



A Statement by PWWSD on Collective Punishment by Israeli Forces

The Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development (PWWSD) July 02, 2014

The Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development (PWWSD) condemns the ongoing actions of the Israeli military in the last month, as in recent years. As history marks incidents of occupation forces punishing people through repressive acts of violence, this is largely the case in occupied Palestine. In June 2014 alone, there have been over 900 reported arrests of Palestinians by Israeli forces, in addition to the killing of at least 14 Palestinians (Ahrar, 2014). It is important to note that one third of these killings have taken the lives of children. Amnesty International has reported that these acts constitute “collective punishment of Palestinians in the West Bank, which are blatant violations of international humanitarian and human rights law” (Amnesty International, 2014). In addition, attacks by settlers and Israeli extremists have left the Palestinians unprotected. The latest incident involving the 17 year old Palestinian child whose body was found in the outskirts of Jerusalem is seen to be an act of vengeance against the Palestinian people. On July 3rd, more than 50 people were shot by live ammunition in the refugee camp of Shufat (Stop the Wall, 2014).

The West Bank and Jerusalem are not alone in being subject to collective punishment by Israeli forces. In addition, Palestinians living in Gaza continue to live in siege, and are effectively blocked by land, and sea in what has been called an “open-air prison”. Overnight airstrikes on Gaza on Tuesday, July 1st and July 2nd, 2014, were acts of intimidation against the Palestinians, many who have no connections to Hamas at all, who Israeli claims to be targeting. Between the 7th and 9th of July, 28 people were left dead and over 100 wounded in Israeli airstrikes in the Gaza Strip. These actions indicate a lack of regard for the human right to life of Palestinians. Among those who were killed are 5 children.

These ongoing aggressions constitute illegal actions of collective punishment against the Palestinian people under international law. They go against the Geneva conventions and deny the basic human rights of Palestinians, who are being arbitrarily arrested, subjected to extrajudicial killings and house demolitions, and constantly restricted in their mobility. PWWSD calls on all human rights organizations and individuals to speak out against these Israeli aggressions and to demand an immediate end to these violations. Silence in the face of repressive acts makes way for further injustice. The words of Bishop Desmond Tutu remind us that “if you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor.”

In line with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, women have rights to protection in times of war and to political participation in any political peace processes that will affect us. Women can and should be agents of change, to speak out against Israeli impunity.