"Enhancing Women's Access to Security Services and Social Accountability in Palestine"

Attendance (without distinction)

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Introduction:

This meeting was held following a Beneficiaries Based Assessment and Analytical study for services and procedures of the Palestinian Civil Police (PCP) in the West Bank from a gender perspective. It was aimed at developing responsive mechanisms and measures for the security needs of citizens and to discuss the challenges and gaps in the work procedures and applied polices of the civil police. The significance of this study is that it is the first of its kind, differing from those that preceded it in that it addresses of the opinions of citizens who interacted with the police's service sectors.

The PCP is considered a major component of the Palestinian security forces. It constitutes, along with the other justice and security services, a reference for enforcing the rule of law and its foundations in all of Palestine. The PCP was established within a legal framework for regulating its security procedures but which is still incomplete, in accordance with agreements that confine its security powers according to the geographic regions A, B and C. This complicates and hinders its work, particularly in Area C. The police establishment was affected by many political changes and shifts, first and foremost the continued occupation and the damaging effects of the second Intifada, in addition to the internal political division.

In spite of these circumstances and challenges, over the years, the police was able to carry out various reform processes for developing its work strategies, its cadres and administrations. It also made developments in improving its relationship with the public, promoting respect for individual freedoms and human rights. It adopted consecutive strategies and issued and disseminated a code of conduct for the police force in 2014. It also formulated a plan for internal accountability among the civil police (2014-2016) to improve respect for human rights and individual freedoms and to monitor the performance of the police force and their level of commitment to the principles and professional conduct.

Discussion: General framework

- **The citizens' overall feelings about the police's incompetence:** including from a security aspect, due to the occupation and its view of the police's role. This is reflected in how citizens view the security services and the police; that their actions are governed by the decisions and dictates of the occupation.
- **The targeting of the Palestinian security establishment by the occupation:** it demolished its headquarters in 2000 and after. This had a very negative impact on the performance of the police in carrying out its duties. During this period, the occupation tried to portray the police as being incapable of protecting its people. In spite of this, in the period between 2003 and 2006, the police had an important role in overseeing the elections in the occupied Palestinian territory.
- **The division** and Hamas' takeover in the Gaza Strip in addition to the ongoing internal political division delivered yet another strong blow to the police establishment, creating challenges that weakened the employment of police resources and the renovation of its infrastructure.
- **The delay in passing the police law** was not a positive move. For this reason, certain challenges surfaced such as the need to complete the infrastructure of the police establishment and dependence on old legislations, without taking into consideration that the people want liberation, which necessitates the "Palestinianization" of laws and legislation.
- **Citizens and the police:** Citizens are a major partner and have an important role in changing their stereotype of the police.
- **Police services**: It is important to reaffirm the importance of police services in Gaza and the West Bank when discussing any study in this regard and not to limit this discussion to the West Bank alone. That is, the study must be comprehensive.
- **Priorities** are contingent upon capabilities, and intervention in this case is carried out in direct coordination with the police's plan and policies administration.
- **Lack of coordination** between the Anti-Corruption Commission and the police services regarding corruption cases and crimes, even though the Commission does not have the necessary tools to achieve this, unlike the police which have investigative and disciplinary tools.
- Moving from the enforcement of law and order to the idea of implementing it, which is not an easy process.
- **The citizen** bears part of the responsibility for building the security system and understanding the role of the police in enforcing the rule of law.
- **The study** is from a gender perspective and not just from a women's perspective; that is, it is different than others in that it addresses the police and targeted sectors directly.
- **Security and geographic divisions** constitute major challenges to the work of the police.
- Familiarity with the men and women of the Grievances/ Human Rights department is not established well through the police but people knew about it through the media,

acquaintances and friends, which means that the police is not the first point of reference in defining its role.

- **Cyber-crimes unit:** Currently, work is underway to establish a cyber-crimes unit; however one of the obstacles is the low salary scale of the police and the bureaucracy of the financial system.

Recommendations

- **Civil Society Organizations** are called on to establish partnerships with the police in an attempt to shift the attitudes of citizens towards the police and the perception that it is a violent and oppressive apparatus.
- **Special investigation unit:** To establish a special unit for investigating with prominent personalities accused of corruption.
- To reaffirm real integration and partnership between the citizens and the police and the need to take the citizens' viewpoints into consideration regarding all aspects of police performance so the latter can carry out its role in the best way possible.
- **The code of conduct for police**: this includes high qualification criteria and therefore needs a program and action plan.
- **Community policing:** To adopt the term "community policing" because it is more approachable in the minds of citizens.
- **Security budget:** To economize the general policy regarding the distribution of the allocated budget for the security sector.
- **Public relations:** To employ several tools and media messages within the work of the police in that every tool targets a certain sector; promoting media attention for the police and introducing its work; reviving social partnerships and volunteer work.
- **Police facilities:** An assessment of police facilities including the service-based ones, and of detention centers; funding the necessary changes through an approved budget; reviewing police procedures in the field of services and analyzing the extent to which they take gender into consideration.
- **Police powers:** The intervention of other security services in the work of the police and infringement on their jurisdictions, must be stopped; considering any overlapping or interference in their powers a major problem; a large part of these duties must be turned over to the police
- **Unifying procedures:** Working towards committing and abiding by unified procedures for all the apparatuses; there should be clear and fair procedures in how the police deals with complaints and other matters.
- **Monitoring police behavior:** reinforcing monitoring over the behavior of the police force; rehabilitating and build their capacities on model behavior and on respecting the rights of citizens when they come to police stations rather than mocking them. If citizens' complaints in certain matter are repeated, this must be carefully inspected and not justified.

- **Female employee rights:** Employing equality in the rights of female workers in the security forces; integrating gender in the entire police force and promoting women's presence in the police services.
- **Sectoral planning:** including sectoral planning in the police services in the direction of budget-based priorities
- **Legal system:** the need to complete the legal system governing the work of the police and closing the current discriminatory gaps.