




Good Practices from Women's Mediation School

Palestinian Centre for Peace and Democracy

In partnership with

Operation 1325 and is financed by Forum Syd via Sida/Sweden





The Palestinian Women and UN Resolution 1325 Working with the Women, Peace and Security Agenda

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This booklet was prepared as a result of a workshop that was conducted to a group of young women involved in the project entitled: Women Mediation School. During this workshop, the youth gave their reflections towards the Resolution and its impact on their lives.

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“The information presented in this handbook does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the 1325 Operation and Forum Syd who funds this project.

The young women who participated in this workshop are the following:

Razan Sinawi
Nur Hajahja
Aya Shawriya
Manar Shalalda
Maram Shalalda
Nur Iyad
Wala Sanad
Layla Ayad
Taqwa Balawi
Bayan Awad
Anbara Shalalda

Introduction

Since its establishment in 1992, the Palestinian Centre for Peace and Democracy has an interest in complete equality between men and women; through advocating to citizenship rights to all the citizens regardless of the sex, religion, belief or political affiliation. This interest was reflected on the strategies, programs, projects and its targeted groups; where the representation of the Palestinian women in its work is up to 60%. The percentage of females within staff and board is higher than the percentage of men.

The PCPD is committed to the 2030 Agenda to achieve Sustainable Development; in realizing the human rights of all and into achieving gender equality, as well as the empowerment of all women and girls. PCPD believes and works for **Goal 5; Gender Equality; Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls**. This goal will work to end global discrimination of women and girls; end all forms of violence against women and girls; ensure full and effective participation of women at all political, economic, and public levels of decision-making, and ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive healthcare. We believe that more women in politics make for stronger democracies; thus, we have to make equal opportunities for leadership and participation of women at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life; to adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislations for the promotion of gender equality. **Goal 10; Reduced inequalities**: this goal focuses on

that is of interest, ensuring equal opportunities and reducing inequalities in legislation and policies, and adopting policies that will promote equality and social protection. Further, there is an interest in PCPD in **Goal 16; Peace, Justice and strong institutions**; that advocates to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels; promote rule of law at all levels to ensure access to justice; the reduction of corruption and bribery, and the development of accountable and transparent institutions.

Throughout different activities, the PCPD tries to hold the decision makers in Palestine accountable; through asking them to abide by the Palestinian Declaration of Independence of 1988, which is regarded the basic constitutional document to the Palestinians, since this document was produced by the Palestinian National Council, which is the general legislative council to the Palestinians inside Palestine and in the diaspora. With the recent developments in the last century, mainly the signing of the State of Palestine on a number of conventions and international resolutions related to human rights and equality, mainly the two Conventions of 1966, CEDAW of 1979 and other conventions that determines the strategic future of Palestine. The PCPD aimed to contribute in establishing the basis of the Palestinian state with sovereignty; the civil democratic state that abide with social justice, and equality between all its citizens regardless of their sex, or religion or belief or color.





Palestine and UN Resolution 1325

UN Resolution 1325 is an international resolution that advocates for the rights of women to solve the conflicts and to bring peace and security. The most important issue in this resolution is to secure the needs of women during conflicts and war, and that advocates to give women the chance to participate on equal footing with men in decision making and securing peace and security; in addition to have women represented in the military monitors and the police. This resolution is important to the Palestinian women who suffer from the occupation. In addition, this resolution enables the Palestinian women to follow the Israeli war criminals who conducted a big number of crimes towards the Palestinians in general and the women in particular.

In 2014, Palestine signed on a number of international conventions and this act is a step towards moving the state of Palestine from an observer state into a full membership in the United Nations. This position will support the civil society and democratic movements in their demands towards developing the Palestinian laws and legislations to be in line with the international conventions. It also will be playing a major role in ending the marginalization of women. It will give them the chance to participate in the decision-making processes on an equal basis as men. The Palestinian women participated in the national struggle since the beginning of the last century; but after all that, women did not achieve the position that equals their sacrifices. This is due to different reasons mainly the

absence of democracy and human rights, the prejudice of the Palestinian laws to men due to the pressure that is imposed by the tribes and their patriarchal values that do not acknowledge the capacities of women.

Inputs gathered during a Workshop on the Palestinian Women and UN Resolution 1325:

PCPD with a generous support from Operation 1325 implemented a project targeting young women from Bethlehem and Ramallah districts through the setting of a Women's Mediation School. The project aimed to increase the power of young women under the age of 30 for increased leadership in civil society, in political participation, dialogue, conflict-resolution and peace-building. It aimed to teach young women the importance of democratic and human rights-based political representation. The younger women had women mentors who shared with them knowledge, experience and skills. Within this project, a workshop was conducted to a group of youngsters involved in the project and questions related to UN Resolution 1325 were discussed. An example were questions related to: "Does the resolution 1325 benefit women on an individual level or in a group level? Did the resolution 1325 affect your life on a personal level? Do you use the Resolution 1325 in discussions and dialogue with the others? Are you with this resolution and what does it mean to you?"

Young women coming together to advocate for the importance of UN Resolution 1325

The PCPD believes in the capacities of Palestinian women to understand the circumstances they live through, and the importance of change; in addition to choosing the mechanisms that accelerates the process of change. Thus, we have coordinated this workshop; where the young women met and discussed this issue, as well as proposed a number of solutions that can be implemented away from slogans and personal interests. We, at the PCPD hope that their voices will reach their families, colleagues and peers who believe in the process of liberating the land from occupation as well as the liberation of man from his human brother. The workshops focused on four parts:

- The first is getting to know about the participants.
- The second is about the articles of UNSCR 1325 and its importance in solving the Palestinian-Palestinian conflict, the conflict that is between the two major political parties in Palestine (Fatah and Hamas).
- The third part is about the Resolution and its effect on the life of the participants.
- The fourth part is about the participation of the Palestinian women in the struggle to build the modern Palestinian State.

The youth who joined the workshop are part of the group involved in this project and they are all fresh graduates and activists at the local level with an interest in women rights. They come from Bethlehem and Ra-

mallah districts, and their information about UNR 1325 was very modest before they joined the project, but have changed by the end of the project.

The following are some of the topics and quotes that were gathered through the workshop:

The importance of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 to the Palestinian women

The first part was on the importance of the Resolution 1325 to the Palestinian women; and when they were asked what it means to them and how it has affected them; most of the participants said that they were interested in its articles. They added that this resolution could do a push to the role of women and it can be a tool to allow women to leave the domestic sphere and be engaged in the public one.

They felt that the training was distinguished; where they got to be aware of the challenges facing them where they summarized them as:

- the occupation.
- the patriarchal society.
- the discrimination exerted on them by their families,
- the feudal values,
- the unemployment.
- poverty.

They have realized that such a resolution, signed by the president could be considered as one mechanism to put the Palestinian women on the equality track.



Throughout the project activities, they became aware that women are absent from the Palestinian Israeli negotiations and the Palestinian-Palestinian reunification negotiations between the West Bank and Gaza. Nur Iyad (one of the participants) hasn't thought before about the importance of having women as part of the reconciliation process, or haven't even thought that their presence could have made a difference, but now she is convinced that there is a vital need to raise the voices and demand women to be on the negotiation table.

Taqwa Balawi said

// this resolution fits well the situation of the Palestinian women since the Palestinians are living under unstable political situation and there is a necessity for the role of women in peace; mainly on the internal level, to have women as part of the Palestinian security systems, in order to decrease the violations taking place against them. //

The Reality of Security in Palestine and the role of UNSC Resolution 1325 in this respect: The second question was on the reality of security in Palestine and the role of UNSC Resolution 1325 in strengthening women position in creating internal security. Most of the participants have shown that there is a social inferiority towards women and the Palestinian public opinion believes that security forces are and should be limited to men (as it is a male job). Anbara Shalalda mentioned that only 4% is the percentage of the women working in the security forces. (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistic) She said,

// Women are not allowed to be engaged in all the military and security trainings taking place. //

UNSC Resolution 1325 in the Palestinian media: Most of the participants said that they have not heard about this resolution before, neither at universities, nor in any readings, but now after their engagement in this



project, they have understood that people who practice discrimination dominate the Palestinian media. They gave examples of a number of Palestinian women in the security forces who were powerful and influencers but they were not mentioned by the Palestinian media, who only focuses on men leaders.

The second part was related to their feelings after the training; whether they had a voice in their families; and whether their opinions and suggestions are appreciated inside their families. Nur Hajahja said, "I have been engaged and involved in many activities conducted by different organizations; but I have kept the knowledge to myself, and haven't shared or discussed the topics of the trainings within my peers or family members, but when I joined the PCPD trainings, I have changed; became stronger and have more confidence. Now I stand and speak in front of the students at the university; I enter into discussions with my teachers and I feel that I am a brave woman".

Women political leaders as mentors to the youngsters

The third part was related to meeting the mentors and women political leaders, and the question was whether they felt that these mentors were models for them? The participants have agreed on one issue, where all of them understood that being a leader is not an easy process; it is painful, complicated and a sensitive process mainly in the Arab World. All the participants agreed that all the women they met are heroines; have done a lot for Palestine; have lost their per-

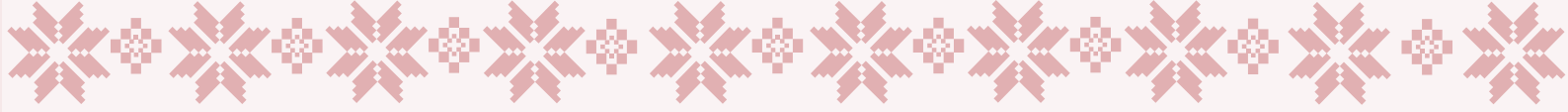
sonal issues in order to struggle for the liberation of Palestine and the human being.

"The mentors enthused us to follow their steps and not to hesitate despite the risks". Razan felt in a new and enthusiastic way after meeting Masroji, since this woman has broken the traditional model of man domination; she succeeded in all the positions that she has led and has achieved big successes. Maram expressed her happiness since she had the chance to meet Ms. Victoria Shukri, face to face, after hearing a lot about her. She said, "I thought that she was an ordinary woman, but after meeting her I was able to distinguish between directors and leaders. She is a great national leader, better than any men leaders." Layla Ayyad added, "These meetings have enthused me to try to be similar to them. I am planning to be a national leader in my country, within two years, and I will be working on that".

The impact of the resolution 1325 on the lives of the participants:

Most of the participants mentioned that the most effective impact has taken place amongst their families, friends, neighbors and colleagues. Nur Hajahja felt that the change in her was obvious to her family, especially when her father confessed that he repented preventing her from participating in previous activities. He said that if he knew that she will be changed positively, he would have allowed her to participate a long time ago. Aya Shawriya said, "my family now takes my shares my opinion in all family matters, while they didn't before, it seems that they feel that I am a new person". Wala





Sanad said that she shared the information she acquired with her friends and now they are interested more in women issues. Hala Faqes regained the trust in herself where for the first time in life, she started a political discussion with her brother, where she has never conducted such a discussion before. Baya Awad's colleagues at the university have known about her engagement in this project and are waiting for this publication in order to know more about this resolution and its effect on the Palestinian women.

Although all the participants are members at Community Based Organizations (CBOs) in their locations, they said that they have never discussed this resolution before, but now this resolution will be on the agenda of these CBOs and they are ready to give sessions on the resolution to other young women throughout these CBOs.

During the project implementation, one Palestinian girl called "Isra Ghareeb" was killed by her family, and this story was discussed between the participants, who had the chance during this project to participate in the marches of "Tal3at", an intersectional feminist movement, that organized a number of marches against femicide. The participants said that they have known the story of Isra from their involvement with the PCPD, and they have participated in the marches conducted in Ramallah and in Bethlehem to protest the killing of women and domestic violence.

Concerning the skills that they gained from the training, the participants said that they gained leadership skills and as a result were able to talk and open discussions with wom-

en mentors. They also gained media skills and that they are ready to talk about this resolution and about women rights in front of a group, a thing that they have never thought they will be doing.

Activism of the Palestinian Women

The fourth part is about the activism of the Palestinian women, where the discussion was about the current political situation in Palestine, mainly the Deal of the Century. They said that this Deal could not be stopped by men alone and that it needs the cooperation of everyone, women and men. Hala Faqes said, "women could not liberate the land until they are liberated from the power of the family and the clans". All the participants agreed that they need to struggle to build a civil state that guarantees social justice and equality for everyone, regardless of sex.

The participants agreed the need to have women involved in the political processes in Palestine and the need to have a Palestinian Constitution that guarantees equality. Taqwa Balqawi said, "men should be convinced of women rights and work for to achieve equality". Hala Faqes added, "there is a necessity to cancel tribal rules". Bayan Awad emphasized that a democratic constitution should be gender sensitive and call for a secular state. Anbara Shalada said, "change will not be achieved without women participation in decision making". Razan Sinawi said, "National unity, social justice, and a 50% quota is a necessity". Aya Shawariya stressed the importance of an independent state with full women participation in all its institutions. Nur Iyad said that

no sovereignty could be achieved without women participating in the economic system. Manar Shalada wants equal roles for women and men in the community, where Palestinian legislations are in control, not Jordanian nor Egyptian.

Stories and Quotes from some of the participants in the project:

RAZAN SINAWI

My name is Razan Sinawi and I am 27 years old, I am coming from Elizariya, a province of Jerusalem. I started university in 2010 in Al-Quds University and I wanted to study law since childhood. I loved my study but I also am interested to do voluntary work at the university as well as do some services that serves students. My first participation was in the Student Exchange Forum, which entitled going to consults and institutions to ask for scholarships. I also was involved in a student exchange program where we hosted an Italian group of students in Palestine; and we showed them round as well as gave them information about the struggle that the Palestinians are living through. Throughout this voluntary work, I had a chance to participate in a 10-day program in England with a group of students and this opportunity allowed me to attend workshops on human rights.

Razan Added, "This year, and in particular in April 2019, I was told by one of my friends that the Palestinian Centre for Peace and Democracy is conducting a program on UN Resolution 1325. Although I attended many trainings before, still I did not know about

this resolution, so this motivated me to be eagerly engaged in this program. I was one of the young women involved in the Mediation School, where we have gotten to know about UNR 1325 in detail and how this resolution is to be implemented in Palestine; and we concentrated on the political side as well as the local laws. What is remarkable in this Mediation School is the practical side which is entitled to do field visits to women leaders, and we were exposed to their work, their studies and their activism in the community. We also had the chance to participate in three study days on the international legitimacy in general and on 1325 in particular".

Razan is smiling, and then she said, "I was also given the chance to be enrolled in another program running at the PCPD; a training on the use of Media (TV sessions). I was one of three women in my group to join this media training and I was lucky to lead one live TV sessions on local Palestinian TVs, and to participate as a guest in another three TV sessions that were on youth issues. We talked about the elections as well as violence against women mainly killing women under what is called honor killings. I was able to shed light on the legal side and to come up with a number of recommendations".

Before she ended, she prefers to add one more thing, "I am interested to join community based organizations as well as the local council in my village. I want to get a leadership position and reach a political position, and a decision making position too. I believe that I gained a lot of information especially in the importance of politics. I have gained information on how I can be a candidate in



political positions. I am enthusiastic to motivate other youth to reach decision-making positions. As for the future, I want to be in the diplomatic field and to be an international lawyer who could stand in international courts and defend the rights of Palestinians. To reach this dream, I am planning to increase my knowledge and experience to be qualified to get a good position in my future”.



ASMA ASAKRA

My name is Asma Asakra and I graduated from the university in 2018 where I was graduated in social services. I like to serve the citizens and my society and I like to do voluntary work, and as a result, during my studies I, with a group of other students established a club to conduct voluntary activities and thus I cooperated with a number of civil society organizations in Bethlehem and Hebron.

“Throughout my activism, I was suffering from the habits and culture in my society and the patriarchal values that want women to stay at home and I suffering from this as soon as I ended my education. When I read about the training that the PCPD is conduct-

ing on UN Resolution 1325, I was interested and registered. I met the coordinator and showed my interest to join the training, but she told me that through this training, there is a possibility to stay overnight in Ramallah. I had to convince my parents and after a lot of pressure from my side, I succeeded”.

“I joined the project and I was enthusiastic and attended all the meetings. I was going out of home a lot and this made my extended family unhappy, although I had the consent of my parents. During this project, I had to be with a mentor and to escort her in her activism. I with another colleague chose to escort Ms. Wijdan Al-Aza who is working at the Palestinian Working Women Committee. We attended a lot of workshops and trainings that Ms. Al-Aza conducted and as a result we become volunteers at this Committee and we were chosen to be part of the Shadow Committee in Handaza municipality. Throughout this project, we met many influential women such as Luna Erikat and Sahar Qawasma and we learnt a lot throughout this experience”.

“Now I feel that I have a stronger personality. I can take my own decisions and look at women rights from a different perspective. I will continue working for empowering young women to reach to decision making positions and be an important part in any future negotiations, where women could be on the negotiation table, side by side with men.



ANBARA SHALALDA

// I believe that UN Resolution concentrates on the political participation of women and it is connected to the conventions that the state of Palestine has ratified. This resolution encourages me to be political active and gives me the right to be involved in the political arena. I believe that I will benefit from it in my future, where I can plan for a future that can challenge the patriarchal society and the political parties that do not acknowledge the role of women in the decision-making processes. //



BAYAN AWAD

// From my point of view, I believe that UN Resolution 1325 concentrates supports women and in our case in Palestine women have to face pressure from the patriarchal society and from the Occupation. Throughout this resolution, women could become independent and reach the decision-making levels, side by side to men. This resolution has made me wonder about the reasons that keep negotiations restricted to men and women are not given the space to be part of solving conflicts and sitting on the negotiation table. //

NUR HAJAJHA

// I knew about this resolution when I joined the PCPD and now I am proud to have been involved in this project and I am advocating for this resolution to my friends at the university. This resolution has three spheres: empowerment, protection and participation. These three spheres are important to women to be able to challenge the habits and culture in the society, to protect them from the occupation, from the inferior view, which prevent her to reach to the decision-making levels. //



MANAR

// Throughout the involvement in this project, I became a stronger woman. Before I was unable to talk in social nor in political subjects, and I was unable to participate in any discussions. Now I feel different; I can participate in the discussions since I have more confidence through the information and skills that I received through this project. //

WALA SANAD

// What was distinguished in the UN R 1325 is the absence of the Palestinian women in solving the Palestinian-Palestinian conflict; her absence from any negotiations or any meetings between Fatah and Hamas; where the Palestinian women are absent. I believe if Palestinian women were part of these meetings, things will have changed, and the separation between Fatah and Hamas has ended. //





Operation 1325 is a Swedish civil society organization working for the implementation of UN's Resolution 1325. Founded by several Swedish women's and peace organizations in 2003, the organizations objective is to increase women's influence at all levels of peace processes and in conflict resolution. The UN Security Council adopted the groundbreaking Resolution 1325, about Women, Peace and Security, in 2000. The resolution's aim is to reaffirm the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace building. Operation 1325 advocates, informs, educates and creates platforms for debate and dialogue to influence decision makers, civil society and the general public with the aim of implementing Resolution 1325. Since its founding, Operation 1325 has carried out capacity-building projects with partner organizations in the Balkans, Central Africa, Middle East and North Africa.

The Palestinian Centre for Peace and Democracy PCPD is a civil society non-for-profit Palestinian, non-governmental organization that was established in 1992. PCPD forges a feminist perspective to achieve gender equality, social justice, freedoms, and to build a vibrant and tolerant Palestinian state that enjoys peace and security, a state that is accountable, committed to the rule of law and is open to the participation of all despite sex, religion, color or political thoughts.

PCPD is committed to the culture that promotes women's and youth's political empowerment, participation and representation in all spheres of their lives; a culture that increases women's opportunities to have leadership roles, their voices heard, and where they have the safe space that enables them to participate in the political and public life as well as in the decision-making processes; a culture that is committed to gender equality, empowerment of women and girls, and to eliminate violence against women as well as sexual and gender based violence.

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