

Gender-Based Violence Information Management System

Overview of Incidents of GBV and Women and Girls' access to justice services

Quarter 2-2022

Background

Three years of economic crisis, compounded by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Beirut Port explosions and political instability have left families living in Lebanon struggling to survive, plunged them into poverty and is affecting their health, welfare, and education. With the limited functionality of public services, administrative offices and courts, this multi-layered crisis¹ had severe consequences on women, girls, children, and marginalized groups like LGBTIQ+ survivors and people with disabilities.

It also worsened the overall protection situation for Syrian refugees and refugees of other nationalities and deepened the vulnerability of the Lebanese host community. In the second quarter of 2022, an uptick in restrictive measures was reported which impacted the protection space including protection partners reporting humanitarian access challenges, and additional information requests on the work of protection partner outreach volunteers.

This gender-based violence information management system (GBVIMS) report² aims to analyze the incidents of GBV in Lebanon, with a focus on the status of access to justice, where this compounded crisis continued to hamper legal actors' efforts to provide legal aid in a timely and responsive manner. The analysis has been triangulated with other sources, protection monitoring reports, studies, surveys, and assessments conducted in Lebanon such as the Vulnerability assessment of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, and the Multi-sectoral needs assessment.

Profile of survivors seeking assistance

During times of emergency and in fragile settings affected by crises, women and girls are disproportionately exposed to human rights abuses, violations, and violence due to their gender identity. According to the GBVIMS reports for the second quarter of 2022, female survivors continue to constitute the majority of survivors seeking services. **94 percent** of survivors were female, but male survivors were also affected with **6 percent of men and boys reporting GBV incidents**, with similar percentages as reported in the first quarter of 2021. Different organizations and service providers have intensive prevention and response activities and programs tailored to meet the needs of women and girls.

¹ ACT Alliance Alert: Lebanon Crisis. Accessed at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/lebanon/act-alliance-alert-lebanon-crisis-16-march-2021>

² The data quoted above are derived from only reported cases and do not represent the total incidences or prevalence of GBV in Lebanon. These statistical trends are generated exclusively by GBV service providers who use the GBVIMS for data collection in implementing GBV response activities across Lebanon, with the informed consent of survivors. Fourteen organizations contributed to the trends. These data should not be used for direct follow-up with survivors or additional case follow-up. This information is confidential and must not be shared outside your organization/agency. Should you like to use this data or access more information on the GBVIMS, please contact the Inter-Agency GBVIMS Coordinator, Lamis Delbani (aldelbani@unfpa.org).



Nevertheless, and despite the limited services designed to meet the needs of male survivors in the GBV programming, several organizations are reporting new projects that work on engaging men and boys in the GBV programming.

Data from the second quarter of 2022 show that adults accounted for **89 percent** and children accounted for **11 percent of the GBV cases reported through the GBVIMS**. The percentage of children seeking services decreased by 7 percent compared to the first quarter of 2022. Despite this decrease in numbers, partners reported an increase in available services targeting children in the region, in addition to the fact that the majority of Child Protection actors might not report to GBV IMS.

Additionally, and according to the gender findings of UNICEF recent report on multidimensional child poverty³, girls and women due to their gender are facing different and specific repercussions of the crisis. Girls, regardless of nationality, shared experiences of harassment in public spaces, restricting their movement and mobility and confining them to their homes. Girls' right to play is further restricted due to harassment societal gender norms, as they are more likely to be confined to the home due to their parents' concerns about their safety.

Syrian refugees remain the main group of population seeking GBV services, accounting for **75 percent** of all the individuals who sought out support in the second quarter of 2022. **23 percent** of the survivors seeking services were Lebanese. Lebanese nationals have also been affected by the escalating socio-economic crisis, with the country's limited capacities to provide basic public services such electricity, water, health and sanitation services, health care and protection services.

According to the GBVIMS report covering the second quarter of 2022, **1 percent** of survivors receiving services are persons with disability, with 1 percent decrease compared to the first quarter of the year. According to Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (VaSyr 2021)⁴, 6.9 percent of Syrian girls from head of households were at least one person with disability report safety concerns around sexual harassment, the rate amongst Syrian girls in head of households without a person with disability is 3.6 percent.

People with disabilities continue to face challenges in accessing and benefitting from the services due to several limitations, including limited capacities and skills of service providers to engage people with disabilities in the activities, community stigmatization and marginalization and the issue of safe spaces that may not be properly equipped to host people with disabilities. In this regard, several initiatives are taking place on inter-sector levels to have better understanding about the barriers and access of people with disabilities to services, including GBV.

Most commonly reported types of GBV incidents

Women and girls continue to be exposed to several risks and GBV types in the community, which is further supported by data reported through the GBVIMS. In the second quarter of 2022, physical assault and

³ United Nations Children's Fund (2022). "Deprived Childhood". Accessed at: <https://www.unicef.org/lebanon/reports/deprived-childhoods>

⁴ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations Children's Fund, World Food Programme (2021). "Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon." Accessed at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/lebanon/vasyr-2021-vulnerability-assessment-syrian-refugees-lebanon>



psychological or emotional abuse were the most commonly reported types of GBV incidents, accounting for **36 percent** and **34 percent** of incidents, respectively.

Sexual abuse remains a risk with devastating consequences on women and girls. However, it remains underreported because of the stigma associated with it. Rape and sexual assault constitute a 17 percent of all reported incidents according to GBVIMS report for Q2 2022.

Home remains not a safe space for survivors of GBV. According to the GBVIMS report covering the second quarter of 2022, 27 percent of the GBV incidents reported took place in the perpetrators home, while 56 percent of incidents took place in the client's home. These high percentages are linked to the high percentage of intimate partner violence incidents reported in the same quarter, with 57 percent of the cases and marking a 2 percent increase compared to the first quarter of 2022.

Intimate Partner Violence

Intimate partner violence reporting continued to increase in 2022, with 2 percent increase compared to the first quarter of 2022, accounting for **57 percent** in the second quarter of 2022, according to the GBVIMS. Data extracted from the GBVIMS indicate that both adults and children are subjected to intimate partner violence, with **7 percent** of female children reporting being subjected to intimate partner violence as well in the context of early marriage. According to KAFA internal reports⁵ on urgent cases of women and girls' reporting different incidents of gender-based violence in Bekaa, Beirut and Mount Lebanon and the South, the majority of cases requesting legal assistance are cases of intimate partner violence. Women and girls are requesting legal protection, prosecution of the perpetrator/ intimate partner, safe shelter and childcare and the procedures weren't put in action due to the continued gaps in the legal services.

Access to services

According to the data reported through the GBVIMS in the second quarter of 2022, Security protection services and legal assistance services constitute the highest percentage of most declined referrals by GBV survivors, accounting to 42 percent and 41 percent respectively.

The current compounded crisis that Lebanon is experiencing worsened the legal services more, with more judges being off duty because of the salaries and the limited functionality of courts due to several reasons including the fuel shortage.

After several efforts to endorse the law 204⁶ which is the law amending Law 293 on the protection of women and other family members from domestic violence in Lebanon, the law was endorsed in December 2020 with several enhancements: Expansion of the family circle, the method of implementing the protection order or restraining request, increasing the severity of the penalty for violating the protection order, the possibility of submission of a protection request by a minor/ child, the criminalization of moral/psychological and economic violence and allocation of a penalty to the perpetrator and other areas.

⁵ 2022. KAFA Internal reports on urgent cases of GBV in need for legal assistance. Accessed at: <https://kafa.org.lb/en>.

⁶ 2022. KAFA analysis of women and girls' survivors of GBV access to justice services.

Since the beginning of 2022, and due to the continuous and escalating multi-layered crisis, several services and administrative offices and courts were reported functioning poorly with limited number of human resources attending to the offices. The services, including the legal, were interrupted by the judges being off-duty due to the fuel shortage, salary issues and the operability of duty stations. The low functionality of service centers, and courts in specific, had a severe impact on the protection of women and girls. Consequently, it was manifested that no more protection orders are issued by the judges who aren't operating, no more implementation of rulings even those issued before such as custody and family violence cases, and a state of total chaos in courts especially against women and the re-enhancement of the idea of impunity of the criminals/ perpetrators. Additionally, the repercussions of the courts' dysfunctionality included a decrease in the number of emergency cases reported to KAFA, requesting legal assistance.

Additionally, and in reference again to KAFA's analysis of women and girls' survivors of GBV access to justice services, it revealed that women migrant domestic workers survivors of gender-based violence are severely affected by the limited functionality of courts and justice systems. Migrant domestic workers have always faced significant obstacles to access to justice. Now, the law enforcement orders are not responding to reported case of abuse against them, with serious risks to their safety because there are no alternative channels to immediately reach domestic workers in isolated and high risk environments, Additionally, Migrant domestic workers are continuously exposed to abuse perpetrated by employers or by recruitment agencies, and even if they manage to exit the abusive employer's house they are exposed to high risks of exploitation and abuse.

These data are supported by the GBVIMS reports on the 1 percent increase in the percentage of survivors from nationalities other than Syrian, Lebanese, and Palestinian seeking GBV services and reporting on the GBVIMS, in the second quarter of 2022 (**1 percent** in Q1 2022 compared to **2 percent** in Q2 2022).

The huge shortage in legal services urged women and girls to try to resolve the family disputes and GBV incidents through other ways that don't cost them reporting their cases to the court and consequently filing a protection order. Data triangulated with a study by UN Women⁷ and partner organizations on **Access to Justice for Sexual and Gender Based Violence case of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon**, it was commonly reported by both interviewed men and women that they tend to resolve the GBV reports/ incidents internally in case the GBV is perpetrated within the household, before bringing the case to court. This is reflective of social pressures, fears associated with a lack of documentation, financial constraints to engaging in the legal system, and the fact that informal justice processes take less time to reach an outcome, even if the outcome is not in the favor of women and/ or the survivor's needs.

⁷ UNWOMEN "Analytica Study of Access to Justice for sexual and gender-based violence cases of Syrian Refugee Women in Lebanon". Accessed at: <https://lebanon.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/03>

Recommendations

The GBVIMS Steering Committee and the Gender-Based Violence Task Force offer the following recommendations for safeguarding at-risk populations and responding to survivors' needs based on the data reported through the GBVIMS during the second quarter of 2022:

- Strengthen the collaboration between GBV sector and Ministry of Social Affairs, the Lebanese National Commission of Women to introduce the GBV services and improve Lebanese women and girls' access to GBV services.
- Strengthen the advocacy efforts with the ministry of justice to explore alternative actions and arrangements to respond to the needs of women and girls' requesting justice services.
- Adapt the complaints and feedback mechanisms to barriers women face, to be able to capture the challenges faced by women and girls in accessing services.
- Strengthen and increase the gender-sensitive discussions and provide systematic and ongoing training for legal professionals and other justice actors on women's rights, refugee rights, existing GBV laws, Lebanon's international obligations under human rights frameworks, referral mechanisms, gendered experiences of justice, and the needs of survivors.
- Facilitate community dialogues and sessions on women's rights, access to justice in response to GBV, and legal protections. Emphasize women's right to seek legal services in response to both family and non-family violence.
- Strengthen community-based approaches such as outreach and scale up the work with community volunteers and committees to ensure improved access to services and information for women and girls.
- Scale- up programming that engages men and boys in women's protection and empowerment, including religious and community leaders, to prevent and respond to GBV and ultimately change harmful male behaviors and attitudes.
- Enhance the quality of empowerment activities targeting women and girls and capacitate them to make informed decisions when seeking justice services in their communities.
- Increase⁸ women's participation and representation in community justice mechanisms due to the ability of women customary leaders in playing an important role in advancing women's rights and consequently improving the service delivery for women.
- Build gender awareness and sensitivity through training and engage traditional, religious and community leaders on gender justice and GBV.

⁸ GBV AoR helpdesk. Strengthening Access to Justice for Gender-Based Violence Survivors in Emergencies". Accessed at: <https://gbvaor.net/sites/default/files/2020-11/gbv-aor-helpdesk-strengthening-access-to-justice-24112020.pdf>