Restoring Hope to Pregnant Women in Crisis Zone

Sheima had never imagined that she would welcome her first newborn in a camp. The 24-year-old young Sheima and her family fled from Deir Ezzor countryside, near Al Hassake in north-eastern Syria, where hostilities have pushed an estimated 5,000 people to leave in the past year, according to the UN Refugee Agency.

Sheima has been living in uncertainty since then but hoping that one day she would go back to her peaceful village. Sheima had to live in different camps in Al Hassake governorate for internally displaced people (IDPs) and now she has ended up living in Al-Areesheh camp. The Al-Areesheh camp is a newly established camp for IDPs near Al Hassake city where the displaced population is estimated to be almost 8,000 and the number is expected to increase due to the continuous flight of people from the northeastern region of Deir-ez Zor.

Despite the tumult of the conflict, Sheima was able to receive skilled medical care at a UNFPA-supported hospital in the host community. The hospital is equipped to support everything from antenatal check-ups to emergency surgery; thanks to generous support from the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO). These services proved to be necessary in Sheima’s case.

Sheima’s baby was soon born and it was a joyous conclusion to her pregnancy. “I’m so excited to finally hold my first baby in my hands” Sheima told UNFPA staff who referred her from Al-Areesha camp to the city hospital.

Displacements continue to increase in northern Syria, with over 68,000 recorded as of the beginning of this year. Women and girls living in displacement require reproductive health care, including not only services during pregnancy and childbirth, but also treatment of infections, counseling on family planning and sexually transmitted infections, and referrals to specialized health care.

UNFPA has expanded the network of services to rural parts of Al-Hassake to cover 279 villages. The number of mobile teams visiting the surrounding rural towns and providing comprehensive health services increased from seven mobile teams at the beginning of the year to reach ten mobile teams and eight static clinics. This expansion helps out to improve the referral system.

After returning to Al Areeshe camp, UNFPA mobile medical team visited Sheima in the camp to check on her condition and her baby. Both mother and the newborn are doing well. “It was like an adventure and a miracle” Sheima said. “Having a baby is a life-changing experience especially when you are away from home and you live in a camp.”

Enhancing media coverage on reproductive health issues in Syria. Turkey cross border: supporting more safe spaces for women and girls

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HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC
FROM ALL CHANNELS

SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC:

- 13.5 million people in need
- 4.2 million women and girls of reproductive age
- 2.86 million youth

SOURCES: 2017 Humanitarian Needs Overview Syrian Arab Republic (OCHA), UNFPA

UNFPA RESPONSE IN SYRIA - SUPPORTED FROM DAMASCUS

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND SAFE MOTHERHOOD

401,001 reproductive health services that include:
- 6,045 normal deliveries
- 1,060 C-section deliveries
- 27,435 ante-natal care services
- 69,000 family planning services
- 1,291 pregnancies under 18

240,275 clients

OTHER REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES

GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT

RESPONSE SERVICES

3,543 women and girls

WOMEN ACCESSING SAFE SPACES

21,706 women and girls

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

14,771 clients

UNFPA-SUPPORTED FACILITIES IN SYRIA

Number of women’s spaces 21
Number of field reproductive health clinics or mobile teams 56
Number of health facilities 912

RESPONSE THROUGH CROSS-BORDER MODALITY

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND SAFE MOTHERHOOD

10,785 beneficiaries received services supported from cross-border operations managed from Jordan, including:
- 856 normal deliveries
- 451 C-sections
- 147 pregnancies under 18
- 3,230 ante-natal care services
- 952 post-natal care services
- 626 family planning services

39,507 clients received services supported from cross-border operations managed from Turkey, including:
- 952 normal deliveries
- 491 C-section deliveries
- 146 pregnancies under 18
- 8,589 ante-natal care services
- 2,150 post-natal care services
- 13,365 family planning services

15,708 women reached through outreach activities supported from cross-border operations managed from Turkey

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT

RESPONSE SERVICES

266 clients received gender-based violence services supported cross-border from Turkey

13,961 clients received gender-based violence services supported cross-border from Jordan

GBV AWARENESS AND OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

3,922 Syrians reached through outreach and awareness activities supported cross-border from Turkey

4,931 Syrians reached through outreach and awareness activities supported cross-border from Jordan

WOMEN ACCESSING SAFE SPACES

2,318 women and girls accessed safe spaces supported cross-border from Turkey

UNFPA MISSION:

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

UNFPA: Delivering a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and every young person’s potential is fulfilled.
HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES AFFECTED BY THE CRISIS

**TURKEY**

**SERVICES**
- 22,896 services for Syrian beneficiaries that include:
  - 7,904 family planning services
  - 1,560 ante-natal care services
  - 728 post-natal care services
  - 35 pregnancies under 18

**AWARENESS SESSIONS**
- 6,218 clients

**OUTREACH**
- 5,284

**SUPPLIES**
- 21,075 brochures distributed

**LEBANON**

**SERVICES**
- 678 services for Syrian beneficiaries that include:
  - 674 family planning services
  - 220 ante-natal care services
  - 93 post-natal care services
  - 21 pregnancies under 18

**JORDAN**

**SERVICES**
- 4,784 reproductive health services that include:
  - 160 normal deliveries
  - 26 pregnancies under 18
  - 1,319 family planning services
  - 1,563 ante-natal care services
  - 509 post-natal care services

**AWARENESS SESSIONS AND OUTREACH ACTIVITIES**
- 2,806 clients

**OTHER RH SERVICES**
- 1,366 services

**IRAQ**

**SERVICES**
- 1,995 family planning services
- 257 normal deliveries
- 69 C-section deliveries
- 405 ante-natal care services
- 503 post-natal care services

**SUPPORTING ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH**

**JORDAN**

**YOUTH PROGRAMMING**
- 1,664 young people

**EGYPT**

**YOUTH PROGRAMMING**
- 429 young people

**TURKEY**

**GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT**

**LEBANON**

**WOMEN AND GIRLS ACCESSING SAFE SPACES**
- 693 women and girls

**OUTREACH ACTIVITIES**
- 217 clients

**RESPONSE SERVICES**
- 32 services

**JORDAN**

**WOMEN AND GIRLS ACCESSING SAFE SPACES**
- 4,229 women and girls

**RESPONSE SERVICES**
- 637 services

**OUTREACH ACTIVITIES**
- 2,671 clients

**EGYPT**

**RESPONSE SERVICES**
- 5 services

**AWARENESS ACTIVITIES**
- 112

**OUTREACH ACTIVITIES**
- 895 clients

**SUPPLIES**
- 681 beneficiaries from recreational activities
**HIGHLIGHTS**

**SYRIA**

Women attending one of awareness sessions in Syria
Photo credit: AL Ihasan Charity Association, Syria

UNFPA supported organizing a workshop for media in Damascus aimed at promoting coverage of reproductive and sexual health. Emphasis was placed on the need to promote curricula for reproductive health, sexuality, social and psychological support and the role of media in raising awareness. The workshop included a film about breast cancer awareness and the prevention methods, as well as to help in early detection of the disease through self-examination.

Throughout October, UNFPA along with the government and local implementing partners organized various activities aimed to raise awareness about breast cancer that included a scout marathon, national seminar, and daily awareness raising aiming to raise women's awareness on the importance of early-detection of breast cancer. Over 200 people participated in the marathon. UNFPA will support offering free mammograms in the Cham complex center for 800 women for the next four months of 2017. Those activities took place in different areas in Damascus, including Damascus, bab-Musala, Shaghour, Jdediet Artouz, Halbouni and Keswa, as well as other governorates, such as rural Damascus, Lattakia, Tartus, Sweida and Al-Hassake.

UNFPA together with UN-Habitat in Damascus held training on resilience and social cohesion. The training aimed at building capacity of United Nations workers including UNFPA, and implementing partners who work under difficult conditions. The attendees were seven from UN Habitat, two from Prmiere Urgence and 15 from UNFPA. The training explored concepts and definitions of resilience and social cohesion and shared practice tools for analysis of local context.

A new women and girls safe space was opened in Mesyyaf, rural Hama. More than 400 women registered at the center, which aims to provide them with consultancy services on health, legal issues and case management services. The safe space also provides women with vocational training.

**JORDAN CROSS-BORDER**

UNFPA's implementing partner in Quneitra recently completed the rehabilitation of the outpatient department of a hospital in southern Syria that provides basic emergency obstetric care services.

During the month, 2100 women and girls visited UNFPA-supported safe spaces inside Syria. Embroidery courses were recently launched at safe spaces and proven to very popular among women and girls.

“I like the sessions that discuss early marriage, especially when my mom is around. It really helps me that she knows it’s wrong for me to get married at a young age,” a 15-year-old girl attending a safe space in Quneitra.

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**UNFPA-SUPPORTED FACILITIES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNFPA-supported Facilities</th>
<th>Number of spaces</th>
<th>Number of health clinics or mobile teams</th>
<th>Number of youth centres and safe spaces</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>8</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Contribution Totals**

- Women’s spaces: 81
- Reproductive health clinics or mobile teams: 92
- Youth centres and safe spaces: 35
LEBANON

Post-partum visits at Hrewi Hospital in Zahleh, in Lebanon
Photo credit: Lebanese order of Midwives

Beneficiary accounts

“I will go to the reproductive health clinic to have a PAP smear test. It is the first time I have heard of this screening test.” a woman attending a reproductive health outreach session.

“At the end of this session I am convinced that spacing children helps improve the finances of the family.” a woman after attending a family planning outreach session.

EGYPT

The safe spaces in Haram, Damietta and 10th of Ramadan continued and launched a new set of activities for their clients that meet more needs of the targeted group.

Word of mouth helped in reaching out to more beneficiaries who came from distant places to attend the activities. They were satisfied as they felt these activities make a big difference to them. The Haram safe space started to receive refugees from 6th of October, Mokattam, Ma-dient Nasr, and New Cairo.

TURKEY CROSS BORDER

UNFPA Turkey cross -border operations provided support for nine women and girls safe spaces, and health facilities in Idleb, Aleppo, Homs, Hama and Rural Damascus. Support to the facilities continued largely unhindered and as a result there have not been any major irregularities in the number of beneficiaries accessing services.

One new safe space in Idleb became operational while another one is in the final stages of starting off. It is expected that facility will begin providing services next month.

Overall beneficiaries of reproductive health services dropped slightly from the last month; this is mainly due to a reduction in the number of people accessing family planning services. Nevertheless, there has been an increase in the number of normal deliveries, C-sections, post-natal care, ante-natal care and treatment of infections, from the previous month.

UNFPA implementing partners conducted GBV trainings in Idleb and Aleppo for 34 female service providers who were trained on GBV core concepts and counselling skills.

A total of 1,936 dignity kits were distributed to IDPs in Idleb and Aleppo by implementing partners outreach teams. This was complemented with psychological first aid and awareness raising for the recipients of the kits and their communities.

UNFPA has facilitated discussions between service providers on the ground to improve referral pathways and collaboration for GBV related services.

Third party monitors have conducted site visits to two UNFPA- supported health facilities in October and a third one is ongoing. Reports from these site visits will be reviewed by UNFPA and recommendations will be added before being distributed to the relevant partners.
LEBANON
UNFPA co-led the national sexual and gender-based violence task force meeting with UNHCR and the Ministry of Social Affairs. The meeting was dedicated to the coming revision of the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017-2020. UNFPA and UNDP presented a joint initiative with UNWOMEN aiming at mapping the legal provisions in Lebanon and the region and requested organizations with a legal mandate to support the validation.

A total of 11 midwives from northern Syria participated in a technical training on new-born resuscitation and post-partum haemorrhage. From the group, 7 participants were selected to enter in the midwifery tutors training program. In total, there will be 19 ‘master midwives’, taught through face-to-face training and distance learning.

The GBV capacity building initiative is continuing as per plan. A second self-care training was conducted with 11 female and three male participants. Furthermore, the monthly learning sessions were held for GBV service providers part of the second group of the GBV capacity building initiative, which focused on case discussion methodologies.

In its role as chair of the Youth Task Force (YTF) in Zaatari camp, UNFPA, with its co-chair NRC, held a taxonomy workshop to agree among all members on the terminology, definitions and guidelines to be used for the youth mapping that is being conducted with collaboration of a team of Syrian refugees and UNHCR/ International Relief and Development staff in the camp.

TURKEY CROSS-BORDER
The GBV sub cluster participated in the strategic and technical review for the second standard allocation of the humanitarian fund. Seven projects with GBV components have passed final review with specific focus on continuity of services and integration of GBV services into existing service delivery points.

The GBV capacity building initiative is continuing as per plan. A second self-care training was conducted with 11 female and three male participants. Furthermore, the monthly learning sessions were held for GBV service providers part of the second group of the GBV capacity building initiative, which focused on case discussion methodologies.

The GBV sub cluster also launched the GBV prevention task force focusing on prevention and risk mitigation work. The task force developed a work plan and is currently focusing on organizing activities for 16 days of activism against violence against women.

The sub-cluster dedicated a large proportion of its time in October to the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for Syria. Work was done in conjunction with the protection cluster and Whole of Syria to finalize the HRP framework as well as supporting partners to work on their sub-missions. As a result, development of the HRP was finalised and partners were consulted during this process and trained on how to develop GBV project sheet for HRP.

The sexual and reproductive health working group focused on guidelines validation, training and coordination. The reproductive health coordinators based in Turkey, along with the Health Directorates representatives, attended the “Making Midwives - Midwifery Proficiency Strategy Compliance and Standard Setting for Syria Consultative Participatory Workshop”. The main goals of the workshop were to review the implementation steps of the midwifery strategy for operations being conducted cross-border from Turkey, focused on building midwifery educational capacity, to gain consensus on steps toward the establishment of midwifery education programs and to build capacity to provide maternal health technical assistance.

A total of 11 midwives from northern Syria participated in a technical training on new-born resuscitation and post-partum haemorrhage. From the group, 7 participants were selected to enter in the midwifery tutors training program. In total, there will be 19 ‘master midwives’, taught through face-to-face training and distance learning.

JORDAN CROSS BORDER
In a meeting of the Cross Border Task Force, the discussion was around the uncertainty surrounding the renewal of the UN Security Council resolution 2165 which authorizes cross-border work. The key message from the Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator was for partners to think well beyond tomorrow and plan for real transition.

UNFPA also took part in the revision of the contingency and preparedness scenarios. Key take aways were the need to pre-position stocks and also the unknown impact of a re-opening of the Nasib border crossing point.

TURKEY
The national protection working group meeting was held in Ankara and preliminary analysis of the protection sector of the 3RP was presented. The inter-agency referral form was introduced by UNFPA. SGBV working group meeting provided updates on their current programs on GBV. The GBV standard operation procedures was reviewed and finalized. It will be shared with Ministry of Family and Social Policies for their endorsement.

The protection core group meeting was held in Gaziantep. This working group was established to create an environment for further discussion of the key issues of protection and its sub-working groups (SGBV and child protection) and to accelerate the decision making of the monthly protection working group.

EGYPT
UNFPA participated at Egypt’s inter-agency standard operating procedures (SOPs) workshop as part of the SGBV working group. This exercise aimed at finalizing the work on endorsing unified and standard guidelines for SGBV services with emphasis on UNFPA- provided services for prevention and response. These SOPs included a section on community engagement to better address the prevention of SGBV among refugee and host communities.
CHALLENGES

JORDAN CROSS-BORDER
In the besieged area of Eastern Ghouta, fuel shortages remain dire. Recently, a new type of substitute fuel derived from plastics has been contaminating the market. If used mistakenly, it could damage or destroy key machinery such as hospital generators for which there are little-to-no replacement parts on the market.

The security situation in Jabata Elkhasshab in Northern Quneitra has recently deteriorated again. This has hindered the movement of patients and also a midwife who was scheduled to undergo intensive 6-week training at a regional maternity hospital to improve the range and quality of services she is able to provide in this conflict-prone area.

SYRIA
Staff availability and lack of supplies, especially medication and consumables, for new health facilities remain a challenge in southern areas of Syria.

TURKEY CROSS-BORDER
Aerial bombardment took place in several areas in Idleb Governorate: Almaara; Kafr Nobol, Jarjanaz, Tramala, Telmennes, Maarzita, and Khansheikhun, which affected operations in those areas.

There was a significant movement of IDPs from Aqirbat (in the eastern rural areas of Hama) to Aleppo and then to Idleb districts, which increased the burden of health facilities in those areas. IPs responded through ambulances, mobile clinics and community protection teams.

EGYPT
Organizing mental support activities has been a challenge given the lack of awareness of the Syrian community. The team has slowly built the trust of the beneficiaries and demonstrated the importance of seeking psychological support when needed. Employing different types of activities like music, plastic art and storytelling has encouraged them to join these workshops, which are a form of a group therapy. These workshops have contributed to create a safe space for them where they can talk freely.

DONORS & PARTNERS

UNFPA IS GRATEFUL FOR THE SUPPORT OF THE FOLLOWING DONORS SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE SYRIA CRISIS:

Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, European Commission, Finland, Germany, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Netherlands, Norway, OCHA/CERF, Saudi Fund for Development, Sweden, United States, United Kingdom, UNDP.

Private sector: MBC and Samsung Electronics.

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

IN SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC: Ministry of Health (MoH), Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC), Syrian Family Planning Association (SFPA), Agha Khan Foundation, Masyal Charitable Association, Al Br and Social Welfare Hama, Al Br Charitable and Sociable Qamishly, Pan Armenian Charity Association, Al-Ihsan Charity Association, Al Br and Al-Ihsan Charitable Association in Ras Alain, Albatoul Charity for Humanitarian Services, Islamic Charity Association – Aoun for Relief and Developments (AOUN), Monastery of Saint James the Mulitlated (MISM), Nour Foundation for Relief and Development, Syrian Catholic Archbispohoric – Relief and Development Center (RDC), Syrian Commission for Family Affairs and Population, SCS, SEBC.


IN JORDAN: Ministry of Health (MOH), Institute for Family Health (IFH), International Medical Corps (IMC), Jordanian Health Aid Society (JHAS), Family Protection Department (FPD); Jordanian Women’s Union (IWU), Youth Peer Education Network (YPE); NCTA (National Council for Family Affairs), Questscope.

JORDAN Cross-border: Relief International and Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS).

IN IRAQ: Ministry of Culture, Sport and Youth (MCSP), Ministry of Labor & Social Affairs (MLSA), Al Massela, START NGO and Harikar.

IN EGYPT: Ministry of Health and Population (MOHP), Ministry of Youth and Sport (MoYS), Arab Medical Union (AMU), Care International.

IN TURKEY: The Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD) of the Prime Ministry of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), and Ministry of Health (MoH); Ministry of Family and Social Polices (MoSP), ASAM (Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants), BÜHASDER (The Association for the Prevention of Infectious Diseases), HÜKSAM (Hacettepe University Women’s Research and Implementation Center), IMPR (International Middle East Peace Research Centre), KAMER (Women’s Center Foundation), CVF (Community Volunteers Foundation), Osmangazi University, PYD (Positive Life Association), SPoD (Social Policies, Gender Identity, and Sexual Orientation Studies Association), Bilgi University.

RELEVANT RESOURCES

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Private sector: MBC and Samsung Electronics.

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