

CSW69 / Beijing+30 (2025)

Parallel/Side event: CONCEPT NOTE

VIRTUAL EVENT

“The destruction of the health system in Palestine: A lifeline in peril for women and girls”

The right of all people to enjoy physical and mental health is unattainable in and gravely breached by genocide, which aims at the destruction of a group in whole or in part, including by deprivation of reproductive health rights which are integral elements of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

The right to health of Palestinian women and girls has been severely breached, especially in the Gaza Strip, and is a crisis that demands international attention and action

Date and time: March 2025

Hosted by: This event is hosted by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP) and will feature the UN Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, Dr. Tlaleng Mofokeng, and two civil society representatives and at least one victim testimonial.

Background: The deliberate destruction of health infrastructure by Israel, the occupying Power, in the Gaza Strip has created conditions calculated to destroy the distressed and traumatized Palestinian civilian population. The genocide acts of genocide perpetrated since October 2023 by the Israeli occupying forces has had an aggravated impact and the health of women and girls, who are suffering miserable, unsanitary and undignified conditions in a situation of mass displacement and mass collective punishment and mass deprivation, including starvation and famine.

This includes the systematic violation of reproductive health rights, as evidenced by ongoing physical assaults on women , with thousands of mothers killed and injured in Israeli military attacks; the deprivation of pregnant women from access to food and water and their exposure to constant trauma; pregnant women forced to give birth in unsanitary and unsafe conditions, often without access to any medical care or forced to undergo cesarean section without anesthesia; malnutrition imposed on new mothers who are then unable to sustain breastfeeding leading to the malnourishment of their babies; heightened rates of maternal mortality; early neonatal loss and infant deaths due to hypothermia, dehydration, starvation and sepsis; and widespread reports of sexual assault of Palestinian women abducted and detained by the Israeli occupying forces.

Healthcare workers attempting to provide desperately-needed medical care to women have also come under systematic attack. Hospitals and healthcare facilities, including maternity wards, have come under direct bombardment and arson attacks by Israeli soldiers, and healthcare workers have been subject to abduction and detention, murder and injury in Israeli assaults on health centers across Gaza. Women doctors and nurses have experienced sexual harassment at the time of arrest by Israeli soldiers within the health facilities, deprived of any form of protection, their rights and dignity gravely breached.

The unwillingness or inability of the world's leaders to stop this genocidal onslaught on the Palestinian people, including women and girls, and Israel's consequent continued and escalating impunity sends a dangerous message.

International humanitarian law, international human rights law, as well as obligations enshrined in international treaties and declarations, including the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action, and countless relevant United Nations resolutions, compel immediate, collective action to bring a halt to this gross and prolonged violation of the rights of women and girls in Occupied Palestine, including their right to physical and mental health.

Additionally, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) has determined, in its advisory opinion of 19 July 2024, the illegality of the Israeli occupation and made clear that Israel must unconditionally end its unlawful presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and has moreover issued binding provisional measures orders on Israel to prevent the commission of acts of genocide in Gaza.

Urgent action must be taken to halt the systematic and mass violence being perpetrated by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people, including women and girls. Alongside serious efforts to ensure accountability for all of the crimes perpetrated against them, immediate efforts must be made to ensure their access to proper and adequate healthcare, both medical and psycho-social support, and to food, water, shelter and other humanitarian essentials required to ensure their healing, well-being and right to health.

At this 30th anniversary mark, an assessment of current challenges that affect the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, including in regards to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and its contribution towards the full realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, would be incomplete without this spotlight on the ongoing genocide. [UN]SILENCING OF CSW69 is mandatory if we are to be true to the commitments we have made and to uphold our international legal obligations and our humanitarian and moral responsibilities to women and girls around the world, including in Occupied Palestine, where Gaza cannot remain the exception to all principles and norms.

Side Event Goals:

- Draw urgent attention to the plight of Palestinian women and girls as a consequence of Israel's grave violations of their human rights, including their fundamental right to health.
- Amplify our demands to world leaders and the multilateral system to act in accordance with international law obligations to end the genocide in Gaza, to free all healthcare workers and to ensure access by the Palestinian civilian population to proper and adequate medical care, including reproductive healthcare for women.
- Discuss strategies for accountability given the well-established pattern of genocide and impunity with Israel's blatant assault on the right to health in Gaza and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory.
- Hear from stakeholders actions that can be taken to promote transnational unity and international solidarity in support of peace, women's rights and gender justice

Audience - As a parallel event, the audience will be a wide range of diplomats, civil society, and academics participating in CSW69 at the UN. The event will also be livestreamed on UN webcast.

Communication - We will create communications collateral – event invitation, photos, tiles, social media messages, for everyone to share before and during the event.

Program:

1. Opening remarks: Chair/Vice-Chair of the CEIRPP
2. Minister Riyad Mansour/Ambassador Feda Abdelhady (5 mins)
3. Discussion moderated by: Dr. Tlaleng Mofokeng, UN Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health - Host/MC - introductions (5mins) (Segment Total: 30 mins)

Panelists:

Amb Feda Abdelhady (5 min) - response to a leading question by DR T

Amb Mathu `Joyini (5 min) - response to a leading question by DR T

Testimony from a woman or two in Gaza if possible to livestream or video recording

International solidarity - Dr. Mimi Syed or another female practitioner (5 min)

Audience participation – moderated/further questions asked by moderator if no participation from the audience (15 mins)

3. Closing remarks: round of statements/call to action from all panelists (10 mins)

4. Host wraps up and ends session: (5 mins)