



Child Marriage Task Force

1. Background

Terms of Reference

Child marriage is a key Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and child protection concern in Palestine. A decline has been documented in recent years among women aged 20-24 (from 15 per cent of girls married before reaching the age of 18 in 2014 to 13.4 per cent in 2019¹). However, despite the general decline, in certain parts of Gaza and the West Bank there have in fact been indications of an increase of child marriage.

In this context, a **strategy for combating child/early/forced marriage** was developed in 2019 as a joint effort of the Gender Based Violence Sub-Cluster (GBV SC) and Child Protection Area of Responsibility (CP AoR). The strategy aimed to guide stakeholders in addressing the increased rates of child marriage in conflict-affected areas in Gaza and the West Bank and among identified communities in humanitarian and development contexts throughout Palestine.

The strategy was reviewed and validated during a roundtable on 18 February 2020. This led to the establishment of a joint Task Force consisting of six GBV and Child Protection AoR members tasked to guide and to follow up on the implementation of the strategy.

Due to COVID-19 pandemic, the implementation of the strategy was suspended. In January 2021, UNFPA and UNICEF, in their capacity as chairs of the GBV and Child Protection AoR, decided to resume it by reactivating the dedicated Task Force based on these Terms of Reference and through reopening its membership.

2. Coordination arrangements

Child marriage is a key concern which is being addressed by both GBV and Child Protection stakeholders. One gap has been the lack of coordination between these actors in preventing and responding to child marriage across Palestine.

In this context, the Child Marriage Task Force is reactivated in order **to supervise the implementation of the strategy and monitor its progress**. It includes appointed focal points from the members of the GBV and Child Protection AoRs (from UN Agencies, (I)NGOs and government institutions). Each member is encouraged to, on a rotating basis, assume the **chairmanship/chairwomanship of the Task Force** (rotation frequency to be jointly determined by members of the Task Force).

The Task Force will **meet regularly on quarterly basis and based on emerging needs**. The GBV and Child Protection coordinators will keep the overall responsibility for internal coordination. The Task Force shall also coordinate its efforts with other relevant actors and sectors, such as civil society organizations

outside the humanitarian architecture.

¹ Palestinian MICS 2019-2020, Survey Findings Report, PCBS



3. Functions

- Review the child marriage situation in Palestine in light of COVID-19 and most recent data, including MICS 2019-2020, as well as acts, policies and laws.
- Identify **gaps and best practice** in current child marriage response and prevention efforts based on a mapping of existing services.
- **Prioritize outcomes and outputs** from the strategy to be implemented by members of the Task Force in partnership with GBV and Child Protection AoR partners, facilitating linkages with the National Inter-Sectoral Violence against Children (NIVAC) Strategy and MoWA's Violence against Women and Girls Strategy. This could include the development of an action plan building upon the joint UNICEF-UNFPA technical guide on Addressing Child Marriage in Humanitarian Settings
- Develop and lead a **resource mobilization** strategy for the strategy implementation. - Update the **timeframe** of the joint child marriage strategy.
- Act as **focal point on child marriage** issues at national level and contribute to the analysis and dissemination of knowledge products in this area, including on trends, progress, gaps and challenges.
- Support **visibility and advocacy efforts** related to combating early marriage with key stakeholders, as well as donors, including by working jointly on Communication for Development (C4D). The Task Force shall combine a top-down and bottom-up approach in its advocacy efforts, e.g. while advocating for legal and policy changes (top-down) or engaging with communities challenging social norms (bottom-up).