

PRESS RELEASE

Palestinian Women Farmers Call for Stronger International Support to Sustain Resilience and Agricultural Recovery

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For Immediate Release

The Palestinian Women's Agricultural Coalition, part of the Palestinian Farmers Union (PFU), calls for urgent and sustained international support to protect and empower Palestinian women farmers, who remain at the forefront of safeguarding land, ensuring food security, and sustaining rural livelihoods across Palestine. Women farmers continue to play a critical but often under-recognized role in agricultural production systems, contributing more than 50% of plant production labor and approximately 87% of livestock production activities, while their ownership of agricultural land remains limited to only 7.7%, reflecting persistent structural inequalities in access to land, resources, and economic opportunities.

Despite their essential contribution to food systems and rural economies, Palestinian women farmers continue to face severe and intersecting challenges, including restricted access to land and water, limited access to financing and agricultural services, weak market linkages, and increasing climate-related risks. These challenges are further compounded by ongoing violations affecting agricultural land and infrastructure, particularly in Area C, the Jordan Valley, and other rural and high-risk areas. In addition, women farmers frequently face mobility restrictions and repeated attacks while accessing or working on their land, placing their livelihoods and agricultural continuity under constant threat.

In this context, the Head of the Palestinian Women's Agricultural Coalition, Ms. Faten Abu Nasser, stated: "Palestinian women farmers are not only producers; they are key partners in resilience, food security, and protecting agricultural land under extremely difficult conditions." She added that "despite their significant contribution across agricultural value chains, many women continue to work in unpaid family farming systems, which limits their economic independence and access to sustainable development opportunities."

The Coalition further emphasizes that women farmers continue to face heightened risks in rural areas, particularly near settlements, where movement restrictions and repeated attacks create serious threats to agricultural production and rural livelihoods. Ms. Suna Al-Deek, member of the Coalition, stated: "Palestinian women face daily risks and direct attacks while working on their land. Protecting their resilience is a shared responsibility of the international community and development partners."

In the Gaza Strip, women farmers are facing unprecedented agricultural and humanitarian losses due to the large-scale destruction of agricultural infrastructure. Preliminary estimates indicate that more than 80% of agricultural land has been damaged, and over 70% of greenhouses have been destroyed, in addition to severe damage to irrigation networks and water systems. This has resulted in the loss of livelihoods for thousands of women farmers and has significantly increased food insecurity among rural households headed by women. Ms. Faten Abu Nasser stated: “Women farmers in Gaza are losing land, water, and income simultaneously, yet they continue to sustain their families and local food systems under extremely difficult conditions.”

The Palestinian Women’s Agricultural Coalition calls on international donors and development partners to strengthen targeted and long-term support for rural women through secure access to land and productive resources, expansion of women-led cooperatives and agro-processing initiatives, tailored agricultural financing mechanisms for women farmers, climate change adaptation and resilience programs, and protection mechanisms in high-risk agricultural areas. Ms. Faten Abu Nasser emphasized: “Investing in women farmers is investing in stability, food security, and sustainable development.”

The Palestinian Women’s Agricultural advocacy Coalition, under the Palestinian Farmers Union, reaffirms its commitment to continuing collaboration with local and international partners to strengthen the rights of Palestinian women farmers, enhance their economic and social resilience, and promote their central role in protecting land and advancing sustainable agricultural development in Palestine.

The Palestinian Farmers Union, through its women’s empowerment programs, continues to implement practical and community-based interventions aimed at strengthening women farmers’ resilience and improving their livelihoods. These interventions are carried out in partnership with international development actors, including Norwegian People’s Aid (NPA), ASTM, the Catalan Agency for Development Cooperation (ACCD), and Spanish Cooperation (AECID). Together, these partnerships support women-led agricultural production initiatives, agro-processing and value chain development, strengthening of women cooperatives and rural enterprises, promotion of climate-smart agriculture, and provision of technical and legal support to enhance women’s access to productive resources.

The Coalition also highlights the strategic importance of the International Land Coalition (ILC) initiative in supporting the establishment of a regional women’s agricultural and land advocacy coalition for the Middle East and North Africa, chaired by the Palestinian Farmers Union. This initiative represents a significant milestone in advancing collective regional advocacy for women’s land rights, strengthening coordination among women-led agricultural movements, and amplifying the voices of rural women at national, regional, and international levels. It is considered a critical step toward advancing land justice, gender equality in land governance, and ensuring that women farmers are recognized as central actors in sustainable development and food sovereignty.