



Palestinians stage a protest against U.S. decision to cut funding to UNRWA © 2018 UNRWA photo by Mustafa Hassona

monthly update on gender issues at UNRWA and in the region

update of the month november 2018 issue no. 97

UNRWA is pleased to announce the release of TV spots to raise awareness on GBV prevention, to be aired on UNRWA TV on November 25. The first four of six TV spots about to be shown, within the context of the "Building Safety" project aim to challenge pervasive gender stereotypes that begin early in childhood, and also to raise awareness on harmful expectations regarding masculinity, as well as the more nuanced forms of GBV.

## stories from UNRWA

### Relief and social services programme in Gaza engages the community in combatting GBV

As part of the Gender Based Violence (GBV) "Building Safety" Project, Phase II, the Relief and Social Services Programme (RSSP) successfully composed five community committees with the purpose of reducing GBV in the community under the auspices of the Women's Programme Centers (WPCs). The established committees developed a community GBV protection action plan, which was finalized with the remarkable support from RSSP's Community Development Social Workers (CDSWs) and Area Social

Work Supervisors (ASWSs) along with 50 youths (males and females) among the community members, whose education majors are, in social work, law & psychology, and who are willing to make change in their community.

The CDSWs and ASWSs facilitated the 2 workshops in September of 2018, one for the Northern Gaza Strip, and the other to serve Rafah and Khan Younis, where the participating groups of the community committees discussed the general points, which included increasing access to a comprehensive and well-coordinated GBV prevention & response services in emergencies and humanitarian contexts, increasing capacity building, awareness, self-protection and enhancing systems for the prevention of GBV in addition to strengthening community protection strategies and engaging men.

"My engagement in the conducted activities, equipped me with the needed skills to go into the community and make the change," commented 26 year-old Yaser Al Said, a community member who attended the workshops and participated in formulating the plan. "I was thinking that GBV is committed only against women. My attitude is changed and my concepts were adjusted too. Now, I am willing to transfer my knowledge to the others," Yaser added.

After conducting the workshops, a final plan was developed to be implemented in cooperation with WPCs across the five governorates in the Gaza Strip. These committees will work as ambassadors in the community and educate others on GBV prevention & risk mitigation.

Through the Building Safety project, UNRWA seeks to expand and improve its abilities to respond to, and mitigate GBV, including in emergencies.



Photo credit: Community development social worker from RSSP on September 8th, Jabalia-Community Based



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## inspiring story

### Ethiopia Gets Its 1st Female President

Ethiopia's parliament has made *Sahle-Work Zewde* the country's first female president, and while the role is largely ceremonial, her appointment carries power in what it signifies. Sahle-Work, an experienced diplomat, is the first female head of state in Ethiopia's modern history. In June, U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres appointed Sahle-Work as special representative to the African Union and head of the U.N. Office to the African Union — the first woman in the role. She was previously director-general of the U.N. Office of Nairobi and held a range of diplomatic posts, including Ethiopia's ambassador to France and Djibouti. *Metasebia Shewaye Yilma*, a media entrepreneur and president of the Ethiopian women's business group said the move was significant in numerous aspects. "One is women are represented in power," Metasebia says. "By her being the president, we feel now like 50 per cent of us are represented. [Read more](#)

## events of interest

### The Universal Declaration of Human Rights turns 70 - *Let's stand up for equality, justice and human dignity*

Human Rights Day is observed every year on 10 December – the day the United Nations General Assembly adopted, in 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This year, *Human Rights Day* kicks off a year-long campaign to mark the upcoming 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a milestone document that proclaimed the inalienable rights which everyone is inherently entitled to as a human being - regardless of race, colour, religion, sex, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. It is the most translated document in the world, available in more than 500 languages. [Read more.](#)

### TEDxPlaceDesNationsWomen - December 6

*TEDxPlaceDesNationsWomen* is a unique event, bringing people together around "ideas worth spreading," in the form of short, impactful speeches and performances.

This year's edition – "Empower" - will focus on women's empowerment and gender equality. The 10 inspiring and passionate speakers, will cover a wide range of issues such as nuclear disarmament, domestic workers' rights, acquiring digital skills, and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). *TEDxPlacedesNationsWomen* will shine a spotlight on 11 inspiring speakers with "ideas worth spreading" to show that when women are empowered, they do great things for society as a whole. [Read more.](#)



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## Regional News

**Iraq:** The World Bank Group, the Government of Iraq, and the Government of Canada launched a US\$1.95 million grant to support Iraq's efforts to strengthen systems and deliver programs to empower women economically and politically. The "Gender and Social Protection in Iraq: Towards Economic Empowerment" program consists of two complementary components: the first component will set in place long-term legislative and institutional capacity for gender mainstreaming, while the second will introduce programs that will support the economic and political empowerment of women in Iraq, including entrepreneurial programs for poor and vulnerable women. [Read more.](#)

**Palestine:** Palestine has the first woman judge to be appointed to the Middle East's Shari'a (Islamic law) courts, Kholoud Al-Faqih.

**The Judge** is a documentary movie that offers a unique portrait of Judge Kholoud her brave journey as a lawyer, her tireless fight for justice for women, and her drop-in visits with clients, friends, and family. With unparalleled access to the courts, the film illuminates some of the universal conflicts in the domestic life of Palestinians regarding custody of children, divorce, and abuse while exposing the realities of women. [Read more.](#)

**Morocco:** For the first time, women in Morocco have legal protection from "acts considered forms of harassment, aggression, sexual exploitation or ill treatment." A law to combat violence against women in Morocco entered into force, following years of heated debate and after thousands of calls for action in a recent gang-rape case. The new law also paves the way for survivors of violence to be offered support. [Read more.](#)

## Reports & Resources

### Violence against women in politics, 73rd session, advancement of women

The latest report on item 29 of the UN general assembly on violence against women in politics has recently been disseminated. The report concludes that the underrepresentation of women in politics and public life, including in the institutions of all States and in representative positions at the international level (such as ambassadors and delegates in permanent missions) is caused and exacerbated by discrimination, harmful stereotypes and gender-based violence. Although data on this subject is limited, some research suggests that violence against women who hold public office has a chilling impact on the political ambition of young women, with inter-generational consequences for the full realization of their political rights. [Read more.](#)

### An Islamic Human Rights Perspective on Early & Forced Marriages

The enlightening report, was released by Islamic Relief, an independent aid agency that is guided

by Islamic humanitarian principles and seeks to end poverty and suffering around the world, especially among vulnerable groups. As part of their commitment to ending suffering, they seek to protect children and establish gender justice by ending gender-based violence. Early and forced marriages (EFM) are practices that they assert, violate the God-given human rights of all, particularly women and children, as well as the sanctity of marriage in Islam. This guide presents an Islamic human rights perspective on EFM for those seeking to understand the issues and working to end the practices in Muslim communities. [Read more.](#)

### Levels & Trends in Child Mortality - report 2018

The report warns that early childhood is the stage of life with the highest risk of mortality for children and adolescents, with 6.3 million deaths in 2017 occurring in the first five years of life. According to the report, achieving the ambitious child survival goals will require providing quality service access for women, children and adolescents. [Read more.](#)

## Facts of the Month

10 per cent

Is how much child mortality could decrease by every extra year a girl spends at school. [Read more.](#)

50 million

fewer women live in South Asia today than there should be, because of violence and neglect. [Read more.](#)

UNRWA is a United Nations agency established by the General Assembly in 1949 and mandated to provide assistance and protection to some 5.4 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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