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## The WCLAC Bulletin - July 2017

**WCLAC contributes to the upcoming universal periodical review for Israel** – This year, WCLAC contributed to the Human Right's Council's Universal Periodical Review for Israel by submitting a report on the situation in Israel/ Palestine regarding the treatment of Palestinian women, and presence of gender based violence. WCLAC put forth recommendations to Israel to identify specific issues which are having the largest and most detrimental effect on women. Included in the report was property destruction, which is recognized by the Committee against Torture as an offence of cruel, inhumane, or degrading treatment or punishment. WCLAC noted that the housing permit system is discriminatory towards Palestinians and causing physical and psychological distress to women and their families, especially when used as a form of punishment after an attack on Israelis. Field research by WCLAC found that women who posted material on social media which is viewed as 'inciting' against Israel have been subjected to night raids and attacks. Women human rights defenders participating in peaceful protest, or publishing critical information on Israel have been threatened, abused, and censored. WCLAC supports Palestinian women working in media to have freedom of expression, and not to be persecuted for reporting facts, or peacefully opposing occupation, through legal assistance. The final report on Israel, including submissions from NGO's, will be published in January 2018.



## WCLAC celebrates the launch of the publication **Palestinian Model Parliament: Towards Legislation based on Palestinian Identity, Progressive Ideals, and Just Content**

– On 12 July a special event was held by WCLAC to celebrate the book launching ceremony of Palestinian Model Parliament: Towards Legislation based on Palestinian Identity, Progressive Ideals, and Just Content, a publication which highlights the ground-breaking work made by PMP in developing Palestinian women's human rights 20 years prior. Many attended the event which also included an awarding ceremony of PMP members and contributors, dabke and theatre performances, and a memorial of PMP co-founder and Palestinian women's rights visionary Ms. Maha Abu Dayyeh. Women's grassroots organisations joined WCLAC for the event with stalls selling handicrafts, and a feeling of pride was present for the steps the women's human rights movement has made in Palestine.



[Read more](#)

**Gazan student achieves 99.3% in her high school exams** – Despite the obstacles faced by Sawar al-Jadba from Gaza city, such as the worsening electricity situation, she still achieved the outstanding grade of 99.3% in her final high school exams. al-Jadba's grade was the 5<sup>th</sup> highest in Gaza strip, which has suffered further electricity cuts since June, reducing the blockaded regions daily allowance to less than 4 hours. She said "I was expecting to achieve a higher grade than what I got, but does not hide her joy at the result". The proud student hopes to go on and study medicine like her sister.



## WCLAC contributes to the UNFPA sub-cluster report on gender based violence in Palestine

– WCLAC submitted statistics and evidence on the phenomena of gender based violence in Palestine between the period January to June 2017, the report was published this month. It was founded that sub-cluster partners reached 7343 GBV survivors, the majority female, in this period, of which 78% utilised some service, and 10% were referred externally to GBV specialists. On the other hand, 20% of registered GBV cases received no service due to the lack of resource capacity and funding. One of the key issues addressed in the report was the worsening electricity crisis in Gaza leading to amplified GBV levels. However, the number of women using specialised services in Gaza was increasing. Download the report [here](#).



**Palestinian women earn sweet money as pastry chefs** - Every morning, 20 women head to work at Abu Salha Sweets, the largest sweets factory in Nablus, in the northern West Bank. Abu Faya, 24, and her fellow "halwanjiyat" (female pastry chefs)

now make up half of the factory workers. Breaking with tradition in this sector, like others, Palestinian women are ignoring prejudices and boldly competing with men for jobs. Despite women outnumbering men by almost 50% in university graduates, they still only comprise 19.3% of the Palestinian workforce. Women are now branching out in to what has been considered as 'men's work' in production. Even though the boundaries are being shifted in what jobs women can and cannot do, in Abu Salha's sweet factory women still on earn half the amount men do. [Read more](#)



### **Fatima Zahra Shabir, a student from Gaza, wins the top prize in National Geographic International Class photography competition**

Shabir won the top prize in National Geographic's competition on photographing culture with her photo collection entitled "Palestinian Wedding- Henna Night". Her skill and success has been hailed as a victory for Palestine, and promotes recognition of Palestinian artists. The images portray an air of celebration, and joy on the brides face as she prepares to be decorated with henna in a dark room lit by candles. The photos highlight this facet of Palestinian tradition which culminates in a celebration with dancing and singing. The traditional embroidered Palestinian dress is worn by guests at the Henna night, a call to Palestinian heritage. "In villages, the Henna night, which precedes the wedding by a day or two, is the most important night for the bride. It comprises ancient Palestinian customs where friends and relatives of the bride meet at night to celebrate and bid farewell to her. It is her last night in the parents' house and folk songs are chanted." See the rest of the photo collection [here](#).



### **Twenty-three imprisoned Palestinian women report being assaulted by Israeli prison staff -**

The head of the Palestinian Committee of Prisoners' Affairs released a statement on Wednesday saying that twenty-three Palestinian women had reported being assaulted by Israeli prison officials in Israel's Damon prison. Issa Qaraqe said that Palestinian lawyer Hanan al-Khatib had visited the prisoners in Damon, where she learned that special units of the Israel Prison Service (IPS) assaulted female Palestinian prisoners and imposed punitive measures against them. Treatment of prisoners in Israeli prisons has been a topic on the forefront of Palestinian politics since the prisoner's hunger strike in May 2017. As of May there were 56 women being held in Israeli prisons. [Read more](#)



**Palestinian women in East Jerusalem struggling for job integration** – A report released Sunday by the independent Workers Advice Center found that Palestinian women living in East Jerusalem are overwhelmingly absent from the capital's labor force, with few viable prospect of meaningful integration. Erez Wagner, the report's author stated that the unprecedented finding present "a picture of extreme poverty..." The finding comes during the month when women's working a pay rights have been a hot topic in Palestine, Gazan women protested their right to equal pay earlier in the month. [Read more](#)

