

SAWA-All The Women Together Today And Tomorrow

Together we create the human potential for nation-building

Newsletter No. 2 – September 2007

Open meeting for the NGO Forum for Combating Violence Against Women – Muntada

Thirty two murders officially registered as "honour killing" took place mostly in 2005 and 2006. The youngest victim was in her 12th year and the oldest was 85 years old. These were among the results of a report on crimes of women's killing in Palestine in the period 2004-2006, which was sponsored by the NGO Forum for Combating Violence Against Women – Muntada (hosted by Sawa – All Women Together Today and Tomorrow). The report results were presented by the researcher Dr. Lamis Abu Nahleh in an open meeting attended by representatives from the relevant ministries. A paper was also presented on how to incorporate the report recommendations into strategies and policies to combat the so-called "honour crimes" in Palestine.

At the end of the meeting, the Forum recommended that perpetrators of "honour killing" should be dealt with as criminals bearing the full legal responsibility for their crimes. Another recommendation was to enact legislations that can protect women from violence in general and from women's killing in particular.

A training course for police officers is concluded

In August, Sawa Centre held a 3-day training course for police officers from the different Palestinian districts with the aim of providing the participating officers with training in the management of women and children victims of violence. The course was attended by 18 officers of varying ranks from the general investigations and criminal investigations departments.

Conclusion of a volunteer training course for the Child-Friendly Helpline

Sawa Centre concluded the first training course for volunteers for the Child-Friendly Helpline 121. The course was held in the Centre's new premises in Ramallah. The trained volunteers started to provide support to children exposed to all forms of abuse and neglect.

The course lasted for a total of 85 training hours, which were carried out over a period of four months. It aimed at helping volunteers acquire skills in offering psychological support and counselling to Palestinian children, as well as to listen to children's concerns and safeguard their rights.

Twelve young people, males and females, participated in the course and will operate the Helpline on daily basis around the week.

Meetings to review past achievements

In an atmosphere of dedication and appreciation, Sawa Centre held a meeting at the Ambassador Hotel in Jerusalem for all female volunteers who have worked with the Centre since its establishment in 1998, including those who have been offering assistance to victims of physical and sexual violence through the hotline and those who are just starting to volunteer with the Centre.

In the meeting, volunteers talked about Sawa Centre and the support it has been providing to all those who approach the Centre seeking assistance, support and advice. They also talked about the fruits of their efforts and outcomes of their ideas built on the basis of their belief in equality and social justice.

Publication of media statements

Sawa Centre has issued several media statements on various topics, including:

- A statement condemning frequent aggressions against the Palestinian Telecommunications Group.
- A statement reproving aggressions on female telecasters in Palestine TV.
- A statement denouncing the killing of three girls in unidentified circumstances in Gaza.
- A statement denouncing aggressions against the civil population in Nahr Al-Bared refugee camp.

A call for volunteers

As part of its aims to consistently recruit and train new volunteers to work in its programmes, Sawa Centre announces that it started to register applicants wishing to join the following courses:

- A training course for volunteers to work in the hotline programme in order to offer assistance and psychological support and escort services to women victims of sexual and physical violence.
- The second training course for volunteers to work in the Child-Friendly Helpline 121 programme.
- A training course for volunteers in the pedagogy programme.

Courses will start during October. Both male and female volunteers are welcome. Those wishing to join any of the above courses should send their CV to the following email address: job@sawa.ps

One by one, they talked about their long experience as volunteers in the hotline offering assistance to women and children in distress, whether by offering psychological support and counselling or by escorting the victims to health centres and judicial services.

The meeting was concluded with warm and inspiring feelings and participants expressed hopes for continued work in responding to the needs of all clients, promoting a culture of peace and security, and raising public awareness in order to build a further advanced society.

A workshop for the Child-Friendly Helpline volunteers on how governmental institutions deal with abused children

In late June, Sawa Centre organized a workshop for the team of volunteers working in the Child-Friendly Helpline, as well as a number of staff members on the provision of protection services by governmental institutions to children subjected to all forms of abuse and neglect.

During the workshop, representatives from the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Labour, the criminal investigation department in the Police, and the General Directorate for Drug Control made presentations on the role of their respective organizations in the provision of protection services to children subjected to all forms of abuse and neglect.