



INTERNATIONAL

WOMEN'S



DAY

FACTSHEET



مركز الميزان لحقوق الإنسان
AL MEZAN CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Al Mezan Center for Human Rights is an independent, non-partisan and non-governmental human rights organization established in 1999. Al Mezan is dedicated to protecting and advancing the respect of human rights, with a focus on economic, social, and cultural rights, supporting victims of violations of international law through legal initiative, and enhancing democracy, community and citizen participation, and respect for the rule of law in Gaza as part of occupied Palestine.

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8 March marks International Women's Day, providing a valuable opportunity to call on decision-makers all over the world to review, promote, and implement policies aimed at protecting women's rights, achieve gender equality, and eliminate discrimination and gender-based violence. This year's theme is "**Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow**", which highlights the severe impacts of climate change and natural disasters on the environment, economic and social development, whilst recognizing the contribution of women and girls who lead the charge on climate change and their efforts to build a more sustainable future for all.

This occasion is marked at a time when Palestinian women continue to endure ongoing violation of their rights, emanating from Israel's occupation and apartheid regime. In particular, Palestinian women in the Gaza Strip bear the brunt of the harsh living conditions and remain subjected to continuous international law violations, political and social marginalization, and gender-based discrimination, caused by Israel's closure and blockade and repeated military attacks, as well as by the ongoing internal Palestinian violence in its different forms.

To mark International Women's Day 2022, Al Mezan presents this fact sheet reflecting the situation of Palestinian women in the Gaza Strip, based on its monitoring and documentation:

- The number of females in the Gaza Strip is nearly 1.04 million out of 2.11 million people. Women head nine per cent of families in Gaza.¹ Of the total 62,081 persons with disabilities in the Gaza Strip, 44.54% are women.²
- In 2021, poverty and food insecurity rates in the Gaza Strip stood at 59%³ and 64%⁴ respectively. The unemployment rate in the Gaza Strip in 2021 stood at 47%, and reached 43% of women.⁵ The cumulative number of total unemployed persons registered in the Palestinian labor market at the end of 2021 was 306,521 people, 40% of whom were women.⁶
- While social and economic conditions continued to deteriorate in the Gaza Strip, an increase to 19.3% was recorded in divorce cases for 2021, compared to 15.6% in 2020; 5.3% of these cases were of couples married in the same year.⁷
- Between 8 March 2021 and 8 March 2022, Israeli military attacks killed 38 Palestinian women and 22 girls, four of them were killed by artillery shells and 56 by airstrikes; the attacks wounded another 397 women and 248 girls. See the following table for figures from the 11-day military bombardment in May 2021:

¹ Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics: [PCBS | Dr. Awad, presents a brief on the status of Palestinian people at the end of 2021](#)

² Hussein Hammad, researcher at Al Mezan, interviewed Mustafa Abed, Director of the Community-Based Rehabilitation Program in the Palestinian Medical Relief Society in the Gaza Strip, on 9 December 2021.

³ World Bank Report: [Palestinian Economy Experiences Growth but Prospects Remain Uncertain](#)

⁴ The Palestinian Economic Policy Research Institute: [Food Security \(SEFSEC\) \(mas.ps\)](#)

⁵ Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, results of the labor force survey 2021:

<https://pcbs.gov.ps/site/512/default.aspx?lang=en&ItemID=4177>

⁶ Hussein Hammad, researcher at Al Mezan's, interviewed Abdullah Shuheibar, Director of the Operations Development Department at the Palestinian Ministry of Labour in Gaza, on 23 February 2022.

⁷ The High Judicial Council, delivery reports of 2021, Gaza.

District	Women killed	Girls killed	Women wounded	Girls wounded	Women who lost their spouses	Destroyed houses owned by women
North Gaza	10	5	240	158	24	277
Gaza City	21	15	86	59	42	354
Middle Area	1	1	27	10	8	39
Khan Younis	3	0	23	10	23	53
Rafah	3	1	21	11	2	19
Total	38	22	397	248	99	742

- During the 11-day offensive in May 2021, the houses owned by 742 women were destroyed, impacting another 3,169 family members, while 46 women lost their share of farmlands to destruction (~211,033 km²), impacting another 329 members of their family.
- 53% of the internationally displaced persons (IDPs) in the May 2021 offensive were women. Most IDPs stayed at UNRWA schools where they endured harsh conditions due to the absence of basic services and the spread of COVID-19, another burden that weighed heavily on women as carers. UNRWA schools sheltered 71,232 Palestinians during the offensive.⁸
- Israeli authorities continued to deny urgently needed medical care to 70 women and 42 girls for whom Al Mezan legally intervened to secure permits for hospitals outside the Gaza Strip.⁹
- The cumulative number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in the Gaza Strip as of 7 March 2022 was 247,618, resulting in 1,940 deaths, 45% of whom were women¹⁰. As the spread of the virus has forced people to stay in their homes for extended periods of time, the pandemic has led to an increase in domestic and gender-based violence.
- The number of female school students in the Gaza Strip in 2021 reached 293,907, while 44,496 female students were enrolled in higher education institutions; 7,032 female students graduated from various university specializations.¹¹ The rate of illiteracy among women over 15 years old in Palestine was 3.8%.¹²

Violations of international law and internal threats:

- Between 8 March 2021 and 8 March 2022, seven women were killed in the Gaza Strip due to various threats emanating from within Gaza. Competent authorities recorded the death of two women due to gun misuse, one from a domestic violence incident, one in a

⁸ Information collected by Al Mezan's fieldworkers during the Israeli offensive in May 2021 from different field sources.

⁹ Al Mezan's database, gathered 27 February 2022.

¹⁰ Basem Abu Jari, researcher at Al Mezan's, interviewed Dr. Hani Al-Whaidi, Director of the Information Systems in the Palestinian Ministry of Health in Gaza, on 7 March 2022.

¹¹ Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics: [PCBS | Dr. Awad, presents a brief on the status of Palestinian people at the end of 2021](#)

¹² Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics: [PCBS | PCBS& UNFPA: On the Occasion of the International Population Day 11/07/2021](#)

property dispute, and three in other incidents relating to conditions in Gaza.¹³ Eighteen women were injured in different incidents, including family disputes, mishandling of weapons and other incidents that Al Mezan attributes to inequality, the lack of rule of law and/or instability in Gaza.¹⁴

- In 2021, 200 women took shelter in safe houses for domestic violence victims.¹⁵
- Around 79,269 households, consisting of 471,888 individuals, were deprived of their financial allocations from the periodic Cash Transfer Program (from the Ministry of Social Affairs). Notably, ca. 37.7% of beneficiary households are led by women breadwinners, ca. 50% of whom are widows. ¹⁶

Palestinian women in the Gaza Strip are victims of direct and indirect Israeli military attacks, which claim their lives and the lives of their spouses and children, destroy their homes, and cause them enormous physical and psychological pressure. Women bear the brunt of the Israeli imposed closure and blockade on the Gaza Strip, including by being denied access to hospitals outside Gaza and family reunification. The repercussions of the deteriorating humanitarian conditions have led to the creation or aggravation of various social problems, most notably gender-based violence. Poverty has also impacted women's dignity and added tremendous burden to their lives, especially when they are deprived of equal employment opportunities and guarantees of a minimum level of income and respect for their human dignity.

Al Mezan honors the resilience of Palestinian women who face numerous challenges to their lives and wellbeing and calls on the Palestinian authorities to immediately start taking measures that guarantee the protection of women's rights, including the adoption of new laws protecting women from violence, enhancing women's participation in society and adopting policies that combat poverty and discrimination in the labor market. Al Mezan calls on the international community to urge Israel to respect international law, stop attacking Palestinian civilians and civilian objects and end its closure and blockade of the Gaza Strip.

¹³ Al Mezan's database, gathered 27 February 2022.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Information gained by Al Mezan's fieldworkers from the Palestinian Ministry of Social Development on 30 January 2022.

¹⁶ Ibid.