



**State of Palestine**

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**Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates**

### **Response to the call for Femicide related data and information**

1. On the existence, or progress in the creation, of a national femicide watch and/or femicide observatory and/or observatory on violence against women with a femicide watch role; observatories at Ombudspersons' office or Equality Bodies; academic institutions and/or NGOs, or any plans to create one.

In 2019, The Ministry of Women's Affairs created a National Observatory for Violence against Women at the domestic level. In 2021, the Ministry created an observatory for Israeli Violence against Palestinian women and girls.

Both observatories have classified different types of violence such as; psychological violence, physical violence, political violence, economic violence and social violence. Femicide cases are investigated by the General Attorney Office. Once the investigation is completed, the case will be filed on a web application along with the forensic report, under strict security measures. Usernames and passwords are given to the staff dealing with these cases.

2. On other measures including research and studies undertaken to analyze femicide or gender related killings of women and girls, or homicides of women by intimate partners or family members and other femicides.

The Ministry of Women's Affairs is finalizing three crucial studies to assess the following:<sup>1</sup>

- a. The context and scene that led to the hate speech on media against women "analyzing the media speeches".
- b. The measures that are carried out in the Muslim Sharia' Canonical Courts, especially with regard to inheritance rights, divorce, child custody, etc...
- c. The cost of violence against women.

3. On the results of analysis of femicide cases, including the review of previous court cases and recommendations and actions undertaken in this respect.

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<sup>1</sup> The final versions will be shared once endorsed.



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In order to develop the services provided for victims of violence, The Ministry of Women's Affairs is reviewing the National Referral System for Women Victims of Violence and the Standard Operating Procedures, as well as activating the role of the National Committee to Combat Violence against women, and the Peer Review Committee for Critical Cases of Violence.

The Ministry of Women's Affairs will prepare an evidence-based investigation report concerning the last 6 cases of femicide. The aim of these interventions is to identify the root causes of violence, develop policies and mechanisms to reduce the rate of violence, and review the national legislations in order to harmonize them with international treaties and standards.

4. On concrete measures taken to improve support to victims of violence and to prevent femicide, in connection with the information gathered via femicide watches or observations.
  - With regard to femicide, articles 18, 98 and 340 of the criminal legislation in force in the State of Palestine are no longer being enforced.
  - As a result of training received by the public prosecutors, the legal classification of crimes against women has been toughened, and judgements are being appealed or impugned with a view to ensuring that the defendants do not escape punishment or receive a lenient sentence. Caution is exercised in respect of waivers of personal rights and conflicts of interests among parties to the case.
  - Media campaigns encourage women and service providers to report violence.
  - Trainers and officers have been trained to identify, monitor and report cases of violence in hospitals and primary health care centres.
  - Health services, family guidance clinics have been established in five hospitals and 11 health centres to assist women victims of violence in accordance with the National Referral System. The service is completely confidential.
  - A harmonized procedure manual for the treatment of women victims of violence in the public and private health care sectors has been prepared and circulated to all health services.



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- Daily and monthly records have been compiled to monitor cases of gender-based violence. These have been printed, distributed to hospitals and primary health care centres, and linked to the computerized system in order to facilitate work on the national report concerning the forms of gender-based violence.
- Family protection units are part of the structure of the Ministry of the Interior, which ensures that they continue to receive funding.
- The Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Social Development and civil society institutions provide rehabilitation and legal, medical and psychological assistance to women victims of gender-based violence.
- The West Bank has a number of protection centres. The Mehwar Centre in Bethlehem, run by the Ministry of Social Development, provides free protection and shelter services to women victims of gender-based violence and their children. It also offers psychological and social counselling, health check-ups, legal representation and counselling, empowerment through education, training and job search assistance and family and social reintegration. The Gaza Strip has two centres.
- A free direct phone line has been opened in order for family protection units in the police force across the country to receive complaints from women victims of violence. A risk assessment template consistent with the Coronavirus state of emergency has been developed. Mechanisms have been elaborated to respond to violence against women, particularly deaths in unclear circumstances. When conducting investigations and broadening their scope, social and psychological reports are used as a key indicator.
- Decree-Law No. 21 (2019) determining the age of marriage in the State of Palestine was adopted on 3 March 2019 and amends the personal status laws governing Muslims, Christians and all citizens of the State of Palestine. The Decree-Law establishes a minimum age of marriage in the State of Palestine of 18 solar years for men and women alike, without distinction, with certain exceptions.



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5. On data, if available, on femicides or intimate-partner and family- related homicides of women and men in the past 3 years, including during the Covid-19 pandemic and its comparison with such data before the Covid-19 pandemic.

The national number of cases will be officially communicated via the observatory during the third quarter of this year.

A number of civil society organizations and non- governmental organizations, as well as the Independent Committee for Human rights, the Police, and the Public prosecutor office usually publish numbers, but the classification does not match among them. Therefore, the observatory unified the methodology in order to come up with a unified national number.