

## **Helpdesk Research Report: Civil Society and Accountability in the Occupied Palestinian Territories**

Date: 30.05.2010

**Query:** Please provide a summary of literature on the role and effectiveness of civil society in the OPTs in strengthening accountability (of national ministries, local governments, service delivery units etc). Who are the actors and what is their capacity? What are the main avenues for engagement and has there been any assessment of their effectiveness in bringing about change?

**Enquirer:** DFID Jerusalem

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### **1. Overview**

There is very little information available that specifically looks at the role and effectiveness of civil society in the Occupied Palestinian Territories in strengthening accountability. Literature that discusses civil society organisations (CSOs) more generally indicates that there are not many CSOs engaged in issues of accountability and transparency. The few that do exist are very active (for example the member organisations of the Coalition for Accountability and Integrity - AMAN) but their efforts do not necessarily target the poor and marginalised.

The literature suggests that the conflict and political division between the West Bank and Gaza Strip has hindered civil society efforts at strengthening accountability. Firstly, the conflict has impeded the legislative process, thus limiting any intervention or influence that civil society can have in this area. Secondly, although relations between the Palestine National Authority and CSOs generally do fluctuate, the political division has had a detrimental impact on those non governmental organisations (NGOs) who are considered to have political affiliations.

It is therefore very difficult to assess the capacity of organisations (or of the sector as a whole) in a report of this nature, which relies upon desk-based research and where opportunities for conducting substantial interviews with organisational representatives are limited. Information on key organisations has been included along with details of their activities; information relating to experience, staffing levels, funders and budgets (where available) has also been included to provide an indication of the capacity of individual organisations. It must be noted though that this information was collated from websites and annual reports and therefore any information presented here on activities and projects is not necessarily up-to-date.

An assessment of the information available suggests that the key civil society actors in the field of accountability are the Coalition for Accountability and Integrity (AMAN) and the Women's Affairs Technical Committee (WACT) and their constituent members.

### **Coalition for Accountability and Integrity (AMAN)**

AMAN is endorsed by Transparency International and is effectively their Palestinian chapter. Their core focus is on 'Enhancing integrity, transparency and accountability in Palestinian society'. The bulk of their activities are centred on civic education and countering corruption in the public, private and non-governmental sectors.

AMAN seems to have been effective in lobbying state institutions and working with the Executive, Legislative and Judicial Authorities to strengthen accountability in the public sector. Firstly, the coalition has implemented numerous reviews of laws that have initiated the drafting of regulations. The Coalition also hosts the Technical Committee of the National Team to prepare a National Plan of Reinforcement of Development of Transparency and Integrity in the Palestine public sector. Secondly, AMAN has been involved in training employees of ministerial and non-ministerial institutions on issues of financial transparency, government tenders and public procurement.

AMAN has a number of constituent members, all of whom have a slightly different focus - the most relevant organisations for this query are:

- The Arab Thought Forum (Multaqā), which has activities in the areas of 'Democratic Process and Nation Building and 'Strengthening the Transparency and Accountability of Local Government'.
- The Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy (MIFTAH), which has a 'Democracy and Good Governance' Programme, which includes components on: Policy formulation; Enhancing Systems of Integrity, Transparency and Accountability in the Public Sector; and Strengthening the Role of the Media in Enhancing Systems of Accountability and Access to Information; and
- The Palestinian Institute for the Study of Democracy (MUWATIN), which has a reform and governance programme focused on legislation related to security services, municipal elections, monitoring the PLC and regulation of the Executive.

### **Women's Affairs Technical Committee (WACT)**

Whilst AMAN focuses on civic education and anti-corruption initiatives at the institutional level, WACT appears to have more of a pro-poor focus. Its initiatives are largely aimed at increasing the voice of women (including those living in rural areas) and the accountability of institutions to the needs and concerns of women. WACT works in partnership with a variety of funders on programmes seeking to improve institutional accountability to women, including on issues of:

- Advocacy and Capacity Building for Reform;
- Empowerment of Women in Local Councils;
- Empowering Young Leaders for Democracy & Good Governance;
- Empowering Rural Women.

WACT also has a significant media profile and publishes a regular periodical that is distributed with a major Palestinian newspaper. WACT has clearly been effective on several fronts – its major successes include drafting a Women's Bill of Rights based on international conventions and human rights law and increasing women's representation in parliament and in local councils.

### **Key avenues of engagement for civil society in strengthening accountability**

It appears that much work needs to be done to improve the effectiveness of civil society in strengthening accountability and transparency amongst public institutions in Palestine. Therefore developing the capacity of the NGO sector to engage in the legislative process and to monitor performance of state institutions is a priority activity. The main areas of possible engagement

are:

- Lobbying, drafting legislation and providing technical expertise and training to ministerial and non-ministerial departments and training on issues of accountability and transparency;
- Reviewing presidential decrees (through expert analysis and through wider public consultation);
- Conducting opinion polls on the conduct of public, private and non-governmental sectors with regard to transparency and accountability;
- Publishing policy orientated research and analysis (mainly in Arabic);
- Promoting good-governance and participatory democracy through civic education initiatives aimed at instilling democratic principles, encouraging participation in decision-making processes and empowering women.

### **Donor recommendations**

Within these areas, the literature suggests that donor support should be targeted towards:

- Supporting efforts aimed at enhancing CSOs' own democratic internal structures in line with the principles of integrity, transparency and accountability. This includes the media and workers unions;
- Empowering NGOs to monitor the public sector and fulfil a watch-dog role;
- Building the capacity of media staff and journalists to effectively investigate acts of corruption and disseminate information pertaining to public sector transparency and accountability. Support should also be directed towards initiatives that prevent prosecution of journalists and media outlets, and provide them with necessary protection;
- Supporting civil society initiatives that combine service delivery and civic education, particularly those aimed at increasing voice of the poor and marginalised and increasing accountability of public institutions to their priorities and needs. Based on an assessment of the available information, there appears to be a paucity of such initiatives aimed at increasing pro-poor accountability, but it could equally be the case such initiatives do exist but that information is not available in the public domain<sup>1</sup>.

## **2. The role and effectiveness of civil society in the Occupied Palestinian Territories**

**AMAN, 2009, 'National Integrity System Study: Palestine 2009', Coalition for Accountability and Integrity (AMAN), Jerusalem**

<http://www.aman-palestine.org/Documents/Publication/NISReportEng.pdf>

This report, part of a larger study sponsored by Transparency International in Arab nations, examines the systems currently in place to ensure accountability in public, private and non-governmental Palestinian institutions. It assesses the legislative, judicial and executive powers of the government along with other major actors such as the security apparatus, political parties, electoral commission, supreme audit and control bodies, civil services, anti-corruption institutions, local government, international parties, the private sector, the media, NGOs and other CSOs. It contains chapters on the media and NGOs and provides an overview of their role in safeguarding integrity and transparency, and their relationship with other sectors.

### *NGOs*

There are more than 4,000 NGOs in Palestine; they are active in every sector of society, including health, education, agriculture, the environment, social affairs and gender issues. However, few institutions address – directly or indirectly – issues of governance, accountability, transparency or combating corruption. Some institutions do monitor policies and laws, or focus on

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<sup>1</sup> TIRI are implementing a DFID funded Pro-poor Integrity project in OPT, but there is little information available on the website (see [http://www.tiri.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=452&Itemid=](http://www.tiri.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=452&Itemid=)). The TIRI representative for OPT was also contacted but didn't respond within the available timeframe.

human rights issues. Trade unions tend to focus on those laws and policies that interest their members, and they chiefly reflect their intellectual, organisational and partisan allegiances. However, professional unions of doctors, engineers and other professionals play a major role in strengthening participation in governance.

Palestinian NGOs are highly independent have sufficient political space, and although some institutions are linked to political parties that may attempt to influence the organisation, such interference is limited. However, the rift between the leadership of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip has led to interference by the executive branch and security services in the work of some institutions. They have attempted to influence their organisations' boards and have even forced closure of some organisations for political reasons. Furthermore the role of civil society organisations in holding the executive branch accountable is still weak, as they have no role in monitoring the drafting or administration of the general budget or development programs.

The report describes the various mechanisms by which Palestinian NGOs are held to account, which in itself can provide an indicator of effectiveness and efficacy. NGOs are accountable on several levels as stipulated by Palestinian law, including to general assemblies, their own membership, the Ministry of Interior and other relevant ministries and donors. Whilst several NGOs report on their activities to the public, some popular unions have not revised their bylaws or held elections for a long period of time, especially those that come under the umbrella of the PLO (e.g. labour unions, student unions and others). In addition, most NGOs do not have clearly established criteria for appointing their staff and managers, and these appointments are often based on favouritism, nepotism or factional loyalties.

The report states that those NGOs that are involved in combating corruption and promoting values of good governance do so through the following channels:

- Monitoring presidential, legislative and municipal elections and the production of detailed reports on the actions and violations of candidates;
- Drawing attention to those organisations that are driven by political and factional interests;
- Educating the community about corruption issues.

The report also offers several recommendations for improving the effectiveness of NGOs against corruption and on strengthening accountability:

- Expedite the process of enforcing and monitoring the NGO code of conduct;
- Developing standards to monitor and enforce compliance by NGOs with the principles of integrity, transparency and accountability;
- Raise public awareness of the causes and consequences of corruption, including: the development of an ongoing national campaign regarding the causes and consequences of corruption; developing and implementing awareness programs on the importance of combating corruption; and coordinating the programs and plans of NGOs promoting integrity and transparency;
- Empower NGOs to monitor the public sector through: establishing the principle of holding the public sector accountable through NGOs; lobbying PNA institutions to adopt values of integrity and accountability in their work; holding public hearings for ministers and public officials to present their strategies and achievements and the challenges they face.

### *Media*

The media in Palestine can be divided into three categories: State-controlled media (Voice of Palestine, Palestine Television and semi-governmental newspapers such as Al-Hayat Al-Jadidah and the Palestinian News Agency Wafa); private media (private radio and television stations, and newspapers); and factional media (satellite channels, magazines and periodicals belonging to political organisations).

To date, no law exists to protect the right of the public to access to information. However,

Palestinian Basic Law guarantees the freedom to print, publish, distribute and transmit, and prohibits censorship. Generally, access to information on corruption within government departments is limited. Furthermore, journalists lack the professional expertise to investigate cases involving corruption. The Association of Journalists and other professional associations play a marginal role in promoting integrity and transparency and such subjects are almost totally absent from their agendas and programs.

Electronic media agencies have multiplied recently, but most are factional and therefore ideologically driven. A number of Fatah and Hamas affiliated websites have published exposés on cases involving corruption, but the sole purpose has been to discredit the opposition. The political division between the West Bank and Gaza has had a detrimental effect on the freedom of the media and press. Some media agencies have been shut down in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and there have been incidents in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip of journalists being arrested because they expressed opinions that opposed official discourse.

The most significant attempt by the Palestinian media to combat corruption has been the establishment of the Media Network for Integrity and Transparency, a voluntary body consisting of Palestinian journalists committed to developing the role of the media in promoting public oversight over government performance in various sectors.

The report offers several recommendations for improving the effectiveness of the media against corruption and on strengthening accountability:

- Build the capacity of media staff through: Building a partnership against corruption among different media outlets through the Media Network for Integrity and Transparency; and build the capacity of the staff of the various media agencies in terms of their understanding of the causes and consequences of corruption and their investigative reporting skills;
- Promote investigative journalism that uncovers corruption;
- Reinforce the right of the media to access to information as a tool for combating corruption. This requires that legislation be drafted dealing with public access to information;
- Conduct professional and independent elections for the Journalists Association;
- Support initiatives that prevent prosecution of journalists and media outlets, and provide them with necessary protection.

**AMAN, 2009, 'Annual Corruption Report: Palestine', Coalition for Accountability and Integrity, Ramallah**

<http://www.aman-palestine.org/Documents/Publication/CorruptionReport08.pdf>

This annual corruption report observes both positive and negative changes in the nature and prevalence of corruption in the various Palestinian sectors. It includes a short section detailing the manifestations of corruption that exist within the NGO sector itself, suggesting that undemocratic and unaccountable practices amongst NGOs may hinder their ability to hold state institutions accountable.

Corruption, in the form of a lack of financial transparency and nepotism, exists amongst CSOs just as it does in the public sector, although not to the same extent. Furthermore, despite increased number of NGOs taking part in anti-corruption activities in 2008, they continue to execute only periodic and diffuse programs or activities aimed at spreading awareness of the various manifestations of corruption in the society

Although codes of conduct for civil society organisations were signed in 2007, their translation into daily practices has not improved in 2008. About 67% of respondents to a public poll carried out by AMAN on the most prevalent forms of corruption NGOs stated that favouritism, Wasta (using one's influence to get things done) and nepotism are most prevalent. This is an increase on equivalent responses recorded for polls in 2006 and 2007.

**Sakr, N., 2001, 'Civil Society, Media and Accountability in the Arab Region', Background Paper for the Human Development Report 2002, Human Development Report Office, New York [http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2002/papers/Sakr\\_2002.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2002/papers/Sakr_2002.pdf)**

This occasional paper for the UNDP's Human Development Report Office discusses ways of promoting accountability on behalf of the disadvantaged with reference to the Arab Region. It includes an introductory chapter on the key concepts of accountability, disadvantage and civil society as they relate to the Arab context and a section of case studies exploring efforts to increase accountability, participation and voice for women in politics.

The paper discusses four case studies, where civil society groups confronted lawmakers and opinion-formers in an attempt to secure women's presence in the national legislature. Their varying degrees of success suggest that the relative strength of civil society and human rights advocacy groups is a determining factor. In addition, campaigns towards accountability for women have made more headway in countries with a functioning multi-party system than in those without.

Women in Palestine have long played a central role in the national liberation movement. In the aftermath of the first *intifada*, however, women's groups found themselves marginalised and in a vacuum. Therefore, Palestinian women affiliated with three political parties joined forces to call for the formation of a dedicated women's technical committee that would address women's political, social and civil rights and work for better representation of women within the other technical committees. The result was the Women's Affairs Technical Committee (WATC), formed in August 1992.

Successes include the drafting a Women's Bill of Rights based on international conventions and human rights law, increasing women's representation in government and on Municipal councils, and on matters such as freedom of movement, maternity leave and women's access to bank accounts and passports for their children.

*See below for more organisational information on WACT*

**Abdel Shafi, S., 2004, 'Civil Society and Political Elites in Palestine and the Role of International Donors: A Palestinian View', EuroMeSCopaper 33, Portugal [www.euromesco.net/media/paper33\\_final.pdf](http://www.euromesco.net/media/paper33_final.pdf)**

This paper examines the role of civil society and the emergence of a new political elite in Palestine. It argues that CSOs fail to practice many of the good governance, democratic and transparency principles that they preach. Furthermore, many of the CSOs that are involved in promoting democratic principles and civil education do not necessarily target the poor and marginalised.

CSOs have been active in articulating principles of democracy, participation, empowerment, transparency, accountability and gender. They have also been very critical of the performance of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) and its inability to provide a model of good governance. This critique is legitimate given the negative record of the PNA in the areas of transparency, accountability and combating corruption. But whether CSOs provide a better model of governance remains questionable. The lack of good governance within CSOs has allowed a patriarchal trend to evolve resulting in the personalisation of many organisations. However, to be effective and credible in their call for democracy within Palestinian society, CSOs have to abide by democratic principles within their own organisations.

Many secular NGOs are providing a wide variety of democracy promotion programmes and public awareness projects in human rights, democracy, participation and the rule of law. NGOs have been successful in influencing governmental policies in different areas such as the passing of the

NGOs law, the Labour law, the preparation of the National Health Plan, launching the national dialogue on economic policies, civil affairs law and many other initiatives through networking, lobbying and other contributions. In addition, members of the civil society elite are often invited by the government to participate in formal committees to discuss policy issues. Nonetheless, the poor and marginalised are not the targets of these activities and there is a clear institutional separation between organisations that provide services to the poor and those involved in public education in issues related to democracy and pluralism.

The paper concludes with some recommendations for CSOs and donors:

- CSOs should develop democratic internal structures in order to enhance their credibility. They should contribute to strengthening democracy within civil society and provide a model of good governance;
- CSOs should combine service delivery with clear developmental objectives. Service delivery should not be seen as an end but rather as a means to an end. CSOs should act as agents of change enhancing democracy and participation in the society. Service delivery should be combined with civic education and the promotion of principles of democracy, pluralism, respect for human rights and defending women's rights;
- It is necessary to provide assistance to support good governance within NGOs because good governance is fundamental for sustainability. Funding should therefore be made conditional upon the application of the principles of good governance;
- Programmes should combine service delivery and civic education. Donors should support organisations that use service delivery programmes to promote principles of democracy, pluralism and human rights.

## 2. Main actors and their activities

### **AMAN (The Coalition for Accountability and Integrity)**

<http://www.aman-palestine.org/eng/index.htm>

AMAN was established in 2000 by a number of Palestinian civil society organisations working in the fields of democracy, human rights, and good governance. Its purpose is to advocate for and provide support for uniting all Palestinian efforts to combat corruption and participate in building national integrity. Transparency International endorsed AMAN in 2006 making it the third Arab TI chapter after Lebanon and Morocco. In addition, it has a Memorandum of Understanding with Salam Fayyad's government to develop a national action plan for combating corruption. AMAN publishes a number of reports and studies on corruption and accountability in Palestine, including an annual corruption report.

AMAN's founder members are:

- The Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy (MIFTAH);
- The Arab Thought Forum (Al Multaqa);
- Palestine Trade Centre (Paltrade);
- The Palestinian Institute for the Study of Democracy (Muwatin);
- Al Mezan Center for Human Rights;
- Council of Foreign Relations, Gaza.

### *Programmes*

AMAN's core programme is 'Enhancing integrity, transparency and accountability in Palestinian society', which is funded by the Netherlands Representative Office (NRO) to the Palestinian Authority, and the Representative Office of Norway to the Palestinian Authority. This has two main strands:

- Providing technical assistance to public sector institutions that have the necessary political will to work with AMAN, by providing consultancy, training and materials on institutionalizing

transparency & accountability in their work. Examples are the Higher Judicial Council and the General Audit Office, Ministry of Justice, Land Deeds Authority, Water Authority, and Financial and Administrative Control Bureau;

- Advocacy & lobbying among the policy makers in the PNA towards the development of a National Integrity System against corruption.

AMAN also has a specific project on improving accountability in the NGO sector entitled, 'Nazaha: Enhancing Accountability and Good Governance in the NGO Sector'. As part of this project, AMAN has produced an NGO Code of Conduct and a corresponding certificate for Good Governance in NGOs. It is funded by the Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation and supported by the European Commission.

See <http://www.aman-palestine.org/arabic/Activities/NAZAHweb/html/indexEng.htm> for more details.

In addition, AMAN provides guidance and leadership to partner institutions and organisations in the OPT, for example by co-ordinating a number of sector-specific networks:

- Journalists and Media Professionals for Integrity and Accountability
- Palestinian Parliamentarians Against Corruption
- NGOs against corruption

It also engaged in various other projects funded by a range of international donors

- Corruption in post-conflict reconstruction (funded by TIRI);
- The National Anti-Corruption Campaign – for advocating UNCAC provisions (UNDP);
- Advocacy and Legal Advice Centre- ALAC (funded by Transparency International).

#### *Capacity*

- According to the website, the coalition has general assembly of 25 members and 21 core staff members;
- In 2007, it had an annual budget \$825,750, which primarily came from international donors;
- It produces Annual and Financial reports (the most recent available are from 2008) and has a strategic plan for the period 2008-10.

#### **Arab Thought Forum (Multaq)**

<http://www.multaqa.org/index.php>

The Arab Thought Forum (ATF), known as Al Multaq in Arabic, was established in Jerusalem in 1977. ATF has a number of projects in the area of 'Democratic Process and Nation Building, including one on 'Strengthening the Transparency and Accountability of Local Government', which according to the website was implemented during 2007/08 in partnership with AMAN.

The project aims to promote and facilitate the development and implementation of transparent financial and administrative models for local government in Palestine. The website lists the main accomplishments as promoting the development of anti-corruption codes of conduct for local governments and drafting a system for citizen complaints to be used by local councils. The latter allows citizens to present claims on the performance of their council.

#### *Capacity*

- ATF has 17 employees;
- Current and recent donors include USAID, Swiss Development Corporation, United Nations Development; Program (UNDP), NDC, and the Carter Center;

## **CIVITAS Institute**

<http://www.civitas.ps/mag/index.php>

The Civil Independent Volunteer Initiative Towards Achieving Sustainability (Civitas) is a Palestinian non-profit and non-partisan organisation. It was established in Gaza in December 2001 as an initiative of democrats, young community leaders, journalists, activists, and human rights and civil society advocates.

Civitas looks to strengthen and broaden the civil society space and to enhance civil and democratic practices and principles towards democratisation and good governance in the Palestinian Society.

'Transparency and accountability' is a main programme strand, but the website is ambiguous as to whether projects in this area are current or expired. Further details such as Annual Reports, financial information or further information about staff and governance structures are also not available from the website.

Programmes include:

- Reform Reinforcement: Civitas implemented a project entitled "Palestinian Reforms... A Palestinian Perspective", which was funded by Friedrich Neuman. CIVITAS conducted several debates and workshops in Gaza centring on reforms in the judiciary, civil society, finance, economy, administrative restructure, electoral system, and local government. The project culminated in a one-day conference in Gaza;
- Anti-corruption: This is an initiative to address the reform issue through increasing the public awareness about the "Illegal Profits Law" and to carry out a public campaign through holding workshops for grassroots communities in all Gaza Districts that targeting variety of beneficiaries, including women and youth.

## **Palestinian Centre for Democracy and Conflict Resolution (PCDCR)**

<http://www.pcdcr.org/eng/index.php>

PCDCR was formed in 1989 and evolved from a series of activities implemented by a group of Palestinian youths. It has six offices in Gaza, Hebron, Nablus, Dear El-Balah, Ramalla and Khan Younis

### *Programmes*

The PCDCR focuses in the following fields:

- Education through a positive influence on youth attitudes, values and skills;
- Direct social work that provides counselling and conflict resolution services for individuals, families and communities;
- Administrative development of various Palestinian institutions.
- Work to promote and encourage citizens' participation in decision-making.

With regards to accountability specifically, there is reference in the most recent 2008 annual report to a community mobilisation programme for reviewing presidential decrees. This aims to enable citizens (particularly those in the Gaza Strip) to assess presidential decrees in line with the needs and priorities of citizens. PCDCR states that this is an attempt to promote public participation in the policymaking process. It is unclear whether this programme is still running and what its current status or achievements are.

### *Capacity*

- PCDCR has a board of directors comprised of nine members and nine staff members (according to the website);

- In 2008, it had a total budget of \$2,146,253 in 2008 with funding from the National Endowment Agency, the European Commission and USAID.

### **The Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy (MIFTAH)**

<http://www.miftah.org/>

Established in Jerusalem in December 1998, MIFTAH seeks to promote principles of democracy and good governance within various components of Palestinian society. MIFTAH has a 'Democracy and Good Governance' Programme, which includes components on: Policy formulation; Enhancing Systems of Integrity, Transparency and Accountability in the Public Sector; and Strengthening the Role of the Media in Enhancing Systems of Accountability and Access to Information.

#### *Programmes*

- MIFTAH's Policy Formulation project is ongoing (at the time of the publication of the 2008 Annual Report) and aimed at promoting accountability and transparency of the public sector. The program attempts to enhance the ability of decision makers to formulate policies in an inclusive and professional manner through a participatory process that leads to disclosure and responds to the needs of the Palestinian public;
- MIFTAH's most recent work in the 'Enhancing systems of integrity, transparency and accountability in the Palestinian Public Sector' area is on Monitoring of the Legislative Process through Enhancing the Civil Society Watch dog Role. This project ran from January-December 2008 and was funded by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung. This project aims to enhance the role of civil society organisations in the legislative process through establishing a Monitoring Unit, which will monitor the performance of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) throughout the current election cycle. Outputs include workshops held in 2008 to discuss Presidential decrees and the performance of the PLC.

#### *Capacity*

- MIFTAH has 23 staff;
- MIFTAH had a budget of \$922,429 in 2008;
- Donors include the Danish Representative Office (DRO), UNFPA, OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID), International Republican Institute (IRI), Heinrich Boell Foundation, National Endowment for Democracy (NED), The Representative Office of Norway (NRO) and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS).

### **The Palestinian Institute for the Study of Democracy (MUWATIN)**

<http://www.muwatin.org/index.html>

MUWATIN was founded in 1992 to promote the study and development of democracy in Palestine and in the region. MUWATIN aims to actively intervene in the reform of the Palestinian political system through policy directed research and public education campaigns on governance issues such as reform of legislation, the separation of powers, reform of political parties, and issues concerning transparency and accountability.

It has a research programme and a number of policy orientated resources and publications available from its website (in Arabic). It has a reform and governance programme focused on legislation related to security services, municipal elections, monitoring the PLC and regulation of the Executive. It also collaborates with AMAN on accountability and integrity related activities.

#### *Capacity*

From the website, it appears that MUWATIN has a small team of six staff. Other information, such as Annual Reports are not available on the website.

## **The Women's Affairs Technical Committee (WACT)**

<http://www.watcpal.org/english/index.asp>

WACT was founded in Jerusalem in 1992 as one of the technical teams formed to support the peace negotiations. Initially a coalition of three women's organisations and a number of individuals, it has expanded as a network to include seven women organisations, three women's centres and individual women activists. Its member organisations are:

- Association of Women's Committees for Social Work (AWCSW);
- Union of Palestinian Women's Committees (UPWC);
- Association of Women's Action for Training and Rehabilitation (AOWA);
- Union of Palestinian Working Women's Committees;
- Palestinian Federation of Women's Action Committees (PFWAC);
- Union of Palestinian Women's Struggle Committees;
- Women's Struggle Group.

It has two accountability and voice related programme objectives. Firstly, it aims to ensure that legislation, laws, policies and programmes are gender sensitive and supportive to women's rights and human rights. It does this through:

- Reviewing laws, policies and legislation to ensure that they are not gender insensitive and to advocate for protection of women and their rights in all spheres of life;
- Advocating decision makers for equal rights and human rights-based laws;
- Equipping decision makers with the skills and information necessary for an adequate gender reading of laws, programs, policies, and budgets.

Secondly, WATC aims to develop the skills and competencies of women to reach decision-making levels in all spheres by:

- Building the assertiveness, leadership and communication skills of rural women to empower them as active participants in community decision-making processes;
- Equipping young women and men with advocacy and community management skills in order to be able to play a leading role in the transformation of their communities and in the advocacy and awareness campaign;
- Equipping local council candidates during with knowledge and skills related to their role in the local council and electoral campaign administration;
- Equipping professional women and men to play a leading role in the transformation of their communities and in the advocacy and awareness campaign.

### *Programmes*

WATC works in partnership with a variety of funders on programmes seeking to improve institutional accountability to women:

- **Advocacy and Capacity Building for Reform:** This program is supported by the Norwegian Representative Office to the Palestinian Authority and aims to enhance the participation of women in democratic reform and nation building;
- **Empowerment of Women in Local Councils:** This project, a partnership with Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, works to empower women local council members in the West Bank and Gaza by equipping them with the knowledge and skills needed for effective leadership;
- **Empowering Young Leaders for Democracy & Good Governance:** This project, supported by DIAKONIA, seeks to develop young people, particularly women, as active participants in nation building and reform and as leaders engaged in advocacy and community awareness work in their communities;
- **Sanabel - Empowering Rural Women:** This project, which is supported by the Ford Foundation, aims to empower rural women to lead reform and to advocate effectively for policies and legislation which do not discriminate against women;
- **Voice of Women (*Sawt An-Nissa*):** a bi-monthly periodical which is also published as a segment of Al Ayam newspaper, has been supported by Konrad Adenauer Stiftung since

1997. Its mission is to promote justice for women and encourage them to participate fully and effectively in society.

#### *Capacity*

- There is no indication from either the website or from WACT's Annual Reports on the number of staff and their level of expertise;
- It has relations with several international donors as outlined above and participates in several international networks such as the Women's Learning Partnership;
- Its total budget for the year 2008 (according to its most recent Annual Report) was \$1,084,136.56 and €107,864. These funds were received entirely from international donors;
- It produces regular annual reports and has a three year strategy (2009-2011) - all documents are available from the website.

#### **4. Additional Information**

##### **Author**

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##### **Websites visited**

AMAN, Arab Thought Forum, Civic Forum Institute Palestine, Civitas Institute, Google Scholar, GSDRC, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Palestinian Center for Democracy and Conflict Resolution, Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, Palestine Commission for Human Development, MIFTAH, Muwatin, Nazaha, NGO Development Center, TIRI, Union of Palestinian Women's Committees, UNDP, UNDP-POGAR, USAID, WATC.

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