

Jerusalem Center for Women
Annual Report 2004

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Introduction

It has not been an easy year. The Bush-Sharon alliance and disengagement plan push on with unpredictable results. Targeted assassinations of top and middle Palestinian cadres have resulted also in very high civilian casualties. The death of Arafat has deeply affected Palestinian lives. Moreover, the demise of the Road Map is another casualty, as no influential political figure exists to persuade the international community regarding its implementation. Unfortunately, very little change has come about as a result of various peace initiatives. Rather, the external environment of prevailing power politics in the Occupied West Bank and Gaza weighs heavily on the work of the Jerusalem Center for Women, as it does the whole of Palestinian civil society and life. The Israeli policy of collective punishment, manifested in erected and movable checkpoints, frequent arbitrary closures, and building of the Apartheid Wall, deters our access to our target groups and inhibits participants from coming to meetings and workshops. All of these circumstances affect internal political debates in our organization, as well as bi-national dialogue through the Jerusalem Link.

Yes as women struggling to maintain our space in the civil society, we continue to conduct activities and implement our projects under harsh circumstances, for we are determined to move ahead and reach our objectives. We believe also that our work and role as a woman's and feminist organization is to persist in advocating our vision of peace, which aims at securing human dignity and life. The Center itself, under the direction of an external consultant, has conducted an evaluation for its ongoing civic education program. We continue to develop our capacity and to design projects aimed at building young professional women's capabilities. Moreover, in the past year four staff members have undergone nine different trainings on advocacy skills and conflict resolution, both locally and abroad, which will help us to broaden our dialogue and influence the larger political scene.

Peace Building Program

Bi-National Dialogue: The Jerusalem Link

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the Jerusalem Link. Our dialogue with Bat Shalom continues, and the various committees continue to meet on a regular basis. The staff/directors meet every two or three week to plan and address joint issues. However, an impasse has arisen over the development of revised principles and work strategies that might arise from them. Discussion of the principles has not been completed, as the two boards cannot agree on two central issues: right of return and how to address structural violence. However, a joint meeting of the two boards on 30 December, 2004, resulted in the formation of two committees: one to draft yet another version of new principles, to be presented to both boards in late February or early March; the other, comprised of the two directors, to draft a new action plan. The latter will focus on extending the bi-national dialogue to other Israeli peace organizations while maintaining the strategic alliance between JCW and Bat Shalom. In addition, the Jerusalem Link will target the media,

using different avenues, to make our joint voice heard, both locally at public events and internationally through advocacy visits and networking. The obstacles faced by our bi-national dialogue are essentially the same as those underlying the larger conflict between Israel and Palestine. However, we continue to work at these problems, believing that our persistence as women and commitment to a peaceful two-state solution will ensure the continuation of the Jerusalem Link and mutual solidarity.

The International Women's Commission

The International Women's Commission (IWC) brings together Palestinian, Israeli and international women committed to a two state solution based on international law and human rights, and to resolving the Israeli Palestinian conflict through negotiation, leading to a viable sovereign Palestinian state alongside Israel according to 1967 borders. The women of this coalition recognize the urgent need and feel a shared responsibility to achieve a just and sustainable peace between Palestine and Israel. The IWC's role will be ongoing, pushing for a just peace and working to sustain it through continual progress toward full reconciliation. Participation in the IWC is grounded in mutual respect for the rights and dignity of all parties and based on the principles of the Jerusalem Link. The goals of the IWC are to

1. ensure the significant participation of women, including civil society women, in any Israeli/Palestinian peace negotiations and related initiatives;
2. secure an immediate and continuous peace negotiation until a just and sustainable peace is achieved;
3. guarantee that women's perspectives and experience be considered in any future settlement.

A meeting with international partners took place in January, and a concept paper has passed through several different drafts. No further meetings have taken place as we are in the process of amending the Jerusalem Link principles, and that dialogue is currently stuck on two thorny issues, making it difficult to move forward. However, many prominent international women have offered firm support for the idea, and we expect to move ahead following acceptance of the revised principles.

IWC: UN Resolution 1325

Despite the acceptance of UN Resolution 1325 requiring the representation of women at all decision-making levels, Palestinian and Israeli women are still absent from such processes, as well as from official negotiations and peace initiatives. This fact promoted the establishment of an International Women's Commission that would help to guarantee women's participation in any future peace negotiations regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Such a commission, based on respect for international law and human rights, offers a vital gender role in ending the occupation, in peace making and peace keeping. Introducing the main principles of Resolution 1325 to Palestinian women was the main focus of an awareness-raising project which depended on networking with women's, human rights, and civil society organizations in different cities.

Eleven public meetings, lasting two hours each, were held in cities across the West Bank and Gaza Strip, including Jerusalem (23 students, NGO's), Ramallah (25), Hebron (29), YWCA/East Jerusalem (staff, journalists, NGO's), Gaza Strip (26), Qibya (village women activists), Gaza City (24), Nablus (37 civil society), Jenin (40 civil society, women's organizations), Bethlehem (30), Tulkarem (25 civil society). Unless otherwise noted, most participants were university students from local educational institutions. Guest speakers were prominent academics and representatives of civil society organizations active in the fields of Human Rights and Social Affairs. JCW also managed to issue 2000 copies of the Resolution 1325 brochure with an introductory summary on the IWC. These brochures, disseminated in local women's and civil society organizations and in each public meeting, received a positive feedback, as no other Palestinian organization has published anything on the 1325 Resolution. Our meetings were successful in covering most sectors of the Palestinian community in an effort to explain how women in the Occupied Territories can make use of Resolution 1325 in view of the current political situation.

Women's International Peace Activist Network (WIPAN)

By linking hands with women peace activists in other parts of the world, we are able to use our collective power and moral force to build mutual trust and support in the face of violence and ongoing harm to women and their families. WIPAN's aim is to raise values of justice, respect for human rights, peace, and peaceful means of resolving conflict, through a women's initiative which is not restricted to women. By developing pressure groups to advocate and exert international pressure for an end to Israeli occupation, as well as lobbying for significant women's leadership roles in the peace-making and peace-keeping process, we hope to foster international solidarity and contacts, share resources of all kinds, and offer mutual support to men and women undergoing crisis everywhere. Together with Bat Shalom, we identified 15 core partners and held our first working meeting in March 2004. Follow-up steps included further discussion on the issues of boycott and the Anti-Wall Campaign. Currently, we are making use of the data base that was compiled for this project to contact new organizations. At the same time, we continue to work on voicing letters and press releases to our friends, partners and e-list.

Public Political Correspondence

One letter concerning the Apartheid Wall was published in *Al-Ha'aretz* on 8 March 2004, and also released to international organizations. The letter stated that the building of the wall is "a dangerous and irresponsible act against the future of any just and peaceful solution to conflict." Other press releases, on the topic of JCW's booklet on the Apartheid Wall and a modified version of Palestinian Women's Perspective on the Security problem, were also issued in 2004.

Participation in Peace Networks

JCW continues to actively participate in activities of peaceful resistance against the Apartheid Wall. Videos and lectures on the effect of the Wall have been shown to various women's groups visiting Jerusalem. Delegations have been invited to many international conferences to present views of the Jerusalem Link and advocate for a just peace: JCW staff and associates were involved in meetings beyond the Palestinian territories in virtually every month of 2004. Amneh Badran attended the Fourth World Social Forum in Mumbai India from Jan. 16-21. Natasha Khalidi spoke in Germany on UN Resolution 1325 in a public debate focused on "Dilemmas of Nation-Building: Bosnia & Herzegovina – An Incomplete State" from Feb. 5-11. Shireen Barakat engaged in a speaking tour in Rome and Milan with "Il Coraggio delle Donne" from March 1-6. On behalf of JCW, General Committee Member Fadwa Labadi spoke in Andalusia-Cordoba, Spain at a conference, "Building a Gendered Peace in the Middle East: The Role of Civil Society and Women's Organizations in Peace Processes." Amneh Badran attended a regional conference in Beirut from March 29-April 1 on "Transparency, Accountability, and Good Governance." Again, from April 5-9, she spoke on eight panels at the 56th annual conference on World Affairs – "Divided We Stand," Boulder, Colorado, USA.

From April 25-28, Board Member Huda Imam traveled to Sweden with a photo exhibition about the Wall and its effect on people in Abu Dis, Jerusalem. Along with Salwa Hdeib-Qannam, she also attended a regional workshop May 29-30 in Cairo: "The Road to UNSC 1325 & Future Perspective." Amneh Badran spoke on four panels at the International Peace Bureau's "Dialogue Toward a World Without Violence" in Barcelona, Spain from June 23-27. Board Member Amal Khriesheh delivered a paper on "Accommodation" at a conference in Berlin, Germany dealing with Dominance of the North: Actors and Practice Fields of the International Civil Society, July 2-3. Huda Imam traveled to Bogota, Colombia to attend an "Invitacion Encuentro Internacional dos Mujeres Contra la Guerra-Colombia" from Aug. 10-12. "Intercultural Learning as a Tool for Inter-Religious Dialogue" was the topic of a youth seminar attended by Samar Dissi from Sept. 6-10 in Nazareth. Amneh Badran and Huda Imam engaged in a speaking tour of the U.K., meeting with MP's, NGO's, and peace organizations from Oct. 4-19. On Oct. 14, Mai Al-Kaila participated in a seminar in Stockholm, Sweden entitled "Re-think! a Seminar for Sustainable Peace." Amneh Badran served as main speaker at the "Women Defending Peace" Conference in Geneva, held from Nov.22-24 and sponsored by CFD, a JCW Partner. She then spoke at a conference dealing with the Empowerment Study in Bern, Switzerland on Nov. 25-26. Her two-week "Women and Peace Building" speaking tour along the east coast of Canada followed, sponsored by Kairos, also a JCW partner, from Nov. 28-Dec. 8. Finally, Fadwa Labadi participated in seminars and talks at the Tampere Peace Research Institute in Finland from Dec. 7-12, including meetings with the Finnish Parliament, NGO's and civil activists.

In addition, staff members participated in international trainings in several different countries. Natasha Khalidi attended a training entitled "Getting Women placed in decision-making positions in peace negotiations" (Complexity Theory applied to social

sciences) in Northern Ireland from Feb. 28-March 4. Next, Lamis Alawi traveled to the US to participate in a three-week training program entitled “Moderate Voices for Progress/Peace” in North Carolina from Aug. 15-Sept. 6. Finally, Mariam Irbash attended a training workshop in Cairo: “Lobbying and Advocacy for Women’s Rights in the Arab Region” (3rd Workshop of the Arab Women’s Forum) from Oct. 8-10.

Active Non-violent Women's Struggle for Peace and Freedom

The Jerusalem Center for women carried out a number of non-violent resistance activities during the second half of the year 2004. The activities included a number of silent vigils and demonstrations, screening films focusing on Women and Peace building for activists and house wives ages 18-40, a number of panel discussions focusing on the role of women in peace building, networking locally and international in advocating for a women's vision of just peace. The activities also included one TV and one radio talk show.

Training and Empowerment Programs

Women and the Palestinian Elections

The center prepared this project to be implemented in 2004 but was delayed to start implementation in 2005

When Palestinians voted for a President and a Legislative Council in 1996, only 32% of women exercised their right to vote and only five women (out of 88 members) were elected to the Palestinian Legislative Council. The main objective of this five-month project is to raise women’s awareness and that of the public to the importance of elections and of women’s participation in the democratization process. Components of the project address and increase women’s participation in public life by holding public meetings, training young women volunteers to monitor electoral balloting, organizing exhibitions showing how women advertised their election campaigns for parliamentary elections in six countries, as well as raising the overall awareness of women’s participation and democratic elections. JCW is in the process of preparing the exhibition to include posters and materials from three Arab countries (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon) and also from three international experiences (England, Sweden, US). It will travel as a moving exhibition to different areas of the West, with special opening ceremonies in every location that would last three days there before going to the next site. Five training sessions (total of 20 hours) will be held for two groups of 20 volunteers each, consisting mainly of Jerusalemite students in Al-Quds and Bethlehem universities. Topics will include the Role of civil society, Democracy and elections, Monitoring on elections day, Post-election monitoring, and Documenting violations. Training of young activists and volunteers to monitor electoral ballots is an investment for the future as these young women will gain knowledge and experience, enabling them to take part in future elections.

A poster promoting Women's participation in the Palestinian Elections:

The Jerusalem Center for Women published a poster for promoting women's participation in the elections, the poster includes the motto " Together we will elect despite Occupation and the Apartheid Wall".

The poster was distributed to local women and human rights organizations in the West Bank and Gaza.

Strategic Planning & Project Management

This project targeted the employees of Palestinian NGO's: women project managers, coordinators, and public relations officers, with the aim of empowering these women and building their skills and capacity so they will be able to better manage their projects and conduct strategic planning if needed. Of the seventeen participants between the ages of 20-35, fifteen completed the program. Trainers were chosen from a pool of academics and skilled professionals. Topics included Elements of strategic planning (Vision, Mission, Organizational Values, Writing statements, Group exercises); Project management (Project life cycle, Case studies); Human resources planning and management (recruitment, selection, orientation, training, compensation and benefit, performance appraisal, overcoming resistance to change, conflict management, negotiation, strategic plans). Additional elements of Strategic planning (SWOT analysis, pitfalls) and Project management (leadership skills, evaluation, budget estimates and cost allocation) were covered toward the end of the 4-month training, which terminated with a graduation ceremony on July 8, 2004. Participants were pleased with both methodology and practical exercises but expressed a need for more time and courses in Management skills, Communication skills, Public relations, Advocacy, Methodology, and Report writing. Having gained new awareness of organizational skills, these women are better empowered to move ahead with their careers and community-oriented activities.

TAWASOL

The aim of this project, started in October 2004, is to build networks between women's and youth organizations on both sides of the Green Line by widening the circle of cooperation between both types of organizations. Thus, we are working to enhance women's active role in maintaining sustainable linkages and developing creative ways of support and solidarity through voluntary work. The specific project objective is to carry out 17 tours, meetings and training sessions; hold one round-table discussion; and schedule a final public meeting to summarize project achievements. Participants come from two geographical areas: the Northern area (Nahaf, Sakhnin, Ibaleen, linked with Ramallah); and the Central area (the Triangle, including Ain Mahel and Kufr Kanna, linked with Jerusalem. Thirty-seven young women activists, ages 18-26, half from each side of the Green Line, come together for discussion groups, workshops, and visits to refugee camps and women's organizations. (Note: only the Jerusalem group is permitted to cross into Israel.) Participating groups include Al-Zahraa Arab Women's Organization, with offices in Sakhnin and the Triangle; Law Club at Al-Quds University; and Sharek, Younth Center (UNDP Project). The project continues, despite obstacles: travel restrictions, student schedules, and reluctance to cross over.

Building Bridges: Female Youth Leadership

Over the last 55 years, Palestinian people living in communities across the green line, in refugee camps around mandate Palestine, in the West Bank and Gaza, and in the Diaspora have developed in different ways being influenced by surrounding political and cultural realities. The main aim of this pilot project is to bring together young women community activists from both sides of the green line to discuss a number of important concepts that will affect the future role and involvement of women in society, such as national identity, peace, and equality. Ten women from each side, ranging in age from 20 to 30, were recruited with the help of Women against Violence (WAV) to participate in two full-day workshops and four educational tours, two in the 1948 areas and two in the post-1967 areas. This highly successful program was completed in December 2004, with the participants expressing strong unity, a desire to extend the program, and a hope to continue contact with each other.

Training on Conflict Resolution Techniques

This long-standing essential component of the JCW Peace Building Program has been modified to focus on young Palestinian activists so as to prepare them for times when conditions are more conducive to bi-national political dialogue. Recruitment for participation in future peaceful civil resistance programs, such as vigils and demonstrations, is a by-product of such training. Twenty participants between the ages of 20-25 were nominated by various NGO's and human rights organizations. Beginning in January 2003 and concluding in September 2004, ten meetings took place in Beit Hanina and the other ten at Al-Quds University in Abu Dis, with each weekly session lasting three hours. Topics included Relation of conflict management with other sciences, Definitions of peace and conflict (national vs. bi-national), Non-violent communication (home, workplace, political life), Majority-minority relations (social and political), Equality of rights vs. Conflicting rights, Cultural diversity, Democratic values and practices, Conflict resolution techniques, Democratic community and Democratic solutions, Tolerance and progressiveness, Right to association and expression, Decision by compromise, Need for agreement, Sustainable conflict management, Palestinian experiences in non-violent communications, and the Making of a campaign. Response to the training was highly positive, for participants at the outset were quite lacking in knowledge of the main steps to managing /transforming /solving conflict. A next phase will be implemented in 2005.

Women's Training Program for participation in Public Forums and International Peace Conferences(implemented for the second time)

This project arose in response to two needs: 1) to communicate with the international community concerning Palestinian aspirations and conflict resolution agenda; and 2) to train a younger generation to speak to the media and participate in international

conferences. Fifteen participants, aged 20-25, were nominated by NGO's and human rights organizations to attend this training; eight are students at Al Quds University. Trainers again included skilled professionals and academics, and the group met every Saturday for three hours from February 2004 to July 2004 at the Al-Razee Association for Education and Culture in al-Dahieh. Topics included Political and diplomatic history of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, Legal aspects of the conflict, Post-Oslo political and diplomatic history, the Intifada of Independence, National liberation movement (South Africa), Comparison study (Northern Ireland), Palestinian-Israeli women's dialogue, Public relations introduction and theory, Palestinian experience in conference participation, Writing news, Feature story writing, Writing press releases, Oral communication in political issues, Video-taping statements and interviews, and How to stand in front of a camera (including practical exercises). Participants expressed strong appreciation for the content of the program, and trainers were pleased by the opportunity to provide participants with essential information.

Women's Training Program for "Democracy and Human Rights"

Because Palestinian women are living in a situation where they are deprived of civil rights, JCW offers them education about their collective and their individual rights. The goal is to activate, mobilize, and empower them to participate in those nation-building processes which incorporate democratic values and principles of human rights. Specific training programs focusing on democracy, human rights, advocacy, and grassroots mobilization continue to be offered. JCW tries to tailor each program to the needs of particular groups and participants' backgrounds. Communication skills are central to all of the programs. In addition, practical aspects are addressed, including field tours, campaigns, and meetings with representatives of organizations, to train women and enable them to move towards positions of community leadership as well as to participate in political processes.

During 2004 the Jerusalem Center for Women cooperated with Spaford, a civil society organization in the old city of Jerusalem for the implementation of its civic education program.

A group of twenty young women ages 22-30 received training on the following topics: democracy, human rights, gender, women and the law, International law, communication skills, Israeli violations of human rights, Economic / Social and Cultural rights, women in development, violence against women and finally advocacy lobbying and campaigning for women's rights.

One of the recommendations during the project evaluation was to continue working with other women's groups in the old city as women are in need for human rights awareness raising programs.

Human Rights Advocacy

Empowerment for Activism: Women with political prisoner(s) in the family

Of the more than 7000 Palestinian prisoners in Israeli occupation prisons, 85 (as in July 2004) are females imprisoned under extremely harsh conditions; six of these are underage,

four are in administrative detention, 51 have not yet been sentenced, and 25 have received sentences. Formerly incarcerated at Neveh Tirtsa Ramla prison, they were transferred in January 2004 to Telmond prison and underground cells which are dark, dirty and infested with bugs and rodents. This project is designed to reach these women and to empower and support them both morally and legally by raising their awareness of their rights inside prisons. Also, it aims to support prisoners' families through awareness raising and counseling meetings. Six two-hour meetings involving a lawyer took place with families in Bidu (6 mothers), Biet Sourik (15 mothers/wives/fathers), Shu'fat refugee camp (25 men & women), Hind-Al-Hussini College (39 people), Silwan's sport club (36 people), Beit Dukku (23 mothers/wives). Families expressed anger and frustration and asked legal advice questions. The main problem had to do with difficulties in obtaining visiting permits, although Jerusalemites noted neglect of detainees by both the PNA and Israeli authorities. Following a meeting with detainees' families at JCW, a letter was written by JCW to International Human Rights organizations and the High Commissioner's Office describing conditions faced both by families and detainees.

Prison visits were made to more than half of the detainees by our lawyer who obtained their stories with under oath testimonies of a few demanding the Right of Education inside prison bars. Over 30 of these stories were published on a weekly basis in the local newspaper Al-Ayyam. The Right of Education issue is still pending as we search for the best partner to handle testimonies that demand that right in order to present them to Israeli prison authorities. Despite the fact that Defense for Children International obtained a ruling that obligates Israeli prison authorities to provide this right to female prisoners, it is implemented only for children in Telmond prison (5 hours per week) and not at all in the women's sector. JCW also contacted the Detainees Family Committee and the Ministry of Prisoner's Rehabilitation to complete a full list of prisoners and contact information. A need exists for better data collection about prisoners and families; not enough accurate information is known by governmental and non-governmental organizations; better coordination between these organizations is also needed. JCW has published a documentary booklet, in both English and Arabic, on female political detainees and will distribute it to donors, partner organizations, and other NGO's.

Jerusalemite Women Confronting the Policy of Home Demolition

Demolition of 550 homes in Jerusalem during the two Intifadas has resulted in the displacement of more than 1500 Jerusalemites, half of whom are children. This orchestrated policy is designed to evacuate the city of its indigenous residents with the objective of judaizing Jerusalem, particularly the part that was occupied in 1967 and annexed in order to make it the Israeli capital under jurisdiction of Israeli law. Most victims are women who are marginalized by society and forced to bring up their children in difficult circumstances. Our year-long project, which began in August 2004, will provide counseling, strengthen the abilities of such women, and empower them to cope with their suffering. The project is taking place in four areas of the Jerusalem:

1) Al Isaawieh, Mt. of Olives and Az'ayem; 2) Silwan, Ras al Amoud, and Jbal al Mukaber; 3) Beit Hanein, Shu'fat and Shu'fat refugee camp; 4) Sour Baher and Im Tuba.

We have organized this program along three axes:

1. Field work to document 33% of victim cases and preliminary field, counseling, and documentary visits to 50 women whose homes have been demolished and 20 whose homes are under the threat of demolition for no justifiable reason.
2. Workshops and training courses, based on collected data, to be presented to 80 women victims of home demolitions, which will include: psychological counseling, legal counseling, meeting with human rights organizations, meeting with Palestinian decision-makers, human rights education, communication and self-confidence skills, and training in lobbying, mobilization and support.
3. Activities conducted by participants, to include: public solidarity activity with families bereaved due to home demolition; media and press conference to announce results of study and recommendations; designing a booklet containing documented cases of victimization and legal counseling information; and designing, publishing and distributing (both locally and internationally) a poster denouncing home demolitions and reflecting the ugly face of this policy.

By December 2004, the initial phase of data collection and analysis was close to completion, and meetings for the second phase were being set up. Axis two will consist of 23 meetings for a total of 69 hours, including first access to the report, counseling, awareness-raising, and empowerment for 80 participants. It is expected that indirect beneficiaries of the project will number 280 (6 individuals from each family) and that many more individuals in their communities will also acquire information and empowerment as a result.

From Grassroots to Decision-Making

During 2004 the third phase of the 14 month long civic education project was concluded. The participants in this phase received training in Lobbying and advocacy skills. They chose the Apartheid Wall as the issue for lobbying. With the help of the Jerusalem center for women and the participants held awareness raising meetings with school students ages 15-17 in the villages East of Jerusalem (Abu Dis, Al Ezarieh). They also used a poster and a booklet documenting the affects of the Apartheid Wall from the eyes of Jerusalemite Women which they had prepared for their advocacy campaign.

Our Vision for 2005

We envision a better year in 2005, as we complete several projects currently under implementation and undertake new initiatives which will further empower Palestinian women. Our Peace Building program will focus on widening the scope of the peace dialogue with Israeli peace groups, as well as making sure that the Jerusalem Link vision of a just peace is heard both nationally and internationally. We will continue to work on networking, peace advocacy, and women's presence at the negotiation table through the International Women's Commission and the Women's International Peace Advocacy

Network. Our projected Training and Empowerment projects include Conflict resolution and non-violent resistance, a Socio-political advocacy campaign, and Civic education with female youth leaders at the YWCA and others. For the coming year, our Human Rights Advocacy will include a new project for Palestinian women detainees and their families, as well as continuing work with Victims of house demolitions and Israeli housing violations in East Jerusalem. Finally, after the elections, we hope to encourage Palestinian Dialogue/Local Networking through our Women to Women Dialogue, which will develop venues of discussion between Palestinian women of different political backgrounds on the concepts of Peace and Gender equality. We will continue to build networks with Palestinian women's organizations and the Women's Movement in the occupied territories and across the Green Line.

JCW persists in stressing the importance of democratic principles and transparency in all of our activities, for we recognize the acute need for our training, empowerment and advocacy programs to continue in the face of bi-national conflict. As Palestinians continue the process of nation-building, we are committed to the ongoing involvement of women at all levels of decision-making and active citizenship. With the help of international external funding and support, we are able to pursue our multi-fold tasks of advancing women's rights, empowering Palestinian women, and building a basis for peace and mutual respect with our Israeli partners.