



More than Numbers

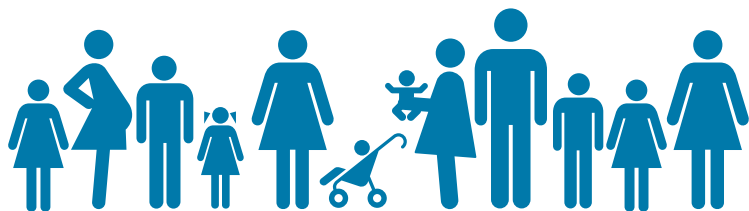
Regional Overview: Responding to gender-based violence in the Syria crisis

2016



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SYRIA CRISIS

Overview of gender-based violence affecting Syrians in the six countries affected by the Syrian crisis (Syria, Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt)

This prolonged crisis in Syria has exacerbated and escalated the vulnerabilities of Syrian women and girls, creating increased and diverse risks for men, women, girls, and boys. Many families have been torn apart and communities destroyed. Schools and hospitals have been wrecked with weakened protection, security, and justice systems.

Gender-based violence crimes have devastating immediate and long-term effects on the lives of survivors, their families, and the communities in which they live, altering the development and future of the region.

In times of conflict everyone is affected by violence; however, women and girls in particular are more at risk, especially of gender-based violence, due to the lack of social protection and lack of safe access to services. There is wide recognition that gender-based violence against women and girls increases during conflict, including domestic violence, sexual violence and exploitation, and child marriage. Men and boys also experience sexual violence, especially in the context of detention and torture.

As of December 2015, an estimated 13.5 million Syrians are in need of humanitarian aid, of which 6.6 million are displaced and 4.2 million are in hard to reach areas. The total number of people who have fled the country has reached 4.6 million and continues to rise. There are 5 million women of reproductive age, 430,000 of whom are pregnant.

Some of the main issues affecting women and girls identified by assessments and studies include insecurity, overcrowding, inadequate access to basic services, rising rent and food prices, and competition for the limited work opportunities. These factors all contribute to the increased rates of gender-based violence and the urgent need for humanitarian agencies to scale up a tailored response.

“More than Numbers” presents an overview of the situation of Syrian women and girls. It provides an introduction to gender-based violence during emergencies, the forms of gender-based violence in Syria and neighbouring countries, the contributing factors and the impact it is having on individuals, families and communities. It includes a list of recommendations and challenges that may help in designing strategies and programmes to better address gender-based violence and influence changes of cultural norms.

“More than Numbers” is a reference tool for all sectors of the humanitarian community and a potential source for advocacy and planning for the prevention of and response to gender-based violence.

“More than Numbers” is based on assessments, studies and research relating to gender-based violence.

“More than Numbers” lists the contributing factors that may increase the risk of gender-based violence in the Syrian context, but at the same time, there are many other factors that remain hidden.

“More than Numbers” shows the impact that gender-based violence may have on the individual as well as the family and community, based on facts and data.

“More than Numbers” shares quotes from Syrian women and girls that have been collected, through individual interviews or group discussions inside and outside the country.

“More than Numbers” reminds us that behind every number there is a woman, girl, man, or boy that must not be forgotten.

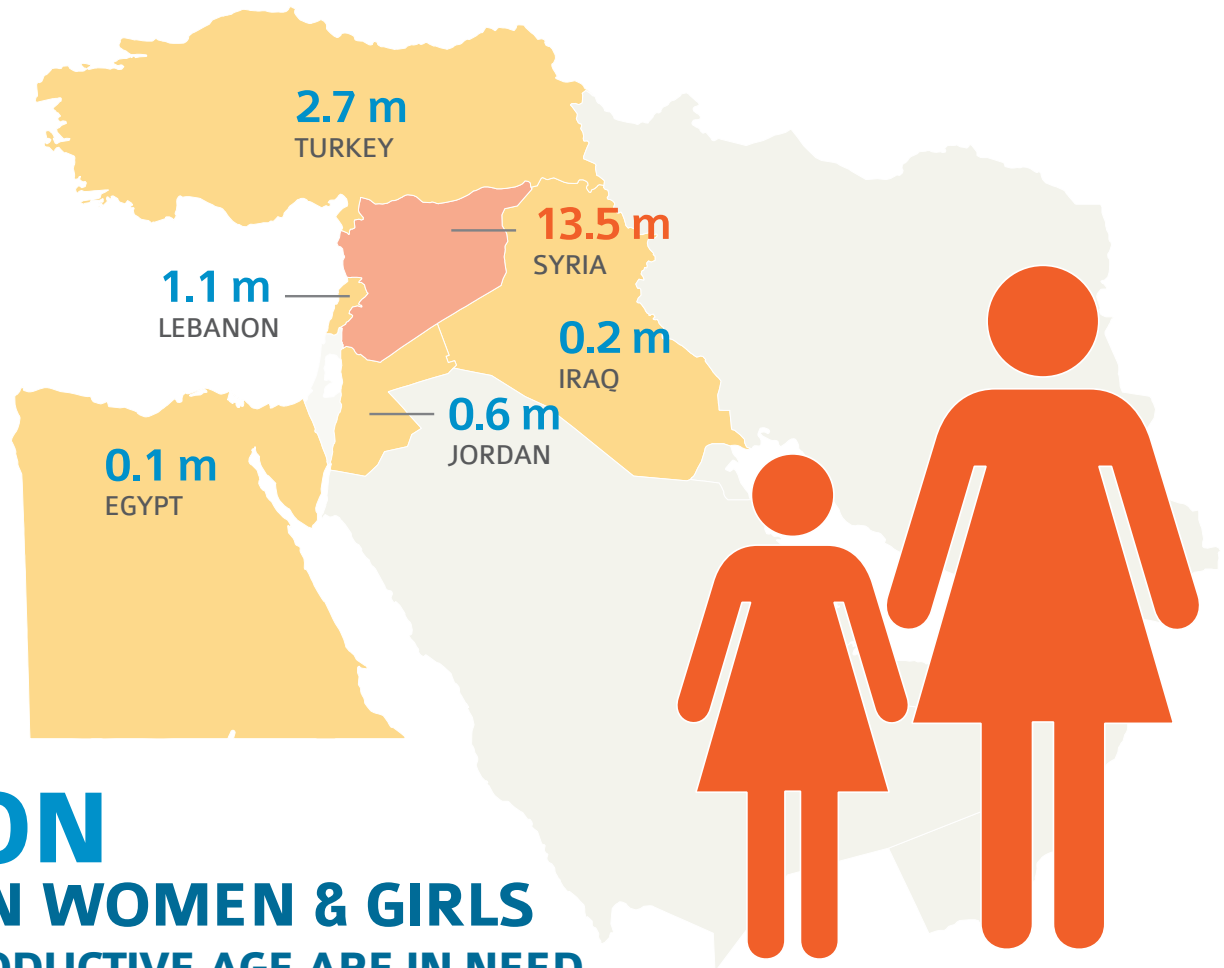
Gender-based violence is the most pervasive yet least reported human rights abuse globally. It undermines development, generates instability and makes peace harder to achieve.

**Gender-based violence
is used during crisis as a tactic to harm,
humiliate and shame.**

Anyone could face gender-based violence irrespective of gender, financial status or level of education.

Syria is the
largest forced
displacement
crisis
in the world

Numbers of Persons in Need



5 MILLION
SYRIAN WOMEN & GIRLS
OF REPRODUCTIVE AGE ARE IN NEED

INSIDE SYRIA



13.5 million people
in need of humanitarian assistance



4.1 million
women and girls of reproductive age
(15-49 years old)



2.5 million
youth (15-24 years old)



360,000
pregnant women



1.6 million
internally displaced women and girls
of reproductive age



1.2 million
and girls of reproductive age in hard
to reach and besieged locations



0.1 million
women and girls of reproductive age
trapped in 15 besieged locations

IN NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES



4.8 million
projected registered
Syrian refugees



1.2 million
refugee women and girls of
reproductive age



0.7 million
refugee youth in need



80,500
refugee pregnant women



145,000
Syrian refugee women heads of
households

(UNHCR, 2014)

SOURCES: Turkey's Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD), UNHCR, OCHA, and UNFPA - March 2016

IN SYRIA

Total fertility rate (live
births per woman)

3.0

(WorldBank, 2014)

Life expectancy among
Syrian women has declined

from to

75.9 **55.7**

in 2010 in 2014

(SCPR, 2015)

Maternal mortality ratio
per 100 000
live births

68

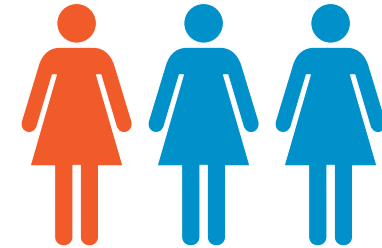
(WHO, 2015)



DEFINITION

Gender-based violence (GBV) is defined as 'any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will, and that is based on socially-ascribed (i.e., gender) differences between males and females'

(IASC, 2015)



has been physically or sexually abused at some time in her life

(WHO, 2013)

Acts of GBV violate a number of universal human rights protected by international instruments and conventions

Article 1: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights"

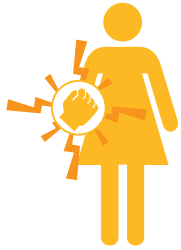
Article 3: "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person"

Article 5: "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment"

(United Nations General Assembly, 1948)

TYPES OF GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

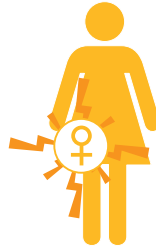
Physical



Physical force that results in bodily injury, pain, or impairment. The severity of injury ranges from minimal tissue damage, broken bones to permanent injury and death. These include: spouse beating/domestic violence, assault.

(UNICEF, 2003)

Sexual



Any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed against a person's sexuality, using coercion, by any person, regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including, but not limited to home and work. These include: humiliation, harassment, rape, marital rape, abuse/exploitation, child sexual abuse/incest, forced prostitution, child prostitution and sexual trafficking.

(UNICEF, 2003)

Psychological



Psychological violence (sometimes also referred to as emotional violence) An action or set of actions that directly impair a person's psychological integrity. These include: humiliation based on gender, discrimination, denial of opportunities and/or services and domestic violence.

(UNICEF, 2003)

Harmful traditional practices

Violence committed primarily against women and girls in certain communities and societies dating from generations so that they are considered, or presented by perpetrators, as part of accepted cultural practice. The most common are forced or early marriage, female genital mutilation (FGM), 'honour killings', punishments directed at women for crimes against culture, denial of education, food for girls/women due to gender role expectations.

(UNICEF, 2003)

Economic

Used to deny and control a access to resources, including time, money, transportation, food or clothing.

(UNICEF, 2003)

Triggers / Contributing Factors

to gender-based violence in the Syria crisis

Gender-based violence is a
widespread international public
health and human rights issue

TRIGGERS

& CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

During a humanitarian crisis, many contributing factors can exacerbate gender-based violence related risks.

These include - but are not limited to - **increased militarisation, lack of community protections, displacement, scarcity of essential resources, disruption of community services, changing cultural and gender norms, disrupted relationships, and weakened infrastructure**

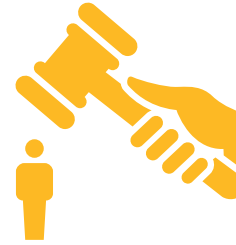
(IASC, 2005)

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE ROOT CAUSES



Gender discrimination

(IASC, 2005)

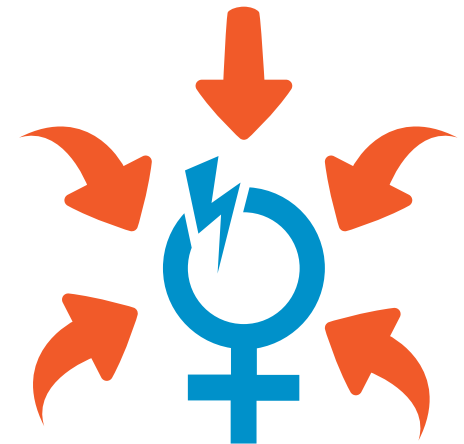


Abuse of power



Lack of respect for human rights for all

There is no one single contributing factor to account for gender-based violence perpetrated against women. The interrelatedness of various factors are key to understanding and addressing the problem within different cultural contexts.



TRIGGERS
& CONTRIBUTING
FACTORS
TO GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

1 SOCIAL

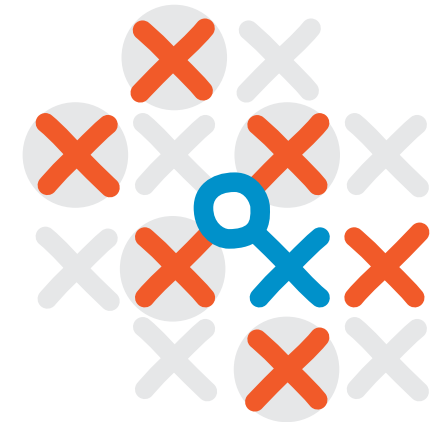
Increased reliance on
negative coping
practices,
such as **marrying**
daughters early in Syria and
neighbouring countries

(HNO, 2016)

✘ **Norms supporting gender-based violence**

include indicators like 'honour killings', domestic violence and child marriages. For example, child marriage of girls in particular is perceived by families as an acceptable means to reduce poverty and cope with economic stress. Many families are keeping their children at home as social norms promote harmful traditional practices. Many women accept being abused by their husbands who are under immense stress.

(WHO, 2009)



22%
of refugee youth in Lebanon
accept the use of violence
within the family

(UNFPA, 2014)

GLOBAL FACT

**Worldwide,
600 million women
are living in countries where
domestic violence is still not
against the law**

(UNFPA, 2012)



✘ The new living environment expose displaced women to further risk

Risk could be due to being in a new country or place where people speak different languages, in a crowded camp or in a settlement, lack of privacy, living with several families in one place, being at distribution and service points, using public water and sanitation facilities, crossing checkpoints.

(UNICEF, 2003)

“There is no place for privacy for girls in our shelter. There is no place to sleep separately, so we sleep altogether in the same place, we are used to it .”

A refugee woman lives in Zaatari camp in Jordan

“I am a single mother with five children, and I feel unsafe walking alone in the camp, I always accompany my daughter to the bathrooms. I can’t leave her alone for a second.”

A Syrian woman in Lebanon

✘ Unstable social conditions

The interconnectivity of conflict, economic hardship and difficult living conditions place women at risk of sexual violence. With the widespread absence of men from the home and community, women have assumed more responsibilities and heavier workloads to support and provide for their families. However, circumstances have become more challenging for women and adolescent girls outside the home.

(WHO, 2009)

TRIGGERS

& CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

2 ECONOMIC

Women and men have reported increased violence in the home because of lack of resources. Women report that their husbands are suffering from stress because they are unable to work and they take out their stress on their wives.

“Women absorb the worries of men.”

(HNO GBV Analysis, 2014)



INSIDE SYRIA

OVER 4 in 5 Syrians NOW LIVE IN POVERTY

(SCPR, 2014)



30% of the population have descended into abject poverty where households struggle to meet basic food needs to sustain life

(SCPR, 2014)



The total economic loss of the nation since the start of the conflict until the end of 2014 was

US\$202.6 billion

which includes damage to capital stock, loss of investment and idle capital stock due to the conflict.

(SCPR, 2014)



The unemployment rate surged from **14.9%** in 2011 to **57.7%** by the end of 2014

(SCPR, 2014)



The inflation rate reached a peak of

57.3% at the end of the first quarter of 2013 in Syria.

(SCPR, 2014)



TRIGGERS & CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

IN NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES

70% of the over
1 million Syrian refugees in Lebanon
now live below the Lebanese extreme poverty line.

(UNHCR, 2015)



Two out of three

Syrian refugees live below the
Jordanian absolute poverty line of 96
USD/person/month.

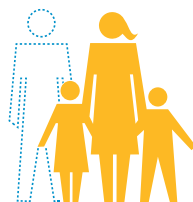
(UNHCR, 2014)



**Levels of poverty are higher
amongst female- than male-headed
households.**

In Jordan, Syrian families spend more than
they earn, with average expenditure
1.6 times greater than their income.

(UNHCR, 2014)



**Syrian refugee workers are generally
paid less and work longer hours**

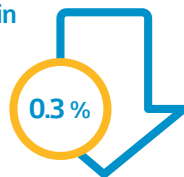
Of the Syrian refugees working in Jordan, 44%
made \$300 or less a month while 30% worked more
than 60 hours a week.

(ILO, 2014)



A United Nations study estimates, **the crisis in
Syria has lowered Lebanon's GDP by
about 0.3 %**

(United Nations, 2014)



TRIGGERS

& CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

3 EDUCATION

A lack of education contributes to gender-based violence

In Syria and neighboring countries, many Syrian girls are forced or asked to stay at home for protection, economic or access related reasons, while boys are sent to school. This is especially the case when a girl is married early and when she is no longer allowed to continue her education. *Without education, these girls become dependent on men who take authority over all aspects of their personal life.*

INSIDE SYRIA



School enrollment rates decreasing substantially

Quality of education deteriorating

Low literacy rate among females

Syria has one of the lowest enrollment rates in the world.

Inside Syria, 2.2 million children are not in school.

(UNICEF, 2016)

Only **17%** of children displaced within Syria are now in school.

(Save the Children, 2014)

The net enrollment rate for females dropped

from **92%** in 2004 to **65.8%** by 2013

for primary education

from **71.8%** in 2012 to **46.37%** in 2013

for secondary education

(UNESCO, 2014)



IN NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES

53% of Syrian refugee children are out of school (amounting to 0.7 million).

Not attending school:

4 in 5

of Syrian refugee children in **Lebanon**
(Save the Children, 2014)

2 in 3

of Syrian refugee children in **Turkey**
(Human Rights Watch, 2015)

3 in 5

Syrian refugee children in **Jordan**
(UNICEF, 2014)



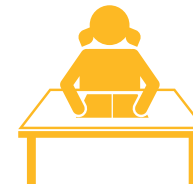
Girls as young as 13 are being pushed towards marriage to relieve the economic strain on their families. In most of the cases girls leave school and stay at home.

(UNICEF, 2015)

"Education increases opportunities for girls, it unleashes their potential, and it gives them economic independence that will help them make independent economic, political, and social decisions. Educating a girl frees her from violence, and helps her to be a self-confident individual. An educated woman has a higher chance to educate her own children. You can't dispute the economic, political, and social benefits of educating a girl."

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for conflict related sexual violence

TRIGGERS & CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO GENDER BASED VIOLENCE



Gender based violence deprives girls of education and limits their educational opportunities and achievements.

In Arab states, girls continue to face the greatest challenges in accessing primary school. **Among out of school children, almost half of the girls will never set foot in a classroom** compared with just over a third of the boys.

(UNESCO, 2014)

Poverty as well as conflict affects girls' chances of an education. In the Arab States, **one fifth of the poorest girls have never been to school**, compared to one tenth of the poorest boys.

(UNESCO, 2014)

TRIGGERS
& CONTRIBUTING
FACTORS
TO GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

4 SECURITY

The rise in extremist and terrorist groups has brought a whole new dimension of sexual violence being used a tactic of terrorism. If you look at the Middle East, we have a number of non-State parties to the conflict, and the United Nations has been documenting evidence of crimes being committed by them."

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for conflict related sexual violence, 2015



50% of refugee youth surveyed agree with the statement "I have not once felt safe since I came to Lebanon."

(UNFPA, 2014)

36% of displaced respondents reported that they were living in shelters with inadequate protection.

(REACH, 2015)

Women experience **serious curtailment of their human rights.**

(Human Rights Watch, 2013)



Women and girls are **exposed to arrest and physical punishment** for not adhering to new rules imposed by extremist groups inside Syria.

(Human Rights Watch, 2013)



Women are **forced to remain indoors** for their safety.

(UNHCR, 2014)



TRIGGERS
& CONTRIBUTING
FACTORS
TO GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

Women headed households A lack of money can force refugees to live in unsafe overcrowded environments, without basic amenities or security. **Women living without a male head of household reported feeling particularly at risk**, especially if their homes lacked electricity, a locking door, or a private bathroom.

(UNHCR, 2014)



Women have to engage in **precarious work to help provide income for the family**, as is the case for many adolescent boys.

(UNFPA, 2014)



“Armed groups force very rigid dress-codes; thus people, and specifically girls, feel the pressure of being subjected to inspection and under surveillance.”

Focus Group Discussions from Aleppo, Damascus, Homs, Idlib, Latakia governorates



The absence of positive choices can **lead adolescents and young people into harm's way.**

(UNFPA, 2014)

TRIGGERS
& CONTRIBUTING
FACTORS
TO GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

5 SERVICES



Limited access
to adequate and
qualified services in
some areas

Only five sub-districts

in all of Syria have perceived
**adequate availability of
functioning community
centres.**



(Key-informant interview,
WOSA data, 2015)

**Health services have become
unaffordable and
inaccessible**

for many refugees, leaving almost a
**million refugee women and girls
of reproductive age worried**
about the future and whether they would even
survive and deliver safely.

(UNFPA, 2014)



**Language
barrier**

and inability to communicate



Lack of
knowledge
about available services



Lack of social and institutional
support in some places.
Syrian women are not allowed to access
services without permission from their male
guardians and without being accompanied
by relatives.

**“ The UNFPA community
centre helped us a lot, I
struggled to explain my
needs to the health centres
or to find my essential
needs as I don’t speak the
Turkish language.”**

A Syrian refugee in Turkey



Lack of trust in the confidentiality

of existing health services/ providers is a barrier for help even though there is a real thirst for services. People fear that they will be targeted and/or that they will not receive the care that they need (because of attitudes, supplies and/or capacity of service providers). Services for gender-based violence survivors either do not exist at all or are very limited, and survivors are reluctant to report gender-based violence due to:

- fear of stigma
- social exclusion
- so-called 'honour killings'
- other reprisals.

This prevents many survivors from seeking life-saving support.

(HNO, 2015)



General lawlessness

Lack of implementation of **laws against** forms of gender-based violence

"A rapist in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria can escape punishment by marrying his victim, and marital rape is not criminalised in Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, and Syria."

(UNFPA, 2015)

Weak laws do not deter sexual violence and perpetuate gender inequality. For example, women cannot access legal systems in non-government controlled areas in Syria.

(Human Rights Watch, 2013)

"A single woman or girl would not address the incident with the camp director, as he has no knowledge about GBV and might have come to power by the use of weapons, but she can also not go to the religious court by herself. Therefore, she protects herself by not talking about it."

A refugee woman in Zaatari camp, Jordan



Lack of specialised services for gender-based violence, especially in hard to reach areas inside Syria

(UN Women, 2014)

GLOBALLY

Only 1 in 10 women come forward to report violence perpetrated against them.

(UNFPA, 2014)



IMPACT

Impact of gender-based violence on individuals and communities

There are multiple consequences of violence, with immediate and long-term effects. The consequences and costs of gender-based violence have an impact at the individual level (for survivors and others affected by violence), as well as within the family, community and wider society, which translate into costs at the national level.

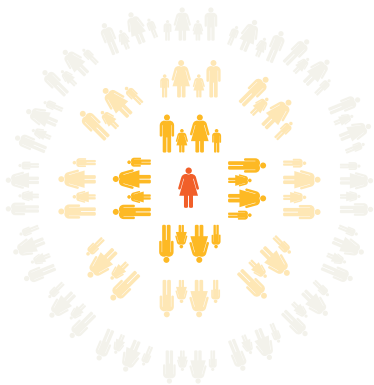
“... violence has become normal... they feel it is their right to hate us, insult us, beat us, rape us...”

(Focus Group Discussions from Aleppo, Damascus, Homs, Idleb, Latakia governorates)

IMPACT

OF GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

The impact of gender-based violence against women and girls - beyond the intangible suffering - includes costs to the survivor and her family in terms of health (mental and physical), employment and finances, and the effects it has on children.



Out of ten selected causes and risk factors for disability and death among women between the ages of 15 and 44, **rape and domestic violence rated higher** than cancer, motor vehicle accidents, war and malaria.

(World Bank, 1994)

Individual

Immediate injuries such as fractures and haemorrhaging, and long-term physical conditions

Mental health, such as depression and anxiety

Sexual and reproductive health problems, such as sexually transmitted infections unintended/unwanted pregnancies and unsafe abortion

Gender-based violence deprives girls of education. School-related violence limits the educational opportunities and achievements of girls

Family

Intergenerational effects of violence

Effects on **school attendance and performance** of children and family members

Decline in health status and **quality of life** of family members

Culture of violence

Rejecting the survivor

Witnessing **marital violence** as a child

(Heise, et al., 1999; Heise and Garcia-Moreno, 2002; United Nations General Assembly, 2006)

Substance abuse (including alcohol)

Poor social functioning skills and social isolation and marginalization

Cost of medical, protection, judicial and social services

Lost workdays, lower productivity and lower income

Overall reduced or lost educational, employment, social, or political participation opportunities

Death

Society

Gender inequality and violence hamper countries' efforts to reduce poverty

Reflected in economic and health costs

Norms **granting men control** over female behavior

Rigid gender roles

Notion of **masculinity linked to dominance**, honor and aggression

Acceptance of violence as a way to resolve conflict

OF GENDER BASED VIOLENCE IN HUMANITARIAN SETTINGS SYRIA CRISIS

SEXUAL VIOLENCE



1 in 3 of Syrian female-headed households **left the house never, rarely and only when necessary** because of fears of harassment or their safety.

(UNHCR, 2014)

3 in 4 were worried for their own or their children's security. They mainly **expressed fears of sexual harassment**, but in some cases of direct physical violence.

(UNHCR, 2014)

1 in 5 Syrian women had **directly been offered money for sexual services** in the Kurdistan region in Iraq.

(UN Women, 2014)

Sexual harassment by employers and sexual exploitation and abuse by aid workers are greater concerns as many of these functions are performed by **men who control resources on which Syrian female refugees depend** for their livelihood, from aid to income from work.

(UN Women, 2014)

PHYSICAL VIOLENCE



67% of women in Syria reported having received "punishment" from their husbands. **87%** of which was physical violence

(IRC, 2014)

"Physical violence has spread in our environment, especially from the side of husbands, fathers and big brothers."

Focus Group Discussions from Aleppo, Damascus, Homs, Idleb, Latakia governorates

"Women have no say in our homes, they get insulted and abused by their husbands."

Focus Group Discussions from Aleppo, Damascus, Homs, Idleb, Latakia governorates

In Jordan and Lebanon, **more than 70%** of violent incidents happened in refugees' homes.

Of those incidents **80%** were perpetrated by an intimate partner or **someone known** to the victim.

(IRC, 2014)

EMOTIONAL / MENTAL / SOCIAL



In Jordan, around **50% of survivors** accessing gender-based violence services **suffered some form of domestic violence.**

(UNFPA, 2013)

1 in 5 of households reported that girls never went outside the house at all in Syria.

(IASC, 2013)

Women and girls **face new rules and restrictions** that impact their daily live in areas controlled by United Nations-designated terrorist groups, including dress code and movement restrictions in Syria.

(UNFPA, 2015)

“Girls face heavy restrictions on their freedom of movement because of insecurity, the fear of kidnapping and verbal and sexual harassment. Girls are prohibited to move without company or even to the balcony.”

Focus Group Discussions from Aleppo, Damascus, Homs, Idleb, Latakia governorates

17 % of refugee youths

interviewed in Lebanon

have thought of ending their own life, and 24 % thought of doing so sometimes, a percentage that is even higher among female youth.

(UNFPA, 2014)

HARMFUL TRADITIONAL PRACTICES

1 in 4 registered marriages is of a girl under the age of 18 in Jordan.

(UNICEF, 2014)



The prevalence of child marriage among Syrians in Jordan increased from **25%** in 2013 to **31%** in 2014 first quarter

(UNICEF, 2014)

Girls who marry before 18 are more likely to experience domestic violence than their peers who marry later.

(ICRW, 2015)

“Early marriage is common, especially now after the revolution. We only go out of the house to the mosque. Girls get married against their will. They have no say about it.”

(Focus Group Discussions from Aleppo, Damascus, Homs, Idleb, Latakia governorates)

ECONOMIC



“Early marriage is spreading from the age of 13 years and above because parents are afraid for their daughters or because the groom has money.”

(Focus Group Discussions from Aleppo, Damascus, Homs, Idleb, Latakia governorates)

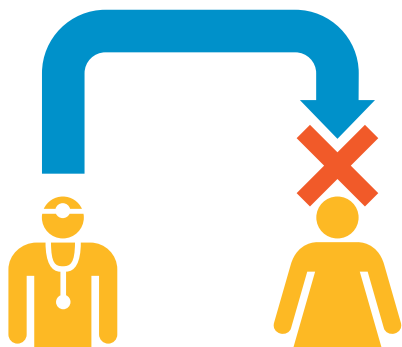
Many Syrian marriages, including those involving children, are not registered. They lack the minimal protection afforded by a review by a Jordanian judge of whether a child marriage is in the interest of the child.

(UNICEF, 2014)

Wives and their children also **miss out on the protection afforded by a marriage that is formally registered.**

(UNICEF, 2014)

Gender-based violence severely restricts women's ability to exercise their reproductive rights, **with grave consequences for sexual and reproductive health.**



Lack of access to family planning and to reproductive health services,

exposing many women and girls to unwanted pregnancies and expose them to an increased risk of life-threatening complications.

(UNFPA, 2016)

Violence limits women's access to family planning,

which can potentially decrease maternal mortality by an estimated 20 to 35% by reducing women's exposure to pregnancy-related health risks.

Women who experience violence tend to have more children than they themselves want.

This not only shows how little control they have over decisions affecting their sexual and reproductive lives but also reduces the potential demographic benefits of reproductive health, estimated to reduce poverty by 14%.

(UN Women, 2012)

Between 23% and 53%

of women physically abused by their intimate partners during pregnancy are kicked or punched in the abdomen.

GLOBALLY

1 in 4 women

experience physical or sexual violence during pregnancy.

This increases the likelihood of miscarriage, stillbirth and abortion, as well as premature labour and low birth weight.

(UNFPA, 2016))



Harmful practices

also damage maternal and child health

Child marriage resulting in early and unwanted pregnancies

poses life-threatening risks for adolescent girls: pregnancy-related complications are the leading cause of death for 15-to-19-year-old girls world-wide.

Female genital mutilation/cutting increases the risks of obstructed labour,

childbirth complications, newborn deaths, postpartum bleeding, infections and maternal mortality.

(UN Women, 2012)

The total deliveries for girls under 18

6% in Lebanon and Iraq

5% in a UNFPA-supported clinic in Zaatari camp in Jordan

19% in UNFPA-supported clinics in the non government-controlled areas in Syria

(24% in the central and north part of Syria and 9% in central and south part of Syria)

29% of total deliveries for girls under eighteen in the central and south part of Syria were C-sections

(UNFPA, 2016)

1 in 5

married Syrian refugees is under the age of 18.



(UNESCO / <http://www.girleffect.org/>)

TAKING ACTION

against gender-based violence in the Syria crisis



UNFPA believes that every Syrian woman and girl has the right to have access to affordable reproductive health care and be effectively protected from gender-based violence.

UNFPA believes, women's empowerment and gender equality should be at the heart of any intervention that addresses gender based violence including prevention, protection and response.



UNFPA and partners are scaling up efforts to empower and improve the lives of Syrian women and youths and impacted communities in host countries, by advocating for human rights and gender equality, to better cope with and recover from the crisis.

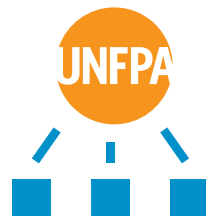
“We know what to do to eliminate gender-based violence: rapid response to crisis; specialist service providers; integration with sexual and reproductive health care; comprehensive sexuality education; rights-based legal environments; mobilizing men and boys; robust data gathering, and evidence-based policies. Only a multi-pronged, multi-stakeholder approach will work.”

Babatunde Osotimehin, Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund

Maintain and strengthen safe access to services for all gender-based violence survivors,



through information dissemination and awareness raising on available services, and expanded outreach and mobile services where needed; this in turn improves access to services inside Syria and in neighbouring countries (urban setting and camps) for all people affected, who live in isolation or in marginalised situations, including people with disabilities. Services also include psychosocial care, counselling and referral mechanisms.



UNFPA supports the gender-based violence response by leading the Whole of Syria gender-based violence coordination system.



UNFPA is working to mitigate risks of gender-based violence through a comprehensive regional humanitarian response and by implementing integrated reproductive health and gender-based violence programmes.



UNFPA is supporting 84 women's centres in Syria and neighbouring countries.



UNFPA is distributing an average of 10,000 hygiene kits to Syrian women every month to protect their dignity and provide essential women's needs.



Increase safe access to health, security and justice services.

In this regard, identify and put in place measures to overcome, where and as possible, causes restricting the utilisation of these services, improve legal systems and secure a safe environment.



Ensure the GBV response is tailored to address the different types of violence

(such as denial of resources, physical assault, sexual violence, emotional abuse, child, early and forced marriage) and the needs of all survivors including persons living with disabilities.



Ensure access to services for violence associated to child, early and forced marriage



Coordinate to make sure that all actors and partners abide by international ethical standards



Strengthen GBV prevention programs targeting women, men, girls and boys

and put in place measures to evaluate their effectiveness.

This includes changing behaviour, increasing knowledge of gender-based violence related issues and empowering women and girls through organising recreational activities.



Strengthen the link between services related to responding to GBV and services related to reproductive health.

MULTI-SECTORAL COORDINATION

UNFPA is one of the UN's lead agencies working to further gender equality and women's empowerment, and to address the physical and emotional consequences of gender-based violence.

UNFPA is mandated to lead gender-based violence coordination systems in humanitarian crisis.

Developing multi-sectoral strategies based on the IASC Guidelines, establishing **communication plans** between sectors and services, setting up **inter-agency coordination** meetings, **developing forums** or cluster meetings for collaboration.



CHALLENGES TO IMPLEMENT RESPONSE



- **Competing priorities**

While gender-based violence is understood to be an issue of concern, actors find themselves competing for funding and for adequate attention to the issue.

- **Capacity and resource constraints**

The lack of partners with gender-based violence expertise limits the quality of the response.

- **Security challenges to access hard to reach areas**

This means the geographical reach of services remains restricted.



UNFPA believes

that every Syrian woman and girl has the right

to have access to affordable reproductive health care and be effectively protected from gender-based violence.

UNFPA and partners are scaling up efforts

to empower and improve the lives of Syrian women and youths

and impacted communities inside Syria and in host countries, including advocating for human rights and gender equality, to better cope with and recover from the crisis.

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More than Numbers

Regional Overview: Responding to gender-based violence in the Syria crisis

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