



A sporting event at the closing ceremony of the 16 Days Campaign against GBV © 2019 UNRWA photo by Khalil Adwan

monthly updates on gender issues in unrwa and the region

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update of the month

Following up on the recommendations made by the Advisory Commission, the Gender Section reviewed the implementation of UNRWA Gender Equality Strategy (2016-2021) and prepared options for the way forward in the next three years. The focus will include preparing for the next UNRWA Medium-Term Strategy that should include a specific high-level result on gender as recommended by the United Nations System Wide Action Plan on gender equality (UN-SWAP).

stories from unrwa

UNRWA response to Gender-Based Violence during the COVID-19 pandemic

UNRWA established since 2010 referral pathways that allow the identification of GBV survivors through its services and their access to services through referrals. From the beginning of 2020 and until 20 April, UNRWA frontline staff identified and provided services to 955 GBV survivors. Among these 559 survivors were identified by health staff, 234 by RSS, and 115 by education. The services provided are first psychosocial support, followed by legal aid, then case management, medical care, and emergency cash assistance. The typology of violence reported is first psychological assault, followed by physical assault, denial of resources, sexual assault, forced marriage and only two rape cases in Lebanon.

In response to the pandemic, UNRWA focused on the provision of healthcare, cash assistance, and remote education with protection concerns progressively integrated. Hotlines were established to provide communities with support and information on available services and how to access them that included information to GBV survivors. Despite the worldwide reported increase in prevalence of gender-based violence, UNRWA like many other services providers witnessed a drop in the identification of cases because of the closure of services. This trend is also corroborated by data from the inter-agency taskforce on GBVIMS (data collection taskforce on GBV) in Jordan that reported a 68 per cent drop in the number of GBV cases reported. Depending on the context of the UNRWA field of operations other initiatives took place:

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- In the **West Bank**, case managers contacted GBV survivors with recent history of domestic violence to check on them.
- In **Lebanon**, and in coordination with the inter-agency taskforce information was shared with community-based organizations on available case management services and an increase in legal aid caseload was noticed.
- In **Jordan**, the GBV hotlines were shared on social media and community outreach modalities were discussed with the GBV network.
- In **Gaza**, emergency hotlines were put in place and provide MHPSS services including to GBV survivors in collaboration with the Health programme.
- In **Syria**, modalities for re-opening the Family Support Offices are being established to resume services and support to GBV survivors.



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inspiring story

Women health-care workers across the Arab world are setting an example fighting COVID-19: Health sector is increasingly female-dominated in the Arab world and that makes women more susceptible to contracting COVID-19. The figures of the WHO show that women make up 35 per cent of the physicians and 79 per cent of the nurses in the Eastern Mediterranean region. Dr. Merai is among a number of female doctors playing key roles in Tunisia. "In all the hospitals of the country, I see resilient women who have pledged to work for days away from their families in order to help the country overcome the crisis," said Dr. Merai. In Syria, Dr. Iman Mohamed Abdel-Razzaq is one of the many health workers risking their lives on the frontlines. As an emergency physician, she has launched an individual initiative touring the northern Idlib camps to meet women and children and raise awareness on COVID-19. In Beni Suef, Egypt, eight female nurses, working in the Department of Chest Diseases, have volunteered to stay inside the local hospital permanently to work with the team of doctors treating coronavirus patients. More [here](#).

events of interest

Webinar | Exiled: Migration and refugee communities during COVID-19: International Coalition of Sites of Conscience is organizing a webinar on **4 June 2020 at 09:00 a.m. EST** (US and Canada) on the complex relationship between public health and migration, past and present. Not only do migrant and refugee populations face an inordinate level of physical, emotional and legal challenges during this crisis, but internal displacement within countries is becoming increasingly problematic as efforts to contain the virus are enforced. More [here](#).

regional news

Rapid assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable women in Jordan:

Developed by UN Women, the aim of this rapid assessment was to review the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on beneficiaries of UN Women Oasis centers in camp and non-camp settings. The assessment included questions related to the economic situation; health concerns; safety and access to health services; violence against women; the roles of men and

women within the household; and access to education. The crisis and confinement measures have resulted in an increased risk of violence in the household, food insecurity and economic insecurity and have also had different impacts on camp and non-camp settings with women in rural areas, in particular, struggling to access services and information. These conclusions should inform the design of the immediate response and beyond. More [here](#).

reports & resources

The impact of COVID-19 on gender equality in the Arab Region : The COVID-19 pandemic will affect all aspects of life in the Arab region and globally. Women will undoubtedly bear a disproportionate burden in terms of the health risks posed by the virus in the Arab region.

In light of these projections, UN Women, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and partner United Nations agencies have prepared proposals on formulating consistent policies and programmes for the short and long term, as part of an urgent regional response to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women. For this response to be effective, it must take into consideration the social prejudices and gender norms

that discriminate against women in the public and private spheres in the Arab region. More [here](#).

Daring to ask, listen and act: a snapshot of the impacts of COVID on women's and girl's rights and sexual and reproductive health: In April 2020, the UNFPA Jordan country program in coordination with Plan International and the Institute for Family Health (IFH) Noor Al Hussein Foundation commissioned a rapid assessment of the COVID-19 situation in Jordan.

The overall purpose of this rapid assessment is to measure the impact of COVID-19 on gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health and rights among adolescent girls in Jordan. More [here](#).

facts of the month

In France, reports of domestic violence have increased by **30 per cent** since the lockdown

In Cyprus and Singapore helplines for GBV have registered an increase in calls of **30 per cent** and **33 per cent**, respectively



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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 5.6 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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