

***THE JERUSALEM CENTER FOR WOMEN***

***SUMMARY ANNUAL REPORT***

***2005***

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**Introduction**

The year 2005 commenced with presidential elections taking place ,a new leadership in Palestine's Presidency came into existence with the winning of Mr. Mahmoud Abbas- Abu Mazen; a winning that came to reinforce the Palestinian democratic process. The Presidential Elections were followed by Local Elections in the Palestinian Occupied territories with effective and obvious participation of women as a result of the integration of the quota of 20percent for women. Local elections were held in two phases covering 120 election districts in the West Bank and Gaza Strip; 36 districts with 207 women nominees in the first phase and 84 districts with 397 women nominees in the second phase. Generally 236 women became Local Committee Members summing up almost 14% of the total winning votes.<sup>1</sup>

Unilateral disengagement from Gaza Strip, the evacuation and dismantling of the Jewish settlements as well as the transfer of authority at Rafah borders from the Israeli to the Palestinian governance took place during 2005. But the price of leaving Gaza was a siege that was imposed afterwards turning the strip into a bigger prison and throwing the stone of Gaza to make the ship of land expropriation move faster in East Jerusalem and the rest of the West Bank.

This besiege was coupled with unprecedented escalation measures throughout the year for the sake of stripping Palestinians of their land, citizenship and rights. The only positive aspect in Rafah is the concrete and essential control of the Palestinian authority on one of Palestine's main borders.

Forms of these dramatic uncountable measures include land expropriation along with the annexation wall building continuation in the West Bank as well as in East Jerusalem, to enhance the Jewish existence in the city . Figures have shown that up till now almost 119 KM of the Annexationis planned to be built around Jerusalem, 15KM of which had been done and 31KM under the construction while the rest 73KM isn't carried out yet.<sup>2</sup>

More escalation in the illegal assassination and execution policy that Israel carries against Palestinians regardless of the truce endorsed between the Palestinian Political Parties and the Israeli government. Outputs have shown that between March 2005 and December 2005 more than 200 Palestinians<sup>3</sup> were killed and assassinated including children and minors (under the age of 18). Females share in the **arrests** reached up to almost 118 females<sup>4</sup> in the year 2005 under the claim-accuse of violent resistance to occupation. Their condition in the Israeli confinements is very bad as they live in poor conditions of health care, food and clothing.

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<sup>1</sup> Women and Local Elections- Success Stories, MIFTAH, Ramallah, January 2006, pg 32-33

<sup>2</sup> Land's Research Center

<sup>3</sup> B'Tselem [www.btselem.org](http://www.btselem.org)

<sup>4</sup> Addameer Prisoners' Support and Human Rights Association

The irreparable harm caused by the restriction of movement because of the checkpoints that suffocate, displace and humiliate Palestinians led to an increase in women's numbers giving birth at checkpoints reaching up to 63 Palestinian women and 36 newborns were stillborn at checkpoints. Moreover, lack of access to reproductive health centers increased the home deliveries to over 30% in (2003) from 5.2% in (2000)<sup>5</sup>.

Increase in the unemployment and poverty in the Palestinian Territories reached a gross average of more than 60% mainly due to the intensified Israeli besiege on the Palestinian Territories. PCBS revealed that more than one fifth of participants in the labor force are unemployed. "The percentage of unemployed among the persons participating in the labor force in 2005 was 23.5% (20.3% in the West Bank and 30.3% in Gaza Strip). The unemployment rate among females was 22.3% compared with 23.7% among men. The number of unemployed persons is estimated to be about 194,000 (115,000 in the West Bank and 79,000 in Gaza Strip).<sup>6</sup>

The Israeli Occupation Forces escalated its measures in the year 2005 in an attempt to take over East Jerusalem and change its status-quo materialized in the seizure of more properties in the Old City of Jerusalem and other neighborhoods such as Silwan, Ras Il-Amoud and Sheikh-Jarrah. The demolition of more than 120 residential houses and the displacement of more than 450 persons out of which almost 190 are children,<sup>7</sup> in Jerusalem\* come under the pretext of illegal construction or unlicensed building, the hindering and complicating of obtaining building permits, the doubling of penalties for those who build without authorization (*though they tried all the possible legal measures to obtain a license but their procedures were never accepted*) to include imprisonment, fines and demolition of the house.

The isolation of entire neighborhoods from the city center and from all the sides whether it's from the North, North-East or South of Jerusalem as the cases of Dahiet Al-Salam, Shu'fat Refugee Camp and Anata (North East of Jerusalem), Dahiet Al-Bareed, Al-Ram and Beit-Hanina (North of Jerusalem) Al-Sheikh Sa'd neighborhood (South of Jerusalem).

The implanting of new settlements in the city of East Jerusalem such as the new settlement quarter that is under the process of building on "Jabal Al-Mukabber" lands – South of the Old City of Jerusalem. In addition to other announcements of building other quarters in Ras Al-Amoud adjacent to Abu-Dees City, and a third quarter in Burj Al-Laqlaq inside the Old City Walls.

A different attack on the Palestinian existence in the city was manifested in shutting down Jerusalemite organizations continued where 5 organizations<sup>8</sup> were closed down; to total more than 30 organizations closed since the beginning of the current Intifada (Al-Aqsa Intifada).

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<sup>5</sup> Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics- Jerusalem Branch

<sup>6</sup> MIFTAH Organization- From (source) Wafa

<sup>7</sup> Land's Research Center

\* Jerusalem: according to the Palestinian definition of Jerusalem that includes not just the neighborhoods recognized by and within the borders of the Israeli Municipality but also the neighborhoods around the city of Jerusalem as for example Bethany-Ezariyya and Abu Dees.

<sup>8</sup> JMCC

As a women organization working in East Jerusalem and the Jerusalem District as a whole, the center faced more challenges with regards to reaching our constituencies in the surrounding Palestinian villages as a result of the check points road blocks and the annexation wall which have become a permanent fact on the ground. The center though is committed and determined to continue its activities regardless of the barriers faced to reach our groups.

A change in administration in August 2005 took place at the center, Amneh Badran left the center and Natasha Khalidi public relations officer was appointed as new director, also during 2005 the center welcomed two new staff members to the team, Zahra Hdieb and Shereen Barakat.

### **Peace Building Program:**

#### ***Bi-National Dialogue: The Jerusalem Link***

In 2005, the eleventh year of the Jerusalem Link, JCW and Bat Shalom continued working together toward a peaceful two-state solution. At the beginning of the year, two committees began working, one to draft another version of new principles for the Jerusalem Link and the other to create a new action plan. Several meetings also took place on both sides to discuss the thorniest issue, Right of Return, which means something different in each sector. By March, both boards accepted new principles reflecting a more progressive feminist vision, one related to peace, equality and international resolutions, rather than political statements explicit to the ongoing conflict ( the new statement was not finalized and a new one has not been released yet). Our joint action plan revolved mainly around the implementation of Resolution 1325 and the formation of the International Women's Commission. In August, Israeli women managed to get the Knesset to pass a law requiring the presence of women in formal peace negotiations, although we believe that women should be present at all such negotiations, whether formal, informal.

JCW was unsuccessful in holding any joint board meetings with Bat Shalom during 2005, but the two directors stayed in touch weekly and maintained the bi-national dialogue on behalf of the two organizations. In December the Jerusalem Link started an exceptional advocacy and lobbying campaign with a committee of women from Silwan .The campaign's first step was a Consulate Tour in response to grass-roots demands of women in three neighborhoods experiencing house demolition. Thus we worked together to reach out to international policy-makers in order to educate them about ongoing Israeli efforts to remove Palestinians from the city of Jerusalem. This joint project and others, such as involvement with the Women in Black International Conference, held locally, is testimony to the fact that the Jerusalem Link is alive and well.

#### ***The International Women's Commission: Peace Partnership***

Thirty-five Israeli and Palestinian women activists met in Istanbul 26-28 July to establish an International Women's Commission to ensure the implementation of UN Resolution 1325, which calls upon nations to include women at all decision levels in every peace negotiation process. The meeting was convened and chaired by Noeleen Heyzer, Executive Director of UNIFEM, which has officially adopted the IWC. Participants in the three days of intensive discussion included eight international women, 14 Israelis, 14 Palestinians, two Turkey-based observers,

and eight members of the support team. Five JCW Board Members, Maha Abus Dayyeh-Shamas, Hanan Ashrawi, Salwa Hdeeb, Zhira Kamal, and Amal Khreishe were among the Palestinian delegates, as were former director Amneh Badran and JCW General Assembly members Samia Bamia, Siham Barghouthi, and Mai Kaileh.

The IWC will work to guarantee women's full participation in formal and informal Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations, based upon principles of gender equality, women's human rights, international human rights and humanitarian law, in any future efforts to bring an end to the Israeli occupation and a just and sustainable peace. The Commission's work will be guided by a charter of principles developed and adopted at the Istanbul meeting to promote a process of political dialogue that rectifies ongoing asymmetries and addresses all possible avenues of reconciliation. As a major objective, the IWC will ensure that the rights and issues of women affected by the Palestinian-Israeli conflict are raised and effectively addressed, including economic issues, social and cultural rights, and human security.

**To achieve these aims, the IWC will**

- advocate IWC principles among policy and decision-makers at the national and international levels;
- seek the active participation of women in all formal and informal peace-related processes;
- review and make recommendations on all relevant multilateral, bilateral and inter-governmental structures;
- make suggestions for facilitating constructive political dialogue and ways of reframing divisive issues and rectifying ongoing symmetries;
- assess all existing and future peace proposals and make recommendations to ensure full incorporation of a gender perspective, as well as human rights, international law and human security;
- incorporate into their recommendations the experiences and expertise of international women, specialists, peace activists and organizations engaged in conflict resolution around the world;
- mobilize local and international support for a just and sustainable Israeli-Palestinian peace through public and media outreach, networking, dialogue and political efforts and actions;
- constantly evaluate and adapt its own structure and mechanisms to changing needs, circumstances, and new opportunities.

***UN Resolution 1325***

The Jerusalem Center for Women continued during 2005 its awareness raising activities with regards to the resolution 1325. Despite the fact that the resolution was adopted by the UNSC in 2000 awareness of the resolution in Palestine remained limited. The awareness raising of this resolution was essentially initiated by the Jerusalem Link during 2004 as a result of the preliminary meetings which took place to begin work on grass roots support locally for the IWC. Despite the time gap that was between the IWC preparatory meetings and the actual establishment that took place late July 2005 the Center integrated the awareness raising of the resolution in all its activities and programs making sure that all JCW target groups are aware of the existing resolution.

The awareness raising activities were conducted in the form of two hour workshops where women activists and JCW staff members spoke about the history of the resolution and its relevance to Palestinian Women and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The Participants were also informed of the history of activism in the Jerusalem Link and the commitment of the Palestinian and Israeli Boards to the establishment of a commission that will guarantee the presence of a gender perspective in any future negotiations and or peace making efforts emphasizing the importance of international involvement due to the nature of the conflict.

JCW held twenty training sessions for its different groups in the Jerusalem area and other areas of the West bank. One session took place in Gaza Strip due to our inability to reach Gaza Strip.

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 Resolution 1325

### ***Women in Black International Conference***

Under the title "Women Resist War and Occupation," 750 Palestinian, Israeli and international women from 44 countries gathered in Jerusalem from 12-16 August, 2005 for plenaries, panels, discussions, workshops, and tours (Ramallah and West Bank, Old City, Annexation Wall, settlements and villages). An exceptional outcome of this conference was the issuance of a joint statement in which women attending affirmed their "commitment to work together as a world-wide network of women dedicated to freedom, equality, justice, peace, women's rights and a world free of violence." We agreed "to meet again to continue our fight" and to "insist on the participation of women as full partners in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and the negotiation and implementation of peace agreements according to UN Resolution 1325." We called for an end to femicide and "all forms of violence to which women are subjected in areas of conflict, in militarized zones and in their daily lives." More remarkable, the assembled body called for "a just and sustainable peace between Israel and Palestine based on international law and human rights, to be achieved by

- an end to the Israeli occupation;
- immediate cessation of all actions against civilians, assassinations, closures, house demolitions, land confiscation, settlement building, building of the Annexation Wall, water deprivation, denial of access to schools, hospitals and places of work and worship;
- the immediate release of all political prisoners;
- dismantlement of all Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967;
- Immediate final status negotiations leading to a viable sovereign Palestinian state alongside Israel on the June 4<sup>th</sup> borders. Peace and a resolution of the conflict will not be achieved by unilateral actions such as the disengagement;

- the recognition of Jerusalem as two capitals for two states, and the immediate ending of all unilateral actions leading to the ethnic cleansing of Jerusalem;
- Israel's recognition of responsibility for the plight of Palestinian refugees as a pre-requisite to finding a just and lasting resolution of the refugee question in accordance with the relevant UN resolutions;
- Recognition of the national and civil rights of the Palestinian minority in Israel."

JCW was instrumental in negotiating the final wording of this statement from the Palestinian perspective, as well as in helping to set the conference program during preceding months of planning.

### ***Consulate Tour***

Israel's continuing attempts to "Judaize" Jerusalem, especially the Old City, violate the Fourth Geneva Convention (1949), which stipulates the protection of civilians during wartime and the safeguarding of the indigenous population against the seizure of its lands and properties and the moving the occupying forces' population into the heart of the land it occupies. However, a silent transfer is taking place. Indigenous citizens of the city, Palestinian Jerusalemites, are coming under increasing pressure to leave the city of their ancestors, by denial of building permits, enforcement of absentee property laws, and restriction of movement and access to jobs and education. In addition, the implanting of Jewish settlers in all-Arab neighborhoods occurs, not in the spirit of co-existence, but with the explicit intention of permanently driving Palestinian inhabitants of Arab East Jerusalem out of the city.

Our concern focused specifically on three areas of Jerusalem: Silwan (88 houses demolished as a block), Al Bustan (88 houses), and Wadi Yasoul (30 houses). JCW stood in solidarity with the people of Silwan and helped to distribute reports. Women from all three areas were intimidated and many of their husbands imprisoned for not paying fines. These women asked for help in speaking to international organizations about their plight. JCW initiated a letter describing Israeli attempts to transform the population of the Old City and organized a meeting with consular political officers.

In an attempt further to increase awareness of coerced evacuation, JCW joined with Bat Shalom in approaching consulates of signatory nations to the Fourth Geneva Convention, as well as other EU nations, to ask that they uphold and enforce international law concerning house demolitions and other types of forced removal in East Jerusalem and elsewhere in the Occupied Territories. On December 14, several diplomats accompanied by Jerusalem Link representatives Dr. Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian, criminologist and lecturer from Hebrew University, and Ms Fadwa Khader, Director of Rural Women's Development Society, began the day with a field visit to Wadi Yasoul to meet with people whose houses had been demolished or were under demolition orders. Their houses are not *illegal*, as the Israeli government claims, but are *unauthorized* because residents had followed legal methods to obtain building permits on their land but were consistently refused.

The consulate educational tour continued on December 14-15 as Jerusalem Link delegations, along with women from affected areas, held individual conversations with diplomats from the following offices: British Consulate, Italian Embassy, Norwegian consulate, US Consulate, European Union, Spanish Consulate, and the Swedish Consulate, followed by the Belgian Consulate on 21 December and the French Consulate on 26 December. This educational effort on the part of the Jerusalem Link was highly successful

***Jerusalem Center for Women Outreach to Israeli Groups:***

The Jerusalem Center for Women initiated dialogue with five Israeli Peace groups and Organizations in an attempt to outreach for the center's vision of a Just Peace. The groups approached include Israeli Committee against House Demolition (ICHAD), Alternative Information Center, New profile, Gush Shalom, Taayush and Women in Black. As for ICHAD, JCW and ICHAD agreed to produce a joint booklet and to hold an exhibition of photos of demolished homes in East Jerusalem during 2006. This will be the first time that JCW and ICHAD will take on joint activities and publications. ICHAD have successfully developed clear political principles with regards to Occupation, settlement building, and boycott which made it easier to find common grounds for the initiation of joint actions and publication. The meetings which took place discussed each groups political standpoints form issues such as occupation, boycott, settlements and each group's vision of the future of the conflict and peace.

***Participation in Peace Networks***

JCW receives many invitations to meetings beyond the Palestinian territories, and although we are not able to accept all of them, we have sent staff and representatives to conferences where discussion of the Annexation Wall and its effects on women's lives would be fruitful for international support.

Attending the World Social Forum in Porto Allegre, Brazil from 25 January to 2 February were Mariyam Ikernami, JCW Project Coordinator, and Hanan Arari, JCW Board Member. Along with nine other organizations, they traveled with the group Occupied Palestine and Golan Heights Advocacy Initiative (OPGAI) and presented in seminars concerning women's issues, women's struggle, media, environment, and children. Together with Europeans, they also negotiated a statement concerning Palestinian rights.

Natasha Al-Khalidi, then JCW Acting Director, represented Palestine on the Steering Committee of the Mediterranean Social Forum and attended planning meetings in Barcelona (February) and Marseille (April) in preparation for the July conference.

Hanan Aroury JCW Board member, traveled to Egypt for the Third Cairo Conference of the International Campaign against US and Zionist Occupation from 24-27 March.

At the invitation of Italian Women in Black (Donne e Nero), Samar Ghnaim, friend of JCW, went to Italy from 28 March to 4 April for a speaking tour, along with a representative from Bat Shalom. The overall theme of the meetings held in Rome and smaller cities was "Palestinian and Israeli Women United against the Occupation, the Wall, and the Militarization of Society."

JCW Board Members Zahira Kamal, Minister for Women's Affairs, and Salwa Hdeeb, Deputy Minister for Women's Affairs, Palestinian National Authority, participated in a panel at a meeting of Socialist International Women, along with prominent Israeli women peace builders, in Tel Aviv 19-20 May.

Salwa Abu Libdah, JCW Media Coordinator, participated in a conference, "Promoting and ensuring women's Rights in the new Iraqi Constitution," in Amman, Jordan, sponsored by Movimiento por la Paz el Desarme y la Libertad, UNOPS and Oxfam. Salwa traveled to Amman twice, once to assist in pre-conference planning and again for the conference itself, held in June.

Salwa Hdeeb was also selected to attend the Palestinian Leadership in Development: Managing Political and Economic Transition executive training program in Athens, Greece from August 21-26.

The V International Human Rights Colloquium in Brazil (October) was supposed to have been attended by Rawan Natshah, Temporary JCW Public Relations Officer. However, due to her dismissal from our organization, no report was filed concerning her participation in the conference.

Mai Kaileh, JCW Board Member, traveled to Madrid, Spain on October 21-22 to deliver a PowerPoint presentation at a Conference on Palestine.

Nibal Thawabteh, activist and friend of JCW, participated in a panel, "Wartime Women Activists Transforming Peace Processes," at the Association of Women in Development Forum on the theme "How Does Change Happen?" in Bangkok (28-30 October) Her trip was funded by the V Day Karama Program.

Natasha Al-Khalidi, the new JCW Director, attended a training for the Anna Lindh Palestinian network sponsored by the Anna Lindh Euro Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue Between Cultures (ALF) between 11-18 December in Alexandria. The Foundation, financed by 25 EU Member States and 10 Med countries, promotes dialogue between cultures and encourages the visibility of the Barcelona Process through intellectual, cultural and civil society exchanges.

JCW staff also attended regional trainings to enhance their skills and build their program-planning capabilities. In February, Samar Dissi, JCW Media Coordinator, attended five intensive days of training in Ramallah on International Mechanism for the Protection of Human Rights. The entire staff attended a workshop on the basics of election advocacy, lobbying, and networking in April at Al Ram, under the auspices of the US Consulate. On 27 April several staff also attended a digital video conference with former US Rep. Constance Morella sponsored by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the US Department of State. In December, Samar Dissi attended 3 days of intensive training for media coordinators in Ramallah for the purpose of enhancing media skills.

## **Training and Empowerment Programs**

### ***Project Management, Needs Assessment and Facilitation Training Program***

In order to assist NGO's in building their capacities and training their employees on project management, coordination, and facilitation, JCW invited Palestinian women's organizations, human rights organizations and counseling centers from Jerusalem, its environs, and Ramallah to nominate staff members for this training. Twenty-two project coordinators, project managers and public relations staff began the six-day training (17 November to 9 December, 2005) and 14 completed it, while seven participated partially. By sponsoring this training, the staff of JCW was able to take advantage of an opportunity to better our own capacities in running projects. Participants discussed the obstacles confronting project implementation, exchanged their experiences through group work, and traced the project cycle from initial needs assessment and planning through such topics as budget, monitoring and evaluation, and time management. The trainer, Luna Shamieh, devoted the final session to the role of the moderator and techniques involved in conducting focus groups. The entire 36-hour training took place at the National Institute for Administration and was funded by Arab Student Aid International.

### ***Women's Participation in the Palestinian Democratization Process***

In order to increase women's participation in public life, JCW conducted a three-phase process to train volunteers, raise the awareness of women to the importance of their participation in building democratic processes, and develop a public exhibition to show other women's experiences in campaigns and elections in three countries: Sweden, South Africa, and Jordan. In the first phase, forty young volunteers and activists learned how to monitor electoral ballots and received information about democracy, elections, and political participation. The training was conducted in two twenty-hour sessions at two locations: Abu Dis and Daheyat Al Barid. Volunteers between the ages of 18 and 30 were recruited partly by newspaper advertisements and also from Al Quds University and BirZeit University. Workshop topics for the first phase included the role of civil society, democratic elections, monitoring on election day, post-monitoring, and documenting violations. Thirty-six participants received certification and 32 women became local observers; other could not get permission because they did not match the Selection Criteria of the Central Elections Committee. JCW received the status of an authorized local monitoring organization.

Five public meetings were intended for the second phase, and the first was held in Bidu village on 1 June. Due to the postponement of elections, announced on 3 June, other meetings could not be held until just before the legislative council elections (25 January, 2006). A second meeting to discuss women's political concerns, needs, and aspirations included women from the eastern areas of Al Azarieh and Abu Dis on 1 January, 2006. Due to Israeli proscriptions against election campaigning in Jerusalem, it has become impossible to hold the additional three meetings in the northern and southern communities of Jerusalem, or in the Old City. Public meetings may be held in Ramallah, however, so women from those other communities have been invited to attend a meeting there to hear from candidates about their experiences with the electoral process and to encourage more women to vote and run for office.

The third phase of the project has been redesigned due to the difficulty of obtaining the desired materials from other countries. Instead of a public exhibition tour, JCW held Activity Days in ten Palestinian locations: Bethlehem, Gaza, Hebron, Jenin, Jericho, Jerusalem, Nablus, Qalqilya, Ramallah, and Tulkarem. Each Activity Day involved 15-20 women who participated in general discussions about the democratic process and the importance of women's participation in decision-making, as well as specific presentations about voter registration, voting, nomination of candidates, running for office and monitoring ballots.

Following Local Council elections, JCW held meetings with women who had won elections in order to train them to promote themselves, prepare CV's, and learn about the national campaign to change Palestinian election law. A booklet, *The Way to Elections*, was published in Arabic to define terms, offer basic information about governance, describe women's rights, and how to use the Quota. Although the proposal did not cover it, immediately prior to the legislative council elections (25 January 2006), JCW held a special training to provide certified monitors, JCW identification badges, and specific instructions on how to report violations of election law. Monitors also accompanied candidates during their election campaigns. The overall participation of women in the Palestinian elections, as voters, candidates, and monitors, has been impressive.

### ***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 been influenced by different 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 the program. The main recommendation at the final session of the project was that the group should continue to conduct activities aimed at raising women's voice in both communities and tackling common issues which women suffer from and participants suggested producing a newsletter tackling two main topics (Women and political participation and Violence against women) therefore a second phase was implemented during 2005. Jerusalem Center for Women and Women against violence organized a one day workshop on each topic so as to help the participants focus on the themes which they will write about. Each of the participants wrote an article concerning one of the two main topics; articles were collected, edited by the media unit in JCW.

### ***Exploring Identity: Female Youth Leadership Program***

As of today, 63% of the Jerusalem population is below 24 years of age. Young Palestinian women here face triple discrimination due to the ongoing conflict, their societal role, and their uncertain future. In order to reach out to these young women and to empower them by encouraging reflection on their situation, JCW brought together 25 female students for 66 hours of life skills training from 15 June to 28 July. Participants were specifically chosen from the YWCA, which

gathered young women from different parts of the city and served as a partner in planning the project. During the first two workshops, young women learned communication skills, including how to present themselves and how to use a video camera. Thereafter, participants used the video camera for sessions dealing with gender and social realities in the Middle East, women's rights, youth needs, the Palestinian identity, and violence against women. Camera footage thus served as a start for discussions and provided a mirror for self-understanding. Field trips to the Women's Studies Center, Women's Center for Legal Aid and Counseling, PYALARA, Nidal, and Palestinian Counseling Center augmented information and discussion sessions. Sessions held at the YWCA Hall and Hay'et Il-Muna in East Jerusalem involved eighteen different instructors. Because of high enthusiasm on the part of participants, additional workshops topics included human rights and democracy, advocacy and lobbying, and more communication skills. Nineteen young women completed the program with a high degree of commitment.

### ***Training on Conflict Resolution Techniques***

The second phase of a Conflict Resolution Training Program, initiated in 2004, was instituted during the past year and will be finalized during mid 2006. This long-standing component of the JCW Peace Building Program focuses on young Palestinian activists to prepare them for a future when conditions will be more conducive to bi-national political dialogue. Beginning in March 2005, JCW began planning for a series of video conferences in cooperation with the YMCA (which owns video-conferencing facilities and equipment) between Americans, Spanish, Palestinians and youth from one other country. . Before these conferences can take place, however, the group trained by JCW will have an opportunity to volunteer to practice their capacities with human rights organizations and NGO's. The training group will also meet a minimum of six times to discuss ways of presenting their ideas and experiences in a televised context. During 2005 a number of trainings were implemented for the trainees on Democracy & human rights concepts and application, UN Resolutions. Those training were mainly to focus on the main concepts and themes of the project .also these training sessions were implemented to specify the main discussion points of the video conferencing. The participants with JCW will also produce a documented booklet detailing the history of women's means of resistance during the two Intifadas (a comparison study).

The main themes which this study is based on are:

- Resistance mechanisms Palestinian women used in both Intifadas.
- The effects of women's role in both Intifadas in maintaining and gaining achievements to the Palestinian women status.
- Social and economical strategies used by Palestinian women during the Intifadas to strengthen bonds among Palestinians as families and as one people.
- The impact that the militarization of Intifadas had on the Palestinian women.

### ***Civic Education: A Pilot Project***

JCW approached a new location which is Al-Sawahreh (a village on the east side of Jerusalem) through a new Palestinian institution which is Al-Muna association. JCW always worked with the villages of west Jerusalem and as the center is committed to reaching Jerusalemite women where ever they are so we chose this

location that is hardly approached by any institution. Eight meetings were implemented on four main topics: The concept of Human Rights, Principles of Democracy, Women Political Participation, Advocacy and lobbying. Each meeting lasted three hours, between April and June 2005. The participants were mostly housewives expressed their need for such programs especially due to their future activities and personal development ,also they asked to be involved and included in JCW future projects. A new partnership has already evolved, as the women of Sawahreh were able to participate in JCW's Democratization project. JCW will use this experience with Al-Muna as a model for further approaching women not reached by any other organization.

### **Human Rights Advocacy**

#### ***Empowerment for Activism: Women with Political Prisoners in Family***

An earlier phase of this project involved legal support for families attempting to obtain visiting permits to prisons. Women political prisoners' testimonies were also collected under oath by our lawyer and published in a weekly newspaper, *Al Aayyam*. JCW has also published a documentary booklet in English on female political detainees and their stories. In the next phase, implemented in 2005, JCW focused on recruiting lawyers, for continuing visits to 30 female prisoners, and counselors, in order to offer Women to Women Voice Therapy. Detainees welcomed JCW's visits and concern as many are visited neither by their families nor by institutions.

Meetings with women from prisoners' families took place in Bidu Village (16 meetings) and Silwan (16 meetings). Each group met weekly for two hours to tell of arrests, openly share their suffering, and explain their desire to bring peace to those around them. The women also described how imprisonment psychologically and financially affects the entire family and told how families of prisoners are ostracized as if blamed for the imprisonment. Three fun psychodrama days for the children of prisoners' families were held in cooperation with the Palestinian National Theatre. Children drew each other, made balloon animals, painted their feelings about prison and missing family members, saw a play, and enjoyed a singing and dancing tour of Palestine and the world with Ronny Rock.

The third phase of this project was individual counseling for newly released women political prisoners. JCW managed to get to 12 female released prisoners. Each had 2 meetings 3 hours per each as one – on- one session. Women in those therapeutic sessions outlet an outcry to be recognized and dealt with and expressed their eagerness and willingness to continue such sessions.

#### ***Jerusalemite Women Confronting the Policy of Home Demolition***

In August 2004, we began a year-long project in four areas of Jerusalem: 1)Al Isaawieh, Mount 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. Preliminary fieldwork to document cases of home demolitions and analyze data was completed by December 2004, and a booklet detailing 50 cases was published in Arabic. The second axis of the project, consisting of 24 workshops in three locations for a total of 66 hours, took place over a period of

three months, finishing in early December. These meetings, based on the collected data, included legal counseling, psychological counseling, assistance from human rights organizations, discussions with Palestinian decision-makers, human rights education, communication and self-confidence skills, and training in lobbying, mobilization and support.

Following the second phase, an advocacy specialist with expertise in international law, Dr. Nizar Ayoub, helped to prepare six pamphlets concerning the history and details of coercive evacuation and ways to present the issue to UN bodies. For the third axis, a three-hour public meeting at Claridge's Hotel in Al Ram. Activities at this public meeting included a human rights presentation, brainstorming connections between workshops, and discussion of how to lobby together and support other women who face the threat of home demolitions. At the conclusion, three women were nominated from each area to serve as key contact persons for further lobbying efforts, particularly with consulates and international NGO's. From the whole of the project, a large number of women acquired information, psychological support and a sense of empowerment either as direct or indirect beneficiaries.

### ***Media Unit***

Since the establishment of Jerusalem Center for Women (JCW) - almost 12 years ago there hasn't been a clear structure of Media Unit or a precise post for media. Addressing issues about JCW, Jerusalem and Women were conducted mainly via the Public Relations Officer along with the Director of the Center. However it was noticed by the year 2004 that there is a need to intensify JCW's presence in the local media. In addition to cover different issues related to JCW and its activities as participation in Public Meetings, Projects, Publications and any joint activities of the Link. Thus, the Center went ahead with the creation of a media unit. An action plan was set for the unit with concentration on local media and advocacy internationally. Accordingly, tasks of writing articles in response to major issues and events happening on the ground as well as editing relevant materials were divided according to their needs whether it's locally addressing issues to the local newspapers, TV's and radios or internationally mainly through JCW website and emails.. Thus, translation from Arabic to English and vice-versa were done as needed /requested. A major task that the unit began to implement is the restructuring of the website in a way to make it more dynamic, having an Arabic Link and more continuously updated.

As well as representing JCW at various meetings/ of coalitions or Ad-hoc committees in and around Jerusalem.

Being a member at the Coalition Committee for Jerusalem, JCW Media Unit took the responsibility of writing a report about the attempts of Israeli Military Occupation Forces to Judaize East Jerusalem and changes its status quo. Later on there was correspondence between the members of the committee and the Media Unit was editing the report as being requested.

**Hence**, of the main reports written and circulated on the Internet are different official JCW statements as; *The Elections in Al-Quds Jerusalem - Elections restriction in Jerusalem (15/1/05)*, *Greed or Security- the Absentee Property Law (27/1/05)*, *Letter to Condoleeza Rice- from the members and friends of JCW in Occupied Jerusalem (6/2/05)*, *Enormity of Humiliation- Checkpoints and Restriction of Movement (22/2/05)*, *A Fake Gesture of Goodwill- Release of*

*Political Prisoners* (24/2/05), *Thirty-eight years of Occupation – JCW speaks out “Peace and Occupation are incompatible”* (5/6/05), *Publicize the Call for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions against Israel* (9/7/05), *Hundreds of Prisoners face Slow-Death threats in the Israeli Occupation Prisons* (22/9/05), *JCW reflects on the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People* (29/11/05), a report about the *House Demolitions in Silwan* and tour visit to different consulates in Jerusalem which included general information and statistics about the house demolitions in Silwan neighborhood, the letter addressed to the Consulates during the tours conducted to address this issue and a feedback report about these visits (20/12/05).

All of these previously mentioned reports are attached as an appendix at the end of the Annual Report.

As for the The Local / Arabic Level of the Media Unit which is also concerned with the regional Arab Countries Level focused on several issues during 2005 as follows:

- 1- Publishing Ads, articles and statements through local most popular newspapers in Palestine.
  - Ads concerning JCW projects (Home demolition, land confiscation, female detainees).
  - Articles and statement addressing the Palestinian women status under occupation and the Israeli aggressive measurements against Palestinians in general and women in special case, also addressing any human rights violation that takes place.
  - Also publishing articles and statements that are concerned with Jerusalem as a special issue regarding Israeli measurements taking place or through ads that represent JCW stand to any given case.
- 2- Another issue was a main concern of JCW Arabic media unit which was the elections advertisements both the local council election and the recent legislative elections and this was done to encourage women to participate in the democratization process through voting and running up for elections.
- 3- Ads on the agreements with the donors of JCW were also published in the newspapers.
- 4- Nevertheless JCW Arabic media unit also was visible in the audio and video local stations through the audio ads in the local radio station and on the local t.v station. A number of audio ads about the elections were broadcasted through the official Palestinian radio station (Palestine voice) and also through other several local radio stations in the PNA areas. Those ads were educational ads for women inviting them and encouraging them to participate in the elections process with special attention to the Jerusalemite people as a whole and the Jerusalemite women in particular in order to encourage her to participate in the election with no restrains by the family traditions.

The audio ads were broadcasted twice a day for a whole month during the elections campaign.

The script of the legislative council election ads are as the following:

**Ad No. 1:**

- Issa's Mother: good morning, its so early where are you going this early?
- Mahmoud's mother: as a matter of fact I'm going to vote
- Issa's Mother: what?? What are you going to vote for?
- Mahmoud's mother: I'm going to participate in the Palestinian elections.
- Issa Mother: oh no, do you want to loose your Id and your children Ids!
- Mahmoud's mother: what's that you are saying? Who told you so? We won't loose our Ids and after all it's our right to select our representatives in this election. Also people have been struggling for Jerusalem all their lives and now you tell me loose the Ids and not participate in the elections.
- Issa Mother: yes you are right, what a pity! I didn't register so I can't participate in the elections.
- Mahmoud's mother: no, don't worry about that, we the Jerusalemites are permitted to vote any where we choose so come on and join me.

The Jerusalemite citizen is a core part of the Palestinian society which is living under Occupation, also Jerusalemites have the right to participate in the democratization process and elect their representatives in the legislative council.

Jerusalem Center for Women

**Ad No.2:**

- Hind: wow! This is so comforting Zareefeh
- Zareefeh: what's that that made you feel so?
- Hind: each list has women in it
- Zareefeh: and are you going to vote for the women
- Hind: of-course! Who can represent us as women better than women themselves and I will give my vote to the woman that deserves it.
- Zareefeh: yes true and as said that women are half of the community, and as we managed to get and win in the local councils elections, we will vote to women nominees in the legislative council
- Hind: true this is one of our basic rights to have someone to represent us as women
- Zareefeh: you can't be more right so come on , lets move and go to give our votes. Our votes are so precious and we will be asked about it by our conscious.

Your vote is a right that you have to preserve and use it well so don't loose this right and don't give it but to who deserves it.

Jerusalem center for Women

**Ad No. 3**

Abu Ali: where are you going.. Are you going to the elections, if you are going then wait so I can give you the names to vote for?

Ali's Mother: what names are you talking about man?

Abu Ali: the names I voted for, sit all of you (Fadwa, Muna, Fatmeh) till I write you the names.

Fadwa: what? Whoever you voted for is your business only.. Me and the others will vote for who we want and feel is right. Come on girls, let's go and vote before the elections time is out.

It's not enough that we live under occupation; they also want to deprive us from our right to vote in the legislative elections.

Palestinians have the full right to choose their representatives

Jerusalem Center for Women

The Arabic media unit also was visible in the local newspapers through the statement that were published whether to support women in political parties or to make statements on the following:

- 1- Statements of condemnation to the illegal bargains of selling properties to the settlers which is taking place increasingly in Jerusalem.
- 2- Spreading JCW's activities and providing the local and regional newspapers with articles that describes the affects of occupation on the Palestinian woman status in her daily life and in cases as home demolition or imprisonment to her or any of her beloved ones, checkpoints, mass arrests, harassments, and birth deliveries on the checkpoints.
- 3- Publishing advocacy campaigns to support women that are threatened or applied to home demolition.
- 4- Press interviews with journalists to highlight the occupation policy.
- 5- Interviews with a number of Palestinian women to discuss the obstacles and harassments they face by the occupation procedures and actions.
  - Those interviews impressed and met the interest of local and international media agencies and some agencies covered these activities live on the air such as Al-Jazeera network.
- 6- The media unit also paid attention to T.V shows and produced a special film on Female detainees named (Restrained Memory). Besides the Palestinian TV broadcasted a special episode on Jerusalem center for Women and hosted Mrs. Salwa Hdieb-Qanam (Head of the board of Trustees) and Mrs. Natasha Khalidi (Director of JCW).
- 7- The Arabic media unit also arranged the presence of JCW through the local T.V through appearing in the interviews which is concerned with women issues or through hosting JCW projects coordinators to speak about the role that JCW play in terms of raising women awareness about Gender concept and implementation.
- 8- Another activity that the Arabic media unit implemented and coordinated was a local radio show for one month hosting each day a woman activist discussing several issues as: women and elections, women and political participation, women and development, these radio shows focused on how Palestinian woman can prove herself and maintain her space in the Palestinian community on local level or on international level, additionally what role can Palestinian woman play in the political agenda.
  - These 15 minutes morning shows were broadcasted through Angham local radio station and a big number of women social and political activists were hosted.
- 9- a number of newsletters and publications were issued by JCW through the media unit as follows:
  - A booklet on home demolition and its affect on Palestinian women socially, financially and psychologically.
  - JCW's Arabic brochure vision and activities.
  - A special newsletter on elections which included: the election's law, national campaigns to edit the election's law, women and political

participation, the Quota, election's campaigns, and JCW's work and activities.

10- The media unit also coordinates with the regional women institutions through several correspondences with Jordanian, Bahrainian and Egyptian women institutions and providing them with our publications.

As a result of all the mentioned above; JCW created and maintained credibility in the written, audio and visual local media. As the ads published in newspapers as invitations for participation in one of JCW's projects are shortly followed by an ad that speaks about the project and the participants in which seduced the other local networks to approach JCW through interviews to the crew of JCW discussing JCW role, vision and activities. Besides JCW proved its work in supporting the Palestinian women on many political and social levels in Jerusalem in a special manner, however also the center played a big role in campaigns to stop the judization of the city of Jerusalem

### ***Committee Participation***

In response to human rights violations in East Jerusalem during the Presidential elections of 2005, three new committees were launched in order to monitor the election process, promoting women's political participation, and lobbying the Palestinian Legislative Council for introduction of the Women's Quota. JCW participates in all three:

- **Jerusalem Election Monitoring Committee** is composed of a number of women's and human rights organizations, which lobby locally and internationally concerning misinformation and election violations by the Israeli government during the 2005 Presidential election.
- **Women's Participation Committee**, headed by the General Union of Palestinian Women, is a coalition of women's and human rights organizations in the West Bank, which lobbies to amend the election statute law and introduce the Women's Quota in the Legislative Council. The Women's Movement succeeded in introducing a Quota of two women in each Local Council election (about 17%).
- **Jerusalem Affairs Committee** introduces basic lobbying strategies and techniques to Palestinian women candidates in Local Council elections and Legislative Council elections. Thus, they raise candidates' awareness and train them in preparing their CV's, running electoral campaigns, forming coalitions, and reaching out to decision-makers and stake-holders.
- **Jerusalem Human Rights Defense Committee** : A committee made up of more than 100 Non Governmental Organizations and personalities in East Jerusalem formed during the beginning of 2005 .The committee works on advocacy and lobbying activities locally and internationally in an attempt to stop the aggressive Israelis attack on East Jerusalem and its residents.

### **Significant Visitors**

JCW took primary responsibility for planning and carrying out logistical details for two important sets of visitors in spring of 2005: 1)Cees Flinterman, member of the UN CEDAW Committee and Professor of Human Rights at the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights; and. Professor Flinterman came from 21-24 March

on a fact-finding mission to listen to Palestinian women activists and victims concerning violations committed by Israel. 2) Board Members of the Global Fund for Women From 27 April to 3 May, the entire Board of Directors, six staff members, and several Global Fund for Women supporters met with Palestinian and Israeli grantee organizations and made site visits. In addition to planning GFW grantee meetings in Ramallah and East Jerusalem, JCW also organized tours of Jerusalem and the Annexation Wall. The purpose of the GFW visit was to increase women's knowledge about the GFW and to listen and learn from women and girls about major challenges facing the Middle East.

### **1000 Women for the Nobel Peace Prize 2005**

As part of a global effort to nominate a collective of 1000 women for the 2005 Nobel Peace, JCW coordinated the Palestinian nominations. We invited nominations, sent letters to women's organizations and NGO's, collected and edited women's CV's, and submitted them to the organizing committee in Switzerland, initiators of the project. In addition, we organized a press conference to announce the final list of Palestinian women selected for official nomination. Two members of the JCW Board, Hanan Ashrawi and Zahira Kamal, were included in the final list of eight women (featured on the website [www.1000peacewomen.org](http://www.1000peacewomen.org) ).

**----- End -----**