.6% in 2001.<sup>34</sup>

**Possible Questions:** What humanitarian measures has Israel taken to facilitate the movement of pregnant Palestinian women or women taking their infants to hospitals across checkpoints? How does the Israeli military differentiate between “security” and “non-security” risks?

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<sup>33</sup> The Implementation of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Program of Action (PoA) 1994-2004 National Report of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Ramallah, Palestine. See also, UN Development Fund for Women. (n.d.) Gender Profile of the Conflict in the OPT. Retrieved January 13, 2005 from <http://womenwarpeace.org>.

<sup>34</sup> PCBS. (2002). Main Indicators of Gender Statistics. Retrieved January 13, 2005 from <http://www.pcbs.org>.

## **Articles 2, 5, 9, 11, 12, 15(4), 16- Family Unification**

### **1. The Nationality and Entry into Israel Law**

In July 2003, the Israeli parliament (the Knesset) passed the *Nationality and Entry into Israel Law* which is intended to stop family unification where one spouse is a resident of the OPT. The Law effectively prohibits the granting of Israeli citizenship to 'any resident of the area' of the OPT. It suspends the procedure by which Palestinians from the OPT who married either an Arab citizen of Israel or a Palestinian permanent resident of Jerusalem had previously been able to unify the family by applying for legal residency in Israel or Jerusalem, and, if they were successful, to obtain Israeli citizenship or permanent resident status respectively. In the case of occupied East Jerusalem, illegally annexed by Israel shortly after 1967, Palestinian residents therein were given a stateless permanent resident status, as opposed to Israeli citizenship.

The Law blocks not only the unification of such families, but also any consideration of their application under the "graduated procedure" system lasting several years, ostensibly to test the validity of the marriage. The practical effect of the *Nationality and Entry into Israel Law* is that thousands of affected families - including many men, women and children who have been in the process of obtaining family unification for years - live separated from each other with no legal means available to unify the family. The only way to maintain the unity of the family, beyond leaving Israel and the OPT, is to reside illegally in either territory in permanent fear of investigation and expulsion. This places immense burdens on the psychological state of Palestinian women, and undermines their freedom of movement; their right to work and care for their family and other related rights.

The Law prevents the husband of a permanent Palestinian woman resident in Jerusalem from acquiring permanent residency in the city. Many have ended up living outside East Jerusalem in other areas of the OPT in order to maintain the unity of the family, while renting a home in Jerusalem and paying municipal taxes and utility bills there, to demonstrate that the city is their "center of life", thereby retaining their Jerusalem IDs. This has doubled the economic burden on women as household caretakers since the beginning of the *Intifada*. In addition, women who lose their Jerusalem ID lose access to health and other social services and do not necessarily acquire a West Bank ID, and risk being left without any nationality at all.

Moreover, under the new law, children born in the OPT to parents for whom one is a permanent resident of Jerusalem are no longer automatically registered in the Jerusalem population registry. Palestinian women residents in East Jerusalem wishing to register their children must go through a tedious bureaucratic process to register the child and to prove that Jerusalem is their "center of life", or face revocation of their ID. Additionally, those women whose children were born in the OPT and who remain unregistered from the age of 12 may therefore be deprived of their children, and of their right to live in a family unit, for the sole reason that the child was born outside Jerusalem. This especially affects women going into labor during a visit to her family in other areas of the OPT, or wishing to be with her family when giving birth. Alternatively, such women may continue to reside illegally with their children in Jerusalem without permits. Children are thus forced to stay with one family member but not both. Thus the law infringes on the rights of Palestinian women to enjoy the same rights and responsibilities as a parent, thereby undermining best interest of the child. Children born to Jerusalemite women married to nationals of Arab countries face the highest risks of remaining without a legal status. Not automatically allowed to be registered in Jerusalem, those children are also not recognized by the governments of a number of Arab countries that have no diplomatic relations with Israel.

In an effort to provide an ostensibly legal basis for the law, Israel has argued that the cessation of family unification procedures is justified by security needs. However, only 23 residents of the estimated 100,000-140,000 OPT residents that received legal status in Israel from 1992 to 2002 following family unification were said to be involved in "hostile attacks" against the state, thereby providing an insufficient basis for the allegations that a dangerous trend has developed.

Effectively the Law is intended as an integral part of Israel's policy of preserving a Jewish majority. The Law, which does not apply to Israeli settlers living in the OPT or to Israeli Jews marrying aliens, institutes a discriminatory system based on national origin, and is directed exclusively against Palestinians. Initially valid for a period of one year, it was renewed on 21 July 2004, for a further six months (effective August 2004), and may be renewed by the Knesset indefinitely, as it requires only one reading and no quorum.

The *Nationality and Entry into Israel Law* in general and the associated regime regarding family unification in particular directly and indirectly violate a number of provisions of the Convention, including all or part of Articles 2, 5, 9, 11, 12, 15(4) and 16. As noted before, Israel has entered reservations on Article 16 concerning equality of women in political and public life. In this regard CEDAW has noted that Article 16 is one of the core provisions of the Convention. As a result, entering reservations to it would only effectively deny women the main purpose of the Convention, namely that of equality. Furthermore, CEDAW noted that reservations lodged to Article 16 regardless of whether they have been lodged for national, traditional, religious or cultural reasons are incompatible with the Convention, and therefore should be reviewed, modified or withdrawn. In its Compilation of Guidelines on the Form and Content of Reports submitted by State Parties to the International Human Rights Treaties, it also stressed that "any reservation to or declaration as to any article of the Convention by the state party should be explained and its continued maintenance justified", with which to date, Israel has failed to comply.

## **2. Other Applicable International Legal Standards**

The *Nationality and Entry into Israel Law* is in breach of Israel's fundamental international legal obligation to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), ICESCR, ICCPR, and the Convention on the Nationality of Married Women. Moreover, under international humanitarian law, it violates Article 27 of the Fourth Geneva Convention which entitles civilians to respect "for their persons, their honor [and] their family rights," and Article 33 which prohibits collective punishment against civilians for acts that these persons have not committed.

**Possible Questions:** In August 2004, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination noted with concern the renewal, for a period of 6 months until December 2004, of the *Nationality and Entry into Israel Law*, and reiterated that it raised serious issues under ICERD.<sup>35</sup> Please provide information on the measures undertaken by Israel to give effect to the concerns of the Committee and to reduce the adverse affects on Palestinian women of the *Nationality and Entry into Israel Law*.

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<sup>35</sup> "Prevention of Racial Discrimination, including Early Warning Measures and Urgent Action Procedures: Decision 2 (65)," *Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination*, Sixty-Fifth Session, 2-20 August 2004, CERD/C/65/Dec2.

### Article 14- Rural Women

About 28.5% of Palestinians in the OPT live in rural areas while 15% live in refugee camps, where conditions are similar to rural areas.<sup>36</sup> Rural Palestinian women, in their daily lives, are bound more to natural resources than men. They are primarily responsible for collecting fuel, fetching the water, preparing meals, and caring for children, and ill, elderly and other people in need. They pay a greater price when environmental degradation takes place. Deforestation,<sup>37</sup> water scarcity, soil degradation, exposure to agricultural, industrial, military toxics and organic pollutants affect women's economic productivity, work load, and nutrition.

Under Israeli military operations and civilian occupation, there has been a severe destruction of the natural environment. The uprooting of trees, destruction of ancient terraces,<sup>38</sup> destruction of water systems and resources, obstruction of sewage vacuum pumps from reaching Palestinian communities, dumping of chemical waste as well as hard waste that allows the raw sewage from Israeli settlements to flow onto Palestinian agricultural land, and, most recently, the construction of a Wall to contain Palestinian communities have systematically degraded the fragile Palestinian environment with disastrous effects that will require the investment of billions of dollars over several generations to rehabilitate. Environmental toxics are particularly harmful to women and children, who are the first to contract environmental illnesses and who manifest symptoms earlier than men due to their body mass and sensitive internal organs. Already increased rates of skin infections, diarrhea, and amoeba have been detected in affected communities.

In addition to the Convention, The Beijing Platform of Action adopted by Israel in 1995 identifies women as key players in preserving the environment and natural resources and in promoting sustainable development. The importance of ensuring environmental sustainability was also underlined in Target 9 of the UN Millennium Development Goals which aims to reverse the loss of environmental resources and integrate principles of sustainable development into country programmes.

**Possible Questions:** Please describe what measures the State party has taken to prevent the denial of Palestinian women to their right to adequate living conditions through the destruction of their physical environment by military and non-military operations. What remedies has the State party provided to address this destruction?

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<sup>36</sup> Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS). (2002) *Children Statistics* No.5

<sup>37</sup> For example, between 1993-1998, Israel destroyed 24,576 trees in the OPT. See, Applied Research Institute. (2000,Jan). *An Atlas of Palestine (West Bank and Gaza)*. Jerusalem, Bethlehem: Palestine.

<sup>38</sup> These terraces have existed for hundreds of years and sustain the soil in the fragile terrain of the West Bank

## **Articles 2, 5- House Demolitions**

Since the beginning of the second *Intifada* in 2000, Israel's harsh demolition policy against the Palestinian civilian population has increased in both frequency and intensity. Houses are demolished for their proximity to illegal settlements and by-pass roads, and during illegal and indiscriminate shelling of Palestinian civilian areas. Thousands more have been demolished on the basis of being built in violation of the Israeli authorities housing permit "policy." To date, more than 430 houses in the West Bank and 2624 in the Gaza Strip have been demolished. More than 2800 people, mostly women and children have been made homeless in the West Bank alone.

In addition, hundreds of families have become homeless as a result of large scale military incursions in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The operations in Jenin refugee camp and Nablus in 2002 and the most recent military operations in Rafah refugee camp between May 13-26, 2004 represent the harshest examples. In Rafah alone, 261 houses were fully destroyed and 271 were partially destroyed. 574 families have been left homeless, affecting some 3422 people, mostly women and children.<sup>39</sup> More than 1000 who were left homeless sought refuge in UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) schools.

Israeli occupying forces justify many of their house demolitions by claiming that the homes belonged to persons who carried out, or are suspected to have carried out, armed attacks against Israeli targets. The mere presence of wanted men is sufficient to trigger demolition. Homes are fully or partially destroyed or may be sealed off to prevent entry. Many demolitions are frequently committed after the "wanted" man has already been killed, as reprisal measures, and can be of buildings and homes in which the "wanted" man did not even reside. In the majority of cases, house demolitions are not carried out for reasons of absolute military necessity but are acts of collective punishment.

House demolitions tend to occur late at night with very little notice or no notice at all. Often, residents are given as little as 15 minutes to remove all their belongings from the house allowing residents with enough time only to take their papers and money. For families whose homes have been completely demolished, the severe impact is made worse by the fact that they are prohibited from rebuilding on the site of their former home. According to UNRWA, Israeli occupying forces have increasingly used explosives in the place of bulldozers, thereby creating widespread collateral damage.

The impact of all these measures on women has been acute, and has added disproportionate economic, social and psychological burdens to their already difficult lives as a result of the political situation and the endurance of occupation. Due to the traditional divisions of labor within society based on sex, Palestinian women shoulder the larger share of household responsibilities and are the main caretakers of their families. Notwithstanding the heavy material loss due to the destruction of property, families usually find themselves without basic necessities such as clothes, food and furniture, which increases the burden and responsibilities within the domestic sphere for Palestinian women to provide basic needs and alternative housing

A home is not merely a building which provides shelter, but has great personal value, particularly to women and children who spend more of their daily time within the household than men. Since social expectations are directed towards women and mothers to take care of their children's wellbeing, and re-establish a sense of protection, safety and comfort, there is no doubt that this has magnified Palestinian women's burden of care.

### **1. Other Applicable International Legal Standards**

Israel's house demolition policy violates several other fundamental provisions of international human rights law. Several provisions in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), such as the rights not to be arbitrarily deprived of one's property and not to be subjected to arbitrary interference with one's privacy, family, home or correspondence are breached by Israel's policy. House demolitions are also in

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<sup>39</sup>Statistics made available by the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR), January 2005.

violation of the right to an adequate standard of living, including housing, as outlined in the ICESCR, and constitute a breach of several provisions of the ICCPR, particularly the rights to choose one's residence; not to be subjected to arbitrary interference with one's privacy, family, home or correspondence; and the equal protection of the law without discrimination. In addition, as asserted by the United Nations Committee against Torture, an extensive house demolition policy may amount to instances of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment in violation of Article 16 of the CAT.

Furthermore, the Israeli policy of house demolitions is a clear violation of international humanitarian law, and constitutes a war crime. Article 53 of the Fourth Geneva Convention prohibits the destruction of personal property, "except where such destruction is rendered absolutely necessary by military operations." Since it also has the effect of punishing a person for offences that he or she may not have personally committed, they also constitute collective punishment or measures of intimidation, which are expressly prohibited under Article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, and Article 50 of the Hague Regulations, both of which are declaratory of customary international law.

The house demolitions which have been carried out in the OPT are based on Regulation 119(1) of the Defence (Emergency) Regulations, 1945: laws passed, but since repealed, by the British during the time of their mandate over Palestine, and therefore clearly contravene international law.

<p><b>Possible Questions:</b> How does the Government of Israel reconcile the demolition of Palestinian homes and entire neighborhoods with its obligations under the Convention? What measures has the State party taken to address the impact of house demolitions on Palestinian women?</p>
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## **ANNEX I: Summary of Possible Questions**

1. The CEDAW Committee would like to reiterate its view that Israel is responsible under international law for the application of the Convention in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. We are gravely concerned with the increasing extent of violations of the Convention in those territories. Would the State party please explain why the Third Period Report does not address the status of Palestinian women in the OPT and East Jerusalem? In light of the State party's position that East Jerusalem falls within its territorial jurisdiction, the CEDAW Committee would like the State party to explain specifically why the report does not include a discussion on the status of Palestinian women in this area.
2. Please provide information regarding what steps are taken to monitor and appropriately discipline members of Israeli military who sexually harass Palestinian women, including whether there is an official complaint mechanism, what guidelines are available in handling complaints on this issue, and statistics regarding the number of complaints which have resulted in disciplinary action. Has the State party established a system which will encourage Palestinian women to report to its officials incidents of harassment or violence?
3. Please provide information regarding what measures the State party is taking to prevent violence by Israeli settlers against Palestinians, including statistics regarding how many settlers are tried for such violence, how many convicted, and sentences given to those convicted. The State party is asked to include information regarding what instructions and procedures are given to members of the Israeli military, in particular those in Hebron, in dealing with settler violence. Please discuss in clear terms how the State party provides protection to Israeli settlers in the Occupied Palestinian Territories whilst not providing a comparable protection to Palestinian women and children who are subjected to attacks by the settler population.
4. Please indicate what measures are being taken to ensure that Palestinian women are not subjected to domestic violence, in particular addressing the number of instances of coordination between Israeli and Palestinian police in dealing with such cases, as outlined in the Oslo agreements. Do Israeli military authorities facilitate the movement of Palestinian police in order to assist them in addressing women victims of violence? What instructions are given to Israeli soldiers in how to deal with Palestinian women victims of violence?
5. What steps has Israel taken, in order to meet the obligations outlined under Article 2, to eradicate the use of gender-based threats of violence against Palestinian women prisoners and detainees? What measures has Israel taken to respect the integrity of Palestinian women under interrogation?
6. What humanitarian measures has Israel taken to facilitate the movement of pregnant Palestinian women or women taking their infants to hospitals across checkpoints? How does the Israeli military differentiate between "security" and "non-security" risks?
7. In August 2004, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination noted with concern the renewal, for a period of 6 months until December 2004, of the *Nationality and Entry into Israel Law*, and reiterated that it raised serious issues under ICERD.<sup>40</sup> Please provide information on the measures undertaken by Israel to give effect to the concerns of the Committee and to reduce the adverse affects on Palestinian women of the *Nationality and Entry into Israel Law*.
8. Please describe what measures the State party has taken to prevent the denial of Palestinian women to their right to adequate living conditions through the destruction of their physical

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<sup>40</sup> "Prevention of Racial Discrimination, including Early Warning Measures and Urgent Action Procedures: Decision 2 (65)," *Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination*, Sixty-Fifth Session, 2-20 August 2004, CERD/C/65/Dec2.

environment by military and non-military operations. What remedies has the State party provided to address this destruction?

9. How does the Government of Israel reconcile the demolition of Palestinian homes and entire neighborhoods with its obligations under the Convention? What measures has the State party taken to address the impact of house demolitions on Palestinian women?

## **ANNEX II: Information about the partners**

**Al-Haq**, the West Bank affiliate of the International Commission of Jurists - Geneva, is a Palestinian human rights organisation located in Ramallah, West Bank. The organisation was established in 1979 to protect and promote human rights and rule of law in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), and has special consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council. Al-Haq is committed to the uniform application of the universal principles of human rights regardless of the identity of the perpetrator or victim of abuse.

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**Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counseling (WCLAC)** is a Palestinian women's rights organization that aims to address the causes and consequences of gender-based violence within the community as well as the gender-specific effects of the increasing militarization associated with the Israeli occupation. To this end, WCLAC acts not only to reverse historical negligence, the negative cultural legacy and social outlook towards Palestinian women within the community, but also, to address the needs of women victimized by Israel's violent military actions in the Occupied Territories. WCLAC received the 1998 French Republic Award on Human Rights.

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**The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights-Gaza (PCHR)** is an independent non-profit organization based in the Gaza Strip. The Centre was established in 1995 by a group of Palestinian lawyers and human rights activists in order to protect human rights and promote the rule of law in accordance with international standards and to create and develop democratic institutions and an active civil society in Palestine. The Centre enjoys consultative status with the ECOSOC of the United Nations. It was granted the 1996 French Republic Award on Human Rights and the 2002 Bruno Kreisky Award for Outstanding Achievements in the Area of Human Rights. The Centre is an affiliate of the International Commission of Jurists, the Federation Internationale des Ligues des Droits de l'Homme (FIDH), and the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network.

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