



Musawah Statement to the CEDAW Committee:

PALESTINE

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Musawah joins Palestinian women activists in raising concerns regarding discrimination faced by Muslim women under the different personal status laws applicable in Palestinian territories. We believe that such discrimination places additional challenges for Palestinian women in an already difficult socio-political context undermined by Israel's protracted occupation.

Yet, we are encouraged by the State party's commitment towards reform and harmonization of personal status laws, as indicated in the State party reports.

Positive legal developments in Muslim contexts indicate a trend towards egalitarian family laws. Taking into account today's lived realities, many Muslim-majority countries have used diverse tools of Islamic jurisprudence, as well as human rights principles, to pursue equality for women under the law.

Musawah thus recommends the CEDAW Committee to urge the State party to take steps to:

- First, **recognise the structural roots of inequality in family laws and practices** and use the diversity of opinions and juristic concepts which exist within the Muslim legal tradition to enable reform of discriminatory laws.
- Second, **consider positive developments in family law reform in other Muslim contexts** such as Tunisia, Morocco and Turkey as examples for an egalitarian personal status law in Palestine.
- Third, **with a definite timeline, engage in a consultative process** towards law reform with women's groups and individuals working on gender equality and family law to ensure that the daily realities of those most affected by these discriminatory laws and practices are addressed.

As articulated by Palestinian women, there is an active and urgent call for family law reform. With strong political will, commitment to gender equality, and engagement of a vibrant civil society, we believe Palestine has the unique opportunity to take concrete steps to end the current discriminatory practices and introduce an egalitarian family law based on the principles of justice and equality, that is applicable uniformly across Palestinian territories. □

Thank you.