



EuroMed Feminist Initiative  
المبادرة النسوية الأورومتوسطية  
Initiative Féministe EuroMed



## Press Release

Ramallah, November 2019

### National Consultation on Developing Regional Guidelines for Women, Peace and Security Agenda

Ramallah, November 10, 2019 - Responding to the [UfM Ministerial Declaration](#) on Women's Rights (27 Nov 2017, Cairo), EuroMed Feminist Initiative (EFI) with a consortium of nine women's rights organizations in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, and Tunisia launched a **Regional Campaign on Zero Tolerance for Violence Against Women and Girls**. The campaign takes place in the frame of the regional project **"Combating Violence against Women in the Southern Mediterranean Region"**, funded by the European Union.

As part of this campaign, the Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development (PWWSD), Palestinian Federation of Women's Action Committee (PFWAC), the Palestinian Non-Governmental Organization Against Violence Against Women (Al Muntada) and EuroMed Feminist Initiative held a **National Consultation on Developing Regional Guidelines for Women, Peace and Security Agenda** on November 10<sup>th</sup> in Ramallah, Palestine. The consultation aimed at fostering a common understanding of Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda and developing guidelines for the implementation of the WPS Agenda on national and regional levels.

In her opening address, Ms. Amal Khriesheh Director of PWWSD, emphasized that Palestinian women and girls have for long time, been denied their fundamental rights for protection by the prolonged Israeli occupation. She said: "Our livelihoods as Palestinians are even occupied. Ending the occupation is a local and global responsibility. Today, and every day, women are in the center of Peace and Security Agenda in Palestine. Implementation of the agenda requires holding the Israeli occupying power accountable to fulfill International Human Rights Laws and the 4<sup>th</sup> Geneva Convention". Ms. Khriesheh confirmed: "Palestinians continue to call for their Right for Self Determination and Right of Return based on UNSCR 194. Their continued struggle for independence is part of their resilience and steadfastness. Domestically, the Palestinian women civil society and human rights organizations strive to influence compliance of national legislations, policies and programs with international commitments made by the "State" of Palestine to mainstream gender equality and combat all forms of gender based violence in the Palestinian society".

For her part, Ms. Majida Al Masri Director of PFWAC highlighted that one of the main pillars for the Palestinian feminist movement to enhance Palestinian Women's Rights and take role in the current changes is to unite in reading the social, economic and political realities and where do women stand from there, or what is their role within this context. She confirmed: "Palestinian Feminist movement needs to unify their priorities, needs and required actions."

During the event, participants addressed the reasons underlying violence and discrimination against women and proposed strategies to reduce all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls. The consultation meeting initiated a discussion on discriminative legislation and harmful practices of the occupation that constitute a severe breach of human rights and a violation of Palestinian women's physical integrity.



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Participants emphasized the importance of the political will and government's commitment to implement the WPS Agenda. In this regard, Ms. Suha Elia - Legal Advisor and Head of the Gender Unit - Ministry of Justice highlighted that the Palestinian Ministry of Justice gave a priority to harmonizing national laws with international conventions ratified by the Palestinian government especially CEDAW. Ms. Elia emphasized that “The legislative harmonization process is a priority at the moment to strengthen the legal personality of Palestine, which also entails obligation on our government, but it is important to highlight the special circumstances for such process when Palestine is still under the prolonged Israeli occupation.”

Given the ongoing Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, a special focus put on the reality of Palestinian women and WPSA priorities within the context of the occupation. Furthermore, the importance of adopting a Gender Sensitive Constitution for Palestine was underlined, along with harmonizing and adapting Palestinian legislation in accordance with International Conventions on WPS.

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