

***THE JERUSALEM CENTER FOR WOMEN***

***SUMMARY ANNUAL REPORT***  
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## **Introduction**

Brutal attacks by Israeli forces in 2006 included shelling Palestinian areas, the first of which were Beit-Hanoun and Beit-Lahia towns in Gaza where they fired rockets into the villages.

This “shelling” – did not advance the peace process or stability in the region. These attacks led only to escalated confrontations and sabotaged truce efforts including the collapse of the February 8, 2005, agreement between Palestinians and Israelis in Sharm Al Sheikh. The "period of calm" also agreed upon during this period calling for the ending of resistance activities also collapsed due to the renewed violence against Palestinians. Within the first week of the Palestinian - Israeli agreement on a truce, the Israelis killed still more Palestinians. Besides, the structural violence, such as annexation apartheid wall construction and settlement expansion in the West Bank, Jerusalem municipality did not stop. Targeted assassinations, random killings, invasions, and a wide-reaching incarceration policy continued. Due to these factors many Palestinian factions announced the end of the truce with Israel at the beginning of the year.

The general theme that distinguishes the year 2006, is **Hamas'** presence in the government after the legislative elections. Hamas won the majority of seats by a landslide (75 seats out of 132). However, Israel, the United States, the European Union, and several European and Western countries cut off aid to the Palestinians listing Hamas as a terrorist organization. These international bodies refused to recognize as legitimate the Islamist political party, Hamas, which rejects Israel's right to exist. Under the same excuse, Israel took this opportunity to escalate its violent & aggressive measures towards the Palestinian population. All while the international community ignored the power of the majority party, Hamas, that was democratically elected to govern.

Brutal incidents accumulated rapidly reaching a peak on June 9, 2006, on a target known as the “**Gaza beach blast.**” Seven members of one family and an additional Palestinian were killed on the beach. Therefore, the armed wing of Hamas called off its 16-month-old truce. The explosion near the family was Israel’s responsibility although claims were made that Israel was shelling 250m away from the family's actual location.

This blast was major but not the only attack on Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. Records prove that between the end of March and the end of May 2006, Israel fired at least 5,100 artillery shells into the Gaza Strip. Operations against civilians continued with another Israeli missile attack on a Gaza highway on June 13, that killed 11 Palestinians and injured 30. On June 20, they killed 3 Palestinians and wounded 15. These killings were followed by the capture of Israeli corporal, Gilad Shalit.

From June 28, 2006, Israel launched **Operation Summer Rains** for the purpose of destabilizing the Palestinian National Authority and toppling the democratically elected Hamas-led government. Israel cited the targeting of

civilian infrastructure, and the capture of government and parliament members. Incursions into Northern Gaza continued. Israeli merkava tanks reached the north Gaza border and Israeli occupation force troops and tanks gathered. During the early hours of June 29, several Israeli naval vessels shelled different locations and spread thousands of leaflets in the northern Gaza Strip towns of Beit Lahia and Beit Hanoun advising civilians to leave their homes. This incursion was coupled with the arrest of 64 Hamas officials, amongst them were Palestinian Authority cabinet ministers and members of the newly elected Palestinian Legislative Council.

This was followed by the **Bombardment Phase** on June 30, the Israeli occupation forces began to hit the Gaza Strip with a variety of targeted attacks. Israeli warplanes struck more than a dozen times in Gaza in the hours after midnight, hitting a Fateh office and a Hamas facility in Gaza City, as well as roads and open fields. The Israeli air force also struck the Palestinian Interior Ministry in Gaza City. On July 12, the IDF dropped a 550lb. bomb on a building in Gaza City, killing a family of nine. A spokesman for the Israeli army said they were trying to kill a group of Hamas militants and did not know that a family was living inside the house when they bombed it.

These clashes were at nearly the same time as the July war on Lebanon, that targeted areas within Lebanon and the oPt leaving unprecedented numbers of fatalities. Such violence continued including the excessive use of force (fighting, bombs, rockets, etc.) and escalated the conflict in the Middle East setting up conditions for a regional war until the United Nations brokered a ceasefire that was formally enacted by Israel lifting their naval blockade of Lebanon.

These operations destroyed power plants, lead to water shortages, and contaminated drinking water. The uncontrolled discharge and untreated sewage flowing in the streets resulted in groundwater pollution and the pollution of agricultural land has made Gazans unable to cultivate or harvest crops, thus negatively impacting their earnings. All of these are serious effects as well as the damaging sonic boom tactics and resulting psychological effects that these measures have on the population, particularly on children.

This summer operation was followed by a winter massacre at Beit-Hanoun. Beit-Hanoun was placed under the very tight control of a large force of tanks and troops who ordered tens of thousands of local people to stay off the streets for all but very brief periods. The Israelis destroyed Beit-Hanoun; they cut water pipes, telephone lines, and destroyed the infrastructure. Two women were killed as Israeli troops opened fired on a crowd of women gathered to help besieged gunmen flee a mosque in northern Gaza. The Israeli occupation forces were firing heavily at women with their machine guns during this attack.

Many journalists predicted that once the Israeli military removed all of the settlers from the Gaza strip at summer's end they would use air raids to attack the Palestinian population. This is exactly what was witnessed in the days to follow. These major incidents took place throughout the Gaza Strip, West Bank and Jerusalem. These attacks reflected directly on Jerusalemites' anger, hatred and

frustration towards the occupation. Israeli attacks and incidents are becoming more and more brutal including measures such as:

- Restriction of movement between the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and Jerusalem, even when crossing from one Palestinian town to another, and further assaulting and attacking Palestinian citizens at checkpoints, leaving them with multiple bruises and injuries.
- Erection of temporary Israeli military checkpoints at the entrance of villages to block Palestinian movement within the West Bank.
- Invasion of Palestinian villages and towns whether midday or midnight using military jeeps, launching search campaigns throughout homes and arresting youth.
- Demolition of houses and the uprooting of trees and destruction of cultivated lands only to build the apartheid wall.
- Humiliation of the Palestinian political prisoners in solitary confinement; here they face extremely harsh conditions, including 24 hour monitoring by cameras in cells, poor treatment from the guards, being forbidden to leave their cells or contact anyone in the outside world, only rare family visits, and the lack of heavy clothes and blankets for winter.

On June 4, 2007, Palestinians will mark four decades of suffering under the brutal and illegal Israeli forces. The consequences and results of this occupation are in many ways influencing all citizens including the children, men and women. The harsh measures taking place are present everywhere in Palestine. By comparison, Jerusalem receives the least military action. However, there are still facts which prove that there are still numerous attempts taking place in Jerusalem to "Judaize" the city, evacuate it from its indigenous population-citizens and demarcate its borders.

Adding to what was mentioned previously, i.e. restriction of movement, closures and flying checkpoints, there is also the confiscation of identity cards, family reunion and residency permits, high taxes charged for housing, land expropriation combined with the exorbitant taxes and difficult-to-obtain permits for building, transportation, water & electricity and the other basic facilities and needs of daily life are all measures designed to strip Palestinians, and Jerusalemites specifically, of their land, citizenship, dignity, and rights. All of these policies facilitate Israel's plan to keep a ratio of 72% Israelis to 28% Palestinians in Jerusalem municipality.

Additionally, the illegal annexation apartheid wall incorporates into Israel the major settlement blocs carving the West Bank into a number of disconnected cantons, removing the richest agricultural land and water, and cutting out the economic, cultural, religious and historic heart of the Palestinians.

Generally, Israel's policy of "taking as much land as possible with as few Palestinians as possible" goes back to 1948, when Israel captured most of the historically Palestinian land. Later, after the 1967 war, Israel annexed the eastern part of Jerusalem. Ever since, land confiscation and home demolition procedures have been practiced all over Palestine effecting more than 12,000 Palestinian homes, establishing more than 300 settlements and uprooting over a million olive and fruit trees.

Women's participation, since 2003 has been enhanced after the lobbying and advocacy campaign that were held under the umbrella of the Palestinian General Union of Women comprised of different women's organizations. The JCW is a member of the steering committee of the committee for enhancing women's civic participation. This committee focused on guaranteeing the introduction of a 20% quota in the amended law for both Local Councils elections and PLC elections. Along with the civil society organizations and the different political parties, the amendment was achieved and 17% quota was introduced to the law for the local elections. Since the electoral law changed, it was automatically integrated in the new law.

The Palestinian Legislative Council elections were, as evaluated by the international observers, free and democratic. Most of the Palestinian political parties participated in the elections; women were also present. Out of the 70 women candidates a total of 17 women now have seats at the Palestinian Legislative Council which is composed of 132 seats.

However, the fact that Hamas won the Palestinian Legislative Council elections was immediately rejected by the international community and all the donor countries stopped channeling their donations. This was coupled with Israel's halting of the Palestinian financial revenue which was tripled by Ehud Olmert (the Israeli Prime Minister) addressing his unilateral realignment as peace. The Orwellian language of the convergence plan that delegitimizes Hamas, draws Israel's permanent borders and places pre-conditions on negotiations allowing Israel to build its future while hindering any possibility for a viable independent Palestinian state.

### **Jerusalem Center for Women Activities**

The Jerusalem Center for Women focuses on outreach to different Palestinian target groups to make sure that the center's vision of a just peace is recognized and advanced in society. The JCW contributes to the **Peace Building Program** ensuring that the gender perspective is represented. The **Human Rights Advocacy Program** is addressed to combat violations committed by Israelis against Palestinians. Additionally JCW develops venues for discussion between Palestinian women on the concepts of peace and gender equality through the **Intra Palestinian Dialogue and Local Networking Programs** The Jerusalem Center for Women also makes efforts to empower Palestinian women in different aspects of leadership through **Training and Empowerment Programs** including:

- ❖ **PEACE BUILDING PROGRAM**
- ❖ **HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCACY**
- ❖ **INTRA PALESTINIAN DIALOGUE / LOCAL NETWORKING**
- ❖ **TRAINING AND EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMS**

#### ❖ **PEACE BUILDING PROGRAM:**

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

Compared to the year 2005, the Jerusalem Link's work towards ending the occupation in 2006, was more efficient. Both organizations continued their efforts towards a peaceful two-state solution through politically and institutionally strengthening and revitalizing the organizational link via internal political dialogue and advocacy campaigns.

One of the most significant meetings of the Jerusalem Link was the meeting of the Link's Political Committees on February 11, 2006. Together they discussed key issues in the plan of action towards joint activities on the International Women's Day on March 8th.

There were different suggestions all revolving around the political framework of challenging realities on the ground such as publishing a joint public letter that focuses on the main themes of house demolitions, the separation wall and the issue of family reunification. Another suggestion was holding a public meeting and press conference including testimonies by women who have been directly affected by the occupation. A third suggestion was holding a tour for Palestinian and Israeli women around the wall, passing through checkpoints. The fourth, was holding a peaceful demonstration followed by a panel with one speaker from each side and our final suggestion was writing an open letter to the quartet. All of these suggestions were taken into consideration and the final activities on March 8, took the form of a *Public Hearing Press Conference* that JCW held along with a *joint peaceful demonstration*, and the publishing of a *joint declaration*.

Another meeting took place on June 10, 2006, between the Boards of Trustees of the Jerusalem Link and members from Jerusalem Center for Women's General Assembly. About 25 women representing the two organizations attended this meeting which took place at Jerusalem Center for Women's office and lasted for 3 hours.

The **1<sup>st</sup> session** of the meeting discussed:

- the current political situation (mainly the Gaza Beach Blast).
- the impact this political situation has on the Jerusalem Link.
- the unique position of the organization to be able to bring together women from both sides of the conflict to talk about peace and politics.

This discussion led to the **2<sup>nd</sup> session** which discussed:

- the agenda of the Jerusalem Link.
- the strategic planning of the Jerusalem Link.
- the concrete actions that should be taken jointly calling for the ending of the occupation and unconditional resumption of negotiations.

The Directors of the Link (Natasha Khalidi from JCW and Molly Malker from Bat-Shalom) met regularly, almost two times each month, analyzing the current situation and discussing details of possible joint work as needed to fulfill the objectives of the Link and its network; raising awareness of UN Resolution 1325, raising public awareness of the Israeli violations in East Jerusalem, and other atrocities. Currently, there has continued mutual correspondence by both staffs in

order to follow-up with the needed activities according to the sort of objective whether it was related to the advocacy campaigns or internal correspondence.

▪ ***Jerusalem Link Advocacy and Lobbying Campaigns:***

Among the visible results of the Israeli policy after the completion of the apartheid wall and the major settlement activities in East Jerusalem is the fact that Arab Jerusalem will lose all possibilities for development and its residents won't have enough housing. The features of the Israeli undertakings in Jerusalem and its surroundings have now become more apparent than they have been since 1967. Strict building restrictions enforced by the Israeli occupation municipality lead to acute housing shortages and the erection of many unplanned and unlicensed buildings. Thus, the illegal policy of house demolition inflicts suffering on Palestinian Jerusalemites.

Herein, a significant part of the Jerusalem Link's (Jerusalem Center for Women and partner Bat-Shalom) advocacy work revolved mainly around the issue of house demolitions in Jerusalem. These atrocities are the major and most evident illegal measures used to change the geographic and demographic make up of the city. The Link's activities took the form of different advocacy campaigns (tours to consulates and embassies, demonstrations, joint declarations, and regular meetings to support women living under the threat of house demolition in Silwan), as well as publishing a booklet and a postcard about Palestinian women and house demolitions in Jerusalem. These Jerusalem Link activities were initiatives designed to stand in solidarity with suffering women as their houses were demolished and / or under the threat of demolition, as well as to help raise women's voices and awareness to the crisis that has become policy for the Jerusalem.

The advocacy campaign to expose the house demolition policy included 11 regular meetings by the Jerusalem Link staff along with young volunteer activists. Two consecutive days were used for meetings with different consulates and additionally two days of visits to embassies, as well as a study day about Silwan and a full day of activities on March 8th. These meetings began in December 2005, and the efforts continued in 2006. The political committee of the Jerusalem Link continued visiting the women of Wadi-Yasoul; together they discussed their visits, evaluating them as well as coming up with new suggestions of how to continue their work. Thus, between January and June of 2006 eight regular meetings took place, in addition to two visits to embassies in Tel-Aviv and one whole day of activities on International Women's Day as follows:

24-1-2006	Women's Recommendations
7-2-2006	Women's Testimonies
23-2-2006	Drafting Letter to Embassies
8-3-2006	The 8 <sup>th</sup> of March Peaceful Demonstration
13-3-2006	Visits to Embassies
16-3-2006	Visits to Embassies
11-4-2006	Peace Activists and Movements.
2-5-2006	General Follow-Up
27-5-2006	What's next? Meeting

30-5-2006	Study Day About Silwan
6-6-2006	Bimkom Visit

The Jerusalem Link's "House Demolition Campaign" continued in the year 2006 by extending visits to include 5 Embassies in Tel-Aviv; on Monday, **March 13<sup>th</sup> 2006**, including *the British Embassy* - meeting with the Second Secretary (Political) there, *the Belgian Embassy* - meeting with the Deputy Head of Mission, and finally *the French Embassy* meeting with the Premier Secretary. On Thursday, **March 16<sup>th</sup> 2006** these visits continued to *the Swedish Embassy* meeting with the First Secretary and then *the Italian Embassy* meeting with the Ambassador.

Through women's testimonies, these meetings focused on raising the issue of house demolitions generally and more specifically the Wadi-Yasoul case as a representative example. Discussion with the officers included what could be done by NGOs in advocating for Human Rights and by the International Community members who had observed violations taking place in Jerusalem.

This activity was a follow-up experience to the tours of consulates in Jerusalem at the end of December 2005. In addition, a diplomatic tour took place to the Silwan area on the 14<sup>th</sup> of December with three political officers representing three different consulates in Jerusalem (the British Political Affairs Officer, the Swedish Political Affairs Officer, and German Political Affairs Officer of the German Representative Office), along with representatives from the Jerusalem Center for Women and Bat-Shalom. Participants viewed the area, listened to some families' testimonies and saw the demolished houses or the ones under the threat of demolition. Later on tours to the consulates took place by a group of women from Wadi-Yasoul, including representatives from the JCW and representatives from Bat Shalom. Visits included *the Italian, Norwegian and American, Spanish, Swedish, Belgian and French Consulates and the European Commission Offices*.<sup>1</sup>

On International Women's Day – March 8, activities included a public hearing press conference that JCW implemented in the morning and a joint demonstration organized by the Jerusalem Link in the afternoon.

The press conference "*Testimonies of Jerusalemite-Palestinian Women ... Collective Punishment... Violations... Suffering*" focused on shedding light on Jerusalemite-Palestinian women's lives under the Israeli occupation, especially those who are experiencing the vicious Israeli policy of house demolitions.

More than 50 representatives from the UN and other international organizations, Consulates, international bodies as well as Palestinian, Israeli and International media were invited. Oxfam – Quebec, the Spanish Cooperation, the European Commission, the Italian Consulate, UNAIS, UNTSO, Netherlands Representative Office, the media Line, the Swedish Organization SOIR; all of these were among those listed as attendees at the press conference.

Later on that same day a joint peaceful demonstration took place in Al-Ram. Several peace activists joined together under the presence of media coverage. The

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<sup>1</sup> Appendix 1: JCW letter addressed to consulates about House Demolitions

demonstration gathered Palestinian grassroots, Israeli and international peace activists who wanted to express their solidarity with the Palestinians against the Annexation Wall and the continuous Israeli violations in Jerusalem against its Palestinian residents. It is important to shed light here on the significant role that the young volunteer activists played whether in the campaign at Wadi-Yasoul or the coordination for the March 8<sup>th</sup> activities, as well as the publishing of the booklet and postcard about House Demolitions.

The Jerusalem Center for Women and the Israeli Bat-Shalom groups under the Jerusalem Link issued a joint letter<sup>2</sup> on the occasion of International Women's Day to express the vision of the Jerusalem Link for a just peace and implementation of human rights and international law in the region towards a peaceful resolution to the conflict. As Palestinian and Israeli women who believe that their equal and active participation in negotiation for peace is essential, and in accordance with the United Nations resolution 1325; together they called for *(the end of the Israeli occupation, the full withdrawal to the 4<sup>th</sup> of June 1967 borders, the dismantlement of all Israeli settlements on the occupied territories, the acknowledgement of the city of Jerusalem as shared capitals for two states, the halting of various unilateral actions on the ground to create a de facto new reality and to isolate East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank, the illegal house demolitions, identity confiscation, land confiscation, and settlement building (ethnic cleansing to maintain a Jewish majority of 70% to 30% in the eastern part of the city). Additionally, the political settlement must be based on negotiations between equals with Compliance with the international law and conventions.*<sup>3</sup>

▪ ***Building Constituencies for Women's Alternative Ways for Peace***

With the overall objective of creating a political climate more conducive to improving relations between the parties, the Palestinian Jerusalem Center for Women, the Israeli Bat-Shalom and the Italian Orlando groups joined together for a three year long project as partners; together they worked to increase awareness among the Palestinian and Israeli societies of the need to mobilize women for a just peace. Generally, this will be implemented by strengthening the Palestinian and Israeli women centers constituting the Jerusalem Link in their outreach and coalition building capacities.

In the year 2006, JCW implemented the first phase of the project successfully, targeting three main areas (Gaza Strip, the North–Jenin, and all the surrounding villages, and Middle–Jerusalem and the surrounding neighbourhoods as well as Ramallah, Bethlehem and Salfet). The target groups were chosen from the Palestinian women leaders and grassroots activists from different political parties including the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine – DFLP, Fateh – Palestinian National Liberation Movement, Palestine Democratic Union – FIDA, Palestinian People's Party, Palestinian National Initiative – Mubadara, and Palestinian Federation of Women's Action. The participants were trained through different workshops on *UN Resolution 1325, the CEDAW Convention, parties'*

<sup>2</sup> Appendix 2 - Jerusalem Link joint declaration on 8<sup>th</sup> of March

<sup>3</sup> Appendix 3 – JCW report on 8<sup>th</sup> of March activities

*law and the role of political parties in supporting women, the history of Palestine and Jerusalem, Jerusalem in different religions; old and new, the demographic and geographic conflict on Jerusalem, Jerusalem and international law, settlers and settlements, and the development of a Palestinian political approach.*

The JCW then selected ten women from its the three target groups from the Palestinian side, who met with the Israeli target group last November in Italy for an intensive training about **“Building Constituencies for Women’s Alternative Ways for Peace”**.

Through different workshops on Open Space Technology (OST) and also on Trauma, the group members discussed their cause and shared experiences with women from different conflict areas around the world. This training is part of the three year long program consisting of different workshops and trainings that will empower Palestinian women politically and enhance their negotiation skills. The goal of these trainings are to put the women a step ahead in ensuring women's significant participation and contribution to creating a political climate more conducive to improving relations between parties, as well as enhancing the Jerusalem Link's role in its outreach and coalition building capacities.

Moreover, yearly joint seminars will be held in order to evaluate each other’s organizational achievements as well as the constraints in the outreach and constituencies’ enlargement process, and in the elaboration of possible alternative visions aimed at reaching common ground on key issues to be settled in final negotiations. *The first joint seminar among the three partners of the project is expected to take place on the 24<sup>th</sup> of February 2007, with 80 women from both sides participating. It will be a one day intensive seminar.*

Success Stories:

**Wafa' Khoury** from **Jerusalem** explains: *"This program gives us the chance and opportunity to know more about the issues of Final Status negotiations such as Settlements, Water, Refugees, in addition to the issue of Jerusalem in details".*

She further added: *"...the facilities provided by Jerusalem Center for Women built trust between us as participants and the Center, and now we refer to JCW as a resource for further knowledge. Therefore, we call on JCW to continue building those bridges between activists, grassroots and the civil society".*

**Kifah Salah** from **Bethlehem** explained how rich the workshops covering different topics such as the 1325 UN Resolution, Women Rights, Palestinian History, Settlements, violations in Jerusalem, and Sovereignty were.

*"This political awareness raising shaped our political skills, abilities and capabilities during discussions and debates. In addition to enhancing our presentation and communication skills", she commented adding: "...as most of the participants in this program are affiliated to one of the political parties, this provided us with venues to hear the different points of view of one another and understand them."*

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

In an attempt to raise awareness about the center's vision of a just peace, the Jerusalem Center for Women initiated and participated in different activities, approaching different peace and human rights organizations in Israel.

As staff members of the JCW; Samar Dissi, Shereen Barakat and Zahra Hdeeb participated on 30/5/2006 in a full study day about house demolitions in Silwan that was held at Bat-Shalom office. Attendance included many Palestinian and Israeli human rights organizations. Additionally, on 17/7/2006 Samar Dissi participated in ICAHD's Fourth Summer Camp in the village of Anata as a speaker to international volunteers about the Jerusalem Link's House Demolitions Campaign.

*The Israeli Committee Against House Demolition - ICAHD* have successfully developed clear political principles with regards to occupation, settlement building, and boycotts which made it easier to find common grounds for the initiation of joint actions and publications. Thus, for the first time, the *Jerusalem Center for Women* and *the Israeli Committee Against House Demolition – ICAHD* took on the initiative of joint activities and publications. They agreed to produce a joint booklet and postcard and to hold an exhibition of photos of demolished homes in East Jerusalem.

**The JCW appointed Anna de Sacco, an Italian volunteer photographer at ICAHD** in contact with few different Jerusalemite-Palestinian women whose houses were already demolished since they decided together that the booklet will focus mainly on addressing the issue of house demolitions in Jerusalem through photos.

Bat-Shalom joined later and the three coordinators from the different organizations drew up a general outline of the form of the project and its phases. A suggestion was made to publish the photos booklet along with a postcard about house demolitions from a feminist perspective, to be followed by a few local and international exhibitions. The booklet is already in print, it includes (A summary of Dr. Nadera Kevorkian's study on "House Demolitions: a Feminist Palestinian Perspective", statistics about house demolitions, an introduction about house demolition policy, 25 photos of women and demolished houses along with quotes from these women's testimonies).

**Al-Nakba Al-Awda- Make 2008 the Year of Return; another initiative – Forum in which the Jerusalem Center for Women is active.** This call includes all of the Swiss EPER partners found in Palestine and Israel. Efforts of the different organizations would combine together to mark the year 2008 through different activities including: starting a Nakba Study Center, publishing books of testimonies from Al-Nakba, a Nakba Museum, sporting events, an international commission on the Nakba, and other activities.

**On the International Level the JCW representatives travelled on Peace Advocacy campaigns to Sweden, Italy and Jordan.**

Samar Dissi, Media Coordinator at the JCW, participated in the SSU Election Campaign that was held on the **Gottland Island of Sweden** during the first week

of July (1 -7th). The JCW was invited by **the Social Democratic Youth of Sweden** to present a speech about the political situation in Palestine generally and women's status specifically, in addition to participating in different international seminars.

Shereen Barakat, JCW Public Relations Officer represented JCW at the **Olof Palme International Center networking meeting** that took place in **Jordan** on Nov. 8-12, 2006. The participants of the meeting were local partner organizations from Palestine and Iraq, who met in order to strengthen the partnership as its basic working method in international cooperation.

Samar Dissi was also selected to participate in a **Study-Visit** conducted in **Sweden** by the hosting organization **Kvinna Till Kvinna** between Nov. 11<sup>th</sup> and Nov. 18<sup>th</sup> 2006. This invitation gathered most of KtK partners in Palestine and Israel where they discussed different issues and participated in many different participatory meetings and roundtables with different Swedish NGO's.

Huda Imam, the JCW Board Member and Mariam Ikermawi, the JCW Projects Coordinator represented JCW at **“Building Constituencies for Women's Alternative Ways for Peace”** training that took place in **Italy** between Nov. 11<sup>th</sup> and Nov. 18<sup>th</sup> 2006. This training was part of the JCW's three year long project **“Women at the Negotiation Table”** previously mentioned under Peace Building Program.

#### ❖ HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCACY PROGRAM:

The Jerusalem Center for Women prepares different **advocacy materials** as a means of outreach to the public and a way of drawing attention to the major and severe Israeli violations in East Jerusalem. The JCW focused in 2006 on highlighting the policy of house demolitions in East Jerusalem as an issue of public concern. For this reason, lawyer, Dr. Nizar Ayyoub, prepared for the JCW six legal analysis documents in Arabic and English about the policy of house demolitions. The topics included:-

- House Demolitions – A Collective Punishment Policy in the oPt
- The Policy of Planning in the Occupied Palestinian Territories - House Demolishing with the Allegation of No Building Permits.
- The Israeli Occupation Authorities' On-going Policy of House Demolitions in the oPt.
- Demolishing Houses Without Prior Ultimatum, Israel, as an Occupying Power Should Commit to its Obligations as Chanted in the IHL.
- House Demolitions Policy Must be Ended Immediately and Palestinians Should be Compensated for their Losses Because of the Policy From 1967 Till Now.
- A letter addressed to the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights - Compensating Palestinians for House Demolition Damages.

Other advocacy material prepared included a study by *Dr. Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian* on “**House Demolition: A Palestinian Feminist Perspective**”.<sup>4</sup>

*Given the gendered socio-economic structure, house demolitions inordinately impacts women, for the home is where women most acutely invest their time, build their safety nets, advance their talents and hobbies, carry on their work of looking after the family, and carrying on with their life responsibilities. Once the home is destroyed, women are left with the metaphoric and symbolic burdens—which are no less real than the material loss of a safe place to live—of not having a sense of safety and place of belonging, a source of memories.*

The Jerusalem Center for Women also conducted several **tour visits** around the city of Jerusalem, showing the apartheid wall, the settlements and the severe geographic change in the city’s map to different international groups who visit the JCW as human rights activists.

#### ❖ **INTRA PALESTINIAN DIALOGUE/ LOCAL NETWORKING:**

- **“Tawasol II: Initiating Contact between Palestinian Women, Youth, and Other Civil Society Organizations Working in Israel and the West Bank”**

The aim of this project is building networks between women’s and youth organizations on both sides of the green line through widening the circle of cooperation between both types of organizations, JCW started the TAWASOL project. The 1<sup>st</sup> phase of the project **TAWASOL I** started in October 2004, gathering thirty-seven young women activists, ages 18-26, half from each side of the green line; whom together had discussion groups, workshops, and visits to refugee camps and women’s organizations.

Consequently, the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of the project **TAWASOL II** focused more on building and enhancing the network between the Palestinian organizations rather than young activists.

The Jerusalem Center for Women has seen the importance of establishing contact with Palestinian organizations along both sides of the green line due to the absence of sustainable institutional and group relationships between Palestinian organizations inside Israel and in the West Bank, therefore it has implemented a small pilot project in 2006. The project includes 3 field visits to some of the Palestinian organizations as the Arab Thought Forum in Jerusalem, the Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees - PARC in Jerusalem, Badil resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugees Rights in Bethlehem and the Palestinian Working Women Society for Development in Ramallah.

Additionally, a workshop took place in Nazareth at the hotel of St. Gabriel on the October 17, 2006. Twenty-three organizations attended from both sides;

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<sup>4</sup> Appendix 4 : Dr. Nadera advocacy study on House Demolition – Feminist Palestinian Perspective

Representatives from the organizations ranged from directors, to lawyers, to project managers, to coordinators. However, most of the West Bank organizations could not attend because of the denial of access.

*The organizations that attended included Sharek Youth Forum, the Palestinian Working Women Society for Development-PWWSD, Sabeel Ecumenical Movement, Palestinian Youth Association for Leadership and Rights Activation PYALARA, Ahali organization, The Committee for the Protection of Silwan Land and Property, The Arab Thought Forum, Al-Haq organization, Women Studies Center (WSC), Women Against Violence WAV, the Mossawa Center, Baladna Arab Youth organization, Pal-Arc, The Arab Association for Human Rights (HRA), I'lam, Media Centre, Tufula, Mada al-Carmel - The Arab Centre for Applied Social Research, Al-Zahraa, Arab Cultural Association, and Adalah.*

The importance of this meeting emerges from the Israeli occupation that is scattering, separating and dispersing us as individuals as well as organizations. Thus the aim of such a pilot meeting was mainly to create a venue for the organizations to meet and form a network through which they could implement joint projects.

These organizations met together, got acquainted with each other's work and projects, discussed common goals, the current political situation, and set recommendations for future initiatives that aim to defy all attempts of the Israeli occupation to keep Palestinian society weak and divided.

The meeting included a short presentation by lawyer Mr. Ahmad Ruweidi on the situation in Jerusalem since 1967, shedding light on how Jerusalemites are dispersed and displaced being denied their identity, stability and property and how Palestinian Jerusalemites were not included in the structural plan of the city. The lack of housing projects, youth, sports and cultural clubs for example indicates some of the total disregard for Palestinians in Jerusalem.

After the presentation a discussion took place exploring the different mechanisms used at organizations for documentation. The workshop concluded with the importance of networking through strategic advocacy and lobbying, working towards the building of sustainable relationships between Palestinian women, youth and other civil society organizations on both sides of the green line.

Developing venues of discussion and building networks between Palestinian NGO's has continued through Jerusalem Center for Women's participation at **OPGAI – Occupied Palestine & Golan Heights Advocacy Initiative as active members.**

This initiative is a network of NGO's established during the Fifth World Social Forum, seeking to improve its capacity and strategy for effective, rights based advocacy among western civil society. The main work this year focused on widening the base of this network, improving its media status and preparing for a joint Palestinian delegation at the World Social Forum-Nairobi. Currently there

are two media officers for the OPGAI network and JCW is one of them, together they distribute the latest BDS news to the local media.

**JCW is also a member of the 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.

### **Media Unit:**

Nowadays, JCW has a Media Department with two sections (Arabic and English) with one media coordinator for each section. The main goal of the department is to outreach and network on a local, regional and international basis, through all the possible visual and audible media means (Press, Radio, Television, Websites and Emails, Publications). Accordingly, tasks of writing articles in the Media Unit in response to major issues and events happening on the ground as well as editing relevant materials were divided according to their needs whether addressing local issues in the newspapers, TV, radio, or internationally, through JCW website and emails. Thus, translation from Arabic to English and vice-versa were done as needed / requested. Nowadays the JCW has a new structure for the website which has made it more dynamic and consistently updated. The Media Department also represents JCW at various meetings of coalitions or Ad-hoc committees in and around Jerusalem.

Various articles and statements were utilized to promote JCW's activities and provide the local and regional newspapers with articles that describe the effects of the occupation on Palestinian women's status - their daily life and in cases such as home demolitions, imprisonment, checkpoints, mass arrests, harassment, and deliveries on the checkpoints, in addition to press interviews with journalists to highlight the occupations oppressive policy.

The Media Unit was established to serve as an advocacy tool for the JCW, tackling women's political issues. Therefore, one of its major goals was very salient during the week of March 8th, when the JCW held a public hearing, press conference and a joint peaceful demonstration along with the Jerusalem Link.

*“Testimonies of Jerusalemite-Palestinian Women ...Collective Punishment...Violations...Suffering”* live testimonies press conference focused on shedding light on the Jerusalemite-Palestinian women lives under the Israeli occupation, as they are experiencing the vicious Israeli policy of house demolitions.

More than 50 representatives from UN and international organizations, consulates, international bodies as well as Palestinian, Israeli and International media were invited. Oxfam – Quebec, the Spanish Cooperation, the European Commission, the Italian Consulate, UNAIS, UNTSO, Netherlands Representative Office, the media Line, the Swedish Organization SOIR; among many others attending the press conference.

Later on during the same day, a joint peaceful demonstration took place in Al-Ram. Several peace activists joined with media representatives.

The demonstration gathered Palestinian grassroots, Israeli and international peace activists who wanted to express their solidarity with the Palestinians against the annexation wall and the continuous Israeli violations in Jerusalem against its Palestinian residents.

The Jerusalem Center for Women and the Israeli Bat- Shalom (under the Jerusalem Link) issued a joint letter on International Women's Day to express the vision of the Jerusalem Link of a just peace and implementation of human rights and international law in the region towards a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

Generally, the media unit implemented and coordinated a local radio show at Ajyal Radio Station in Ramallah hosting a daily woman activist discussing issues in Palestine and Jerusalem from a feminist perspective. Topics included:

- The National Unity by Fadwa Khader
- Women's Role in Shaping Political History in the Region by Ms. Amal Khreisheh
- Judaizing and Isolating the City of Jerusalem by Ms. Huda Imam
- UN Resolution 1325 by Ms. Salwa Hdeib
- The Annexation Apartheid Wall's effects on Palestinian Women (Psychologically, socially and economically) by Ms. Rima Awad
- Gender by Ms. Sama Oweidah
- Education in Jerusalem in the Context of the Teachers' Strike by a representative from the Ministry of Education

A number of newsletters and publications were issued by the JCW through the media unit including:

- A film about the Jerusalem Center for Women's popular activities, trainings, panels through its different programs.
- A postcard issued on the 9<sup>th</sup> of December, International Refugees Day, stating the UN law in this regard.
- Broadcast of a public hearing on Aljazeera Satellite live channel on International Women's Day with a group of women whose houses were demolished or under the threat of demolition.
- A booklet and postcard about House Demolitions in Jerusalem as part of the Jerusalem Link Campaign against this policy; to be published by the first half of 2007. The booklet and postcard are to be published jointly between the Jerusalem Link and Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions ICAHD.

Of the main reports written and circulated on the Internet are different official JCW statements such as; "Jerusalem Center for Women assures the urgent need

for ending War-Crimes”, (8-August 2006)<sup>5</sup> “Repressing a Peaceful Demonstration at Al-Ram Checkpoint” (3<sup>rd</sup>-May, 2006)<sup>6</sup>

As a result of all the activities mentioned above; the 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 which attracted other local networks to approach JCW to carry out interviews with the staff at JCW discussing JCW’s role, vision and activities. The JCW advanced its values through supporting Palestinian women on many political and social levels in Jerusalem in a distinctive manner. The center also played a big role in campaigns to stop the judaization of the city of Jerusalem

## ❖ TRAINING & EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMS

### **Women & Elections**

In 2005, the Jerusalem Center for Women brought about 40 young women from different areas surrounding Jerusalem such as (Abu-Dis, Bethany, Sawahreh, Dahiet Al-Barid) all of whom were university students and women activists, in order to create a cadre of young women activists aware of and able to participate in the monitoring process of the elections.

The Jerusalem Center for Women was successful in becoming a non-governmental monitor of the elections and post elections processes in the different areas surrounding Jerusalem. Moreover, JCW submitted reports to the Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizen’s Rights - PICCR on violations that occurred during the Election Day legislations, besides realizing the importance of women’s participation in peace and nation building.

### ***Success Story:***

#### ***Wafa' Abdel-Halim Ghazawneh:***

*Wafa' is one of the participants of JCW through the project "Women & Elections". Wafa' is a Jerusalemite citizen, mother of two children, who explained the direct impact of the project on her personally.*

*The different trainings with JCW Empowered me, as I learned how to nominate myself for local elections, how to organize my election campaign, how to outreach with women in Al-ram district and support their initiatives as well as how to care for the needs of citizens."*

*"...further I became more aware of my legal status and my rights and responsibilities at the Local Council are clearer for me."*

*She added that sharing the experience with the JCW staff helped in analyzing her priorities. She mentioned over that women members in Al-Ram Local Council*

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<sup>5</sup> Appendix 5

<sup>6</sup> Appendix 6

*specifically and in the other Local Councils generally are more aware and experienced than men since women support themselves with the experience and knowledge that they gained at different trainings; whereas men in those councils refer many times to women for consultation.*

*Wafa' further added that currently, the Local Councils haven't begun any projects because of the financial status that the entire Palestinian sector is suffering from and which it faces due to the lack of channeling of any financial aid. Thus, it is not possible to achieve any of the proposed plans of the Local Council women members who aim to empower and support women in different areas. Wafa' concluded by calling upon the different NGO's to keep supporting and empowering women through different projects and trainings that help in raising the awareness of women in the different Palestinian villages and towns, which doubles her ambitions to achieve their aims, but with more power through the knowledge gained!*

#### ▪ **Empowering Women: Towards Activism**

Based on the increasing pace of change in the geographic and demographic status of Jerusalem parallel to those in the economic, social, health, physical, and psychological conditions of the victims of demolished houses, Palestinian women often carry the burden of their displacement and perform dual roles of supporting family members young and old, affording them their basic needs and protecting them from trouble. Thus, there is an obvious infliction of suffering and psychological pressure practiced upon these women due to the tension, fear and distress. Not to mention the women in society who are already marginalized. Women therefore need to understand and evaluate the many roles they are playing and to recognize the support they will need in order to survive and prosper in these extreme situations.

The Towards Activism project consisted of a civic education program targeting three groups of women from diverse geographic, economic, and educational backgrounds including Wadi-Yasoul in Jerusalem, the Old City of Jerusalem, young women from civil society organizations and Women at Local Councils.

The project also included a lobbying and advocacy training campaign which was implemented in the second phase of the project through publishing a poster about the ethnic cleansing in Jerusalem.

The target groups were trained on different topics such as gender, communication skills, history and the concept of human rights, civil and political rights, humanitarian international law, CEDAW, needs assessment, personal status law, family courts and applications, women's rights comparison between religion, laws and societal laws, protection – security and safety, protection laws and their application.

Other activities included visiting Palestinian NGO's such as the Women's Studies Center and the Arab Thought Forum.

The JCW has also started working on empowering women in local councils on different topics such as: democratic communities, human security, the role of a

local council member, conducting sessions in local councils, in addition to the tasks of the legislative council, the judicial body and the executive authority.

These women come from local village councils of the Bethlehem district such as *Tquo'*, *Bateer*, *Jenata*, *Beit Fajar*, *Wadi Fokin*, *Al-Khader*, *Al- Walajeh*, *Al- Abeedyeh*, *Al- Shawawreh*, *Zaatara*, *Joret Al- Shamaa'*.

The JCW had conducted a needs assessment workshop in which women reflected the need for attaining knowledge on certain issues and the eagerness to create mechanisms that ensure sustainable communication with different legislative and executive bodies of the PNA. The participants along with the trainer pinpointed the issues they need to work on as local council's members and as women. They agreed on running a campaign in the legislative council through presenting a petition including their demands.

On December 27, 2006, the women headed to the legislative council with their demands. They met the head of the legislative council and some other legislative council members. They expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to visit the legislative council and its parts, and meeting the decision making parties. Women along with the legislative council members discussed the list of demands which revolved mainly around:

- equality with the municipal councils with regard to the reward for meetings,
- allocation of part of the proceeds of fuel for the local councils
- The activation of article 53 of the Civil Service Law No. 4; the demand for the implementation of the article on women
- Review of the application of the law of social insurance
- Reimbursing the teachers who work in rehabilitation institutions of the disabled (paid) by the Palestinian National Authority
- Diverting the kindergarten sector from private to a governmental one.
- Activation of the Disabled Persons Law No. (4) Of the year 1999; the monitor, the executive branch and its various institutions

Major out comes of this project included a poster about "Ethnic Cleansing in East Jerusalem" and a documentary film about the JCW and its activities.

### ***Success Story***

#### ***Jihad- Um Tawfeeq – Wadi Yasoul***

*Jihad- Um Tawfeeq lives in Wadi-Yasoul neighborhood of Silwan; an area going through the vicious Israeli policy of house demolitions. There are about 30 houses in this neighborhood that have demolition orders. In the public hearing press conference held on the International Women's Day, women narrated their stories and brought to light the details of their daily sufferings in the context of house demolitions speaking about the psychological, social, economical and health effects of this policy.*

*Um Tawfeeq is one of the participants in a general target group. The JCW had followed her cases through different advocacy campaigns and civic education programs that helped them expose their cases directly to the international community. Um Tawfeeq was a main activist in the March 8<sup>th</sup> events as she spoke out about her suffering as a human being first and foremost, and as a woman who has been oppressed. Um Tawfeeq explained that her voice is the voice of all the*

women in her neighborhood who consider it important that their voices are heard throughout the whole world and particularly through the media. Women urged for local and international solidarity to advocate and support Palestinian Jerusalemite women who continuously suffer from Israeli violations manifested mainly in the apartheid wall, settlements, land expropriation, house demolitions, and family reunification.

*Um Tawfeeq says: “it was a very difficult situation for me and my children... I’ll share with you how I’ve built this house; my husband and I bought a piece of land as we used to live in a very tiny house of one room. I always dreamt of a bigger house and separate rooms for me and my kids, with our own furniture. No sooner had we cheerfully finished building the house, than we received a small piece of paper notifying us that the house will be demolished. I was shocked and gazed at my kids as they were sleeping, carrying the burdens of debts on my shoulders... It was quite a short time after that when the bulldozers appeared one day, demolishing the house. I carried my children and ran away watching from afar how they are demolishing it.*

*Our dreams had vanished leaving us all with psychological stress... we took shelter at our neighbors’ house that was also under the threat of demolition till we could find another shelter as my husband works at a restaurant...” She then explained how the Jerusalem Center for Women looked for the women whose houses were demolished or under the threat of demolition for legal, social and psychological counseling. Herein, she mentioned the vital role that Dr. Nadera Shalhoub Kevorkian, the Criminologist and Human Rights Activist, played in psychologically letting out the stress and anger, besides addressing how and what could be done about the devastation.*

*“Imagine that even the kids sat with Dr. Nadera drawing pictures of their houses describing its details...” she commented. Jihad – Um Tawfeeq further pointed out the vital role that the JCW played in introducing the women to the different consulates to exert the necessary pressure required for stopping such policies, including the Public Hearing Press Conference where the women addressed their cases directly to media representatives worldwide, explaining how they are displaced as families and children due to such brutal measures.*

#### ▪ **Civic Education: Women Leadership program**

In 2006, the Jerusalem Center for Women's civic education program approached women in the Villages of North West Jerusalem and students at Abu-Dis University as the center committed to reaching Jerusalemite women where-ever they are. The JCW chose those locations that were rarely approached by institutions looking to help them. It is important to mention that the JCW had already targeted these areas previously based on the women’s and students’ needs, which had been expressed to the center. Thus, the JCW succeeded in establishing relationships and building trust with the women from these areas.

**The target groups included** women from villages North West of Jerusalem (Beit Anan, Beit Sourik, Qatanna, Beit Ijza): these women were housewives and young women who finished high school and/or university. The program has been implemented at the women center in Beit Anan.

Another target group included female and male students of Abu Dis University: the group hailed from law, social work, and political science faculties. The program was implemented at the University of Abu Dis. The main topics covered in this Civic Education training through 12 meetings in the villages and 14 meetings at the University included; gender, democracy and human rights, personal status law, violence against women, early marriage, legal and psychological counseling.

Additionally the *awareness raising campaign* method was applied to Al-Quds University students. They suggested that it should be implemented in 4 summer camps in the Abu Dis area. The participants along with the coordinator chose to give training on the issue of “*Violence against Women*” to the female youth of the summer camps. Sessions focused on identifying women’s organizations’ concepts and roles in terms of reaching out to violated women.

As for Beit Anan the participants formed small women’s groups each in her area and the issue of violence against women was discussed intensively in terms of how to get the help needed for cases of violence against women. A definition was made of the women’s organizations in Jerusalem and Ramallah and their role. This session achieved raising awareness towards violence against women and provided women with the needed organizations to reach out for help. The session continued with exchanging stories and experiences.

Another Civic Education program targeted women between the ages of 18-50 in the Jerusalem district and rural areas of **North Jerusalem and North West Jerusalem** including Dahyat Al Barid and Al Ram, BirNabala, Al-Jeeb, Qatanna, Bido, Beit Sourek, Beit Anan and Bait Deqqo.

**Also, South Jerusalem Areas** including Abu Dees, Sawahra, Al Ezareya, Anata, Beit Sahour, Bethlehem, Beit Jala (villages in Bethlehem Area in General).

**Topics of the trainings included** – the judicial authority and its responsibilities, legislative authority and its responsibilities, executive authority and its responsibilities, basic law, personal status law, criminal law, UN Resolution 1325, human rights, U.N.’s instruments on human rights, international law, democracy and democratization, overlook on feminism, history and development of the Palestinian women’s movement, women and legislation, non-governmental organizations in general and their role in different societies, fundraising skills and project management.

On the other hand, the Jerusalem Center for Women conducted research about “Women in the Local Councils”- to be published. The research discusses the mapping process of the local council elections; more specifically where did the women’s movement fail in the mapping process and where did it succeed? A previous research assessment was done by the JCW as documentation of the 1996, Palestinian elections in terms of women, focusing on findings of the Presidential and Council elections. However, this second research project is more specifically about the Local Council elections and why some female candidates succeeded and were elected, while others were not. The research will be translated and distributed to the different Palestinian and international civil society organizations as soon as it is ready.

The research in part II of the Civic Education Project of the Training for empowerment programs successfully promotes the organization's goal of Palestinian women's empowerment in community and political activism as well as the advancement of their rights and status.

**Success Stories:**

***Khitam Malloukh (Um Rabee')***; is one of the main activists at the Civic Education- Women Leadership program who comes from one of the villages in North Ramallah. *Khitam emphasized that the Jerusalem Center for Women was the very first organization to implement a project that pays attention to women in this Palestinian Village. The JCW was concerned to raise the awareness of women about their rights with a peaceful means of attaining them. Khitam stated that: "Women in the village are ignorant of their rights in many issues related to their social and family status, as well as early marriage..."*

*She called on the JCW and different organizations to continue follow-ups and trainings so that women could be empowered and lead to a more positive role in their communities by addressing issues of awareness and sharing their skills with others in the target group. Um Rabee' emphasized the importance of such trainings through sharing personal stories about women and the effect these trainings had in their villages and on their understandings of human rights. Furthermore, she suggested providing women with small loans so that they can fund, plan and implement their own income-generating projects, which serve to enhance the self-esteem of women especially through economic independence.*

***Ghadeer Ghneim, Student at Al-Quds University / Abu Dis***

*Ghadeer is one of the participants at the Civic Education- Women Leadership program that JCW held at Al-Quds University in Abu-Dis targeting university students. The project increases the awareness in topics related to elections, current political issues, the Palestinian Reality and the International treaties and Human Rights Conventions.*

*Ghadeer explains: "With regards to Political Science as it is the field of my study at the university, I benefited a lot from the training held by the Jerusalem Center for Women. It is one of the best tools that clarified the international conventions for me, the chronology of the Palestinian cause, the Gender and Human Rights issues, in addition to raising the awareness of the male students about Gender issues"*.

*Ghadeer comprehended that the fruits of the different trainings evolved during the discussions and debates at workshops and afterwards. "As university students, we call upon JCW to continue such non-formal education, which help in shaping our individual views." Ghadeer mentioned that raising awareness about women's roles in the election process, provided students with the chance to become more familiar with election laws. As Jerusalemite girls, she was among those who monitored the election process at the Jerusalem District in the Legislative Council elections of 2006.*

- **Training of Trainers (ToT) - Capacity Building Program**

The Jerusalem Center for Women is currently conducting a “Training of Trainers – ToT” project on a weekly basis aiming at enhancing women's abilities and capacities, especially those who work in the civil society field. These trainings also provided women with the knowledge and the skills which will improve their personal and career status. The JCW took this approach to give women the opportunity to create another generation of trainers where women are equally proficient and capable of continuing the process.

The JCW staff has chosen the trainers from the most professional trainers in the field of facilitation and TOT trainings. The trainers chosen are the best in this field and the most accredited across the country. The 20 participants came from different women’s organizations and other Human Rights organizations such as the *Jerusalem Center for Women, The Palestinian Land authority, Al- Sadiq Al-Tayeb Association, Ensan Center for Democracy & Human Rights, Teacher Creativity Center, Palestinian Vision organization, Palestinian Working Women Society for Development, Women’s Affairs Technical Committee, PICCR, PARC/ Bait Rima Women’s Center, PARC/ Yabroud Women’s Center, Bait Anan Cultural Forum, Spaford*. Furthermore, all of these women hold positions in their institutions ranging from directors to lawyers, project managers and social workers (including JCW staff members). Training sessions included - Concepts of Facilitation, Gender & Lobbying for Fair Change, Gender & the Roles of Human Beings in Society, Gender Issues, Self Assertion Sessions, Successful Facilitation Techniques, and many others. These sessions were followed by a practicum consisting of 25 additional training hours for each participant in order to implement the theories they have had learned.

Workshops began on August 30, 2006, and are expected to continue until mid-March, to be followed afterwards by practicums in different theories. The Jerusalem Center for Women hosted 12 workshops including about 91 training hours in 2006; topics covered included *an introduction to TOT, Gender, Self Assertion, Communication Skills, Presentation, Definitions, Analysis of Facilitation, and Facilitation Models, Group Psychodynamics - Roles and Positions of Facilitators*.

As sessions evolved one could sense that participants were more able to express themselves in correct terminologies, as well as an ability to be open to change and different points of view. Participants expressed opinions that the information and the techniques they learned contributed to their social and career development in an obvious and practical ways.

This project is unique and distinguished in that it targets groups representing different sectors of Palestinian civil society including a variety of educational, social, and political backgrounds and experiences. In the first half of 2007, it is expected that these workshops will continue and reach up to 175 training hours, followed by 25 practicum hours.

- ** JCW Internal Environment (Staff Capacity Building)**

The year 2006 was marked by significant changes within the internal working environment of the JCW. At a time when field projects were empowering women in the Palestinian community towards political activism, involvement in nation and state building and in the decision making process, a parallel empowerment was taking place internally with the staff of the JCW.

Capacity building for the staff took several different forms; **Strategic Planning, Outlook Feminism Workshops and the Development of a Media Department and Establishment of a Legal Unit**

The **Strategic Planning** was done in two intensive full-day workshops (February 25-26, 2006). The details of the JCW working map were dealt with in depth. JCW staff members along with the head of the board of trustees and a few of the JCW board members joined the meetings that dealt with these topics.

Capacity building for the staff of the JCW continued in May in three consecutive meetings (May 3, 10, & 17) given by **Dr. Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian** about *the history and development of Women's Liberation Movements*. Introducing the different women's movements as the liberal, marxist, radical, socialist, racist, and post-colonialist, was very important to the staff, as young female leaders who can understand and become sensitive to the gender perspective in the politics of peace. The staff were appreciative in that they are more able to realize now how they are involved in their own society as well as the bigger picture of feminist movements worldwide. The staff understood how their work on gender issues was important and no different than the many other theories and principles that called for women's empowerment and women's participation in decision making as equal partners worldwide.

A meeting with Kvinna Kvinna took place on September 30, 2006 to discuss their latest release **"To Make Room for Changes – Peace Strategies from Women Organizations in Bosnia and Herzegovina"**.

The meeting revolved around how Palestinian organizations' work has been effective in working towards peace and democracy. It was also expressed that most organizations wanted to increase awareness of women's participation as a prerequisite for a sustainable peace. The JCW as a partner of KtK participated in this meeting and shared in the organizational vision, mission and experience.

Additionally, the JCW staff attended several workshops and represented the organization in activities such as:

- Between 13/3/2006 – 16/3/2006 Shereen Barakat participated in a three day intensive workshop about International Humanitarian Law.
- Between 20/6/2006 – 22/6/2006 Shereen Barakat and Zahra Hdeeb participated in a three day intensive workshop about negotiation skills.
- Between 13/9/2006 – 14/9/2006 Mariam Ikerawi participated in a two day intensive workshop about Transparency, Integrity and Accountability in civil society organizations.

In addition to the internal capacity building and the regional meetings and workshops that JCW is present at, the JCW receives many invitations to meetings

beyond the Palestinian territories. The JCW sends staff and representatives to different conferences and study visits, reflecting Palestinian Women's voices and reality, and seeking to increase the awareness of the international community towards calling for justice and ending the occupation.

The JCW staff and active members of JCW's General Assembly and friends attended on August 17, a **Video Conference** held by the US consulate on **"Women and Political Participation"** together, Sarah E. Brewer, the associate director of the Women and Politics Institute at the American University and the attendees discussed the role of women in election campaigns and political life.

Additional training with the US consulate on leadership (**Collaborative Approach to Problem Solving**) took place last December facilitated by Yvonne R. Davis / DAVIS Communication.

The target group included JCW staff, female leaders from different local councils, as well as active grassroots women and youth. The workshop defined problem solving, collaboration, how to employ collaborative problem solving, sequential steps to problem solving, problem solving techniques, overcoming barriers to problem solving, negotiating your way by using the collaborative process and the leadership role as facilitator, mediator and conciliator when problem solving.

The Jerusalem Center for Women will follow up in the process of internal capacity building and development of the organization through analyzing and restructuring the organization. By 2007, the Legal Unit will formally launch its activities that will focus on documenting and consulting on legal violations against Palestinian women inside the city of Jerusalem. Furthermore, the JCW persists in stressing the importance of focusing more attention and directing more efforts jointly with the Jerusalem Link towards advocacy and lobbying against the judaization and continued occupation of the city of Jerusalem in 2007.

## **Appendices: Appendix 1**

### Letter addressed to Consulates

**Your Excellency**

**December 14, 2005**

Jerusalem Center for Women is a Palestinian non-governmental women's Center located in East Jerusalem. JCW envisions Palestinian women empowered and involved in the process of nation and state building and all aspects of civil society development. Our organization is committed to advance its peace work, despite the consideration of changing political realities. As a social, political, human rights, and cultural organization—we ask you for your support for a just and lawful peace process between Palestinians and Israelis. Further, we ask that you ensure that women are not left out of the process. Hereby we address the following concern aiming to protect and advance Palestinian women's rights and status.

Since 1967 the Israeli military forces have adopted several measures at various levels to change Jerusalem's status especially the Old City. There have been continuous attempts to Judaize the city, thus violating the Fourth Geneva Convention of 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 of the occupying forces' population into the heart of the land it occupies.

A silent transfer is taking place in Jerusalem. The indigenous citizens of the city, Palestinian Jerusalemites, are coming under increasing pressure to leave the city of their ancestors, simply by denying them building permits and restricting their movement and access to jobs and education.

In addition, the implanting of Jewish settlers in all-Arab neighborhoods is not done in the spirit of co-existence, rather in the explicit intention of driving the Palestinian inhabitants of Arab East Jerusalem outside of the city once and for all. The Israeli Occupation in Jerusalem, as elsewhere in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, is in grave violation of the Fourth Geneva Conventions, especially with regards to their obligations towards the citizens of the country it occupies. Absentee Property Law, a sketched Zionist Plan in 1999 to build 200 new residential units in the area, an aim to bring an entire gross of 100,000 settlers half of which already exists, tying up settlements as Ma'ale Adumim Settlement which covers 33% (10Km<sup>2</sup>) out of its actual plan (35 KM<sup>2</sup>) are among several unmentioned figures aiming to seize as much land and expel as many citizens as possible, this eliminating any form of sovereignty in East Jerusalem.

**These actions are in full violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention as Article 53 (concerning *house demolishing*) and Article 49 (*concerning settling the occupation people in occupied territories*), as well as all the subsequent**

**international resolutions of the United Nations that condemn all the measures applied in East Jerusalem to change its status including the citizens themselves and their properties. The Israeli Military Occupying Forces are contravening the principles of contemporary International Law, violating tens of international laws in this regard most of which / mainly are the General Assembly Resolutions (2253 of the year 1967, 2254 of the year 1967, 2851 of the year 1971, 2949 of the year 1972) and the Security Council Resolutions ( 252 of the year 1968, 267 of the year 1969, 271 of the year 1969, 298 of the year 1971, 465 of the year 1980, 476 of the year 1980, 478 of the year 1980, 672 of the year 1990) and many more.**

JCW is excessively concerned with the continuous measures that are being adopted and applied to change Jerusalem's status through violating International Humanitarian Laws, and those laws presented and agreed upon in International agreements and human rights conventions.

JCW calls upon the International Community to hold Israel (as the Occupation Force) accountable to its international commitment as prescribed in the United Nations Charter of the year 1945 related to international peace and security. In addition, the International Community should obligate Israel, whose membership in the UN was contingent upon the respect of all UN resolutions, to implement all its commitments to the UN political committee;

JCW calls the Signatory Parties of the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention, to hold Israel accountable to its commitment as prescribed in the Fourth Geneva Convention regarding the protection of civilians at war-time, and the condemnation of Israeli acts against Jerusalem and its citizens as it has violated the rules of convention.

JCW calls the European Union to practice pressure on the Israeli Occupation Forces and exercise political and legal will in order to halt illegal Israeli measures in East-Jerusalem.

And last but not least, JCW calls International and local Human Rights Organizations to mount a public campaign against the illegality of Israel's actions in East Jerusalem and seek to enforce and uphold international law, by legal actions against specific persons and/or the State of Israel, whose continuous current actions in East Jerusalem (and elsewhere in the Occupied Territories) can only be labeled as war crimes. May peace prevail!

Sincerely yours,

Jerusalem Center for Women

Occupied Jerusalem, Palestine

## **Appendix 2**

### **The Jerusalem Link declaration on International Women's Day 2006**

On the occasion of the international women's day, we, Palestinian and Israeli women of the Jerusalem Link, reaffirm our commitment for the realization of our common vision for a just peace between our two people.

As women and mothers, we affirm that the continuation of the Israeli occupation and all its manifestations is the perpetrator of human rights violations, and serves as the engine behind the further fueling of the conflict between the two people.

Time has come for a political settlement based on the ending of occupation and the recognition of Israel to the legitimate national and human rights of the Palestinian people. Such a settlement will pave the path for the two independent and viable states, which will guarantee the security of both peoples.

Therefore, the fundamental elements of any comprehensive and political settlement are:

- 1) The end of the Israeli occupation, a full withdrawal to the 4<sup>th</sup> of June 1967 borders and dismantlement of all Israeli settlements on the occupied territories, as a step towards the establishment of an independent sovereign Palestinian state alongside the state of Israel.
- 2) Acknowledgement of the city of Jerusalem as shared capitals for two states. Halting of various unilateral actions on the ground to create a defacto new reality and to isolate East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank, illegal house demolitions, identity confiscation, land confiscation, and settlement building (ethnic cleansing to maintain a Jewish majority of 70% to 30% in the eastern part of the city).
- 3) The structure of occupation and all its manifestation must be ended: collective punishment, checkpoints "humiliation zones", closures, the separation wall, house demolitions and land confiscation, and all other attempts to the defragmentation and bantustanization of the West Bank and the continuation of separation between West Bank from Gaza Strip.
- 4) Any political settlement must be based on negotiations between equals which can guarantee a sustainable peace opposed to unilateralism which will preempt such a political settlement.
- 5) Compliance with the international law and conventions (UN Security Council resolutions) and especially 4<sup>th</sup> Geneva Convention, and the need for international action to compel Israel to act in accordance with universal human rights.

In view of the current policies, we follow with deep concern the threat and actual use of superior power of the occupier in the pursuit of illegitimate aims. Specifically, we reject the Israeli policy of halting the financial revenue entitled to the Palestinian authority following the recent elections for the Palestinian legislative council.

As feminist peace activists, struggling for equal rights for all segments of the society, for democracy based on values of freedom, solidarity and non-violence, we believe that our equal and active participation in negotiation for peace is essential, and in accordance with the U.N. resolution 1325.

We call upon women and men in the region and elsewhere to join us in making our vision of peace a reality.

Jerusalem, March 8, 2006

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**Appendix 3**  
**On the occasion of the 8<sup>th</sup> of March**  
**Jerusalem Center for Women presents Women's testimonies**  
**on the Israeli violations practiced upon them**

On the occasion of International Women's Day of the 8<sup>th</sup> of March, Jerusalem Center for Women (JCW) held the press conference **“Testimonies of Jerusalemite-Palestinian Women ...Collective Punishment...Violations...Suffering”** bringing light to their lives under the Israeli occupation.

The conference was held with the presence of the local and international press, international missions, and representatives of foreign and local NGO's who attended the conference which took place at the YWCA in East Jerusalem and started at 10:00 am until 12:00 pm.

Dr. Nadera Shalhoub- Kevorkian (Criminologist and Human Rights Activist) facilitated the conference while six women spoke of their experiences and then led the discussion that took place afterwards.

At the beginning of the conference, Dr. Nadera addressed a greeting to all women all over the world and a special greeting to Palestinian women who are living under the brutal practices of the Israeli occupation that are violating the individual and collective rights of Palestinian women. Dr. Nadera gave an introduction to the Israeli policy of home demolitions and specifically in Jerusalem and explained the different ways of how Palestinian women are suffering from it.

The conference commenced with dialogue and interaction between Dr. Nadera and the Palestinian women (who were mostly from Wadi-Yasoul neighborhood of Silwan). These women are going through the Israeli vicious policy of house demolitions. There are about 30 houses in this neighborhood that have demolition orders. These women narrated their stories and brought to light the little details of their daily sufferings in the context of house demolitions speaking of the psychological, social, economical, health effects of this policy.

Sana' from Wadi Yasoul narrated her dream of building a house of her own since her marriage- 9 years ago. After realizing this dream she was given a demolition order and a high fine by the Israeli municipality under the claim of having no permit to build the house. Even though Sana' and her husband worked hard to afford the exorbitant amount of fines and pay them, they still received an order that they should demolish the house by themselves.

Jihad (50 years old) lives with her 12 family members in a small house built from wood and zinco on an 80 meters square area. And after 30 years of marriage they decided to build a better house for the family in place of the old one and so they did and also received a demolition order to put the house down. Mrs. Jihad stated in confusion and bewilderment: “My husband was arrested and my son was imprisoned because of building a house without permit although we tried all the possible legal measures to obtain a permit but we were never authorized one!”

**Huda**, Jerusalemite resident, narrated how she lives nowadays in a rented house after her house was demolished. “It was such a beautiful house where I drew nice roses and butterflies on the walls for my children to have some hope. We were so happy to finally have our own private house; yet this happiness didn’t last long as we received an order of 40,000 Shekels fine because the house was built with no permit. We were obliged to pay the fine, and then moved to live there as we thought that it was over and solved after the payments. Unexpectedly we received another fine of 28,000 shekels, accompanied by the order of demolition in addition to firing my husband from his work because he was considered as a law-breaker!,” Huda said.

Huda’s house was built on a land that her husband inherited from his father, so in the legal context it’s her own property; but after demolishing the house they expropriated the land too. Huda frustrated, angry and afraid was asking and wondering: “where do I to move? Where to shelter? Where to put my children? How may I ask my kids to sleep in the streets? Abandon their rooms and dreams? Whom may I rely on? My husband is unemployed, my children are young, and I went out and forged my way to find work so as to be able to pay the amounts of fines! The Israeli municipality of Jerusalem destroyed our lives before demolishing our house!” was of her final expressions in her testimony.

Filled with anxiety, Ra’eda from Wadi-Yasoul explained: “Our daily talk goes no further than the bulldozers that might show up at any moment to demolish our houses, regardless of the fact of our children’s dreams...their own paintings...their own rooms...their peace that’s uprooted from their souls and minds...the innocence that is stolen from their childhood!”

At the end of the conference, the women ascertained that despite these cruel Israeli policies and threats that the Israeli government acts and the penalties that may double as a result of their participation in the conference, they still took part in the activities of the 8<sup>th</sup> of March to speak out about their suffering as humans first and foremost and as women in the second place who are treated inhumanely. They said that it was important for them that their voices are heard throughout the whole world and particularly through the media. Women urged for local and international solidarity to advocate and support Palestinian Jerusalemite women who continuously suffer from the Israeli violations manifested mainly in the apartheid wall, settlements, land expropriation, house demolition and family reunification.

On the same day, Jerusalem Center for Women organized a Palestinian women peaceful demonstration. The demonstration headed from Jerusalem Center for Women at Dahiet Al-Bareed in East Jerusalem up to the Israeli Checkpoint of Qalandia (Humiliation Zone). Masses from different Palestinian NGO’s and grassroots from Jerusalem and the villages surrounding it, along with Israeli women peace activists joined this demonstration who wanted to express their solidarity with the Palestinians against the Annexation Wall and the continuous Israeli violations in Jerusalem against its Palestinian residents. The demonstration was also held in refusal of the Israeli unilateral actions that the Israeli government implies restricting any chance for a two state solution called for by the International community and the US.

Besides, Jerusalem Center for Women and the Israeli Bat- Shalom under the Jerusalem Link issued a joint letter on the occasion of International Women's Day to express the vision of the Jerusalem Link of a just peace and implementation of human rights and international law in the region towards a peaceful resolution to the conflict. As Palestinian and Israeli women who believe that their equal and active participation in negotiation for peace is essential, and in accordance with the United Nations resolution 1325; together they called for **the end of the Israeli occupation, the full withdrawal to the 4<sup>th</sup> of June 1967 borders, the dismantlement of all Israeli settlements on the occupied territories, the acknowledgement of the city of Jerusalem as shared capitals for two states, the halting of various unilateral actions on the ground to create a de facto new reality and to isolate East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank, the illegal house demolitions, identity confiscation, land confiscation, and settlement building (ethnic cleansing to maintain a Jewish majority of 70% to 30% in the eastern part of the city). Additionally, the political settlement must be based on negotiations between equals with Compliance with the international law and conventions.**

Ms. Zahira Kamal, former Minister of Ministry of Women's Affairs and member of the Board of Trustees of JCW stressed that Israel should abide totally to the International Court of Justice resolutions with regards to the Annexation Wall in the Palestinian territories and specifically in Jerusalem as it violates and has dangerous effects on the individual rights of the Palestinians. The light should be shed on the policy of house demolitions that the Israeli government is applying against the Jerusalemite citizens which is a grave violation that is taking place on a wide but scattered pace. Ms. Zahira also called for the implementation of the Security Council role of imposing sanctions on Israel as any other country that violates human rights and international laws in the world.

Mrs. Salwa Hdeeb Qannam, Head of Board of Trustees of JCW and Deputy Minister at the Ministry of Women's Affairs reassured that the Israeli municipality of Jerusalem demolished 150 houses in the year 2004 and 94 houses in the year 2005, in addition to another 1,000 houses that are currently under the threat of demolition. Herein she called for the immediate end to the policy of house demolitions against Jerusalemite Palestinians in occupied East Jerusalem considering this as a brutal violation to the right of housing and living in peace and security and to the respect of individual and collective rights in the Holy City. Mrs. Hdeeb condemned the continuous Israeli occupation of the Palestinian and Arab territories and called for the full withdrawal of Israel back to the 1967 borders. Herein, she assured that peace, security and dignity for both peoples will not ever be achieved through the hegemony of power. This is proven by 39 years of failed attempts to settle the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Thus, the moral values are the basis for a genuine and lasting peace.

## Appendix 4

### House Demolition: A Palestinian Feminist Perspective

By Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian, Ph.D

For Jerusalem Center for Women

The literature that has been generated on women in violent and politically conflicted zones generally attempts to reveal women's victimization in more public than private contexts. In fact, it would be fair to say that the 'politics of conflict' itself, is almost always considered a matter that is played out in the public arena. By contrast, this introductory remark would like to reveal the ways in which the home front is closely allied to the violence of the more public face of conflict and war. Thus, the essay hopes to illuminate that space of confluence of the private sphere and the larger political and politicized and public space beyond. In attempting to do so, this introduction specifically looks at Israeli military attacks on Palestinian house demolitions, and seeks to sketch the effects of such demolitions on Palestinian women. In adapting a critical feminist perspective that believes in the need to offer oppositional epistemologies and consciousness, I would like to focus on the gender effect of the crime of the actual or threat of house demolition and sealing that was and is used by the Israeli government throughout the occupation of the Palestinian land in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Over the past decades, Israel has systematically confiscated land from Palestinians both inside Israel and in the Palestinian Occupied Territories (POT), and engaged in the demolition of houses on this land and has continued to violate international human rights and international humanitarian laws. Legally, house demolitions are considered a war crime under the Geneva Conventions of the 1949. In addition, the Security Council on 19 May 2004 adopted resolution 1544, which reiterate the obligation of Israel, as the occupying power, to scrupulously abide by its legal obligations and responsibilities under the Fourth Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 that addresses the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, and other resolutions on the Palestinian questions. Israel has repeatedly failed to abide by its obligations under the international human rights convention such as the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination; the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and more. On the 27<sup>th</sup> of May, 2004, Adalah, the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, and Al-Haq ( a Palestinian NGO spell out what the acronym stands for) filed a petition and a motion asking the Supreme Court to define - for the first time- the legal scope of the term "military necessity" in accordance with international humanitarian law, the Rome Statutes of the International Criminal Court and the recent decisions of the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia. The reason behind such a request was the constant abuses committed against Palestinian residents in the name of "military necessity" and or the "security threats" these residents ostensibly represent.

As an often used tactic of the Israeli military, house demolitions, has been a very powerful method for militarizing spaces and imposing spatial dominance, that also intensifies the continual policing of Palestinian spaces, giving sweeping power to the Israeli state, the military and the police, allowing them to attack without discrimination.. Perhaps less obvious, but of critical importance is the fact that house demolitions turn the home—both materially and symbolically--into a battle field, thus there are no safe havens left for Palestinian citizens. The militarization of the domestic spaces through the policy of house demolitions turns the private, political, indeed the bodily space of the Palestinian men and woman into a hinterland within the more recognizable conflict zones. The home, once legitimized as a battle field can be destroyed, attacked, dislocated and confiscated at any given time. In addition, sporadic and arbitrary “security laws” and regulations, seemingly enacted to help the Israeli state identify “terrorists” and those spaces that can potentially destabilize Israeli society, have in turn ended up jeopardizing the security and indeed the livelihood of the Palestinian people. Such pseudo legalized justifications for military actions, including the militarized use of confiscated lands (see also Ghanem Rouhana & Yiftachel, 1998; Zureik, 1978; Shehadeh, 1998; Rouhana, 1997; Kimmerling, 1983) have further aggravated an always already racialized social structure and policy. Needless to say, such actions have also exacerbated the socioeconomic exclusion of the Palestinians, tremendous feeling of insecurity and caused constant internal displacement. Moreover, the racialized policy formed internal ghettos, and isolated communities detached from each other. Palestinians have become the underclass that resides in socially and physically isolated spaces, lacking economic stability and long-term jobs, enduring continuous loss of land, home and loved ones, and suffering social instability and loss of and connections with loved one’s.

Palestinian women suffer in unique and specific ways from house demolitions, and all the other arbitrary military actions that attend them. The caprices of the Israeli military have increased Palestinian women's vulnerability to violence, and particularly affected those most vulnerable such as younger and older women, displaced and refugee women, women from low socio-economic situation, unemployed women, expectant mothers and those who are gravely ill and in need of immediate access to medical care. The loss of the home, added to the restrictions of movement, the constant humiliating treatment of the Palestinians and the increased hidden and apparent military measures to capture/threaten those that their houses are under the risk of being demolished changed and in some cases transformed women’s gender roles tremendously. Apart from such immediate, material impacts, house demolitions have long term affects such as limiting or negating women's access to education, social services, medical services, support systems and economic resources. The gendered differences and gaps between men and women was not only enhanced but also abused by military forces when relating to house demolition. Military forces violated social and familial norms and intentionally sexually and socially harassed women and humiliated and used violence against men and women publicly and privately. The humiliation of men in front of women, and the abuse of women publicly and in their private spaces among their male family members, mainly before, during and following house demolitions increased the social fears and sense of insecurity towards the safety of women, and affected what feminist

would call not the difference between men and women, but the difference such a difference makes.

Given the gendered socio-economic structure, house demolitions inordinately impacts women, for the home is where women most acutely invest their time, build their safety nets, advance their talents and hobbies, carry on their work of looking after the family, and carrying on with their life responsibilities. Once the home is destroyed, women are left with the metaphoric and symbolic burdens—*which are no less real than the material loss of a safe place to live*—of not having a sense of safety and place of belonging, a source of memories. The destruction of the home changed women's previous gender roles sharply and required them to face new challenges, carry the burden of rebuilding a new house/home, and cope with all the incontinentines of moving, with the entire economic, social and psychological load it entails. Moreover, the effects of house demolition on women are not limited to military control and destruction of the land, the physical property and the psychological effect it carries, but it essentially entails the colonization/oppression of all economic, social and physical means of survival. The process of humiliation and harassment before, during and after that almost always accompanies the loss of the house, the sense of constant and arbitrary displacement, not surprisingly, has been found to increase stress inside families, raise the frustration level of family members, and cause the critical loss of the informal support systems that the space of the house provided, for those who perceived the home as one of the most significant place in their lives- namely women and children. Many women tried to explain the ways in which the actual destruction of the physical house was always accompanied by changes in their gender roles and the correspondingly devastating emotional and metaphoric loss of "home". As Maha stated in succinct and lucid ways, "since they demolished the house, I stopped knowing who am I, and what should I do....I feel *m'shatateh* -displaced...I feel like a refugee in this world...I feel like naked...*haddo hilteh* – they wiped out all my power". Similarly, Ina'am said: "*Mish Bas Il Dar Rahat...Il Bit Kullu Rah...wit shatatna* (not only the house was lost, but the whole home was lost, and we ended up displaced and exiled)".

Moreover, women were left with unique burdens following the loss of the house and home. Women repeatedly tried to explain the myriad of problems they faced in creating yet another space for their families and themselves (a space, which they knew was not necessarily secure from another arbitrary act of destruction.). They spoke of the difficulties of organizing and creating a new home with literally nothing left to begin anew. They shared with me their hardships in taking care of their own and family member's needs following the demolition, their search for a place to live, their need for shelter, food, their hygiene and their health needs. They talked about their feeding of despair, yet their need to be strong and calm down their children when they had no place to shelter or safeguard them. They discussed their need to go to their work place or school, upset, desperate, hungry and without having been able even to wash up, or change clothes. Women would point out how it was easier for their sons or brothers, who could at least sleep over with family or friends; but for them or their daughters (mainly due to the social restrictions on girls), who were more vulnerable, it was always much harder to survive these violent dislocations. Women spoke of incidents where some of their daughters started menstruating at

the age of ten after the trauma of losing their house. Some women stated that the fact that girls were expected to react to the demolition of the house in a feminine manner, and were not able to give free reign to their emotions like their male brothers, eventually affected their state of mind. The loss of the only safe haven that the young boys and girls have known, of course affects them both deeply, but the gender ramifications of such violence are different, and far from being fully accounted for.

What is the effect of such militaristic policy that intrudes spatially on women? I believe that in attempting to discern the effects of house demolition on women, feminists and human rights activists need to pay more attention to the connections that exist between the various systems of oppression. More explicitly, one need to look at the ways that house demolitions, or even the perpetual threat of losing a home affects women in all levels. This in turn demands a closer examination of the ways in which the domestic and the public spaces are linked. Thus, one must look at the way in which the various systems of domination operate in tandem. As Siham shared with me, when her daughter Manar goes to school, she is constantly harassed by the Israeli soldiers at the checkpoints, for they know that her house is under demolition, and that her family is considered a “security threat” to Israel. The vulnerability of her family makes Manar more prone to dangers, shot, sexually harassed and abused, arrested and more. Siham told me how Manar's health is steadily deteriorating, her ability to eat is decreasing and her fears and frustration levels are very high. She shared with me the fact that Manar is very determined to reach her university on time, but her fears from being restricted from crossing the checkpoints makes her chose more dangerous paths, and look for alternative roads- and as Siham stated: “ this { she meant choosing unsafe roads)...for a young girl like Manar is very risky,,and makes me feel- as a mother- that I can’t even protect my own children ”. Furthermore, Siham stressed the fact that Manar is refusing to get married with the man she loves, fearing that her marriage might entail an economic burden on her family, when they are all busy in finding the money to pay the lawyer, the city engineer, and the various fines ( that exceeded the 70,000 Israeli Shekels- almost 18,000\$- the last two years). Manar’s feeling of failing to safeguard her children, and Siham's reflections as shared by her mother, were restated by discussions ensued between a group of women from the village of Silwan, Ziyem, Isaweyeh, Anata refugee camp, and Wadi Yasoul all of whom have houses either demolished or under demolitions. They all reiterated the litany of hardships and its effect on the gendered roles. They also observed how the after affects of house demolitions are pervasive and various, causing tensions to women, internal family fights, separation between couples and most perniciously, violence against women.

Manar and Siham's story are only one story out of many which illustrates that understanding the effect of the Israeli demolition policy on women entails that we look and examine closely how systems of oppression mutually constitute each other and understand how the political, legal, social, gender and economic are linked. In addition, we need to look also at the way the various systems of domination and occupation operates on the domestic and local level and identify legal and social practices that produce racial hierarchies (see also Sherene Razack, 2002). Such racialized hierarchies – as I have show in the previous examples-

enhance the differences between men and women, and operates as an additional tool of discrimination and domination.

Hence, and to further understand the gender effect of house demolitions and examine the effect of the spatial-ghettoization of Palestinians, and the constant internal displacement, we must talk about the mobility/immobility of women in such militarized spaces; about the economic status of women and violence against them under such circumstances; about secure and insecure spaces that increase women's vulnerability to sexual violence; about the isolated and excluded spaces that favor a particular system of control. More importantly, we must look at the way all of these factors impact gender relations. Thus, a spatial analysis helps us understand the interlock between history, politics, gender, space, race, occupation, capitalism, law and international globalized power games. Men and women come to know themselves, their roles and power through their gendered body and spaces. Understanding how gender roles and bodies are produced in spaces and how spaces racialize bodies entails an interrogation of how subjects come to know themselves in and through spaces, within multiple systems of domination.

What is the price women pay to reconstruct a liberated space in an incarcerated militarized context? The prices that Palestinian women pay in such conditions are far from being examined/studies and the need to expand our visions and analyses on the issue at hand is of utmost urgency. Our limited observations in the previously mentioned locations showed that some Palestinian women find the quest for independence in a safe haven- a home-, given the conditions in which they live, to be a weakness, a selfish act that brings only loneliness for the already ostracized and excluded. Others prefer to withdraw into the total, the collective, and at the same time into the self, while others challenge the system and transform their gender roles. Women's ways of challenging the various systems of dominations, through the repeated attacks on their private and public spaces, both increased their vulnerabilities, but also empowered them to fight injustice. These women frontliners understand their actions for what they are—political resistance or what they call “nidal”. They tried – in the nothing left- to find ways and innovate methods to cope with the loss of the house and the home (see for more details Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 2006). Yet, the question remains whether the international community will continue to turn a blind eye, and avoid examining the gender effect of house demolitions and the attending ordeals facing Palestinians in general and Palestinian women in particular.

By carefully listening to the words of women, and looking at house demolitions with more than a jaded eye, we hope to show how the destruction of the house, is also significantly a destruction of “home” for Palestinians, the demolition of the house is not an isolated political, legal, social or psychological issue. For Palestinian women the loss or the threat of losing the house/home means an increase in their vulnerability but also in their determination to combat such oppression. A gender analyses of the policy of house demolition is urgent for it could help us understand the ways in which women's bodies are embedded in the histories and matrixes of space and place in conflict zones: “Place,” according to them, is their “woman's space.” Such a space affects women's ways of building their identities, identities that are neither unchanging nor static. Or as Fadwa stated: “*Lama rah il bit...hassit mish bas rahat dari...inma rah miqdar*”-

when I lost my home...I felt not only that I lost my house, but also that I lost my value.

## **Appendix 5**

### **Jerusalem Center for Women Declares the Urgent Need for Ending War-Crimes**

The Jerusalem Center for Women (JCW) condemns the Israeli war-crimes on Palestine and Lebanon, and calls for an immediate and unconditional cease-fire halting all acts of Israel's military aggression in the occupied Palestinian Territories (oPT) and Lebanon.

Since the beginning of the Second Intifada (September 2000), until last May, more than 1600 Palestinians have been killed (308 children and 88 women). Over the past month, more than 928 Lebanese civilians (1/3 of them children) have been killed.

The Jerusalem Center for Women condemns the massacres causing an unprecedented number of fatalities in Qana, Merwaheen, Al-Qaa, Gaza, Nablus, & Jenin, and many other targeted areas along Lebanon and the OPT.

The Israeli military escalation is steering both sides towards a regional war; there has been excessive use of force (fighting, bombs, rockets, etc.) falling indiscriminately on women, children, rescue workers, ambulances, journalists and other innocent victims. Additionally, the civilian infrastructure has suffered significantly under Israel's strike forces, causing the displacement of hundreds of thousands of civilians from their villages, cutting off vital routes for international humanitarian aid and making it difficult for civilians to leave by destroying roads and bridges. Such ongoing Israeli aggression will result in the additional deaths of civilians, spreading panic and terror among them.

The JCW calls on the Israeli military forces to immediately, unconditionally and fully cease-fire in Lebanon and the oPT and withdraw from the oPT, Lebanon and Syria.

Furthermore, Jerusalem Center for Women:

- Urges the international community to hold Israel responsible for committing war-crimes.
- Insists on the international community to immediately intervene; exerting influence on their governments to protect the lives of civilians from further war crimes.
- Demands all governments to ensure safe-routes to allow the delivery of humanitarian aid to persons affected by the hostilities.
- Calls on urgent investigation by an independent and impartial body like the International Humanitarian Fact-Finding Commission (IHFFC) of the ongoing illegal actions by Israeli forces.

The deliberate and disproportionate attacks by the Israeli military forces violate International Humanitarian Law and constitute war crimes.

Occupation, military aggression, and unilateral actions, cannot serve to promote peace in the region. Actions such as ending the occupation, withdrawing from the oPT, Shib'a Farms, and the Golan Heights, reverting back to the 1967 borders, implementing UN resolutions and resuming negotiations, with women present as core partners will help pave the way for a new Middle East. The new Middle East will not be based on terror and conflict, rather on security and stability through just, comprehensive and lasting peace.

*8/8/2006*

*Jerusalem Center for Women*

## Appendix 6

### **Repressing a Peaceful Demonstration at Dahiet Al-Bareed**

The Jerusalem Center for Women strongly condemns the vicious and aggressive attack initiated by Israeli occupation military forces and policemen. These officials attacked protesters at a peaceful demonstration against the apartheid wall and occupation, in commemoration of 58 years of Al-Nakba (1948 War) .

The demonstration which took place last Saturday, May 13<sup>th</sup>. A crowd gathered including a number of members of the Palestinian Legislative Council, different political parties and factions, representatives of local and village councils from Ramallah and Jerusalem, and hundreds of Palestinian, Israeli and international peace activists including both women and men. This demonstration took place at the Martyr's Square in the center of Al-Ram. Protesters marched towards Dahiet Al-Bareed, led by Palestinian youth. Demonstrators held placards with slogans that called for the end of occupation, and the condemnation of the apartheid wall. As soon as marchers reached Dahiet Al-Bareed's humiliation checkpoint, they were attacked by a huge number of Israeli occupation soldiers and policemen who shot at the crowd with hundreds of tear-gas bombs, poison bombs, and bullets. Three citizens and four international activists were arrested and many protesters suffocated due to the use of toxic bombs. At the other side of the checkpoint special police forces stopped Israeli and international peace activists from reaching the demonstration by holding them back.

“The occupation forces used extraordinarily brutal measures to repress this march which focused on the apartheid wall and the isolation of East-Jerusalem from its surroundings” commented Mrs. Salwa Hdeib-Qannam, the head of Board of Trustees at the JCW and the Deputy Minister at the Ministry of Women's Affairs. “This peaceful demonstration was coupled with the death of martyr, Omar Rasheed Abu Kamel Al-Malhi, a 42 year old from Shu'fat refugee camp. On the previous evening, an ambulance that was carrying Omar to the hospital was banned from crossing the check-point by Israeli soldiers. Omar died after having had a heart-attack and while waiting for the occupation security forces to let the ambulance through!” added Mrs. Salwa.

“Beit Hanina, Qalandia, and all other check-points that surround East-Jerusalem, in addition to the apartheid wall, are illegal. These measures all suffocate East Jerusalem from its community, displace Palestinians, and shut down the regional economy. Check-points are considered “humiliation zones.” Here Palestinians face inhuman treatment, restriction of movement, harassment, threats, violence and long waiting periods before passage is allowed or more likely, denied. More than 63 childbirths have taken place at checkpoints since the outbreak of the second intifada. In some of these cases the women giving birth did not survive labor. This is the case of a woman from Shu'fat refugee camp. She was banned from crossing the check-point and was unable to reach a hospital in time” explained Mrs. Hdeib. Furthermore, Mrs. Hdeib condemned the international human rights organization's silence towards the circumstances that Palestinians live in under the occupation.

The Jerusalem Center for Women urges international human rights organizations and the international community to take concrete steps towards boycotting Israeli products and services in order to bring an end to the illegal Israeli occupation, oppression, settlement building, and land annexation. All of these practices, if continued will only incite the escalation of violence, as well as, hinder any positive processes for peace in the region.

The Jerusalem Center for Women condemns the American and European boycott of the newly elected democratic Palestinian government. This impediment which has discontinued funding aid to the Palestinian Authority has subsequently led to an enormous decline in the economic situation in the occupied territories.

17/5/2006

Jerusalem Center for Women