

**Written Submission of NGO Monitor to the
70th Session of the CEDAW Committee for its review of “State of Palestine”**

NGO Monitor¹ presents this submission to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (“Committee”) at its 70th session regarding its review of “State of Palestine” and its compliance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (“CEDAW”), to which it purported to accede in April 2014.

Under CEDAW, the Palestinian Authority (PA) is required to “condemn discrimination against women in all its forms” and to “agree to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating discrimination against women” (Art. 2); to “ensure the full development and advancement of women, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men” (Art. 3); to “(b) participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government” and to “participate in non-governmental organizations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country” (Art. 7); to “take all appropriate measures to ensure to women, on equal terms with men and without any discrimination, the opportunity to represent their Governments at the international level and to participate in the work of international organizations” (Art. 8); to “ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education” (Art. 10); to “accord to women equality with men before the law” (Art. 15); and to “eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations” (Art. 16).

Yet, the PA is currently not fulfilling these obligations, as indicated in its own submission to the Committee. Personal status laws discriminate against women in matters of marriage, divorce, child custody, and inheritance. Repressive cultural practices such as child marriage, female genital mutilation, polygamy, and “honor” crimes are endemic. Coupled with unsatisfactory educational and employment opportunities, the laws and customs create an environment where there is both entrenched *de jure* and *de facto* discrimination. In addition to legal and cultural discrimination, the PA exploits women and girls to carry out and incite acts of terrorism against civilians. The PA promotes female terrorists as national role models for young girls, enabling a culture of violence, in direct opposition to the principles of

¹ NGO Monitor is a project of the Institute for NGO Research, an Organization in Special Consultative Status with ECOSOC (since 2013). Members of the Institute’s Advisory Board include Elliott Abrams, Senior Fellow for Middle Eastern Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations; former Canadian Ambassador to Israel, Amb. Vivian Bercovici; Amb. John Bolton, US National Security Advisor and former US Permanent Representative to the UN; Hon. Michael Danby, MP, senior member of the Australian Labor Party; Harvard Professor Prof. Alan Dershowitz; Canadian Senator, Hon. Linda Frum; best-selling author and commentator and British journalist and international affairs commentator, Tom Gross; Colonel Richard Kemp, former commander of British forces in Iraq and Afghanistan; Douglas Murray, Director of the Centre for Social Cohesion, best-selling author and commentator; former Member of Italian Parliament, Hon. Fiamma Nirenstein, UCLA Professor and President of the Daniel Pearl Foundation, Prof. Judea Pearl; US Jurist and former Legal Advisor to the State Department Judge Abraham Sofaer; Dr. Einat Wilf, former member of Knesset with the Israel Labor Party and advisor to Shimon Peres; Harvard Professor Prof. Ruth Wisse; R. James Woolsey, former US Director of Central Intelligence; and Israeli Supreme Court Justice, Justice Elyakim Rubinstein.

CEDAW. The PA also supports so-called “civil” society organizations that promote the exploitation of women for nationalism and violence, denying women the ability to access legitimate organizations that might aid them in achieving equality and prosperity.

NGO Monitor is also greatly concerned by the [2018-2022 UNDAF agreement](#) signed between the PA and the 24 UN agencies operating in the West Bank and Gaza. The agreement calls for \$252 million in annual funding, with approximately \$18 million dedicated to “human rights mechanisms are increasing engaged to hold Israel accountable for its obligations under international law.” Part of this funding is to be used to author, with UN help, 33 shadow reports against Israel to UN treaty bodies.

It is egregious that the PA (with UN agreement) is using scarce humanitarian aid to write shadow reports targeting Israel, but has requested no assistance to produce materials regarding its own compliance. This failure suggests that the PA is not interested in sincerely complying with or improving its own human rights record but rather, seeks to exploit humanitarian aid and UN bodies for its political war with Israel. It is disturbing that the UN agreed to be a willing partner with the Palestinian Authority in this endeavor.

Nevertheless, we hope that the Committee, as should be its standard practice, will focus its review on the PA’s compliance with CEDAW. The Committee will be in breach of its duties if instead, it decides to use the “State of Palestine” review to whitewash PA violations of CEDAW and simply engage in an improper second review of Israel.²

In the interests of brevity, the submission highlights several representative examples of violations of CEDAW by the PA, but there are countless additional cases.

Jurisdiction and Applicability of the Convention:

Throughout its 71-page submission, the PA fails to accept its legal commitments, and instead, ascribes primary blame to Israel for discrimination faced by women in the West Bank and Gaza. As stated in the PA’s submission, it

“Describes the situation of Palestinian women under colonial Israeli occupation and the effects of illegal Israeli policies that are part of an institutionalized regime founded on settlement, systematic oppression and discrimination. All levels of the Israeli political and military apparatus, including the Israeli occupation army and the terrorist settler militias, are implicated in the systematic and wide-ranging crimes and violations being perpetrated at against Palestinian women and the entire Palestinian people wherever they are suffering.”

This offensive and false statement reflects the PA’s distortion of its legal obligations under CEDAW.

² Israel was reviewed by the CEDAW Committee in October 2017.

Between 1993 and 1995, the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (designated representative of the Palestinian people) freely entered into a series of agreements (Oslo Accords) regarding the governance and administration of the West Bank and Gaza. These agreements established the Palestinian Authority, the governmental body for the Palestinian people that exercises jurisdiction over more than 95 percent of the Palestinian population. In 2005, Israel relinquished all claims to the territory of Gaza and removed its armed forces and civilian population. Since that time, Gaza has been entirely self-governing. In 2006, Palestinians elected the Hamas terrorist organization as the majority party in power. In 2007, Hamas took over total control of the Palestinian Authority in Gaza and expelled the Fatah party in a violent coup.

Under CEDAW, the Palestinian Authority is required to “condemn discrimination against women in all its forms, agree *to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay*,” and it “*shall take in all fields*, in particular in the political, social, economic and cultural fields, all appropriate measures, including legislation, to ensure the full development and advancement of women”; and “*shall take all appropriate measures*” to carry out its other obligations (emphases added). No matter how it seeks to shirk its responsibilities, the PA’s political and territorial disputes with Israel do not immunize the PA from reporting on, review of, and fulfillment of its obligations under CEDAW.

Preventing the Development and Advancement of Women (Article 3) Terrorists in Political and Public Life (Articles 7 & 8)

The Palestinian elevation of the “resistance fighter” as hero steers women to adopt radical and violent roles. This phenomenon is reflected by the female Palestinian role models glorified by the PA, international NGOs, and local women’s rights NGOs. As well as failing to promote peace, the PA’s promotion of terrorists as role models effectively prevents young women from developing and advancing in society. For example,

- In June 2018, the PA honored a mother, Latida Abu Hmeid, whose five sons are currently serving multiple life sentences in prison for committing terror attacks. According to Palestinian Media Watch, the PA has provided the mother and her family with over \$1 million (as of May 2018) in “rewards” for her sons’ terrorist activities. Palestinian President Abbas himself praised Latida Abu Hmeid and honored her with leading the PA campaign for statehood at the UN in 2011. The district governor of Ramallah has referred to her as a “role model” for Palestinian women.
- In a [speech before the European Parliament](#) in September 2017, 17-year-old Ahed Tamimi — whose arrest on counts of assault and incitement to terror has since resulted in her celebration as an international icon — said, “I’m very proud to be here with Leila Khaled, the most important symbol of the Palestinian revolution and (sic) really represents Palestinian women and shows us how woman at all stages of the Palestinian struggle have been able to be an example of what can be done. There are many symbols, many Palestinian women who resist, who oppose, we have Leila Khaled. We appreciate all of these women because they show the perseverance, the resistance, this commitment of the cause and they are fantastic example for women in

- Palestine.” Leila Khaled is notorious for hijacking airliners and is a member of the PFLP, designated a terror organization by the [EU](#), [US](#), [Canada](#), and [Israel](#).
- As uncovered by Palestinian Media Watch, on January 1, 2018, official [Palestinian Authority TV aired a segment](#) on the role of young people in the “Palestinian revolution.” The show’s guest was Madeline Manna, the coordinator of Fatah’s university student committee for women, known as “Sisters of Dalal” after Dalal Mughrabi, a terrorist who in 1978 murdered 37 civilians, including 12 children. Manna said, “In the Palestinian universities, especially in the Fatah Shabiba [Student Movement], the female student committees were named after Martyr Dalal Mughrabi – Sisters of Dalal – after the Martyr who was the commander of 11 men. We learn leadership from her, and that women always lead... Dalal Mughrabi is a role model, like other heroic female Martyrs in Palestine. We draw willpower and determination from her, and perseverance and [the will to] continue this struggle.”

The PA’s use of women to glorify terrorism also extends to its support of civil society organizations. According to the PA’s submission (paragraph 21), “Many non-governmental institutions working to combat poverty and promote development and empowerment help to respond to the needs of women, in particular in rural and marginalized areas.” Yet, NGO Monitor research has shown that while the Palestinian Authority claims to promote and support numerous Palestinian NGOs addressing issues related to empowering women and combatting discrimination, the PA also supports groups that use the terminology of women’s rights to promote conflict, violence, discrimination, and hatred.

In a May 2017 example, WATC inaugurated a youth center for girls in the town of Burqa, near Nablus. The center [is named after Dalal Mughrabi](#) (see above). Funding for this building was provided by Palestinian Authority Ministry of Local Government, UN Women (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women), and [Norway](#). Upon learning that the center had been named after a terrorist, the [Norwegian government](#) and the [United Nations](#) issued [strong condemnations](#). Norwegian [Minister of Foreign Affairs Børge Brende](#) stated that “We have asked for the logo of the Norwegian representation office to be removed from the building immediately, and for the funding that has been allocated to the centre to be repaid.” A [member of the village council further](#) acknowledged that the center would focus on the “history of the struggle of Martyr Dalal Mughrabi and on presenting it to youth groups, as it constitutes the beginning of the launch of enrichment activities regarding the history of the Palestinian struggle.”

This is not the only time that the PA has promoted Mughrabi. [Palestinian Media Watch](#) notes that “the PA has turned Mughrabi into a role model for Palestinians. Among other things, it has named [3 schools](#) after her, Abbas has named [a computer center](#) after her, and held a [birthday celebration](#) for her.”

In another example, the organization [Women’s Centre for Legal Aid and Counseling](#) (WCLAC), employs as a field worker Manal Tamimi, who repeatedly uses violent and virulently antisemitic rhetoric and imagery on social media. In September 2015, for instance, Tamimi [tweeted](#), “Vampire zionist celebrating their Kebore day by drinking Palestinian bloods, yes our blood is pure & delicious but it will kill u at the end.” In August

2015, Tamimi [tweeted](#), “I do hate Israel ,i (sic) wish a thrid Intefada (sic) coming soon and people rais (sic) up and kill all these zionist settlers everywhere.”

Far from condemning her actions, the PA promotes her as a human rights defender.

The PA has also glorified terrorist Ahlam Tamimi, responsible for orchestrating the Sbarro suicide bombing attack in August 2001 that killed 15 people, including 7 children. An [article in an official PA publication](#) referred to her as a “dreamy student and conscientious journalist turned into a different sort of woman – she began a race against time to participate in carrying out operations...” Another PA TV program stated that her choice to study and work in the field of media “[increases the respect and love I feel for her](#).”

The Palestinian NGO [Miftah](#), founded by Hanan Ashrawi, member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, regularly promotes “resistance” (a euphemism for terror attacks) and glorifies female terrorists. The group [characterizes](#) Wafa Idrees, one of the first female Palestinian suicide bombers, as “the beginning of a string of Palestinian women dedicated to sacrificing their lives for the cause.” Idrees detonated herself on January 27, 2002, killing 81 year-old Pinhas Takatli and wounding another 150 Israeli civilians. She is [described](#) as one of the “several young women” who “decided to join the ranks of the resistance movement.”

In another case, the NGO Addameer, [an affiliate of the PFLP](#) terror group, produced a booklet, “[For the Love of Palestine: Stories of Women, Imprisonment and Resistance](#),” together with another Palestinian NGO, Samidoun, stemming from the visit of a delegation of American activists to the West Bank and Israel. The booklet features the “stories” of a number of female Palestinian terrorists and employs extremely inflammatory rhetoric, representing another case of promoting poor role models for Palestinian women and girls. The introduction of the booklet notes that “The Palestinian mother loves her children very much, but you cannot believe how much she loves her homeland.”

Examples provided in the booklet include:

- Rula Abu Dhou, [current faculty member](#) at Birzeit University’s Institute of Women Studies. Abu Dhou is listed as a lecturer and teaches a course on feminist political thought. Abu Dhou, a member of the PFLP, [served nine years of a twenty-five year prison sentence for her role in the murder of an Israeli civilian](#). After her release, Dhou declared, “**I’m not sorry for it... On the contrary, I’m proud. And I wish I could do more for my country**” (emphasis added). The booklet praises her attempts at organizing other female prisoners to demand their release during negotiations surrounding the Oslo Accords (pp 5-6).
- Khalida Jarrar, a senior PFLP official and former executive director of Addameer. The booklet claims that “She was charged with... representing the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine in the Palestinian Legislative Council. **Most major Palestinian political parties are considered hostile and prohibited by the Israeli military occupation**” (emphasis added). Beyond stating a blatant falsehood, the booklet fails to mention that the PFLP is designated a terrorist organization by the [EU](#), [US](#), [Canada](#), and [Israel](#). In 2015, Jarrar was [indicted for various offenses](#), including active membership in a terrorist organization (the PFLP) and inciting

violence through a call to kidnap Israeli soldiers. Jarrar accepted a plea bargain, was [convicted](#) on “one count of belonging to an illegal organization and another of incitement,” and received a 15-month prison sentence with an additional 10-month suspended sentence. She was [released from prison](#) on June 3, 2016. Jarrar [was again arrested](#) in July 2017, “following her involvement in promoting terrorist activity through the PFLP.”

- Lina Jarbouni – an Israeli-Arab who was [sentenced to 17 years in prison](#) in 2002 for [aiding and abetting Islamic Jihad suicide bombings](#) – is described by Addameer as having been “arrested in 2002 at the age of 26 and interrogated, tortured, and abused for thirty days. She was sentenced to 17 years for ‘aiding the enemy,’ being actively involved in Palestinian resistance.”

In addition to promoting female terrorists as role models to young girls, the PA, Hamas, and other Palestinian groups exploit women and girls by cynically using them to commit terror acts and serve as human shields – in violation of CEDAW as well as other international human rights laws and humanitarian law commitments. For example, during what is referred to by Palestinians as the “Great March” of 2018 (March-June 2018), a 7-year-old girl was sent through the border fence by Palestinian militant groups. The goal of this incident was to provoke a response by the IDF soldiers stationed along the border, generating immense pressure against Israel. However, the IDF identified the young girl and returned her to her family. The number of women and girls killed and injured in the violence also demonstrates how these members of society were encouraged to approach the border with Israel despite warnings of violence and potential threat to their lives.

Similarly, during the 2014 Gaza war, Hamas utilized women and girls as human shields, placing them in harm’s way in order to generate media attention and encourage UN investigations against Israel. The IDF distributed leaflets, utilized a “knock on the roof” strategy, as well as other warning measures to allow civilians time to evacuate areas prior to military attacks on militant targets. Hamas, however, would instruct civilians to remain in areas despite the threat. The blame for the deaths and injuries that resulted thus falls on Palestinian officials who encouraged their civilians to serve as human shields.

Recommendations:

In order to comply with the obligations of CEDAW, the PA must end ALL support for terrorism, incitement, and hatred. This action includes ending the glorification of female terrorists and promoting them as role models; ending support for organizations that glorify terrorism and promote hatred while operating under the guise of women’s rights; ending the use of women and girls as human shields for terrorist activity. In addition, terrorism and other violence against civilians cannot be covered up or justified under a euphemism of “resistance.”

Education (Article 10)

The PA and Hamas violate CEDAW by using the Palestinian education system to indoctrinate and incite girls to violence and hatred. For instance, educational materials routinely spew virulently antisemitic and violent content – portraying Jews as apes, dogs, and pigs; calling Jews a cancer; denial of the Holocaust; and claiming Palestinian “victory” will be achieved through the murder of Jews and the elimination of Israel. Too often UNRWA materials, schools, and teachers are involved in this campaign.

The Palestinian Authority inculcates this bigotry and racism in children beginning from birth. Babies and toddlers are dressed as suicide bombers. Children’s TV programs brainwash kids to hate and kill Jews. Plays for kindergartens show children kidnapping and murdering Chassidic Jews. Older students are rewarded for imagery that promotes violence and the elimination of Israel.

According to Impact-SE, an NGO that monitors school curricula and textbooks globally for conformity with UNESCO standards conducted a review in 2017, the first since 2000, of the Palestinian educational system.³ The group’s findings should cause the Committee alarm:

- Radicalization is pervasive across this new curriculum, to a greater extent than before.
- The curriculum exerts pressure over young Palestinians to acts of violence in a more extensive and sophisticated manner. The discourse is couched in terms of nationalist and religious martyrdom, across science, literature, history and religious education textbooks.
- This version of the PA curriculum educates for a long war of attrition against Israel which stands out as the axis mundi of Palestinian identity, connecting its various dimensions into one ideology. With a comprehensive and oft-stated justification for defensive (obligatory) jihad, the curriculum's focus appears to have expanded from demonization of Israel to providing a rationale for war.
- The crux of this report is education for war and against peace with Israel. The second batch of the new, reformed curriculum of the PA has further distanced itself from our UNESCO-derived standards, as detailed in the conclusion.

Impact-SE also found that women and girls are depicted as “rewards” of martyrdom and pressured to sacrifice themselves in martyrdom operations:

“The following description of Paradise and its pleasures relates the blessings of the faithful (not necessarily those dying in battle). But the pleasures—with an emphasis on the sexual—seem clearly part of a design which encourages death as the pathway to an exciting place.

³ http://www.impact-se.org/wp-content/uploads/PA-Curriculum_2017-Grades-5-11.pdf

Palestinian Muslim girls are also encouraged to sacrifice their lives. This form of feminism espoused in the curriculum is a way for girls to achieve 'equality' by their sacrifice. Islam is presented as a faith that raises the status of women, so they are 'sisters to the men in sacrifice and altruism.'"

The Palestinian Authority also uses cultural programs, theater groups, sports and community centers to violate the obligations of CEDAW. One egregious example involved a puppet show instructing children to [replace cigarettes with machine guns](#) and included the warning, "Jerusalem, we are coming, Jerusalem, the time of death has arrived." In a [2015 Facebook video](#) posted by the "Jerusalem Intifada's Young People's Coalition," a girl gives instructions to youth in the West Bank on how to best stab Israeli civilians shouting "Stab, stab, stab, stab."

Recommendations:

The PA must stop promoting violence and hatred in educational programing and other cultural activities for children. The PA must revise its educational materials and curricula to ensure they are not used to promote conflict, violence, incitement, and hatred. UNRWA must eliminate materials that promote conflict, violence, incitement, and hatred, and remove all employees engaged in such activities.

Denying Women of their Rights to Family Planning (Article 12)

The PA violates CEDAW's provisions regarding family planning and reproductive rights and even imposes criminal penalties on those women that exercise them. In its submission, the PA states that abortions are illegal, except on medical grounds. The PA affirms that, "it is an offence to deliberately terminate a pregnancy, whether with or without a mother's consent," that "a woman who terminates her own pregnancy or has a termination performed by a third party faces a penalty of from 6 months to 3 years in prison, and that "the penalty is higher if the termination is performed by a doctor, surgeon, pharmacist or midwife." In July 2018, the PA promoted a song about mothers viewing their unborn child as a future "[Martyr for Palestine](#)." According to Palestinian Media Watch, the song has been broadcast on official PA TV and radio.

The PA also claims that female genital mutilation does not occur in the West Bank and Gaza. Yet, according to an [OECD report](#), "it is reported that female genital mutilation (FGM) is practiced in Gaza, but there are no reports on the number of women affected." Likewise, according to [UNFPA](#), "In the Middle East, the practice does occur in the areas under Palestinian control." The lack of data, therefore, does not mean, as claimed by the PA, that the practice is absent, but rather, that cultural factors are hampering reporting and inadequate monitoring mechanisms are in place.

Recommendations:

The PA must end all violations relating to family planning and reproductive freedom. The PA must eliminate FGM and also monitor and report on its prevalence.

Treatment of Female Palestinian Prisoners (Article 15)

The PA makes egregious and factually inaccurate claims regarding female prisoners held in Israeli prisons, with the majority of claims [copied from a 2008 report](#) by the [PFLP affiliate](#) (as identified by Palestinian sources) [Addameer](#). Khalida Jarrar, mentioned above, is Addameer's [vice-chairperson](#). Addameer is a leader of campaigns in support of Palestinian prisoners convicted of security offenses, referring to them as “political prisoners” and altogether omitting the context of violence and terror.

The PA alleges that Israeli prisons do not “meet the minimum standards for gender equality, not to mention basic humanity.” This is simply false. The claims of beatings, sexual assault, arrests at “any time or place,” not being allowed to see a lawyer for a month, being deprived of communication and visits with family, denial of medical treatment, and denial of recreational activity are also false.

The PA also fails to provide the reader with accurate context and factual information. For example, the use of handcuffs, blindfolds, and strip searches fit with international norms and standards. References to the “Palestinian Legislative Council” that are made refer to members of Hamas or other terrorist organizations, or have been convicted of violent crimes.

The “monthly stipends” referred to in the PA’s submission are a form of incentivizing terrorism, as prisoners who commit violent attacks against Israelis receive a monthly stipend based on the amount of time imprisoned and that far exceed average salaries. According to a [systematic study of the salaries](#), they can range from \$364 to \$3,120 per month. The statement that “the State also tries to secure jobs for released prisoners – male and female – and give them priority in annual hiring in State institutions” also appears to be a form of incentivizing terrorism. Again, incentivizing terrorism is directly against women’s rights.

[Female victim of a brutal terrorist attack](#), Kay Wilson, [was stabbed 13 times and had over 30 bones broken](#) by two Palestinian men aligned with a terrorist cell of the PA’s ruling Fatah party. Her friend was murdered in front of her during the attack. An article in the *Jerusalem Post* explains that already her attackers received £9,000 from British taxpayers via the PA and were slated to receive hundreds of thousands of dollars over the course of their sentence. NGO Monitor notes the role CEDAW can play in helping female victims of violent attacks by supporting an end to the Palestinian Authority’s incentivizing terrorism.

Recommendations:

The PA must immediately stop providing financial payments to convicted terrorists and end all financial incentives for terrorism.

Inequality of Men and Women (Article 16)

The PA’s personal status laws continue to promote child marriage, gender apartheid, and discrimination against women in violation of CEDAW. For example, the PA states that marriage and divorce documents must be registered with the sharia courts. As admitted, these courts are dictated by men, giving little to no voice of women in their own material matters. For instance, noting the discrimination between men and women, the PA explains that “a marriage contract for a virgin daughter requires the approval of a guardian, who is always a

male. Males do not need the approval of a guardian.” The minimum age for marriage in the West Bank and Gaza can be overruled by a judge, allowing girls as young as nine years of age to be wed if “she is ruled to be sufficiently mature and her physical constitution is equal to it.”

Regarding familial roles, the PA states that “while the man is the head of the family and has guardianship and decision-making authority, the woman is supposed to be obedient and take care of the home.” In an overt contravention to CEDAW, the PA states that the “The marital relationship is based on reciprocity of rights and obligations **rather than equality**” (emphasis added).

Until 2011, according to the PA’s submission, laws granted “exonerating or mitigating factors to a man murdering a woman” in an honor killing. Despite the repeal of these factors, the PA admits that there are various other provisions in the Penal Code that allow murderers who commit honor killings to avoid prosecution and serving time. According to the PA, the currently proposed draft penal code would “do away completely with exonerating factors in cases of honour killings of women, and would grant same right to the wife as the husband to claim mitigating factors if she kills or injures him or his partner after catching them in an adulterous or illicit sexual situation.” CEDAW must ensure that the PA implements this legislation in a timely manner and verifies its adherence to the agreed upon principles.

Recommendations:

The PA must eliminate all Personal Status laws and other laws that discriminate against women and girls.

Conclusion

As noted throughout this submission, the PA’s personal status laws, exploitation of women and girls to promote terrorism and hatred, radicalization in the educational system, and denial of reproductive freedom represent widespread and systematic violations of CEDAW by the PA. Furthermore, the PA’s regular blame on Israel for all issues related to women’s rights, including in areas where Israel has no jurisdiction or influence, clearly demonstrates the PA’s attempt to shirk its responsibilities and obligations under CEDAW. Again, we reiterate that we hope that the Committee will focus its review of “State of Palestine” on the PA’s compliance with CEDAW. If the Committee instead uses this review to whitewash PA violations or simply turn this session into another review of Israel, it will fail in its obligations as the guardians of CEDAW and as protectors of Palestinian women and girls.

Respectfully submitted,

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