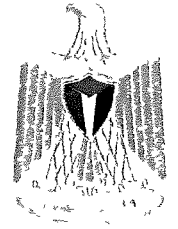




PERMANENT  
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**Statement by H.E. Ms. Rabiha Diab, Minister of Women's Affairs, State of Palestine,  
before the 57<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, 6 March 2013:**  
*Check against delivery*

Madam Chair,  
Ladies and Gentlemen, Distinguished Guests,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you on your election as Chair of the Commission and to also congratulate the Bureau members, wishing you all success.

It is my pleasure today to speak about Palestinian women, their issues and aspirations for a better future that would provide them with security and safety, and enable them to participate in the building of their homeland at the political, social, economic and cultural levels, in the State of Palestine, that is free from violence and where democracy, social justice, full equality and genuine partnership between men and women prevail.

Here, allow me to express, on my own behalf and on behalf of the Palestinian women, our profound gratitude to all sisterly and friendly countries for their firm stand by Palestine and its just cause by voting in favor of resolution 67/19 granting Palestine non-member observer State status in the United Nations. We also thank H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations, for his report on the "Situation of and assistance to Palestinian Women", and for his support of the Palestinian people and their right to self-determination and the achievement of the independence of their State, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Violence is a global phenomenon, and despite all efforts and attempts by United Nations, regional and national bodies around the world, this phenomenon persists, as field studies and research conducted by governmental and private institutions indicate that at least one out of three women is subjected to violence either by beating, coercion or humiliation every day of her life. In this regard, the World Health Organization (WHO) stated that approximately 70% of homicide victims were women being murdered at the hands of their male partners.

Women are still subjected to disgraceful violence and threats by men against their lives and existence as human beings with dignity and freedom, whether at home or at work, and in terms of political and economic participation in their societies. Such difficulties continue to impede their strong involvement in various decision-making spheres.

Because of all this, work began since the 1980s to eliminate the phenomenon of violence. There was the Third World Conference on Women, held in Nairobi in 1985, up to the Beijing Declaration in 1995 aimed at taking a stand against this global phenomenon from which women suffer and which has become an obstacle to genuine sustainable development and constitutes a flagrant violation of the most basic human rights.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Like other women, Palestinian women suffer from societal violence, whether at the level of family or work, or from laws that they are subjected to, as confirmed by Palestinian statistics. But, the most harsh and severe violence to which they are subjected is that of the Israeli occupation, which affects all aspects of Palestinian life and all segments of the people, women, men, elderly or children, as it inflicts on them a systematic policy of racial violence without international monitoring or law or deterrent. The Israeli occupation kills, arrests, assaults, destroys homes and evicts their inhabitants, builds walls and checkpoints, and confiscates lands, in violation of all international conventions and human rights, considering itself above the law.

Moreover, it must be underscored that the serious political consequences within the context of the Palestinian question as a result of the policies and practices of the Israeli occupying forces, including to Judaize Occupied East Jerusalem and obstruct it from being the capital of the State of Palestine, to expel its inhabitants, including the demolition of houses for settlers who wreak havoc on the land, and many other systematic racist policies, are being borne by Palestinian women. We also cannot forget the blockade imposed by the Israeli occupation against the Gaza Strip. This oppressive and unjust siege is affecting the life of our entire people, children, women, elderly and men, and is an obstacle to progress and prosperity and to rebuilding what has been destroyed by the Israeli war machine and its internationally banned bombs.

Throughout their long history, Palestinian women have proven their resilience and strength in their homeland. Despite their subjugation to continuous Israeli violations, women's institutions continue their quest to advance their rights and their freedom to live in dignity. In this regard, and in order to provide safety and security for Palestinian women, the Ministry of Women's Affairs, in partnership with community and women organizations, has issued ministerial decisions that will reduce the rate of violence against women, which include:

1. Establishment of the Supreme National Committee for the Elimination of Violence against Women,
2. Ratification of the Strategic Plan for the Elimination of Violence against Women 2011-2019,
3. Draft law for family protection against violence,
4. Draft system for transferring battered women to health, social and police services.

5. Issuance of a resolution by the Council of Ministers to form a national committee for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000).
6. Formation of the Sensitive National Committee on Social Gender.

Thus, we are working today and striving with all our energy to join the international conventions on women, and our efforts would not have succeeded without the support of United Nations bodies, especially UN WOMEN.

In conclusion, we thank you for your constant noble positions and support of the Palestinian people to regain their rights in freedom and independence, and we thank you for your support of Palestinian women. As we reaffirm our commitment and support of the international conventions and norms adopted by the international community with regard to women, we stress the necessity of ending the Israeli occupation of our land and the release of our brave women and men prisoners in Israeli jails and the lifting of the siege on the Gaza Strip. We also call for and underscore the necessity for Israel to unconditionally comply with all obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law and human rights law, including the Geneva Conventions.

We call upon the international community in its entirety to renounce and condemn the systematic terrorist acts perpetrated by the Israeli occupation against the Palestinian people, and to take a prominent and main role in the implementation of measures and mechanisms that would eliminate violence in all its forms and manifestations against our defenseless people, including our women, in the face of the most powerful military arsenal in the region.

Thank you for your kind attention.