

25 Palestinian women killed in 'honor' crimes in 2013

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NABLUS (Ma'an) -- Twenty-five women have been killed so far this year in Palestine in so-called honor crimes, the Women's Center for Legal Aid and Counseling says.

The latest victim, Tamar Zeidan, was found strangled on Saturday in the Tulkarem village of Deir al-Ghosoun, the Palestinian Center for Human Rights reported.

Her father allegedly admitted that he killed her.

A family member told Ma'an that Tamar had been a victim since she was young when she was forcibly married at the age of 15. She got divorced four years later.

"A few days ago, young men from the village caught a man from a neighboring village, allegedly, drunk near the victim's house. He was taken to a police station, then he was released after family dignitaries intervened and ended the problem," the relative said.

"Nevertheless, shortly after a traditional Sulha ('truce') was reached, villagers were surprised by a statement signed by the victim's father and posted on public places and walls in the village. He announced in his statement that he disavowed his own daughter."

Shortly after the statement was posted, the father allegedly strangled Tamar to death.

He publicly blamed Hamas lawmaker Abdul-Rahman Zeidan for forcing him to take his daughter's life, after he created a petition with other family members to disown the father.

The father put up posters in the village saying that the lawmaker was trying to convince family members to sign a petition to disown him.

He allegedly killed his daughter shortly afterward.

Commenting on the accusations, Abdul-Rahman Zeidan said that 51 members of the Zeidan family had endorsed a statement disowning the woman's father and expelling him from his house and the West Bank.

The father had run into difficulties with the family and the aim of the petition was to protect the honor of the Zeidan family, which is conservative and has its own customs and traditions, the lawmaker told Ma'an.

Asked about his attitude to honor killing, Zeidan said he condemned killing of women for family honor, calling it an insult to the human soul and a violation of Islamic teachings.

An activist in the Tulkarem area, Sureida Abed Hussein, rejected the lawmaker's statement, saying that "he did what he did in his capacity as a lawmaker representing the Hamas movement. This was indirect incitement against the woman."

She said that in 2012, 13 women were murdered in 'honor killings' while in 2011 four women were killed.

The Palestinian Center for Human Rights on Sunday issued a statement condemning the killing of Zeidan and calling for a serious investigation into the murder.

PCHR also called for "prosecuting perpetrators of 'family honor' murders, and dealing with such murders in the same manner as other crimes of willful killing, taking into consideration international human rights standards."