

Press Release

The Breadwinning Woman in Gaza Between Family Care and the Struggle for Survival

(Translated)

The Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research revealed that the war on the Gaza Strip has led to an unprecedented expansion in the phenomenon of women becoming family breadwinners, amid a rise in the number of widows to more than 22,000 widows.

The center explained in an analytical paper entitled: "Women Breadwinners in the Gaza Strip: War Economy and the Reproduction of Social Poverty" that the loss of providers as a result of the war has contributed to profound transformations within the structure of the Palestinian family, with tens of thousands of children having lost one parent. Thus, women have become burdened with complex roles combining economic support and family care, amid the total absence of external aid and assistance, which has deepened the economic, psychological, and social pressures upon them.

Field data showed the scale of the catastrophe experienced by women in the sector, as the data indicates the annihilation of more than 6,020 families, with a sole survivor remaining in many cases, often a woman or a child, in addition to 2,700 families that were completely wiped out. The martyrdom and arrest of tens of thousands of husbands has led to their wives becoming sole providers for their families under extremely difficult humanitarian and economic conditions.

Available data indicates the presence of tens of thousands of widows, and that no fewer than 53,724 children have lost one parent, most of them having lost their father, in addition to 2,596 children who lost both parents.

Recent estimates indicate that more than 58,600 families in Gaza are now headed by women, representing nearly 14% of all families. This means that women are no longer merely active members within the family, but have become the center of decision-making in a broad segment of families. However, this transformation is not occurring within a stable empowerment context, but rather in an environment of widespread displacement, collapsing support networks, and lack of economic security.

Women breadwinners are also more vulnerable to displacement and instability, as data indicates that 88% of female-headed households have been displaced, compared to 77% of other households.

These figures do not merely reflect human losses, but point to a broad disintegration in the traditional family structure and a forced transfer of provider roles to women, transforming the phenomenon from scattered individual cases into a widespread social

pattern with broad impact. In addition, there has been an almost complete collapse of economic activity inside Gaza. Estimates indicate that the overall unemployment rate reached around 68% in 2025, while labor market participation fell to only about 25% after having approached 40% before the war. The economy has recorded a “near-total collapse” across various productive sectors, meaning that the market is no longer capable of generating job opportunities or absorbing new labor. As a result, the problem facing women breadwinners is no longer obtaining employment opportunities, but rather the absence of the market itself. Data reveals a severe imbalance in the labor market structure, with women’s unemployment reaching 92%, and economic participation only 17%. The percentage of female-headed households also rose from 12% before the war to 18% during the war. This reflects a sharp contradiction where women’s economic responsibilities are increasing while their opportunities to access employment are declining.

These are numbers and statistics that show only part of the ongoing suffering of these women, with no solutions appearing on the horizon. They face a harsh life devoid of the basic components of dignified human living, a life in which their roles have shifted from raising and caring for children to struggling for survival. Most of them now live in worn-out tents or destroyed homes lacking most necessities of daily life such as water, electricity, gas, and sanitary facilities. They are even deprived of the “luxury” of grieving, as they are forced to suppress their emotions and postpone their grief indefinitely in order to comfort their children and compensate them for the loss of their fathers, whether through martyrdom or imprisonment. All of this affects them psychologically, physically, economically, and socially.

All this and more while the world is preoccupied with its conflicts and greed, and women’s organizations remain in a deep slumber from which they awaken only to attack Islam, its rulings, and its legislation.

O Muslims: what more are you waiting to happen to those women concerning whom your noble Messenger (saw) advised you during the Farewell Pilgrimage and in many of his Hadiths?!

Tens of thousands of victims with all their different forms of suffering do not stir anything within you!! Has the saying of Allah Almighty become applicable to you: **ثُمَّ قَسَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ فَهِيَ كَالْحِجَارَةِ أَوْ أَشَدُّ قَسْوَةً وَإِنَّ مِنَ الْحِجَارَةِ لَمَا يَتَفَجَّرُ مِنْهُ الْأَنْهَارُ وَإِنَّ مِنْهَا لَمَا يَشَقَّقُ فَيَخْرُجُ مِنْهُ الْمَاءُ وَإِنَّ مِنْهَا لَمَا يَهْبِطُ مِنْ خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ** “Then your hearts became hardened after that, being like stones or even harder. For indeed, there are stones from which rivers burst forth, and there are some of them that split open and water comes out, and there are some of them that fall down for fear of Allah. And Allah is not unaware of what you do” [Al-Baqarah :74].

**Women’s Section
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