



Ministry of Women`s Affairs

The Reality of Palestinian Women and the Escalation of Gender-Based Violence (2025-2026)

March 8, 2026



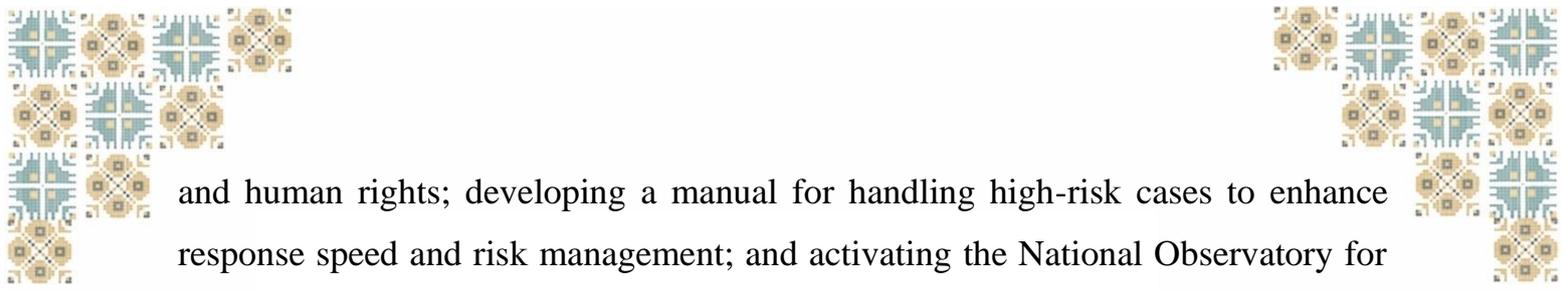
Introduction

This report is issued on the occasion of International Women's Day, amid the exceptional circumstances faced by Palestinian women and girls in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and Jerusalem, as a result of the ongoing aggression and the escalation of Israeli occupation policies. These policies have deepened the fragility of the social and economic reality and doubled the daily risks facing women. This context has led to an expansion of the scope of gender-based violence (GBV) in its various forms, whether within the family, in public spaces, or in places of displacement and work, in addition to the escalation of digital violence patterns that restrict women's participation and voice in the public sphere.

This report comes as part of monitoring the implementation of the National Strategy to Combat Violence Against Women, adopted by the Ministry of Women's Affairs as a comprehensive national reference for organizing prevention, protection, accountability, and response efforts. It affirms that combating GBV represents a cross-sectoral national priority directly linked to gender justice, the rule of law, and strengthening the resilience of Palestinian society.

The report provides documented indicators and results on the manifestations of violence against women and girls, based on national and international reports. It shows how the effects of war, displacement, overcrowding, and deteriorating living conditions intersect with escalating patterns of violence. Furthermore, it highlights how movement restrictions, lack of privacy, and economic pressures affect women's ability to access services, support, and protection, exacerbating their social and economic vulnerability.

Through the Higher National Committee for Combating Violence Against Women, and in partnership with official and civil institutions, the Ministry works to translate the strategy's goals into practical executive tools. These include updating the national referral system for abused women and its protocol to ensure confidentiality, dignity,



and human rights; developing a manual for handling high-risk cases to enhance response speed and risk management; and activating the National Observatory for Monitoring Violence as a national mechanism for data collection, analysis, and directing interventions.

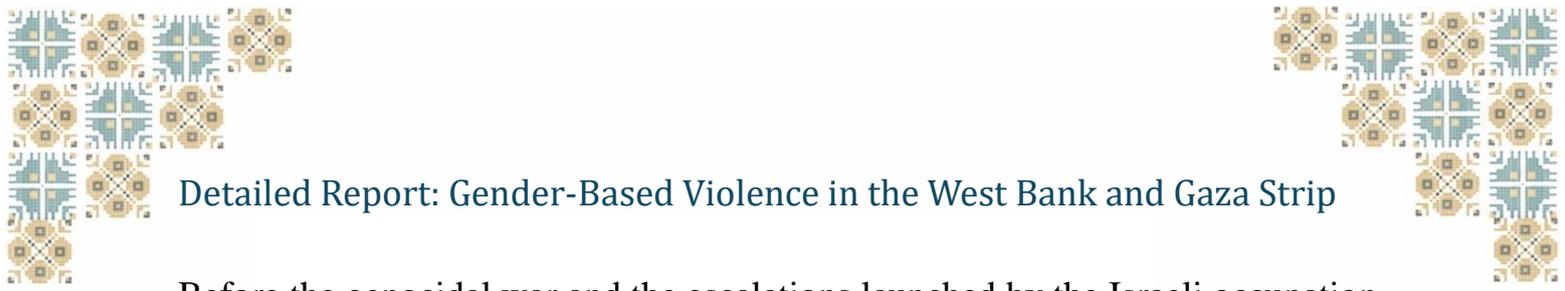
These efforts integrate with the implementation of the third generation of the National Action Plan for UN Security Council Resolution 1325. This enhances women's roles in protection, participation, prevention, and relief, and solidifies the State of Palestine's international commitments to protecting women in conflict contexts.

The Ministry of Women's Affairs emphasizes that implementing the National Strategy in this complex context requires strengthening coordination between the judicial, security, health, and social sectors, and intensifying partnerships with civil society and international partners to ensure a comprehensive, rights-based response.

Combating violence against women is not a sectoral responsibility, but a national and humanitarian commitment based on the National Strategy and the legal obligations of the State of Palestine. It aims to build a safe Palestinian society, free from violence and discrimination, that preserves the dignity of women and enhances their status as full partners in development and state-building.

H.E. Mona Al-Khalili

Minister of Women's Affairs



Detailed Report: Gender-Based Violence in the West Bank and Gaza Strip

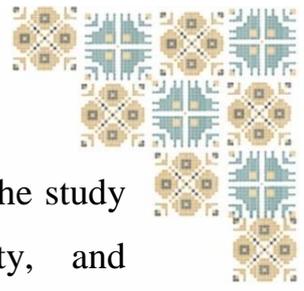
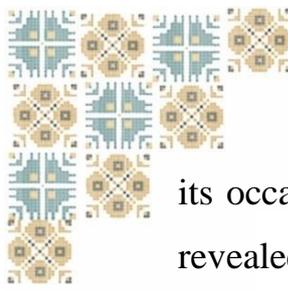
Before the genocidal war and the escalations launched by the Israeli occupation, women and girls in Palestine were exposed to various forms of GBV, especially within the family, with a clear weakness in reporting and seeking protection, as shown by the 2019 PCBS survey. However, since the genocidal war, the violence against women has shifted from primarily societal and domestic violence to violence imposed by the conditions of war, displacement, loss of housing, privacy, and income. Consequently, opportunities for control, coercion, and exploitation have increased within homes, displacement centers, and public spaces.

Under a fragile ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, the causes of violence remain because the effects of war have not ended; they persist through poverty, declining living standards, and the weakness and limited nature of protection services. This keeps women and girls in constant suffering, and the effects of this violence remain for long periods, seriously affecting their lives and futures. In the West Bank, the suffering of displaced women from northern West Bank camps is worsening, which we will highlight specifically.

I. Escalation of Gender-Based Violence in West Bank Camps

Displacement conditions for thousands of women in northern West Bank camps have exacerbated various forms of violence. A study by the Al-Najda Association and the UN (2025) documented that raids, displacement, overcrowding, and lack of privacy have left chronic psychological effects on women, such as insomnia, anxiety, loss of security, isolation, loss of appetite, and avoidance of social interaction.

The study also monitored an increase in GBV, especially verbal, physical, and psychological violence within the family (from the husband or his family), and

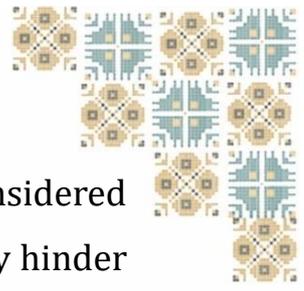
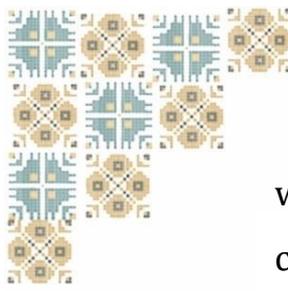


its occasional appearance from some service providers. Furthermore, the study revealed that deteriorating living standards, increasing poverty, and unemployment rates in the camps have contributed to raising tension and the levels of violence these women face.

According to a UNFPA 2025 report, which monitors forms of violence women face in the West Bank and Jerusalem at checkpoints and during transit, women are subjected to repeated harassment and insults, humiliating physical searches, and being forced to remove items of clothing or the hijab. This also includes unauthorized filming and searching phones to access private photos.

These violations can be summarized as follows:

- **Violence during raids and incursions:** Verbal and physical violence, humiliating searches in front of cameras, and arrests of women as substitutes when wanted men are not found, including a recorded case of a pregnant woman. Reports also mentioned the theft of gold jewelry and the destruction of homes during raids.
- **Settler violence around villages and lands:** Women face numerous attacks, terrorization, and intimidation, leading to restricted access to land and work, especially during harvest seasons, in addition to closing village entrances and expanding outposts near homes.
- **Violence in public places and work:** Women and girls are subjected to verbal harassment in streets and markets, in addition to electronic blackmail. Regarding workplaces, women working in homes or unsafe public places are increasingly susceptible to harassment.
- **Economic violence:** The report addressed this form of violence, especially that committed by husbands through restricting women's



work or controlling spending and income. It also considered checkpoints and settler violence as economic violence, as they hinder women's access to work and income sources.

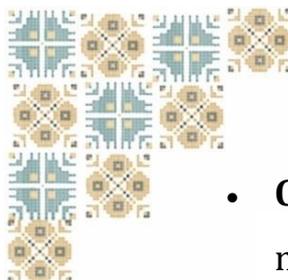
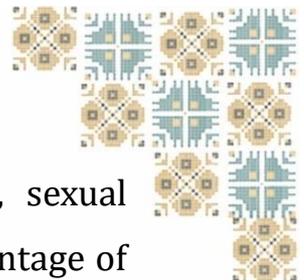
- **Husband's violence:** The report revealed an escalation in psychological, financial, and physical violence within families after October 7, due to economic pressure, loss of income, and war-induced tensions, in addition to restrictions on women's movement, which also extended to children.

II. Escalation of Digital Violence against Palestinian Women and Girls

Digital violence against women and girls in the Palestinian context is escalating as a direct extension of GBV, becoming more dangerous when platforms facilitate the anonymity of the aggressor and weaken accountability opportunities. A 2025 report by 7amleh shows that the impact is not limited to psychological and social harm, but drives many to reduce their presence on platforms and avoid reporting.

Key findings include:

- **Declining sense of digital safety:** The average sense of digital safety reached 45% among women in the West Bank and Jerusalem, compared to 56% among Palestinian women inside the Green Line.
- **Clear withdrawal from digital spaces:** Platform usage among women decreased by 51% after October 7.
- **High sense of surveillance:** Most women felt they were being monitored on platforms (67%).

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- **Common social attacks:** These included digital stalking, sexual messages/comments, and sexual extortion, with a high percentage of anonymous aggressors.
 - **Individual protection responses:** The most common responses were blocking and deleting (63.4% and 57.6% respectively) rather than formal complaint paths.
 - **Response time:** Removing exploitative content took up to 48 hours, enough time for it to spread and exacerbate social and psychological harm.
 - **Reasons for not complaining:** A belief that reporting would not change anything (43.8% in the West Bank), reflecting weak trust and fear of consequences.

III. Escalation of Gender-Based Violence in the Gaza Strip

The Israeli aggression led to extensive residential destruction in Gaza. PCBS data indicated that about 330,500 housing units were damaged and 102,067 buildings were completely destroyed, while other estimates show 268,000 units completely destroyed and 148,000 severely damaged, meaning loss of shelter for over 288,000 families.

In this harsh humanitarian context, a UNFPA field survey revealed that displacement has become almost universal, with only 1% not displaced, and 28.7% of women forced to displace more than seven times. Furthermore, 94% of displaced women lived in tents (including street tents and school-turned-shelters), with 97% reporting a loss of privacy and 98.8% feeling unsafe. Under these conditions, GBV escalated unprecedentedly, with 93.8% of women reporting exposure to violence.

