Palestinian Women Earn Substantially Less Than Palestinian Men, Report Finds

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The average wage of Palestinian women stands at 73 percent of that of Palestinian men, a Palestinian Authority Central Bureau of Statistics report found.

Palestinian women receive an average salary of NIS 83.3 daily, whereas Palestinian men earn NIS 114.1, the report found.

The report, published on the occasion of International Women’s Day, sheds light on inequality between men and women in the workplace.

“It is well known that male and female workers in Palestine are treated differently, especially in the private sector,” Fadwa al-Labadi, a professor of Women’s studies at Al-Quds University, told The Jerusalem Post.

While PA law stipulates that women and men of comparable rank in the public sector receive equal starting salaries, no law mandates such a practice in the private sector.

“Private sector employers often value male employees more than female employees, because women take time off during pregnancies,” PA Women’s Affairs Minister Haifa al-Agha told the Post. “This is wrong and we need to make sure both sexes are judged by their merit, not by their sexual orientation. Women should be honored in the workplace and receive equal salaries in comparison to men.”

Labadi provided three reasons for the wage gap in the private sector between men and women. First, women receive fewer promotions than men, even if they have the same educational qualifications. Secondly, employers do not grant women additional children’s allotments, as they do for men. Finally, employers provide women with smaller salaries than men, because it is assumed that they are not the primary wage earners.

Agha, however, noted that the wage gap in the Palestinian territories is not unique, since women make less than men in many other countries.

The wage gap among Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development member states, which does not include the Palestinian territories, is 15.4 percent, according to the international body's website.

PA Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah said in a video posted on his Twitter account on Wednesday that women’s empowerment is a top priority of his government, but did not mention any specific actions it is taking to achieve this goal.