Women in Palestine

Women in Palestine (covering Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem) live within a context shaped by long-standing political conflict, economic constraints, and social norms. Prior to the current war, many women already faced structural challenges, including lower labour force participation, higher unemployment, and legal and social frameworks that often assumed that men had primary authority within families.

Impact of the War in Gaza

1. Displacement and Living Conditions

The war in Gaza has led to mass displacement, with a large proportion of the population forced to move multiple times. Women and girls constitute a significant share of those displaced and this has resulted in:

- Overcrowded shelters with limited privacy
- Restricted access to food, water, and sanitation
- Increased exposure to safety risks and reduced dignity
- Greater risk of gender-based violence and exploitation in displacement settings

2. Health and Access to Services

The conflict has severely affected access to healthcare, particularly maternal, reproductive, and general health services:

- Damage to health infrastructure has limited access to hospitals and essential services
- Pregnant and breastfeeding women face heightened risks due to malnutrition and lack of medical care
- Mental health impacts are significant, with high levels of psychological trauma reported,

3. Casualties and Direct Harm

Women and children make up a substantial proportion of civilian casualties in Gaza and large numbers of women have been killed or injured since October 2023. Beyond fatalities, women experience indirect harm through loss of family members, which changes household structures and responsibilities.

4. Economic Impact and Changing Roles

The war has intensified economic hardship with very high unemployment rates among women in Gaza, the destruction of livelihoods and infrastructure and an increase in female-headed households due to the death or absence of male relatives. As a result, many women must support families under severely constrained conditions, often without a stable income.

5. Protection Risks and Social Consequences

Conflict conditions have led to increased vulnerability, including reported increases in early or forced marriage as a coping mechanism in extreme poverty and a lack of safe, gender-appropriate facilities and services

Broader Impact of the Occupation

Beyond the current war, the long-standing occupation contributes to ongoing challenges:

- Movement restrictions and limited economic opportunities
- Periodic escalations of violence affecting stability and livelihoods
- Persistent poverty and dependency on humanitarian assistance

These structural factors shape women's lives even outside periods of active conflict.

In summary, women in Palestine experience a combined impact of structural inequalities and conflict-related pressures and the war in Gaza has significantly intensified existing vulnerabilities. At the same time, women continue to play a key role in sustaining families and communities under extremely challenging circumstances.

LEND WITH CARE

We are supporting Dina with a loan of £45.00, she didn't want to be photographed.

Dina is 23 years old and lives in the central West Bank. She is married and has no children. Dina owns and manages a tailoring business, which she operates from her home. The project is established and is run independently by Dina. Her work focuses on sewing and tailoring services, serving customers in her local community.

Her business currently includes sewing equipment valued at around £1,509 and embroidery tools worth approximately £754. The project is fully operational and generates an estimated monthly net income of £830, which supports her household.

Dina has applied for a loan to further develop her business. She plans to use the funding to purchase a new sewing machine costing £2,263 and to buy raw materials in bulk. These investments will allow her to take on more orders, improve productivity and increase her income. Through this investment, Dina hopes to strengthen her business, raise her earnings and enhance her living conditions, supporting a more stable future for herself and her family.

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References

Facts and estimates: Women and girls during the conflict in Palestine | UN Women – Palestine Country Office

New report highlights the impact of war on women and girls in Gaza

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Women bearing the brunt of Israel-Gaza conflict: UN expert | OHCHR