



## RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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The Board		19 July 2007
About the Board	<b>ISR102543.E</b>	
Biographies		
Organization Chart	Israel: Services offered by Women Against Violence (WAV) to Arab women victims of domestic violence; the extent to which Arab women are able to access these services (2005 - 2007)	
Employment		
Legal and Policy	Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa	
References		
Publications	Founded in 1992, Nazareth-based Women Against Violence (WAV) is an organization that works on issues of domestic violence, and in particular, tries to address the scarcity of services available to Arab women victims of violence (WAV n.d.a). On its Web site, WAV states that it is an independent group with no political affiliations (ibid.).	
Tribunal		
Refugee Protection Division		
Immigration Division	Arab women victims of domestic violence may access a number of services from WAV (ibid. 11 June 2007). WAV runs a 24-hour help line, a means by which women can speak confidentially about their experiences and obtain information about WAV's services (ibid.). A representative from WAV stated in 11 June 2007 correspondence with the Research Directorate that WAV receives roughly 48 calls or "approaches" each month. The 24-hour help line is advertised in a discreet manner but is well-promoted in schools, universities and social and health services networks (ibid.).	
Immigration Appeal Division		
Decisions		
Forms		
Statistics		
Research		
Research Program	Another service that WAV provides is its crisis shelters (ibid.). In particular, WAV operates a shelter in Galilee that is for the exclusive use of Palestinian women (ibid.). The Representative from WAV stated that apart from this Galilee shelter, a short-term women's crisis shelter in Haifa is the only other location where a Palestinian social worker is on staff (ibid.). WAV also operates a shelter for Palestinian girls between the ages of 12 and 25 (ibid.). According to the Representative, there are no facilities in Israel for women victims of domestic violence who are drug addicts, prostitutes or mentally ill (ibid.).	
National Documentation Packages		
Issue Papers and Country Fact Sheets		
Responses to Information Requests	In recognition of the fear and stigma often associated with reporting cases of violence against women (ibid. n.d.b; ibid. 2005; Working Group 21 Jan. 2005), WAV, in cooperation with the Union of Rape Crisis Centers, has established the "Escort of Victims through the Legal Process" project (WAV n.d.b). This project assigns a representative to women victims of domestic violence in order to help them through associated legal processes (ibid.). Seventy-nine women received assistance in 2006, and at the time of writing of this Response, 16 women in 2007 were being aided (ibid. 11 June 2007).	
Recent Research		
Media Centre		
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Information Sheets		
Media Relations		
Proactive Disclosure	In addition to the aforementioned services, WAV lists a number of initiatives to promote women's rights, such as the "Campaign to Raise Awareness of Women's	

Rights and Services within the Palestinian Community in Israel" (ibid n.d.c; ibid. n.d.d; ibid. n.d.e).

According to the WAV Representative, it is "quite difficult" to measure the extent to which Arab women victims of violence in Israel are able to access support services since the accessibility of different services varies substantially (11 June 2007). Personal factors in an Arab woman's ability to access support services include "how much freedom she has, how much access she has to make contact and her own awareness of her rights" (WAV 11 June 2007). According to WAV, only 22 percent of women who seek assistance from them will file a police complaint due to a general distrust of the police (*Haaretz* 9 July 2007).

WAV reports that the accessibility of its services is impeded by the fact that there is significant demand for its services and not enough funding to increase its capacity (WAV 11 June 2007). According to the WAV representative, Israel's Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs provides partial funding for NGO-operated women's shelters; however, the Israeli government does not subsidize expenses such as "child care, legal aid programs, volunteer training seminars, and consciousness-raising workshops" (ibid.). The Representative also explained that shelters do not have enough staff, particularly those who specialize in helping women find "long term solutions" to their problems, and that waiting lists for WAV's shelters and halfway houses are a chronic problem (ibid.). In a Galilee shelter for Palestinian women, roughly 80 to 100 shelter requests are denied each year due to insufficient space (ibid.).

The Representative from WAV explained that domestic violence programs and support services are under-funded, particularly in the Palestinian community (ibid.). In the Division of Services for Women and Girls, part of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, there is only one full-time staff position to support Arab women and twenty part-time workers to help Palestinian girls (ibid.). There are, according to WAV, "130 Jewish-community positions for workers dealing with girls in distress" (ibid.).

In an article published in the Israeli daily newspaper *Haaretz*, the director of WAV states that:

Arab women are generally more reluctant than Jewish women to seek assistance following a sexual assault, because there is a tendency among portions of Arab society to view the woman as the guilty party in such cases, and the women are concerned about damaging "what is termed the family's honor." ... Arab victims of sex crimes do not enjoy the support of their society, and often, friends and relatives will publicly deny that an attack took place when they know that it did. ... [I]t is particularly hard for Arab women to challenge sexual harassment in the work place, because it is so difficult for them to find work. (9 July 2007)

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection.

#### References

*Haaretz* [Tel Aviv]. 9 July 2007. Yoav Stern. "Katsav Case Spurs Arab Women's Complaints of Sexual Assault."  
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and their Rights in Israel." <<http://www.wavo.org/english/pRightse.doc>> [Accessed 14 June 2007]

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Working Group on the Status of Palestinian Women Citizens of Israel. 21 January 2005. "NGO Alternative Pre-Sessional Report on Israel's Implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)." (Adalah - The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel) <<http://www.adalah.org/newsletter/eng/feb05/CEDAW.pdf>> [Accessed 14 June 2007]

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