

Kayan Feminist Organization's Project on Femicide in Palestinian Society in Israel

Research Report



In 2020, Kayan Feminist Organization completed an extensive research process on the phenomenon of femicide in Palestinian society in Israel, in order to address the lack of holistic research and documentation on this topic. The study addressed previously unexplored angles on femicide, including unprecedented field research focusing on previously marginalized perspectives of the family and friends of victims, in order to shed light on the societal, political, and economic structures underlying the phenomenon of femicide. In addition,

Kayan performed research on coverage by the Arab media; the roles and responsibilities of state institutions, including the Israeli police; and Israel's compliance with international women's rights treaties. This work culminated in the publication of a comprehensive report, which confirmed that femicide is not taken seriously enough on any level; that there is a lack of information, awareness, and political will for action; that state institutions display an appalling level of ineptitude and lack of care; and that there is an unfortunate tendency to blame the victim instead of recognizing the root of the problem.

The report confirmed through hard facts and holistic analysis what our work in the field had already revealed to us about gender-based violence on all levels, and presents a clear message without any room for argument. That is, our analysis of both the field research and the quantitative research provided mutually reinforcing data, which pointed to an undeniable conclusion: that femicide is a reflection of societal-level problems and the tyranny of the patriarchy, and that both society and state are failing in their moral and legal duty to keep Palestinian women safe.

Link: [Kayan's report on femicide](#) (full report in Arabic; English summary on p. 86)

Press Conference

Our report was presented in an international press conference held on 12 April 2021. We hosted approximately 120 people (about two-thirds in person and one-third over Zoom), including over a dozen representatives of various media outlets (both Arabic and Hebrew), many international and diplomatic attendees, and several grassroots women representing Jusur Forum and the local groups. We invited our partner from the West Bank, Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling (WCLAC) to join our press conference. Its general director, Randa Siniora, shared the perspective of a feminist NGO working in the West Bank on the topic. Our press work resulted in 25 media reports in Arabic, 3 in Hebrew, and 1 in English, and the conference was broadcast live in Facebook and has reached approximately 5,000 views.



Link: [Newsletter announcing the report and press conference, with link to full conference recording](#) (English)

Link: [Newsletter announcing the report and press conference, with link to full conference recording](#) (Arabic/Hebrew)

Link: [Press release about press conference](#) (English)

Ongoing Legal Advocacy

Kayan's research exposed the ineffectiveness and lack of care displayed by Israeli state institutions, including the police, Attorney General's office



and Ministry of Justice. Families gave testimonies of incompetent and even corrupt police work, which underscored a nationwide trend of institutionalized discrimination in cases of violence in Palestinian society and specifically against Palestinian women. Part of our research included direct work with the Israeli police. Under the Freedom of Information Law, we requested data from the Israeli police

about femicides of Arab women from the past five years. All we received back from multiple attempts were minimal and vague data, along with a lot of excuses. We pursued our inquiry to higher up offices, always receiving the same result. In response, we petitioned the Jerusalem District Court to oblige these bodies to provide more precise details. We have since received two updates from the Ministry of Justice: one in June 2021 and one in October 2021. Both of these updates provided some, but not a lot, of data. Our legal advocacy in this area is still ongoing.

Link: [Newsletter with link to press releases in 3 languages about response from Ministry of Justice](#) (June 2021)

Link: [Newsletter with link to press releases in English and Arabic about second response from Ministry of Justice](#) (October 2021)

Ongoing Awareness-Raising Efforts

Kayan has engaged in ongoing efforts to raise awareness about our findings on femicide, as well as ongoing advocacy efforts every time another Palestinian woman is unfortunately murdered in Israel. We have done so on several levels: 1) by spreading societal awareness within the grassroots, through our local women's groups and Jusur Forum of grassroots women leaders; 2) through media work, including social media work; 3) through disseminating our report to other Palestinian NGOs

doing feminist/human rights work; and 4) through international advocacy, such as connecting with embassies, working with NGOs throughout the Arab world, and sharing our expertise through our special consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). We are currently engaging in a social media campaign using stories to raise awareness about five important topics related to our work on femicide.

Link: [Report submitted to the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women](#) (this information informed her presentation on femicide to the General Assembly in the Fall 2021 meeting)

Link: [Album with images used in our current social media campaign](#)



Supporting Families of Murdered Palestinian Women

Every time a new femicide occurs, Kayan documents the case to ensure that data is accurately captured for advocacy and research purposes. On a case-by-case basis, Kayan also provides legal and emotional support for families of murdered Palestinian women. For example, Kayan has been assisting the family of Wafaa Abhara, who was murdered in Arrabeh in November 2020 by her husband, through the difficult process of participating in the court hearing of her murderer. In addition to providing intensive support and legal consultation to Wafaa's family, Kayan also organized a protest at the Haifa District Court on the first anniversary of her murder. Many people joined to express solidarity with Wafaa's family and to pressure the court for a transparent and fair judicial process that brings full justice to women facing domestic violence.



Facts About Femicide of Palestinian Women in Israel:

Over 2 times

as many Palestinian women are murdered than the rate of femicide in the overall Israeli population.

Over 2/3

of murder victims in cases analyzed by Kayan **were already known to the social welfare authorities as sufferers of domestic abuse** before their murder.

60%

of murdered Arab women in 2020 had **previously filed complaints with the Israeli police** about violence they had been experiencing.

Many murder cases

never hold the perpetrator accountable and are closed without an indictment. Other cases that do lead to an indictment **often end with a plea bargain and a severely reduced sentence.**

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