



Women Development Organization
l'Organisation pour le Développement de la femme

منظمة تنمية المرأة



Ministry of Women's Affairs

Palestinian Women Surviving Against All Odds

A Flagship Report on Crisis and Structural Reform



Acknowledgements

The Women Development Organization (WDO) extends its profound appreciation to the Palestinian Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA) for its close collaboration and valuable contribution to this report. The Ministry's provision of data, insights, and policy guidance has been essential in shaping the study's vision and recommendations, ensuring that they reflect the realities, needs, and aspirations of Palestinian women living under occupation.

This joint effort stands as a testament to the shared commitment of WDO and MOWA to advancing women's empowerment, promoting gender-responsive policies, and advocating for justice and equality in the face of ongoing challenges.

The Women Development Organization reaffirms its continued dedication to supporting the Palestinian people especially women and girls whose resilience and strength remain a source of inspiration across the OIC member states and beyond.

A Letter from the Executive Director of the Women Development Organization

It is with profound respect and commitment that the Women Development Organization (WDO) presents this flagship report on Palestinian women and girls. This publication is both a documentation of urgent realities and a call to action for the international community to uphold justice, dignity, and human rights for the Palestinian people.

This report is part of WDO's broader mandate to address the intersecting challenges faced by women in crisis-affected contexts. It provides a comprehensive analysis of the realities confronting Palestinian women and girls, including barriers to economic participation, education, healthcare, security, and access to justice. Through this work, WDO continues to ensure that gender perspectives remain central to regional and international policy responses to the situation in Palestine.

As an organization dedicated to delivering impact-driven programs, developing informed policy recommendations, and strengthening regional cooperation, WDO views this report not only as a research product but as a call to mobilize collective action. We remain committed to working with our partners and member states to promote targeted interventions that respond to urgent needs while also laying the groundwork for sustainable development and resilience.

This publication would not have been possible without the dedication of the WDO research, advisory, and coordination teams, whose efforts ensured its analytical depth and relevance. Their commitment to evidence-based policy and advocacy reflects the values at the core of WDO's mission.

Above all, we honor the enduring strength of Palestinian women, the mothers, educators, caregivers, entrepreneurs, professionals, and community leaders who continue to safeguard life and preserve hope for future generations. Their resilience is not only a testament to courage but also a guiding force for global solidarity.

In closing, WDO extends its appreciation to the Palestinian Ministry of Women Affairs for its support and cooperation throughout the development of this report. Their contribution reflects a shared vision for empowering Palestinian women and advancing their rights at the national, regional, and international levels.

WDO will continue to stand with the State of Palestine and with the Palestinian Ministry of Women Affairs in advancing gender-responsive policies, meaningful advocacy, and practical interventions that support Palestinian women today and in the future.

With Sincere Appreciation,

Dr. Afnan Alshuaiby

Executive Director

WDO

A Letter from the Minister of Women's Affairs – State of Palestine

It is both a privilege and a responsibility to launch this flagship report at such a defining moment in our national history—amid an ongoing humanitarian catastrophe and the unprecedented Israeli aggression against our people in Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and Jerusalem. The compounded consequences of this aggression have deeply affected every aspect of life, particularly for Palestinian women and girls, making this report not only timely but essential.

This report represents a national and institutional effort grounded in evidence, policy relevance, and collective commitment. It reflects the joint endeavor between the **Ministry of Women's Affairs** and the **Women Development Organization (WDO)** of the **Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)**, and the remarkable dedication of the research team who combined rigorous analysis with field realities to provide an accurate and comprehensive understanding of the situation of Palestinian women under aggression.

Beyond documenting violations and impacts, the report sets forth a forward-looking framework—identifying what must be done in the short term through humanitarian response and protection, and in the long term through sustainable recovery, institutional resilience, and gender-responsive development policies. It is a call to align our national response with justice, accountability, and human dignity.

The Ministry considers this report a cornerstone for guiding policy dialogue and programmatic interventions, in line with Palestine's **Cross-Sectoral National Gender Equality Strategy (2025–2027)**, the **National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2023–2030)**, and the **National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women (2022–2030)**. Together, these frameworks form the backbone of our collective efforts to achieve equality, justice, and peace.

I extend my sincere appreciation to the **Women Development Organization** for its genuine partnership, and to all researchers, experts, and national institutions whose commitment and professionalism have enriched this important work. This report is not the end of a process, but rather a foundation for continued collaboration—to ensure that Palestinian women are protected, empowered, and able to lead in rebuilding and shaping our shared future.

With Sincere Appreciation,
Mona Al-Khalili
Minister of Women's Affairs
State of Palestine

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Executive Summary

This Women Development Organization (WDO) report seeks to capture the experiences of women and young girls living under Israel's occupation-led "Femi-genocide."¹ According to UN experts, the extreme brutality and violence against Palestinian women is a deliberate strategy to destroy the continuity of the Palestinian people. The systematic destruction of sexual and reproductive healthcare facilities and the destruction of healthcare, educational, residential, and agricultural facilities have resulted in the massacre of millions while depriving others of the necessities of survival. The gendered impact of the genocide was brutal, with thousands of women dead and infants buried. According to the 2025 report of UN Women, the systematic violence of this genocide especially targets women and children. (UN OCHA, 2025; UN Women, 2025; WHO, 2025). The UN Human Rights Commission reports this genocide as 'unprecedented and beyond the endurance capacity of humans' (UNHRC, 2023). This report takes the important task of consolidating key findings as they unfold in Palestine and further contextualizes them by operationalizing the theoretical, ideological, structural, and historical apparatuses.

The suggested Strategic interventions especially highlight the pivotal role the League of Arab Nations and the OIC can play in mitigating the crisis. The failure of key international organizations has proven their incapacity and reliance on donor funding. The report emphasizes regional support and enhanced collaboration between the Palestinian Ministry of Women (MOWA)² and OIC member states. This report aims to serve as a powerful political call to action, highlighting the urgency of the current circumstances and the need for coordinated, gender-informed policy solutions, drawing on interdisciplinary approaches to offer faith-based, technology-driven, and cost-effective solutions to the problem.

¹ UN experts have used the term "Femi-genocide"¹ to describe the violence against Palestinian women, arguing that it is part of a deliberate strategy to destroy the continuity of the Palestinian people. This includes the systematic destruction of sexual and reproductive healthcare facilities, which has led to a surge in miscarriages and the deaths of pregnant women and infants due to a lack of essential healthcare. United Nations Human Rights Council. (2024). *A/HRC/53/25 - Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry*. Retrieved from <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/co-israel/index>

² The Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA) of the State of Palestine was established in 2003 to advance the rights and status of Palestinian women. The Ministry works primarily in areas of gender equality, eliminating discrimination, and enhancing women's participation across all sectors of society. (MOWA.org)

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.0 Historical and Ideological Underpinnings of the Israel-Palestine Genocide

The Israel-Palestine conflict continues to stand out as one of the most enduring and unresolved crises in contemporary history, persistently unraveling the humanitarian fabric of the global community and casting a long shadow over international relations. This intricate and multifaceted situation has devastated countless lives, with no viable resolution currently in sight, leading to an ever-deepening sense of despair among those affected by it. The recent escalation in violence, particularly from late 2024 through 2025, has alarmingly intensified, prompting many human rights experts and international organizations to characterize the dire circumstances as reaching the threshold of what can be defined as genocide. In this context, Palestinian women have tragically borne the disproportionate weight of these atrocities, standing at the intersection of occupation, structural violence,³ and socioeconomic precarity.⁴ This precarious position has not only exacerbated their vulnerability but also highlighted the urgent need for a concerted global response to address systemic injustices. The international community must engage in meaningful dialogue and action to confront these issues and work towards peaceful and equitable resolutions.

Historically, the complex roots of this systemic violence can be traced back to the emergence of the Zionist nationalist movement, which took shape in 19th-century Europe. This movement not only laid the groundwork for significant political changes but also culminated in the establishment of Israel in 1948. A pivotal event in this historical narrative is the Nakba, often referred to as the "catastrophe," during which more than 700,000 Palestinians were forcibly expelled from their homes and into refugee camps. This tragic occurrence set the stage for an enduring dispossession regime, with repercussions lasting for decades. Scholars such as Ilan Pappé (2006) have rigorously detailed how this extensive campaign of displacement and violence amounted to what can be characterized as ethnic cleansing.⁵ This period was marked by systemic and institutionalized dehumanization, widespread land seizures,

³ UN Women. (2022). *Gender-based violence in humanitarian settings: Lessons from Gaza*. United Nations.

⁴ Zhumatay (2024) Fassin, D. (2011). *Humanitarian reason: A moral history of the present*. University of California Press

⁵ Pappé, I. (2006). *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*. Oneworld Publications

and a series of recurrent military offensives aimed at maintaining control over the Palestinian population in Israel. These strategies have evolved into a long-term model of occupation that structurally marginalizes Palestinians, systematically destroys essential infrastructure, denies fundamental rights, and perpetuates a cycle of state-sanctioned violence. In examining the current chapter of this grim legacy, it becomes evident that it is marked not only by intensified aggression against the Palestinian people but also by the emergence of gendered violence against women.⁶ These are described by Zhumatay (2024) and Fassin (2011) as constitutive elements of what has been termed a "gendered genocide"⁷ specifically targeting Palestinian women. This alarming characterization highlights the intersection of violence and gender discrimination, elucidating how women's struggles are profoundly intertwined with the broader sociopolitical context of the ongoing conflict.

1.1 Below is a Summary of the August 2023-Ongoing Unfolding of the Crisis

As of mid-2025, the humanitarian crisis affecting the regions of Gaza and the West Bank has intensified to unprecedented levels, resulting in a situation that is increasingly described as 'dire and urgently requiring international attention.'⁸ Current estimates indicate that over 70% of Gaza's population has been displaced from their homes, with millions killed, educational and healthcare infrastructure destroyed, and famine and malnutrition penetrating across shelters, as reported by the UN Women report. Moreover, female-headed households are common, with children and women suffering serious injuries. The UN OCHA (2025) report calls this an 'unprecedented series of violence', especially against women. Experts label this genocide as a fem-genocide, as reproductive and maternal healthcare injustice is systematically carried out against women's bodies and lives. (UN OCHA, 2025)⁹

1.2 Key Outcomes Affecting the Future of Survivors of The Genocide (Solutions Provided in Strategic Interventions)

- 1) Severe Mental and Psychological Trauma:** The consequences of the ongoing occupation and genocide have resulted in systemic failures, particularly pronounced among women in both Gaza and the West Bank. Women report fears, anxiety, PTSD, and permanent displacement, and the loss

⁶ Shalhoub-Kevorkian, N. (2023). The politics of birth and death: Palestinian women's narratives of violence. *Gender & Society*, 37(1), 65-89.

⁷ Gendered genocide refers to the ways in which genocidal violence is carried out differently against men and women, where men are often executed as potential leaders or fighters, while women are subjected to sexual violence, forced pregnancy, or enslavement as a means of destroying the targeted group. (Shalhoub, 2023)

⁸

⁹<https://www.un.org/unispal/document/ocha-humanitarian-situation-update-306-gaza-strip/>
<https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-288-gaza-strip?>

Human Rights Watch. (2024). *"They treated us like animals": Sexual violence against Palestinian women during conflict*. Human Rights Watch; (OCHA, 2025).

of their homes and communities’ results in a series of psychological attacks.

- 2) **Civil Society Destroyed:** Homes, women’s personal belongings, and most importantly, civil documentation systems are destroyed. Women are obstructed from accessing essential legal identification, social services, and critical international aid. The lack of civil status registration or legal identity places these women at risk of erasure—not merely from the ongoing nation-building processes within their territories but also from the overarching global human rights framework intended to safeguard their fundamental rights and their dignity.
- 3) **Complete Destruction of Educational and Healthcare Infrastructure:** The ongoing and widespread destruction of healthcare and educational infrastructure has had distinctly gendered and profoundly catastrophic consequences for women. No access to hospitals with basic medical supplies. Women are forced to deliver without any medical support. has been severely decimated by relentless military operations. This has resulted in classrooms being turned into ruins, leaving countless futures immersed in uncertainty and hopelessness (WHO, 2025).¹⁰
- 4) **Reproductive and Maternal Health Injustice:** Essential reproductive health services remain largely inaccessible to many, creating significant barriers for women who require them. This, in turn, has contributed to a marked increase in maternal mortality rates, as reported by the World Health Organization in 2025. The field of education was once regarded as a vital source of empowerment and opportunity for Palestinian women.

The Table Below summarizes the systematic and pervasive violations against women in the conflict, highlighting the urgent need for humanitarian responses and accountability, which is further discussed in the following chapters.

Table 1: Atrocities Committed Against Women in the Israel-Palestine Conflict After October 2023

¹⁰ Ibid.

Date	Type of Atrocity	Description	Location
October 2023	Civilian Casualties	Over 46,000 fatalities reported, with approximately 24,000 identified as women and children.	Gaza
November 2023	Gender-Based Violence	Significant increase in sexual and reproductive violence linked to military actions.	Gaza
December 2023	Targeted Killings	Reports of deliberate killings of women, including accounts of snipers shooting women during evacuation attempts.	Gaza
January 2024	Destruction of Healthcare Facilities	Attacks on clinics causing loss of reproductive health services, with facilities like Al-Basma IVF Center targeted.	Gaza
February 2024	Unsafe Birth Conditions	Women forced to give birth under unsafe conditions due to a lack of medical supplies and personnel.	Gaza
February 2024	Malnutrition and Starvation	Pregnant and lactating women facing severe nutritional deficiencies amidst widespread starvation.	Gaza
March 2024	Psychological Impact	Increased instances of PTSD, obstetric emergencies, and miscarriages reported due to ongoing trauma.	Gaza
March 2024	Public Humiliation	Female detainees reported incidents of being photographed in degrading circumstances by	Gaza

		Israeli forces.	
April 2024	Violations in Detention	Reports of sexual violence, including rape, faced by women in Israeli prisons during detainment.	Israeli Prisons
April 2024	Settler Violence	Rise in sexual abuse incidents reported involving collaboration between Israeli settlers and security forces.	West Bank

Source: *UN Human Rights Council report A/HRC/58/CRP.6*¹¹

¹¹ <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessions-regular/session58/a-hrc-58-crp-6.pdf>

1.3 Research Objectives

This report aims to discuss the ongoing onslaught of inhumane warfare, policies, and the massacre of Palestinian women. The ongoing genocide has disproportionately and violently affected Palestinian women and children. This report transcends the boundaries of mere historical excavation and humanitarian testimony. It serves as a powerful political call to action, highlighting the urgency of the current circumstances. This genocide is to be recognized this moment as one characterized by civil erasure,¹² legal invisibility, and systemic gendered dispossession, which disproportionately impacts women within these communities. While previous reports have extensively documented the grave challenges faced by women in this context, this report endeavors to go beyond a mere description. It takes an active stance against the risk of rhetorical repetition by advancing strategic, policy-oriented recommendations that are specifically tailored for implementation by the OIC member states and allied humanitarian stakeholders. These recommendations are informed by comparative insights gathered from other conflict-affected contexts that have successfully mobilized gender-responsive recovery efforts and engaged in institutional rebuilding efforts. Leveraging these insights, this report aims to provide a roadmap for targeted actions to address the pressing gendered consequences of the current crisis.

1.4 Research Methodology

This report employs a mixed-methods research approach that utilizes both primary and secondary data. An extensive literature review was conducted, incorporating advocacy reports, NGO briefings, international human rights inquiries, independent research, and academic literature. Primary data were gathered through semi-structured in-depth interviews. Additionally, interviews with activists, academics, and government officials operating in the Palestinian context provided insights into their on-the-ground experiences. This report presents the findings while ensuring adherence to all ethical standards. All interviews were conducted with participants fully informed of the nature of the study and its publication protocols.

1.5 Theoretical Lens

The report adopts an interdisciplinary theoretical lens, specifically using theories of Structural Violence

¹² Refers to the systematic denial or stripping away of an individual or group's recognition within the civic order, often excluding them from public records, institutions, or rights, thereby rendering them socially non-existent. Describes the condition in which individuals or groups are excluded from legal recognition and protection—such as lacking citizenship, documentation, or legal status—leaving them outside the framework of rights and justice. (Galtung, 1969)

(Galtung, 1979)¹³ and Intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991).¹⁴ Structural violence theory refers to the systematic denial or stripping away of an individual's or group's recognition within the civic order, often excluding them from public records, institutions, or rights, thereby rendering them socially non-existent. Intersectionality refers to the multiplicity of women's identities, where power, systems, and structures are studied to better understand how each factor can impact a woman's life. (Crenshaw, 1991)

1.6 Conclusion

This chapter traces the trajectory of the Israeli occupation of Palestine and the mass atrocities carried out over decades. The escalation of the crisis since 2023¹⁵ has taken the shape of a genocide, stripping women of their basic right to live. With millions killed, the impact of this genocide has plunged women into homelessness without medical, educational, legal, or humanitarian support. This report adopts mixed-methods research to study women lived experiences, sharing their stories of resilience and hope. In many cases, in the face of unspeakable violence, profound dislocation, and ongoing adversity, these women continue to rise and lead their communities, vowing to make a difference in their lives despite the odds stacked against them. They are actively engaged in organizing extensive community networks that foster mutual support and collaboration, educating children in innovative and informal settings that defy the constraints imposed upon them, and passionately advocating for fundamental human rights, which are often denied to them. Furthermore, they play a crucial role in sustaining and nurturing the collective Palestinian identity, which remains a vital anchor during times of extreme distress. Their resilience is not only symbolic but also structural; they are the bedrock that holds together what remains of civic life amid the ongoing ruins. The chapter further introduces the theories of structural violence and intersectionality that are used to study the data findings and highlights the importance of these theories in suggesting recommendations.

The Next chapter discusses the theory that is used to draw on the recommendations and further highlight the underpinnings of this crisis.

¹³ Galtung, J. (1969). Violence, peace, and peace research. *Journal of Peace Research*, 6(3), 167-191.

¹⁴ Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review*, 43(6), 1241-1299.

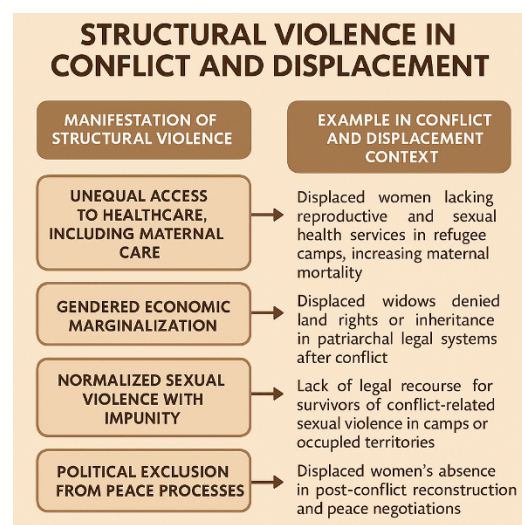
¹⁵ <https://www.ungeneva.org/en/news-media/news/2025/09/110618/gaza-top-independent-rights-probe-alleges-israel-committed-genocide>

Chapter 2: Theory Structural Violence and Intersectionality

2.0 Introduction

The concept of systematic/structural violence, introduced by Johan Galtung (1969), refers to the systematic ways in which social structures, institutions, and systems cause harm by preventing individuals from meeting their basic needs. In conflict zones, such as Palestine, this form of violence is deeply embedded in governance structures, humanitarian systems, and occupation policies. Unlike direct physical violence, structural violence manifests as long-term deprivation, inequality, and denial of essential services.¹⁶ The gendered impact of conflict in Palestine demonstrates that systematic violence operates not only through direct killing but also through the deliberate reshaping of social and ecological systems. Palestinian women endure malnutrition, trauma, and disproportionate care burdens, while ecological dispossession, such as restrictions on water, farmland, and seeds, creates chronic food insecurity. These pressures, intensified by poverty, displacement, and militarized violence, create gendered vulnerabilities that deny women security, dignity, and autonomy.

For instance, the destruction of hospitals, restrictions on medical supplies, and blockades have created acute shortages in maternal and reproductive health services, leaving women disproportionately exposed to preventable deaths and complications. Forced displacement pushes women into overcrowded shelters, where the absence of privacy heightens the risk of gender-based violence. International aid mechanisms often prioritize military ceasefires and reconstruction over women's reproductive



¹⁶ Farmer, P. (2004). An anthropology of structural violence. *Current Anthropology*, 45(3), 305-325.

health, legal protection, and leadership roles, further marginalizing women during post-conflict recovery.

To begin addressing these challenges, governments, international organizations, and donors must prioritize women's Health and Safety in Humanitarian Aid and ensure that emergency aid packages and humanitarian interventions allocate resources specifically to maternal health, reproductive services, and protection against gender-based violence. It also strengthens women's agency in peacebuilding and governance. Mandate women's inclusion in peace negotiations, reconstruction planning, and local governance structures, recognizing their leadership roles in community resilience, address Structural Deprivation Through Rights-Based Interventions, and support initiatives that safeguard access to water, land, food, and education, framing them as human rights rather than optional aid provisions.¹⁷

These overarching dynamics form the foundation for understanding how systematic violence manifests in daily life. The following sections examine in detail how this violence unfolds across the five crucial domains of women's lives, beginning with education, a sector where Palestinian women and girls face systematic deprivation yet continue to demonstrate resilience in the pursuit of their rights.¹⁸

2.1 Intersectionality

The theory of intersectionality draws on the need to understand women lived experiences based on the various structures of power that play a significant role in their lives, such as patriarchy, race, class, and physical and mental limitations (Crenshaw 1999). This theory is useful for contextualizing the findings of this report to draw on the recommendations in the latter half of the report. The recommendations consider the diverse needs of women, and a generalized gender identity may be fused with a stereotypical understanding.

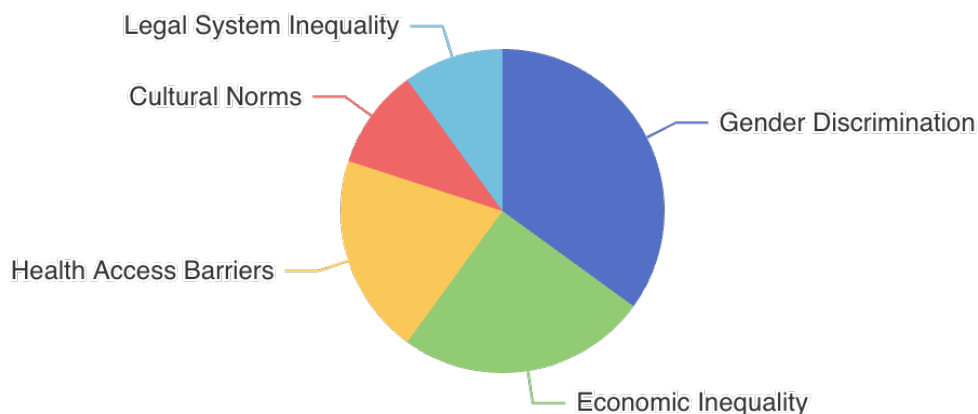
The Chart below categorizes the findings of the UN Human Rights Council report of 2023, discussing The data were fused with the theories of structural violence and intersectionality in women experiencing the ongoing genocide in Palestine. The Chart explains the percentages of gender discrimination, legal system inequality, cultural norms, and health access burdens, along with economic inequality, a direct result of structural violence penetrated within society, and a need for an intersectional lens to solve the

¹⁷ Shalhoub-Kevorkian, N. (2015). *Security theology, surveillance and the politics of fear*. Cambridge University Press.

¹⁸ Roy, S. (2016). *The Gaza Strip: The political economy of de-development* (3rd ed.). Institute for Palestine Studies.

Chart 1. Structural Violence and Intersectionality in Palestine

Structural Violence and Intersectionality in Palestine



Source: Based on the UN Human Rights Council report, 2023¹⁹

2.2 Structural and Gender Based Violence in Palestine

Palestinian women are subject to several different forms of violence, ranging from the state of Israel's use of violence as a source of domination to harassment, limited mobility, and lack of legal and social protections. At the state level, women are subject to structural violence that takes shape in several forms. For example, women living in Palestine are accustomed to security check posts where they are humiliated and curfews that limit their mobility. Gender-based violence works as a structure, but when other structures impact gender relations and gender identities, the impact is multifold; therefore, the situations faced by women during warfare are far greater than those experienced by men.²⁰

This chapter considers the challenging situations faced by women in different parts of Palestine and the ways in which these challenges are faced and mitigated. While this chapter focuses specifically on the challenging situations faced in Gaza and Jenin, it is crucial to remember that the experiences of women in Jerusalem also play an integral and significant role in the broader narrative of resilience and

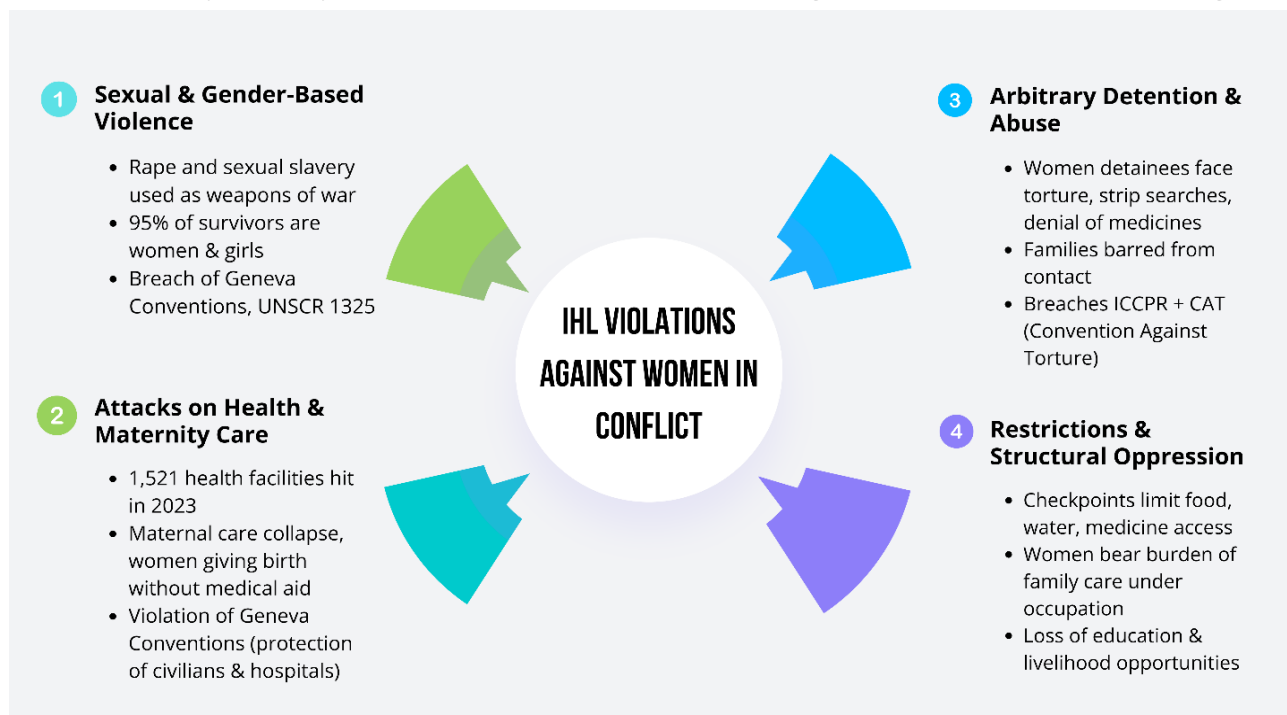
¹⁹ The Pie chart showing how structural violence affects Palestinian women through various intersecting factors. The chart illustrates how gender discrimination (35%) is the largest component, followed by economic inequality (25%), health access barriers (20%), and cultural norms and legal system inequalities (10% each). *Based on the UN Human Rights Council report, 2023*

²⁰ <https://www.nrc.no/resources/reports/gender-based-violence-in-palestine-protection-challenges/>

struggle in this region. The unique stories of these women, who navigate their own complex realities, are ripe for detailed exploration and deserve attention in the literature. Their voices are often unheard, but they carry the weight of history and experience, contributing richly to our understanding of the social fabric of this tumultuous area.

In addition, the chapter highlights the need to offer a diverse set of solutions addressing women's intersectional needs, such as those based on the 2024–2025 indicators: the percentage of displaced women significantly impacted their civil and social rights, thus requiring solutions engineered to tackle social and civil rights. Women's documentation, marriage certificates, degrees, and birth certificates destroyed during the ongoing crisis require a special mechanism to offer them legal solutions. Second, a method or digital solution may be offered so that women in crisis-prone regions can securely maintain their digital accounts.

2.3 Summary of Key GBV Occurrences: According to the IHL Violations Against



Women IN conflict, are summarized in the Infographic

Source: Author, consolidated Data²¹

²¹ <https://www.ungeneva.org/en/news-media/news/2025/09/110618/gaza-top-independent-rights-probe-alleges-israel-committed-genocide?>
<https://www.un.org/unispal/document/public-health-situation-analysis-on-hostilities-in-the-occupied-palestinian-territory-opt-02-may-2024-who-report/>
<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/9/16/first-head-of-united-nations-body-declares-israels-gaza-war-a-genocide>
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/12/amnesty-international-concludes-israel-is-committing-genocide-against->

2.4 Testimonials of Gender Abuse Survivors^{22 23}

The following section shares narratives of abuse survivors and highlights the structural violence at play, along with intersectionality. The need to understand the structural violence and intersectional dimensions of the narratives is to address the need for effective policy and implementation, which the report drafts towards the latter half. Furthermore, understanding the structural dimensions that serve as impediments for women is an important component for effective advocacy and future rehabilitation of Palestinian women. Gender-based violence (GBV) against Palestinian women and girls has been extensively documented by human rights organizations, UN bodies, and news agencies. These testimonies and reports highlight a range of experiences, from physical and sexual abuse in detention to the broader systemic violence of the occupation and its impact on women's lives.

[palestinians-in-gaza](https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-288-gaza-strip)

<https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-288-gaza-strip>

²² Interview provided with the help of Al-Meezan Human Rights Center

²³ Quote from: <https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/women-and-newborns-bearing-brunt-conflictgaza-un-agencies-warn>.

Survivor: Zainab, 45 (Differently Abled) Jerusalem

Zainab is differently abled, 45 years old, and relies on a wheelchair to move around. The genocide changed everything. Zainab's family were her primary caregivers; she could not move around without their support or a wheelchair. Their apartment building was bombed by Israel's military. Zainab had to move to a camp, but her family members were injured, and she could not help them. Zainab was left in the rubble for many hours, after which a few strangers assisted her to safety in a camp. Zainab's needs in the camp are unmet. She required special medical attention and mobility access. The failure of local and international communities is evident in the operation's aftermath. However, what is more painful is the grave complications faced by differently abled, children, and the elderly.



Lived Experience

Survivor: Sawsan al Zein: A Mother's Struggle: Gaza

A 50-year-old mother, who once stood as an unwavering pillar of her household. During a devastating bombing that obliterated her home, she lost her eye and sustained grievous hand injuries. These physical scars are compounded by emotional wounds, as she now struggles with simple daily tasks that were once effortless. She is burdened by the heartache of losing both her daughters, and the violence inflicted on her daughter by her son-in-law weighs heavily on her. Sawsan's son-in-law had been violent towards her daughter. She not only faces physical limitations due to the loss of one eye, but also immense mental trauma due to the loss of her two other daughters and the infliction her daughter has faced due to her husband.



Lived Experience

Survivor: Aisha: Pregnancy Amidst Conflict: Gaza

Aisha, a young woman with dreams and hopes like any other, found herself facing a life-altering moment when she discovered that she was pregnant on a day that marked a dramatic escalation in the ongoing conflict. In a matter of hours, her life shifted dramatically as she was forced to flee from her only home she had ever known. During chaos and uncertainty, she grappled with the harsh realities of malnutrition and the alarming lack of adequate prenatal care.

Lived Experience

Survivor: Safa Btah: Perseverance Through Pregnancy: Jenin

Safa Btah was six months pregnant when the October 2023 operation began. She was hopeful that, like many other times, the operation would not be deadly for her or her unborn child. Safa was displaced from her home and moved to a shelter in the same city. The strength it took to move around for hours each day in search of water and food while being pregnant was heart-wrenching. Safa was committed to ensuring that the oppressors would not win at any cost. Safa gave birth to a healthy baby boy. She delivered the baby in the camp without any medication or support. Safa knew that she could face complications because the pregnancy had been difficult for her. However, she was consistent and hopeful that God would not abandon her. Safa records the horrors of giving birth without support; she was lucky that a midwife in the camp assisted her while other women of the camp poured water and held her lovingly. Safa said she could not think of going to a hospital, as all hospitals in the vicinity were bombed.



Lived Experience

Survivors: Leila and Lama: Lives Altered by Violence: GAZA

At just 17 years old, her life was irrevocably altered when an Israeli missile struck the school-turned-shelter where she had sought refuge. In an instant, she lost her leg, a traumatic event that transformed her physical abilities and her hopes and dreams. Similarly, 19-year-old Lama, who was newly married and just starting to build her life, faced unimaginable devastation when a shell struck her apartment. The attack left her as a double amputee, robbing her of mobility and independence. Both young women share a profound yearning for prosthetic limbs that could restore a semblance of normalcy to their lives, as well as a fervent desire for an end to the incessant conflict that has disrupted their existence and shattered their aspirations. Leila and Lama recorded that they had no proper sanitation or female hygiene products. During the camps, she recorded the innumerable challenges women faced. At one point, they were offering hope to the children, while at other times they were fetching water or searching for food. Physical attacks and injuries were common in the camps. Many women, men, and children had numerous injuries. Leila and Lama also recorded how they could not sleep at night and felt a deep sense of anguish, horror, and fear for the future. The lack of support on the ground for mental health challenges, especially as survivors faced severe symptoms of PTSD. Source of Testimonies



Lived Experience

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter discusses how the notion of security is deeply compromised and gendered for Palestinian women's security. The genocide has resulted in mass casualties, and those living require an immediate ceasefire. Accounts and reports from entities such as the UN and ActionAid reveal that women and girls encounter a distinct array of security challenges, which are both a result of the ongoing conflict and a reflection of pre-existing societal disparities. Heightened Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is common in the occupation and intensified during the genocide. Gender-based violence, including sexual and psychological abuse against women, is unprecedented, and women across Palestine recount severe cases of abuse, humiliation and sexual harassment. Jarring accounts of women being compelled to undress and endure verbal abuse by Israeli authorities. Reports from organizations such as the Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor have also highlighted how the severe stress and losses brought about by the conflict have given rise to domestic violence. In addition, women's displacement during the genocide severely impacted their security, with rape, harassment, and abuse being common. The destruction of homes and the absence of secure and private areas in overcrowded shelters have heightened the risk of GBV. This chapter discusses gender-based violence and structural violence as important overlapping theories that permeate the lives of Palestinian women. The chapter also highlights the need for an intersectional lens in devising recommendations for women, as women's identities are not homogeneous and require diverse views and unpacking of power structures to offer relief. Israel's destruction of Palestinians through reproductive violence and harm. The heartfelt testimonies emerging from Palestine powerfully illustrate the profound impact of the ongoing genocide on women's lives. Amid the misery and anguish faced by women, traces of hope remain. Women remain resilient for the sake of their families. Many are enduring physical injuries and grappling with the heartbreaking loss of loved ones, watching the dreams they once held dear fade away, and the identities they have formed begin to erode. The resilience displayed by these women is inspiring and sobering. These compelling narratives are not merely stories of survival; they underscore the unwavering strength that persists amidst overwhelming adversity.

As this report delves deeper into their experiences, it becomes increasingly clear that there is an urgent need for humanitarian assistance, comprehensive medical support, and a unified and concerted effort to achieve peace and stability in the region. The plight of women in these areas serves as a poignant reminder of the broader social issues at play, urging us to act and advocate for the dignity and rights of all individuals affected by conflict. Their stories call for our attention and action, illuminating the path towards a future where all voices are heard and valued, paving the way for healing and hope.

Chapter 3: Erasure of Educational Institutions

3.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive summary of the structural violence faced by Palestinian women in five crucial areas—education, health, nutrition, shelter, and displacement—all examined in a multifaceted and evidence-based manner. This analysis is informed by data derived from reputable humanitarian sources, including the Palestinian Ministry of Women²⁴, Amnesty International²⁵, UNHCR²⁶, UNICEF²⁷, UN Women²⁸, UNFPA²⁹, and OCHA,³⁰ which collectively highlight the urgent need for intervention and support in these critical areas. The Report titled *A/HRC/58/CRP.6*, submitted to the Human Rights Council by the Independent International Commission of Inquiry, analyzes the systematic use of gender-based violence by Israeli Security Forces (ISF) in the context of the conflict in Gaza since October 7, 2023. It highlights the extensive destruction of residential areas and the disproportionate impact on women and children, with a significant increase in female fatalities, which make up 59% of the identified casualties in the ongoing violence.³¹ ³² Based on the empirical evidence of the UNHCR report,³³ it is evident that the ideological apparatus

²⁴ <https://www.mowa.pna.ps/>

- Women under occupation: the gendered impact of displacement in Palestine (2024)
- Gender analysis of refugee camp conditions in the west bank and Gaza (2023)

²⁵ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/search/?q=palestinian+women+refugees>

- Nowhere to go forced displacement and its impact on Palestinian women (2024)
- Lebanon: exiled and suffering: Palestinian refugees in Lebanon (2023)
- Stateless and unprotected: the systematic discrimination against Palestinian refugees (2022)

²⁶ <https://www.unhcr.org/search?query=palestinian%20refugees>

- Protection gaps: Palestinian women in displacement" (2024)
- Statelessness and gender-based violence among Palestinian refugees (2023)
- Regional refugee response framework: special focus on women and girls (2022)

²⁷ <https://www.unicef.org/search?force=0&q=palestinian+women+children>

- Children in crisis: educational outcomes for displaced Palestinian girls (2024)
- Health and nutrition status of women and children in Palestinian refugee camps (2023)

²⁸ UN women: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/search/node?keys=palestinian%20women>

- Triple jeopardy: gender, displacement, and statelessness among Palestinian women (2024)
- Economic empowerment initiatives for refugee women in Jordan and Lebanon (2023)
- Gender assessment of camp conditions in Gaza (2023)

²⁹ <https://www.unfpa.org/search/site/palestinian%20women>

³⁰ <https://www.unocha.org/search/node/palestinian%20women>

³¹ UNHCR. <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessions-regular/session58/a-hrc-58-crp-6.pdf>

³² Ibid

³³ UNHCR. <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessions-regular/session58/a-hrc-58-crp-6.pdf>

of the genocide requires careful attention so that solutions can be suggested. Therefore, the section below draws on the theory of structural violence and intersectionality to provide a detailed ideological account of the severe humanitarian crisis and the reproductive violence faced by women and girls in Gaza amid escalating conflict and targeted military actions. The theoretical understanding will facilitate a deeper and holistic preparation of the interventions, listed in the end of the report.

3.1 Erasure of Education Institutions

In the occupied Palestinian territories, education has tragically evolved into much more than just collateral damage in the ongoing conflicts; it is now recognized as a strategic target in a prolonged and multifaceted war of erasure aimed at undermining the identity and aspirations of the Palestinian people. Girls' education has been systematically weaponized within the broader ideological and political struggle that unfolds not only between Israel and Hamas but also among competing narratives surrounding sovereignty, resistance, and social order. The deliberate and calculated destruction of educational infrastructure, coupled with reduced access to digital resources and the erosion of safe learning environments, undermines not only the individual dreams and aspirations of young Palestinian women but also threatens the collective capability of the Palestinian populace to rebuild, resist oppression, and reclaim their fundamental rights. As we consider this troubling landscape, it is vital to recognize that the impact of such measures extends far beyond immediate educational outcomes; it fundamentally alters the societal framework and the long-term prospects of an entire generation. The eradication of educational opportunities for girls represents a profound injustice, inhibiting their potential to contribute meaningfully to society and perpetuating the cycles of inequality and disempowerment. In this context, the battle for education is emblematic of a larger struggle for dignity, autonomy, and preservation of cultural identity, reflecting the deep-seated human desire for self-determination and empowerment.

Thus, the ongoing crisis surrounding education in the occupied Palestinian territories not only highlights the urgent need for advocacy and international attention but also underscores the critical importance of supporting initiatives aimed at safeguarding the rights to education and personal development for all individuals, particularly marginalized groups like girls.

The education system in Palestine has been under considerable strain for many years, primarily because of decades of military occupation and systemic neglect, which have significantly hampered its development and functionality. As the situation currently stands, this education system now teeters

precariously on the brink of complete collapse, with its foundational structures showing signs of distress. In 2024, a staggering 2,274 violent incidents were recorded. These incidents involve a range of troubling activities, including military raids, settler incursions, and targeted airstrikes directed at educational institutions, such as schools and universities (PHSA, 2025).³⁴ The consequences of these violent actions have profoundly affected the educational environment, leading to the transformation of schools, once a safe and nurturing sanctuary for the pursuit of knowledge, into stark symbols of vulnerability and trauma. This harrowing shift undermines the quality of education and creates an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty, adversely impacting the psychological well-being of both students and educators.

According to UNICEF (2025),³⁵ it has been estimated that a staggering 660,000 Palestinian children, a significant majority of whom are girls, are currently out of school in the West Bank. This troubling statistic signifies far more than a mere breakdown of the educational infrastructure. Among these obstacles are early and forced marriage, which often pulls young girls away from their studies, and increased domestic responsibilities that weigh heavily on their time and attention. Additionally, overwhelming psychological stress compounded by large-scale displacement further detracts from their ability to engage in learning environments. Girls face distinct and unique challenges in this context, including rigid and traditional gender norms that obstruct access to online educational platforms. Furthermore, persistent issues such as frequent power outages render digital alternatives largely unviable in these areas. Even when remote learning opportunities are theoretically available, the reality remains that a lack of reliable electricity, intermittent internet blackouts, and the high prohibitive costs associated with the necessary technology mean that education continues to be largely inaccessible for most of these children in the long term.³⁶

Thus, the intersection of these multifaceted issues creates significant barriers to educational attainment, underscoring the urgent need for comprehensive solutions that address not only infrastructural needs but also the sociocultural dynamics at play in the region.

More alarmingly, the ongoing collapse of the education system has not only undermined academic progress but also stripped away the very few protective spaces available to girls. This alarming trend has rendered these young individuals increasingly vulnerable to a range of serious issues, including gender-based violence, child labor, human trafficking, and a marked deterioration in their mental health. As one deeply affected 14-year-old girl from Khan Younis heartbreakingly testifies about her experiences, it

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ryan, C. (2017). Everyday resilience and resistance in Palestinian communities. *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 46(2), 43-61.

underscores the urgent need for action in the face of these challenges.

*“I want to become a doctor. However, I have no books, no school, and no hope of ever having them. They bombed everything.” (Save the Children, 2024)*³⁷

Table 3. Education Data Pre-Genocide to Genocide (2024-2025)

Sector	Indicator	Pre-Genocide (Before Oct 2023)	During Genocide (2024–2025)	Impact Summary
Education	Primary school enrollment (girls)	98.4%	Greater Than 40%	Massive disruption to access
Education	Schools damaged or destroyed	Less Than 5%	93% of Gaza schools Destroyed	Widespread infrastructure collapse
Education	Students without access	Less Than 10,000	625,000+	Near-total system breakdown
Education	Universities operational in Gaza	6	Most bombed or non-functional	Higher education system collapsed
Education	Girls’ access to online learning	Limited but possible	Extremely restricted	Digital exclusion intensified

Source: Author, consolidated Data (WHO 2025; UN WOMEN; 2024-2025; UN ESCHWA, 2025)³⁸

³⁷ Human Rights Watch. (2024). *"They treated us like animals": Sexual violence against Palestinian women during conflict*. Human Rights Watch; (OCHA, 2025).

³⁸ Human Rights Watch. (2024). *"They treated us like animals": Sexual violence against Palestinian women during conflict*. Human Rights Watch; (OCHA, 2025).

3.2: TESTIMONIAL

MARAH AL-QAYED, AGE 23. GAZA

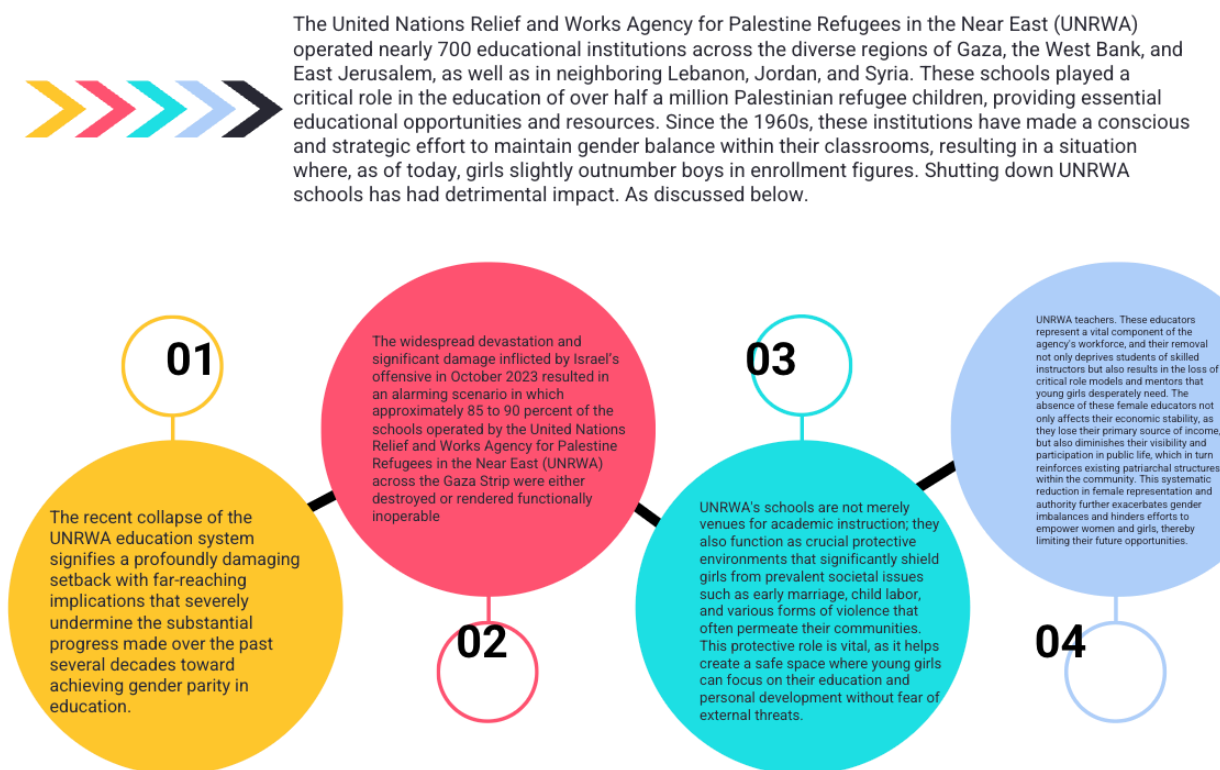
AT JUST 19 YEARS OLD, MARAH'S VIBRANT DREAMS OF PURSUING HIGHER EDUCATION AND CAPTURING THE BEAUTY OF LIFE THROUGH HER LENS AS AN ASPIRING PHOTOGRAPHER WERE TRAGICALLY INTERRUPTED BY GENOCIDE. INSTEAD OF ATTENDING UNIVERSITY, SHE FOUND HERSELF TAKING ON THE HEAVY RESPONSIBILITY OF FETCHING WATER AND BREAD TO SUPPORT HER FAMILY—A ROLE SHE NEVER ANTICIPATED HAVING TO ASSUME AT SUCH A YOUNG AGE. AS THE WEIGHT OF THE CONFLICT BORE DOWN ON HER, SHE FELT HER SENSE OF FEMININITY ERODING AMIDST THE HARSH REALITIES OF SURVIVAL IN A WAR-TORN LANDSCAPE. DESPITE THESE OVERWHELMING CHALLENGES, MARAH CONTINUES TO HOLD ON TO THE FLICKERING FLAME OF HER ASPIRATIONS, CLINGING TO THE DREAM OF RETURNING TO HER STUDIES AND RESHAPING HER DESTINY. WITHIN THE TUMULTUOUS ATMOSPHERE OF JENIN, THE CONFLICT HAS DEVASTATED COUNTLESS YOUNG LIVES AND SHATTERED FAMILIES. HEAVY TOLL OF VIOLENCE ON YOUNGER GENERATIONS.


**Lived Experience: On
Education**

3.3 Impact of UNRWA School Closure on Education

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) operates nearly 700 educational institutions across the diverse regions of Gaza, the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and neighboring Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria. These schools play a critical role in the education of over half a million Palestinian refugee children, providing essential educational opportunities and resources to them. Since the 1960s, these institutions have made a conscious and strategic effort to maintain gender balance within their classrooms, resulting in a situation where, as of today, girls slightly outnumber boys in enrollment figures.

Impact of UNRWA School Closure On Education



Source: Reports UNRWA 2023-2025³⁹

³⁹ <https://www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/unrwa-situation-report-189-situation-gaza-strip-and-west-bank-including-east->

3.4 Conclusion

The educational disruptions currently being experienced are not isolated; they unfold in parallel with a catastrophic economic collapse that has reshaped every sector of Palestinian society. By the midpoint of 2025, Palestine witnessed an alarming 22% contraction in GDP and a 65% surge in poverty rates (UN ESCWA, 2025).⁴⁰ These figures do more than describe economic hardship; they illustrate how systematic dispossession undermines access to education. When households fall deeper into poverty, families are forced to pull girls out of school to prioritize immediate survival, whether through child labor, early marriage, or unpaid domestic work. Thus, the collapse of the education system is directly intertwined with broader patterns of economic and social exclusion. Furthermore, the erosion of civil documentation exacerbates this crisis. The widespread destruction of civil registries and essential government infrastructure has left many Palestinian women without official identification, creating unprecedented barriers to accessing education, healthcare, and humanitarian assistance. Without ID cards, mothers cannot enroll their children in educational institutions, nor can they cross checkpoints to reach schools or access essential services. This is not merely a bureaucratic hurdle; it is a form of civil erasure, transforming education into a privilege reserved only for those who remain legally visible. In this way, economic collapse, loss of identity, and destruction of education reinforce one another, producing a cycle of structural violence that denies Palestinian women and girls both knowledge and personhood.

Chapter 4: Collapse of Palestine's Healthcare Sector

Israeli military operations have severely damaged sexual and reproductive healthcare facilities, with only two of the 12 hospitals in Gaza remaining partially operational as of January 2024, impacting approximately 540,000 women and girls of reproductive age in the region.⁴¹

4.0 Introduction

The health system in Palestine, particularly around Gaza, has been pushed far beyond its breaking point and is struggling to cope with an overwhelming and critical health crisis. Over half of all health facilities in Gaza have become non-functional because of relentless airstrikes, severe fuel shortages, and the ongoing blockade restricting the flow of essential medical supplies (UN & WHO, 2025).⁴² This dire situation presents especially grave challenges for women, particularly those who are pregnant or suffer from chronic illnesses, as the collapse of the healthcare system poses life-threatening consequences that can affect both their health and that of their unborn children.

In particular, the provision of maternal healthcare has been obliterated, rendering it nearly impossible for women to receive the care they require. Shockingly, more than 50,000 pregnant women find themselves without access to competent and reliable delivery services because of overcrowded conditions and damage sustained by hospitals, leading to alarming increases in maternal and newborn mortality rates (UNFPA 2025).⁴³ Reproductive healthcare has become essentially nonexistent in the displacement shelters where many are seeking refuge, and the sanitary conditions are inadequate. The absence of menstrual hygiene supplies, combined with the presence of unclean water, significantly heightens the risk of infection, further compromising women's health during an already challenging period of their lives. The following sections discuss

⁴¹ UN Report A/HRC/58/CRP.6

⁴² https://www.un.org/unispal/document/who-sitrep-30jun25/?utm_source

⁴³ <https://palestine.unfpa.org/en/publications/palestine-situation-report-18-may-june>

these issues in detail.

Healthcare professionals on the ground have provided some of the most harrowing accounts of the situation. They speak of a system that is not just overwhelmed but is deliberately targeted and collapses. A senior Gazan healthcare worker shared a plea that has resonated globally: "Do not rely on Gazan resilience anymore, we are also human."⁴⁴ This encapsulates the exhaustion and despair felt by medical staff who have been working for hundreds of days without a break, witnessing the deaths of their colleagues and the destruction of the hospitals they work in. Doctors Without Borders (MSF) described a continuous flow of mass casualties with injuries of unprecedented scale and severity. Dr. Mohammed Fadlalla of MSF said, "The health system is overwhelmed and it is collapsing. We have many patients who come in with open fractures that need repair, and we do not have the equipment to repair these open fractures." He further noted that simple cases are dying "in your arms because there is no space or no basic medical supplies."⁴⁵

Moreover, there is a severe lack of medical care available to women while in detention. Numerous Palestinian women inmates have bravely spoken out about their experiences, claiming that they have faced not only mental and physical abuse but also a refusal to provide necessary medications and treatment (Human Rights Watch, 2024).⁴⁶ The cumulative impact of these factors paints a stark picture of the challenges faced by women in Palestine, highlighting the urgent need for international assistance and intervention to address these critical health issues.

⁴⁴ Médecins Sans Frontières. (2024). *Health under siege: Medical consequences of restricted access in Gaza*. MSF.

⁴⁵ Médecins Sans Frontières. (2024). *Health under siege: Medical consequences of restricted access in Gaza*. MSF.

⁴⁶ Human Rights Watch. (2024). *"They treated us like animals": Sexual violence against Palestinian women during conflict*. Human Rights Watch.

4.1 Genocide and Reproductive Injustice in Palestine



Source: Author, Data Consolidated Report⁴⁷

⁴⁷ <https://griid.org/tag/palestinian-children/>

4.2 Summary of Genocide Reproductive Violence

1. TARGETTING FAMILIES

- Two mothers are killed every hour by Israeli forces during the first 100 days of the genocide.
- Over 3,000 women became widows and heads of households from October 2023 to April 2024.
- 902 families were erased from the civil registry (all members of the family killed) by August 2024.⁴⁸

2. DENIAL OF REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

- 4,000 embryos were destroyed when Israel bombed Gaza's largest fertility clinic.
- Approximately 60,000 pregnant women in Gaza are facing genocidal conditions and lack access to healthcare.
- As Israel blocks humanitarian aid, 700,000 women and girls are unable to access adequate menstrual supplies or contraception.
- There was a 300% increase in miscarriages.⁴⁹

3. TARGETTING INFANTS

- A total of 93% of children under 2 years old are unable to meet their nutritional needs.
- A total of 170 cases of congenital deformities were documented by November 2024, associated with exposure to explosives and chemical weapons.
- 710+ babies killed within the first year of life as of August 2024.⁵⁰

4. TARGETTING CHILDREN

- 67 children killed per day, on average, as of November 2024.
- By October 2024, 35,055 children had lost at least one parent.
- Over 19,000 children are orphaned or unaccompanied, causing the phenomenon of child-headed households in the country.⁵¹

5. REPRODUCTIVE & OBSTETRIC VIOLENCE

- The Genocide Convention defines "imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group" as genocide.
- Israel's genocide in Gaza is characterized by extreme systemic reproductive violence and multigenerational attacks targeting Palestinian women, children, and families.

⁴⁸ <http://meezan.org>.

⁴⁹ <https://www.palestinechronicle.com/report-number-of-ill-palestinians-denied-permits-to-receive-medical-treatment-on-the-rise/>

⁵⁰ <https://www.palestinechronicle.com/report-number-of-ill-palestinians-denied-permits-to-receive-medical-treatment-on-the-rise/>

⁵¹ <https://www.palestinechronicle.com/report-number-of-ill-palestinians-denied-permits-to-receive-medical-treatment-on-the-rise/>

4.3 Testimonials: Pregnant, Breastfeeding Mothers ⁵²

Testimonial: Al-Meezan Health Center Breastfeeding Mothers in Gaza: Facing Malnutrition and Anemia

Acute Food Insecurity

Approximately 1.95 million people face acute food insecurity, Breastfeeding mothers are particularly affected by the limited access to supplements and vitamins. Approximately 1.95 million people in Gaza experience acute food insecurity, affecting families and children.

Need for Urgent Treatment

Around 16,500 pregnant and breastfeeding women urgently require treatment for acute malnutrition, emphasizing the critical state of maternal health in the region.

Impact of Health System Collapse

The health system in Gaza has collapsed due to ongoing attacks and infrastructure issues, severely limiting access to necessary healthcare services.

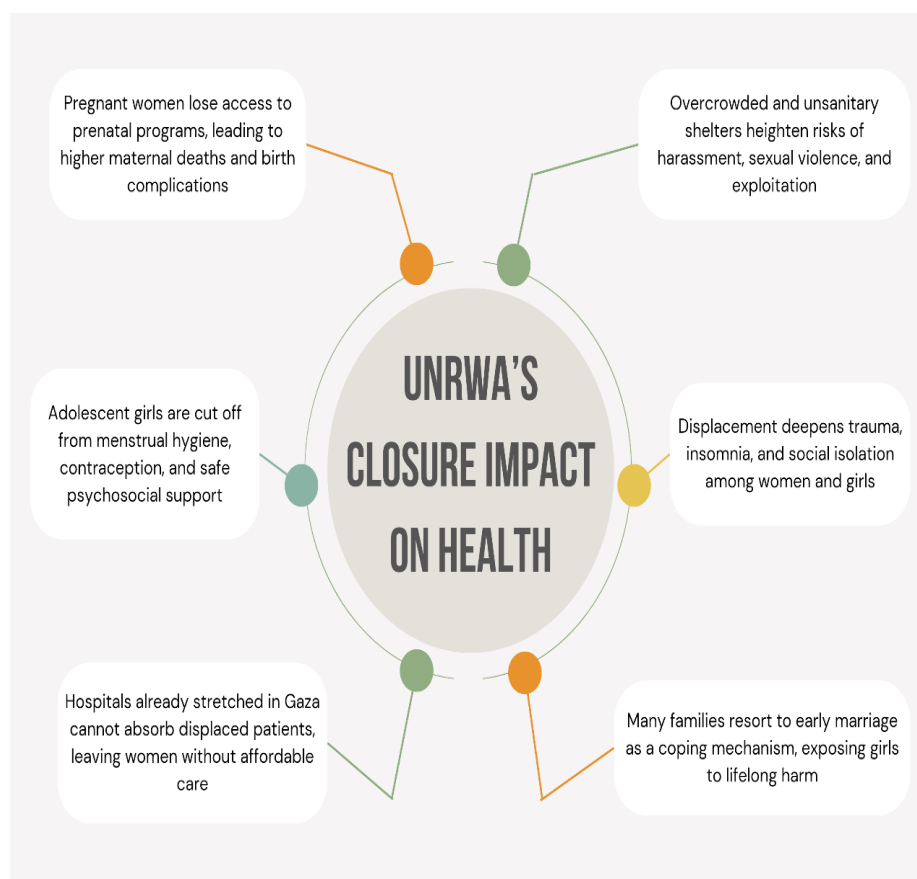
Surge in Malnutrition and Anemia

Al-Awda Hospital reports a concerning rise in severe malnutrition, anemia, and dangerously low birth weights among newborns, reflecting the dire situation.

⁵² (palestinechronicle.com)

4.4 UNRWA's Closure: Impact on Health

4.5 UNRWA's Closure and Gendered Health Impact



This section discusses the impact of UNRWA's closure on health care delivery. The collapse of Gaza's already fragile health system has made UNRWA's services even more indispensable. As hospitals lie in ruins and local facilities struggle with shortages of fuel, medicine, and staff, Palestinian women have become increasingly dependent on UNRWA health centers for basic and gender-sensitive care. In the absence of a functioning public health infrastructure, UNRWA clinics and mobile services have acted

as lifelines, ensuring access to maternal health, reproductive services, and childcare that would otherwise be impossible to obtain. However, the looming threat of UNRWA's closure places these essential lifelines in jeopardy, risking an even deeper humanitarian and gendered health catastrophe.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) are the primary organization dedicated to providing gender-sensitive healthcare services in Palestinian refugee camps. This vital agency currently operates an extensive network consisting of 140 health centers and a series of mobile clinics strategically positioned across its fields of operation, as detailed in a report published by the UNRWA in 2023. Among the array of essential healthcare services offered, UNRWA provides comprehensive maternal and child healthcare, family planning assistance, and various sexual and reproductive health services, all of which are crucial but often remain inaccessible in highly militarized or impoverished areas such

as Gaza. The looming threat of potential closure or significant scaling down of these critical services could severely exacerbate existing gender inequalities that hinder access to reliable and necessary healthcare for women and marginalized communities in these regions.⁵³

For instance, in Gaza, a region that has been facing significant challenges, public hospitals are not only under immense pressure but are also severely strained owing to the ongoing Israeli blockades and the profound collapse of essential infrastructure. As a direct result of these circumstances, pregnant women in Gaza encounter heightened and alarming risks of experiencing complications during childbirth and are increasingly vulnerable to maternal mortality, all of which occur in the absence of essential prenatal care programs provided by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) (WHO, 2023).⁵⁴ Furthermore, adolescent girls, who typically depend on UNRWA clinics for vital education regarding menstrual hygiene, access to contraception, and necessary psychosocial support, now find themselves in a precarious situation, as they are deprived of confidential, safe, and culturally sensitive care.

This is crucial for the well-being of the children. This unfortunate closure of invaluable services creates a dangerous void in healthcare provision, as both state healthcare systems and private medical facilities have become either completely inaccessible or prohibitively expensive for refugee women and girls needing assistance. Military operations and settler violence have displaced approximately 2,275 Palestinians in the West Bank between 2023 and 2025 (OCHA, 2025).⁵⁵ This figure is substantially higher than that in Gaza. Families are frequently deprived of possessions, identity cards, and government services because of recurrent displacement. Due to overcrowding, lack of gender-segregated areas, and inadequate sanitary facilities, shelters put women at risk of sexual assault and harassment (UN Women, 2024).⁵⁶ Women and girls residing in these shelters frequently complain of poor hygiene, fear of abuse, and a loss of dignity. A lack of privacy worsens mental health issues and upends family dynamics,

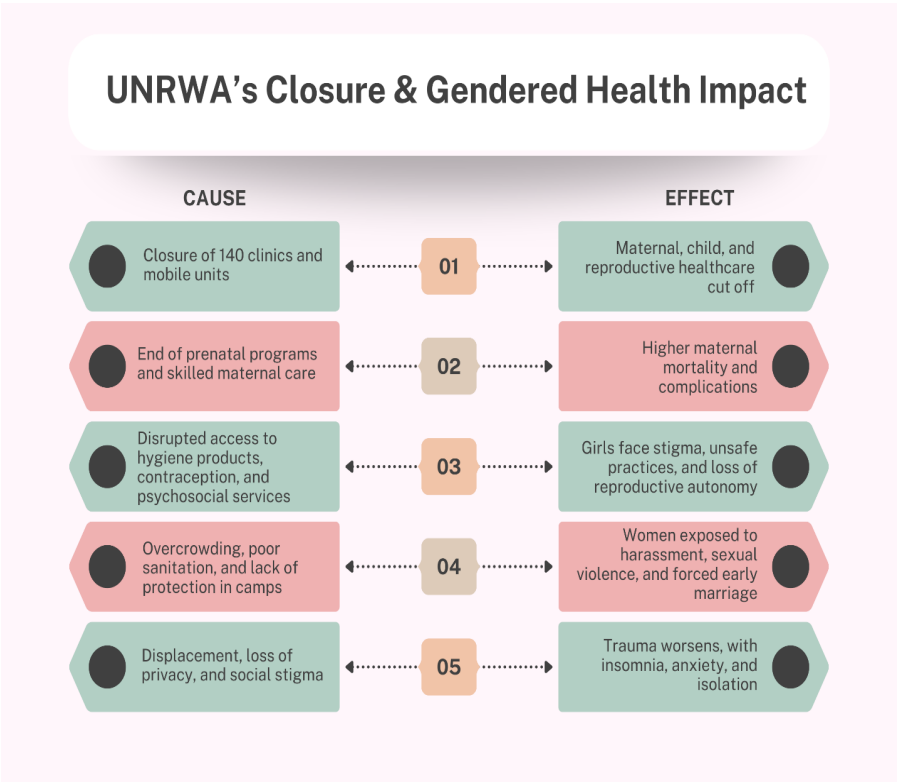
⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

especially for socially stigmatized widowed or divorced women in the UAE. share spaces with strangers, often without separate toilets or bathing areas. For adolescent girls, the lack of privacy often results in early marriage as a protective measure, a decision rooted in fear rather than agency. Many women report deep anxiety and insomnia, with their sense of home, safety, and dignity stripped away. Widows and single mothers face compounded stigma, isolation, and a lack of support in shelters.



Displacement camps are overcrowded, under-resourced, and poorly designed. Women are forced to suffer from this.

4.6 SUMMARY OF MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT ON GENOCIDE IN WOMEN

Summary of Mental Health and Psychological Impact on Women In Palestine 2023-Ongoing

High Prevalence of PTSD:

Studies indicate high rates of symptomatic PTSD among women in Gaza, a condition often predicted by factors such as experiencing frequent migrations and unemployment

Forced displacement and loss of dignity: Multiple displacements erode a woman's sense of stability and privacy, creating emotional and psychological distress. Overcrowded shelters lack basic sanitation and privacy, leading to feelings of humiliation.

Forced displacement and loss of dignity: Multiple displacements erode a woman's sense of stability and privacy, creating emotional and psychological distress. Overcrowded shelters lack basic sanitation and privacy, leading to feelings of humiliation.

Widespread Anxiety and Depression: There are alarming rates of anxiety and depression, with symptoms often intensified by persistent uncertainty about safety and the welfare of loved ones

Comorbidities:

A significant proportion of women experience co-occurring symptoms of anxiety, depression, and PTSD

Transmitted trauma: Traumatic experiences can be passed down through generations via parenting behaviors, narratives, and even epigenetic changes. Studies have found that children are at increased risk of developing PTSD when their mothers have been exposed to trauma

Increased gender-based violence (GBV): The breakdown of social protections has led to a documented rise in domestic and gender-based violence. Imprisonment by Israeli forces also exposes female detainees to abuse and trauma

The emotional burden of motherhood: Many mothers feel despair and guilt over their inability to protect their children from violence and hunger. Qualitative studies cite women reporting feelings of helplessness, fear for their children's survival, and questioning the life they are able to provide.

This decade was filled with innovations, creations and revelations beyond many people's wildest dreams.

Source: Hamamra, B., Mahamid, F., & Bdier, D. Surviving trauma: Gazan women's mental health during genocide. *Discov Public Health* 22, 229 (2025). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12982-025-00637-z> Reports^{57 58 59}

⁵⁷ Hamamra, B., Mahamid, F. & Bdier, D. Surviving trauma: Gazan women's mental health during genocide. *Discov Public Health* 22, 229 (2025). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12982-025-00637-z>

⁵⁸ <https://www.pcrf.net/information-you-should-know/transgenerational-trauma-in-palestine.html#:~:text=The%20enduring%20legacy%20of%20these,the%20capacity%20for%20peace%2Dbuilding.>

⁵⁹ <https://borgenproject.org/mental-health-in-palestine/#:~:text=Although%20the%20need%20for%20mental,of%20mental%20disorders%20than%20men.>

4.7 Conclusion

The accounts provided by genocide victims depict a distressing scenario of suffering and desperation. Amputations and Medical Neglect are common due to the scarcity of surgical supplies and overcrowding of hospitals, and numerous individuals with treatable injuries are experiencing life-altering outcomes. A woman from Gaza recounts how a physician was "compelled to amputate her leg under challenging conditions to preserve her life. The interviews facilitated by Al-Meezan Human Rights were filled with stories of an extreme nature, describing the hospital environment where deceased bodies were left in plain sight. The destruction of health infrastructure extends beyond treating the injured. Reports from the United Nations and testimonies from organizations such as the UNRWA illustrate how the lack of essential medical supplies and clean water has precipitated a public health crisis. An UNRWA situation report noted the depletion of essential medicines, including those for hypertension and antibiotics for adults in the Gaza Strip. This has resulted in a surge in communicable diseases, and inadequate nutrition has led to increased malnutrition in children. Additionally, the psychological impact is profound, with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and anxiety being prevalent, particularly among children who have witnessed such violence and loss. Across Palestine, women find themselves navigating a perilous landscape marred by relentless conflict, where the struggle for survival becomes a daily battle that weighs heavily on their hearts and souls. It is within this harsh reality that stories of resilience and struggle unfold, highlighting the indomitable spirit of those living in the shadows of violence.

To amplify these struggles and ensure they are neither silenced nor forgotten, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) member states have a vital role to play. They must integrate curricula in schools and universities that address the Palestine-Israel conflict and the ongoing genocide in Palestine so that future generations are educated about these realities. Beyond the classroom, the OIC states should actively press the international community to evacuate Palestinian students from dangerous zones and provide scholarships to secure their educational futures. Simultaneously, digital platforms should be harnessed to raise awareness globally and mobilize pressure against ongoing atrocities. Finally, long-term memory and justice can only be safeguarded if OIC members invest in documentaries, museums, and educational initiatives that document and preserve the history of the systematic violence and genocide faced by Palestinians. Together, these efforts ensure that Palestinian voices are heard, their resilience is recognized, and their rights are defended.

Chapter 5: Nutrition Crisis: Famine and Gendered Starvation

5.0 Introduction

The collapse of Palestine's health system is compounded by an escalating nutrition crisis that has left women and children disproportionately vulnerable to malnutrition. In Gaza, food insecurity has reached catastrophic levels due to widespread destruction of farmland, restrictions on imports, and blockades that limit access to essential goods. Women, who often act as primary caregivers, face the dual burden of managing household food scarcity while sacrificing their nutritional needs to protect their children. Pregnant and lactating women are particularly at risk, as malnutrition increases complications during childbirth and threatens infant survival. The denial of adequate nutrition is not a byproduct of conflict but a deliberate tactic of systematic violence and dispossession, weaponizing hunger to weaken Palestinian communities. Addressing this crisis requires recognizing nutrition as both a human right and a frontline battleground in the struggle for survival and dignity of the people.

The broader nutrition crisis is most visible in the daily struggle for food and water. With farmland destroyed, imports restricted, and supply chains deliberately obstructed, shortages are no longer temporary disruptions but a permanent condition of life under siege. For women, this means rationing scarce food among family members, often sacrificing their own health to feed their children. For infants and pregnant women, the consequences are especially severe, as inadequate nutrition directly translates into higher risks of illness, complications, and even mortality. These structural scarcities, rooted in both blockade and dispossession, set the stage for the acute shortages and gendered vulnerabilities described in the following sections.

5.1 Food Shortages

Palestine is facing a food shortage crisis. One in three infants under the age of two suffers from acute malnutrition, and malnourished women are more likely to experience problems during pregnancy and

childbirth (Relief Web 2025).⁶⁰ When it comes to food distribution, patriarchal traditions frequently give preference to males and children, which means that women either eat last or not at all. According to Amnesty International (2024)⁶¹, water scarcity and agricultural land loss further jeopardize access to clean water and diverse food. Maternal malnutrition increases the risk of anemia, premature delivery, and developmental impairment in the unborn child. These problems worsen with each generation of devices. A cycle of vulnerability that begins in the womb and continues throughout adulthood is perpetuated when undernourished girls grow into undernourished women. Water scarcity further exacerbates this crisis. According to Amnesty International (2024)⁶² less than 10% of the water in Gaza is safe for drinking. The lack of clean water leads to diarrhea, kidney problems, and worsens malnutrition, especially for women during pregnancy and menstruation. Beyond physical health, the inability to feed one's family affects women's mental well-being and sense of identity. Many report feelings of shame, failure, and despair, reflecting how food insecurity in conflict is not just physical deprivation but also a deeply psychosocial trauma.⁶³

⁶⁰ <https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/features/bombardment-displacement-and-collapsed-health-care-crisis-women-and-girls-gaza>

⁶⁰ <https://www.fao.org/3/cb4549en/cb4549en.pdf>

⁶⁰ <https://www.fao.org/3/cb4549en/cb4549en.pdf>

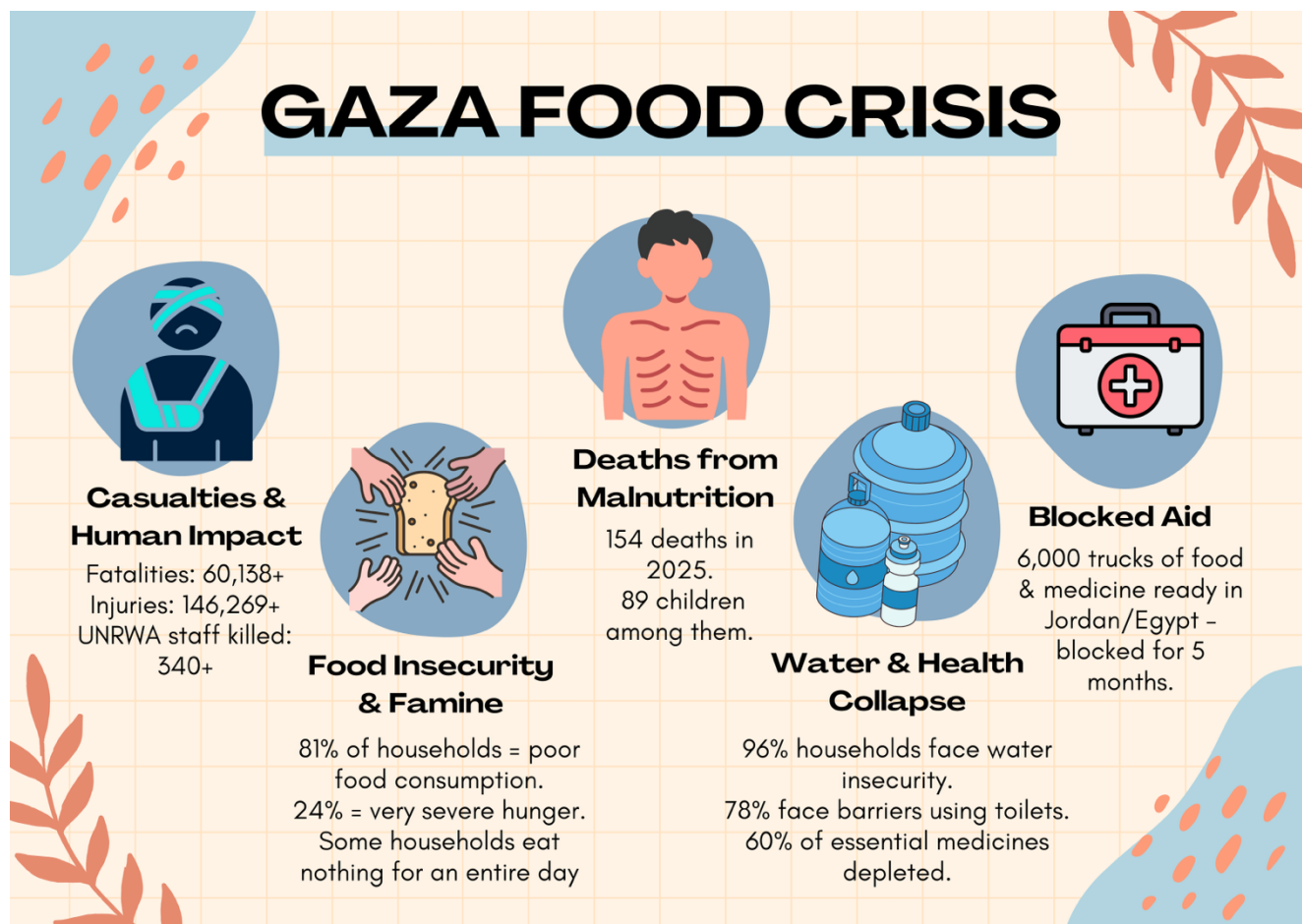
<https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/features/bombardment-displacement-and-collapsed-health-care-crisis-women-and-girls-gaza>

⁶¹ <https://reliefweb.int/search?search=palestinian%20women%20refugees>

⁶² <https://reliefweb.int/search?search=palestinian%20women%20refugees>

⁶³

5.2: GAZA FOOD CRISIS



Source: Infographic⁶⁴

⁶⁴ <https://reliefweb.int/search?search=palestinian%20women%20refugees>

5.3 The table below summarizes the impact of food insecurity on women in this study.

Table 5. Summary Matrix of Food Insecurity in Women Across Palestine

Dimension	Impact on Women
Increased Malnutrition	Pregnant and lactating women face severe anemia and malnutrition, compromising maternal and infant health.
Gendered Hunger Hierarchies	In many households, women and mothers eat last and least when food is scarce.
Psychological Stress	Food insecurity compounds trauma, anxiety, and depression, particularly for women coping with displacement, violence, and loss.
Health Risks	Malnutrition increases risks of osteoporosis, weakened immunity, and reproductive health issues.
Loss of Livelihoods	Female farmers, artisans, and informal workers lose incomes, exacerbating economic dependency and poverty levels.
Increased Gender-Based Violence	Economic pressure and food insecurity heighten risks of domestic violence and exploitation.
Disruption of Childcare and Education	Women struggle to balance family needs, caregiving, and education for themselves and their children.

Source: ⁶⁵

⁶⁵ <https://reliefweb.int/search?search=palestinian%20women%20refugees>

5.4 UNRWA's Closure of Nutrition

Food insecurity in Palestine has further exacerbated after the UNRWA's shutdown. Food assistance programs are crucial lifelines that provide essential basic nutrition to approximately 1.2 million people residing in the Gaza Strip alone, a significant number of whom are female-headed households struggling to make ends meet in these challenging circumstances (UNRWA, 2023). With a landscape characterized by widespread unemployment rates that remain alarmingly high, soaring food prices that are becoming increasingly unaffordable, and restricted movement that poses additional hurdles, Palestinian women bear the brunt of the pervasive and dire food insecurity gripping the region for an extended period. The withdrawal of UNRWA's food aid exacerbates this already critical situation, deepening the crisis and leading to a pronounced and gendered form of hunger that disproportionately affects women and their families in the Gaza Strip. The impact of these challenges extends far beyond mere hunger, influencing the overall well-being and prospects of entire communities in the long term.⁶⁶

Women and girls are often the first individuals to reduce their food intake during times of scarcity, a troubling trend that highlights both the vulnerability of their situation and the gender dynamics at play. This behavior is particularly pronounced in patriarchal households, where male family members predominantly control decision-making processes surrounding food distribution, as documented by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in 2021⁶⁷. In these circumstances, women and girls may sacrifice their own nutritional needs to ensure that male family members have enough to eat, showcasing deeply ingrained societal norms and expectations that prioritize men's well-being over that of women and girls. Additionally, pregnant and lactating women face specific and significant health risks when deprived of targeted nutritional support during critical periods of their lives. These risks can include anemia, which can lead to fatigue, weakness, and increased susceptibility to infections, as well as low birth weight in newborns, a condition that can have long-term effects on the health and development of children. Therefore, inadequate nutrition during these pivotal phases not only affects mothers but also endangers the future health and well-being of their children, underscoring the importance of ensuring that pregnant and nursing women receive the necessary nutritional support.

Furthermore, the disruption of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency's (UNRWA) school feeding programs has a far-reaching impact on the nutritional status of young girls. These programs are

⁶⁶ <https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/features/bombardment-displacement-and-collapsed-health-care-crisis-women-and-girls-gaza>

⁶⁷ <https://www.fao.org/3/cb4549en/cb4549en.pdf>

often a vital source of daily nutrition for many school-aged girls, providing essential meals that support both cognitive development and overall physical well-being. When these programs are interrupted or suspended, it significantly diminishes the ability of young girls to meet their nutritional needs, thereby jeopardizing their health, academic performance, and potential for a brighter future.⁶⁸

The section below sheds light on the accounts of the food security crisis in Palestine, as studied by two experts.

⁶⁸ <https://www.fao.org/3/cb4549en/cb4549en.pdf>
<https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/features/bombardment-displacement-and-collapsed-health-care-crisis-women-and-girls-gaza>

5.5 Expert Interview: Shommer, Activist, Agri-food Consultant

On July 31, Israeli military forces, accompanied by bulldozers, arrived at the site of one of the two propagation units of the Palestinian National Seed Bank in the West Bank city of Hebron. The bank, established in 2010, is dedicated to collecting, multiplying, and preserving local plant seeds, with an emphasis on heirloom varieties of crops and plants of economic significance. Seeds stored in the bank's units, in which research is also conducted, are grown seasonally, in cycles, with an aim of keeping them viable for future generations. Each year, the Palestinian bank provides free seeds to hundreds of agricultural workers to encourage the preservation of the genetic diversity of some 80 traditional varieties.

The main propagation unit, south of Hebron, included four dunams (about an acre) of cultivated land – this time of year, the plots were overflowing with tomatoes, cucumbers, okra, gourds, and other summer crops – as well as a 50-square-meter metal structure that included a control room and space for storing equipment. However, at 9 a.m. on that recent Thursday, according to Palestinian reports, Israeli Defense Forces soldiers arrived at the site, forcibly removed a Palestinian agricultural engineer from the premises, and then used bulldozers to demolish the structure along with its contents: irrigation and monitoring systems, tools for cleaning and drying seeds, and important documents relating to the agricultural research conducted there, destruction of records and equipment, and water and electricity infrastructure, which has effectively shut down the irrigation system in the propagation plots. This situation puts the seasonal harvest at risk and threatens the annual seed supply to more than 500 farmers who, after two consecutive years of drought and declining yields due to the ongoing climate crisis, depend on the bank more than ever. Moreover, the damage to the unit – another one, in the northern part of Hebron, is still functioning – is a harsh blow to Palestinian food sovereignty (i.e., a community's ability to control the foods it grows, produces, and consumes) and to the Palestinian Authority's ability to provide food security for its people." ⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Interview with Forrest Shomer (May 2025)

5.6: Dr. Aqsa Durrani – Pediatrician, Doctors Without Borders⁷⁰

“When I entered Gaza, the Israeli military had a rule: I was only allowed to bring in seven pounds of food. As I was weighing out protein bars, trying to get under the limit, I said to my husband, ‘How sinister is this?’ I’m a humanitarian aid worker. Why would there be a limit on food? I have worked in many places with extreme hunger, but what’s so jarring in this context is how cruel and deliberate it is. I was in Gaza for two months; there is no way to describe the horror of what is happening. I say this as a pediatric ICU doctor who sees children die as part of my work. Among our staff, some doctors and nurses are trying to treat patients while being hungry and exhausted. They live in tents. Some have lost 15–20 members of their families. In the hospital, there are kids maimed by airstrikes: missing arms, missing legs, and third-degree burns. Often, there is not enough pain medication. But the children are not screaming about the pain, they’re screaming: ‘I am hungry! I’m hungry!’ I hate to only focus on the kids because nobody should be starving. However, the children haunt you differently. When my two months were over, I did not want to leave. It is a feeling I have not experienced in nearly 20 years of humanitarian assignments. But I felt ashamed. I am ashamed to leave my Palestinian colleagues, who are some of the most beautiful and compassionate people I have ever met. I was ashamed as an American, as a human being, that we have been unable to stop something that is so clearly genocide. I remember when our bus left the buffer zone. Out the window on one side, I could see Rafah, which was nothing but ruins. On the other side was Israel, which was lush and green. When we exited the gate, the first thing I saw was a group of Israeli soldiers sitting at a table eating lunch. I’ve never felt so nauseous seeing a table full of food.”

During our interview, she repeatedly expressed a desire to center the voices of her Palestinian colleagues. To this end, I spent the past week collecting stories from the Palestinian staff of MSF in Gaza. I will share these stories over the next several days. I am so grateful for the time that these people gave me; they were sleepless, hungry, traumatized, and often working 24-hour shifts. Due to unreliable Internet connections, their images are sometimes grainy. However, their words will be crystal clear.

⁷⁰ Interview with Dr. Aqsa Durrani (Pediatrician Doctors Without Borders- June 2025)

5.7 Conclusion

The ongoing 2023 food insecurity crisis has taken an inhumane shape, with reports of a complete blockade on food imports for the Palestinian people. Reports reveal that bullets were shot at children and women who had gathered to collect food. The blockade of food is part of the Israeli genocide to push people into extreme starvation, which they have succeeded in, as thousands have now died due to lack of food. Along with the import ban, no food production, and scarcity of food and water, there is a careful and tactical attack on the food sovereignty of the Palestinian people and the destruction of their indigenous food production, as discussed by Shomer.⁷¹ The destruction of the Palestinian National Seed Bank's propagation unit in Hebron and the withdrawal of UNRWA's food assistance programs together represent a profound assault on Palestinian food security and sovereignty. On the one hand, the demolition of vital seed preservation infrastructure undermines efforts to safeguard heirloom crops, sustain agricultural diversity, and support more than 500 farmers already struggling with drought and climate pressures. However, the suspension of UNRWA's nutrition programs deepens food insecurity for 1.2 million Gazans, disproportionately affecting women and girls, who are the most vulnerable in times of scarcity. These twin crises, which erode both the capacity to produce food and access to adequate nutrition, expose Palestinian communities, especially female-headed households, pregnant women, and school-aged girls, to heightened risks of hunger, malnutrition, and long-term developmental harm. Together, they highlight how the destruction of agricultural traditions and the curtailment of humanitarian aid intersect to intensify gendered vulnerabilities and weaken the foundations of community resilience and self-determination.

⁷¹ Interview With Forreest Shomer, Food Activist (May 2025)

Chapter 6: Internal Displacement of Palestinian Women and Refugees in Neighboring Countries

A surge in settler violence has been noted post-October 7, with many incidents involving sexual abuse and collaboration with Israeli Security Forces personnel."⁷²

6.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the internal displacement of Palestinian women and the state of refugees in neighboring countries. The Ongoing bombardments and systematic destruction of civilian infrastructure have created an unprecedented displacement crisis in Palestine. According to the OCHA (2025),⁷³ more than 2 million people in Gaza have been displaced since October 2023, many of them multiple times, as temporary shelters themselves come under attack. For women, the loss of home represents not only the destruction of material security but also the erasure of spaces where dignity, identity, and family cohesion once existed. In overcrowded shelters, privacy becomes a luxury, with women and girls often forced to share limited spaces and inadequate sanitation facilities. These conditions magnify their vulnerability to sexual harassment, exploitation, and gender-based violence. Families that once cultivated stability are now trapped in a cycle of uprooting, where the very concept of “home” has become fleeting and fragile, replaced by tents, school classrooms, or damaged public buildings temporarily converted into shelters. The Palestinian refugees, numbering over 5.9 million, remain one of the longest-standing displaced populations worldwide. The protracted nature of their displacement, compounded by legal restrictions, limited rights, and economic marginalization, requires innovative rights-based approaches to improve their quality of life. This chapter discusses the limitations faced by Palestinian refugees in neighboring countries. The concluding section presents potential transferable recommendations for the full and collective engagement of Palestinian refugees in host countries

⁷² UN Report A/HRC/58/CRP.6

⁷³ <https://www.unocha.org/search/node/palestinian%20women>

6.2 Gendered Burdens of Internal Displacement

Displacement does not impact men and women equally; instead, it exacerbates existing gender inequalities. Women, as primary caregivers, bear the brunt of ensuring survival in camps and temporary shelters, securing food, clean water, and medical care for children and elderly family members despite the near absence of resources. This role exposes them to constant exhaustion, trauma, and impossible choices, such as sacrificing their own nutritional needs so that their children can eat or risking dangerous journeys to collect water or aid. The absence of safe infrastructure, such as secure sanitation facilities, further endangers women, who often wait until nightfall to relieve themselves, thereby exposing themselves to assault. Additionally, displacement frequently interrupts girls' education, as parents in conservative or insecure environments withdraw them from schools, either out of fear for their safety or because of the economic necessity of marrying early. Beyond the immediate crisis, these gendered burdens create long-term exclusion, reinforcing cycles of poverty, dependency, and marginalization among women and girls.⁷⁴

6.3 UNRWA's Closure Impacts Displacement

UNRWA has played a crucial and pivotal role in providing much-needed emergency shelter to countless families displaced by various factors, including Israeli military operations, home demolitions, and natural disasters. The organization has developed and implemented shelter programs that are particularly significant in highly affected areas such as Gaza and the West Bank. These programs are thoughtfully designed to prioritize the specific needs of vulnerable groups, including widows, divorced women, and single mothers, who are often marginalized and face significant challenges in securing housing through local authorities. The absence of a robust safety net for these individuals can have far-reaching and direct implications, contributing to an increase in instances of gender-based violence and homelessness among individuals.

⁷⁴ <https://www.unocha.org/search/node/palestinian%20women>

Without the essential support provided by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), women-led households face an alarmingly heightened level of vulnerability, which significantly increases their risk of eviction, forces them into overcrowded living conditions, and exposes them to various forms of gender-based exploitation. These women and their families often end up in makeshift shelters that are severely inadequate and lack privacy and security, thereby significantly raising the risk of physical and emotional harm. Women and girls in these precarious situations are at a greater risk of experiencing physical and sexual abuse, especially when they are situated in unregulated or militarized zones where law and order are either weak or nonexistent (UN Women, 2023)⁷⁵.

Furthermore, the instability caused by housing insecurity has far-reaching consequences that extend beyond mere shelter; it disrupts access to fundamental services such as education and healthcare. This disruption triggers a cascade of disempowerment, particularly targeting women who already face numerous societal challenges. The absence of institutional shelter support effectively transforms the experience of women refugees into a state of invisibility within their own refugee camps, as they find themselves not only stateless but also marginalized from the very systems designed to support their well-being and recovery. This systemic oversight compounds their struggles, leaving them in a precarious position that further disenfranchises them from opportunities for improvement and empowerment.

The closure or suspension of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) is not merely an administrative failure that can be brushed aside; it constitutes a profound systemic assault on the most vulnerable segment of the Palestinian refugee population—specifically, women and girls, who often bear the brunt of social and economic hardship.

These institutional gaps, which arise from the cessation of vital services, multiply the effects of existing gender inequalities and injustices, effectively stripping away the already limited gender-sensitive support services that offer protection, empowerment, and stability to this marginalized group. Although various humanitarian actors may attempt to step in and fill the void left by UNRWA's withdrawal, it is important to emphasize that the agency's unique mandate, the trust capital it has built over several decades, and its well-established infrastructure cannot be easily replicated or replaced. The ramifications of this closure extend far beyond mere logistical concerns; they threaten the very fabric of hope and opportunity for those who rely on these essential services for their survival and well-being in challenging circumstances.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ <https://www.unwomen.org/en/search/node?keys=palestinian%20women>

⁷⁶ <https://www.unwomen.org/en/search/node?keys=palestinian%20women>

Therefore, considering the ongoing challenges and complexities surrounding the situation, any policy responses developed must incorporate a range of comprehensive measures, including, but not limited to, the establishment of emergency funding mechanisms aimed specifically at sustaining vital gender-focused services that support women and girls in Afghanistan. Additionally, these policies should entail robust international diplomatic pressure designed to uphold the critical mandate of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), which plays a crucial role in providing aid to Palestinian refugees. Furthermore, any strategy for addressing these issues must incorporate community-driven contingency planning that prioritizes and centers female leadership, ensuring that women's voices and perspectives are heard and actively integrated into decision-making processes. In the absence of such deliberate and strategic efforts, there is a significant risk that the potential dismantling of the UNRWA could inadvertently transform into what could be perceived as a silent war on Palestinian women. This situation would ultimately lead to the erasure of decades of hard-won progress in the realm of gender equity, all under the troubling guise of bureaucratic crisis.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ <https://www.unrwa.org/activity/education-gaza-strip>

Table 6. Summary Matrix of Key Areas of Life Impacted by Displacement During Genocide

Sector	Key Services Lost	Gendered Impact	Implications
Education	700+ schools closed; female-led teaching workforce disrupted	Girls lose access to safe, empowering learning spaces; female teachers lose jobs and recognition	Early dropout rates rise; increased early marriage; erosion of women's leadership
Health	140 health centers & mobile clinics shut	Pregnant women lack delivery services; girls lose access to menstrual hygiene & contraception	Spike in maternal and infant mortality; long-term reproductive health risks
Shelter	Emergency shelter programs terminated	Widows and single mothers face housing insecurity and displacement	Heightened risk of GBV; overcrowding and lack of privacy
Nutrition	School feeding and food distribution programs cut	Women and girls skip meals in families; pregnant women face undernutrition	Increased anemia and complications in births; cognitive issues in malnourished children
Protection	Community-based protection for GBV survivors removed	Loss of access to support and response mechanisms for GBV victims	Escalating unreported GBV; worsening mental health
Livelihoods	Female staff in health, education, and admin laid off	Women lose employment; increased dependency on male family members	Higher poverty rates; decreased role of women in public spaces

Source: Author, Consolidated Data⁷⁸

⁷⁸ <https://www.unrwa.org/activity/education-gaza-strip>

6.2 Displaced Refugees in Neighboring Countries:

While the plight of Palestinian women in the Occupied Palestinian Territories is increasingly visible in international discourse and has garnered significant attention from various human rights organizations and activists, it is important to recognize that even less attention is paid to the equally pressing struggles of Palestinian refugee women living in neighboring host countries. This oversight obscures a broader regional crisis that not only affects the displaced women themselves but also highlights the interconnectedness of their experiences, wherein Palestinian women continue to face deep-rooted structural discrimination, legal invisibility, and numerous gender-specific vulnerabilities in displacement contexts across Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan. Consequently, the unique challenges encountered by these women in the wake of their displacement are often overshadowed by the more prominent narratives surrounding occupation, thus undermining the complexity of their experiences. This chapter aims to significantly expand the geographic and analytical scope of the discussion surrounding Palestinian women by investigating how factors such as displacement, restricted legal status, and institutional neglect shape the daily realities faced by Palestinian refugee women in these three countries. By doing so, this study seeks to shed light on the multifaceted nature of their struggles and highlight the urgent need for comprehensive policies and interventions that address their specific needs and rights.

The Table below summarizes the characteristics of Palestinian refugees in host countries.

Table 7. Summary of Palestinian Refugees in Neighboring Countries

Country	Citizenship	Access to Services	Employment Rights	Education	Overall Integration
Jordan	Yes (1948 refugees)	Full	Full	Full	High
Syria (pre- 2011)	No	Nearly full	Full	Full	Moderate- High
Iraq (pre- 2003)	No	Partial	Full	Full	Moderate
Lebanon	No	Limited	Restricted	UNRWA	Low
Egypt/Turkey	No	Minimal	Informal only	Limited	Very Low

*Source: Table Summary of Palestinian Refugee Integration in Neighboring Countries*⁷⁹

6.3 Lebanon and Syria: Exclusion and Systematic Abuse

Palestinian refugees currently residing in Lebanon—numbering over 480,000 registered individuals— are among the most marginalized and vulnerable populations in the region. Unlike their counterparts in neighboring countries, such as Syria or Jordan, who may have some access to employment opportunities and social services, Palestinian refugees in Lebanon face severe restrictions; they are systematically denied access to more than 30 different professions and are wholly prohibited from owning property. This situation exacerbates the entrenched cycle of poverty that disproportionately affects the most vulnerable members of their communities, particularly women, who are often left with limited options to support themselves and their families (HRW 2022). The state’s persistent refusal to integrate Palestinian refugees into its legal and economic systems has resulted in long-standing systemic socioeconomic exclusion. This marginalization has created numerous barriers to achieving equality and economic stability, leaving women to bear the brunt of the structural neglect that permeates every aspect of their lives.

Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, including prominent sites such as Shatila, Burj al-Barajneh, and Ein el-Hilweh, face a multitude of pressing issues that significantly impact the daily lives of their inhabitants. These camps are characterized by severe overcrowding, which exacerbates the

⁷⁹ Ibid.

already challenging living conditions of refugees. Additionally, the lack of proper sanitation facilities leads to health risks, and the infrastructure is often unsafe, posing further threats to residents' health. In these dire environments, women frequently assume the role of primary caregivers, managing large households while navigating the challenges presented by their circumstances. Unfortunately, these women are often deprived of access to essential resources, including adequate maternal healthcare services, psychosocial support systems, and viable income-generating opportunities that could improve their and their families' quality of life (QOL). A troubling statistic highlighted in a 2020 report by UN Women indicates that over 70% of Palestinian women refugees in Lebanon have reported experiencing some form of gender-based violence, a grim reality that underscores the vulnerability of women in these camps. Furthermore, the available avenues for seeking justice are limited, and safe spaces where women can find refuge and receive support are severely lacking (UN Women 2020).⁸⁰ This compounding of challenges makes it imperative to take effective measures to address the needs of Palestinian women living in refugee camps, ensuring their safety, health, and access to opportunities for their empowerment and recovery.⁸¹

6.4 Jordan: Relative Stability, Persistent Inequality

Jordan is home to the largest number of registered Palestinian refugees in the world, with a staggering count that exceeds 2.2 million individuals. A significant portion of these refugees has been granted Jordanian citizenship, which affords them legal protection and rights within the country. However, despite this citizenship that many possess, there remains a troubling situation concerning approximately 158,000 Palestinian refugees originally from Gaza. These individuals entered Jordan after 1967 and are currently classified as stateless, placing them in a precarious position. Due to their status, they face numerous challenges and obstacles, as they are systematically denied access to essential services that are critical for their well-being, such as public education, adequate healthcare, and opportunities for gainful employment. This situation highlights the complexities and difficulties faced by this vulnerable population of refugees living in Jordan, as documented in BADIL's 2021 report⁸² For stateless Palestinian women residing in Jordan, the repercussions of their lack of proper documentation create a myriad of complex and interrelated barriers that impact various facets of their lives. These women find themselves unable to register the births of their children, which significantly limits their children's access to essential services and rights. Furthermore, this lack of documentation prevents them from pursuing higher education opportunities that could enable them to improve their socioeconomic

⁸⁰ <https://www.unwomen.org/en/search/node?keys=palestinian%20women>

⁸¹ <https://www.unwomen.org/en/search/node?keys=palestinian%20women>

⁸² <https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/features/bombardment-displacement-and-collapsed-health-care-crisis-women-and-girls-gaza>

status and secure a better future for themselves and their families. In addition, without the necessary legal papers, they are unable to obtain formal employment, which restricts their ability to gain a stable income and achieve financial independence. Consequently, many of these women are compelled to seek work in informal sectors, such as domestic work, which often leaves them vulnerable to various forms of exploitation and abuse. In environments where labor protections are nonexistent, these women confront the daily reality of precarious working conditions and the threat of mistreatment while lacking legal protection or support. Furthermore, female-headed households, particularly those led by widows or divorced women, face considerable challenges in finding adequate shelter and accessing essential child support services.

This situation is exacerbated by patriarchal family laws that govern their lives and the numerous bureaucratic barriers that make it extremely difficult for these women to navigate the system and secure the assistance they desperately need. According to a report by the UNRWA in 2023, these overlapping issues highlight the urgent need for targeted interventions and support to address the unique challenges faced by stateless Palestinian women in Jordan.⁸³ Even among Palestinian women who hold Jordanian nationality, the persistent issue of gender inequality remains a significant challenge, manifesting itself in various aspects of life, including access to social services, the right to inheritance, and avenues for legal recourse. The ongoing role of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA)⁸⁴ in delivering gender-sensitive healthcare and education tailored to women's needs is crucial for promoting gender equality. However, they face threats from political resistance to foundational mandates and the troubling trend of chronic underfunding.

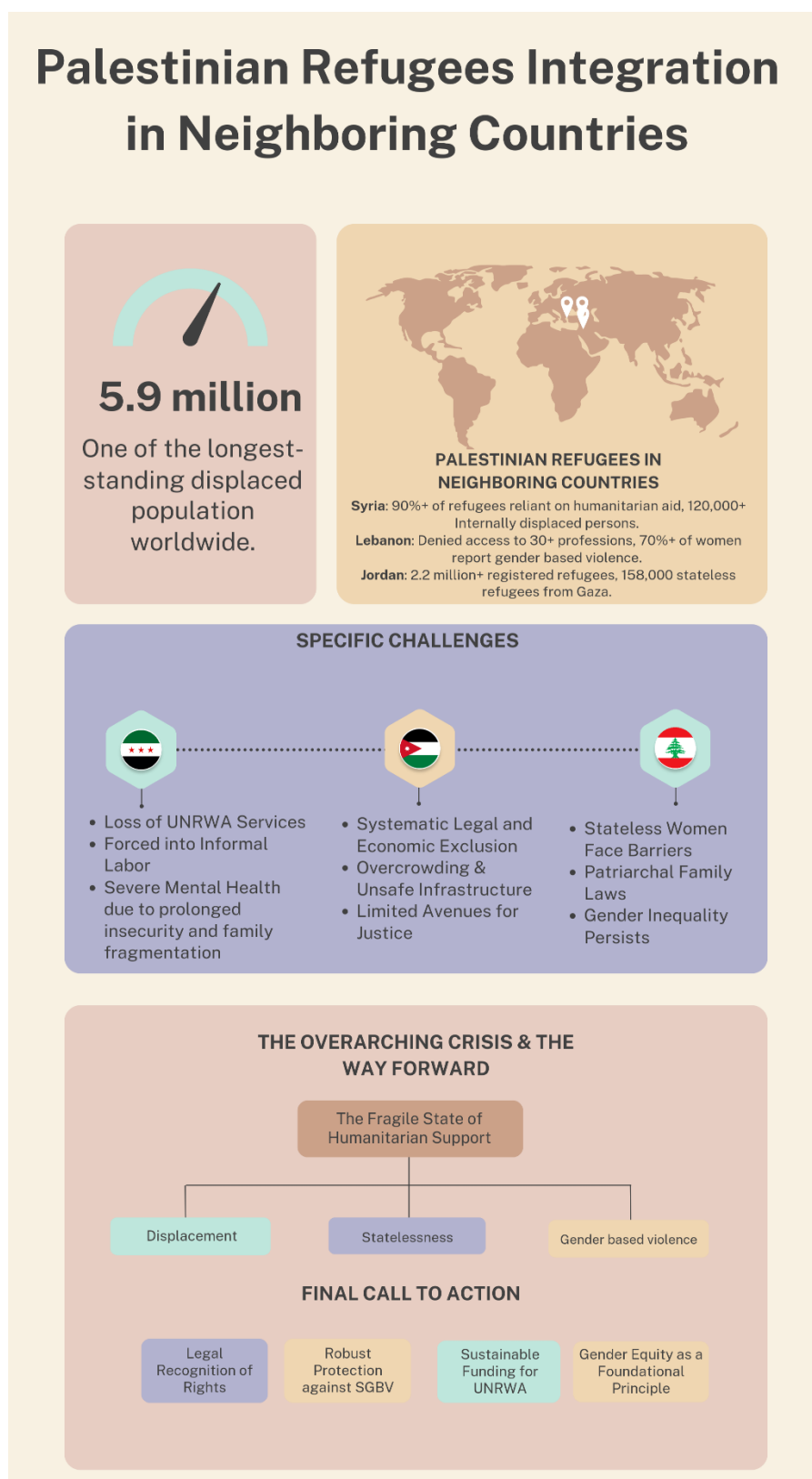
⁸³ <https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/features/bombardment-displacement-and-collapsed-health-care-crisis-women-and-girls-gaza>

⁸⁴ <https://digitallibrary.un.org/search?ln=en&p=palestinian+women+refugees>

This precarious institutional landscape risks exacerbating the vulnerabilities faced by Palestinian women refugees, particularly those with varying legal statuses, as they navigate a complex web of social, legal and economic challenges.

The dire and challenging situation faced by Palestinian refugees and the necessary tools and resources, as well as the multifaceted intersectionality of displacement, statelessness, and various forms of gender-based oppression, are examined throughout the regions of Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan. While each of these national contexts presents its own unique set of circumstances, particularly in terms of varying degrees of legal recognition and integration within their respective societies, a consistent and unifying theme remains across all environments. This central

theme is characterized by the significant absence of durable protections for these vulnerable populations and the alarming increase in the fragility of the humanitarian support systems available to them, with particular emphasis on the role of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). These systemic issues not only exacerbate the challenges faced by Palestinian women but also contribute to a larger crisis of security and stability in the region itself.



Without immediate and gender-specific policy interventions—which should encompass essential measures such as legal recognition of rights, economic inclusion in various sectors, robust protection against incidents of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), and the provision of sustainable funding for organizations such as the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)⁸⁵—it is likely that Palestinian women living in host countries will continue to exist on the margins of society. This marginalization results in the deprivation of basic human dignity, autonomy, and access to the necessary tools and resources vital for building resilience in challenging circumstances. Any future strategy aimed at addressing the complex issues surrounding Palestinian refugees must encompass embedding gender equity as a foundational principle rather than viewing it as a peripheral concern or afterthought. Gender equity should be recognized as a central pillar of regional refugee policy initiatives, as it addresses the unique challenges faced by women and promotes their empowerment in the host country. Prioritizing gender equity in these policies is not merely a humanitarian obligation arising from ethical considerations; it is an essential prerequisite for achieving true justice within the broader context of societal recovery and development.⁸⁶ registry offices amid the ongoing conflict and the challenges imposed by occupation and blockade, which have rendered these essential services either inaccessible or completely obsolete.⁸⁷

6.5 Transferable Lessons Summary Matrix

Model	Key Lesson	Application for Palestine
Egypt (Legal Aid)	Legal identity is foundational for all other rights	Mobile legal clinics with interpreters and gender-sensitive advisors
Netherlands (Digital Work)	Digital platforms can bypass physical barriers	Upskilling hubs with secure internet and freelance access
Turkey (Support to Life)	Holistic care in safe spaces builds resilience	Women-only centers with childcare, trauma counseling, vocational support
Aceh (LINA)	Institutional inclusion transforms recovery	Quotas and leadership roles in reconstruction governance

Source: Author consolidated table using the Data discussed and cited above⁸⁸

6.6 Conclusion

⁸⁵ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-needs-overview-2024>

⁸⁶ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/protection-monitoring-women-and-girls-displacement-2023>

⁸⁷ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/shelter-conditions-and-gender-specific-needs-assessment-2023>

⁸⁸ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/displacement-crisis-palestine-gender-impact-2025>

In the complex and multifaceted context of the displaced in Palestine, where deep-seated distrust in formal institutional structures is widespread and movement restrictions imposed by various factors are remarkably severe, there is a significant opportunity for progress through the empowerment of local women-led committees. These committees, which can be established in various camps or neighborhoods, could serve a dual purpose: acting as vigilant monitors of community needs and challenges while simultaneously functioning as mediators to facilitate dialogue and understanding among the different factions. Such an approach could effectively decentralize protection mechanisms, fostering a more responsive environment that can quickly adapt to evolving circumstances. Additionally, it is crucial to consider the role of religious leaders in this sensitive region. By engaging with these influential figures as allies in the advocacy for women's rights, rather than perceiving them as adversaries, it may be possible to soften and ultimately reduce the ideological resistance that often hinders progress. This collaborative effort could pave the way for a more inclusive dialogue that respects cultural contexts while promoting the advancement of women's rights within the community, fostering a sense of shared purpose and mutual understanding among all stakeholders involved. The internal displacement has posed serious threats to women in terms of their safety, access to food, education, healthcare, and beyond. The displacement has resulted in overcrowded camps and limited access to life's necessities. Similarly, the ones who have fled the country in hopes of safety and a better life face other challenges of exclusion, inequality, and legal and economic limitations. Thus, OIC member states and the global community must reevaluate their current policy statutes and implementation on the ground for a holistic integration of the Palestinian refugees residing in neighboring countries. Special attention needs to be paid to legal aid, safeguarding women's rights, and dignity as refugees. Similarly, initiatives should be undertaken to promote women's collective well-being and offer greater engagement in economic opportunities, especially through digital work, community work opportunities, and remote work. Singular solutions and broad policies may not provide relief, rehabilitation, and opportunities for growth for displaced families and individuals who have undergone long-term deprivation.

Chapter 7: Strategic Recommendations for Supporting Palestinian Women (2025–2030)

7.1 Vision

Addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by women in Palestine requires a comprehensive and nuanced approach that creatively combines immediate humanitarian assistance, such as food, healthcare, and shelter, with sustainable long-term development strategies that focus on education, economic empowerment, and social support systems. It is essential to take the time to learn from successful models and best practices that have been implemented in other countries around the globe and adapt these strategies thoughtfully and carefully to fit the unique and complex Palestinian context. By doing so, we can significantly empower women at various levels, promote gender equality throughout society, and ultimately build resilient communities equipped to face the future with strength, resilience, and determination. This ongoing journey toward empowerment is not merely a goal that can be achieved in isolation; rather, it stands as a fundamental investment in the fabric of society, fostering a brighter, more equitable future for all individuals. In this pursuit, it is crucial to actively engage local women in decision-making processes that affect their lives, ensuring that their voices are heard and their specific needs and aspirations are addressed. Through collaborative efforts, we can create programs that not only uplift women but also strengthen families and communities, ultimately leading to a more just and equitable society.

7.1.1 Guiding Principles of The Recommendations

- **Co-creation over top-down aid**
- **Respect for Cultural and Local Norms:** All Solutions should be grounded in local cultural practices, avoiding the imposition of external norms or values.

- **Awareness of Structures of Violence:** Structures of violence in the form of militarism, patriarchal principles, and historical and systemic disadvantages must be understood to provide relief, rehabilitation, and growth opportunities to women.
- **Intersectionality at the Core of Resource Distribution:** Direct aid should be distributed in a manner that prioritizes women and girls, ensuring access to basic needs such as food, clothing, medicine, and sanitation supplies. Gender-sensitive distribution systems should be created to address the unique needs of women, including pregnant and breastfeeding mothers and those with disabilities.
- **Inclusive Participation:** Ensure that victims of war, particularly marginalized groups such as women, children, the elderly, people with disabilities, and ethnic or religious minorities, are actively involved in decision-making processes.
- **Faith-Based Solutions:** Using mosques, religious leaders, and sharing stories of hope to help survivors connect with faith.
- **Inclusive of Digital and AI Inclusion:** It is pertinent to inform recommendations that can make use of digital, financial, and AI. Digital and AI inclusion can help create e-wallets and e-identities and offer support beyond the availability of inadequate resources.
- **Financial inclusion:** Reimagine financial inclusion by integrating Islamic values of Islamic Finance, using Zakat funds, and special funds pooled by OIC member states.
- **Participatory Development:** Development that is co-creative and engages with individuals on the ground, ensuring they have an active say in the process, highlighting their needs, and rehabilitation and growth that is not dictating but rather informative and collaborative.

7.2 Introducing Strategic Interventions: Mid-Long-Term Recommendations⁸⁹

In the initial year of implementation, the member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) should take decisive steps to establish a comprehensive and robust Regional Legal Protection

⁸⁹ The recommendations use an exhaustive list of programs that are studied in detail to correspond to the ongoing genocide devising strategy and policy that is tailor made and ensures stakeholder engagement.

Framework. This crucial initiative should be undertaken in close collaboration with the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, which plays a pivotal role in guiding the framework's development. The primary objective of this framework is to draft and enact uniform legislation that explicitly criminalizes all forms of gender-based violence, provides comprehensive protection against forced displacement, and guarantees equitable access to emergency legal aid for affected individuals. To enhance the effectiveness of this framework, mobile legal clinics staffed by highly trained lawyers equipped to reach and assist women residing in remote and underserved areas of Gaza and the West Bank are proposed. These clinics will serve as vital resources, ensuring that legal aid is accessible regardless of geographic barriers.

Furthermore, independent oversight panels should be established to ensure the integrity and accountability of the framework. These panels would consist of esteemed civil society leaders, respected international jurists, and experts in women's rights, all responsible for monitoring compliance with the Fourth Geneva Convention and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. An essential aspect of this initiative is the establishment of mechanisms to ensure the swift and gender-sensitive adjudication of critical legal issues, including inheritance rights, land ownership disputes, and cases of domestic violence. By prioritizing these matters, the initiative aims to provide immediate support to those in need and establish a foundation for sustainable accountability, thereby deterring future human rights violations and fostering a more equitable society for all individuals.

Between the crucial stages of years two and three, the focus must be on fostering inclusive governance, particularly by bolstering the capacities of Palestinian electoral bodies and local councils. This strategic shift can be realized through the implementation of targeted capacity-building programs designed to enhance operational efficacy and public engagement. In this context, the technical support provided by the United Nations Development Programme will play a pivotal role. Specifically, municipal election officials and members of emerging women's caucuses will undergo comprehensive training initiatives. These initiatives encompass essential areas such as transparent budgeting practices, participatory planning methodologies, and robust anti-corruption strategies.

Furthermore, in conjunction with these training programs, parallel community outreach campaigns will be instituted, crafted in collaboration with grassroots women's organizations to ensure that they are grounded in the realities and needs of the community. These campaigns will focus on expanding voter registration efforts, particularly among women and youth, thereby fostering a more inclusive electoral process. The overarching goal of these initiatives is to guarantee that future local and national elections are not only characterized by genuine gender parity but also reflect the rich diversity of voices and

perspectives that encompass Palestinian society. Through these concerted efforts, we aim to create a more equitable and representative governance structure that embodies the principles of democracy and inclusivity.

By the third year of implementation, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) aims to establish contributions that will support the development of a universal Social Protection Floor. This initiative is designed to ensure that female-headed households receive vital and reliable baseline income support alongside access to essential services, aligning with the standards established by the International Labour Organization (ILO). The financial mechanism involved encompasses various critical components. It provides unconditional cash transfers to qualified beneficiaries, effectively offering economic stability to those in need. Additionally, the initiative will proactively eliminate fees associated with maternal and pediatric healthcare services provided at public clinics, thereby removing financial barriers and facilitating access to the necessary medical care for mothers and their children. Another important aspect of the initiative is financing continuous professional development programs for frontline healthcare and social service workers, ensuring that these essential providers are well-equipped with the skills and knowledge required to deliver high-quality support to women and families.

Moreover, to ensure the efficacy and responsiveness of the program, rigorous impact evaluations will be conducted. These evaluations will be undertaken in close collaboration with the ILO's Social Protection Floor Advisory Team, enabling a thorough examination of the program outcomes. The insights gained from these evaluations will guide necessary adaptations and inform scaling efforts, thereby ensuring that the most vulnerable women continue to receive reliable economic security and comprehensive health coverage as the social and economic landscape evolves. This strategic approach focuses on fostering a resilient support system for female-headed households, ensuring that their needs are met effectively and sustainably.

Over the mid- to long-term period, specifically spanning years three to five, it is imperative that reconstruction financing sourced from the Islamic Development Bank be strategically directed towards gender-sensitive infrastructure projects that meet the community's diverse needs. This funding should prioritize the establishment of modular health centers that are not only equipped with essential medical facilities but also feature dedicated obstetric wings to cater to women's health requirements. Furthermore, secure shelters for survivors of gender-based violence are critical; these shelters would provide a haven for those in need, offering them the opportunity to recover in a supportive environment. In addition, the development of community-run psychosocial support hubs is essential, as these hubs play a vital role in restoring mental health services that may have been dismantled due to ongoing conflict and instability. Moreover, educational facilities must be reconstructed with significant input

from women and girls in the community. This collaborative approach will ensure that the rebuilt schools provide safe pathways for students, adequate sanitation facilities to accommodate all genders, and dedicated spaces for learning in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), thereby fostering a more inclusive education system that empowers young women and girls to pursue their dreams.

Simultaneously, the concurrent restoration of critical infrastructure, such as water supply, electricity, and transport networks, is necessary. This effort should be coordinated under the auspices of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs' Gaza Recovery Plan, which aims to create a synergistic environment conducive to economic activity and promote social cohesion within the affected communities. By strategically implementing these initiatives, we can look forward to rebuilding not only the physical structures of society but also its social fabric, ultimately leading to a more resilient and equitable future. Throughout the entire duration of the comprehensive five-year period, these various interventions must be meticulously overseen by a robust framework established by the United Nations Transitional Authority. This framework should be designed to effectively integrate essential gender indicators into every phase of planning, implementation, and evaluation. Moreover, there should be a commitment to regular and systematic public reporting focused on critical aspects, such as legal reforms, the level of electoral participation, the extent of social protection coverage, and significant milestones in reconstruction efforts. These practices will not only foster a culture of transparency but also play a vital role in maintaining donor confidence, which is crucial for the sustainability of these initiatives. Furthermore, such initiatives will serve to amplify and promote women's leadership roles in the ongoing process of shaping their recovery in a meaningful and impactful way.

It is of paramount importance that the principles of accountability, community participation, and gender parity are embedded in the very core of these programs. This approach is essential not only for compliance but also for ensuring that the framework is designed to secure a durable, rights-based pathway toward the achievement of Palestinian self-determination and the realization of lasting,

FROM GLOBAL LESSONS TO LOCAL SOLUTIONS

1

HUMANITARIAN AND ECONOMIC SUPPORT

1. Cash Transfer Program

Global Inspiration: Pakistan BISP
Application in Palestine: Mobile based aid

2. Cash for Work Program

Global Inspiration: Jordan Zataari Camp
Application in Palestine: Engage women in community repair and infrastructure projects to earn an income.



2

HEALTH, SHELTER, AND LEGAL EMPOWERMENT

1. Health and Mental Health Initiatives

Global Inspiration: Sudan, Syria, and Lebanon
Application in Palestine: Establish women led community kitchens and mobile mental health units

2. Shelter and Legal Empowerment

Global Inspiration: Yemen and Morocco
Application in Palestine: Modular housing to replace temporary camps and establish legal aid clinics



3

MULTI-FACETED APPROACH

1. Economic

Application in Palestine: Implement micro-finance and vocational training programs to foster women economic independence.

2. Advocacy

Application in Palestine: Use a culturally adaptive approach by partnering with religious scholars to advocate for women rights.

3. Governance

Application in Palestine: Ensure women's representation in post conflict reconstruction with gender quotas.



9.3 From Global Lessons to Local Solutions

○ It is essential to prioritize and empower grassroots women's networks that can operate effectively, even in the face of movement restrictions. To enhance their resilience and impact, it is crucial to equip these networks with adequate funding to support their initiatives and comprehensive training programs that enhance their skills and knowledge. Furthermore, these networks should be backed by recognized partnerships that lend legitimacy and credibility to them within their communities and beyond. This multifaceted approach will ensure that they thrive and contribute significantly to the governance processes that affect their lives and those of those around them.

- Gender equity rooted in cultural and religious contexts

- **Gender-Responsive Reconstruction:** It is essential to institutionalize and enhance the

active participation of women in post-conflict governance mechanisms by implementing mandatory representation quotas and establishing clear policy consultation mandates that ensure their voices are heard and influential in decision-making processes. This approach emphasizes the importance of diverse perspectives in shaping policies that affect the entire foster an environment where women's contributions are recognized and valued in rebuilding society after conflict.

Community Network Adoption Models

- Based on numerous reports, testimonies, and lived experiences documented by humanitarian organizations, news outlets, and human rights groups, the health crisis for Palestinians is a multifaceted and devastating reality. The impact of Israeli violence on health is not limited to direct casualties but extends to the systematic dismantling of the healthcare system, psychological trauma of constant insecurity, and daily struggles to access even basic medical care.⁹⁰
- In Gaza and the West Bank, expanding community networks to include trained women from displaced populations could address both physical and mental health concerns. Community health workers, supported by telemedicine links to specialists, can deliver maternal and pediatric care in informal shelters, supply menstrual hygiene kits, and offer trauma-informed counselling. Scaling such services is vital, given that only one in three female survivors currently receives psychosocial intervention.⁹¹ The innovative and community-driven healthcare model of Partners in Health, effectively implemented in Haiti and Rwanda, highlights the profound impact of healthcare worker networks firmly rooted in local communities on improving overall health outcomes. In regions such as Gaza and the West Bank, there is a significant opportunity to enhance these networks by integrating trained women from the displaced population into the healthcare system. This approach would not only address pressing physical health challenges but also tackle the pervasive mental health crises affecting these communities in the long term. The incorporation of community health workers, who are supported by telemedicine connections with healthcare specialists, could vastly improve service delivery in various settings, especially in informal shelters where displaced individuals live. These health workers should be empowered to deliver essential maternal and pediatric care, provide menstrual hygiene kits, and offer trauma-informed counseling services, which are critical for the well-being of the affected individuals. It is essential to scale up such services,

⁹⁰ <https://apha.confex.com/apha/141am/webprogram/Paper286870.html?>

⁹¹ <https://apha.confex.com/apha/141am/webprogram/Paper286870.html?>

particularly considering the alarming statistic that only one in three women survivors of crises currently has access to psychosocial interventions. Expanding the reach of trained female health workers to these vulnerable populations is crucial for enhancing healthcare delivery and ensuring comprehensive support for both physical and mental health needs.⁹²

- Community-based, trauma-informed, and inclusive recovery
 - Strategically integrate the discourse surrounding women's rights within the framework of Islamic values to ensure broader community acceptance. This can be achieved by actively engaging and collaborating with respected religious scholars who can be powerful allies in efforts to reduce the stigma associated with female leadership. Furthermore, their involvement can play a crucial role in facilitating successful interventions against gender-based violence (GBV), fostering an environment that supports and empowers women in the community.
- **Multi-Service Safe Spaces**
 - Develop comprehensive centers specifically designed to address and support the multifaceted needs of women in areas such as economic empowerment, psychosocial well-being, and legal assistance. These centers should utilize innovative co-funding models involving collaboration and partnerships with international organizations and local stakeholders. This approach fosters community engagement and ensures that the centers are well-resourced and sustainable. These centers must maintain a strong focus on accessibility, ensuring that they are available in both camp settings and urban environments so that all women, regardless of their living situation, can easily access the vital services they provide.
- Regional Collaboration and Advocacy
 - In today's interconnected world, where globalization and collaboration are fundamental drivers of progress, regional collaboration and advocacy are of utmost importance. This is particularly true for empowering women, who have historically faced numerous barriers and challenges in various societies worldwide. The Islamic Development Bank's innovative Transform initiative stands as a beacon of hope and a powerful symbol of change, pooling vital resources and support for projects that are specifically centered on

⁹² <https://apha.confex.com/apha/141am/webprogram/Paper286870.html?>

the unique needs and aspirations of women from all walks of life. This transformative initiative goes far beyond mere financial contributions; it represents a collective commitment among stakeholders to foster sustainable development and enhance the overall quality of life of women in diverse communities. By bringing together governments, NGOs, and grassroots organizations, the Transform Initiative establishes a synergistic partnership aimed at addressing the multifaceted issues women encounter. Through capacity-building programs, educational opportunities, and social empowerment projects, this initiative works tirelessly to create an environment in which women can thrive and achieve their full potential. Ultimately, the efforts embodied in the Transform initiative underscore a shared vision for gender equity and social justice, signifying a renewed dedication to building a more equitable future for all.

- To further advance this pivotal mission aimed at enhancing the status of women, it is vital to establish a dedicated fund specifically focused on women's empowerment initiatives in Palestine. This fund could strategically leverage various Islamic social finance mechanisms designed to tap into and utilize the rich and diverse resources available in the community. Furthermore, it could foster valuable regional partnerships that would significantly enhance the program's overall impact and effectiveness. By actively collaborating with local organizations, community leaders, and various stakeholders, this initiative could create a robust framework that effectively incentivizes investment in crucial areas such as women's education, entrepreneurship, and access to essential health services. In doing so, it would not only promote gender equality but also contribute to the broader socioeconomic development of the region itself. Through these collaborative efforts, the initiative could ensure that women are supported and empowered in ways that lead to sustainable change and lasting benefits for the entire community.

II. Time-Bound Strategic Framework

A. Short-Term (1–2 years) or Emergency Phase

- Mobile legal aid clinics
 - These data-driven adaptations chart a clear and strategic pathway from a state of crisis to resilience and stability. By effectively linking mobile legal aid services to comprehensive mass documentation campaigns, facilitating digital upskilling initiatives that prepare individuals for remote work placement opportunities, connecting community health

networks to trauma-informed care resources, and integrating urban residency programs with formal labor markets, the scope of rights available to Palestinian women can be significantly enhanced. This approach aims to restore and expand civil, economic, and social rights throughout 2024 and 2025. Through these interconnected strategies, we can create a more supportive and empowering environment for Palestinian women, fostering a society in which their rights and contributions are recognized and valued.

- Support for Pregnant Women
 - Additionally, it is crucial to invest in efforts that focus on training local women as midwives and empowering them to provide essential maternal healthcare services. By doing so, we can significantly enhance the overall health and well-being of mothers and their children within the community, creating a positive ripple effect that benefits families and future generations.
 - Pregnant women should be offered free blood work, especially due to reports of major anemia and malnutrition in women.
 - Special supplements in the form of dry powders should be provided to overcome mineral deficiencies in women.
 - The use of contraceptives, sanitation products, prenatal care, and post-partum care should be taught to women in camps for better preparation of their needs.
- Emergency cash transfers to female-headed households
 - Special funding and cash transfers should be given to female-headed households, as research suggests that female-headed households are disproportionately impacted compared to male-headed households.
- Modular shelters for GBV survivors
 - In response to the ongoing and devastating humanitarian crisis that has taken hold in Yemen, various nations, notably the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Saudi Arabia, have undertaken a series of commendable and proactive steps aimed at alleviating the suffering of those impacted. These nations have implemented innovative modular housing solutions specifically designed to address the urgent need for safe and stable living conditions. These rapid-deployment homes are meticulously crafted to provide a secure environment for displaced populations who have been tragically uprooted and have lost their homes and livelihoods because of the conflict. Similarly, in Indonesia, a

remarkable initiative known as the Rumah Aman shelter has emerged as a critical lifeline for individuals who are survivors of gender-based violence (GBV). These shelters are not merely physical structures; they represent a beacon of hope and security for those who need them.

- They not only offer a safe refuge from the dangers and trauma that these individuals face but also extend a comprehensive range of essential support services to these individuals. These services include legal aid to help them navigate the complexities of their situations, as well as childcare and counselling, which are instrumental in fostering an environment where individuals can begin to heal and rebuild their lives. Through these initiatives, both nations demonstrate their commitment to helping individuals not only survive but also regain their independence and dignity in the face of adversity.
 - Building on these effective strategies that have shown promise in aiding and supporting, it is critical to introduce innovative and sustainable modular housing solutions in Gaza, replacing the temporary tents that currently exist and fail to provide adequate protection, comfort, or long-term stability for the inhabitants of Gaza.
 - Establishing durable and secure shelters specifically designed for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) is of paramount importance, as it ensures that these individuals have consistent access to safety, dignity, and comprehensive support services to begin the healing process and effectively rebuild their lives. By taking these proactive and thoughtful measures, we can create a solid foundation that paves the way for a brighter, healthier, and more secure future for those severely affected by the dual challenges of displacement and violence in the region.
- Rapid psychosocial response (mobile mental health units)
 - In Lebanon, the increasingly urgent need for comprehensive mental health and psychosocial support services has led to the establishment of innovative mobile mental health units. These mobile units are designed to provide vital trauma counselling and art therapy within various refugee camps, where individuals often face numerous psychological challenges requiring immediate attention. The services offered by these units not only facilitate individuals in processing and understanding their deeply distressing experiences of trauma but also play a significant role in promoting personal resilience through the power of creative expression and artistic endeavor. Simultaneously, UNICEF launched an impactful and transformative initiative, Healing

Classrooms,” in Syria. This initiative aims to empower teachers by equipping them with the necessary skills and strategies to recognize and effectively address trauma in their students. By providing educators with the tools and training they need, this approach acknowledges and highlights the profound and far-reaching impact of psychological well-being on the overall learning and developmental processes of children, particularly in challenging environments. Through these concerted efforts, Lebanon and Syria are working to foster a more supportive and nurturing environment for those affected by conflict and displacement.

- Given these successful models that have demonstrated their effectiveness in various contexts, it is highly recommended that similar mobile mental health units be deployed in Gaza. These dedicated units could serve as a much-needed beacon of hope for the community, specifically providing essential psychological support to children who have faced unimaginable hardships and trauma due to the ongoing crisis. Furthermore, to maximize the positive impact, it would be beneficial to focus on integrating trauma-informed practices into local schools and other existing programs. This approach would help create nurturing and supportive environments in which children feel secure, understood, and ready to engage in the learning process. Such an atmosphere would ultimately foster their mental health and recovery, providing them with the tools they need to navigate their challenges and thrive despite their circumstances. like having Women's Resilience Circles, which are safe corners for storytelling, Prayers, Art, and collective Trauma Healing, led by trained local facilitators.

- **Digital Inclusion**

- Egypt's Women Tech Makers initiative serves as a noteworthy and inspiring example of how targeted programs can empower women by providing them with essential training in crucial fields such as coding and artificial intelligence. These skills are not only in high demand but are also vital for navigating today's technology-driven landscape. By simultaneously connecting women to the expansive global gig economy, this initiative creates new avenues for professional growth and economic independence for women. This program not only empowers women with valuable and marketable skills but also helps bridge the gap that often exists between their immense potential and the opportunities available in the vast and ever-evolving digital realm. To build on this empowering inspiration and transformative model, it is highly recommended to launch

comprehensive digital literacy programs in Palestine. These programs should be purposefully designed to empower women by equipping them with the essential skills needed for remote work, which is becoming increasingly prevalent in today's job market.

- Such an initiative would not only provide women with the tools necessary to navigate the digital economy effectively but also foster a sense of independence and self-reliance among participants. Ultimately, by investing in their education and skill development, we can enable these women to thrive and succeed in an increasingly tech-driven world, opening doors to countless opportunities. Thus, creating a supportive environment for this type of initiative could have far-reaching positive implications for individuals and communities.

B. Medium-Term (3–5 years) or Recovery Phase

- In the initial year of implementation, the member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) should take decisive steps to establish a comprehensive and robust Regional Legal Protection Framework. This crucial initiative should be undertaken in close collaboration with the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, which plays a pivotal role in guiding the development of the framework. The primary objective of this framework is to draft and enact uniform legislation that explicitly criminalizes all forms of gender-based violence, provides comprehensive protection against forced displacement, and guarantees equitable access to emergency legal aid for affected individuals. To enhance the effectiveness of this framework, mobile legal clinics staffed by highly trained lawyers equipped to reach and assist women residing in remote and underserved areas of Gaza and the West Bank are proposed for implementation. These clinics will serve as vital resources, ensuring that legal aid is accessible, regardless of geographic barriers.
- Furthermore, independent oversight panels should be established to ensure the integrity and accountability of this framework. These panels would consist of esteemed civil society leaders, respected international jurists, and experts in women's rights, all responsible for monitoring compliance with the Fourth Geneva Convention and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. An essential aspect of this initiative is the establishment of mechanisms to ensure swift and gender-sensitive adjudication of critical legal issues, including inheritance rights, land ownership disputes, and domestic violence cases. By prioritizing these matters, the initiative aims to provide immediate support to those in need and establish a foundation

for sustainable accountability, thereby deterring future human rights violations and fostering a more equitable society.

- Between the crucial stages of years two and three, the focus must be on fostering inclusive governance, particularly by bolstering the capacities of Palestinian electoral bodies and local councils. This strategic shift can be realized through the implementation of targeted capacity-building programs designed to enhance operational efficacy and engage the public. In this context, the technical support provided by the United Nations Development Programme will play a pivotal role. Specifically, municipal election officials and members of emerging women's caucuses will receive comprehensive training. These initiatives encompass essential areas, such as transparent budgeting practices, participatory planning methodologies, and robust anti-corruption strategies.
- Furthermore, in conjunction with these training programs, parallel community outreach campaigns will be instituted, crafted in collaboration with grassroots women's organizations to ensure that they are grounded in the realities and needs of the community. These campaigns will focus on expanding voter registration efforts, particularly among women and youth, thereby fostering a more inclusive electoral process in the future. The overarching goal of these initiatives is to guarantee that future local and national elections are characterized by genuine gender parity and reflect the rich diversity of voices and perspectives that encompass Palestinian society. Through these concerted efforts, we aim to create a more equitable and representative governance structure that embodies the principles of democracy and inclusivity.
- Moreover, rigorous impact evaluations will be conducted to ensure the program's efficacy and responsiveness. These evaluations will be undertaken in close collaboration with the ILO's Social Protection Floor Advisory Team, enabling a thorough examination of program outcomes. The insights gained from these evaluations will guide necessary adaptations and inform scaling efforts, thereby ensuring that the most vulnerable women continue to receive reliable economic security and comprehensive health coverage as the social and economic landscape evolves. This strategic approach focuses on fostering a resilient support system for female-headed households, ensuring that their needs are met effectively and sustainably.
- Inclusive governance: women's quotas, municipal capacity-building
 - Over the mid- to long-term period, specifically spanning years three to five, it is imperative that reconstruction financing sourced from the Islamic Development Bank be strategically directed towards gender-sensitive infrastructure projects that meet the

community's diverse needs. This funding should prioritize the establishment of modular health centers that are not only equipped with essential medical facilities but also feature dedicated obstetric wings to cater to women's health requirements. Furthermore, secure shelters for survivors of gender-based violence are critical; these shelters would provide a haven for those in need, offering them the opportunity to recover in a supportive environment. In addition, the development of community-run psychosocial support hubs is essential, as these hubs play a vital role in restoring mental health services that may have been dismantled because of ongoing conflict and instability.

- Simultaneously, the concurrent restoration of critical infrastructure such as water supply, electricity, and transport networks is necessary. This effort should be coordinated under the auspices of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs' Gaza Recovery Plan, which aims to create a synergistic environment conducive to economic activity and promote social cohesion within affected communities. By strategically implementing these initiatives, we can look forward to rebuilding not only the physical structures of society but also its social fabric, ultimately leading to a more resilient and equitable future for all. Throughout the entire duration of the comprehensive five-year period, these various interventions must be meticulously overseen by a robust framework established by the League of Arab Nations and the OIC. This framework should be designed to effectively integrate essential gender indicators into every phase of planning, implementation, and evaluation of the project. Moreover, there should be a commitment to regular and systematic public reporting focused on critical aspects such as legal reforms, the level of electoral participation, the extent of social protection coverage, and significant milestones in reconstruction efforts. These practices will not only foster a culture of transparency but also play a vital role in maintaining donor confidence, which is crucial for the sustainability of these initiatives. Furthermore, such initiatives will serve to amplify and promote women's leadership roles in the ongoing process of shaping their recovery in a meaningful and impactful manner.

- Universal Social Protection Floor

- By the third year of implementation, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) aims to establish contributions that will support the development of a universal Social Protection Floor. This initiative is designed to ensure that female-headed households receive vital and reliable baseline income support alongside access to essential services,

in alignment with the standards established by the International Labour Organization (ILO). The financial mechanism encompasses various critical components. It provides unconditional cash transfers to qualified beneficiaries, effectively offering economic stability to those in need of it. Additionally, the initiative will proactively eliminate fees associated with maternal and pediatric healthcare services provided at public clinics, thereby removing financial barriers and facilitating access to the necessary medical care for mothers and their children. Another important aspect of the initiative is financing continuous professional development programs for frontline healthcare and social service workers, ensuring that these essential providers are well equipped with the skills and knowledge required to deliver high-quality support to women and families.

- STEM education and digital literacy for girls and women
 - Moreover, educational facilities must be reconstructed with significant input from women and girls in the community. This collaborative approach will ensure that the rebuilt schools provide safe pathways for students, adequate sanitation facilities to accommodate all genders, and dedicated spaces for learning in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), thereby fostering a more inclusive education system that empowers young women and girls to pursue their dreams.
- Legal reforms and inheritance rights enforcement
 - It is of paramount importance that the principles of accountability, community participation, and gender parity are embedded in the core of these programs. This approach is essential not only for compliance but also for ensuring that the framework is designed to secure a durable, rights-based pathway toward the achievement of Palestinian self-determination and the realization of lasting, sustainable peace within the region. The comprehensive involvement of all stakeholders, particularly women and marginalized communities, will be key to creating an environment that supports equality, fairness, and justice throughout this transformative period of barriers to accessing aid and services.

III. Sectoral Pillars and Program Models

1. Legal Empowerment & Civil Rights

- In both Morocco and Tunisia, innovative legal aid clinics have been successfully established, demonstrating a remarkable commitment to providing vital support to

women striving to secure their property rights and retrieve essential documentation that may have been lost during periods of displacement, often with significant emotional and legal repercussions. These clinics serve as crucial resources, offering comprehensive guidance and assistance to women as they navigate the often complex and challenging legal landscape. Their services empower women to reclaim their rights with confidence and help foster a sense of independence and self-worth, which is especially important in societal contexts where women's rights may be overlooked or undermined. Considering these successful initiatives and their positive impact on women's lives, it is crucial to develop similar legal aid services in Palestine. The establishment of such services would play an essential role in assisting women in effectively navigating the myriads of legal challenges they face.

- Reclaim their rightful properties and access the necessary documentation. This initiative would not only enhance individual women's circumstances but also contribute to fostering a greater sense of stability and empowerment within the community, ultimately leading to a more equitable and just society. Hence, implementing these legal aid services should be a priority to ensure that women have the tools and resources necessary to thrive in their pursuit of justice and equality in the workplace.
 - By strategically investing in access to capital for these ambitious women, we not only empower them to pursue their entrepreneurial dreams but also contribute significantly to the development of a vibrant and flourishing entrepreneurial ecosystem within the region that encourages growth, creativity, and economic resilience. In addition to this crucial financial support, substantial investments in care services are vital. These services play a dual role; they not only create critical employment opportunities, fostering job growth and stability, but also serve the broader community by effectively addressing the pressing needs of families and caregivers of children with disabilities. By ensuring that these support systems are in place, we can significantly enhance the quality of life of many individuals and families, allowing them to thrive while simultaneously contributing to a healthier, more supportive community environment.
- Mobile legal clinics (Egypt model)
 - In both Morocco and Tunisia, innovative legal aid clinics have been successfully established, demonstrating a remarkable commitment to providing vital support to women striving to secure their property rights and retrieve essential documentation that may have been lost during periods of displacement, which often have significant

emotional and legal repercussions. These clinics serve as crucial resources, offering comprehensive guidance and assistance to women as they navigate the often complex and challenging legal landscape. Their services not only empower women to reclaim their rights with confidence but also help foster a sense of independence and self-worth, which is especially important in societal contexts where women's rights may be overlooked or undermined. Considering these successful initiatives and their positive impact on women's lives, it is crucial to develop similar legal aid services in Palestine. The establishment of such services would play an essential role in assisting women in effectively navigating the myriads of legal challenges they face.

- Documentation recovery campaigns (Tunisia/Morocco models)
 - Documentation and Identity: Help victims who have lost official documentation (e.g., birth certificates and IDs) regain legal recognition and citizenship status. Without documentation, individuals can face many problems.
 - Establish E-Portals for document safety. Digital identities should be created for all refugees and survivors of the genocide to ensure that they do not lose their identification documents during displacement.

2. Economic Participation

- BRAC-inspired microfinance
 - In Bangladesh, the innovative BRAC microfinance model stands out as a beacon of hope on the horizon of economic development, as it offers vital microloans that are specifically tailored to support women-led small businesses in a significant way. This crucial financial support system not only facilitates the economic independence of women, enabling them to achieve their financial goals and aspirations, but also fosters a vibrant spirit of entrepreneurship and innovation in communities. By empowering women with the necessary resources to launch and sustain their own enterprises, BRAC is helping create a ripple effect that enhances the overall economic landscape. Meanwhile, in Turkey, the government's thoughtful and strategic investment in care services has not only generated substantial employment opportunities across various sectors but has also played a pivotal role in championing gender-inclusive growth. This progressive approach actively encourages and facilitates the participation of more women in the workforce, allowing them to engage meaningfully in the economy and enhancing their overall quality of life. Such initiatives, whether in Bangladesh or Turkey, are crucial for promoting

equality and ensuring that women thrive in all aspects of life, including economic, social, and personal dimensions. Through these efforts, both countries set vital examples of how targeted support for women can lead to broader societal progress and women's empowerment.

It is crucial to establish innovative microfinance programs specifically designed for women entrepreneurs in Palestine, ensuring that these initiatives effectively target and meet the diverse needs of this group. These programs should provide women with a comprehensive range of essential resources and robust financial support, enabling them to transform their innovative business ideas into tangible realities that thrive in the market.

- Cash Transfer programs
 - Cash transfer programs have consistently demonstrated their effectiveness in delivering immediate relief and comprehensive support to vulnerable populations facing various hardships and adversity. In Pakistan, for instance, the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) has emerged as a critically important initiative that provides essential financial assistance specifically targeted at households headed by women. This program utilizes innovative mobile wallets to facilitate the distribution of funds, which not only enhances the overall transparency of the financial transactions involved but also significantly reduces the incidence of fraud and corruption that can often plague such initiatives aimed at helping those in need. Moreover, historical instances of disasters, such as the devastating earthquake that struck Turkey and the catastrophic floods that impacted various regions within Pakistan, underscore the importance of cash transfers in providing prompt and effective assistance to affected women, who may otherwise struggle to access the necessary resources, support, and services during times of crisis and upheaval. This highlights the critical role that such programs play in reinforcing the resilience of marginalized communities and ensuring their ability to navigate the challenges posed by unexpected emergencies.
 - Furthermore, it is essential to recognize and acknowledge the compelling necessity of establishing a well-structured cash transfer program specifically designed to meet the needs of female-headed households in Palestine. This initiative should leverage mobile technology to facilitate effective and secure financial aid distribution. By incorporating such advanced technology, the program can help eliminate any potential delays in the disbursement process, thus ensuring that the funds reach those most in need without

unnecessary obstacles. This timely support can significantly enhance the livelihoods of vulnerable families by providing them with the financial resources required to navigate daily challenges and improve their overall well-being.

- Jordan-style cash-for-work in camps
 - It is highly advisable to adopt similar cash-for-work programs within Palestinian refugee camps, as this initiative would not only engage women directly in essential rebuilding efforts but also empower them by providing valuable income-generating opportunities. Such programs can also help women acquire new skills crucial for their personal and professional development. Ultimately, this approach can significantly enhance their livelihoods and promote their overall well-being, fostering a sense of independence and self-sufficiency in challenging circumstances.
 - It is highly advisable to adopt similar cash-for-work programs within Palestinian refugee camps, as this initiative would not only engage women directly in essential rebuilding efforts but also empower them by providing valuable income-generating opportunities. Additionally, such programs can help women acquire new skills that are crucial for their personal and professional development. Ultimately, this approach can significantly enhance their livelihoods and promote their overall well-being, fostering a sense of independence and self-sufficiency in challenging circumstances.

3. Health and Nutrition

- Women-led community health centers (Gaza)

It is highly advisable to establish similar community healthcare centers in Gaza, focusing intently on crucial areas such as maternal health, which encompasses comprehensive prenatal and postnatal care, as well as emergency healthcare services that are vital for the well-being of mothers and their children. These centers should ideally be staffed primarily by trained local women who possess the unique ability to provide culturally sensitive care and support tailored to the needs of their communities, thereby fostering a sense of trust and rapport that is essential for effective healthcare delivery. By ensuring that healthcare services are accessible to those who need them most, particularly in an environment where traditional healthcare options may be limited or unavailable, these community centers could play a transformative role in improving overall health outcomes and enhancing the quality of life of Gaza's residents.

- Women's soup kitchens (Sudan model)

Sudan's Women's Soup Kitchens play a vital and indispensable role in addressing the critical issue of malnutrition among vulnerable populations within the country. By providing nutrient-rich meals specifically designed for malnourished children and pregnant women, these soup kitchens are making significant strides in tackling acute malnutrition, which poses a considerable risk to health and overall well-being. The meals served are carefully curated to meet the specific dietary needs of those who are most at risk, ensuring that children receive the essential nutrients they need for proper growth and development, while also supporting pregnant women in maintaining their health during a crucial time for both them and their unborn child

- Midwife training and maternal health investment
 - Midwife training should be made mandatory for women. In cases of need, they can help fellow women, and the success of midwife training across various war zones has been beneficial to this end. Furthermore, community support is important for improving maternal healthcare conditions. Special attention needs to be given to children, nursing mothers, and pregnant women to provide them with quality nutrition and raise support to avoid food insecurity in women.
 - Intergenerational trauma is common in Palestine, as women who give birth fear for the future of their children. Special attention is needed to help overcome feelings of inadequacy and hopelessness.

4. Education and Digital Inclusion

- Syria's "Healing Classrooms" for trauma-informed schooling
 - UNICEF launched an impactful and transformative initiative, "Healing Classrooms," in Syria. This initiative aims to empower teachers by equipping them with the necessary skills and strategies to recognize and effectively address trauma among their students. By providing educators with the tools and training they need, this approach acknowledges and highlights the profound and far-reaching impact of psychological well-being on the overall learning and developmental processes of children, especially in challenging environments. Through these concerted efforts, Lebanon and Syria are working to foster a more supportive and nurturing environment for those affected by the consequences of conflict and displacement.
 - Given these successful models that have demonstrated their effectiveness in various contexts, it is highly recommended that similar mobile mental health units be deployed in the region of Gaza. These dedicated units could serve as a much-needed beacon of hope for the community, specifically providing essential psychological support to children who have faced unimaginable hardships and trauma due to the ongoing crisis in Gaza. Furthermore, to maximize the positive impact, it would be beneficial to focus on integrating trauma-informed practices within local schools and other existing programs. This approach would help create nurturing and supportive environments in which children feel secure, understood, and ready to engage in the learning process. Such an atmosphere would ultimately

foster their mental health and recovery, providing them with the tools they need to navigate their challenges and thrive despite their circumstances.

- Egypt's Women Tech Makers digital workforce model
 - Egypt's Women Tech Makers initiative serves as a noteworthy and inspiring example of how targeted programs can empower women by providing essential training in crucial fields such as coding and artificial intelligence. These skills are not only in high demand but are also vital for navigating the technology-driven landscape of today. By simultaneously connecting women to the expansive global gig economy, this initiative creates new avenues for professional growth and economic independence. This program not only empowers women with valuable and marketable skills but also helps bridge the gap that often exists between their immense potential and the opportunities available in the vast and ever-evolving digital world. To build on this empowering inspiration and transformative model, launching comprehensive digital literacy programs in Palestine is highly recommended. These programs should be purposefully designed to empower women by equipping them with the essential skills needed for remote work, which is becoming increasingly prevalent in today's job markets.
 - Such an initiative would not only provide women with the tools necessary to navigate the digital economy effectively but also foster a sense of independence and self-reliance among participants. Ultimately, by investing in their education and skill development, we can enable these women to thrive and succeed in an increasingly tech-driven world, opening doors to countless opportunities for them. Thus, creating a supportive environment for this type of initiative could have far-reaching positive implications for individuals and communities.
- **Vocational Training**
- Indonesia's post-tsunami skill-building for women
 - Indonesia's innovative post-tsunami model serves as a powerful illustration of the effectiveness of rapid vocational training programs, particularly in areas that have experienced significant disruptions and trauma, such as natural disasters. This model specifically highlights how providing women with essential skills in diverse fields, including nursing, digital freelancing, and agribusiness, can have a transformative impact. This approach not only facilitates economic recovery in these hard-hit regions but also plays a critical role in empowering women within the affected communities,

enabling them to take charge of their futures and become active participants in their local economies. Drawing inspiration from the success of this model, stakeholders must implement well-structured vocational training programs in both the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. These programs should be carefully and thoughtfully

- Alignment is crucial to ensure that women are not only trained in viable professions with growth potential but are also positioned to contribute meaningfully to the economic landscape of their communities. By prioritizing such targeted training initiatives, we can take significant steps toward cultivating a skilled and adaptable workforce, thereby providing women with valuable pathways to success and security in the field. Enhancing their job prospects will not only improve their personal circumstances but also contribute to the overall social and economic development of their communities. Empowering women through vocational training represents a vital investment in the future, fostering resilience and innovation in the face of challenges such as genocide.

IV. Funding and Coordination Mechanisms

- **Palestine Gender Justice Trust** under OIC supervision
 - To operationalize support, OIC member states should consider activating the Islamic Solidarity Fund (ISF) and Islamic Development Bank (ISDB) gender equity grants to finance emergency relief and long-term programmes for Palestinian women. Establishing a Palestine Gender Justice Trust under the OIC's supervision can channel funds toward healthcare, education, and psychosocial support through vetted local NGOs. Additionally, pooled contributions via zakat or waqf mechanisms can be formally directed toward maternal health, legal aid clinics, and women's entrepreneurship programs in Gaza and the refugee camps. Implementing these initiatives can significantly empower women in Palestine, whose resilience has been tested by ongoing challenges. For instance, enhanced healthcare services specifically designed for women can address pressing health issues such as maternal and child health, which are critically important in conflict-laden regions. Funding training for local healthcare providers and establishing mobile clinics can ensure that women receive the necessary prenatal and postnatal care, which plays a vital role in reducing maternal mortality rates.
- **Activating Islamic finance tools:**

- **Zakat-Waqf-OIC Solidarity Fund:** One of the major blockades in providing relief, rehabilitation, and growth is the availability of funds. Since then, the international community, especially UN-led projects in Palestine, has systemically aggravated the situation on the ground. **It is imperative that the OIC immediately use the Zakat and Waqf funds, pooled from other Islamic countries, for the relief of the Palestinian people.** Across the Muslim world, the banking sector automatically deducts zakat funds, and in cases of emergencies, such as natural calamities, special funds are established with the support of the government and central banks (for example, during floods in Pakistan, the State Bank of Pakistan and banks come up with projects to deduct money from people's accounts voluntarily; however, zakat funds are deducted involuntarily each year). Similarly, the OIC can set up a pool of funds for Palestine that can then be used with the help of regional actors for the relief, rehabilitation, and growth of the Palestinian people. Special funds can also set quotas for female-headed households, pregnant women, and women with disabilities. In this case, women who bear the brunt of the crisis can crawl to safety.
- **Align with UN transitional governance frameworks.**
 - UN transitional governance frameworks can be beneficial in rebuilding governance structures. However, it is best recommended that tailor-made governance structures that are useful historically in the context of Palestine be adopted. UN transitional governance frameworks are beneficial as guidelines, but they must be reworked to situate them in local contexts.

V. Cross-Cutting Approaches

- **Peer support & trauma healing circles**
 - **Art and Expressive Therapy:** Implement creative forms of therapy, such as art, music, and storytelling, that allow women to express their pain and begin to process trauma in nonverbal ways.
 - **Intergenerational Healing:** Focus on connecting women with younger generations and passing down knowledge, cultural heritage, and strategies for coping with trauma. This creates stronger and more resilient communities and helps ensure that future generations are not burdened by the same historical trauma.
 - **Safe Spaces:** Confidential spaces should be created for women to speak openly about their experiences and healing needs. This could include physical spaces or virtual platforms, depending on security and resources.

- Community consultations with women
 - Women survivors may benefit from establishing or joining support groups where they can share their healing journeys, gain strength from each other, and exchange practical advice for resilience.
 - **Art and Expressive Therapy:** Implement creative forms of therapy, such as art, music, and storytelling, that allow women to express their pain and begin to process trauma in non-verbal ways.
 - **Building Solidarity:** Women can play a pivotal role in peacebuilding, both as survivors and key figures in community healing. Supporting women's leadership in peacebuilding and reconciliation initiatives is critical for long-term social cohesion.
 - **Intergenerational Healing:** Focus on connecting women with younger generations, passing down knowledge, cultural heritage, and strategies for coping with trauma. This creates stronger, more resilient communities and helps ensure that future generations are not burdened by the same historical trauma.
- Inclusion of men and boys in healing
 - While focusing on women's needs, it is important to engage men and boys in the rehabilitation and relief process. This can prevent future cycles of violence and encourage shared responsibility for healing and rebuilding the community.
- Respect for local knowledge & cultural norms
 - Solutions should be grounded in local cultural practices and avoid the imposition of external norms or values. **Respect for Local Knowledge and Traditions:** Many communities have developed informal coping mechanisms and traditional practices that can be valuable in post-war relief efforts. These practices should be supported while integrating modern humanitarian approaches.
- Protection of children and the elderly
 - **Peer Support Networks:** Women survivors may benefit from establishing or joining support groups where they can share their healing journeys, gain strength from each other, and exchange practical advice for resilience.
- Safe spaces for vulnerable groups

- Confidential spaces should be created for women to speak openly about their experiences and healing requirements. This could include physical spaces or virtual platforms, depending on security and resource availability.
- Women can play a pivotal role in peacebuilding as survivors and key figures in community healing. Supporting women's leadership in peacebuilding and reconciliation initiatives is critical to achieving long-term social cohesion.
- Ensure that victims of war, particularly marginalized groups such as women, children, the elderly, people with disabilities, and ethnic or religious minorities, are actively involved in decision-making processes.
- Organize listening to sessions, focus groups, and community dialogues where women can freely express their needs, desires, and concerns. This approach ensures that the solutions are contextually relevant, culturally sensitive, and genuinely empowering

7.3 Conclusion

The conclusions of the strategic interventions and recommendations are a compilation of a long research protocol to suggest effective and timely solutions to overcome and mitigate the detrimental impact of gendered genocide on women. The recommendations take a holistic guideline, not relying only on top-down methods for development, but rather insisting upon a multi-level engagement, especially highlighting the importance of a participatory and bottom-up approach to development. bottom-up approach as well as co-creation of knowledge and suggest building collaborative programs with the OIC and regional states to rebuild their lives. OIC member states can play an instrumental role in establishing a special fund for Palestinian women, which can be further operationalized with the help of the Palestinian Ministry of Women (MOWA). Second, the OIC should recommend that educational institutions across all Muslim-majority countries take up advocacy and integrate the unfolding of the crisis in Israel as part of their educational curricula. Adequate funding, awareness, and collaboration can help rebuild Palestinian women's civil society. The recommendations also suggest setting quotas and funding opportunities for refugees fleeing Palestine. The report endorses better assimilation of Palestinian refugees into the respective neighboring countries. The recommendations adopt a faith-based, technologically savvy, cost-effective, and inclusive policy to ensure timely and effective solutions to reach women on the ground level. The recommendations were divided into three phases. The emergency phase requires immediate assistance in healthcare, food, legal, shelter, and education. Mid-tier and long-term strategies recommend implementing a social protection floor for the well-being and inclusion of Palestinian people.

PALESTINE: WOMEN AT THE FRONTLINE OF GENOCIDE

01

KEY FINDINGS

70% Displaced → Forced relocation in Gaza.
Healthcare Collapse → No maternity & reproductive services.
Education Lost → Girls pushed out of schools.
Rights Violated → Gender-based violence, laws ignored.
Poverty & Hunger → Militarized occupation fueling crisis.

02

VOICES OF RESILIENCE

Palestinian women remain exemplars of resilience, hope, and solidarity

CONCRETE ASKS

OIC Member States

Demand accountability & stronger diplomatic push for ceasefire. Fund women-led recovery initiatives.

Donors

Prioritize gender-responsive aid. Ensure sustained funding for UNRWA's women & child programs.

UN Agencies

Guarantee humanitarian corridors for women & children. Rebuild healthcare & education infrastructure with gender lens.

Global Community

Uphold international humanitarian & human rights law. Increase pressure to end collective punishment & blockades.

03

Source: Summary of Conclusion

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