

Syria crisis



Regional activity highlights

UNFPA commemorated the International Day for the Elimination of the Violence against Women on 25 November and called on all partners to continue exerting efforts to protect Syrian women and girls of reproductive age, to end gender inequality and the impunity that allows violence and human suffering to continue on such a widespread scale and to ensure safety and justice in the region.

The crises in Syria and Iraq have caused a flood of movement that continue to destabilize neighboring countries and pose a threat to regional stability and to countries around the world. More than 13 million people are in need of urgent humanitarian interventions, among this total 25 per cent are women and girls of reproductive age, 7.6 million are displaced within Syria and 3.2 million have become refugees. In Iraq, 2 million have been displaced this year by tribal fighting and the advance of the Islamic State.

Absorbing refugees from Syria and Iraq has strained neighboring Jordan and Lebanon to the breaking point. In Lebanon, for example, the country has welcomed 1.8 million refugees into a native population of 4.5 million.

Women and girls have become the most vulnerable group affected by the crisis, facing severe human rights abuses, violations and humiliations. They are subjected to gender-based violence, coerced into early marriages, overwhelmed by economic strife, and psychologically scarred by loss.

The staggering refugee crisis continues unabated, and their situation is expected to get even worse in coming weeks as winter approaches. UNFPA is working with partners to address the needs of women and girls in humanitarian settings to assure that every woman can access affordable reproductive health care and be protected from gender-based violence.

- **Syrian Arab Republic:** UNFPA reached **38,800 women with reproductive health and GBV services**. The Fund launched a reproductive health, including family planning and **GBV awareness-raising campaign, targeting around 50,000 internally displaced persons** residing in 12 shelters in Damascus, Sweidah, Tartus and Lattakia. UNFPA delivered reproductive health tools and supplies to Aleppo, enable around 72,000 affected people to receive better quality reproductive health services, including emergency obstetric care and safe delivery services.

- **In Lebanon:** UNFPA conducted **85 awareness sessions** on different reproductive health issues **targeting 1,375 Lebanese and Syrian women**. UNFPA in collaboration with its partners provided GBV services to

1,713 Syrian women and conducted three training sessions targeting 67 service providers on family planning counselling. **A total of 2,910 sanitary pads and 3,000 pamphlets** on different reproductive health topics such as nutrition during pregnancy and reproductive tract infections were distributed during the awareness sessions implemented by UNFPA in partnership with Lebanon Family Planning Association for Development & Family Empowerment. Also in partnership, UNFPA and Intersos began conducting a mapping of GBV services in Mount Lebanon by conducting interviews with 15 organizations.

- **In Jordan:** UNFPA **sensitized a total of 9,312 women, girls, men and boys** through GBV and reproductive health awareness sessions. UNFPA ran 56 recreational activities benefiting 536 women.

- **In Iraq:** UNFPA provided **GBV services to around 5,155 women** and girls of reproductive age at UNFPA women's centres. UNFPA is supporting the deliveries of babies in the maternity clinic in Domiz camp in Duhok and is responding to the needs of women arriving from Kobani, by involving them in

the psychosocial support sessions, distributing dignity kits to 1,400 women and 400 women received winter dishdashas.

- **Turkey:** UNFPA conducted a field visit to the Syrian Social Gathering in Mersin to observe their information system to collect data and services regarding reproductive health and GBV. UNFPA conducted a **Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) training in Adana for 34 provincial service providers** and programme managers and conducted a training on the **clinical management of rape in Sanliurfa for 23 gynecologists, psychologists and midwives** working in Syria.

- **Egypt:** UNFPA organized an orientation session on currently available services for community health workers working with Syrian refugees in Egypt. The Fund supported the training of 30 community health workers and **80 healthcare providers on psychosocial support, GBV risks and available services**. UNFPA provides post rape treatment kits to primary health care centres and launched the national medical protocol/guidelines for GBV.

Syria crisis



A story from the field, Lebanon

Offering Access, Protection and Solidarity in an Era of Conflict and Displacement

The lack of work is a common concern for displaced Syrians. Jobs are not only a vital source of income, but are also source of distraction and dignity. Unfortunately, they are difficult to come by and difficult to keep, especially for Syrian refugee women. Most refugee women looking for work in Lebanon are unable to find a job. If they do find employment, they're earning about 40 per cent less on average than their male counterparts.

"I want to learn new skills but I'd also like to contribute here," says Yasmeen who is expecting her second child in a few months. But instead of looking forward to having her baby, Yasmeen is concerned with her family's finances. "I worked as an accountant before the war and I would like to get a job and be able to support my family. I'm qualified but I think the skills I learn here will help me find work in Lebanon." Like many educated and highly skilled middle-class Syrians, Yasmeen and her husband are struggling to find work that matches their skill level. Roughly one-third of Syrian refugees in Lebanon are unemployed. Most Syrians, who have found employment, work in unskilled or semi-skilled professions and are earning less than the minimum wage. Her husband's wage alone is not sufficient to cover the expenses of Yasmeen's young family.

The centre in Nabatieh offers Yasmeen more than just dignity kits and trainings to improve her chances of finding a job once she has had her baby. She also found a

place of refuge and a support network. "I try to come to the centre every day. It's the only time I get to myself. I can meet with the other women, talk and forget about my worries for a little while. We've become good friends. And we help each other. I'm going to have my baby soon and I didn't have any baby clothes. I didn't feel prepared but my friends gave me baby clothes and blankets they didn't need anymore. Especially, my friend Um Hadi, a Lebanese social worker at the UNFPA-supported SHIELD centre has supported me during the pregnancy. We didn't plan to have another child because we feel insecure in Lebanon. But it's a great relief to have friends who support me. I didn't buy anything since we arrived, Um Hadi collected donation of clothes and mattresses for winter from neighbors and distributed them to us, she has encouraged me to attend family planning session and introduced me to the family planning methods that the centre can support free of charge for Syrian women.

Um Hadi is a social worker that is working with Syrian refugee women at the women's centre in Kfar Sir in Nabatieh. She's a motherly figure to the women. They trust her and turn to her when they need support and guidance. "I feel for the women. Moving countries isn't easy. To go and live in a country you've never even been to before, where you don't know anybody, it's hard. I try to help them however I can."

Um Hadi is a natural leader and a resolute woman. She often visits the women who come to centre at home in order to better understand their living conditions and the problems they face. "I feel happy to be a part of this effort to help Syrians in our country and to be able to make women feel they are not alone. I provide them with social and emotional support. We discuss issues that they face and try to come up with plans. Moreover, I organize morning gatherings and social events to help them feel at home"

"Life here isn't getting worse," she said "It isn't getting any better either. We just want to go home," says Yasmeen. "My home in Nabatieh is very small. We are three families of eleven members in a house. It's too many and we have no privacy but at least the rent is supported by UNCHR for a year. We can stay at this house until the end of the year but then we will have to move. I don't know if we can find something that we can afford. And we will have another baby by then, too." It's so important that I find a job."

*Name changed to protect identity

Syrian Arab Republic

12,200,000 Estimated number of people in need
488,000 Estimated number of women of reproductive age

Lebanon

1,144,762 Number of people in need
193,612 Number of youth
282,254 Number of women of reproductive age

Jordan

619,000 Number of people in need
127,206 Number of youth
150,206 Number of women of reproductive age

Iraq

235,373 Number of people in need
59,612 Number of youth
50,271 Number of women of reproductive age

Turkey

1,600,000 Number of people in need
337,500 Estimated number of women of reproductive age

Egypt

137,504 Number of people in need
29,499 Number of youth
35,363 Number of women of reproductive age