IV. Main areas of concern and recommendations

D. Civil rights and freedoms (arts. 7, 8 and 13–17)

Birth registration and name

28. The Committee is concerned that:
   (a) The registration of children, particularly children of parents living outside of the State party, is often delayed and that fees apply if the registration is made 11 days after birth;
   (b) Children born to unmarried parents or as a result of incest cannot take their parents’ name;
   (c) Children, who do not have a birth certificate and/or whose parent(s) do not hold Palestinian identity, including because they reside outside of the State party or in East Jerusalem, or stay illegally in the West Bank and Gaza, lack identification, leading in some cases to family reunification requests being delayed.

29. Taking note of target 16.9 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee urges the State party to:
   (a) Consider waving fees for late birth registration, in particular for families living outside of the State party, and continue its measures to promote birth registration;
   (b) Adopt regulations to ensure that children born to unmarried parents have the right to take on the name of at least one of their parents and that children born of incest are afforded the same opportunity, where it is in their best interest;
(c) Continue its efforts to facilitate family reunification and to provide services, including education and health care services, to children who lack identification.

F. Family environment and alternative care (arts. 5, 9–11, 18 (1) and (2), 20, 21, 25 and 27 (4))

Family environment

44. The Committee is concerned that:
   (a) National legislation concerning family and personal status matters is fragmented in the State party and that provisions of the Jordanian Personal Status Law (1976) and the Egyptian Family Rights Law (1954), which are in force in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip respectively, allocate the guardianship rights to fathers and specify the parent with whom children have to live in case of the divorce of their parents, without consideration of the best interests of the child;
   (b) Maternity leave is limited to ten weeks.
   (c) A number of children are deprived of the care of at least one of their parents due to restrictions by Israel on the freedom of movement to and from the State party and on residence in the State party or East Jerusalem.

45. The Committee recommends that the State party:
   (a) Harmonize national legislation concerning family and personal status matters and bring national legislation in line with the Convention and international standards, particularly concerning guardianship and maintenance of children;
   (b) Increase the duration of paid maternity leave to at least 14 weeks, in line with international standards, and undertake all other measures to facilitate the equal sharing of parenting responsibilities between mothers and fathers;
   (c) Take all possible measures to ensure that children are cared for by both parents.

Children deprived of a family environment

46. The Committee notes with serious concern that:
(a) The State party has not established a comprehensive database on children deprived of a family environment and on the support that they receive;
(b) The financial support to orphaned children ended in 2016 (CRC/C/PSE/1, para. 248);
(c) Children have reportedly been removed from their families without a court decision;
(d) Children with different needs, including children deprived of a family environment, child victims of neglect and abuse and children with behavioural problems or accused of offences, are placed in the same residential care institutions;
(e) Monitoring of residential and foster care of children deprived of a family environment is infrequent, including due to the insufficient number and qualification of child protection counsellors.

47. Drawing the State party’s attention to the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children, the Committee urges the State party to:
(a) Collect data on children who are deprived of a family environment and the support they receive, including by finalizing the “foster care database” (CRC/C/PSE/1, para. 261), in order to facilitate regular monitoring of their situation;
(b) Ensure that all orphaned children receive social assistance, according to article 31 of the Palestinian Children’s Code;
(c) Ensure that removal of children from their families is based on a court order;
(d) Further support and prioritize family-based care for all children under the age of 18 years who cannot stay with their families, with a view to reducing the institutionalization of children, and ensure that children in residential care are housed and provided with services according to their needs;
(e) Allocate the human, technical and financial resources necessary to fully implement the Foster System Regulations (2013) and ensure periodic review of the placement of children in foster care and alternative care institutions, and monitor the quality of care therein.
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Country Care Review:
State of Palestine

| N/A | N/A |

**Acronyms and Abbreviations:**

- **CEDAW**  Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- **CRC**  Convention on the Rights of the Child/Committee on the Rights of the Child
- **CRPD**  Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- **ICCRP**  International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- **ICESCR**  International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- **OPAC to CRC**  Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict
- **UN**  United Nations
- **UPR**  Universal Periodic Review