

*The following statement was issued at the closing of the 43<sup>rd</sup> session of the 23 member-UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) which is one of eight human rights treaty bodies whose role is to monitor implementation of core international human rights treaties. CEDAW monitors the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.*

### **Statement of the CEDAW Committee on Gaza<sup>1</sup>**

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women is deeply concerned about the recent military engagement in Gaza between Israel and the Hamas (January 2009) which has resulted in heavy civilian casualties and a humanitarian crisis in Gaza including the killing and injuring of a large number of women and children.

The Committee calls on the parties to the conflict to fully implement the current ceasefire and to comply with Resolution 1860 of the Security Council.

The Committee recalls that international human rights and humanitarian law apply in all circumstances and at all times and to all parties involved and that the right to life should be respected even in the course of hostilities. The Committee notes with deep concern that the human rights of women and children in Gaza, in particular to peace and security, free movement, livelihood and health, have been seriously violated during this military engagement.

Recalling the Preamble to the CEDAW Convention, which reaffirms that “the cause of peace requires the maximum participation of women on equal terms with men in all fields” the Committee urges the parties to the conflict to involve women in accordance with Resolution 1325 of the Security Council in the decision-making process on the promotion and maintenance of peace and security at all levels.

It further calls on all State parties to support international efforts to alleviate the humanitarian and economic situation in Gaza and more especially to facilitate the provision and distribution throughout Gaza of humanitarian assistance including food and medical treatment, especially to women and children.

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<sup>1</sup> In light of its earlier practice concerning consideration of States parties (Decision 18/III) and communications (Rule 60 of the Committee’s Rules of procedure), the Committee decided that the expert from the State party concerned should not take part in the decision-making on the statement.