



للارشاد القانوني والاجتماعي

Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling

مركز المرأة
للارشاد القانوني والاجتماعي

WCLAC Annual Report

2019

Introductory Note by the General Director

Dear Partners,

Despite the difficult and challenging times which we are currently facing in Palestine and all over the globe with the Corona Virus Covid 19, and its unknown implications on the short-term and long-term on all aspects of life, I am glad to present to our partners WCLAC 2019 annual report. While the world around us is drastically changing these days and most of us are working from their homes with fear and uncertainties, some realities in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) remain the same and their implications on us as Palestinian civilians living under Israeli military occupation remain unchanged.

Only few days ago, a Palestinian in Al-Essawiyeh in East Jerusalem demolished his own home to avoid extra expenses and penalties if he waited for Israeli bulldozers to do the demolitions. Back there in Bethlehem while completely closed down due to the Corona pandemic, the Israeli military entered the city and arrested 3 persons. Night raids, arrests, house demolitions, restrictions on movement and settler violence among numerous other violations and collective punishments continue unabated. For the Israeli military occupation, business continues as usual without any consideration to the current health situation threatening the safety, well-being and lives of all.

Evidence based data documented by WCLAC with Palestinian women reflect the additional sufferings and gender implications of Israeli policies and systematic violations of human rights and humanitarian law on lives of women and girls in the oPt. This is further exacerbated with the patriarchal structures under which Palestinian girls and women live and the multi-layered oppression to which women face within a colonial occupation and structured patriarchy.

Furthermore, under the current health situation, WCLAC anticipates that with the restrictions on movement and the general lockdown with all members of the family staying at home, a remarkable increase in cases of domestic violence will be witnessed. The additional burden remains on women within the household and their traditional roles within the family as housewives and main care-providers, as women are expected to bear more than other members of the family the brunt of the current situation. Women victims of gender based violence living with their abusers might be subjected to increased violence under the current situation, and might be reluctant to report on cases of domestic violence. The fear and anxiety of the unknown, and the caring of the well-being of the family, will make women victims of GBV endure the situation and compromise their safety and well-being for the sake of her children and the family. WCLAC expects an increase in violence against girls and women and hence preventive measures are required. WCLAC has therefore decided to keep its free helplines for social, legal and psychological consultation and support open, and our emergency shelter is also open in case women are referred to us for protection based on the Palestinian national referral system for victims of GBV. Prevention measures through media campaigns, emergency committees and interventions are activated to immediately respond to needs of women victims of GBV and a contingency emergency plan is developed and regularly updated to meet emerging needs.

WCLAC's 2019 annual report starts with a political brief reflecting on major political developments within the oPt as well as the areas under the control of the Palestinian authority and their gendered impact on women and girls within our society. The report covers in details achievements and challenges faced by our organization during the year, both external and internal. Despite those obstacles, WCLAC was able to achieve numerous successes during the year. The report extensively addresses all those achievements and successes, but in brief: WCLAC was present for women victims of GBV and provided quality legal and social services to them to ensure their safety and well-being, especially for those women who are in crisis and in need of immediate protection. Protection networks established by WCLAC for immediate intervention functioned in close cooperation with official institution to provide protection to women victims of violence. We also worked closely with our partners from community-based organizations, supported them and provided the necessary guidance, coaching and capacity-building programs to ensure that they are empowered to reach out women in the most remote and marginalized areas of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem to provide social legal services and awareness building programs. We conducted our awareness-building and training activities successfully and reached out numerous beneficiaries all over the West Bank including East Jerusalem. The volunteers' program targeting young women and men in our community were successfully implemented and their initiatives at the local level within their local communities supported and encouraged; we saw in the young generation the catalyst for change and were inspired by them to continue our work with passion and commitment.

WCLAC continued to monitor and document evidence-based testimonies of women victims of Israeli violations of human rights and made the voices of women heard through our international advocacy program, submissions and our engagement with UN human rights mechanisms and special procedures. The most important submissions were those presented to the Commission of Inquiry on the gendered impact of the great marches of return on women and girls in the Gaza Strip who released its report to the Human Rights Council in March 2019, including numerous testimonies from women whom we connected with the committee. The report also was gender-sensitive and addressed numerous issues highlighted in our submission to the Commission in late 2018. In addition, a submission was made to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights reflecting the negative impact of Israeli policies on the economic, social, cultural and environmental rights of Palestinian women based on our evidence-based data with first hand documentation produced by WCLAC field researchers. WCLAC also attended the sessions at the UN during the review of Israel's report before the Committee and provided information and recommendations to the Committee who adopted many of those related to women and gender issues.

During the visit of three members of the CEDAW Committee, WCLAC in cooperation with the Palestinian CEDAW Coalition, provided an extensive follow up report to the Committee on measures taken or not taken by the state of Palestine regarding issues related to the recommendations and concluding remarks of the Committee after the review of the initial review of the CEDAW report before the Committee in July 2018. WCLAC, on behalf of the Palestinian Forum to combat violence against women (Al Muntada), focused on article 16 of the Convention related to personal status laws, and on measures taken/not taken to combat violence against

women. During deliberations with the members of the committee we reiterated our recommendations for the immediate need for the adoption of the Family Protection Law, the amendment of Personal Status Laws to ensure their compliance with the CEDAW Convention, and the publication of CEDAW in the official Palestinian Gazette.

We conducted our advocacy work at the national level and consolidated efforts with all other civil society organizations to ensure the passage of laws, legislation, policies and programs that are gender sensitive and worked diligently to ensure equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex and respect for women's human rights.

WCLAC focused most of its efforts during 2019 on the passage of the Family Protection Law which was long overdue. With our counterparts from other women's organizations both national and international, we consolidated our advocacy campaigns all through the year, especially during the International Women's Day in March and the sixteen days to combat violence against women (November- December) to call on the Palestinian authority and the President specifically to pass the Family Protection Law. Our expectations were high at the beginning of 2019 that the law will pass upon a recommendation to the President by the previous cabinet to pass the law in December 2018, but those hopes later faded down with a decision by the President to return the draft law back to the new cabinet for further review by the governmental technical committees. Unlike the previous years, civil society organizations were not engaged in the process and we were uncertain what exactly were the amendments made on the last draft. Our calls for national consultations over the law were received by confirmations by the government, namely the Minister of Women's Affairs that the law will not be passed without our review and recommendations. The year ended without much progress and it was only in February 2020 that we received the amended draft for review and comments.

On another level, WCLAC with the Palestinian General Union of Palestinian women revived the coalition of the Personal Status Law. Upon the concluding remarks of the CEDAW committee WCLAC developed a policy paper with its partners to address the discriminatory provisions of the law and propose possible scenarios for the adoption of a Palestinian Personal law/s that are in compliance with CEDAW, especially article 16 of the Convention. "Irada", a Palestinian feminist social movement, focused its efforts on specific provisions of the law, and in coordination with the personal status coalition addressed three pressing issues within the law: raising the age of marriage to 18 years for both men and women without exceptions, the abolition of guardianship for women in marriage and equal rights in divorce by ensuring that divorce is only conducted by the courts. Those efforts were seen as a step forward towards compliance with the CEDAW recommendations and the women's movement efforts towards the adoption of personal status laws based on gender equality and non-discrimination.

The last quarter of 2019 witnessed a huge counter campaign by Islamic fundamentalists, namely the al-Tahreer Islamic political party and some tribal groups in Hebron against WCLAC and other Palestinian women's organizations, and called in mosques and social media for the withdrawal of Palestine from the CEDAW Convention. Numerous meetings were held in Hebron and later in Jerusalem attacking women's organizations and inciting against women's organizations and the CEDAW Convention. Women's organizations were left again on their own to combat this huge

campaign and the official responses of the Palestinian authority were too moderate and were not up to the expected. The campaign was specifically against the Law by order issued by the President to raise the age of marriage for both men and women to the age of 18 which entered into force on the 29th December, 2019.

The year 2019 was also loaded with numerous challenges at the national and regional levels. Obviously, the general setback in the status of human rights in our society can be attributed to numerous factors; namely the prolonged Israeli military occupation, internal political divide, and the social and cultural context in which we work where patriarchy and the imbalance in power relations in favor of men still prevail.

Yet for us at WCLAC, despite all these challenges, we continue to conduct our work with commitment and diligence to influence change and provide a better world to us and to all Palestinian women. Staff worked hard to implement their plans and were ready to respond to emergency situations to ensure protection to women victims of violence. Internally, the working environment was positive and numerous staff activities were conducted for our staff for venting purposes, recreation and the refreshment of the energy, especially for our service providers' staff who always work under extreme pressure. The Board of Directors conducted their meetings on regular basis every two months and the General Assembly meetings were held in March and December. Support staff of the organization provided the administrative and financial support to our program staff and met their obligations in a timely manner. WCLAC maintained good relations with all its partners and the organization was able to end the year with no deficit in its budget.

I want to take this opportunity to thank you and to thank all staff at WCLAC for their diligent work and commitment to human rights and women's rights. WCLAC sees in itself a catalyst for change and strongly believes that we can make a difference in the lives of Palestinian women and our society. We hope you enjoy reading our annual report and are looking forward to our continued partnership.

Randa Siniora

General Director/WCLAC

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Part I. Summary Report

Political Brief

This section presents gender sensitive analysis of the political arena in 2019. In specific, this section presents gender impact of the Israeli occupation violence, which contribute to the multi layered oppression Palestinian women suffer from. It is evident that women's rights are negatively affected by the Israeli occupation political, social and economic oppression. Any discussion of challenges facing Palestinian women must be set in the context of prolonged Israeli violations to Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law in West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza Strip.

The second part of this section introduces legal, social, economic and political development within the Palestinian Authority's impact on women's rights and their access to justice. Lack of political will to enact new laws and to publish international conventions; especially CEDAW created some attempts to reinforce patriarchal system in Palestine through the campaign that was led by some tribal leaders and religious political parties.

I. Impact of Protracted Israeli Occupation Measures on Women

Blockade on the Gaza Strip and its gendered impact on Women

Almost thirteen years of Israeli blockade on the Gaza Strip and internal division have extreme direct and indirect impacts on women. Humanitarian crisis affecting every aspect of the daily lives of 1.8 million persons through poverty, unemployment, poor drinking water, food insecurity, storage of power, poor health infrastructure, and limited access to protection services. This protracted crisis was overburdened with the massive casualties for the "Great March of Return" demonstrations, which added to women's vulnerability. While women coping mechanisms were eroded, psychological stress and Gender Based Violence (GBV) intensified women's suffering and vulnerability. Prolonged humanitarian conditions have affected psychological well-being of the population in Gaza. According to Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO 2019), 52000 people are in need of mental and psychosocial health as a result of Gaza ongoing tension. The situation, however, has extreme adverse impact on women as they become more exposed to tension, depression and violence because they are considered the corner stone of the family and women often become shock-absorbers in the crisis. Gaza Community Mental Health Programme reported that there is an increase in the level of anticipatory anxiety, especially among women and children. Further, this multi layered violence is exacerbated by the Israeli blockade as it has resulted in severe restrictions on women's access to healthcare, including sexual and reproductive health, to realizing adequate living standards for themselves and their families, including shelter, water, electricity, and sanitation. Palestinian women are also subject to Israel's aggressive, and sometimes, lethal attacks against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.¹

¹ The Impact of the Current Situation on Women in Gaza <http://www.socialwatch.org/node/18312>

Moreover, the protracted humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip and its impact has exacerbated GBV in all its forms, including sexual violence, domestic violence and child marriage. The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) Violence Survey 2019 reveals that 64% of women in Gaza suffer from psychological violence, 26% physical violence, 11% sexual violence, 47% social violence, and 55% economic violence. These high ratios of violence can be, at least partially attributed to severe humanitarian conditions of unemployment, displacement, inadequate housing, limited sanitation facilities, and limited access to health, social and protection services.²

A study carried out by the GBV Cluster on (Impact of the ‘Great March of Return’ on Gender-based Violence) shows that negative impact of the blockade and the Great March of Return on women has dramatically increased stress on the family, which is reflected into more negative repercussions on women; especially increase of GBV. Data shows that around 15.6% of hospitalized injured are children. Mothers of these children have reported increased gender-based violence, especially psychological/emotional violence as mothers were often blamed by their husbands and other family members for ‘allowing’ their children to participate. Additionally, the extra care associated with the injured child is mostly borne by the mothers as it is seen as their role by the family and society as a whole. Mothers from poorer household also reported an extra burden in being responsible for seeking medical assistance for their injured children causing them further embarrassment.³

Women participated in the peaceful Great March of Return and were exposed to Israeli attacks. According to a report issued by the Ministry of Health 12 women were killed and 2,440 (7.5% of total injuries) were injured from March 2018 until mid-June 2019. PCBS data of 2019 shows that ratio of women-headed households in Gaza reaches 9.5% as consequence of losing the primary breadwinner of the family through death or injury. This forms substantial burden on women who are required to meet all the needs of their families, including financial needs. Further, data shows that 83.7% of the males killed are between the age of 18-39, which means that many of the women left behind are around the age of thirty, and, therefore, still perceived by society to be able to remarry, thereby risking the custody of their children. Furthermore, girls whose fathers have been killed or injured are at risk of forced marriage and drop-out of schools or even GBV. Also, the consequences are harsher on injured women particularly for mothers as they are expected to continue fulfilling their home duties despite the injury. In addition, mothers bear the responsibility towards injured children by virtue of their reproductive role and the sexual division of labor within our society, and thus they become more tired and stressful due to the recession and help they provide besides basic functions at home, compounding the burden on women.⁴

Following an evidence based report submitted by WCLAC to the Commission of Inquiry (COI) on the impact of the Great March of Return on Women on Sept. 2018, the COI issued its report on February 28th, 2019. The report was not only related to reports submitted by Palestinian Human Rights Organizations but also based on meetings with victims. In this regard, WCLAC facilitated the COI mission through arranging for Skype meetings with women whom WCLAC documented testimonies from and presented its report. The [COI report](#) stated that *“the demonstrations were civilian in nature, had clearly stated political aims and, despite some acts of significant violence, did not constitute combat or a military campaign.”* This was clearly highlighted in WCLAC’s report to the COI, which emphasized based on testimonies collected that

² OCHA <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/almost-one-three-palestinian-women-reported-violence-their-husbands-2018-2019>

³ GBV Cluster <https://palestine.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Situation%20Report%20Gaza%20-%208%20June%202018%20-%20Great%20Return%20March%20-%20final.pdf>

⁴ *ibid*

it is obvious that civilians are being directly targeted without posing any imminent threat to life to others; in most of the cases, civilians were taking part in cultural events organized in areas where marches of return took place, and were not taking part in any hostile acts. WCLAC's report clearly defined the impact of Israeli violations on Palestinian women living in Gaza who found to be suffering of psychological, physiological, economic and social levels, due to Israeli violations committed during the marches of return. Women suffered on all levels, whether they themselves were directly targeted or indirectly and even when one of their family members or loved ones was targeted.

Gendered Impact of Israeli Occupation in East Jerusalem & West Bank

Minors' House Arrest

Israel's constant measures against Palestinians in East Jerusalem are directly affecting women. **Minors' house arrest** is a measure taken against children under on Israeli Military Order 1651⁵, which establishes the age of 12 as the minimum age for criminal responsibility.⁶ After the age of 16, Palestinian minors are tried as adults, with a maximum penalty of 10 years imprisonment.⁷ It is often the case that, prior to Palestinian children being placed under house arrest, they are detained, without trial, for a period of time ranging from a few hours to weeks or even months. Following this period of detention, they are then placed on house arrest while charges are determined or while they await trial.⁸ WCLAC documented testimonies from women on impact of child house arrest on their lives in a report submitted to CESCR 66th session-Israel review in September, 2019. According to WCLAC's findings, such house arrests tend to disproportionately affect women. This is because mothers usually bear the traditional role of greater responsibility for childcare and housework. Hence, they are more likely to have to stay indoors with the minors under house arrest, in order to monitor them and ensure that they do not break the terms of the sentence, while their husbands leave for work. Also, if minors are allowed to attend school, the mothers must accompany them during the entire duration of school hours. Hence, their ability to work is highly restricted, **and many of them had to abandon their jobs and become the prison guards of their own children.**⁹ As a result, these mothers are also socially isolated from their community. Another example of isolation discovered through the testimonies collected by WCLAC is that women fear society's judgment that they were not able to prevent their sons from being put under house arrest. The burden is even greater for women who are single parents or whose husbands are disabled or otherwise unable to work.

Residency Revocation

Residency revocation is the most direct tool used to forcibly transfer Palestinians from East Jerusalem. According to Israel's Ministry of Interior, Israel has revoked more than 14,643 Palestinian residencies from Jerusalem between 1967 and 2018¹⁰. WCLAC's findings show that Israel¹¹ continues the practice of revoking residency as a collective punishment, implementing it against women and girls who are related

⁵ Article 186 of Military Order 1651, August 2015 Available at: http://www.addameer.org/sites/default/files/publications/article_186.pdf

⁶ UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, 20 November 1989, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 1577, p. 3, article 1.

⁷ UNICEF report 2013: Children in Israeli Military Detention, p. 8: Available at

https://www.unicef.org/oPt/UNICEF_oPt_Children_in_Israeli_Military_Detention_Observations_and_Recommendations_-_6_March_2013.pdf

⁸ Defense for Children International "Child house arrests rise in Jerusalem clampdown" (2014) Available at: http://www.dci-palestine.org/child_house_arrests_rise_in_jerusalem_clampdown

⁹ CESCR, 1966, article 6, para 1

¹⁰ <http://www.hamoked.org/Document.aspx?dID=Updates2075>

¹¹ Joint submission to the UPR Working Group 29th session, *Palestinian Women under Prolonged Israeli Occupation*, WCLAC, WILPF et al. 2018-01, page 7, para 5.2. Available at: https://www.wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Palestine-UPR_web-2-5.pdf

to an accused perpetrator of politically related charges (Breach of Loyalty).¹² Palestinian women who live in Jerusalem may lose their residency permits, obtained through a family unification procedure¹³. Women's residency permits for women from the West Bank married to Jerusalemites in order to live in Jerusalem depend on their husband being able to renew their permit for them. Consequently, in case of divorce the ex-husband would not be allowed to renew his ex-wife's permit anymore. The fact that women's residency depends on their relationships with their husbands create risks of gender related issues such as women's dependency and risk of exacerbating men's control over their wives. In cases of marriage disputes and wife abuse cases, often prefer to endure violence in order to maintain her residency permit. This is further exacerbated with the conflicting legal systems in force and the difficulties entailed in implementing court rulings.

House Demolitions

The difficulty in obtaining Israeli-issued building permits has driven Palestinians to construct housing and business structures that are at constant risk of demolition or confiscation by Israel on the grounds of being unauthorized. Only 13 per cent of East Jerusalem is zoned for Palestinian construction, much of which is already built up, while 35 per cent has been allocated for Israeli settlements, which are illegal under international law. Since the beginning of 2019 a total of 111 homes and other structures were demolished. A total of 36 structures were self-demolished where owners are forced to demolish their properties to avoid heavy fines, following the issuance of demolition orders by the Israeli authorities. As a result of the increase in demolitions, more people have been displaced in East Jerusalem in the first four months of 2019 than in all of 2018.¹⁴ Testimonies documented by WCLAC from women who had either experienced demolition by Israeli forces at night or in the early morning, or they had been forced to destroy the house themselves by demolition or concrete sealing.¹⁵ This is a degrading and heart-wrenching task for the families who have fought to maintain their homes and livelihoods.

Israel's Environmental Crisis

Israel's environment degradation is directed toward Palestinians and Palestinian land in the West Bank. It is using the West Bank as a dumping site for hazardous and industrial waste.¹⁶ In its latest report, the Special Rapporteur on the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) underlines that: "The transfer of Israeli industrial waste to treatment plants in the West Bank – through the creation of so-called 'sacrifice zones' that are less rigorously regulated – contributes to the environmental scarring of the occupied territory, without the involvement or consent of the Palestinians."¹⁷ This is endangering the health of Palestinians living in proximity, as such dumping of hazardous waste causes pollution of air, soil and water. Since large amounts of hazardous materials and wastes are either buried or openly disposed of in agricultural land,

¹² New Bill Allowing Revocation of Residency of Palestinians in East Jerusalem for "Breach of Loyalty" is Illegal: <https://www.adalah.org/en/content/view/9390>

¹³ Under this residency system, spouses must submit family reunification applications where one member holds a Jerusalem ID and the other does not. Only if both have Jerusalem IDs can they live legally in Jerusalem. As of 2003, however, with the passing of the Law of Citizenship and Entry into Israel (Temporary Order, 2003), this reunification became almost impossible. Under this law, Palestinians are blocked from attaining Jerusalem ID on the basis of marriage.

¹⁴ OCHA Record number of demolitions, including self-demolitions, in East Jerusalem in April 2019 <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/record-number-demolitions-including-self-demolitions-east-jerusalem-april-2019>

¹⁵ Joint submission to the UPR Working Group 29th session, *Palestinian Women under Prolonged Israeli Occupation*, WCLAC, WILPF et al. 2018-01, page 7, para 5:2. Available at: https://www.wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Palestine-UPR_web-2-5.pdf

¹⁶ Kurzom, Geroge, Why has Israel relocated its hazardous waste treatment facilities to the West Bank?, Maan Center, 2019, Available at: <http://www.maan-ctr.org/magazine/article/2123/>; <https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=24349&LangID=E>

¹⁷ Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, 15 March 2019, A/HRC/40/73, para. 26

the soil and groundwater are being polluted.¹⁸ WCLAC's [findings](#) show that agriculture is a work sphere common for Palestinian women living close to farmlands. Considering that Israeli solid waste, which is dumped and spread into the Occupied Palestinian Territory highly affects farming, Palestinian women are particularly affected including by the loss of livelihood, and the health risks related to pollution. WCLAC's research indicates that women express feeling useless, distressed and anxious about the fact that they are no longer contributing to the economy of the family. This in turn affects Palestinian women's role within the family, as their independence and ability to own and harvest land is hugely hampered. Within a context of economic crisis in the oPt, the loss of agricultural work is a real blow for women who work in this sector as they often tend to have low skills to fit in other forms of skilled labour.

Israel continued HR and IHL violations against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip through the clearing and bulldozing of agricultural and residential lands by the Israel military along the eastern borders of Gaza and has been complemented by the unannounced aerial spraying of crop-killing herbicides.¹⁹ The areas treated by Israeli chemical spraying are located in the eastern and south-eastern border areas of the Gaza Strip, in the so-called "buffer zone" and are allegedly carried out for security reasons.²⁰ According to official Palestinian statistics, the border area encompasses some 29 square kilometres of agricultural lands, equivalent to about 25% of the total agricultural land in the Gaza Strip.²¹ An evidence based [Report](#) prepared by WCLAC submitted to Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) in the 66th Session in August 2019- Israel Review found that Palestinian women living in the buffer zones, in areas such as Khan Younis/Khozaa/Eastern borders of Gaza, are very dependent on the mentioned farmlands. Women play a big role in a variety of tasks including planting, harvesting, irrigating, in addition to doing household chores and taking care of their children. Toxic pollution forces women to stay away from their land for a week after spraying. Chemical spraying does not only kill crops but also affects the soil itself on the long-term.²² Therefore, women working in these fields risk being affected by the soil pollution. Crops are also affected for a long period and may continue to be polluted and hazardous. Chemical spraying of crops disproportionately impacts Palestinian women whose role is central in farming and food production. Children usually also accompany their mothers to the fields and hence also risk diseases and infections associated with chemical spraying, which can in turn augment women's time spent in caregiving.

Palestinian Female Prisoners

Israel continues detention of Palestinian women over the last 50 years with an estimate number of 10,000 Palestinian women have been arrested and/or detained under Israeli military orders.²³ A total of 41 female prisoners were in Israeli jails in 2019, 17 out them were mothers. There are four Palestinian female detainees who are held at Israeli prisoners under administrative detention. Those four detainees are held without any charges or a trail. There are eight injured female prisoners and twelve sick female prisoners who suffer medical negligence by the Israeli Prison Services.²⁴

¹⁸ Dr. Jad Isaac, Dr. Khaldoun Rishmawi, *Status of the Environment in Palestine 2015*, Publications of the Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem (ARIJ), 2015-12, page 102. Available at: https://www.arij.org/files/arijadmin/2016/SOER_2015_final.pdf

¹⁹ Weizman, Eyal, *Herbicide warfare in Gaza*, Forensic Architecture, Available at: <https://forensic-architecture.org/investigation/herbicide-warfare-in-gaza>

²⁰ <https://forensic-architecture.org/investigation/herbicide-warfare-in-gaza>; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jul/19/israeli-spraying-of-herbicide-near-gaza-harming-palestinian-crops>

²¹ Kurzom, Geroge, *Israel's chemical war on Gaza farmers*, MaanCenter, 2018, Available at: <http://www.maan-ctr.org/magazine/article/2016/>

²² Ibid.

²³ Imprisonment of Women and Girls http://www.addameer.org/the_prisoners/women

²⁴ Addameer <http://www.addameer.org/publications/international-women%E2%80%99s-day-%E2%80%A643-palestinian-women-detention>

In this year, the Israeli occupation forces arrested more than 5500 Palestinians; among them were 889 children and at least 128 women, according to a joint report by The Prisoners Affairs Commission, the Palestinian Prisoner Society and Adameer that the number of Palestinian prisoners and detainees in occupation prisons to the current date is approximately 5000, including 41 women, approximately 200 child detainees and 450 Palestinians held in administrative detention, Israeli imprisonment without charge or trial.²⁵ According to the report, Israeli occupation forces arrested 889 children. By the end of the year, the number of detained children in Israeli jails reached approximately 200, while 35 are held under house arrest. The punitive measures utilized by the Israeli forces are a systemic method of imposition on the Palestinian civilians' intrinsic rights. It serves to ensure that any actor that opposes the Israeli authorities pays for their actions.

In October 2019, Khalida Jarrar a law maker and former member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, was arrested from her house at dawn. Her latest release from Israeli prison was in February 2019 after spending 20 months in "administrative detention". Administrative detention is a form of internment where an individual is held without trial or charge which is in flagrant violation of international law and the most basic requirements of fair trial in democratic countries, as prisoners are incarcerated for prolonged periods, without charge or due process. Jarrar has always been an advocate of the freedom of Palestinian prisoners and has served as the former vice chair and executive director of Palestinian prisoners' rights group [Addameer](#).²⁶ In October 31st, 2019 Khalida Jarrar was arrested again just eight months after being released and put first under administrative detention and then charges were brought against her and she is currently waiting for her trial. More than 275 organizations, political parties, and social movements worldwide have joined a collective call for her release.²⁷

Moreover, administrative detention was also used by the end of August and September against two Jordanians from a Palestinian descent while crossing the King Hussein crossing from Jordan to the West Bank, Hiba Labadi was subjected to 30 days of interrogation in the Petah Tikva interrogation centre²⁸. During her interrogation, which sometimes extended to 20 hours a day, she was tied to a chair and placed in a painful position. She went on a hunger strike to protest her detention where she was admitted to hospital due to deteriorating health condition. She ended the hunger strike following the announcements about her release on November 6th, 2019.²⁹

Israeli Settlements & Settlers Attack

The State of Israel continues to support settlement expansion that aggressively and illegally confiscates Palestinian land. It constitutes the main obstacle to peace by fuelling tensions between Palestinians and settlers, which often turn violent. Settler violence creates instability and fear for Palestinians living in close proximity to settlements in the OPT. Advancement of housing units continued on a high level in 2019. A total of 5,800 new housing units were advanced in different stages of the planning and implementation process in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Around 1,153 of the units pertain to settlements located in East Jerusalem, and 4,647 to settlements located in other parts of the West Bank, including in outlying locations deep inside the West Bank.

²⁵ <https://samidoun.net/2019/12/year-end-report-israeli-occupation-arrests-over-5500-palestinians-in-2019/>

²⁶ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/10/israel-arrests-palestinian-leftist-figure-khalida-jarrar-191031071410783.html>

²⁷ <https://samidoun.net/2019/10/breaking-news-israeli-occupation-forces-arrest-khalida-jarrar-palestinian-leftist-feminist-parliamentarian/>

²⁸ <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/israel-un-experts-express-grave-concerns-over-detention-of-heba-al-labadi-call-for-her-release-press-release/>

²⁹ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/11/israel-frees-jordanians-held-charge-191106144638912.html>

A new settlement was approved in the north of the West Bank and another plan was authorized to continue the construction of Sde Bar and Efrat settlements in Bethlehem. Plans were advanced for the settlement of Ma'ale Adumim, one of the large settlements that is located in a strategic location to prevent any attempts to establish a continuous Palestinian state and North-South, East-West connectivity. 289 new housing units were approved for validation for the expansion of the Alon settlement near the Palestinian community of Khan al-Ahmar, which is under threat of demolition. Khan al-Ahmar is situated in a sensitive location in Area C, and has strategic importance for preserving the contiguity of a future Palestinian state. Currently, there are approximately 215,000 Israelis living in East Jerusalem and 413,000 settler population live in Area C of the West Bank. A total of 630,000 settlers live in the West Bank in 143 settlement locations (132 in the West Bank, 11 in East Jerusalem and 113 outposts). Israeli measures of legalizing settlements construction on privately owned Palestinian land, as well as legalizing settlement outposts that were previously outlawed are reflecting implementation of the law, which was passed by Israeli Knesset in 2017³⁰. Such a law poses an enormous obstacle to reaching a just and durable solution to the conflict. It also fosters support of legislation, prioritizing settlers and their illegal developments over the livelihood of Palestinians and their rightful claims to land.

Settlements and settlers violence have dramatic psychological impact on women, as they constantly fear for themselves and their children. Students, especially females are subject to settlers' violence and harassment on their way to school, which is one of the main causes of girls' drop-out of school. Further, the detrimental effect on the family causes immense strain to women who try to provide basic needs and security for their families. WCLAC reports that settler violence generally goes un-charged due to its strategic position in obtaining land from Palestinians, who are threatened and fearful of returning to their land.

According to the PSCB National Survey statistics 60% of the women reported that they or at least one of their households' members were exposed to a form of violence by the occupation forces or settlers, 15% of the women reported that they faced difficulties in reaching their workplace as for the restrictions by occupation forces and settlers caused difficulties in reaching workplaces at a percentage of 90%.

II. Discriminatory National Laws and Exacerbated Patriarchal Norms: another Layer of Oppression

Gender Based Violence and Femicide

The Palestinian Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) launched the 2019 National Violence Survey in Palestinian Society 2019. Results of this survey found that 29% (38% in Gaza and 24% in West Bank) of ever or married currently or ever married women experienced least once one form of violence such as sexual, physical, psychological, social or economic violence by their husband in Palestine. Results also showed that 57% (64% in Gaza and 52% in West Bank) of currently married women or ever married women experience "at least once" psychosocial violence by their husband. Further, 9% (11% in Gaza Strip and 8% in West Bank) of the currently married or ever married women experienced sexual violence by their husband. Furthermore, 18% (26% in Gaza Strip and 12% in the West Bank) of the currently married or ever married women experienced "at least once" physical violence by their husband. PCBS data also showed that more than half of women who experienced violence preferred to keep silent and 48% talked about it to their

³⁰ Law summary available at: <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/israel-settlement/judea-and-samaria.php>

³⁰ Article 11(A) of the Law of Entry to Israel of 1952: "The Minister of the Interior may at his discretion...cancel any permit of residence under this Law."

families while only 1.4% requested support from service providers. Data also found that 3% of the women have experienced psychological violence in shopping places, 4% in the street, 4% inside the educational institutions and 2% at the workplace.³¹

The year 2019 witnessed dramatic increase of not only cases of femicide but also brutality of violence against women. WCLAC documented 24 cases (18 in the West Bank and 6 in Gaza Strip) of femicide in 2019. The case of Isra'e Ghrayeb who was killed by her family in Bethlehem triggered Palestinian public opinion through campaigns calling for justice not only to this victim but also to other women who were victims of femicide and domestic violence. The brutality used to kill this woman on the hands of her family members in August 22nd sparked outrage across Palestine and the Arab world, prompting women to shatter public taboos and share their own stories of domestic abuse on social media. They demanded justice to this victim and to hold those from her family members and the institutions that were supposed to protect her but kept silent responsible. Grassroots movements demanded the Palestinian Authority to launch an investigation into the killing. On September 26th, particularly in response to Ghrayeb's death, thousands of Palestinians marched in dozens of cities across historic Palestine and abroad, under the banner of "no liberated homeland without the liberation of women." The demonstrations were organized by the Tal'at movement ("rising up" in Arabic) — a Palestine-based group of women founded a year before Ghrayeb's murder, seeking to redefine the Palestinian national struggle.³² This brought existing outdated laws, especially the Penal Code to discussion again calling for modern laws that ensure justice to the victims and abide by International Conventions Palestine acceded to. Still it is evident that despite modifications on some articles of the Penal Code, especially Articles 98 and 99 through a Presidential Decree, inadequate protection for women prevails. These amendments do not reflect the actual need for protection measures and policies and access to justice for women who are victims of GBV and femicide. This entailed the pressing need to adopt the Family Protection Law and the Palestinian Penal Law to ensure justice to women victims of femicide and GBV.

On December 29th WCLAC published an [analytical report](#) "*Discrimination and Violence against Women: Fertile Ground for Femicide*" focusing on femicide cases mapped and documented by WCLAC during 2016-2018. The report adopted a qualitative methodology while analyzing 67 cases of femicide WCLAC documented within three years in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. It aimed to provide an analysis from a feminist perspective on the dimensions, factors and different repercussions of femicide in the Palestinian society. The report also highlighted the most important results of analyzing the circumstances of killing women and girls that were mapped and documented by WCLAC and presented both recommendations and suggestions that would contribute to combatting this phenomenon.

Early Marriage

On October 21st, 2019 the Council of Ministers attributed to the President the amendment of Article 5 of the Personal Status Law of 1976, which sets the marriage age to be 18 years for both sexes. . In November 2019, President Mahmoud Abbas issued a presidential decree that has the power of law in accordance with Article (43) of the Basic Law setting the minimum age for marriage at 18 for both sexes. The Presidential Decree, however, allowed for specific exceptions to be decided by the Chief of Judges. As for

³¹ <http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Downloads/book2480.pdf>

³² <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-palestinians-women-killings/palestinian-women-demand-legal-protection-after-suspected-honor-killing-idUSKCN1VP2AW>

the special exceptional cases which were left unrecognized / unidentified (within the law), the Chief of Judges requests the judges of the Shari'a courts, "to verify the legal, Shari'a and social justifications, establish a control according to the case's reality " and submit it to him "to study it and carry out the legal and Shari'a requirements duly."³³ Women organizations were against such condition fearing that exceptions will become the rule and more girls will marry at an age of less than 18. WCLAC and other women organizations have been calling for the increase of age of marriage since the advent of the PA. Imposing exceptions in the Presidential Decree would increase cases of early marriage using these exceptions. Thus, WCLAC and women organizations have been calling for the increase of age of marriage without any exception, which is a goal that requires collective efforts to achieve.

These amendments on the age of marriage were faced by rejection of some tribal leaders and religious political parties; especially Hizb ut-Tahrir. This political party led an organized incitement and defamation campaign using recommendations set in WCLAC's CEDAW shadow report to influence tribal leaders to reject the convention claiming that it opposes Islamic and cultural beliefs in the Palestinian society?. Recommendations set forth in CEDAW shadow report were taken out of context and posted widely on social media trying to influence different community groups to reject this convention and organizations that adopt it, and to prevent any attempts to publish the Convention in the Official Gazette. As a result, the issue of CEDAW was widely discussed at community levels; especially with some tribal leaders and conservative Islamic political parties; namely Hizb ut-Tahrir asking for withdrawal from the Convention or imposing reservations. This campaign of incitement introduced a discourse that called for boycotting women and civil society organizations adopting or working on CEDAW, which created a social unrest. To overcome this issue, WCLAC immediately requested CEDAW Coalition to carry out a meeting to define messages to be disseminated to our constituencies and through the media. The Coalition was determined that Palestine's accession to this Convention without reservations was a remarkable success for women and the women's movement and our principles towards equality are un-negotiable. Women organizations and The Palestinian Women General Union had a meeting with the Public Prosecutor discussing the impact of decisions made by some tribes on civic peace and safety and security of women organizations and women activists.

Family Protection Law

For the last 15 Year women organizations have been pushing for the adoption of a Family Protection Law. 2018 marked significant efforts of women and civil society organizations through membership in the Harmonization Committee of national laws with international conventions through the review of Family Protection Draft Law. The Law acts as the first step to prevent gender-based violence, protect survivors of gender-based violence, and hold the perpetrators accountable. The draft Bill, endorsed by Cabinet at the end of December 2018, which sent it to the Palestinian President for endorsement through Presidential Decree that has the power of law. The Palestinian Cabinet was changed in April 2019 with the 18th Government led by Dr. Ishteyaeh. Unfortunately, the President returned the Family Protection Laws to the new Cabinet for further deliberations.

In November 2019 and during the 16 Days of Activism national and international organizations designed a campaign "Together against Violence" calling for prompt adoption of the Family Protection Bill and

³³ <https://www.aljazeera.net/news/humanrights/2019/12/12/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%B7%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%B7%D9%8A%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%B7%D8%A8%D9%82-%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%88%D9%86-%D8%B1%D9%81%D8%B9-%D8%B3%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B2%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%AC-%D9%86%D9%87%D8%A7%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%85>

better access to services for gender-based violence (GBV) survivors. The campaign involved around 68 national and international organizations to advocate for the adoption of the Family Protection Law. During the campaign more than 100 coordinated on-site activities were organized throughout Palestinian cities and villages using different methods to advocate for the adoption of the Family Protection Law and using social media messages against gender-based violence and disseminated information for survivors of violence in seeking legal, medical, psychosocial, and sheltering support.

The year 2019 ended with no achievement made on the adoption of the Family Protection Law. Women and civil society organizations were excluded for the review process despite government assurance in different occasions that CSOs are and should take part of the discussion.

Women's economic security

In February 2019, the Israeli government implemented a law endorsed by the Israeli Knesset in 2018 to deduct 140 US\$ million from Palestinian tax revenue transfers, for payments made by the PA to prisoners in Israeli jails. Until the full amount is provided, the PA has refused to receive any clearance revenue funds, which constitute around 65% of the PA's budget and 15% of GDP. Consequently, the PA encountered a severe liquidity squeeze and had to accrue large debts to its employees, private suppliers, local government units and the public pension fund in the amount of USD 686 million in the first half of 2019. Full salaries have been paid only to the lowest earning employees, whose monthly salaries are 2,000 shekels (USD 550) or less, while employees earning more than that have been receiving only 60% of their wages.

The West Bank's economy continued to slow down in 2019 with real GDP growth declining by 2.1% during the first quarter. Unemployment rates in the West Bank affects 19% of participant population in labor force compared with 52% in Gaza Strip. Gender and wage gaps remained high, as the unemployment rate for females was 26% in comparison to 14% for males, and unemployment rate among youth aged 15-24 years was 25% (20% for males in comparison to 46% for females). Furthermore, despite an increased female participation rate in the labor force in the West Bank from 19% in 2017 to 21% in 2018, this rate decreased again during the first quarter of the calendar year in 2019 reaching again 18% and remaining generally low in comparison to that of males, which was at 74% for the same period.

On March 7th, 2019 the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) published an article highlighting that about half of Palestinian female participants in the labor force were unemployed by the end of 2016. The report stated that the unemployment rate among female participants in the labor force was 47.4 % compared to 22.3% for male participant. The highest rate, 65.8 %, was among females aged between 15 and 29 years, while unemployment rates reached 53.8 % among women who completed 13 school years and above. The report also mentioned the female participation's rate in the labor force - 19 % of the total female population was in the labor market in 2017, compared to 10.3 % in 2001, while the male participation rate was 71.2 % in 2017. Meanwhile, the average daily wage for females was 84.6 Israeli shekels (app. \$25) compared to 119.6 shekels (app. \$35) for males. The PCBS said women represented half of the Palestinian population by the end of 2017 at a ratio of 103 males for every 100 females. The percentage of female-headed households in Palestine was 10.6 % in 2017, 11.2 % in the West Bank and 9.5 % in Gaza Strip.

These alarming figures were confirmed through a [World Bank Report](#) "Women, Business and Law 2020", which analyzes laws and regulations affecting women's economic opportunity. The report highlighted that

women the Middle East and North Africa have only half the legal rights of men. Although many economies have acted to reduce barriers to women's economic participation over the last 50 years, the progress made cannot be equated with success. "Women, Business and the Law" emphasizes the work still to be done by making a contribution to research and policy discussions about the state of women's economic opportunities³⁴. Since 2017 Palestine was ranked as the last in the world with the score of 26.3 and was among the 56 countries that haven't made any improvements related to the discriminatory laws women face at every stage of their career.

Alarming results in this report require collective efforts to further analyze them upon them based socio-economic and geo-political context in Palestine. We cannot neglect that part of these results is due to Israel occupation's policies and practices. Such as the economic blockade on the Gaza Strip, complete control of borders in addition to mobility restrictions imposed by military checkpoints. Further, settlements' expansion, land confiscation and control over resources as well as property destruction add to the economic burden. Nevertheless, the Palestinian market is mainly considered as a consumer market for Israeli products. In light of the high unemployment's rates among both sexes as well as low participation of women in the labor market, where women's participation rate in the labor force has only reached 19.1% out of total women at work age during 2019. The facilities are not made to enhance Palestinian women's participation in economic activities nor motivational factor at work environment are taken into account, such as equal salaries between men and women, consideration of minimum wage or even provide an appropriate environment away from harassment/abuse and grantee or provide health insurance. As a result, the Palestinian government is required to narrow the gap between men and women by starting political change through legal reform to protect women's rights to equal opportunities. Additionally, there is a need to generate new job opportunities through introducing women entrepreneurship and small businesses. On January 28th, President Abbas signed on halting the execution of the Social Security Law. This happened after the many Palestinian protests, which started by the end of 2018 as a consequence of the government's announcement for the private sector to pay their financial dues and registration to the institution. This was done without taking the worker's rights into consideration and it therefore infuriated thousands of people, pushing them to call for the government to pull back. According to the law, all workers are subject to the same percentage of contribution to the Social Security Corporation, with no clauses providing for workers who receive under minimum wage.³⁵

Women constitute the majority of those who work under the minimum wage and are hence automatically excluded from the benefits of the new draft of the Social Security Law. In addition, all drafts of the draft law included discriminatory provisions against women in the labor force, which will further discourage women from entering into the labor force.

Thousands of Palestinians, especially those who work in the private sector, opposed the implementation of the law mainly due to the lack of trust between the people and the government, the high percentage of deductions from workers' salaries compared with contributions made by the employers, the political instability since the Palestinian territories are still under Israeli occupation in addition to the dysfunctionality of the PLC (Legislative Council) for the past 12 years, which is a vital official instrument of

³⁴ <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/32639/9781464815324.pdf?sequence=6>

³⁵ <https://mondoweiss.net/2018/12/dispatch-palestine-review/>

control and accountability for the government, thus there is no guarantee for workers would ever benefit from their contributions.

According to a study published by WCLAC, the draft Social Security Law had articles that are discriminatory against women, and the Law contains supporting factors in expelling women and motivating them to enter the labor market, although they constitute the highest proportion of the labor force that are paid below the minimum wage.

Article 70 (2) of the Social Security Law deprives daughters from their right in the pension in case of marriage, while it keeps the right of the sons regardless of his social status. This reinforces the stereotypical image of women as being always economically dependent on men. Many other core issues in the Law still remain uncovered or undealt with, such as the subject of maternity leave and its related details in case of abortion or the birth of a deceased child, thus many organizations have been waiting for the implementation of the law's bylaws in order to cover those unclear provisions in the law.

Progress towards Outcomes & Achievements

The year 2019 is the fourth phase of implementing WCLAC's five-year strategic plan, Learning, Adapting, and Imagining to Creating Change.

Strategic goal 1: Contribute to the protection and empowerment of women suffering discrimination and violence

Provision of quality Protection Legal & Social Services and Emergency protection.

As part of WCLAC's strategic direction to contribute to the protection and empowerment of women suffering discrimination and violence, the Centre maintained its work towards providing social and legal counseling and protection services to women victims of violence.

In 2019, a total of **445** women were supported to access their social and legal rights in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Analysis shows that most of the legal cases WCLAC served in 2019 revolved around divorce (21% of the cases) and alimony (59% of the cases). The high rate of cases related to alimony reflects the poverty and living conditions of these women as they depend on the sum of money they receive for living since they have no means of financial support due to early marriage, or not completing their studies. 73% of the women beneficiaries for instance did not complete their education, 39% of them were married at an early age (around the age of 16 years and 19 years old) and 86% of them are financially dependent. WCLAC's human rights feminist approach to support women's access to justice is conditioned with examining all options to obtain legal settlement either through court representation or mediation. WCLAC carried out court representation in **553** different cases, obtained **353** legal verdicts in favor of women, **152** out-of-court settlements through mediation facilitated by WCLAC's team of lawyers and social workers. Further, WCLAC realizes that women victims of violence are in need to psychosocial support through a well-defined intervention plan between WCLAC social worker and the women themselves to

empower these women, develop their knowledge about their rights and increase their self-reliance. WCLAC provided **213** women with long-term and social counselling through individual sessions as well as providing them with awareness raising material on alimony, custody, and divorce rights. Additionally, taking into consideration mobility and accessibility issues, especially for women living in remote areas, WCLAC provides consultation through the free help-line and e-counselling. A total of **151** women have received social and legal counselling through the help-line and phone, which provided these women with advice on where to access their rights.

WCLAC emergency shelter, which is the only civil society led shelter managed to provide protection to **31** women accompanied with **2** children for 2019. 23% of them were married early (between the ages of 14-16 years old), 41% were divorced, 80% did not complete school and 58% were under 25 years old. This number is considerably low compared with the same period of last year (39 women with nine children). This number is lower due to the fact that the type of cases WCLAC dealt with were somehow difficult and needed lots of coordination meetings, intervention plans and case conferences for better utilization of referral mechanisms under the National Referral System. Realizing that protection services provided are integral part of the National Referral System, ongoing coordination through referral of these cases and case-conferences were done with Family Protection Units at the Police, and the MoSD. Further, as part of WCLAC's belief of women's right to live in a safe environment through providing them with skills and knowledge to claim their rights and work with local communities to create conducive environment for their reintegration, a total of 48 case conferences and meetings with families and 10 coordination meetings were held to return 17 women back to their homes. WCLAC ensured through comprehensive coordination with social affairs units in different governorates that these women will benefit from better conditions within their families, and will be protected from violence, in tandem with gaining more dignity and respect.

Remote and marginalized areas are extremely underserved with social and legal services. Accessibility and knowledge about these services are rarely available for women, thus they suffer from dire need for services and awareness to increase their access to their rights. Through capacity building of grassroots organizations on providing social and legal counseling to women as well as awareness raising those women can have a window of opportunity to access such services in their own communities or nearby ones. Since last year, WCLAC worked on extending its outreach through building a new partnership with Nahdit Bent Al-Reef Charitable Society in Dura southern Hebron as it covers 45 villages due to the health care services it provides, and the trust it holds within the local community in addition to building the capacity of its team members. This contributed to supporting women in remote and marginalized areas to access their legal and social rights and provide mechanisms to detect cases of violence against women through not only social, legal and awareness sessions but also through mobile clinics and outreach program. By the end of 2019, 248 women in these areas received legal and social counselling services. Furthermore, WCLAC continued to support Jericho Women Charitable Society, in building its financial, managerial and funding capacities to provide quality services in which helped them in assisting 151 women and conducting 142 visits to 5 remote and marginalized local communities in order to provide services for the women in these areas.

Strategic goal 2: Promote women's rights to access justice and eliminate discriminatory policies against them

Development of Policies & Procedures to eliminate Discrimination against Women

Despite Palestine's accession to international conventions and treaties, no credible political will is available to enact modern and non-discriminatory laws that comply with these conventions. At the national level WCLAC continued its efforts to influence the Palestinian Authority to comply with international conventions and treaties it accede to; especially CEDAW. WCLAC strategy to influence policy and decision-making process through research and surveys provides the Palestinian government with evidence on priorities and themes to undertake legal reform and to better understand gaps in the legal system that prevent women from accessing their rights. Joint marital property rights might be considered one of the taboos in Palestinian society. Validation research WCLAC conducted in 2019, "The Rights of a wife in the Joint Property after Marriage in Palestine" assessed women's enjoyment or deprivation to joint property and fortune accumulated during marriage and examined the factors that play the most important role in this reality³⁶. Recommendations presented in the study based on interviews and FGD with several human rights activists, women organizations, decision makers, women themselves and CSOs showed importance of a law that can govern marital property rights. Further presentation of the study and recommendations supported WCLAC to validate findings and recommendations as well as defining methods to exert pressure on the State to enact relevant laws and take necessary measures to increase women's access to their marital property rights. Better understanding of social and economic impact was introduced through discussion papers presented by representatives of Ministry of Labour, Ministry of National Economy, Ministry of Social Affairs reemphasized significance of having a special law that define legal measures to ensure women's joint property rights. Recommendations concluded by the conference were namely; *the urgency to intensify societal awareness campaigns among women especially about joint property in marriage and the necessity of legally documenting women's rights, set up societal work mechanism of organizations and rights activists involved in women's equality area to create joint work strategy to amend the Personal Status Law or adopt new personal status law that is responsive to women's rights especially joint property and sharing (the Coalition of Personal Status Law in Palestine as suitable organizational framework for the strategy), introduce specific texts of sharing joint property in marriage by learning from Arab and Islamic experience indicated in the study, as well as work on the short run –until active organizations and institutions in this field could achieve legal change to arrive to modern civil law– on amending the provisions of the Personal Status Law in Palestine to ensure equality of women- create a platform for women and human rights organizations to advocate for the enactment of marital joint property rights in Palestine. By doing so, WCLAC contributed to shedding the lights on an issue that is considered a taboo in Palestinian society and situated this topic on the agendas of different women and human rights organizations as well the government.*

³⁶ <http://www.wclac.org/Library/174/> حقوق الزوجة في الملكية المشتركة بعد الزواج في فلسطين

WCLAC Publishes Two Reports on Femicide and GBV in Hebron

In 2019, WCLAC prepared and published an analytical report of femicide cases collected by WCLAC's team. The report analyzed 67 femicide's cases that took place between the years 2016 until 2018. Furthermore, the report connected the femicide analysis with the Palestinian social, legal and political Palestinian context. It also highlighted the impact of the lasted variables on the alarming escalation of the phenomenon. Ultimately, it suggested some recommendations that must be considered in the future work of WCLAC when dealing with the future cases. [Read more in Arabic](#)

WCLAC also published a study on Gender Based Violence and the type of services provided to women in Hebron governorate in Arabic in partnership with Drosos Foundation. The study dealt with all forms of violence that women are subjected to, especially from the violence under the occupation and its direct and indirect impact on women, such as social and family violence resulting from the patriarchal cultural system and discriminatory laws governing the lives of women, especially the Jordanian Personal Status Law of 1967 in addition to the negative social practices that discriminate against women. The study aimed at introducing the reality of female victims of violence in Hebron, being introduced to the services provided to victims of violence in the area, as well as to assess the needs of these women and the challenges that both women and services' providers face. According to the study, WCLAC found that the most prominent forms of societal violence in Hebron are the ffemicides and impunity due to discriminatory laws in force, early marriage of girls, physical, psychological, verbal and sexual violence, violation of the health and economic rights of women, detention of freedom, and electronic blackmail. [Read more in Arabic](#)

Work towards Holding Israel Accountable for Human Rights Violations

Israeli violations to Human Rights and International Conventions have direct and indirect impact on Palestinian women. Through evidence based data collected from women themselves, WCLAC develops reports and submissions presented to different UN procedures. These reports present recommendations to duty bearers persuading them to hold Israel accountable. This is combined with advocacy and influencing missions which includes meetings with representative missions, political parties, parliamentarians, and human rights organizations in addition to holding side events at the Human Rights Council or at the UN.

In February 28th The Mission of Inquiry published its initial report in which it said that the Israeli army deliberately used excessive force against Palestinian demonstrators, possibly amounting to war crimes and crimes against humanity, and demanded that the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to refer the report to the International Criminal Court. The Committee made a number of recommendations, most notably the need to lift the siege imposed on the Gaza Strip immediately. In its recommendations, the Committee stressed on the three parties' (Israel, the de facto authority and the Palestinian National Authority) need to comply with their responsibilities and improve the living situation in the Gaza Strip. The Committee further stressed on the obligation of the Occupying Power to investigate the killings and injuries, punish the perpetrators and ensure the effective treatment of those affected. WCLAC expressed its high gratitude and appreciation for the fact that Mission Inquiry committee has responded to its

observations with a view to highlighting the violations that women have been directly or indirectly subjected to. In this context, WCLAC highlights that the report and recommendations of the Committee are in response to its observations on the importance and necessity of highlighting the violations suffered by women directly or indirectly. The report took into account gender and women's issues, and paid particular attention to violations committed against women and girls in Gaza Strip, taking into account gender and gender issues in accordance with the recommendations. In 2018, WCLAC had submitted its detailed report titled "Gaza's Return Marches: The Gendered Impact of the Excessive Use of Force by Israeli Occupation Forces on Civilians", which is primarily based on testimonies collected by WCLAC's field researchers from Gazan women relating to direct and indirect violations of international humanitarian law committed by the Israeli occupation forces during the return marches.

Gendered Impact of the Occupation highlighted in UN Sessions and Submission to Special Procedures

As part of WCLAC efforts to hold duty bearers accountable, submissions and reports developed based on evidence based data were produced, submitted and presented at different platforms. Through its ECOSOC consultative status WCLAC utilized different UN treaty and non-treaty bodies to present reports and recommendations that aim at holding Israel accountable to IHRL and IHL. In March 2019, during the 63rd Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CWS63) in New York, from the 11th to the 22nd of March 2019 under the theme of "Social protection systems and opportunities for access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls." WCLAC shed the light on discrimination against women, Israeli occupation international humanitarian law violations against Palestinian women, especially Jerusalem women and social protection system under occupation through presenting reports and case studies.

The Side Event WCLAC conducted on March 14th, WCLAC organized in the UN building in New York the focus was on two major themes: Israeli occupation international humanitarian law violations against Palestinian women, especially Jerusalem women and social protection system under occupation. The side event which is entitled "The Double Jeopardy of Palestinian Women in oPt: Social Protection under Colonial Occupation and Structured Patriarchy." Touched upon the situation of Palestinian women living under occupation and a patriarchal society, the combination aimed to give the complete full view of the social protection reality in Palestine in light of a prolonged occupation. Impact of Israeli IHL violations on Palestinian women living in Jerusalem was of high focus during the side event; especially on issues related to minor's house arrest, house demolitions, residency revocation and punitive measures. WCLAC realizes that Israeli occupation measures combined with inadequate protection system impose a double jeopardy on Palestinian women. Social protection and providing services in OPT to women victims of violence under multiple forms of jurisdiction (Israeli laws, Jordanian laws and Palestinian laws) under occupation further increase women's vulnerability and discrimination against them. Engagement of the 150 participants in the discussion facilitated better understanding of persons representing civil society, representative mission, UN agencies and human rights activists created a platform for them to further advocate for Palestinian women's rights as well as calling for holding duty bearers accountable to IHRL and IHL.

In December 2019, WCLAC lodged a submission for the special rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian occupied territory since 1967, Mr. Michael Lynk. WCLAC's submission "**Punitive Measures: the Gendered impact on Palestinian Women**", highlighted the gendered impact of the Israeli punitive measures and collective punishment policies imposed on Palestinians. The submission focused on four major areas observed by WCLAC, where the Israeli government practices the policy of punitive measures, which are housing demolitions or house closure, residency revocations, collective punishments imposed on communities and the prevention of prisoners from receiving visits. The submission was concluded with a number of recommendations emphasizing on respecting the international humanitarian law and prohibiting all punitive policies that cause women and girls to become arbitrary victims of these illegal acts.

In September 2019, WCLAC attended the opening of the 66th session of the Committee on Economic, Cultural and Social Rights (ICESCR), where the state of Israel report was reviewed. WCLAC reported to the committee by submitting a shadow report based primarily on first-hand data from Palestinian women gathered by WCLAC from 2016-2019, supplemented by secondary figures and reporting. WCLAC also delivered an oral statement in front of the Committee members at Human Rights Council. In the submission WCLAC highlighted the gendered impact of violations of the Covenant by Israel, and calls on the Committee to consider the cumulative and multiple forms of discrimination that women face in its consideration of the state party's report. WCLAC's analysis was underpinned by Article 2 of the ICESCR prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex, and Article 3 of the ICESCR, recognizing the right to equality between men and women. In the submission WCLAC focused on the themes of house arrests imposed on minors, residency revocations, education, forced evictions and house demolitions, access to water and health hazards, in addition to the effect of chemical spraying, industrial zones and hazardous waste. [Read WCLAC's full submission](#) and [oral statement](#)

Challenges

Israeli Occupation Policies and Political Instability

The occupation policies continue to be a multilateral challenge for WCLAC, not only due to political instability but also because we have come to understand that increased violence from the occupation leads to more violence endured by women within the general society and the household as well which is shown in WCLAC's voices. The violence of the occupation disproportionately affects women, both directly and indirectly especially when we talk about residency revocation, minors' house arrest and house demolitions. As the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women highlights in her report on Israel, "patriarchal attitudes and gender stereotypes are deeply entrenched in society and petrified and tolerated in the context of conflict and occupation constituting [the] root causes of GBV against women." Recognizing the gendered nature of the occupation, and its direct effect of legitimizing and perpetuating GBV, she makes a clear call for Israel to end "the occupation and conflict and to promptly address its gendered impact in line

with its obligations under human rights and humanitarian law principles." This is further exacerbated by the continued internal political divide which works against the interests of the Palestinians of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and increases sufferings of women, especially victims of gender based violence.

The unstable political situation and split between West Bank and Gaza has adversely affected WCLAC's efforts to influence policy and decision making process to promote women's rights. The dysfunctional status of the Palestinian Legislative Council stopped enactment of new laws and provided power for the President to issue these laws through Presidential decrees. This could not support WCLAC to pursue its mission on influencing policy and decision making process.

Fundraising Challenges, and a Shrinking Space for Human Rights and Civil Society Organisations

Similarly to last year, WCLAC continues to suffer from the shrinking spaces for human rights organisations and limited funding. The unstable political and financial setting of the area has led to increased competition. There is significantly less core funding available as donors continue to prioritise special projects rather than programmes. Donors have shifted priorities to other areas in the region. This shift in funding has made it difficult for WCLAC to meet the needs and requirements of its beneficiaries and is struggling with overheads and running costs.

Shrinking spaces at the local level is also affecting WCLAC's activities due the Palestinian Authority measure imposed through enactment of the cybercrime law. Any advocacy or influencing messages are under surveillance, which increases pressure on WCLAC's plans of holding duty bearers accountable to human rights. Also, the smooth passage of funds between organisations is affected, due to Israeli policies that constrain the movement of funds to bank accounts of Palestinian NGO's in occupied East Jerusalem. Many NGO and International NGO bank accounts in Jerusalem were closed down completely. These impediments persist also due to new measures adopted by the Palestinian Ministry of Interior, which further complicates the transaction process from organisations in areas under the Palestinian Authority control and those in East Jerusalem. Transactions to East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank are being treated as international transfers, causing delays and extensive bureaucratic measures. WCLAC is addressing these issues in cooperation with the Palestinian NGO network, to overcome the complications imposed by these restrictions.

Human rights Organisations and Women Rights Organisations are facing immense threats through shrinking spaces due to the restrictions imposed by Israeli policies. There are also examples where the NGO Monitor, which is an Israeli led/supported organization has tried to discredit the work of human rights organisations producing reports using false and incorrect information and analysis to present Palestinian NGO's as supporting "incitement and hatred", this with the final purpose of trying to influence donors and partner organizations to stop their support.

WCLAC recognizes that politcal changes in neighbouring Arab countries is directly and indirectly affecting our work. Increase of conservatism is indirectly affecting advocacy and awareness raising attempts to

promote women's rights. This means that WCLAC has to utilize new strategies and to invest in young males and females to challenge existing patriarchal norms and to create preventive measures to equip men, women and male and female youth with skills and knowledge to remain and endure social change in their communities.

Risks Assessment and Mitigating Measures

During last year, WCLAC invested in reviewing the risks and mitigating measures to prevent any adverse consequences on the Centre and its work. For the purpose of this report we highlighted some major risks that we think have a direct and indirect impact on our work and women's rights and the relevant mitigating measures took by WCLAC's team. Political instability still plays a major role in increasing gender based violence. Intensity of conflict and aggression against Palestinians in general and men in particular is diverted towards women as the least fortunate in the family. WCLAC programs invested in targeting men in local communities to create agents for change who are equipped with knowledge and skills to advocate for women's rights in their communities.

Political instability also leads to increase of settlers' violence and night raids against Palestinians; especially in areas adjacent to Israeli settlements. This is combined with mobility restrictions through the checkpoint regime. WCLAC realizes that impact of such aggression and mobility restriction on women are paramount. These women live in a patriarchal society, which increases its dominance on women through imposing certain rules to *protect* women. Thus, women in need for social and legal services will be victimized both from the patriarchal society and the Israeli measures. Therefore, WCLAC's free helpline provides some refuge for these women through providing them with social and legal advice without the need to physically access our offices.

WCLAC also documents cases Israeli violations in these areas from women themselves to define impact of human rights and IHL violations on their lives. These testimonies are then analyzed and submitted to different UN machinery. Instability of the political situation in the region and increased waves of conservatism is also affecting Palestine society either directly or indirectly. This has created new perceptions within local communities about women's rights and created a kind of recession on women's rights in some local communities. Therefore, WCLAC paid attention to this issue through targeting university students, young male and female volunteers and community activists to raise their awareness on women and human rights and increase their skills to design and carry out community initiatives to promote these rights.

The division between West Bank and Gaza, which led to dysfunctional Palestinian Legislative Council affected the review and enactment of new modern laws. This contributed to maintaining the de facto situation of resorting to existing Jordanian and Egyptian laws; especially the Penal Code and Family Status Law. WCLAC realizes that the State of Palestine has considerable obligations towards international conventions it acceded to; especially CEDAW. Therefore, WCLAC submitted a shadow report on Palestine

highlighting issues related to family status and penal code to influence CEDAW Committee to adopt these recommendations. The List of Issues provided by CEDAW Committee to the Palestinian Government included a large number of issues highlighted in our report, which should be responded to before the official review session in June 2018. WCLAC also designed advocacy campaigns to influence decision makers to ratify laws that comply with international conventions through Cabinet decision and Presidential decrees.

Finally, the most emerging risk in 2019 revolved about calls of some tribes and political groups to have Palestine withdraw from CEDAW Convention and/or impose reservations. This created social unrest; especially through incitement made through statements published by some tribal leaders. WCLAC was aware that it should review its approach to address the public, governmental bodies, partner women and human rights organizations and donor community. The staff were also aware of the impact of this situation on their work and reach out to local communities. Therefore, WCLAC defined its unified human rights message to be communicated with different stakeholders, while emphasizing that WCLAC will not compromise its principles towards promoting women's rights and gender equality. WCLAC also called for a meeting with members of the Palestinian Women General Union, members of Al-Muntada in addition to the Board of Directors to discuss where we stand in order to define a unified position against any incitement and calls to withdraw or impose reservation on CEDAW. WCLAC also addressed local media outlets emphasizing its position towards advancing gender equality while calling the PA to abide by international conventions it acceded to; especially CEDAW.

WCLAC's Interrelated Issues

The Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling (WCLAC) is an independent Palestinian, non-profit, non-governmental organization that seeks to develop a democratic Palestinian society based on the principles of gender equality and social justice. Based on its feminist vision fostering equality and social justice, WCLAC doesn't only play prominent role in addressing gender-based violence in Palestinian society it also contributes in addressing:

Human Rights Issues

Protecting women's rights includes, inter alia, guaranteeing their access to service provisions such as welfare, legal aid, legal protection, health care, and more. In the context of the OPT, this also includes defending Palestinian women against the patriarchal systems and practices embedded in Palestinian society. Further, in the context of the Israeli military occupation under which Palestinian women suffer the double-edged discrimination of ethno-religious identity and gender, women are the most disadvantaged group and therefore the most susceptible to human rights violations. In this context, our work includes documenting eye witness testimonies from women who have been subjected to violence and violations of their rights by the Israeli authorities; in 2017 WCLAC documented 135 such testimonials. Additionally, WCLAC realizes that members of unions and political parties play a significant role in creating social change among community members through shouldering the responsibility of other community members through raising the awareness of their peers, creating protection networks at the community level that can coordinate and collaborate with governmental and nongovernmental service providers to reveal cases of

abuse and violence against women in their communities, and voice the needs of legal reform through advocating for change.

Protection of Environment

WCLAC doesn't have a specific policy related to the protection of environment, however WCLAC ensures environmental friendly interventions. For example, WCLAC uses MIS to record clients' data to minimize as much as possible the use of paper files, most of the time we use recycled paper, the usage of glass cups instead of plastic cups in the organization's offices in addition to the use of emails for correspondence to ensure our concern regarding the protection of environment.

Anti-corruption

Our organization's long-standing commitment to assisting women in achieving their rights with integrity means avoiding corruption in any form, including bribery, maintaining confidentiality and privacy while providing services, as well as complying with the anti-corruption law. We provide guidance to our team (lawyers, social workers and field workers) on how to conduct legal aid, testimonies and counselling in a fair, ethical and legal manner. All associates of our organization are required to read, understand and follow the precepts of our Code of Conduct and procurement manual, which includes anti-corruption expectations for all employees. WCLAC decision making process is done at different levels to ensure transparency and accountability. Based on the organizational structure and internal procedures, decisions taken at the Board of Directors are separate and binding for the whole organization. These decisions are separate from those taken by executive management. Further, WCLAC has developed its procurement manual in a way that ensures transparency and separation of roles and responsibilities throughout the procurement process. A committee is defined to open and review tenders responsible of analyzing the offers technically and financially and present their recommendation. The decision is then taken by another level, which is a major part of the anti-corruption process WCLAC follows.

Part II. Detailed Activity Report

Strategic goal 1: Contribute to the protection and empowerment of women suffering discrimination and violence

1.1. Provide quality legal and social services that respond to the needs of women exposed to violence and discrimination

WCLAC provides social-legal counselling and protection services to Palestinian women in order to promote their self-autonomy and raise understanding of their rights and how to claim them through social counselling or Sharia courts.

1.1.1. Continuous thorough legal and social services for women in Palestine

WCLAC provides some of the most vital and effective services for female survivors of GBV through four organisational branches: Ramallah, Bethlehem, Hebron, and Jerusalem. Over the reporting period, WCLAC provided long-term legal or social counselling to 443 women of all ages, 193 of whom were from Ramallah and Jerusalem, 221 of whom were from the Southern West Bank. Out of these cases, 33 women received only social counselling, 43 women received only legal; a majority of 338 women received both legal and social services. Furthermore, this year WCLAC provided family counselling for 4 women and referred 7 cases to other partners.

WCLAC has found that certain social realities are exacerbating the situation, requiring social or legal support. Some of these conditions include: early marriage, polygamy, poverty, unemployment, and denial of education that can prevent them from achieving full access to their rights and economic independence.

Throughout the reporting period, 553 new cases for legal support were brought to WCLAC. Each woman might have more than one court case, and 133 cases from previous years were followed up on. Since the start of the year WCLAC lawyers obtained 353 verdicts were in favour of the women. 152 of these cases were closed through mediation by WCLAC's team of lawyers and social workers while the rest remain pending within the courts. Through mediation, WCLAC was able to support the relevant parties in reaching long-term solutions to the problems faced by WCLAC's female clients. Most women were able to claim some or all of their rights via agreements signed by the husband/family member without bringing the case to court.

WCLAC noticed that most of the legal cases revolved around personal status issues where 59% were around alimony, 21% of the cases were related to divorce, and 10% were related to children's custody. As for the rest of cases, 1% of the cases were related to general rights issues and implementing court decisions, 5% focused on dowry, and 4% of the cases were on marital obedience and housing. The high number of cases

related to alimony reflects the living conditions of these women as they lack other economic resources, or income thus they depend on the alimony which doesn't provide just life for these women (it's around 400-600 NIS per month).

20% of the women were referred to WCLAC by partners, 3% were referred from other lawyers, 0.5% from health care units and 43.5% were referred by the courts. The rest approached WCLAC directly (33%).

Develop the skills of Sharia lawyer trainees on court procedures and gender sensitive representation to better provide legal service for women

During 2019, WCLAC conducted 4 trainings on court procedures and gender sensitive representation for 69 Sharia lawyers' trainees (64 females and 5 males) between the age of 22 and 25 years old in the West Bank including East-Jerusalem to develop their knowledge, skills and attitudes toward women's rights, and create more gender sensitive court representations at Sharia courts in the near future. The trainings were mainly carried out in Ramallah, Hebron, Bethlehem and East- Jerusalem with a total of 25 hours for each training. Through this training WCLAC aimed not only on improving the skills of Sharia' lawyers trainees but also at raising the level of legal awareness of the trainees on the laws applied in the city of Jerusalem, Shari'a cases' lawsuits and the standing mechanism for writing summons and urgent requests, helping trainees in differentiate between the legal laws in force in the West-Bank specially when they receive mixed issues (Jerusalem - West Bank) and spatial jurisdiction of courts. Furthermore, this training focused on teaching practical legal skills to create awareness on gender issues among the participants, and to work on supportive directions for women. The main topics that were discussed throughout the training were the spatial competence of legal cases, drafting legal cases and the response mechanisms to the list of urgent claims, summonses and requests, the different types of Sharia cases that are considered in Sharia courts and introduce participants to some laws that intertwine in Sharia issues, such as the National Insurance, the Israeli Interior's Ministry applied decisions (related to alimony, place of living, child's birth certificate, citizenship and residency card) and the Palestinian Alimony Fund. As a result, the training managed to break the barrier between theoretical and practical level. It created an incentive for the lawyer trainees to get involved in working with women and family issues, the panel discussions in the lectures formed brainstorming among participants, and highlighted several points that pushed the participants to expand their knowledge, the training also provided an opportunity for female lawyers to identify the obstacles facing lawyers in providing evidence required by the woman and the corresponding pleas. 87% of Shari'a lawyers increased knowledge on gender responsive court representation according to the pre-post assessment.

Provide one-off legal and social consultations

In addition to long-term services, WCLAC is an active facilitator/provider of one-off legal and social consultations for women. This service helps women obtain help in legal issues and decision making. The consultations are provided after awareness raising sessions, e-counselling, and helpline discussions. Fifteen consultations took place following awareness raising sessions, where women would individually approach WCLAC lawyers and social workers and ask personal questions related to the topics discussed, and ask for advice on how to make the right decisions and what steps to take. A total of 79 consultations took place via the helpline where women were provided with advice on social and legal issues or referred either for long term intervention at one of WCLAC offices or to another institution. 304 women approached WCLAC directly

seeking a one-off consultation through one of our four branch offices. The services provided by the Centre varied between cases of maintenance, custody, dispersion, divorce and family reunification cases, implementation of court decisions, custody, arbitrary divorce, and national insurance. There were also numerous social consultations on family problems, marital disputes, social empowerment, sexual assaults, marital problems, psychological support, shelter and sexual harassment.

Furthermore, WCLAC's team noticed that the type of violence against women beneficiaries in 2019 was a composite of social and economic issues. 71% of the women beneficiaries didn't complete their studies, as for the economic situation 70% of the women beneficiaries' income is about 500 NIS. It turned out that 10% of women were victims of early marriage were married at 14-16 years old; some of the women expressed that endogamy is a problem (as women might be unable to seek divorce to maintain family relations, or it urges them to waiver their legal rights). It was obvious through analysing these cases that living in the same place of the husband's family or in a close neighbourhood might lead up to serious family disagreements due to general interference in the woman's daily life. It should be mentioned that most of the women sought help due to their husbands' out-of-wed lock relations.

Success Story: WCLAC enables a woman to access her legal and social rights

(R) is a 40 years old woman from Jerusalem who approached WCLAC for legal support after being divorced from her husband. She requested legal support for her legal divorce rights concerning alimony and housing for the kids. WCLAC social worker and lawyer discussed the case with (R) who explained that the relationship between her ex-husband and her father in-law had worsened since buying a house; especially that she shares two thirds of the house. As a result, she started receiving threats from her father in law. She decided to leave the house after 10 months of problems, threats and refusal of paying alimony for the children. The lawyer explored with the woman the case file and court procedures. Further, and based on the law applied in Jerusalem, the father is responsible for paying all children's expenses, after her consent the lawyer filed for the case in the Family Affairs' Court. After many sessions, the decision came in favour of (R) and the ex-husband has legal and social obligations towards his children and divorcee.

1.1.2. Effective integrated and holistic protection system implemented by different sectors working on the protection of women

Provide emergency protection services to women whose lives are in jeopardy, and survivors of violence

In 2019, 31 women with 2 children (accompanied their mothers) were hosted at the emergency protection shelter in Jericho. This shelter is a place of immediate protection for women whose lives are under threat and in need of immediate intervention. WCLAC believes that the shelter is only a temporary safe space for women to seek protection and does not substitute the need for social and communal transformation on the approach to GBV. Out of the 31 women (aged 17 – 53), 1 was engaged, 11 were married, 6 were single and 13 were divorced. Women sought assistance from the shelter for reasons such as escaping family retaliation for out-of-wedlock relationships or pregnancy, inter-family violence and denial of rights. WCLAC noticed that 58% of the women were under 25 years old and 29% of the women were from Ramallah (9 women). Moreover, WCLAC noted a mix of socio-economic problems, an absence of free dialogue between

family members, emotional neglect and electronic exploitation were all leading to numerous social problems. The lack of employment and study opportunities also increased vulnerability to GBV amongst women as they became trapped within their social sphere as 80% of the women beneficiaries didn't complete their school education and 9.6% weren't allowed to either enter school or were forced to leave school (3 women). Furthermore, 23% of the women were forced into early marriage between the ages 14-16 years old. Professional interventions were facilitated in partnership with the Family Protection Unit at the Police, the Governorate and the Ministry of Social Development through carrying out 48 case conferences, 6 meetings with families of women, and 10 meetings with the Coordination Committee for the Shelter in Palestine. These interventions resulted in returning 17 women to their families in better conditions with an emphasis on ensuring prevention from violence and preservation of their dignity. 8 women were referred to another shelter for extensive intervention, 2 women still remain in the shelter, 1 woman was put in jail for adultery, another was arrested due to violence against other women in the shelter and 2 women were helped in organising their travel as they hold different citizenship.

1.1.3. Develop capacities of service unit staff to provide better services to women victims of violence

Provide service unit staff with knowledge and skills required to provide social, legal, protection services and awareness activities to women

WCLAC views the personal and professional development of its lawyers and social workers as key to maintaining and developing the capacity of WCLAC's Service Unit to effectively respond to the needs of Palestinian women, improve service provisions for women suffering from gender-based discrimination across all the branches. During the reporting period, WCLAC conducted a specialized training for 7 shelter housemother (20 hours for 3 days) on self-care for services providers. The training focused on the themes of self-care and self-protection (concept, principles, causes of tension, mechanisms for managing tensions and self-care), crisis management (the concept of crisis, its causes, the indicators of its occurrence, its dangers, methods of prevention and intervention to manage the crisis), dealing with emergency situations or threat on life (emergency concept, ways to deal with it, how to contain such cases, and best tools to deal with potential consequences) and teamwork (team concept, challenges, harmony, features, cohesion mechanisms, etc.).

WCLAC also provided a specialized training for social workers on building and facilitating women support groups (5 days with a total of 20 hours) to develop the skills of the social workers, the training combined between both the theoretical and practical dimensions in working with groups and the importance of this aspect in the field psychological support framework, and focused on dividing groups into different types which serves different categories with different goals within different services' provisions, counselling and support contexts that we define according to the objectives of the interventions. Group contents: group dynamics, roles / process and content, opposition, projections, central mission, stages of group development. Where the meetings aimed at this goal to clarify these addresses in terms of their concept and the reasons for their work in the group with the groups. The training also focused on which categories WCLAC wants to target, the situation of the target groups WCLAC deals with to define whether they are support groups, or empowerment or for awareness raising especially that they are related to WCLAC's general strategic goals especially that we work on different levels. Finally, working on a unified model

among the social workers within the context of building women groups, after setting the goal and all its related contents that are intended to work on in building groups.

WCLAC also implemented a training workshop (3 days with a total of 20 hours) to develop the skills and knowledge of service providers from WCLAC lawyers, social workers, partners from governmental services providers such as the health, MOSA and police as well as WCLAC's partner CBOS from Tulkarem, Jericho and Hebron for 20 participants (19 females and 1 male). The training focused on the integration of international mechanisms in the international conventions into Palestinian policies. The training was designed in a structural way that started with introducing the participants to the overall general definitions related to international agreements affecting women's rights, as well as the conventions to which the State of Palestine acceded to. Furthermore, the training focused on supporting the participants to differentiate between key terms such as treaty, convention, charter, covenant, declaration, protocol, agreement, and the terms of a reservation to any convention. Then the training focused on the importance of knowing the interpretations of the committees, the governmental policies taken to solve or meet the needs, and the need to know the internal systems of different governmental departments and ministries.

1.2. Promote the level of social responsibility towards women's rights and eliminate discrimination against women

1.2.1. Increase awareness in local communities on the elimination of discrimination and violence against women

Carry out awareness raising initiatives for women to increase knowledge of their legal and social rights in five years (including East-Jerusalem)

WCLAC organised awareness-raising activities targeting 54 women, in areas of the West Bank with difficult political, social and geographical circumstances. After needs assessment, WCLAC's team sensed the need of the women in these areas for increased knowledge on issues related to their legal and social rights. Workshops were held in two remote towns in the South of Bethlehem, Beit Fajar and Al-Khder, and one village in East of Jerusalem, Shu'fat. The aim of these workshops is to raise women's awareness on their rights and empower them on how to protect and claim their rights. The discussions were highly interactive, indicating that women felt comfortable expressing their opinions. Discussions mainly revolved around marriage, divorce, custody, GBV, women legal rights and the societal pressure that women face. Feedback from women participants in these awareness raising workshops highlighted a better understanding of their human rights, an enhanced ability to identify types of violence, and an updated knowledge of services available to protect them in their area. The topics mainly focussed on all forms of GBV, with particular attention paid to sexual assault and sexual harassment, the reasons for women remaining silent as victims of GBV, the reality of their right, discrimination against women in the Palestinian society, women inheritance rights, femicide, early marriage choosing one's partner, violence meaning and forms, and women's employability.

In addition to awareness raising sessions, a network of support groups in Al-Tur and Essawiya areas of Jerusalem were developed. Women in Jerusalem suffer from double jeopardy, with suppression coming

from both Israeli violations and the patriarchal norms in society. WCLAC worked on forming two social support groups, which also provided women with counselling. 26 meetings were held, (13 sessions in both areas) for 44 women (15 women in al- Turi and 29 in Esawiya), on topics of self-empowerment and women's empowerment. Throughout the meetings, great focus was put on the self, feelings and personalities. Many stated that the level of their responsibilities both inside and outside the home, were a great burden on them. Support sessions such as these provided a confidence boost to many, and raised awareness that self-care and personal space are important facets to a fulfilling life. By the end of 2019, WCLAC developed two social support groups in Al- Khader village south of Bethlehem and Wadi-Al-Hosein in Hebron that also provided women with counselling, 20 meetings were held (10 sessions in each area) for 30 women (15 women in each area) between the age of 30 and 55 years old on self-empowerment, priorities, daily challenges they face, discrimination against women, gender based violence, protection, legal and social support and documentation. It should be mentioned that 70% of participant women are housewives and only completed their school education and 30% completed higher education and are unemployed.

Carry out comprehensive training for a group of women activists on women's social, legal and human rights

In 2019, WCLAC contributed to increasing the awareness of local communities on the importance of eliminating discrimination and violence against women (women with disabilities, economic violence, political discrimination) through targeting and training 44 women activists between the age of 25 – 57 years old from underserved areas in the West-Bank including East- Jerusalem. Accordingly, 13 women were targeted from the villages in western north Jerusalem (Qattana, Bido, Al-Jeeb, Beit Anan and Beit Duqo), 16 women activists from underserved areas in southern Hebron (such as Al-Shioukh, Sourif, Kharas, Ithna, Nuba, Beit-Oumar, Beit-Oula and Tarkoumia villages) in addition to 15 women activists from the villages in Bethlehem governorate (Al-Khader, Wadi Fuqeen, Beit-Fajjar, Za'tara, Hossan, and Nahaleen) to build their capacities on women's social, legal and human rights for 8 days (in each area) in addition to an introductory meeting. According to the pre-post assessment and the evaluation session, 87.5% of participants showed a high level of interest and interaction during the sessions. They expressed that this is their first time to participate in such training. Moreover, they explained that these sessions helped them to gain facilitation skills such as good listening and how to differentiate between needs and goals. Also, the participants mentioned that they were introduced to new concepts related to women's rights and societal roles for women and men. It also focused on specific concepts related to violence against women. The training also contributed to increasing the knowledge of facilitation skills and how to deal with the target groups when holding any community awareness meetings. Furthermore, the training also aimed at empowering activists to advocate for women's rights and in their local community.

WCLAC aimed not only on improving the skills of community activists trainees but also at raising the level of social and legal awareness of the trainees on the laws applied in the city of occupied Palestinian territories related to Personal Status Law, Joint Marital Properties Law and to create awareness on gender issues among the participants, and to work on supportive directions for women while providing awareness sessions in their constituencies.

Support women activists to carry out awareness raising sessions in their constituencies

In 2019, trained women activists were able to conduct 15 awareness sessions in West East Jerusalem's villages such as Beit Surik, Bido, Beit Ijza, Al-Jeeb, and Beit-Anan targeting 104 women on gender based violence, early marriage, rights related to divorce, domestic violence inside the family how it starts with verbal, then escalates to psychological that might lead to physical and in certain cases to death. Moreover, the activists talked about the organizations that provide help and services to women such as WCLAC and other institutions that are near in addition to the national referral system and how they should talk about violence and seek help. Finally, WCLAC conducted two follow up meetings with these activists to monitor and evaluate their experiences in facilitating sessions to express their fears, strengths, success and the difficulties they have or might get acquainted to and how to solve them.

1.2.2. Empower local communities to support and protect women's rights

Develop skills of university students on identifying and combating discrimination against women

In 2019, WCLAC held 3 trainings for university students with 20 training hours in Birzeit University, Al-Istiqlal University and Al-Quds University targeting 68 students (45 females and 23 males). WCLAC coordinated with every university to implement the activity and the workshop sessions were built based on the students' needs. The trainings focused on International treaties, GBV, protection and intervention with women victims of violence, legal mechanisms for intervention, analysis of discriminatory laws against women; especially the penal code, technical and social procedures through intervention, economic empowerment.. The training mainly focused on CEDAW convenient the shadow reports of civil society organisations, the initial report of the countries, the importance of implementing the signed treaties and Istanbul treaty, and mechanisms of social intervention and mechanisms to respond for CEDAW Committee concluding remarks. The concept of intervention was presented from the social aspect, the working mechanisms with the abused women, what are the basics of the intervention, the definition of an abused woman, which suitable criteria should be taken into account in the intervention (Family intervention, individual intervention and the importance of family intervention). The students were also introduced to the legal terms of intervention in cases of GBV and personal status law ad types of courts, the compensation for divorce in Jerusalem and the West Bank / alimony and custody in addition to gender and gender-based violence, protection and documentation. Ultimately, the training sessions discussed the personal status law for Muslims and its relationship with sharia law. In spite of the disparate views among students concerning gender issues, such as femicide the manifestations of gender-based violence in the Palestinian legislative system and the prospects of harmonizing these laws with CEDAW.

Finally, 86% of the students expressed that they have gained new knowledge and information related to gender issues, international treaties especially CEDAW and Istanbul Convention, protection, documentation

of cases of violence in addition to mechanism of intervention, highlighting that this is the first time they were exposed to such themes. The students emphasized the importance of such workshops as it addresses GBV and intervention mechanisms to protect violated women. 60% of the students expressed their interest in organizing initiatives to advocate for women's rights and to volunteer. The students emphasized also on the importance of such workshops as it addresses GBV and intervention mechanisms to protect violated women. Social work students stated that social intervention skills provided in one of the sessions equipped them with skills related to document cases of violence and mechanisms of intervention with women victims of violence.

Develop the skills of professionals on women's rights

In 2019, WCLAC conducted a training course for 24 female and male professionals (20 females and 2 males). Through this training WCLAC aimed to tackle counselling intervention through psychodrama, which is a recent guidance intervention that aims at developing the capacities of professionals (who have been targeted previously) in dealing with cases based on their needs. The training came as a result of the professionals' previous comments; where they expressed their sufficiency from the normal themes, thus this course will be advanced in covering topics related to developing their intervention mechanisms in different ways. The training was conducted in 4 sessions targeting lawyers, social workers and health workers. The participants were introduced to Psychodrama and its relation with the person and analyzing it while dealing with women cases, facing challenges, as part of the training the participants presented behavioral, social and psychiatric problems that professionals encounter as a form of psychological discharge, self-insight through simulation and representation, psychological compatibility and restructuring human behavior. 75% of the professionals expressed that they have gained new knowledge and information related to the subject.

On a different level, WCLAC conducted a training for 15 activists and members of civil society organizations (for 6 days with a total of 30 hours). The training focused on the main concepts of gender equality, the situation of the Palestinian women in the Palestinian legislative system, the main mechanisms of advocacy and lobbying. Besides, the training days highlighted main facts about the process of documentation and its targets, the process of fact-finding, the forms of evidence, the impediments of the documentation process and the tasks of the documenter and the methods of protecting her/his own safety. Furthermore, the training also illustrated on the methods of conducting interviews, the main elements of statements, the forms of femicide documentation, the international mechanisms of human rights' protection and the main concepts of human rights and the international humanitarian law. In addition to highlighting the main pillars of the human rights bill and the treaty-based mechanisms of protecting human rights. In this context, the articles of the convention of CEDAW were discussed in details. Besides, the conditions of accession and the obligations resulting from this accession was subject to in depth discussion. In the end of the training sessions, few case studies concerning women's rights violations in health sector, work space, gender-based violence in the personal status law and the violation of the freedom of movement were discussed by the participants.

Carry out advocacy campaigns on agreed themes on International Women's Day in coordination with partner organizations.

To mark the International Women's Day, on March 12th, WCLAC held the first national conference on women's joint marital property rights, under a joint project with Young Men Christian Association (YMCA) and funded by the European Union entitled "Promoting Women's Common Marital Property Rights within the Marriage Institution". The conference was held after conducting a validation research entitled "*The Rights of a wife in the Joint Property after Marriage in Palestine*" which was designed to assess the reality of enjoyment or deprivation of woman's/wife's rights to joint property and fortune that accumulate after marriage, examine the factors that play the most important role in this reality. The study also provided recommendations and conclusions related to the effective laws in Palestine, and the sociocultural situation where this right is addressed.

The conference that was attended by more than 50 people from different organizations and coalitions had several sessions where different topics related to women's economic rights were discussed. One session presented and discussed the validation research, presenting the experiences of women who claimed/were deprived from their economic rights especially marital property rights. Another session was held on the assessment of Women's economic rights under the Palestinian laws and regulations. The last session was on Economic Rights from a Gender Perspective. These sessions included panelists from governmental institutions, human rights and women's organizations, coalitions and activists, and were all followed by a discussion.

The conference confirmed on the recommendations provided by the study, which include:

1. There is urgent need to intensify societal awareness campaigns among women especially about joint property in marriage and the necessity of legally documenting women's rights.
2. Set up societal work mechanism of organizations and rights activists involved in women's equality area to create joint work strategy to amend the Personal Status Law or adopt new personal status law that is responsive to women's rights especially joint property and sharing (the Coalition of Personal Status Law in Palestine as suitable organizational framework for the strategy).
3. Introduce specific texts of sharing joint property in marriage by learning from Arab and Islamic experience indicated in the study.
4. Work on the short run –until active organizations and institutions in this field could achieve legal change to arrive to modern civil law– on amending the provisions of the Personal Status Law in Palestine to ensure equality of women.

Participate in national landmark events

On March 8th, WCLAC's General Director Randa Siniora participated as a guest speaker for the closing event of "My Rights, Our Power" joint campaign. The event took place at Yabous Cultural Centre to celebrate the 2019 International Women's Day. Ms. Siniora talked about Family Protection Bill and how the passage of the law will provide the necessary protection for women victims of violence and will bring real stories and examples from our cases at WCLAC. In her speech, Ms. Randa highlighted the major four components of the draft law which are prevention, protection, empowerment and re-merging survivors into society as well as the penalties to deter perpetrators from committing such crimes. The closing event was organized by the British Consulate-General, Italian Agency for Development Cooperation, Palestine Vision, and UN Women

as part of the “My Rights, Our Power” joint campaign, involving over 30 partners from civil society organizations, media outlets, and international development partners who used outreach activities, TV/Radio, social media, and other parallel events to promote women’s fundamental human rights.

1.3 Develop capacities of community activists and grassroots women’s organisations working on women protection and advocate for their rights

1.3.1 Extend women's service provision to underserved parts of Palestine through partnering and building the capacity of selected grassroots organisations

Since 2005 WCLAC has worked with grassroots organizations in marginalized communities and remote areas of the West Bank in order to improve their capacity to defend Palestinian women’s rights and to spread an awareness of the services available to them, should they require legal assistance or social counselling. As well as providing training and awareness-raising sessions for numerous organisations, WCLAC also has institutional partnerships with three grassroots women’s organisations in less well-served parts of the West Bank. WCLAC supervises the legal and social service provision delivered by these partners to women in their communities, while at the same time building their organisational capacity to improve the quality and resilience of independent service providers.

Continue developing the capacity of the service provision staff at the Jericho Women’s Association.

Throughout the year, the Jericho Women’s Association provided legal and social services to 151 women in need. 44 women received socio-legal support, 4 women received social counselling, and 3 women received legal support only, as for the short term social and legal consultations they were provided for 100 women. The Association assisted 41 women in implementing court decisions, and brought 54 cases before the Sharia court, out of which 36 were ruled in favour of the woman, and the others remain pending. The majority of cases addressed denial of rights by close family or husbands, specifically delaying dowry, whilst others covered physical and sexual assault, child custody, family disagreements, divorce, and maintenance payments. The geographical distribution of all the participants was as follows: 60 women from the cities, 43 from the villages, and 48 from the refugee camps. Legal and social workers organized 26 awareness raising sessions in Jericho, Al-Aghwar and its neighbouring areas such as Al-Daiouk, Fasayl and the city of Jericho. The main themes of these sessions were violence against women, the role of law in protecting victims, personal status law, and punishment. 702 people participated (208 of them were males), mostly housewives, workers and students. The number of beneficiaries is higher than those who received consultations and/or had their cases referred to other institutions for services.

Specialised Supervision

In 2019, WCLAC has been developing its capacity building program for grassroots institutions to expand the outreach and provision of social and legal services to abused women in marginalised areas. Since 2016 WCLAC has been working to strengthen the capacity of staff in Jericho region through financial and technical support. Additionally, professional training was provided for the grassroots organisation to develop and continue their service provision.

WCLAC provided twenty supervision sessions to social workers and lawyers at the CBOS aiming at increasing their interventions with targeted women. Twenty supervision sessions (5 social, 6 legal and 9 collective)

with a total of 60 hours were carried out where the team developed a procedure manual for legal and social service providers, legal and social women cases were also discussed and intervention plans were both discussed and designed by both lawyers and social workers to ensure support for women to access their rights.

Create and develop mobile counselling service in Jericho partner organisation

A specialized team from WCLAC and JWCS conducted 142 visits to 5 remote and marginalized local communities in order to learn about the needs and necessities of women in these areas. After these visits 5 mobile clinics started operating in marginalized communities near Jericho; one in the area of Jiftlek, one in Alfasayel, one in Al-Diouk Fouqa, one in Al-Nuwe'i'meh and the other in Al-Ojja. 22 women were provided with legal and social services mainly on domestic violence. Furthermore, in both Al-Ojja and Jiftlek there was high level of interest in conducting awareness sessions for local community and students.

It should be mentioned that WCLAC provided the teams of the clinics with 5 training sessions (total of 30 hours) before they started working.

Capacity building of CBOs' administrative and financial procedures

WCLAC continued its comprehensive support to partner CBOs through on-going meetings with staff members and management. Five programmatic meetings were implemented with JWCS and attended by 9 staff members and management. Additionally, another four financial follow-up meetings were held revolving around financial support, review budget and action plan for 2019, follow up on activities and program's implementation, feedback on financial statements and upgrade the financial managerial files in addition to a capacity building plan for staff members, and employment mechanisms.

Developing the capacity of CBOs to build relationships with the local community and donors

In 2019, WCLAC conducted a specialized training for 10 of the JWCS's General Assembly and team on fundraising, and proposal writing for 25 training hours. Through this training WCLAC was aiming to establish good foundations in institution- donor relations and in fundraising. The training contributed to introducing them to the fundraising procedures, writing project proposals, and introducing them to the donor bodies in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the structure of aid management in the occupied Palestinian territories, the basic principles of fundraising, relations with donors as a relationship that arises over time starting from testing, building trust then arrive to partnership. In addition to highlighting the importance of accountability, integrity and transparency while building relations with donors. By the end of the training JWCS staff developed written materials about their organisation, how to develop a proposal and helping them to develop two proposals and submit them to donors.

Building the capacity of CBOs in Jerusalem

For the reporting period, WCLAC supported Al-Thwri Women's Centre in implementing an initiative on producing videos about violence against women or women's rights to raise awareness of women's rights, highlighting the rights of women and social problems through short videos. The girls who worked on the videos were aged between 13-17 years old. 5 meetings were conducted to agree on the themes, producing the videos, the participants were also introduced on identifying the rights of women and the most important social problems that the society suffers from. The problems were discussed with the participants on how to

find solutions. According to the criteria, the videos should send a powerful message to the community on paying attention to these problems and rights and the importance of finding solutions to the problems faced by women in society and the implementation of women's rights. The meetings were attended by 14 girls. The girls produced 7 videos focusing on different topics such as, gender discrimination, violence against women, divorce, negative effects of violence on the individual and family, electronic games and their disadvantages, school dropouts, the internet and its impact on social life, as well as child labour. As a result of the contest, 3 girls won, the first place: with a prize of NIS 1,000: two girls shared the prize and were Darine Husseini and Noor Askafi, both received 460 votes. Second place with a prize of NIS 500: was for Mariam Al-Sharq, winning the votes of the Committee. The committee was set up by the trainer who carried out the training, a male journalist and a female journalist. The committee also gave comments on the girls' videos so that the girls could modify the videos according to the instructions of the committee and the instructions that were received by WCLAC.

Create and develop a new social and legal service provision program in the Hebron partner organization

WCLAC established and created a new partnership with a grassroots organization in the South of Hebron (governorate of Dura area) by signing a MoU with “Nahdet Bint Al Reef” for two years. WCLAC chose this organization as it covers the areas of Dura, and it has presence in 45 villages which ensures that “Nahdet Bint Al-Reef” has a high level of trust with the local community. This year, WCLAC continued in building the capacity of the staff to provide quality services to women victims of violence. Moreover, WCLAC conducted 8 follow-up meetings with 12 staff members, and general assembly on preparing awareness raising sessions, developing action plans and preparing trainings and activities.

The meetings mainly focused on providing technical trainings for staff and follow up on the requirements to start providing services. WCLAC held 23 collective supervision, legal and organizational meetings with 6 lawyers and social workers consisting of 69 hours. These supervision sessions mainly dealt with lawyers and social workers code of conduct at work, creating safe space for the beneficiaries, challenges that staff might face at the beginning of their work, reporting standards, and examples of cases and the best options of interventions. WCLAC also held 2 monitoring meetings for the team on documentation, concerning financial records, services provision records (how they document cases, record of consultations and opening cases file).

Continue developing the capacity of service provision staff at Nahdet Bint Al Reef Charitable Society (NBRCS)

WCLAC has been following up on the quality of the work and the progression of implementing the work plan with grassroots organisations. This has been done through the following mechanisms:

WCLAC works in partnership with NBRCS association in order to continuously facilitate the various services and legal and social counselling they provide to women. In 2019, NBRCS assisted 248 women. 30 women received social-legal services, 56 received social services, 16 woman received legal services, and 146 received social-legal counselling. Additionally, NBRCS provided representation in court for 130 cases, 97 of which were ruled in favour of the women and the rest still pending. The geographical distribution of beneficiaries seeking services from NBRCS is 71 women from villages, 163 women from cities, and 14 from refugee camps. A majority of the cases are women being deprived of rights either from the family or the

husband especially dowry, alimony, whilst the remainder cover custody issues, divorce, physical and sexual violence.

Regarding awareness-raising, legal and social workers conducted 39 sessions in the Hebron governorate reaching Dura to discuss several topics of concern. Issues that were raised revolved around alimony, personal status law, family violence, early marriage, protection, divorce, pre-marital counselling, mechanisms in working with abused women, sexual assault, conflict and disagreements, and exploitation of women. These meetings reached about 650 participants who were mainly housewives.

Create and develop a new mobile counselling service in Hebron partner organisation

A specialized team from WCLAC and NBRCS conducted 143 visits to 6 remote and marginalized local communities Al-Samou', Yatta, Deir-Samet, and Al-Zhahrieh, Al-Koum and Al-Fawar in order to learn about the needs and necessities of women in these areas. The team provided 107 consultations for women on domestic violence topics.

Building regional protection networks one in the North and one in the South for symbiosis between grassroots institutions that provide services in the health, social, and legal sectors

During the reporting period, WCLAC carried out 3 meetings with the Ministry of Women Affairs (20/6/2019, 3/7/2019 and 23/9/2019) as it is considered an important partner in protection networks. During the meetings, MoWA confirmed that the networks are on its agenda and is interested in coordinating more with WCLAC, especially in building a new network to support the work in the rest of the governorates. Furthermore, MoWA stressed that it is a temporary stage as the Ministry of Social Development must be responsible for following-up on the networks officially as part of the structure and they are only seeking the coordination, besides emphasizing that WCLAC is the title of follow-up and supervision of networks since 2015. Networks are very significant as these act as a platform for service providers to exchange knowledge and experience as well as organizing their efforts to provide better services to women victims of GBV. This year WCLAC established a new protection network in Qalqilia with the participation of 15 members (11 females and 4 males).

Meanwhile, 3 training sessions for 90 members (76 females and 14 males) and 26 meetings were conducted among protection networks service providers for women victims of violence in the three governorates of Hebron, Tubas, Tulkarem. The two meetings focused on the death of a young women in different governorates, the discussions mainly focused on how the protection failed, what were the most suitable mechanisms of and how tribal meetings excluded the role of the Persecutor's office, providing free health, psychological and legal services to women and how they coordinate with other institutions that provide services to women. As well as discussing the issue of privacy in cases and providing protection to women victims of violence. As for the Protection Committees in Tulkarem they have discussed the nature of cases, communication between services' providers, coordination and mechanisms of intervention.

Strategic goal 2: Promote women's rights to access justice and eliminate discriminatory policies against women

2.1. Contribute to the development of laws, policies and procedures to eliminate discrimination against women

2.1.1. Amendment of laws and policies in line with CEDAW

Contribute to preparing CEDAW shadow report to the PA and submit it to the PA and submit it to the CEDAW special Committee

CEDAW Committee concluding remarks emphasized considerable number laws and legislations that Palestinian Authority should amend and enact to law to eliminate discrimination against women. Family Protection from Violence law was one of CEDAW Committee recommendations that was also brought to the attention of the Committee through WCLAC Shadow Report. During 2019 considerable efforts were made to draft the Family Protection Law. Collective efforts were made to influence the process of drafting the Family Protection Bill through exerting pressure on the Government to include representatives from civil society organizations in the National Committee on Harmonizing Laws in accordance with International Conventions. WCLAC as a specialized organization that provides direct social and legal services to women victims of violence was assigned in the working committee along with Al-Muntada for Combating Violence Against Women to participate in drafting the law. WCLAC accumulated practical experience was significantly contributed to introducing relevant legal provisions to the law. WCLAC vision ensuring prevention, protection and rehabilitation that was presented in its policy paper, was translated within the draft law. This draft of the law focused on protection of the victims of violence through for example, taking the perpetrator out of the house instead of having the victim (the woman) to leave. The draft also focused on the prevention part, which includes certain obligations Ministries should have within their work to reinforce awareness raising MOE, MOSA, and others. The draft also included rehabilitation of the perpetrator through exposure to certain counselling and rehabilitation sessions. The Bill was approved by the Palestinian Cabinet and sent to the President for final endorsement.

Political instability and legal vacuum through a Palestinian Legislative Council being abolished through Presidential Decree, cripples the whole legislative process. Government change in April created another legal vacuum. President Abbas's return of the Family Protection Draft to the Cabinet for further review created another rescission in the process, where the law is subject for new round to drafting under the new government.

Carry out strategic impact litigation and legal procedures to introduce new legal tools to change and modify existing laws concerning women

This is considered to be a very recent addition to WCLAC's activities. Currently WCLAC is developing its working scheme in strategic litigation especially that WCLAC's work in providing social and legal services to women, its work in documenting human rights violations, and its advocacy work will form a solid base for building up litigation cases. WCLAC anticipates carrying out strategic impact litigation on the case of

matrimonial rights. In specific, one case under a EU funded project on matrimonial rights will be taken for strategic litigation to influence policy making process and ultimately advocate for the enactment of a matrimonial law. This process will be conducted along with an extensive advocacy campaign to raise public awareness and influence the decision-making process. .

Review laws and policies that violate women's economic and social rights

WCLAC focuses on women's economic and social rights in Palestine through advocating for better laws that are based on justice and equality. In 2019, WCLAC prepared a policy paper on the shortcomings in the laws regulating the security sector law, especially discriminatory act against women and those that might prevent women from advancing in high level positions.. This paper constitutes a main ground for an in-depth research paper discussing this issue more extensively. The policy paper was followed by a round table discussion attended by 23 participants representing members of security sector and civil society organizations to discuss the paper and to develop a better understanding concerning the status quo and present some recommendations to develop our comprehensive report. It should be noted that the round table discussion was preceded by conducting a focus group of (11 women and one man) representing several security agencies, such as the national security and the preventive security agencies to better understand the situation, the shortcomings in the policies, the regulations and the impediments of women's free access to decision- making positions in the security sector.

2.1.2. Shed light on policies, laws and practices in place that deal with femicide and sexual violence

Document cases of femicide and sexual violence and prepare analytical report

WCLAC carries out ongoing documentation of VAW - cases of femicide especially - in order to collate a strong body of data on which to base our advocacy strategies in lobbying for gender-sensitive legislative reform. A sound argument, grounded in facts, can also be used to pressure the government into taking concrete steps in order to amend legislation towards protecting women from violence. It should be noted the structural violence inherent in the unequal balance of power relations between the perpetrator and the victim which is reproduced in social life. As a rule, WCLAC investigates all deaths of women and girls in the OPT, excluding those caused by the Israeli force. WCLAC continues to be a reliable resource in documenting cases of femicide and incest in Palestine.

In 2019, WCLAC documented a total of 24 femicide cases in West-Bank and Gaza (**six** women were killed in Gaza Strip and **18** women were killed in the West Bank.) through field workers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, most of the women were aged between 16- 65 years old. Throughout the analysis, WCLAC realized that there is an increase in the number of obvious killings compared to last year. This year WCLAC documented 13 cases of obvious killings and 2 cases last year. Nevertheless, in two cases the age and women remain unidentified until this moment and 33.3% of the women are in their twenties. A large number of local and international organizations usually request ongoing updates on numbers of femicide cases because WCLAC is the only organisation documenting those cases.

By the end of 2019, WCLAC issued analysis report for three years (2016-2018) through providing evidence-based data to influence decision makers to perform legal reform and adopt non-discriminatory laws. The

report analyzed the 67 femicide's cases, connected the femicide analysis with the Palestinian social, legal and political Palestinian context. It also highlighted the impact of the last variables on the alarming escalation of the phenomenon. Ultimately, it suggested some recommendations that must be considered in the future work of WCLAC. [Read more in Arabic](#)

2.2 Advocate for women's rights at the international, regional and local levels

2.2.1 Engagement in active networks and coalitions to support women's rights

WCLAC works within networks and coalitions to target national, regional and international decision-makers in order to affect essential legal and policy changes for women in Palestine. Coalitions are comprised of civil society actors, representatives from governmental bodies, members of political parties and other decision-makers. WCLAC also incorporates representatives from its volunteer clusters into the coalitions, thereby bringing the voice of the Palestinian community to the decision-making level. Participation, in turn, empowers volunteers with invaluable advocacy skills. WCLAC is a member in numerous local and international coalitions and networks including: 1) *The National Committee for Women's Labour and a commitment in a periodic meetings*, 2) *NGO Forum on Violence Against Women (Al Muntada)*, 3) *SALMA Network against violence against women in the Arab world*, 4) *AISHA Network (Arab Women's Forum)*, 5) *Arab Network for Monitoring and Changing the Image of Women and Men in Media (ANMCWM)*, 6) *Musawa Coalition (Equality without Reservations)*, 7) *Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network and the Gender Working Group*, 8) *National Committee to Combat Violence Against Women*, 9) *Arab Network for Human Rights and Citizenship Education (ANHRE) Network*, 10) *National Committee of the Palestinian National Coalition on UN Resolution 1325*, 11) *Media and Rights Coalition to Ensure Implementation of Courts Decisions*, 12) *The Coalition on women with disability*, 13) *The Palestinian coalition on social, economic, and cultural rights (ADALA)*, 14) *Women Employment committee*, 15) *PNGO-Network*.

During this reporting period, WCLAC participated in a Training Program on Gender Statistics which aims to increase the knowledge on how to compile, analyze, disseminate and communicate gender statistics in a user friendly way.

As an active member of the **Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network**, WCLAC participated in the periodic meeting of the Network in April where Human Rights updates were shared among the members and a special emphasis was given to the adopted criminal protection laws in each country, as well as the application of Council of Europe against Domestic Violence "Istanbul Convention", in terms of raising awareness on its importance and the adequacy of the domestic laws and legislations of each country with the Convention. Furthermore, focus was also given to evaluate the previous strategic plan of the Gender and Gender Working Group.

WCLAC has also been part of the discussion meetings on the strategic plan for the **gender group within the Euro-Med** and the future strategic plan for the Euro-Med Network.

WCLAC continued to be an effective member of the **Higher Committee on UNSCR1325**, which was formulated based on a Cabinet decision and responsible for following up the National Action Plan (NAP)

on UNSCR1325. It is also an effective member of the **National Coalition on UNSCR1325**, which consists of representatives of CSOs and aims to engage civil society organizations in implementation of the NAP. In January, WCLAC participated in reviewing and developing a specialized strategic plan of the **National Women's Coalition on UNSCR1325** to align it with the current political challenges.

WCLAC participated in the meeting of the **Non-Governmental Women Coalition for the Implementation of CEDAW** in occupied State of Palestine. The meeting aimed at discussing the action plan of the coalition regarding CEDAE, the implementation of the convention especially after considering shadow report submitted by GUPW and next steps regarding developing the upcoming shadow report especially that the PA will present its report in July 10th.

WCLAC also plays an active role in the **Committee on Minimum Wage** to ensure having fair and equal wages for women. This Committee plays a significant role to affect labour policies and influence Ministry of Labour to modify employment policies in accordance with international conventions Palestine acceded. This year, the meeting was held to develop the work of the committee, increase the pressure on the government to implement and adopt more just laws, WCLAC highlighted the violations against women in work places in addition to the unemployment rate and lack of working opportunities.

Furthermore, WCLAC is active in the **Protection Cluster Group OPT**, led by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights office in the OPT. the meetings takes place once every month in the OHCHR office in Ramallah.

WCLAC is also a member in the stirring committee to discuss and work towards LGBT rights in Palestine, along with Al Haq, Independent commission for human rights, Al Qaws, OHCHR, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty international. The committee is still in its very early stages of formation, and the members are meeting once every 2-3 months, to discuss the latest updates concerning this topic and to share ideas about work mechanism. However, it is worth mentioning that WCLAC's role will be only limited to provide services for women\girls who are victims of domestic violence.

Finally WCLAC is a member in a stirring committee, formed by the independent commission for human rights. The main aim of this committee is to meet once every month to discuss human rights issues relevant to Palestinian NGO's work on the ground and mainly to discuss thematic interesting topics related to human rights issues on the Palestinian community. The committee contains various Palestinian NGOs, such as Al-Haq, Addameer, JLAC, Hurriyat, and Musawa.

2.4. Improve women's position in the media and combat negative attitudes against them

2.4.1 Follow-up, document and analyse women's image in the media from a gender perspective

In March 2019, WCLAC contributed to the edition of This Week in Palestine Magazine, by writing an article on Economic Independence: [Achieving Independence- Women's Entrepreneurship](#). As well as, contributing to May's edition by writing an article on the importance of Advocacy from a feminist perspective [Feminist Advocacy](#).

Develop the Arabic and English website

During the reporting period, WCLAC has managed to update its website and Facebook pages. As for the website, WCLAC has new programming to become more user friendly. Regarding Facebook, the updates included different WCLAC activities in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, follow up on the advocacy work, coverage of the abolishment of article 308 in the Penal code developments, TV interviews with WCLAC general director and employees, articles written by WCLAC employees and different laws and news on women's issues. As for the facebook's page engagement it is mainly focused on beneficiaries' inquiries related to the type of services we provide, and how they can reach us.

2.5. Empower youth networks of defence and advocate for women's rights

2.5.1 Expand the network of volunteers to advocate and mainstream women's rights in their communities.

WCLAC believes that meaningful change in favour of women's rights begins at the grassroots level. For this reason, WCLAC works with volunteer clusters to advocate for legal and policy reform and to grow an awareness of women's rights in underserved and marginalised communities throughout the West Bank. Volunteer mobilisation also empowers women (as well as men who support women's rights) with skills to develop their capacities, self-esteem, social status and voice in the public sphere. WCLAC supports teams of volunteers working in 4 locations to promote women's rights across the West Bank. Volunteers – a mix of male and female young professionals, typically fresh graduates or university students – are handed with knowledge and information to organise and lead awareness-raising and advocacy events on women's rights in their local communities that contribute to the economic, legal, social and political empowerment of women and enable them to exchange experiences. These activities usually include information-sharing workshops on women's rights and gender issues, educational and recreational activities, and cultural events. Through this network of volunteers, WCLAC is able to extend its reach, bringing its vision to conservative isolated, hard-to-reach locations. WCLAC also believes in the importance of targeting male volunteers in its programmes, and indeed the number of male volunteers forms almost half of our total number of volunteers. WCLAC volunteers are highly committed and dedicated to furthering the vision and message of WCLAC.

In 2019, WCLAC formed four new volunteer groups one in each of the following governorates: Tubas, Tulkarem, Hebron and Qalqilia, The 4 volunteer groups consist of 80 (53 females and 27 males) volunteers.

During this reporting period, WCLAC held 12 periodic meetings with the volunteers to follow up and supervise the volunteers' action plans and activities in Hebron, Qalqilya, Tubas and Tulkarm. The volunteers were trained to identify the goals they aspire to achieve from each activity, which created a space to discuss the nature of these activities and implement them in a more gender sensitive and effective way to serve the needs of women in marginalized areas. Furthermore, the volunteers were provided with analytical skills to understand backgrounds and causes related to the reality of women in Palestinian society, discuss perceptions and solutions to such issues, and empowered them with personal skills in order to increase the group's ability to interact with the local community, especially in relation to running awareness workshops and training. WCLAC also held a 4 training days for 22 volunteers in which

they were introduced to 1325 resolution, its importance and the specificity of women in conflict, to take measures to ensure their protection and adhere to the human rights of women and girls, as well as securing the special needs of women and girls in conflict, in addition to the representation of women of armed conflict communities to make their voices heard in the process of conflict resolution and to be part of all levels of decision-making as equal partners for conflict prevention and resolution. Later on, the volunteers suggested to implement initiatives in their regions related to this decision and in line with the needs of their community as a result of the training.

On a different level, four main activities were carried out by 42 volunteers (8 males and 34 females) in Qalqilya, Khirbet Al Maleh in Tubas Governorate, and the Bouira area of Hebron city and in the village of Kafr al-Labad in Tulkarem. The theme of the activities this year focused on the Family Protection Law against Violence and pressure decision-makers to approve this law, especially in light of the escalation of killing of women and the rise in violence against women. These activities also included entertainment for the women participating in these activities which were (142) women participants.

2.6. Document Israeli human rights violations against Palestinian women and develop effective tools to present them.

2.6.1 Highlight the gender-specific impact of human rights violations on Palestinian women

During the period, WCLAC collected 120 testimonies from Palestinian women in the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem. The themes focused on two main issues: the right to access to education for girls in the Jerusalem area, and violations of environmental rights and their impact on Palestinian women. WCLAC also posted 50 [voices](#) on the website; the violations mainly focused on children's house arrest, house demolitions, punitive measures, residency revocations, violations against women during visits to prisoners, violations of women in marginalized areas especially in Hebron and the right to health.

Moreover, WCLAC issued 12 monthly [Bulletins](#), and participated both as an independent NGO and as a part of the official Palestinian delegation in the 63rd Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CWS63) that took place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from the 11th to the 22nd of 2019 in which WCLAC held a side event: "The Double Jeopardy of Palestinian Women in oPt: Social Protection under Colonial Occupation and Structured Patriarchy", that touched upon the situation of Palestinian women living under occupation and a patriarchal society, the combination of topics aimed to give the complete full view of the social protection reality in Palestine in light of a prolonged occupation.

WCLAC's English language [website](#) continued to be active and regularly updated with new and original materials.

2.6.2 Rally International support for Palestinian women among governments, parliaments and Civil Society

During the reporting period a total of 45 presentations and meetings with delegations visiting Palestine were achieved. The delegations comprised parliamentarians, diplomats, journalists, and civil society activists to present evidence of human rights violations under occupation. Most of the meetings were

held to exchange information and the latest developments from our respective organizations and see what opportunities we might have to work especially on CEDAW, the Family Protection Law, which included highlighting HR situations in OPT with focus on Jerusalem and the Gendered occupation on Women's Human Right, discussing UN resolution 1325, Women Peace & Security and the impact of Israeli HR & IHL Violations on Palestinian Women focused on Women in Jerusalem. Certain meetings focused on the old city of Hebron and H2 area, emphasizing on Palestinian women's daily sufferings, where WCLAC invited a number of women from the area to speak to the delegation about their daily life under occupation, violations and harassment they are exposed to and challenges they are encountering.

WCLAC has also conducted 3 advocacy trips abroad, two of the advocacy trips were held in New York. The first advocacy trip was held in March 2019 where WCLAC participated as both an independent NGO and part of the official Palestinian delegation in the 63rd Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CWS63). The second trip, took place on August 17th which was organized by WCLAC's partners in Oxfam. Through this trip, WCLAC aimed to network and connect with various solidarity groups, civil society organizations and supporting congressional members, in order to build an advocacy base in the U.S., introduce WCLAC's work through engaging with different decision makers and stake holders. and most importantly, push towards changing the US policies concerning the Palestine Israel conflict through highlighting the gendered impact of the occupation and its impact on the daily life of Palestinian women, through presenting evidence based data collected from Palestinian women based on their own personal daily experiences.

2.7 Work towards holding Israel accountable for human rights violations

2.7.1 Use UN mechanisms to hold Israel accountable to its violations under IHL

In February 28th The Mission of Inquiry published its initial report in which it said that the Israeli army deliberately used excessive force against Palestinian demonstrators, possibly amounting to war crimes and crimes against humanity, and demanded that the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to refer the report to the International Criminal Court. The Committee made a number of recommendations, most notably the need to lift the siege imposed on the Gaza Strip immediately. In its recommendations, the Committee stressed on the three parties' (Israel, the de facto authority and the Palestinian National Authority) need to comply with their responsibilities and improve the living situation in the Gaza Strip. The Committee further stressed on the obligation of the Occupying Power to investigate the killings and injuries, punish the perpetrators and ensure the effective treatment of those affected. WCLAC expressed its high gratitude and appreciation for the fact that Mission Inquiry committee has responded to its observations with a view to highlighting the violations that women have been directly or indirectly subjected to. In this context, WCLAC highlights that the report and recommendations of the Committee are in response to its observations on the importance and necessity of highlighting the violations suffered by women directly or indirectly. The report took into account gender and women's issues, and paid particular attention to violations committed against women and girls in Gaza Strip, taking into account gender and gender issues in accordance with the recommendations. In 2018, WCLAC had submitted its detailed report titled "Gaza's Return Marches: The Gendered Impact of the Excessive Use of Force by Israeli Occupation Forces on Civilians", which is primarily based on testimonies collected by WCLAC'S field researchers from Gazan

women relating to direct and indirect violations of international humanitarian law committed by the Israeli occupation forces during the return marches.

Attend CSW sessions and parallel events

This year WCLAC participated both as an independent NGO and as a part of the official Palestinian delegation in the 63rd Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CWS63). The session took place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, from the 11th to the 22nd of March 2019. The main theme of the session was "Social protection systems and opportunities for access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls". WCLAC team participated in attending the opening session ceremony in which Palestinian Women's Affairs Minister, Mrs. Haifa Al Agha, gave a speech on behalf of group 77, which tackled the issue of discrimination against women and empowering women and its relation to the sustainable development goals (SDG's).

On March 14th, WCLAC organized a side event, which came as part of WCLAC's intentional Advocacy work. It focused on two major themes: Israeli occupation international humanitarian law violations against Palestinian women (especially Jerusalem women) and social protection system under occupation. The side event was called: **"The Double Jeopardy of Palestinian Women in oPt: Social Protection under Colonial Occupation and Structured Patriarchy."** Touched upon the situation of Palestinian women living under occupation and a patriarchal society, the combination of topics aimed to give the complete full view of the social protection reality in Palestine in light of a prolonged occupation. In the first part of the event, a Jerusalem report was launched. The Jerusalem report highlights impact of Israeli IHL violations on Palestinian women living in Jerusalem focusing on four major themes: minor's house arrest, house demolitions, residency revocation and punitive measures. In the second part, WCLAC aimed to address social protection dimensions, which conform to the general theme of CSW 63rd session through highlighting social protection and providing services in OPT under multiple forms of jurisdiction (Israeli laws, Jordanian laws and Palestinian laws) under occupation, double oppression women are exposed to, social security and the national transfer system. Moreover, WCLAC presented different challenges and achievements concerning the social protection system in Palestine, in addition to various real stories from women who encountered difficulties and violations in relation to the social protection context. Lastly, a very interactive dialogue with participants took place. The side event was a successful one; the attendance number was up to 150 attendees from several international organizations, NGO's, governmental representatives and solidarity groups.

2.8 Empower Palestinian women and provide them with opportunities to communicate their own messages and to express themselves to the outside world

2.8.1 Enable Palestinian women in Area C and near the wall to communicate their stories with international delegations

Train local women in Area C and near the wall to present their cases to international delegations

In September, WCLAC trained 20 women from the old city of Hebron (Tel Al-Rumeida) in the southern part of the West Bank who are directly impacted by Israeli measures of segregation, checkpoints and settlers' violence and between the age 29 -50 years old to develop their capacities on pillars of Women Peace and Security (20 hours). These training sessions were attended by women activists from H2 Area in Hebron. Training sessions introduced women and human rights; especially within International conventions Palestine acceded to. Application of USCR1325 within the Palestinian context, the National Action Plan to implement UNSCR1325. The training also introduced women to methods of advocacy and campaigning, tips of how to develop advocacy initiatives to promote women, peace and security

Women were also introduced to methods of documenting IHRL and IHL violations from a gender perspective. In particular, women were provided with guidance and tips to document Israeli violations to contribute to holding Israel accountable. In addition to introducing them to gender, gender related issues, international humanitarian law as well as international treaties. At a later stage, these women will design and carry out initiatives to advocate for women, peace and security in their communities.

Select 3 women from friction areas to participate in meetings with international delegations

By the end of April 2019, the field work coordinator concluded a training for 3 women from Jerusalem. The main aim of the coaching sessions is to train women to talk about their stories and cases of violations of their human rights by Israel in different international events either locally or internationally, and to present their suffering as women living in Jerusalem in front of delegations and in any required activity for WCLAC. However, these coaching sessions will also work as a raising awareness sessions in different human rights and IHL areas.

All participant women had suffered from different types of violations committed by Israeli forces, such as night raids, children arrest, Minors House arrest and the loss of their beloved ones. During the coaching, women has experienced a change on various levels, and it was proven through their meetings with delegations as they were able to deliver their voices and to speak up about violations they've encountered. The meetings with the delegations were the most prosperous and effective part of the coaching process, in which on a WCLAC level, it was reflected in a very positive way. The delegations feedback about these meetings was very positive.

2.8.2 Provide ongoing training for field workers and coordinator

During June 2019, the fieldwork coordinator held training and meeting sessions for the field workers (documenting Israeli occupation violations against Palestinian women). The main aim of the training was to introduce the field researchers to the new themes that WCLAC will be working on, and to provide them with knowledge and developed questionnaires that will cover the new themes.

WCLAC held a follow-up training for the field workers just after their collection of testimonies to reflect on their experiences in documenting new topics and address the main challenges they faced.

Strategic goal 3: Develop institutional and human capacity in order to ensure the sustainability, effectiveness and efficiency of WCLAC

3.1. Develop WCLAC policies and procedures

3.1.1 Improve WCLAC policies, procedures and practices

Draft new policies and procedures

During the reporting period, WCLAC's General Director, Director of Finance and Administration, Programmes Director and Human Resources Coordinator conducted an initial review of the Centre's salary scale policy to ensure the development of an applicable policy that satisfies the needs and aspirations of the staff. 3 drafts were provided to the Board of Director's, the board developed a committee to review the drafts and decide on the most applicable/suitable one. Moreover, WCLAC drafted a complaint mechanism which will be implemented to cover internal and external complaints. This means that complaints could be processed from clients, staff, partners and all stakeholders. WCLAC also worked on reviewing its Human Resources' Manual.

3.1.2 Enhance WCLAC's programme and information management system

Undertake evaluations of WCLAC's programmes

During the reporting period, WCLAC immediately responded to the first comment made by the external midterm evaluator for its 5 years strategic plan (which was conducted in June 2018) on reviewing the Logical Framework. An internal planning workshop took place with WCLAC staff to define interventions and better develop indicators. WCLAC will design an action plan to respond to these recommendations with timeframe and tasks and responsibilities. This plan will be designed through a participatory approach that involves all staff members and WCLAC management team.

WCLAC has also started to develop an efficient monitoring and evaluation plan after carrying out participatory planning workshops with staff members to design a response plan for M&E and Logical Framework.

Develop WCLAC's Strategic Plan for 2021- 2025

WCLAC is planning to develop its five years strategic plan. TOR were prepared and published in the local newspapers. After technical and financial analysis of the tenders, WCLAC selected Grip Consulting to carry out the process. Initial meetings were conducted with WCLAC management to discuss methods of carrying out the rapid assessment of the current strategy, to give informed decisions on strengths and progress made under the current strategy 2015-2020 and recommendations to inspire the new strategy. The first strategic planning workshop was conducted with staff in December. This will be followed with workshops with the BOD and GA as well as meeting with local and international partners. In addition, an online survey was

designed and distributed to a sample of national and international partners as well as beneficiaries. This was combined with FGD conducted with groups from WCLAC beneficiaries. It should be mentioned that the plan is expected to be ready in April 2020.

Develop WCLAC's library

During this reporting period, WCLAC has inserted 82 books on WCLAC's electronic library catalogue, WCLAC also purchased 44 new books related to its field of work, mission and vision. Due to WCLAC's rich library many visitors come to read and photocopy books on women's issues. From January 1st – December 31st, 211 visitors (180 females and 31 males) have accessed WCLAC's library.

3.2. Develop professional skills of WCLAC staff

WCLAC has ongoing capacity building for its staff through an annual capacity building plan, which includes capacity building of staff, appraisal system and incentives policy based on staff evaluation, participation in local, regional and international learning opportunities, including conferences, workshops and trainings. In 2019, WCLAC allocated budget to ensure that the administrative staff gets equal opportunities for capacity building since most of the opportunities are programmatic.

Part III. Annex

Tables for WCLAC's provided services

The following tables indicate the numbers of women that WCLAC has provided services to, in different categories:

Table 1. Type of Service Provided

		<i>Ramallah</i>	<i>South of the Pal. Territories</i>	<i>Jerusalem</i>	<i>Total</i>
Type of service	Legal and social	105	190	43	338
	Legal	11	29	3	43
	Social	30	2	1	33
	Total	146	221	47	414

Table 2. Type of Case

		<i>Number of cases</i>
Legal/social case	Marital obedience incl. housing	19
	Custody and visits	58
	<i>Nafaka</i> (alimony)	327
	<i>Mahr</i> (dowry)	29
	Divorce	116
	Rights issues	4
	Total	553

Table 3. Social Indicators of Women Clients

		<i>Ramallah</i>	<i>Bethlehem</i>	<i>Hebron</i>	<i>Jerusalem</i>
Average family monthly income (NIS)	Less than 500	0%	0%	0%	2%
	Unknown	29%	34%	81%	11%
	No Income	12%	18%	4%	22%
	501 - 1000	1%	6%	1%	7%
	1001- 1500	6%	10%	4%	0
	1501 - 2000	7%	4%	1%	9%
	2001- 2500	5%	4%	2%	2%
	2501- 3000	5%	8%	1%	9%
	Above 3000	23%	16%	4%	38%

		<i>Ramallah</i>	<i>Bethlehem</i>	<i>Hebron</i>	<i>Jerusalem</i>	Total
Age	Under 15	0%	0%	0%	0%	14
	16-20	0%	13%	14%	6%	130
	21-25	16%	13%	18%	18%	29
	26-35	62%	31%	35%	12%	74
	36-40	16%	12%	17%	12%	27
	40 and above	26%	31%	16%	40%	34
	Unknown	0%	0%	0%	0%	0

		<i>Total from all WCLAC's offices</i>
Level of education	Unknown	1%
	No formal education	0
	Elementary school	6%
	Primary school	14%
	Secondary school	43%
	Higher education	36%

Table 4. Source of Referral

		<i>Total percentage from all WCLAC's offices</i>
Source of referral	Courts	43.5%
	Health sector	0.5%
	MoSD	9%
	Other institutions	10%
	Lawyers	3%
	Women by themselves	33%
	Prisons	0%
	Police	1%
	Governorates	0%

Table 5. Type of perpetrator

		<i>South of the Pal. Territories</i>
Perpetrator	Father	2%
	Mother	1%
	Ex-husband	13%
	Husband's family/ relatives	2%
	Husband	75%
	Outside the family	1%
	Neighbours/ Friends	1%
	Siblings	3%
	Fiancé	2%



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WCLAC enjoys special consultative status with ECOSOC