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Palestinian Women in Occupied Al-Quds

Victims of the Occupation's Policies



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Introduction



The Israeli occupation, along with its various Judaizational tools, target the constituents of the Palestinian community in the occupied Al-Quds through implementing several Judaizational policies. Such policies target the Palestinians' presence in general, and the details of their daily lives in Al-Quds in particular. The occupation's schemes severely impact the city residents' lives and psychological and physical well-being; and result in grave social and life problems. The policies include the low economic conditions of the Palestinians, demolition of the Palestinians' homes, expulsion of the residents from their villages, their isolation through the Apartheid Wall, killing them at

times, and arresting them at Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa or the alleys of the occupied Al-Quds and other occupied villages and lands.

These assaults affect all Palestinians from different places and all groups. This paper addresses the sufferings of Palestinian women in the occupied city, especially because the women in Al-Quds have proven their effectiveness in defending the holy sites through ribat at Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa, facing the daily break-ins of the Masjid, handling the Judaizational measures mentioned above, and carrying the burdens and troubles of life.

Shedding light on the women of Al-Quds is not just a part of global solidarity

campaigns, but also a part of describing what the people of Al-Quds generally suffer from (including the continuous terrorization by the occupation and its assaults). It is also important to shed light on what the women of Al-Quds do to fight off the occupation's ambitions, how they are directly targeted, and the types of assaults they are subjected to.

Palestinian women have participated in the battle against the occupation since the British occupation of Palestine. In the First and Second Intifadas, the women of Al-Quds sacrificed a lot and played a major role through direct participation or offering sacrifices to stop the occupation's

war machinery. Their role has not ended, in fact women have surpassed men in some of their fields.

The women of Al-Quds are patient mothers who have encouraged their children to pursue education and work, and to resist and rebel. They are the *muarbitat* in the alleys of Al-Quds and arenas of Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa; the teachers who build generations; the cultured and activists; the resistance in the face of the occupation and its security bodies. The women of Al-Quds sided with the public against the e-gates which were installed; they chanted and prepared food. They face the occupation as role models for pioneer work.

Women of Al-Quds Are Part of the Palestinian Community; Restrained by Poverty and Unemployment

According to the data collected from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, the number of women in Al-Quds reached 209,000 and the number of men 217,000 by the end of 2016. According to 2016 Jerusalem Statistics Yearbook, 62.9% of the women of Al-Quds are under 29 years; 48.1% live within the Apartheid Wall; 82.3% live in the urban part of the city; 11.3% live in the countryside; and 6.4% live in the camps¹.

Socially, statistics show that 41.2% of marriage contracts are concluded for women whose ages range from 15-19 years; and that 52.4% of the women over 12 years old are married. The average age for marriage among the women in Al-Quds is 19.9 years.

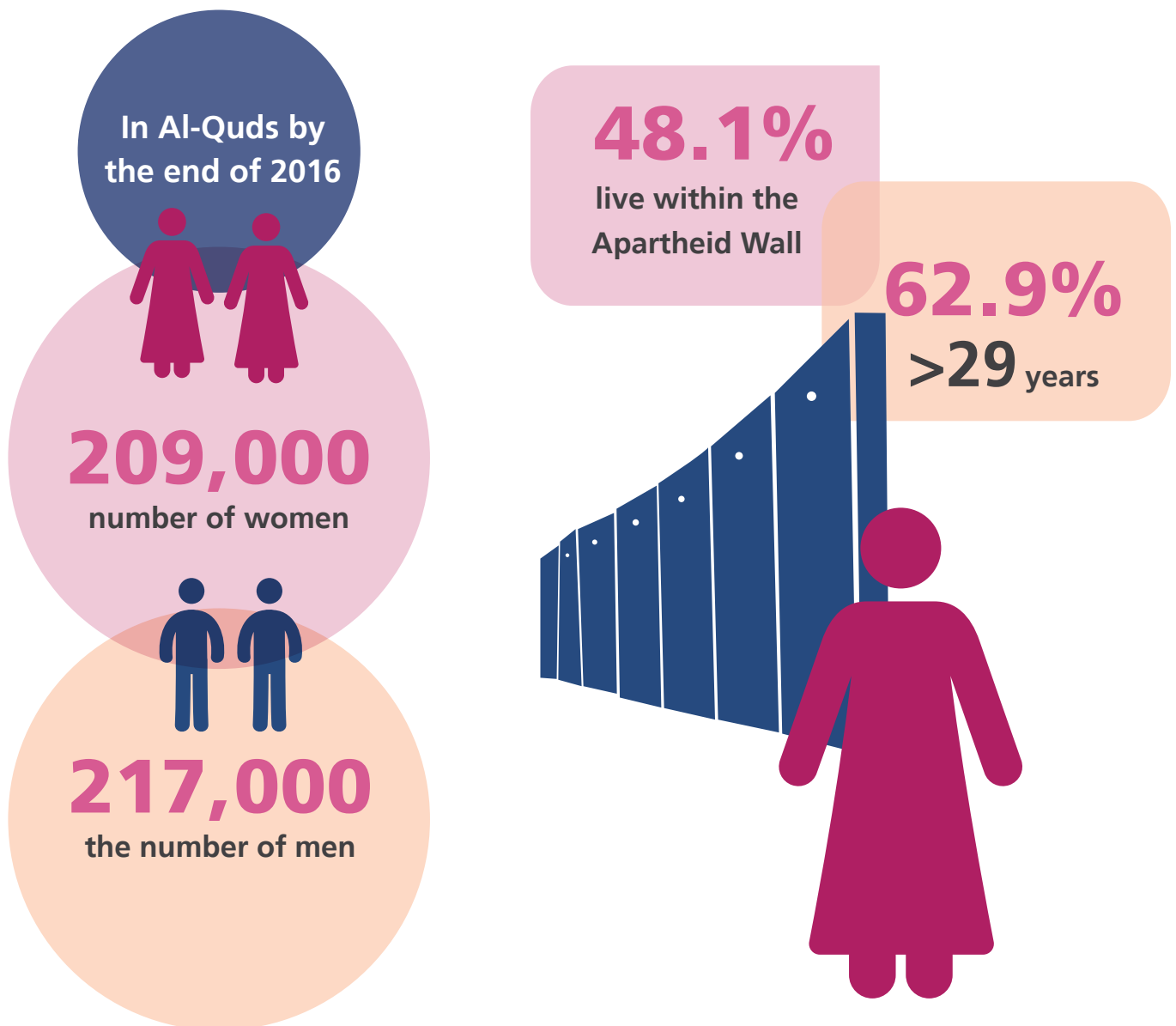
The women of Al-Quds suffer from the deteriorating economy of the Palestinian community. If a woman is a housewife who looks after her family affairs, she would suffer a lot to overcome the daily difficulties,

¹ 2017 Jerusalem Statistics Yearbook, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, June 2017, pp. 25-31.
The Women of Al-Quds: The Culture of the Community and Occupation's Practices, Sama Fayiz Oweida, Al-Jazeera Net, 9/3/2017, <https://tinyurl.com/ydyk9lr6>

or she would go look for a job to secure a dignified life for her and her children. According to the Palestinian Ministry of Labor, the unemployment rate among the women of Al-Quds reached about 85%².

Statistics show that only 13% of the women of Al-Quds are involved in the labor force³. According to Jerusalem Statistics Yearbook,

6.6% of the women of Al-Quds are in the labor market⁴. The average number of working hours for the women is 36.4 hours/week. They receive an average of \$21 for a daily wage. According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, the poverty rate in families whose breadwinner is a woman reached 30% in 2017, and whose breadwinner is a man reached 29%⁵.



² Donia Al-Watan, 30/1/2019, <http://bit.ly/2TIRAUI>

³ Laborers Union Maan, 17/7/2017, <https://tinyurl.com/yc72q6mm>

⁴ Ibid: 2017 Jerusalem Statistics Yearbook, p.56.

⁵ Ibid: The Women of Al-Quds: The Culture of the Community and Occupation's Practices.



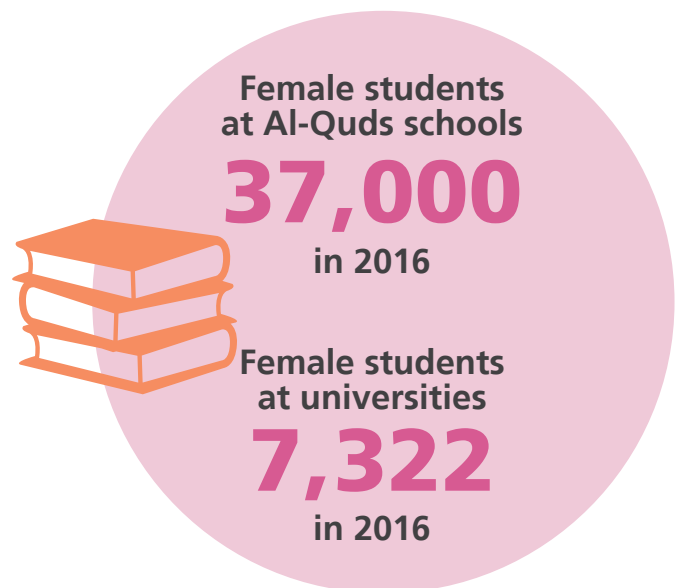
Occupation's Assaults and Economic Conditions Increase School Dropouts

All the sectors in the occupied city of Al-Quds suffer severely. The educational sector is facing Israelization attempts, and lacks the necessary financial resources to restore the school buildings. The occupation's bodies, headed by its municipality in Al-Quds, exert pressure to include the educational sector to

the 'Israeli' system and use education to serve its policies and schemes. The occupation's municipality and Ministry of Education are forcing the Palestinian schools, especially private ones, to use the 'Israeli' curricula in exchange for financial aids⁶.

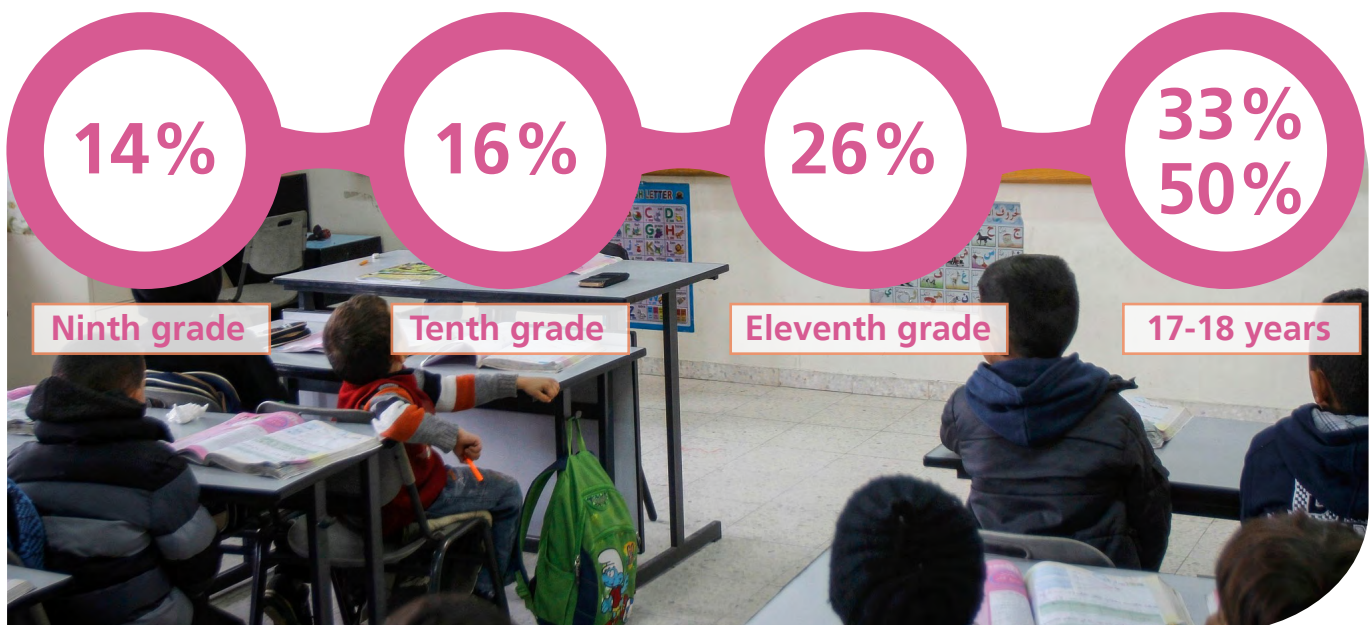
⁶ Hisham Yacoub (editor) et al., Al-Quds Situation 3/2016, Al-Quds International Institution, <https://tinyurl.com/y4y68bv4>.

The number of female students at Al-Quds schools reached about 37,000 in 2016⁷, at Al-Quds universities reached 7,322, and graduates for the year 2014-2015 reached 1,536⁸. These numbers indicate that a huge number of girls do not finish their education. About 14% of female students in the ninth grade (14 years) dropped out of schools in the occupied Al-Quds, 16% in the tenth grade (15 years), 26% in the eleventh grade (16 years), and about 33% to 50% (17-18 years)⁹. According to Ir Amim's estimates for the year 2017, the Palestinian neighborhoods require about 2,557 classrooms, and one third of the students in the occupied Al-Quds do not finish their 12 years of education¹⁰. The



occupation's checkpoints and humiliating searches of the students are key reasons that make families not send their girls to schools, especially after puberty¹¹.

Dropped out of schools in the occupied Al-Quds



⁷ Ibid: 2017 Jerusalem Statistics Yearbook, p.77.

⁸ Ibid: p. 83.

⁹ Al-Jazeera Net, 1/9/2016, <https://tinyurl.com/y783cyyy>.

¹⁰ B'Tselem, 11/11/2017, <https://www.btselem.org/arabic/jerusalem>.

¹¹ The Influence of the occupation's Violations of Women in Al-Quds, Palestinian NGOs Networks, p. 38.

'Golden List': Striking Al-Ribat Movement through Targeting Women of Al-Quds

The assaults against the murabitat at Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa since August, 2015 have risen. The occupation's authorities banned 20 murabitat from entering Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa upon an order from the occupation's police. These women were added to 'the blacklist', but the Palestinians gave it the name 'the golden list'. Ever since, the number of banned murabitat rose. In early September, 2015, the number reached 45¹²; but it soon rose to over 60 by the end of 2016¹³. While banning the murabitat from entering the Masjid, the occupation's

authorities also banned the 'organization of murabiteen and murabitat' on 8/9/2015¹⁴ in an attempt to further restrict ribat and the women of Al-Quds.

In 2018, the occupation's authorities banished about 176 Palestinians from Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa. The banishment duration varied from a week to six months. Among the banished were 30 women¹⁵. While in 2017, 15 Palestinian women were banished¹⁶; in 2016, the number reached 23. This reflects how the occupation's authorities target the



12 Wadi Hilweh Information Centre, 6/9/2015, <http://www.silwanic.net/index.php/article/news/61910/ar>.

13 Hisham Yacoub (editor) et al., Al-Quds Situation 2016, Al-Quds International Institution, Beirut 1st ed., 2017, p. 47.

14 Hisham Yacoub (editor) et al., Al-Quds Situation 2016, Al-Quds International Institution, Beirut 1st ed., 2018, p. 52.

15 Wadi Hilweh Information Centre, 31/12/2018 <http://www.silwanic.net/index.php/article/news/77520/ar>.

16 Wadi Hilweh Information Centre, 1/1/2018, <http://www.silwanic.net/index.php/article/news/77233/ar>.

23

in 2016

15

in 2017

Palestinian women
were banished from
Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa

30

in 2018

presence of women at Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa and that the murabitat make a difference

in deterring the almost-daily break-ins of the Masjid.

The occupation's security bodies also increasingly target the murabitat as they work on seizing the eastern side of Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa. They arrested 6 murabitat on 3/2/2019 and issued a banishment order for two weeks, charging them with sitting in the eastern side of Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa near Bab Al-Rahma¹⁷.

Arrest and Capture of Women in Al-Quds: Their Sufferings in Detention and Imprisonment

The women of Al-Quds are continuously arrested and subjected to physical and psychological assaults, leaving deep scars that are difficult to heal. In 2018, the occupation arrested about 1,736 Palestinians from the occupied Al-Quds¹⁸; about 27.8% of the arrested were women¹⁹ (63 women, 2 minors and 4 elderlies)²⁰.

The women of Al-Quds suffer also from the unjust rulings and verdicts that are issued. The administration of the occupation's prisons intentionally place the female prisoners with Israeli female criminals²¹, adding to their sufferings and exposing them to physical and psychological assaults

63

Arrested women in 2017

88

Arrested women in 2018



¹⁷ Al-Quds city website, 4/2/2019 <http://alquds-online.org/index.php?s=1&id=30172>.

¹⁸ Ibid: Wadi Hilweh Information Centre, 31/12/2018.

¹⁹ Commission of Detainees Affairs, 30/12/2018, <https://tinyurl.com/yamb7t3f>.

²⁰ Amad for Media, 28/11/2017, <https://www.amad.ps/ar/Details/203078>.

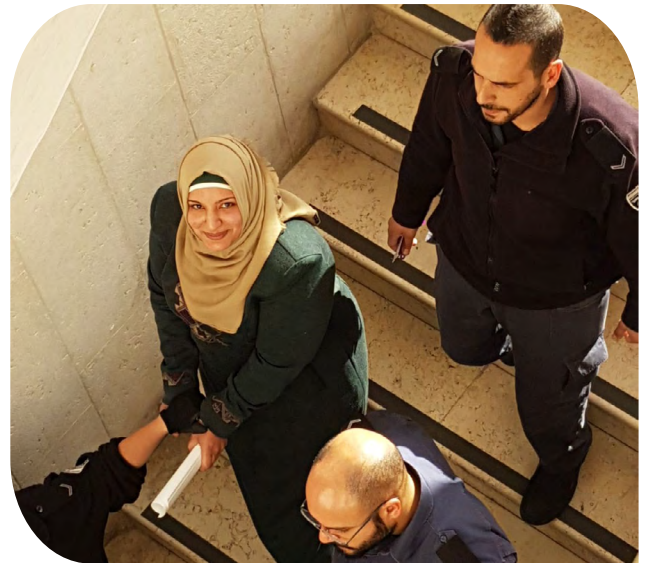
²¹ Al-Jazeera Net Encyclopedia, <https://tinyurl.com/y9ztqtl1>.

whether by the jailors or the Israeli criminals. Following are the main types of assault the female prisoners are subjected to in the occupation's jails²²:

- The female prisoners are sent to solitary confinements.
- They are interrogated for long hours.
- They are subjected to strip search.
- They are subjected to psychological pressure and humiliation by the jailors.
- Their rooms are broken into at night.
- They are beaten while being transferred to the court by the Nahshon units which swear the women.
- They are continuously observed using surveillance cameras that violate their privacy.
- The women are transported to the courts in iron vehicles. The journeys are slowed down to increase their sufferings. The journey could begin at 3 am and end at 11 pm, during which they are only presented one meal and are not allowed to go to the bathroom.

The occupation's courts also issue unjust and vengeful verdicts. For example, the prisoner Fadwa Nazih Hamada, 31 from the occupied Al-Quds, was sentenced 10 years and fined 30,000 shekels (i.e. about \$8,250). Amani Khalid Hashim, 31, was also sentenced 10 years.

Another famous prisoner who has been suffering in the occupation's prisons is



Prisoner Fadwa Nazih Hamada



Israa Al-Ja'abees

Israa Al-Ja'abees, 31, who was arrested on October 11, 2015 while driving her own vehicle in a street near Al-Zaeem town in the occupied Al-Quds. The occupation's authorities accused her of trying to blow her car up, but her parents and other eyewitnesses said that her car suddenly burned and the soldiers prevented her from exiting the vehicle. She suffered from severe burns, lost 8 fingers and both

²² Ibid: Amad for Media.



her face and back became deformed. The occupation also sentenced her 11 years in prison²³.

Israa, along with the other female prisoners, cannot have her daily needs fulfilled without the assistance of other prisoners.

She also has psychological needs that are left unattended. The occupation's prisons' administration has rejected Israa's requests for plastic surgery and offering her the most basic needs to reduce her physical and psychological pain²⁴.

Denial from Housing: Women of Al-Quds' Houses between Demolition and Seizure

The demolition of the Palestinians' homes is one of the most adopted policies by the occupation which intends to reduce the number of Palestinian inhabitants of the occupied city. It has also become a punitive measure to prevent any individualistic operations in Al-Quds Intifada.

In 2018, the occupation demolished about

143 residential and commercial facilities. 24 of them were demolished by their owners to avoid expensive fines and demolition high costs²⁵. In 2017, 116 houses and facilities were also demolished²⁶.

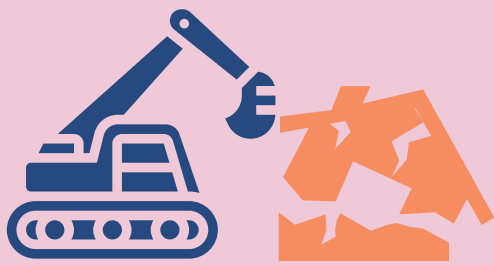
About 27% of the notifications issued by the occupation in 2018 were demolition notifications for the Jerusalemites in

²³ Al-Arabi Al-Jadid, 17/10/2018 <https://tinyurl.com/yaz6lxmlk>.

²⁴ Rai Al-Youm, 24/11/2018, <https://tinyurl.com/yd8pcx6y>.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid: Al-Quds Situation 2017, p. 80.



143

**Residential and commercial facilities
in 2018**

116

houses and facilities in 2017

the occupied city.²⁷ The most prominent demolished residential and industrial facilities in Al-Quds are two residential

buildings, 40 homes, 52 commercial facilities, 18 containers used as offices and for storage, 7 cattle barn-barracks, and 6 garages²⁸.

The rising number of demolition operations directly affects the women and children of the occupied Al-Quds. These operations increase the housing crisis among women, forcing so many women to live in small homes with other families, so they lose any sense of security or privacy. Women are constantly concerned over losing their homes. Some Palestinian women even testified that they sleep with their daily clothes on after receiving demolition notifications, because they fear any sudden break-ins. This makes women live in constant psychological instability²⁹.



27 Abdullah Al-Hurani Centre, 30/12/2018, <https://tinyurl.com/y8wsqjzu>.

28 Ibid: Wadi Hilweh Information Centre, 31/12/2018.

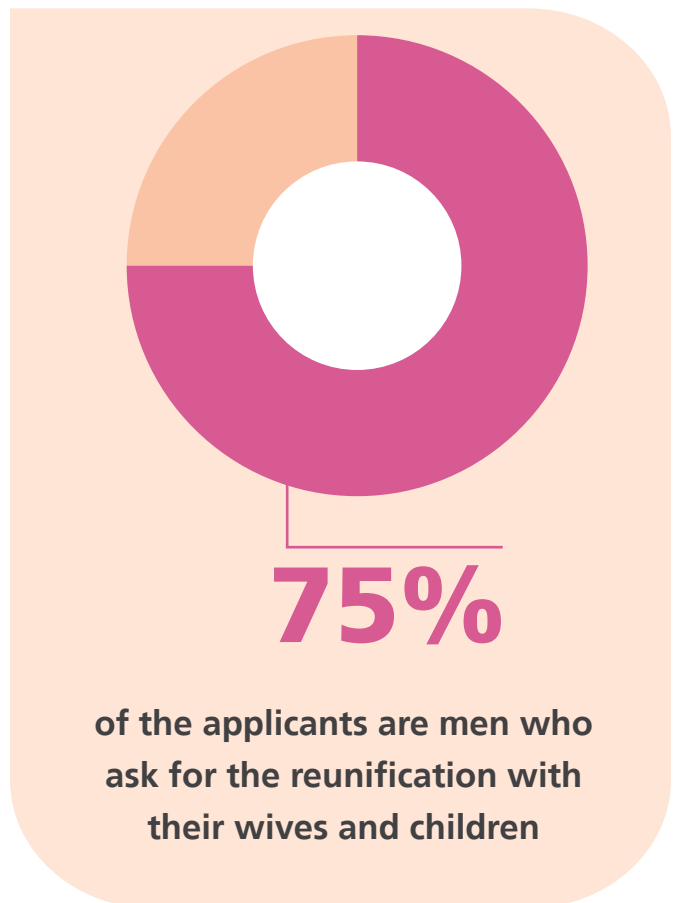
29 Ibid: The Influence of the occupation's Violations of Women in Al-Quds, p. 38.

Denial from Reunification

One of the occupation's laws that negatively affects the female Jerusalemites is the denial from reunification (also called "Citizenship and Entry to 'Israel' Law") which prevents Palestinians who have the Palestinian ID and live in the West Bank from having a legal standing in the occupied lands as they are married to Palestinians living in the occupied Al-Quds or in the 1948 occupied lands. The occupation renews the law on an annual basis for over seventeen years³⁰.

In addition to the consequences of this dangerous law on thousands of Palestinian families, it has affected the demography of Palestinians in the occupied Al-Quds. It has caused a crack between Palestinians living in the occupied Al-Quds and those who live in the West Bank. It has also negatively impacted the geographical and cultural diversities as there were many marriages between Palestinians from both areas, but since the law's execution the Palestinians became more isolated in the occupied Al-Quds, especially with the establishment of the apartheid wall³¹.

Statistics show that the number of Palestinians living in occupied Al-Quds with their husbands upon the request of reunification is about 12,300 Palestinians, 9,900 of them have a residence permit that is renewed every year, but the rest are described as "temporary residents". Statistics also show that most of those who



apply for reunification with their families who live in the West Bank are Jerusalemite

³⁰ Al-Jazeera Net, 7/10/2017, <https://tinyurl.com/y86t9ua5>.

³¹ Maan news agency, 27/2/2017, <https://maannews.net/Content.aspx?id=894526>.

men, as 75% of the applicants are men who ask for the reunification with their wives and children, while 25% of the applicants are women³².

These points that show the occupation's policy against the women of Al-Quds are just glimpses of the sufferings of the Palestinian women in the occupied Al-Quds and the attacks they face that make their lives a kind of resistance and sacrifice. Their sacrifices are increasing in a time when supporting the Palestinian issue is decreasing and the normalization is going ahead as if the free Palestinian women have to stand steadily alone but with the limited support of the free people of the world.

³² Ibid: Al-Jazeera Net, 7/10/2017.



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