**HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTH**

**December 2017**

**UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND**

**REGIONAL SITUATION REPORT**

**FOR SYRIA CRISIS**

1-30 December 2017

**ISSUE NO. 64**

**CONTINUING CROSS-BORDER INTERVENTIONS FROM TURKEY AND JORDAN IN 2018**

Security Council Resolution 2393 was adopted, renewing the provisions of Resolution 2165 for an additional 12 months. This will enable UNFPA to continue supporting people in need, working with implementing partners through cross-border interventions from Turkey and Jordan.

**UNFPA DELIVERS AID TO PREVIOUSLY UNREACHED SHEIKH MAQSoud IN ALEPPO**

A UNFPA team arrived in the Sheikh Maqsoud area of Aleppo on 28 December, marking the first entry of a United Nations agency into the area to deliver much-needed aid.

Two mobile reproductive health teams have been deployed to the Sheikh Maqsoud area of Aleppo following the arrival of a UNFPA and Syrian Arab Red Crescent mission on 28 December, the first time a United Nations agency has entered the area with aid for distribution. There are an estimated 65,000 people in need in Sheikh Maqsoud, the majority of them women, children and elderly persons. This number is expected to change as more displaced families return to the area.

An assessment found significant health-care needs, including severely limited reproductive health services. Only one health facility is operational in Sheikh Maqsoud, serving an estimated 50 patients per day – not sufficient to meet local needs, where about 3,000 women are estimated to be pregnant.

“Conflict typically puts these women and their babies at risk. Physical hardship and emotional trauma often complicate delivery,” said Massimo Diana, UNFPA’s Representative in Syria. “Health services are deteriorated after the seven years of crisis in Syria, in addition to the limited supplies and high patient loads.”


**TELLING STORIES FROM SYRIA: ETHICAL REPORTING ON GBV**

A three-day training was organized for 24 journalists and UNFPA communication professionals on how to report on gender-based violence within the context of the Syria crisis. The participants, most of whom represented well-known media outlets in their own countries, came from six countries affected by the Syria crisis — Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Turkey.

The training aimed at helping journalists to better understand issues surrounding gender-based violence (GBV) and how to effectively and sensitively write about them. Over the course of the three days, participants were introduced to a collection of practical tips on how to report on GBV in the context of the Syria crisis, building upon internationally recognised ethical principles. The programme also gave them an overview of interview and photography techniques to guarantee safety, confidentiality and the dignity of survivors, their families and communities.

**SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC (FROM ALL CHANNELS)**

- 419,707 reproductive health services delivered to Syrians
- 19,454 deliveries supported, including 8,746 C-section deliveries
- 83,178 family planning services
- 25,820 gender-based violence services provided to Syrians
- 20,356 women accessed women safe spaces

**IN NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES AFFECTED BY THE CRISIS**

- 64,423 reproductive health services delivered to Syrian refugees
- 15,983 Syrians received family planning services and consultations
- 3,035 clients received gender-based violence services
- 51,816 Syrian refugees accessed women safe spaces and participated in activities in camps and host communities
- 27,549 Syrian refugees reached with gender-based violence related messages
UNFPA RESPONSE IN SYRIA - SUPPORTED FROM DAMASCUS

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND SAFE MOTHERHOOD

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES
368,266 reproductive health services that include:
- 9,103 normal deliveries
- 7,802 C-section deliveries
- 31,724 ante-natal care services
- 71,636 family planning services
- 1,515 pregnancies under 18

OTHER REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES
270,303 clients

GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

RESPONSE SERVICES
5,512 specialised GBV services provided

WOMEN ACCESSING SAFE SPACES
15,564 women and girls

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES
16,935 clients

UNFPA-SUPPORTED FACILITIES IN SYRIA

Number of women's spaces
26

Number of field reproductive health clinics or mobile teams
55

Number of health facilities
912

RESPONSE THROUGH CROSS-BORDER MODALITY

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES
11,640 beneficiaries received services supported from cross-border operations managed from Jordan, including:
- 773 normal deliveries
- 489 C-sections
- 157 pregnancies under 18
- 3,447 ante-natal care services
- 927 post-natal care services
- 758 family planning services

39,801 clients received services supported from cross-border operations managed from Turkey, including:
- 832 normal deliveries
- 455 C-section deliveries
- 168 pregnancies under 18
- 7,244 ante-natal care services
- 1,863 post-natal care services
- 10,784 family planning services

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES
11,682 RH services provided through outreach activities supported from cross-border operations managed from Turkey

GBV SERVICES
17,326 gender-based violence services provided cross-border from Turkey

15,516 gender-based violence services provided cross-border from Jordan

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES
9,703 Syrians reached through outreach activities supported cross-border from Turkey

2,364 Syrians reached through outreach activities supported cross-border from Jordan

WOMEN ACCESSING SAFE SPACES
4,792 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

FAST FIGURES

SOURCES: Turkey’s Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD), UNHCR, OCHA, and UNFPA

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND SAFE MOTHERHOOD

TURKEY

SERVICES

54,479 services for beneficiaries that include:
- 10,803 family planning services
- 2,176 ante-natal care services
- 905 post-natal care services
- 89 pregnancies under 18

Awareness Sessions

18,076 clients

Outreach Activities

15,850 clients

Supplies

50,865 publications distributed

LEBANON

SERVICES

1,040 services for beneficiaries that include:
- 1,067 family planning services
- 155 ante-natal care services
- 55 post-natal care services
- 24 pregnancies under 18

JORDAN

SERVICES

8,904 reproductive health services that include:
- 132 normal deliveries
- 37 pregnancies under 18
- 2,438 family planning services
- 1,934 ante-natal care services
- 438 post-natal care services

Awareness Sessions

3,145 clients

Outreach Activities

1,482 services

Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment

TURKEY

Response Services

1,522 services

Women and Girls Accessing Safe Spaces

46,608 women and girls

Outreach Activities

14,227 clients

Supplies

79,984 clients

LEBANON

Women and Girls Accessing Safe Spaces

972 women and girls

Outreach Activities

8,322 clients

Response Services

312 services

JORDAN

Women and Girls Accessing Safe Spaces

3,906 women and girls

Response Services

1,297 services

Outreach Activities

936 clients

EGYPT

Awareness Activities

50 clients

Outreach Activities

2,591 clients
The “Changemakers” initiative concluded its third training camp, which included 15 intensive sessions of programming skills and entry into entrepreneurship. Fifteen participants came to expand their vision of the programming world and learn how programming can greatly contribute to facilitating lives in the modern digital age. “Changemakers” also aims to encourage girls to enter the world of digital technology.

Technology continued to be a primary area of focus in December’s activities, with TEDxYouth@Jahez and “Chagemakers” organising two “Developers Meetup” sessions in Damascus that brought together over 60 young people to discuss the latest entrepreneurial technical projects in a collaborative, interactive and diverse environment. “Changemakers” also organised the second Hackathon event in the area, in which 12 young developers collaborated on building an online platform to express thoughts and ideas in written form. Last but not least, the Syrian Computer Society also concluded the three-month programming competition that launched in September, crowning nine winners from different fields. The project is one of the initiatives supported by UNFPA within the “Education for All” project funded by the Government of Japan.

Damascus celebrated its first Interactive Theatre Festival organized by the Y-PEER Youth Network. The festival helped foster a healthy environment where youth can share their talents and develop their art skills related to interactive theatre, in addition to promoting the art as a potent and viable medium for constructive dialogue. Twelve youth teams from around the nation delivered performances on different topics including gender-based violence, child marriage, drugs, stigma, and discrimination. The performances were followed by open discussions moderated by an interactive theatre trainer, which helped highlight focal points and ensure the communication of key messages.

“Ensuring public participation in post-play discussions is just as important as ensuring the implementation of our various programmes,” commented Sara Al-Malki, a Y-PEER educator. “These discussions often result in constructive debates that rouse people’s curiosity to learn more,” she continued.

Lastly, Y-PEER organized an intensive Training of Trainers with the objective of equipping twenty new peer educators with fundamental training and capacity development skills. The training adopted a progressive approach that strongly focused on developing the personal skills of participants, who hailed from Damascus, Rural Damascus, Homs, Tartous, and Hama.

“The training was designed to help us become solid trainers ourselves, but I feel I’m becoming a better team player as well,” commented one trainee.
UNFPA in partnership with the international NGO IRC continued to provide reproductive health services in Azraq refugee camp, including antenatal care, postnatal care, family planning, counselling, and management of sexually transmitted infections. All pregnant women in their third trimester were referred to Azraq hospital for regular antenatal care visits and delivery. UNFPA also provided essential reproductive health drugs and post-exposure preventive kits to Azraq hospital to ensure effective medical care for rape survivors.

Additionally, 14 healthcare providers working at health facilities in a number of villages in Jordan with large numbers of refugees received refreshment training for essential newborn care, clinical management of rape, and IUD insertion. Efforts continue to expand the clinic in Zaatari camp to meet increasing demand, and the work is scheduled for completion by year-end 2017. The expansion includes the establishment of an additional postpartum room to increase the capacity from eight to ten beds in addition to a family planning clinic and an examination room. Additional medical equipment will be procured to bolster overall care capacities.

As part of the 16 Days of Activism Campaign, UNFPA collaborated with IRC, UNHCR and the sexual and gender-based violence sub-working group to organize a workshop to review and mark the progress of gender-based violence programming in Jordan seven years into the Syria crisis. During the workshop, gaps and future priorities for programming were identified, focusing on case management, funding for gender-based violence programming, the legal environment, a survivor-centric response approach, and other core topics. The workshop was attended by several donors and stakeholders from different organizations and ministries.

UNFPA also conducted a campaign in partnership with several implementing partners in the UNFPA-supported sites and project locations. The campaign included implementing such activities as art therapy, awareness-raising sessions on early marriage, and a role-playing activity that focused on the negative impact of early marriage.

In the newly-established women and girls safe space in Jasim in southern Syria, a UNFPA implementing partner has begun conducting activities and offering services to beneficiaries. Meanwhile, the team has hired a midwife in the primary health clinic at Sweisa, whose presence has helped attract more patients to the clinic to receive various reproductive health services, resulting in a five-fold increase in overall attendance.

“Women need to be aware of their rights, pursue their studies and work so they can say no to early marriage and be independent.”— Adolescent girl participating in outreach session.

“Men are supposed to be strong. I feel stronger making my wife feel safe than making her feel afraid.” — Male peer educator

MARIAM (name changed) is a 56-year-old Syrian woman with four children. A survivor of early marriage, she was married at age 16 — a union that lasted nearly two decades before her husband passed away at the age of 35.

To support her family, Mariam had to take various jobs, often grappling with serious economic difficulties. Her situation was compounded when the crisis in Syria erupted, presenting a new set of challenges that made supporting her family all the more difficult. At first, Mariam resisted the idea of leaving her homeland, but eventually her children took refuge in Turkey, which forced her to relocate as well.

While integrating into Turkish society was in itself a major challenge for Mariam, her situation became even more complicated when she was diagnosed with breast cancer shortly after her arrival. Dealing with her illness proved to be a major challenge because of the language barrier, and Mariam reports that she often attempted to interpret her doctors solely through their facial expressions, which prevented her from addressing her health issues effectively. Her situation became so dire that her mind was consumed with
thoughts of her own mortality.

It was then that Mariam came to the attention of UNFPA’s health mediator and was able to receive access to specialized health services at the Ankara Oncology Hospital, accompanied by a professional interpreter to facilitate the process. She received an overall positive prognosis and was scheduled for monthly check-ups to monitor her condition. Today, Mariam is an active participant in a number of training programmes at UNFPA, where she is learning the Turkish language and receiving essential information on reproductive and overall health.

TURKEY CROSS-BORDER

UNFPA Turkey cross-border operations supported 11 women and girls safe spaces, 21 health facilities and 11 mobile clinics in Idleb, Aleppo, Homs, Hama and Rural Damascus. Support was delivered through five implementing partners and three sub-grantees.

A new UNFPA-supported women and girls safe space in northern Syria began operations in December in Al-Bab district of Aleppo. The centre will be primarily focusing on awareness-raising on gender-based violence, both inside the facility and through outreach. The centre will be providing the local community with life skills activities, recreational activities, vocational training as well as case management and specialised psychosocial support for gender-based violence survivors.

Outreach activities related to gender-based violence increased during December as part of the 16 Days of Activism campaign. The awareness raising activities were accompanied with psychological first aid and referrals.

EGYPT

Inspired by the desire to cultivate seeds of change at a community level, a team comprising 25 Egyptian and Syrian refugees was formed under the heading of “Nawah,” which is Arabic for “seed,” and received training on different theatrical techniques that span improvisation, storytelling, décor, miming, music, acting, and team management. The team then developed theatrical sketches using simple and available tools, touching upon several core themes that include sexual harassment, intimate partner violence, and harmful social and cultural expectations surrounding gender roles. The main objective of the performance was to raise awareness on the impact of GBV and mobilize the community towards combating violence against women.

Additionally, the activity served as a vehicle for strengthening social cohesion and integration by allowing Syrians and Egyptians to work together toward a shared objective. Six performances were organized by the group to date and attended by a total of 623 Syrians and Egyptians. Similar activities are also being planned for the safe spaces in Damietta and Haram.

Women and girls safe spaces in Haram, Damietta and 10th of Ramadan resumed their routine activities, with participants reporting high levels of satisfaction with the quality and appropriateness of services offered. Word-of-mouth continues to be the most common modality for outreach and the activities have successfully attracted a sizeable sum of participants, including those who reside in areas that are not necessarily proximate to the centers — a clear testament to the success and appeal of the interventions. Close to 350 beneficiaries attended a series of activities spanning psychosocial support, psychodrama workshops, group therapy, storytelling workshops, dance therapy, and theater training.
JORDAN

In Zaatari camp, UNFPA implementing partner JHASi participated in the 16 Days of Activism campaign, conducting awareness sessions and some recreational activities for the women. Ten healthcare providers, including doctors, nurses and midwives, were trained on emergency obstetric and neonatal care, with a refresher training on essential newborn care.

During the reporting period, the UNFPA Jordan country office conducted meetings with key implementing partners on areas of reproductive health, gender-based violence and youth to discuss 2018 work plans and budgets for the new programme cycle of 2018-2022.

UNFPA, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Development and the Jordanian Women’s Union, participated in the regional workshop to launch the essential package of service guidelines. The essential service package is designed to help national authorities put in place essential services for survivors of gender-based violence, spanning health, police, justice and social services. It was agreed that UNFPA would join UN Women in launching the GBV guidelines in a joint workshop during the beginning of 2018 focusing on health, legal, justice, and social sectors.

LEBANON

UNFPA co-led with UNHCR and the Ministry of Social Affairs the final monthly meeting of the sexual and gender-based violence task force for the year 2017. The meeting focused on two main issues: rolling out the 2017 guidelines for gender-based violence and finalizing the plan for 2018. The meeting also covered the preparations for the national sexual and gender-based violence task force exhibition entitled “Voices of Adolescent Girls,” which was held on December 15.

UNFPA also led the bi-monthly meeting of the reproductive health sub-working group, in which the sub-working group work plan was reviewed and endorsed. The members also reviewed the sexual and reproductive health quarterly reports and discussed current challenges and the way forward.

UNFPA led the meeting of the clinical management of rape (CMR) monthly task force. The meeting provided updates on CMR training and the distribution of PEP-kits around Lebanon. The meeting also presented updates on the development of the CMR strategy with the Ministry of Population and Health.

TURKEY

The national protection working group meeting was held in Ankara where the inter-agency sexual and gender-based violence referral form was endorsed to be used nationally. The meeting also discussed a draft guidance note for the 3RP protection sector’s output indicators.

A workshop took place in Gaziantep organised by the south-eastern Turkey working group as well as the sexual and gender-based violence/child protection sub-working groups, during which participants reviewed what had been accomplished in 2017 and discussed the work plan for 2018. Moreover, a series of training programmes on standard operating procedures for women and girls safe space were organized in Izmir, Istanbul and Ankara for service providers working in safe spaces.

TURKEY CROSS-BORDER

During the 16 Days of Activism campaign, the gender-based violence sub-cluster with the support of UNFPA organized a training in Gaziantep for case managers and psychosocial support workers as well as staff, most of whom were working inside Syria. The first part of the training, attended by 17 participants representing 14 organisations, lasted for ten days and focused on the basics of gender-based violence as well as its associated standard operating procedures. The second part centred on case management and was attended by 22 from 18 GBV sub-cluster member organizations.

On December 2nd, the GBV sub-cluster organized a “Family Day” event to which organisations and their families were invited to celebrate achievements made in 2017. Around 120 people participated in the event.

The GBV sub-cluster organized a visit to Gaziantep by a physician specialized in CMR to support organizations through CMR capacity building. The mission included three main meetings that tackled a variety of subjects, including CMR basics, case management components, psychological services, technical support in hard-to-reach areas, and other topics. Additionally, stakeholders were engaged in initial discussions on the issue of “virginity testing” and the doctor presented the recently-developed guidance note that clearly advocates for a total abandonment of the practice.

The gender-based violence sub-cluster also developed an orientation pack to guide new members on key documents, available capacity-building opportunities and on how to receive technical guidance. Moreover, the cluster participated in the consultation for the 2018-2020 GBV area of responsibility global strategy, organizing a comprehensive focus group discussion.

In December, the reproductive health working group focused on midwifery strategy, technical guidance and coordination. A face-to-face training brought together Syrian midwives who were finally selected for the tutorial programme after participating in the “Helping Babies Breathe and Helping Mothers Survive” trainings in March and October 2017. The master training addressed 17 participants who were already being coached and assessed through the distance learning activities. The main contents focused on reproductive health, reflective practice and teaching and presentational skills.
CHALLENGES

TURKEY CROSS-BORDER

Safe and efficient transport of commodities as well as staff remains a major challenge for all implementing partners. Unstable security and operating environments in besieged areas are a major concern for UNFPA-supported facilities in those areas.

TURKEY

The closure of international NGOs working in Turkey is believed to create gaps in providing services to beneficiaries in the field.

JORDAN CROSS-BORDER

The security situation in Eastern Ghouta has negatively affected the service provision in both Duma and Misraba areas. Limitation of working hours led to insufficient access to health facilities. UNFPA’s implementing partner responded to that by dividing the working hours among the staff so they can cover the emergency cases as much as possible.

SYRIA

Limited capacity of implementing partners in hard-to-reach and besieged areas negatively affects the ability to deliver quality reproductive health and GBV services and to monitor the ongoing humanitarian assistance, including aid provided through joint UN convoys.

The repercussions of bilateral sanctions along with depleted local markets have affected the ability of partners to deliver quality reproductive health services.

Ongoing military operations in different areas of the country have exposed affected people, including women and youth, to such life-threatening risks as the lack of access to safe delivery and gender-based violence services.

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, France, 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, Masyaf Charitable Association, Al Bir and Social Welfare Hama, Al Bir Charitable and Sociable Qamishly, Pan Armenian Charity Association, Al-Hasan Charity Association, Al Bir and Al-Hasan Charitable Association in Rav Alain, Albatoul Charity for Humanitarian Services, Islamic Charity Association – Aoun for Relief and Developments (AUQN), Monastery of Saint James the Multilated (MSJM), Pour Foundation for Relief and Development, Syrian Catholic Archdiocesan – 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 (JWU), Youth Peer Education Network (YPE), NCFA (National Council for Family Affairs), Questscope.

IN IRAQ: Ministry of Health, (MOH), 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 Policies (MoSP), ASAM (Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants), BUHASDER (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.

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RELEVANT RESOURCES

www.unfpa.org
www.ocha.org
www.unhcr.org
http://syria.humanitarianresponse.info