

## Biannual MIFTAH Newsletter - Second Edition (July - December 2017)

### MIFTAH Participates in the Second Palestinian Urban Forum Entitled: Gender Equality in Urban Development: Women's Impact on Developing Urban Plans



MIFTAH supported several women members of local and village councils from various West Bank governorates to exercise their leadership role in the planning process of the communities they represent, through enhancing women council members engagement and participation in the development of a structural plan that illustrates the changes and additions that occurred in the plan reflecting women's inter-

This second biannual MIFTAH newsletter highlights the most significant achievements and accomplishments of the organisation over the past six months and offers our friends and partners a snapshot of our activities and accomplishments. MIFTAH hopes that the biannual newsletter becomes an on-going tradition.

venes in the planning process. This came with the view of reflecting the different needs of the community groups from a gender perspective, with the town of Aseera Shamaliya serving as a model for this intervention. These changes were presented in a side-event during the Second Palestinian Urban Forum, which was held in Birzeit University, in which a comparative presentation was made of the structural plans of the town before and after the women council members intervened, highlighting the women's contributions and suggested solutions to address some problems in the town. Through this intervention, MIFTAH stressed the need to build on these experiences, which promote the participation and interaction of women in public field, including in urban planning. MIFTAH also pushed for policy formulators to adopt the recommendations and translate them into practical steps with the view of mainstreaming just policies that support women's participation in decision making, especially in the local government sector.

### Available Means to Reform the Electoral System in Palestine



During November MIFTAH held a panel discussion on available means to reform the elections system with the view of promoting a democratic environment for supporting the election process in Palestine. The panel was organised in cooperation with the Central Elections Committee (CEC), and participation from the Independent Commission for Human Rights and civil society organisations such as the Arab World Democracy and Electoral Monitor (Al Marsad), as well as experts in elections affairs and women activists. The panel included two sessions: the first session discussed the legal framework to reform the electoral system, promote partnership and more comprehensive representation.

The second session was entitled "the 2017 local elections results and the setback in women's representation." The participants made a number of recommendations, including: the need to pressure and influence the reform of the electoral system that will guarantee a democratic, pluralistic and participatory atmosphere for Palestinians and that is in line with the electoral environment in Palestine, to renew the commitment of political parties to the honour code in regards to women's representation of at least 30%, and to pressure for the restoration of the democratic climate in the PLO bodies and to move away from the policy of partisan allocations.

## "Complementary Meetings on Activating the General Union of Palestinian Students"

MIFTAH expanded its dialogue sessions on ways to support and promote the participation of women and youth in PLO bodies, namely the General Union of Palestinian Students (GUPS). This took place through the participation of representatives from Palestinian universities' student council unions, student body officials and representatives of political parties. The representatives stressed that factions should respond to the aspirations of youth by representing them within these factions, as well as guaranteeing that democratic means are adopted within the factions. They stressed on the importance of continuing meetings aimed at reviewing GUPS bylaws; expanding the circle of dialogue between factions at all levels; introducing amendments to the bylaws of student union council elections to guarantee the representation of female students in these unions; and supporting a youth movement aimed at galvanising GUPS, which they also said requires the formation of a preparatory committee to follow up on implementation of the recommendations.



## Participation of Women in Reconciliation Meetings

MIFTAH continued to support the "Wifaq" Committee, which includes young women and feminist leaders from various West Bank governorates, including Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, by supporting and building their leadership capacities and providing them with information on reconciliation files and developments in the efforts of ending the Palestinian division. President Mahmoud Abbas said that the women and youth sector should be represented in the national reconciliation dialogue, especially after the signing of the reconciliation agreement between Fatah and Hamas in October.

MIFTAH also supported "Wifaq" Committee by sending letters to the Palestinian factions in the Gaza Strip to represent women at the factional meetings held in Cairo on 21 November, which led to the participation of women leaders in these meetings.

## "Women Political and Social Agenda"

MIFTAH organised a series of dialogue sessions to draft a Women Political and Social Agenda with the participation of independent women and women representatives of all political factions including Hamas and Islamic Jihad. This comes in line with the efforts of the women's movement to place the issues of Palestinian women as an urgent priority at Palestinian political decision-making level, and in accordance with numerous national references, including the Declaration of Independence, the Rights Document for Palestinian Women and international agreements, keeping in mind the diversity of Palestinian women and the multiplicity of political ideologies. The dialogue sessions will continue with participation from Palestinian women in diaspora including Jordan, Egypt and Lebanon to reach a consensus on the drafted Agenda and to promote the participation and integration of Palestinian women in the Palestinian political decision and the inevitable political decisions of the Palestinians.

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### A Visit to Exchange Knowledge and Expertise on Standards of International Transparency to Tunis



MIFTAH organised a visit to exchange knowledge and expertise in October to Tunis on standards of international transparency for budgets. The Palestinian delegation included representatives of the Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Education and Higher Education and Ministry of Local Government, as well as the Palestinian civil society, represented by MIFTAH and Applied Research Institute- Jerusalem “ARIJ”. The visit comes in harmony with MIFTAH’s interventions to adopt standards of international transparency among official institutions by publishing the citizen budget. The Palestinian delegation shed light on Palestine’s experience in fiscal transparency and participatory

budgeting in their meetings with Tunisian Social Affairs; Women, Family and Childhood; and Local and Environmental Affairs Ministries. This framework promoted networking and exchange opportunities between Palestinian official institutions and their Tunisian counterparts.

### Policy Meeting to Discuss the Repercussions of the Recent US President's Decision

MIFTAH conducted a policy meeting on “the repercussions of the American ‘recognition’ of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel”. The meeting discussed the current political developments at the national, regional and international levels in light of the recent US president’s speech recognising Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and his decision to move the US Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. The meeting touched on the implications of this decision, as well as the challenges that directly face the Palestinian reality and the national issue, in addition to the steps required at various levels to address them. The participants called on the Palestinian national movement to adopt a new national strategy based on the premise of peaceful popular resistance and comprehensive civil disobedience, particularly since the experience of Jerusalem reflected the Palestinian people’s steadfastness and survival capacities. The participants emphasised that the Palestine Liberation Organisation has to take the lead in this movement and define the political agenda for the next phase through an integrated national strategy. The restoration of Palestinian national unity and the Palestinian national sense, the establishment of a programme with clear objectives and follow-up with determination remains the Palestinian priority at this stage.

### MIFTAH Caps-Off Work on the Fair Tax Monitor in Palestine

“MIFTAH” capped off work on the “Fair Tax Monitor” in Palestine, which is a methodology that was developed and implemented by Oxfam on an international level in 10 countries in the initial phase. The methodology is characterised as a comprehensive methodology that analyses the fairness of the tax system including both revenues and expenditures. This is undertaken by analysing: tax structure; tax burden and progressivity; tax leakages; tax administration; government spending; and transparency and accountability. The importance of finalising the “Fair Tax Monitor” comes within the framework of accumulating efforts and work on reforming the taxation system in Palestine towards contributing to the realisation of social justice. In this context, a national conference will be organised to scrutinise and develop practical recommendations to reform areas of tax burden, tax administration and government spending on the social sector.

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### Hosted by MIFTAH

MIFTAH publishes interviews with prominent individuals and political leaders, which discuss the current situation developments at the national and international levels and their impact on the Palestinian cause.

During the second half of 2017, MIFTAH has conducted interviews with the following:

\* Dr. Azmi Shuaibi, Advisor to The Coalition for Accountability and Integrity (AMAN)'s Board of Directors: Analysis of the recent developments of Palestinian reconciliation

\* Mr. Khalil Tufakji, Arab Studies Society's land and settlement expert: Fifty years of occupation have isolated Jerusalem from its Palestinian extension and the situation on the ground is even more tragic

### Facts and Figures

MIFTAH believes that presenting accurate information is a key part of its mission. MIFTAH's "Facts and Figures" offers specific information on subjects related to the Palestinian condition, Palestinian-Israeli conflict and final status issues. Most recently, the following fact sheets have been compiled:

- Palestinian Child Prisoners
- United Nations Resolutions and the Middle East Peace Process
- Current Palestinian Government Structure
- Palestinian Government Timeline Since January 2006
- International Humanitarian Law: The Siege on the Gaza Strip
- Fateh-Hamas Reconciliation Efforts
- Israeli Checkpoints in the Occupied Territories
- Family Reunification
- Olive Trees – More Than Just a Tree in Palestine
- The Jordan Valley
- House Demolitions in the West Bank

### MIFTAH's Publications in 2017

#### Manuals & Studies:

- Obstacles which Hinder the Equal Representation of Women and the Youth inside the Various Bodies of the PLO and Limit their Access to Decision-Making Positions.
- Proposed Reforms to the 2011 Income Tax Law and its Amendments
- A Vision for Palestinian Women's Rights Organisations based on the Global Study on the Implementation of UNSCR 1325; Ten Strategies for Tackling Issues Pertaining to Women Peace and Security.
- The Impact and Damage of the Internal Division from Gender Perspective
- Analytical Reading on Violence against Women: Documenting Cases and Data from the Forum on Violence against Women
- Manual: Citizen Budget Preparation Manual in the Ministry of Social Development (Arabic)

#### Specialized bulletins:

- Info graphic: Enhancing Gender Equality and Women Participation in Local Elections
- Citizen Budget 2017 - Ministry of Education and Higher Education
- Citizen Budget 2017 - Ministry of Social Development

