

## **Protest and Condemnation Memorandum**

We, the undersigned representatives of Palestinian women and civil society organizations, express profound concern regarding the recent statement issued by UN Women concerning the situation in Palestine and Israel.

Over the past 50 days, UN Women has consistently supported calls for an integral independent investigation regarding the allegations of gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual abuse on October 7. However, the statement did not address the ongoing refusal of the Israeli occupation to cooperate with various international investigation commissions appointed by the United Nations to probe into the crimes committed against Palestinian women in the past. Consequently, Israel's rejection of initiating an international investigation is a matter that should draw the attention and raise concerns of all institutions and commissions dedicated to achieving justice for the victims and holding the perpetrators accountable.

While there has been no initiation of an independent, impartial investigation into gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual violence, UN Women declares in its statement: "We are alarmed by the numerous accounts of gender-based atrocities and sexual violence during October 7 attacks". By issuing such a statement, which relies on uncertainties and unproven evidence (it appears that political motives may be influencing it), UN Women appears to deviate from its jurisdiction and procedures. The protection of women and girls should remain at the core of its mission

Moreover, UN Women has not issued any statement expressing concern or alarm regarding the instances of gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual violence committed by Israeli soldiers and settlers against Palestinian women. Numerous cases of such crimes have been officially documented in previous years, including testimonies from Palestinian prisoners released after October 7, reporting instances of GBV and sexual abuse by Israeli guardians. This includes documented cases of sexual verbal abuse by Israeli settlers against Palestinian women. UN Women did not express alarm regarding the sexual violence and physical searches carried out by Israeli soldiers at Shifaat Military Checkpoint (one of the checkpoints isolating Jerusalem from its surroundings) against Palestinian women. In a similar context, Israeli soldiers compelled four Palestinian women to undress at a checkpoint inside the Old City of Hebron. We assert that the application of physical violence against Palestinian women, during arrest, investigation, and the threat of rape by Israeli soldiers, constitutes one of the numerous forms of GBV and sexual abuse requiring condemnation by various international agencies and institutions, with UN Women at the forefront

While acknowledging the considerable pressure on UN Women, we firmly believe that it should demonstrate a steadfast commitment to International Law, International Humanitarian Law, and International Criminal Law. Additionally, it should adhere to the principles of the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda, which are founded on the protection of women during armed conflicts and instances of foreign occupation. We emphasize the implementation of the principle of no impunity for perpetrators and the equal treatment of all, without bias.

We condemn all forms of gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual abuse against women. We urge for conducting an independent and impartial investigation concerning the alleged cases. Furthermore, we denounce the statement from UN Women, which lacks evidence and reproduces the Israeli narrative, seen as one of the tools within the war against Palestinians.

As Organizations, we strongly urge UNWOMEN to:

1. Schedule a meeting with UN Women, represented by its executive director, to discuss its role in advocating for the rights of women without discrimination.
2. Arrange to hear first-hand testimonies from Palestinian women, including released women prisoners and other women who have experienced sexual harassment and abuse at the hands of Israeli soldiers and settlers in the West Bank.
3. UN Women should actively endorse international initiatives to establish investigation committees concerning sexual crimes and acts of genocide perpetrated by the Israeli occupation in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Additionally, it should advocate for expediting the investigation process of these crimes, through the International Criminal Court.

1. Women's Labor Union
2. General Union of Palestinian Women
3. Union of Palestinian Women Committees UPWC
4. Coalition for Accountability and Integrity - AMAN
5. The Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development
6. Union de l'Action Féministe - Morocco
7. Union of Palestinian Women's Struggle Committees
8. MUSAWA Initiative for the Unification, Rebuilding, and Improvement of the Justice System
9. The Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy - MIFTAH
10. Palestinian Counseling Center PCC
11. Women Media and Development
12. We Are Capable- Qaderat - Tunisia
13. Al-Najda Social Association
14. Rural Women's Development Society
15. The Palestinian Family Planning and Protection Association
16. Palestinian Women's Development Society
17. Palestinian Youth Association for Leadership and Rights Activation PYALARA
18. Family Defense Society
19. Himaya Association for Protecting Working Women Against Violence and Sexual Abuse
20. The Palestinian Development Women Studies Association
21. Women Action Association for the Rehabilitation of Women and Children
22. Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development PWWS
23. Sharek
24. Filastiniyat
25. Human Rights and Democracy Media Centers "SHAMS"
26. Amman Center for Human Rights Studies
27. The Center for Defense of Liberties and Civil Rights Hurryyat
28. Al Najd developmental Forum NDF
29. MUSAWA- The Palestinian Center for the Independence of the Judiciary and the Legal Profession
30. Women's Studies Centre
31. QADER for Community Development
32. Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling WCLAC
33. Women's Studies Centre

34. Faisal Hussein Foundation
35. Arab World Democracy and Electoral Monitor Almarsad
36. Teacher Creativity Center
37. Sisters Arab Forum for Human Rights
38. Women's Affairs Technical Committee
39. Bisan Center for Research and Development