



**Draft Law on the Shelter System for Women victims of abuse and violence Victims of Abuse and
Violence for the Year 2024**

**Analytical Review considering the Absence of Disability Inclusion and the Weakness of
Governance and Legislative Policy**

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(Palestine – November 2025)

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1. Summary

Women’s Protection Centers in Palestine constitute one of the core pillars of **the social protection system**, reflecting the State’s commitment to safeguarding the dignity of women and girls who are subjected to gender-based violence. However, despite ongoing efforts toward legislative reform, this system continues to be governed by a traditional administrative philosophy that excludes the most marginalized groups instead of protecting them and entrenches discrimination rather than eliminating it.

This analytical paper provides an in-depth legal review of **the Draft Regulation on Women’s Protection Centers for the year 2024**, prepared primarily by the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) to replace the Protection Centers Regulation in force since 2011. However, the new draft regulation continues to lack a disability-inclusive approach and reproduces the same structural deficiencies that have long characterized legislative policy in this field, after more than a full decade since the State of Palestine accession to **the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)** in early April 2014, and its publication in the Official Gazette pursuant to Decision by Law No. (36) of 2023.

This paper clearly indicates that the methodology of “**inflating**” the draft with terminologies such as “**reasonable accommodation**” or “**consideration of individual differences**” does not manifest genuine disability inclusion but rather amounts to mere **linguistic ornamentation devoid of practical implementation**. Moreover, the continued reliance on **the Law of the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) No. (14) of 1956**— inherited from the Jordanian era — as the foundation for issuing complementary regulations at the level of protection centers and the national referral system for women victims of abuse and violence, undermines any real possibility of developing a modern system grounded in rights and accountability. As the paper highlights, the core problem lies not only in the legal texts themselves, but in **a legislative policy** that is still driven by a welfare-based approach rather than one rooted in rights and justice.

Through a comprehensive analysis of the relevant legislative framework — from the 2011 Protection Centers Regulation to the 2022 National Referral System Regulation and the 2024 Draft Regulation — the paper demonstrates that **the absence of institutional and financial harmonization**, the continued administrative **dominance of MoSD** over the centers and the steering committee, and the lack of cross-sectoral coordination all serve to strip the protection system of its rights-based substance. It further reveals that Article (15) of the draft, which excludes women with severe intellectual or physical disabilities from admission, constitutes **codified discrimination** that violates the Amended Basic Law, particularly Articles (9) and (32), as well as the international obligations of the State of Palestine.

This analytical paper — the first of its kind within this specific analytical approach — concludes that genuine change cannot be achieved through the mere re-drafting of old regulations, but rather through the **re-engineering of the entire system on new legislative foundations** that link protection with empowerment and accountability, and that redefine the relationship between the State and society within a framework of **justice, equality, and disability inclusion**.

Accordingly, the paper calls for the **adoption of a modern framework law for social development**, the linkage of **the protection centers system and the national referral system with the Draft Law on the Protection of the Family from Violence as an inclusive framework**, the strengthening of the independence of the centers, and the institutionalization of the genuine participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations, in a manner that restores trust in the system and renders it a true pillar for safeguarding human dignity.

2. Introduction

This analytical paper is situated within a national context characterized by ongoing efforts to develop **the social protection system** for women and girls, particularly those subjected to gender-based violence, including the most disadvantaged and marginalized groups. In this framework, **the MoSD** initiated the drafting of **the Regulation on Women’s Protection Centers for the year 2024** to replace the Protection Centers Regulation in force since 2011, as an attempt to modernize the regulatory framework governing shelters and related services.

However, a careful analytical reading of the 2024 draft regulation reveals the persistence of the same **structural deficiencies** that have accompanied the system for more than a decade, most notably **the absence of genuine legislative harmonization with the CRPD**, to which **the State of Palestine** acceded and which was published in the Official Gazette pursuant to **Decision by Law No. (36) of 2023**. Although certain terms, such as **reasonable accommodation and consideration of individual differences**, were included, these references remain merely **formal and superficial**, without any real reflection in the executive provisions or the related institutional procedures.

The paper demonstrates that the core of the problem does not lie solely in weak legal drafting, but rather in the **absence of a legislative policy** grounded in a **philosophy of rights, accountability, and governance, and in the disregard for the genuine participation** of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in legislation and decision-making. This runs contrary to the **“golden article” (4/3)** of the CRPD, which obliges the State of Palestine to closely consult with and actively involve organizations representing persons with disabilities. **Participation here** is not limited to providing a formal opportunity to comment on a draft that is already finalized; **rather, it entails** meaningful and effective involvement that begins with the overall philosophy

of the regulation, its design, structure, and legislative policy, as well as the legislative process and the principles and techniques of legal drafting, and extends to implementation and oversight mechanisms. Any failure to uphold this level of participation constitutes a **fundamental violation** of the Convention.

This paper is based on an analytical review of several legislative texts and legal provisions governing the protection system, most notably:

- **The Law of the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) No. (14) of 1956, in force.**
- **Decision by Law No. (10) of 2016 concerning the amendment of the Ministry of Social Affairs.**
- **The Regulation on Women’s Protection Centers No. (9) of 2011, in force.**
- **The National Referral System Regulation for Women victims of abuse and violence No. (18) of 2013 (repealed).**
- **The National Referral System Regulation for Women victims of abuse and violence No. (28) of 2022 (in force).**
- **The Draft Regulation on Women’s Protection Centers for the year 2024 (pending approval).**
- **The Draft Decision by Law on the Protection of the Family from Violence for the year 2022 (pending approval).**
- **Decision by Law No. (36) of 2023 on the publication of the CRPD in the Official Gazette.**

Building on this framework, the paper adopts it as an analytical reference to **deconstruct the shortcomings of the system**, including **the absence of a disability-inclusive approach, weaknesses in governance, and the lack of the financial and administrative independence of the centers**, as well as **the absence of a coordinated framework** between the MoSD, the Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MoWA), and civil society. It further seeks to present an **in-depth critical reading** that leads to **specific findings and recommendations** aimed at supporting the transformation toward **a comprehensive and inclusive protection system** grounded in **a rights-based approach** rather than **a welfare-based model**.

This introduction lays **the groundwork for presenting the legal framework governing the protection system** in a manner that reveals **the legislative roots of the existing structural deficiencies**, and for analyzing **the legislative policy** that has contributed to the persistence of this weakness despite numerous attempts at reform and modernization.

3. The Legal Framework of the Protection System and Its Weak Alignment with International Conventions

The social protection system for women victims of abuse and violence and girls in the State of Palestine is grounded in a set of laws and regulations that emerged and evolved across successive historical phases. However,

it continues to suffer from legislative inconsistency and a lack of **harmony with the international conventions** to which the State of Palestine has committed. The analysis shows that the current legislative components are rooted in outdated legal frameworks that do not reflect modern human rights transformations, rendering them **incapable** of establishing an effective and comprehensive protection system.

3.1. The Law of the Ministry of Social Affairs No. (14) of 1956

This law constitutes the **primary legislative foundation** upon which the subsequent regulations governing women's protection centers and the national referral system for women victims of abuse and violence were built, despite its age and its lack of **a modern rights-based approach**. It is a **welfare-oriented** law grounded in the concept of charity rather than a rights-based framework. It has only undergone a formal amendment through **Decree-Law No. (10) of 2016**, which merely replaced the name of the ministry from the "Ministry of Social Affairs" to the "Ministry of Social Development," without any substantive development of its functions, philosophy, or objectives.

3.2 Regulation on Women's Protection Centers No. (9) of 2011

This regulation was issued pursuant to the above-mentioned law and thus carried forward the same welfare-based and paternalistic features. It lacked **clear definitions of professional standards and accountability mechanisms**, disregarded the participation of civil society organizations in governance, and confined itself to an administrative description of the relationship between the ministry and the centers. Moreover, it neglected the **disability-inclusion approach** and failed to address accessibility and empowerment requirements for women with disabilities.

3.3 The National Referral System for Women victims of abuse and violence (2013 – Repealed) and the National Referral System (2022 – In Force)

These regulations represented an attempt to link protection and shelter services with the national referral mechanism. However, they entrenched the same fundamental shortcomings, most notably the **absence of a disability-inclusive perspective** within protection, intake, and referral procedures. They were limited to a formalistic reference to facilitative measures, without such references being translated into actual forms, procedures, or monitoring, evaluation, and accountability tools within the system.

3.4 Draft Regulation on Women's Protection Centers (2024 – Pending Adoption)

3.4 مشروع نظام مراكز حماية المرأة المعنفة لسنة 2024 (قيد الإقرار)

Despite the continuation of efforts to update the protection system, the new draft reproduces the same structural shortcomings through **broad, imprecise drafting and the absence of clearly defined implementation mechanisms**. **The concept of disability remains confined to definitions**, without being translated into

practical measures within procedures related to residency, service provision, exit, oversight, licensing, and case and records management. The drafters merely inserted terms such as “**consideration of individual differences**” or “**reasonable accommodation**” in scattered provisions and deemed this sufficient from an inclusion perspective, reflecting a limited understanding of the disability-inclusion approach, which constitutes the core of the CRPD.

3.5 Draft Decree-Law on the Protection of the Family from Violence (2022 – Pending Adoption)

This draft represents the most advanced initiative in terms of legislative vision, as it is grounded in a philosophy **based on prevention, protection, and accountability**, and aligns with several international commitments. However, it still requires a strong and systematic linkage between the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and it has not yet been adopted. Conversely, the failure to enact this draft leaves the protection system hostage to subsidiary regulations based on an outdated law and **obstructs the transition toward a comprehensive, rights-based legislative framework** rather than a welfare-based one.

3.6 Decree-Law No. (36) of 2023 on the Publication of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

This Decree-Law conferred binding legal force upon the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) within the Palestinian legislative system, thereby obligating the executive authority to conduct a comprehensive review of legislation and regulations to ensure their alignment with the provisions of the Convention, particularly with respect to the principles of equality, non-discrimination, genuine participation, and accessibility. Accordingly, the continued application of non-aligned legislation constitutes a violation of the rule of law and a retreat from the State’s international obligations.

Furthermore, the decisions of the Palestinian Supreme Constitutional Court (2017) affirmed that international treaties to which the State of Palestine accedes prevail over ordinary laws, including decree-laws, in terms of binding force, once they have passed the necessary stages for incorporation into domestic law and are published in the **Official Gazette**. This means that any provision that contradicts the CRPD is deemed **constitutionally and legally null and prohibited from application**.

Moreover, the principle of **equality and non-discrimination**, including discrimination **based on gender and disability**, is firmly enshrined in Article (9) of the Amended Basic Law (the Palestinian Constitution) and constitutes a constitutional rule that prevails over all legislative texts. It is also entrenched in the international

conventions **published in the Official Gazette**, and any provision that violates this principle is considered void and devoid of legal effect.

3.7 General Observation: The Old Administrative Framework in the Face of the Rights-Based Transformation

Despite the multiplicity of regulations and draft instruments related to women's protection centers and the national referral system for women victims of abuse and violence, **the hierarchical structure of the legislative framework** remains unbalanced. Contemporary **regulations continue to be grounded in a law dating back to the 1950s**, which does not reflect the current social and political reality nor Palestine's international obligations. The reliance on **Article (4)** of the 1956 Law as the legal basis for enacting these regulations represents **a procedural extension rather than genuine legislative reform**, and it keeps the system confined within the old administrative framework.

3.8 Conclusion: The Need for a Modern Framework Law and an Inclusive Protection System

The analytical review of the 2024 Draft Regulation on Women's Protection Centers, in conjunction with the broader protection legislative framework, confirms that **the absence of a modern framework law for social development** constitutes the root cause of this persistent structural deficiency. The Ministry of Social Development continues to operate under **welfare-oriented legislation** that grants it administrative powers without clearly defined rights-based obligations, and without alignment with the international conventions acceded to by the State of Palestine and their corresponding requirements. This framework keeps the centers under the Ministry's direct financial and administrative control, thereby limiting their institutional independence and their capacity to **attract qualified personnel** and **secure the resources** necessary to apply international protection standards.

Accordingly, any updating of regulations **without reforming the overarching legislative reference framework will remain merely cosmetic** and will not achieve the required transformation **toward an inclusive, rights-based protection system grounded in governance and accountability**. We therefore reaffirm that linking the regulation of the centers and the national referral system to **the Draft Law on the Protection of the Family from Violence, issuing them as a unified, inclusion-based legislative framework**, strengthening the independence of the centers, and entrenching the genuine participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations within this legislative framework, in line with the relevant international conventions, would restore confidence in the system and render it a true pillar for the protection of human dignity.

4. Institutional Analysis and Legislative Policy of the Protection System

The reading of the legal framework shows that the challenge within the social protection system is not limited to the legal texts alone but extends **to the nature of the legislative policy** that governed their drafting and development. This policy has remained bound to a bureaucratic administrative logic based on regulating institutions rather than empowering them, on welfare rather than rights, and on centralization rather than partnership. This explains the repeated reproduction of the same system in new formulations over the years, without any impact on its essence or its institutional structure.

4.1 The Institutional Structure and the Absence of an Inclusion-Based Approach

The institutional structure of the social protection system is characterized by **a high degree of fragmentation and overlap of mandates** among government bodies, particularly between **the Ministry of Social Development** and **the Ministry of Women's Affairs**. The former supervises the centers, issues their licenses, manages their staff, and directly funds them, while the latter is responsible for developing **national strategies for women** and following up on gender-related issues. Nevertheless, there is an absence of an **inclusion-based coordination framework** that links the two organizations through a clear and effective coordination mechanism within the protection system at the legislative level, which inevitably leads to overlapping roles, duplication of tasks, and duality of references.

Through the provisions of the Draft Regulation on Women's Protection Centers (2024), it is evident that the relationship between the centers and the Ministry of Social Development remains based on **administrative guardianship** rather than **organizational partnership**. The centers are managed, funded, and monitored by the same authority, which weakens their independence and hinders the development of **sound governance** that enhances transparency, accountability, and efficiency in performance. The absence of a unified database and an inclusion-based information system also undermine planning and **evaluation improvised** rather than grounded in objective performance indicators.

4.2 The Absence of Strategic Legislative Planning

A reading of the overall legislative landscape of the protection system suggests that the process of drafting regulations lacks a comprehensive vision that defines priorities and links legislation to public policies and sectoral plans. These regulations appear to be formulated **as a reaction** or response to funding requirements or institutional pressures, rather than as the outcome of a comprehensive consultative process. This leads to the production of texts that are **disconnected from practical reality** and inconsistent with international trends in the field of social protection and human rights.

We observe that the absence of an institutional mechanism for legislative **impact assessment prior to the adoption of regulations**, through a specialized unit for legislative and policy analysis within the Ministry of

Social Development, the Ministry of Women’s Affairs, or the government as a whole, weakens the ability to assess the compatibility of new texts with existing legislation or with **the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** and other international conventions.

4.3 The Dominance of the Welfare Perspective and the Weakness of the Rights-Based Approach

The current legislative policy reflects the continued dominance of **a welfare-based and paternalistic approach** in dealing with women victims of abuse and violence and girls, particularly women and girls with disabilities, as the texts treat them as service beneficiaries rather than rights holders. The centers are managed with a “care and shelter” mentality rather than as spaces for **protection, empowerment, and accountability**. This is evidenced by the absence of provisions related to participation in decision-making within the centers, the weakness of complaint mechanisms or the monitoring of violations within protection institutions, and the failure to stipulate the adaptation of forms themselves to the needs of women with disabilities across different types of disabilities.

Furthermore, **the focus on procedural form rather than substantive rights** has led the new draft regulation to recycle the old framework in different languages. Reference to “consideration of individual differences” does not mean guaranteeing effective participation, and mention of “facilitative arrangements” does not substitute for incorporating standards of accessibility and environmental, informational, and spatial accommodation into the structure of the centers and their operational models.

4.4 Weak Public Participation and the Absence of Consultation with Stakeholders

A review of the Draft Regulation on Women’s Protection Centers (2024) shows that the drafting of the texts and the core legislative structure of the draft took place within a closed framework, without the actual and effective participation of civil society organizations or **organizations representing persons with disabilities**, contrary to the requirements of **Article (4/3) of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)**. This absence leads to the loss of social legitimacy of the texts and weakens the chances of their practical implementation and reinforces a wide gap between legislation and society.

It also appears that weak participation is not limited to the level of consultation but extends to **the absence of a permanent institutional mechanism for dialogue** between government bodies, civil society, and the disability sector. This demonstrates the limited societal influence on decision-making and keeps the legislative process within a closed administrative circle, far from the dynamics of rights-based development, thereby widening the gap in practice.

4.5 Institutional Conclusion

The analysis shows that the malfunction within the system for the protection of women victims of abuse and violence stems from **accumulated organizational and legislative factors** rather than from linguistic gaps in the texts. The

absence of governance, the multiplicity of references, weak participation, and the failure to embed the disability-inclusion approach into policies and programs all produce **a system incapable of achieving its objectives and goals of protection and empowerment**. Accordingly, the required reform cannot be patchwork or cosmetic in nature but must be based on a **new legislative policy** founded on **organizational coherence, accountability, disability inclusion, effective oversight, and the independence of the centers** within a national framework for governance and social protection.

5. The Absence of a Disability-Inclusion Approach in the New Draft Regulation

Despite the passage of more than a decade since the State of Palestine acceded to **the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**, the **disability inclusion approach** remains absent from the legislative and executive structure of the social protection sector. The Draft Regulation on Protection Centers for Abused Women (2024) constitutes a clear example of this structural absence, as it merely includes formal references to concepts such as **reasonable accommodation and consideration of individual differences**, without any practical translation of these principles into the procedural or structural provisions of the regulation.

5.1 Disability in Legal Texts: Linguistic Presence and Practical Absence

The draft regulation, in its Second Article on definitions, includes references to the terms “reasonable accommodation” and “individual differences” within the definitions of the centers and the case conference, while disregarding the definitions protected in the Convention. Moreover, this presence remains **merely symbolic and linguistic**, confined to the level of terminology without extending to concrete mechanisms of implementation. No tangible trace of these concepts can be found in the chapters of the regulation related to **residency, procedures, the rights of beneficiaries, complaints, center management, licensing, safety, or accessibility**. These gaps between text and practice reveal the absence of a genuine understanding of **disability inclusion as a comprehensive approach**—one that is based on the inclusion of persons with disabilities at all stages of planning, implementation, and evaluation, rather than confining them to the status of an “exception” or a “special case.”

5.2 The Reproduction of an Exclusionary Approach in Admission and Shelter

Article (15) of the Draft Regulation on the Protection of Women victims of abuse and violence for the year 2024, entitled “**Cases Not Admitted to the Centers**,” constitutes a direct extension of the **exclusionary approach** enshrined in the current Regulation on the Protection of Women victims of abuse and violence No. (9) of 2011 (**Article 29**). It explicitly excludes **women who suffer from severe intellectual or physical disabilities** and are unable to meet their basic needs. Although a general clause was added stating that the Ministry shall take the

necessary measures to protect such cases in coordination with the competent authorities. This provision remains **vague**, establishes no time-bound obligation, and fails to specify the responsible entities or the procedures to be followed.

The **dual discrimination** within the category of women with disabilities—whether through direct exclusion or through vague and ambiguous referral—**constitutes a fundamental violation of the principles of equality and non-discrimination** as enshrined in Articles (5), (6), and (16) of the CRPD. It further exposes the persistence of a medical or welfare-based outlook in lieu of a rights-based, empowerment-oriented approach.

This exclusion also represents a direct violation of the provisions of the Amended Basic Law, in particular Article (9), which prohibits all forms of discrimination, including discrimination on the basis of disability, and **Article (32),** which considers any infringement of the public rights and freedoms guaranteed therein a crime not subject to the statute of limitations and obliges the Palestinian National Authority to provide compensation to those who have been harmed.

Accordingly, the continued inclusion of provisions that **exclude women with disabilities** from protection and shelter services does not merely reflect a legislative flaw but rather constitutes a **constitutional violation** that strikes at the very core of equality and human dignity upon which the Palestinian constitutional order is founded.

5.3 Absence of Accessibility within the Operational Structure of the Centers

The new 2024 Draft Regulation on the Protection of Women victims of abuse and violence lacks any reference to **accessible facilities and physical accessibility** within the centers, including corridors, rooms, sanitary facilities, furniture, and alarm systems, in addition to **assistive communication tools** for women with hearing, visual, or intellectual disabilities. The regulation also fails to include any obligation to provide **specialized staff** or to train personnel on how to work with women with disabilities, even though such measures constitute a fundamental qualification for effective protection.

Accordingly, we find that the absence of these reasonable arrangements does not merely reflect an administrative shortcoming, but rather a **structural legislative failure to embed a disability perspective within the design and operation of the system.** This disobeys the provisions of Article (9) of the CRPD on accessibility and is inconsistent with **the international standards for safe shelter** as set out in the UN Women *Guidelines for Gender-Based Violence Shelters* (2020), which emphasize the necessity of environmental and communicational accessibility for all groups. This confirms that references to reasonable accommodation and individual differences in the draft remain merely cosmetic in nature.

5.4 Exclusion of Disability from Oversight, Supervision, and Licensing

It is evident that Chapter Seven of the Draft Regulation on Centers for the Protection of Women victims of abuse and violence, which addresses **licensing, oversight, and supervision**—specifically Articles (34) and onwards—is entirely devoid of any reference to accessibility or inclusion, whether in the conditions for licensing centers, the criteria for license renewal, or the composition of the **licensing committee**. The requirements of the CRPD are not incorporated among the legal references that must be observed, which effectively means that private or non-governmental centers are not obligated to apply accessibility standards or inclusion requirements. Furthermore, Article (50) of the new draft regulation, which concerns **the rectification of the status of centers following the entry into force of the regulation**, does not include any explicit condition ensuring the adaptation of the physical or informational environment of women’s protection centers to meet the needs of women with disabilities. This further entrenches **structural discrimination within the system** and keeps the most vulnerable groups outside the sphere of effective protection.

5.5 Absence of the Integration of Disability Inclusion within Administrative Justice Procedures

It is also deeply concerning that the 2024 Draft Regulation on Centers for the Protection of Women victims of abuse and violence does not guarantee women with disabilities the ability to **submit complaints, seek assistance, or challenge decisions** through disability-accessible language or means, whether within the centers themselves or before the Ministry of Social Development. Nor does it provide for any measures to simplify forms or adapt procedures to the capacities of women and girls with disabilities, even though Article (13) of the CRPD obliges States to ensure access to justice at all stages.

This comprehensive absence within the executive provisions reflects **institutional exclusion** rather than a mere technical gap. It further confirms that inserting rights-based terminology without translating it into practical instruments amounts to **a form of legislative ornamentation** that does nothing to alter the reality of entrenched discrimination.

5.6 Analytical Conclusion

The new 2024 Draft Regulation on Centers for the Protection of Women victims of abuse and violence suffers not only from a deficiency in rights-based terminology, but from **a deficiency in the rights-based approach itself**. The repetitive, formalistic use of phrases such as “reasonable accommodation,” without linking them to clear, defined, and detailed mechanisms that ensure effective implementation, strips these concepts of their substantive rights-based meaning and renders the regulation a continuation of structural exclusion rather than a departure from it.

Accordingly, what appears as a “**linguistic modernization**” conceals **stagnation at the level of philosophy**, and what is framed as “consideration of individual differences” is transformed into **a pretext for justifying discrimination**. Genuine reform, therefore, cannot be limited to textual amendments alone, but rather requires **a comprehensive reconstruction of the entire system** based on a disability-inclusion approach across all public policies, plans, institutional structures, resources, and the tools of implementation and oversight.

6 Lack of Institutional and Financial Accessibility in Center Management

The Draft Regulation on Centers for the Protection of Women victims of abuse and violence for the year 2024 reveals a profound deficiency in the **institutional and financial structure** governing the management of these centers, as they are administered as an administrative extension of the Ministry of Social Development rather than as protection entities that are financially and administratively independent and possess the flexibility and resources necessary to apply international standards, particularly those **related to disability inclusion**. The absence of **financial and administrative independence**, the weakness of capacities and transparency in resource allocation, and the lack of rehabilitation and equipping plans are all factors that render the regulatory provisions—regardless of how progressive they may appear in form—**incapable of bringing about tangible change** in the reality of protection on the ground.

6.1 Centers as an Administrative Extension Rather Than Independent Protection Institutions

The new Draft Regulation on Centers for the Protection of Women victims of abuse and violence for the year 2024 continues to treat protection centers as units subordinate to the Ministry of Social Development in terms of administration, financing, and oversight, without granting them any degree of **institutional independence**, legal personality, or autonomous administrative structures. The Ministry remains the authority that sets internal regulations, appoints officials, approves plans, oversees implementation, and grants or renews licenses. This concentration of powers renders the centers closer to being “shelters affiliated with the Ministry” rather than specialized institutions dedicated to protection and empowerment. It also indicates that the lessons of past experiences have not been duly internalized.

This structure undermines the very notion of **good governance** in the management of women’s protection centers, as there is no separation between the bodies responsible for planning, implementation, financing, and oversight, nor are there independent internal or external accountability mechanisms. It is striking that this approach continues even though **the Law on the Rights of Disabled Persons No. (4) of 1999** designated the Ministry of Social Development as the competent authority for its implementation—yet the same Ministry persists in administering protection centers through a welfare-based approach. Conversely, the **Draft Decision by Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities for the year 2019** provides for the establishment of a Supreme Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities composed of

official bodies and representative organizations of persons with disabilities, a Board of Directors that convenes periodically (at least every two months), an executive administration, and an independent budget incorporated as a distinct line within the general budget, with full financial and administrative independence and its own financial resources. Nevertheless, no lessons have been drawn from this proposed rights-based transformation—which itself still requires further development—even though it has yet to be formally adopted. Its philosophy should have served as a source of inspiration for advancing the protection system toward **independence, accountability, and good governance**.

6.2 Financial Resource Crisis and the Absence of Funding Transparency

The institutional challenge is further compounded by the prolonged **public financial crisis** faced by the Palestinian National Authority in recent years, which has had a direct impact on public sector employees' salaries and on the capacity to finance protection and rehabilitation programs. Within this context, the Draft Regulation fails to provide any serious treatment of the funding question, does not identify sustainable sources of support for the centers, and does not establish clear obligations to **allocate specific budget lines within the general budget** for the equipping and rehabilitation of centers in accordance with the requirements of a disability-inclusive approach.

Moreover, the continued inclusion of the centers' budgets within the general budget of the Ministry of Social Development—without any mechanism to track the **actual allocations dedicated to women's protection centers and the national referral system for women victims of abuse and violence**, and in the absence of indicators that specify what is earmarked for facility rehabilitation, staff training, quality assurance of services, and the provision of reasonable accommodations—renders it difficult to monitor **public expenditure** and to assess the State's level of compliance with its obligations in this regard. Consequently, the centers remain hostage to scarce public resources, without any guarantee of sustained, effective, and systematic funding for the needs of women and girls with disabilities.

6.3 Institutional Accessibility and Disability Inclusion: Between Text and Practice

A **disability-inclusive approach** requires the redesign of the institutional and financial structures of protection centers so that they become capable of:

- **Recruiting specialized staff** in the fields of disability, gender, and mental health.
- **Providing spatial and technical facilities** that ensure accessibility within the centers.
- **Developing file, record, and documentation systems** that consider differences related to the type of disability and the nature of violence.
- **Strengthening an accessible complaints and review mechanism** for women with disabilities, along with a comprehensive and disaggregated database.

However, the Draft Regulation on the Protection of Women victims of abuse and violence for the year 2024 does not incorporate any institutional or financial obligations to meet these requirements, nor does it refer to rehabilitation plans, training programs, or infrastructure upgrading. The legislative policy deficit thus persists, with no lessons drawn from past experiences. Instead, these requirements are treated as secondary details left to administrative discretion or to externally funded projects. This effectively shifts the **burden of accessibility onto the centers themselves**, without providing them with the resources or the independence necessary to fulfill such obligations.

6.4 Absence of a Vision for Financial and Administrative Independence

The Draft Regulation does not set out any framework for enabling the centers to access **diversified funding sources** or to establish partnership mechanisms with the civil society sector or international organizations. Nor does it open the way for the establishment of **an independent board of directors, an executive administration**, or autonomous powers in planning and budget formulation, as envisaged in the Draft Decision by Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of 2019. Furthermore, the Draft fails to link the granting and renewal of licenses to the centers' capacity to comply with disability inclusion standards, thereby weakening the institutional incentive to invest in this area.

The continuation of this structural arrangement renders the transition from **the language of commitment** to the reality of **implementation virtually impossible**. Provisions that refer to "reasonable accommodations" and "consideration of individual differences" cannot be operationalized in the absence of resources, clarity of mandates, and institutional independence. Consequently, the absence of institutional and financial accessibility becomes a **structural barrier** to any serious attempt to ensure the inclusion of women and girls with disabilities within protection and shelter services. In this sense, building the new system—just as was the case with the currently applicable Regulation on Centers for the Protection of Women victims of abuse and violence of 2011—upon the outdated Law of the Ministry of Social Affairs of 1956 constitutes a **grave structural error**.

6.5 Conclusion of This Axis

This analysis demonstrates that the issue of institutional and financial accessibility is not a secondary administrative detail, but rather **the core pillar of the protection equation**. Centers that are administered as subordinate units of a Ministry already burdened by a chronic resource crisis—without independence, transparency, or partnership—cannot constitute an effective platform for protecting women and girls from violence, particularly women and girls with disabilities.

Accordingly, genuine reform of the protection system cannot be achieved through the **introduction of superficial** textual amendments in the Draft Regulation of 2024. Rather, it requires a comprehensive

reconstruction of the system on the foundations of financial and administrative independence, diversification of funding sources, strengthened partnership with civil society and the disability sector, and the linkage of licensing and license renewal to standards of disability inclusion and accessibility.

The absence of these **foundational pillars** transforms the centers from spaces of protection into ineffective administrative annexes devoid of accountability, whereas their integration within an independent institutional framework—along the lines envisaged in the Draft Decision by Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of 2019—represents the **decisive step** toward a shift from welfare to rights, and from dependency to good governance.

7 Excluded Groups from Protection: Codified Discrimination and the Absence of Justice

Article (15) of **the Draft Regulation on Centers for the Protection of Women victims of abuse and violence for the year 2024** reveals the persistence of an exclusionary approach based on gender and disability that the system has inherited from **the Regulation on Centers for the Protection of Women victims of abuse and violence No. (9) of 2011**, with only a slight change in wording rather than in substance. Instead of addressing previous gaps and including women and girls with disabilities within the protection system, the Draft reproduces the logic of “exception” as a governing rule by defining categories that are not admitted to the centers, most notably “any person who has a severe intellectual or physical disability and is unable to care for herself or meet her personal needs.”

In this context, it is further noted that the Draft Regulation of 2024—similar to the Regulation in force since 2011—continues to treat other groups, such as women who are addicted to or abuse alcohol or narcotic substances, and women who engage in prostitution, as “ineligible for admission.” This reflects the continuation of a pattern of **social stigmatization and legal exclusion** that is incompatible with the principle of **human dignity** and contradicts the obligations incumbent upon the State under the Amended Basic Law (the Constitution) and international conventions. All women victims of abuse and violence, regardless of their background, behavior, or health or social status, **have the full and equal right to protection from violence** and must not be left to an unknown fate in unsafe environments or without the institutional support to which they are entitled.

This provision constitutes **a form of compounded discrimination** against women and girls with disabilities, as it excludes them from the protection system based on their disability and shifts onto them the burden of an **institutional failure** to provide an inclusive environment and specialized services for victims/survivors of violence.

7.1 The Discriminatory Legacy of the 2011 Regulation

Article (29) of the Regulation on Centers for the Protection of Women victims of abuse and violence of 2011 stipulated “**seven categories that shall not be admitted to protection centers,**” including women with

intellectual or physical disabilities that “render them unable to meet their basic personal needs,” in addition to women sentenced by judicial rulings, any woman addicted to or abusing alcohol or narcotic substances, and those who engage in prostitution based on a report from the police or the Ministry, except in special cases left to the discretion of the Director of the Protection Center following a case assessment by specialists.

This provision combined **social stigmatization with legal discrimination** at the same time, by placing women with disabilities in the same category as groups treated as deviant or morally transgressive, in complete disregard of human dignity and the rights guaranteed under the Palestinian Amended Basic Law and international conventions. The Draft Regulation of 2024 was expected to rectify this fundamental defect; however, it merely rephrased the text in softer language without addressing the core substance of the discrimination that permeates the provision.

7.2 Codified Discrimination in the 2024 Draft Regulation

Although **Article (15)** of the Draft Regulation attempts to appear more “balanced,” it retains the same discriminatory logic by excluding women with severe intellectual or physical disabilities under the pretext of “inability to care for oneself,” while adding a vague clause granting the Ministry of Social Development the authority to take what it terms “the necessary procedures and measures to ensure their protection and provide the required services in coordination with competent and qualified entities.”

This ambiguous wording opens the door to **transferring women with disabilities to closed institutions** or custodial environments that lack even the minimum standards of protection, empowerment, oversight, and accountability for violations they may face. This constitutes a clear and explicit violation of Article (19) of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which enshrines **the right to independent living and inclusion in the community**.

7.3 Dual Discrimination Within and Beyond Disability

Discrimination does not stop at the exclusion of women victims of abuse and violence with disabilities from protection centers; it extends further to differentiate and discriminate between types of disabilities themselves. The text excludes persons with “intellectual” or “severe physical” disabilities, without any reference to hearing, visual, or other intellectual disabilities, reflecting a **narrow medical-corrective perspective** that is incompatible with the human rights-based concept and approach to disability.

Accordingly, the provision becomes a source of two parallel forms of discrimination: discrimination against women with disabilities as compared to women without disabilities, and discrimination within the category of women with disabilities themselves based on the type and severity of disability. This **intersecting discrimination** violates the essence of Article (9) of the Amended Basic Law, which prohibits all forms of discrimination, including discrimination

based on disability, and contradicts Article (32) of the same Law, which considers any violation of rights and freedoms a crime that is not subject to prescription.

7.4 The State's Responsibility to Provide Specialized Centers

Rather than excluding women with disabilities from protection centers, the Draft should have explicitly provided for the **establishment of specialized units or sections** within protection centers, equipped with trained personnel and facilities responsive to physical, psychological, and sensory diversity.

Justifying exclusion through phrases such as “inability to care for oneself” reflects an **institutional failure** to provide supportive services rather than a legitimate legal basis for exclusion. Under international conventions, the **State is obligated** to take **all necessary measures** to ensure that women and girls with disabilities can access protection on an equal basis and without discrimination—not to restrict this right under the pretext of administrative incapacity or limited resources. Such restrictions constitute an evasion of State responsibility and an inevitable constitutional violation.

7.5 Article (16): Specialized Centers Under Ministerial Control

Article (16) of the Draft attempts to address part of the excluded categories by providing that “the Ministry shall establish a specialized center to receive victims of drugs, sexual exploitation, and any category added by a decision of the Minister.” However, this approach amounts to a form of “**forward evasion**” that leads to further marginalization and exclusion and reflects an institutional failure to comply with constitutional obligations.

Moreover, this provision deepens the crisis rather than resolving it, as it leaves the establishment of specialized centers entirely subject to **ministerial discretion**, without any objective standards, time-bound commitments, or guaranteed financing, and subjects these centers to direct ministerial supervision without any administrative or financial independence.

In addition, the text makes no reference to the establishment of a specialized center for women with disabilities, despite the fact that they are among the groups most in need of specialized protection. Thus, “exception” is transformed into an **entrenched legislative policy** that leads to further marginalization and exclusion.

7.6 Conclusion of This Axis

The persistence of discriminatory provisions in the Draft Regulation on Centers for the Protection of Women victims of abuse and violence for the year 2024 clearly demonstrates that **the prevailing legislative philosophy remains captive to a welfare-based approach** that conflates protection with exclusion. Instead of establishing an inclusive system, the Draft reproduces the same structural gaps under different labels. **A disability-inclusive approach** requires a fundamental re-examination of Articles (15) and (16), whereby the principle of exclusion must be **entirely** abolished and replaced with a principle of **institutional adaptation** that

guarantees the right of all women—including women with disabilities—to access protection services without any constitutionally prohibited discrimination.

This further necessitates the incorporation of explicit provisions obligating the Ministry to provide the required human and material resources, and establishing State responsibility for any harm resulting from the exclusion of women with disabilities from protection services, in accordance with Articles (9) and (32) of the Amended Basic Law and Article (4)(3) of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which constitutes the true compass for any national legislation.

8 The Steering Committee for Women’s Protection Centers: Weak Governance and the Exclusion of Representative Participation

The Steering Committee for Women’s Protection Centers, as provided for in Articles (51) and subsequent provisions of the Draft Regulation on Centers for the Protection of Women victims of abuse and violence for the year 2024, constitutes one of the most significant institutional instruments for ensuring coordination, oversight, and the integration of roles among official bodies, civil society, and the disability sector within the protection system. However, a careful reading of these provisions reveals that the new Draft clearly tends toward reproducing the problem of ministerial administrative dominance, while confining the Committee to a limited advisory framework of marginal effectiveness, far removed from the concept of **good governance and genuine participation** grounded in the principles of transparency, accountability, diversity, and equitable representation.

8.1 Ministerial Dominance and Weak Independence

Article (51) of the Draft Regulation provides for the establishment of a Steering Committee chaired by the Minister of Social Development, with membership drawn from several official institutions and civil society organizations, including one organization representing persons with disabilities. Despite the symbolic significance of this representation considering international obligations, the Ministry’s control over the chairmanship of the Committee and its core powers may reduce the Committee to an **executive instrument** in the hands of the governmental authority, rather than a participatory decision-making framework.

This legislative deficit is further reinforced by Article (53), which grants the Minister (as Chair) the authority to **approve the Committee’s internal regulations for them to enter into force**, and stipulates that the **Steering Committee shall hold at least one ordinary meeting per year**. This means that convening a single meeting annually would be considered **legally sufficient**. As a result, the intended oversight and coordination function is reduced to a formal activity that may be fulfilled through a solitary annual meeting, effectively undermining the principle of periodic follow-up and continuous accountability.

8.2 Absence of Genuine Participation in Organizations Representing Persons with Disabilities

Although the Draft provides for the representation of organizations of persons with disabilities within the Committee, this representation remains symbolic and limited. The Regulation contains no provisions to ensure field-level monitoring or the evaluation of the inclusiveness of the centers and the services provided from a disability-inclusive perspective. **Symbolic representation without meaningful participation** runs counter to the “**golden article**” (4/3) of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and its requirements, which obligate States to undertake close consultation with, and the full participation of, persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in all stages of decision-making. It also contradicts the principles of **good governance** based on transparency, accountability, diversity, and representation.

8.3 Weak Coordination with the Ministry of Women’s Affairs and Civil Society Organizations

Despite the strategic role of **the Ministry of Women’s Affairs in shaping national gender policies** and leading the Women, Peace and Security agenda within its comprehensive framework that links protection, participation, justice, and accountability, the Draft Regulation does not grant it the **central role** it deserves—whether within the substantive provisions of the Regulation or within the Steering Committee itself. It remains merely a member, albeit as Vice-Chair, without clearly defined mandates related to planning, oversight, or performance evaluation.

In addition, the Draft Regulation suffers from the absence of an **effective institutional coordination mechanism** with civil society organizations working on gender-based violence and disability issues, including non-governmental, human rights, and community-based organizations. The Regulation does not specify mechanisms for consultation, information-sharing, joint reporting, or joint follow-up, which weakens national integration between governmental and non-governmental institutions and deepens sectoral fragmentation in the management of protection-related issues.

8.4 Reduction of the Committee’s Role to Consultation Without Accountability

Article (52) of the Draft defines the functions of the Steering Committee to include proposing policies, developing programs and services, reviewing plans, and submitting reports to the Ministry. However, it contains no provision linking the Committee’s decisions to binding obligations on the Ministry or the centers under its authority.

This means that the Committee lacks any **oversight or binding authority**, thereby hollowing out its substantive role and transforming it into a purely consultative forum rather than a genuine instrument of good governance and quality assurance. In the absence of legal enforceability of the Committee’s recommendations or powers to hold centers accountable, internal oversight remains weak and fragmented—an impact that will be felt most acutely by women and girls with disabilities.

8.5 The Need to Reform the Governance Structure

Reforming the system requires a redefinition of the role of the Committee within a **clear participatory governance framework** that ensures:

1. The redistribution of powers so that the Committee becomes a national body vested with genuine oversight authority, rather than a committee subordinate to the Ministry.
2. The stipulation of regular meetings of the Committee at a minimum frequency (at least once every three months), as well as extraordinary meetings when necessary.
3. The adoption of a voting mechanism whose recommendations clearly bind the Ministry, with explicit provision to that effect in the Draft Regulation.
4. The expansion of the representation of organizations of persons with disabilities and of women's and human rights civil society organizations to preserve a balance between official and non-official actors within the Committee's membership and to prevent unilateral decision-making.
5. The inclusion of an explicit provision linking the deliberations and reports of the Committee to their submission to the Council of Ministers, thereby recalibrating the relationship between administrative and executive authorities and strengthening transparency and accountability.
6. The requirement to publicly disclose and circulate the minutes of the Committee's meetings and its reports to all relevant stakeholders, including the disability sector, so as to entrench the principle of public transparency and enhance public trust in the protection system.
7. The establishment of a permanent technical monitoring and evaluation mechanism within the Committee tasked with preparing periodic reports on the implementation of recommendations and on the effectiveness of protection centers in achieving their objectives, including disability and gender inclusion indicators.

8.6 Conclusion: Between Centralized Administration and Participatory Governance

The current formulation of the Steering Committee in the Draft Regulation on Centers for the Protection of Women victims of abuse and violence for the year 2024 demonstrates that it continues to revolve around **centralized administration** rather than participatory governance. The absence of genuine representative participation, the marginalization of the Ministry of Women's Affairs, and the sidelining of human rights organizations and organizations of persons with disabilities are all indicators of a **loss of institutional direction** in building an inclusive protection system. In its present form, the Steering Committee appears to be a **nominal advisory body** subject to ministerial authority, whereas it should function as an **independent national body** that contributes to decision-making, performance evaluation, and the assurance of periodic accountability.

This deficiency reflects the persistence of a **legacy administrative mindset** in addressing issues of violence and disability, divorced from a governance-based approach that distributes responsibilities, enhances transparency, and rests on balanced representation and mutual accountability. Accordingly, serious reform must begin with **liberating the Committee from ministerial guardianship**, entrenching the financial and administrative independence of the centers, and ensuring an effective leadership role for civil society organizations, organizations of persons with disabilities, and the Ministry of Women’s Affairs. This alone can restore public trust in the protection system and transforming it from a closed executive structure into a **participatory system** that embodies justice, equality, and human dignity in practice, not merely in text.

9 Analytical Findings

The analytical review of **the Draft Regulation on Centers for the Protection of Women victims of abuse and violence for the year 2024** demonstrates that the process of so-called “updating” the text has not resulted in a substantive transformation in the intellectual or rights-based foundation of the system. Rather, it has been limited to cosmetic improvements in certain definitions and terminology, without altering the core structure of the system and outside the framework of a disability-inclusive approach. The most salient findings may be summarized as follows:

9.1 Persistence of the Welfare-Based Approach Rather Than a Rights-Based Approach

The Draft remains entrenched in the traditional “care and shelter” paradigm rather than one of “empowerment and protection.” The centers continue to be administered according to a bureaucratic—administrative logic that has demonstrably failed in practice, rather than through a philosophy grounded in rights and accountability. The text lacks any affirmation of the independence of the centers or of the State’s obligation to guarantee the financial and human resources required to operate them in accordance with standards of protection and justice.

9.2 Absence of Legislative and Institutional Alignment

The provisions reveal that alignment with **the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)** remains merely formal, confined to the inclusion of phrases such as “reasonable accommodation” and “consideration of individual differences” in definitions and introductory sections, without being extended to implementation details or the institutional structure of the centers. This lack of substantive alignment places the system in direct contradiction with the international obligations of the State of Palestine, particularly Articles (4) and (8) of the CRPD, as well as with the provisions of the Amended Basic Law (the Constitution), especially Article (9), which prohibits discrimination, and Article (32), which criminalizes any violation of rights and freedoms and guarantees redress.

9.3 Structural Defect in Legislative Policy

The comparative analysis clearly demonstrates that all relevant regulations—from the 2011 Regulation on Centers for Protection, through the National Referral Systems for Women victims of abuse and violence of 2013 and 2022, to the current 2024 Draft—have been grounded in an outdated law dating back to the 1950s (the Law of the Ministry of Social Affairs No. 14 of 1956). Continued reliance on this obsolete law as a legislative foundation fundamentally undermines the possibility of building a modern rights-based protection system. It further underscores the urgent need for a contemporary social development law that embodies the principles of social justice, equality, and non-discrimination.

9.4 Weak Governance and Oversight

This analytical paper demonstrates that the dominance exercised by the Ministry of Social Development over the Steering Committee for the centers, coupled with the Committee's weak independence and limited meeting mechanisms, has resulted in the erosion of oversight and coordination functions and in a lack of transparency in the management of the protection system. The absence of a periodic monitoring system, and the lack of oversight reports submitted to the Council of Ministers or to the Legislative Council (if convened in the future) and made available to the public, effectively signify **the absence—or severe erosion—of institutional accountability** and the weakening of the principle of good governance.

9.5 Codified Discrimination Against Women with Disabilities

The analysis confirms that Article (15) of the Draft—concerning cases not admitted to the centers—embodies a systematic form of discrimination against women and girls with disabilities and transforms deprivation of services into a codified policy under the pretext of “inability to care for oneself,” in a manner that demeans human dignity and reflects institutional failure or incapacity. This provision constitutes a clear violation of Articles (5) and (6) of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which affirm gender equality and the protection of women and girls from multiple and intersectional discrimination. It also contravenes the principle of human dignity, which represents a cornerstone of the Palestinian Basic Law.

9.6 Absence of Cross-Sectoral Coordination

The Draft Regulation fails to define a clear relationship between the Ministry of Social Development and the Ministry of Women's Affairs, despite the latter's sectoral mandate over gender policies. Nor does it clarify coordination mechanisms with the Ministries of Justice, Health, and Interior, or with civil society organizations and the disability sector. This weakens institutional integration and keeps protection-related work fragmented across isolated silos. **Disability is, by its very nature, a cross-sectoral issue**, and its effective inclusion is only possible within a unified national system that integrates roles and distributes responsibilities in accordance with

a comprehensive vision of social protection, based on a disability-inclusive approach and in line with the CRPD and its obligations.

9.7 Absence of Inclusion in Procedures, Forms, and Records

Despite the inclusion of general references to the rights of persons with disabilities in the overarching provisions, the Draft Regulation introduces no amendments to ensure that **forms and procedures are accessible** to and responsive to the needs of women and girls with disabilities. It does not explicitly address accessibility within the centers, the adaptation of facilities and rooms, the nature of reasonable accommodations, or inclusive communication mechanisms (such as sign language, visual communication, or personal assistants). As a result, access to effective protection is rendered nearly impossible in practice.

9.8 Absence of Institutional Awareness as a Multiplier of Exclusion

The analysis further reveals that the **lack of awareness-raising** programs on the rights of persons with disabilities—explicitly mandated by Article (8) of the CRPD—has contributed to the **perpetuation of stereotypical perceptions** of disability within official institutions. **The multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination** embedded in the Draft Regulation and in the wider protection framework have not emerged in isolation but rather stem from an institutional culture that approaches disability through the lens of incapacity rather than rights, thereby entrenching exclusion in both text and practice.

9.9 The Need for a New Approach

All of the foregoing leads to the conclusion that the new Draft Regulation, despite its ambitious title, continues to operate within the orbit of the old protection paradigm. Genuine development is not achieved through the reordering of language, but through **the re-engineering of the system** on new legislative and institutional foundations that redefine the relationship between the State and society, between protection and empowerment, and between legal text and lived reality.

10 Final Recommendations

Based on the foregoing legal and institutional analysis, reforming the system of women’s protection centers in Palestine requires a **profound legislative and structural transformation**, rather than mere cosmetic amendments to existing regulations. The key recommendations may be summarized under the following axes:

10.1 At the Level of Legislative Policy

1. **Drafting a modern framework law for social development** to replace reliance on the Law of the Ministry of Social Affairs No. (14) of 1956, and to establish a system grounded in rights, accountability, and transparency rather than a welfare-based approach.

2. **Linking the Regulation on Centers for the Protection of Women victims of abuse and violence to the Draft Decision by Law on the Protection of the Family from Violence** as the closest legislative framework for harmonization with international obligations, while ensuring that disability issues are integrated at its core rather than relegated to its margins.
3. **Requiring the Ministry of Social Development and its partners** to review all related regulations (centers, national referral system, licensing, and others) to ensure their alignment with the Amended Basic Law and international conventions, in particular the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

10.2 At the Level of Governance and Administration

1. **Redefining the role of the Steering Committee** to become a permanent national body for coordination and oversight, convening its regular meetings at least once every three months, with extraordinary meetings as needed, and submitting periodic reports to the Council of Ministers.
2. **Strengthening and expanding the representation of organizations of persons with disabilities** and civil society organizations within the Committee to ensure genuine, rather than symbolic, participation, in line with Article (4)(3) of the CRPD.
3. **Enhancing the administrative and financial independence** of the centers within the framework of good governance, enabling them to recruit specialized staff and to develop internal performance evaluation systems that ensure quality and accountability.
4. **Establishing an independent internal oversight mechanism** to monitor the performance of women's protection centers and to ensure their compliance with national and international protection standards and good practices, with the participation of civil society and the disability sector in the evaluation process.

10.3 At the Level of Disability Inclusion

1. **Repealing Article (15) in its current form** and replacing it with a provision affirming the **full and equal right of all women and girls, including those with disabilities, to access protection services without any form of constitutionally prohibited discrimination.**
2. **Introducing the principle of institutional adaptation** instead of exception, whereby the Ministry is obligated to provide reasonable accommodations within the centers to meet the individual needs of beneficiaries, particularly women with moderate and severe disabilities.
3. **Mandating all governmental and non-governmental centers** to apply standards of physical, cognitive, and communicational accessibility, and incorporating these standards as an essential condition for the licensing and renewal of licenses of protection centers.

4. **Developing specialized training programs** for staff working in the centers on how to engage with women and girls with disabilities, including effective communication, psychosocial support, and supported decision-making.
5. **Integrating disability inclusion indicators into the official forms and records** of the centers to enable the collection of disaggregated data by disability and gender, thereby supporting evidence-based planning.

10.4 At the Level of Institutional Coordination

1. **Strengthening partnership between the Ministry of Social Development and the Ministry of Women's Affairs** in leading the protection system based on complementary roles, unified sectoral references, and effective, integrative partnership with civil society and the disability sector.
2. **Activating coordination among the relevant ministries** (Justice, Interior, Health, Education, and Labour) to ensure a multi-sectoral response to violence against women, with the integration of a disability-inclusive perspective at all stages of institutional action.
3. **Establishing a joint national mechanism** bringing together government bodies and civil society organizations—particularly those representing persons with disabilities—to monitor the implementation of international obligations related to the rights of women and girls with disabilities.

10.5 At the Level of Community and Media Awareness

1. **Launching national awareness-raising campaigns** on the rights of women and girls with disabilities in the context of gender-based violence, in accordance with Article (8) of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).
2. **Including concepts** of equality, non-discrimination, disability inclusion, and legal empowerment into training and media curricula, and incorporating real-life models of women with disabilities that contribute to changing social behavior and entrenching the values of dignity and respect.

10.6 Concluding Recommendation

In its current form, **the Draft Regulation on Centers for the Protection of Women victims of abuse and violence for the year 2024** does not constitute a rupture with the previous legislative legacy as much as it reproduces it in a new قالب; it perpetuates the same welfare-based approach that time has surpassed and overlooks the required structural shift toward a system grounded in rights, accountability, and equal citizenship, and aligned with international standards.

Accordingly, this analytical paper recommends **the launch of a comprehensive legislative and institutional reform** process that reconstructs the protection system on modern foundations rooted in the Amended Basic

Law as the supreme constitutional reference, and in international human rights conventions that have become part of the national legal system, in particular Decision by Law No. (36) of 2023.

This reform must be founded on the principles of **human dignity, substantive equality, and disability inclusion** as a cornerstone of social justice—not as a regulatory exception or an administrative burden. The empowerment of women and girls, particularly those with disabilities, is the true measure of the State’s credibility in safeguarding human rights and a genuine test of its will to move from discourse to practice, from welfare to rights, and from centralization to participatory governance. **There is no protection without dignity, and no dignity without justice.**