



Regional activity highlights

Now, in the fourth year of the conflict, there are 2.9 million Syrian refugees registered in the region. The number of refugees continues to increase and camps and informal settlements are growing, some into sizeable cities. The highest number of Syrian refugees are in Lebanon, followed by Turkey, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt; 75 per cent are women and children and 25 per cent are women and girls of reproductive age. Host populations are being faced with high prices and scarcity of basic services while governments and humanitarian agencies are struggling to tackle the crisis given the current security situation and economic challenges.

More than 145,000 Syrian refugee families in Egypt, Lebanon, Iraq and Jordan – or one in four of all households – are headed by women facing a lone fight for survival, struggling to make ends meet and to maintain dignity and care for their families in run-down, overcrowded homes, insecure makeshift shelters and tents, according to a UNHCR report released in July.

Syrian refugee youth in Lebanon are overburdened with anxiety and insecurity, with young women in particular living in distress, suffering from poor living conditions, while fear of sexual harassment and exploitation and other factors restrict their mobility and encourage early marriage as a coping strategy. In Syria, over half the country's population has been forced from their homes seeking peace. Of these, many are in informal settlements where they receive very little assistance. Around 6.5 million have been exiled in their own country, including 1.6 million of women and girls of reproductive age, and 432,000 pregnant women. An additional 240,000 women are besieged in Syria's

contested cities. The population of Lattakia and Tartous has grown by 50 per cent with major economic implications in the two cities.

Syrian displaced and refugees are vulnerable to growing hardships and risks. UNFPA and partners are scaling up efforts to achieve universal access to sexual and reproductive health (including family planning), promoting reproductive rights, reducing maternal mortality and improving the lives of youths and women by advocating for human rights and gender equality and by promoting the understanding of population dynamics.

UNFPA believes that ensuring that the basic protection and assistance needs of every refugee are met in accordance with international standards is investing in the future of Syria and the stability of the region. Failing to provide the required level of humanitarian support to Syrian population through the Syrian Humanitarian Assistance Plan (SHARP) and the Regional Response Plan 6 (RRP6) would not only have dramatic consequences for each Syrian girl, woman, boy and man, but would also ultimately represent a heightened threat to peace and security in the region.

- **Syrian Arab Republic:** UNFPA provided lifesaving reproductive health services, including emergency obstetric care, safe delivery, family planning services to **64,000 women and GBV services to around 9,200 women.**

- **In Lebanon:** UNFPA conducted 51 awareness sessions on reproductive health targeting 700 women and provided GBV services to 155 women, in addition to training 119 health professionals on GBV case management and communication and to 109 Lebanese and Syrian women on basic life-skills. UNFPA developed a manual on improving health service responses to violence against women survivors, a manual on "[Communication with Violence Survivors: A Teaching Manual for Health Care Providers](#)" and launched the findings of a [situation analysis of youth in Lebanon](#) affected by the Syrian crisis.

- **In Jordan:** UNFPA provided reproductive health services to **23,023 women and girls**, celebrated the birth of **baby number 1,000** at its clinic in the Zaatari Camp. UNFPA initiated a national youth mapping and provided services to 791 GBV survivors while **22,761 women, men, boys and girls were sensitized** on GBV-related issues.

- **Iraq:** UNFPA provided [reproductive health services to 2,848 women](#) and girls and worked with partners to address the challenges the health system is facing in responding to the ongoing crisis. UNFPA recruited eight social workers to strengthen UNFPA psychosocial services in camp and non-camp settings.

- **Turkey:** UNFPA organized a training course on the minimum initial service package for 30 health professionals and distributed **3,000 hygiene kits to Sanliurfa women's centre.** As part of a joint cross-border humanitarian convoy by United Nations agencies, a UNFPA humanitarian truck containing **2,400 dignity kits** crossed the Turkish-Syrian border to Aleppo.

- **Egypt:** UNFPA organized a training course for 135 health professionals at the primary health care units that serve Syrian refugees in Sharkia, Sadat City and El-Mansoura. UNFPA organized a [marathon to stop violence against women](#) with the participation of 600 Syrian and Egyptian youth. UNFPA provided ten reproductive health [kits for post-rape treatment](#), aiming to enhance the services provided to survivors.



A story from the field, Iraq.

Persevering through ambition and support

The crisis in Syria has destroyed countless homes and broken many families. Being a victim of the crisis is practically inevitable for civilians in Syria. Many are trying to cope with their losses and put the pieces of their lives back together. Yafa is a 31 year old Syrian mother of two says "I want to raise my two daughters, Helena (7yrs) and Khemly (4yrs) in a safe place where I can send them to school and allow them to play with other kids, without fear of losing them at any point." Safety is a big concern for most Syrian parents who also worry about work and their ability to provide food and shelter. Being displaced means having to start over, which is not a simple task.

Prior to the crisis Yafa and her husband were doing well in Syria. Her husband was a successful tailor in Damascus. He earned a good wage, "we were happy" says Yafa, "We had a dream of building our own house." During the beginning of the crisis, Yafa and her family would watch the news to see what was going on in other parts of Syria. They would get phone calls from other family members and friends, telling them about the horrors they faced. Once they got news that the violence was making its way to their town, they decided to abandon their home rather than risk the safety of their children. We left the house, left our dreams and memories and belongings," says Yafa. "I was carrying my daughter in one hand and in the other, a bag containing my wedding album and my daughters photos." They headed to Iraq, where they had some relatives and friends. "We spent 5 hours in the border; there were a lot of people," says Yafa.

Once Yafa and her family reached Iraq they were able to settle in rather quickly. They were welcomed by the community and used the money they had saved to rent and furnish a house. However, they needed a source of income to be able provide for themselves. Yafa and her husband quickly began looking for work. During her job hunt, Yafa's friend encouraged her to visit the UNFPA-supported Al Messala women's centre. Here, she found a variety of free courses and support groups. "I met a lot of new friends from Kurdistan and Syria. We started talking and sharing our experience and the reason that forced us to leave our home." She decided to enrol in a hairdressing and make-up course. It was a long-time dream of hers to one day open a salon. Yafa explains, "I used to cut my friends' hair in Damascus." The centre provided her with a fresh start, a chance to pursue her dream. The classes provided her with new methods, techniques and tips that enhanced her skills. "I feel more empowered, professional and confident enough to run my own business," says Yafa.

In fact, Yafa did open up her own home business where she receives clients. She states "the centre remains a support", anytime she needs information, advice or guidance she turns to the centre.

According to Sara Hussein, a 26 year old social worker at Al Messala women's centre, Syrian women continue to impress her. She states that the women "insist on wanting to learn, to work and they keep benefiting from other." The UNFPA-supported centre has a complete team to support refugee women in Erbil. The classes Al Messala offer not only provide a skill, but offer an opportunity for women to meet and rebuild their social networks. It also provides an entry point for the team at Al Messala to ensure that women know their rights and the services available to them.

Many social workers and community volunteers are spreading the word about the Al Messala women's centre to the community of Syrian women residing in Erbil. It's the centre's goal to provide hope and support to these women. . Providing courses such as hairdressing and makeup, sewing, computer literacy and English empower women and restore their confidence. The centre also looks after the physical wellness of these women by guiding them to available services. Thanks to the support provided by the UNFPA-supported centre, Yafa is better able to cope with the crisis and with being a refugee in Kurdistan.

Syrian Arab Republic	
10,800,000	Number of people in need
432,000	Estimated number of pregnant women
2,700,000	Estimated number of women of reproductive age
Lebanon	
1,146,774	Number of people in need
20,297	Estimated number of pregnant women
268,446	Estimated number of women of reproductive age
Jordan	
609,376	Number of people in need
10,785	Estimated number of pregnant women
148,116	Estimated number of women of reproductive age
Iraq	
218,040	Number of people in need
3,859	Estimated number of pregnant women
48,123	Estimated number of women of reproductive age
Turkey	
1,000,000	Number of people in need
40,000	Estimated number of pregnant women
250,000	Estimated number of women of reproductive age
Egypt	
138,458	Number of people in need
2,450	Estimated number of pregnant women
34,811	Estimated number of women of reproductive age