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**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and
to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly
entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and
peace for the twenty-first century”**

Statement submitted by Association of Iranian Jurists Defending Human Rights, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

Effects of Armed Conflict on Women; Emphasizing Palestinian Women

It is estimated that close to 90 per cent of current war casualties are civilians, the majority of whom are women and children. Although entire communities suffer the consequences of armed conflict, women and girls are particularly affected because of their status in society and their sex. The forms of violence against women committed in armed conflict include murder, sexual slavery, forced pregnancy and forced sterilization. The Platform for Action, adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995, identified the effects of armed conflict on women as one of 12 critical areas of concern requiring action by governments and the international community, and stressed the need to promote the equal participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels. Across various regions, women bear the brunt of violence, displacement, and insecurity, facing specific challenges that often go overlooked. One critical area of concern is the ongoing armed conflict in Palestine, where women are disproportionately affected by the ongoing hostilities.

Women in conflict zones, especially in Palestine, experience violence, displacement, and loss of livelihood at an alarming rate. In addition to the physical violence, including sexual violence used as a weapon of war, they often suffer from emotional and psychological trauma. This not only affects their own well-being but also disrupts the social fabric of communities. As primary caregivers, Palestinian women must also manage the safety and survival of their families under extreme conditions, often with limited access to basic necessities such as food, water, and healthcare.

Furthermore, Palestinian women face restricted access to healthcare, especially maternal health services. The destruction of healthcare facilities and the lack of medical supplies due to blockades exacerbate the already dire situation. This leads to higher mortality rates for mothers and infants, creating generational health challenges. The educational opportunities for girls and women are also disrupted, with schools destroyed or turned into shelters. This interruption not only affects their academic progress but limits their future economic opportunities and participation in society.

The impact of armed conflict on women, particularly in Palestine, is multifaceted and deeply entrenched. It is imperative that the international community prioritizes the protection and empowerment of women in conflict zones, ensuring that their voices are included in peace processes and recovery efforts. Addressing the specific needs of Palestinian women, from healthcare to economic support, is not only a moral obligation but also essential for achieving lasting peace and stability in the region.
