

## gender bulletin



monthly updates on gender issues in UNRWA and the region

update of the month

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UNRWA has submitted inputs for the first reporting on the *Call to Action on the Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies* (Call to Action). The Call to Action is a multi-stakeholder initiative that aims at transforming the way gender-based violence is addressed in humanitarian emergencies. The Agency joined the Call to Action in February 2017.

stories from UNRWA

## UNRWA Marks International Women's Day 2018

On 8 March, UNRWA joined the world in marking International Women's Day (IWD). IWD is a worldwide event that celebrates women's social, political, and economic achievements while calling for greater gender equality.

This year in particular, IWD came on the heels of unprecedented global movements for women's rights, equality and justice and a rising determination for change. Referring to this global movement, the theme for IWD 2018—developed by UN Women—read “Time is Now: Rural and urban activists transforming women's lives”, ensuring that this momentum galvanizes change towards gender equality for all women.

*“Gender equality is not a slogan or a trend. It is about a fundamental commitment to rights and justice. It is about transforming lives, realizing potential and pursuing dreams and aspirations. Achieving it requires more than words. For an organization like UNRWA it is an operational imperative: empowering women and girls means improving the quality, relevance and sustainability of services. It means investing in a better future.”*

Pierre Krähenbühl, International Gender Champion

For UNRWA, this year's IWD came amid a time of funding crisis in the Agency and the need to demonstrate the importance of maintaining its commitment to gender equality as part of the continuation of services to Palestine refugees. Therefore, the Agency marked IWD by linking it to its *Dignity is Priceless* campaign, emphasizing that it is particularly during those precarious and uncertain times that the Agency stands by its unwavering commitment to advance gender equality and to ensure that no Palestine refugee woman, man, girl or boy is left behind. More than ever, the Agency is committed to the advancement of gender equality, particularly at this moment in the Agency's history, not despite it.

UNRWA Commissioner-General (CG) Pierre Krähenbühl officially became an “International Gender Champion” at the beginning of 2018. International Gender Champions is a leadership network that brings together female and male decision-makers determined to break down gender barriers and make gender equality a working reality in their spheres of influence (<https://genderchampions.com/>). In a statement released on 8 March, CG Krähenbühl emphasized that gender equality and the fulfilment of the rights of women and girls are indivisible from the Agency's mandate to serve Palestine refugees and that this ethos is also at the heart of the *Dignity is Priceless* campaign.

Across the five fields, a variety of activities took place to mark International Women's Day. They included a wide range of initiatives such as awareness raising sessions on the role of men combating GBV or the effect of stigma attached to GBV survivors, a drawing competition for students focussing on the importance of education, focus discussions groups with both men and women on various topics, and workshops on the rights of female workers.



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## Inspiring Story

### Woman from Gaza Sets Up Her Own Business with Support from UNRWA Microfinance Programme

After she lost her house in the last war on Gaza in 2014, Khloud Samer Abu Farhana, mother of six children, started making sweets and pastries in order to make a living. When Khloud heard about the UNRWA microfinance programme, she approached the Agency. Kholoud was one of the 38,000 individuals that UNRWA microfinance programme supported through loans for their businesses amounting to US\$ 37 Million in loans. UNRWA documented her story as part of the Agency's #DignityIsPriceless campaign. [Read more.](#)

## Events of Interest

Scholarship Program, Lebanese American University (LAU), Beirut  
*Deadline: March 31.*

LAU has launched the "Tomorrow's Leaders Graduate Scholarship Program". The program offers 18 scholarships to students from the Middle East and North Africa region for master's degrees in Applied Economics, Interdisciplinary Gender Studies, International Affairs, and Migration Studies. [Read more.](#)

### MoMoWo Symposium (ICWEGE)

*13–16 June. Turin, Italy.*

"Women's Creativity since the Modern Movement (1918-2018)" (MoMoWo), a large-scale cultural cooperation project co-funded by the EU and coordinated by the Polytech in Turin, is organizing a conference titled "Toward A New Perception and Reception". Purpose of the conference is to map the general state of research about tangible and intangible cultural heritage created by women in 100 years, in order to give a new impetus to broaden studies in Europe and beyond. [Read more.](#)

## Regional News

oPt

Palestinian activists and human rights organizations welcomed measures by the government beginning of March to give more rights to women. The changes include the right of Palestinian women to pass on their citizenship to their children and to open bank accounts in their names. The Cabinet also recommended to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas a series of legal amendments that include cancelling or amending a law that allows rapists to avoid punishment by marrying their victims as well as changes to the 1960 penal code, which allows for lower punishment for acts of violence carried out in so-called "honor crimes." [Read more.](#)

Jordan

Beginning of March, the Lower House's Labour Committee in Jordan decided to amend provisions in the draft Labour Law including the introduction of a two-day paternity leave for fathers, ensuring that workplace owners establish daycares for their employees if the

total number of their children is 15 or more and introducing laws that ensure pay equity. The new amendments and additions are expected to work towards increasing the number of working women in the labour market and ensuring a safe environment for their children at the workplace. Jordan was ranked 142 out of 144 countries in women's labour force participation at the Gender Gap Index of the World Economic Forum 2017. [Read more.](#)

Marocco

A hotly-debated new law aimed at protecting women in Morocco against domestic violence does not go far enough, said women's rights activists who have campaigned for reform for years. The law passed early March criminalises "harassment, aggression, sexual exploitation or ill treatment of women", according to the women's ministry. But according to Human Rights Watch, it failed to define domestic violence or explicitly outlaw marital rape. [Read more.](#)

## Reports & Resources

Toolkit for Optimizing Cash-based Interventions for Protection from Gender-based Violence

Together with the International Rescue Committee and Mercy Corps, the Women's Refugee Commission has launched this toolkit and accompanying resources that are designed to help humanitarian actors ensure safe, quality cash programming for those displaced by crisis—especially displaced women, who are often the most at risk of GBV. It assists practitioners in collecting the requisite situational protection information on risks for affected populations with an age, gender, and diversity lens. [Read more.](#)

Gender Equality Promising Practices, UNHCR

This report contains in-depth information on seven gender equality promising practices that are part of the response by UNHCR to the Syrian crisis in the Middle

East and North Africa. Building on the reports documenting age, gender and diversity good practices in the Americas, this report is the first in a series of regional documentation of gender equality promising practices. [Read more.](#)

A Guide to Gender-responsive Budgeting, OXFAM

A gender-responsive budget is a budget that works for everyone – women and men, girls and boys – by ensuring gender-equitable distribution of resources and by contributing to equal opportunities for all. These resources by Oxfam are designed to show how different actors can influence the budget cycle to promote gender-responsive budgeting at its different stages. It is intended to help groups developing strategies to think through the actions to take at each stage of the government budget process. [Read more.](#)

## Facts of the Month

**700 per cent**

was the rise of intimate partner violence during the last war on Gaza. [Read more.](#)

**25million**

child marriages worldwide were prevented in the last decade. The proportion of women who were married as children decreased from 1 in 4 to approximately 1 in 5. [Read more.](#)



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UNRWA is a United Nations agency established by the General Assembly in 1949 and mandated to provide assistance and protection to some 5 million registered Palestine refugees. Its mission is to help Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, West Bank and the Gaza Strip achieve their full human development potential, pending a just and lasting solution to their plight. UNRWA services encompass education, health care, relief and social services, camp infrastructure and improvement, protection and microfinance.

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