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In Syria

In Syria, women and girls would visit parks and other places for children to play and adults to socialize.¹ However in 2010 almost 2,500 women (50% of the respondents) in Syria reported that they were not permitted to leave their home without being accompanied by a family member².

In rural areas in Syria, birth rates are kept higher by a culture of preference for sons (and the need for unpaid agricultural labor by family members)³.

Males both experience and practice violence more frequently than females and that the level of violence was worse in rural areas⁴. Most (87%) children between 2- 14 years experienced violent discipline (physical punishment and/or psychological aggression), with no significant difference between girls and boys⁵. Domestic violence is a prevalent practice among families in both urban and rural areas⁶. Of the women surveyed, 67% said they had been punished in front of their families either through verbal insults, revocation of pocket money or in 87% of these cases, physical beatings. Family members, particularly husbands and fathers were the perpetrators of beatings 80.4% of the time.⁷

¹ UN Women (July 2013) *Interagency Assessment of Gender-Based Violence and Child Protection among urban Syrian refugees in Jordan, with a focus on early marriage*

² The Syrian Commission for Family Affairs (2012) *Quantitative and Qualitative Survey Research on Domestic Violence Against Women in Syria* (unpublished)

³ Sanja Kelly & Julia Brelin (ed.s) (2010) *Women's Rights in the Middle East and North Africa*, Freedom House, Plymouth

⁴ The Syrian Commission for Family Affairs and UNICEF (2009) *Situation Analysis of Children*

⁵ Syria Multi Indicators Cluster Survey (MICS) in 2005-2006

⁶ UNIFEM survey of 1,891 people in both rural and urban areas (2005)

⁷ J.Gorham (2012) *Final Report, Jordan Mission of the Inter-agency GBV Advisor, Rapid Response Team*

Syrian culture promotes early marriage for girls⁸. In 2005, a study in Syria revealed that 38% of women married between the ages of 15-19 years.⁹ Males usually married between 18-25 years. Refugees advised that men generally get engaged after their military service. Military service is usually completed by the age of 18 years.¹⁰

An estimated 200 women are killed each year in Syria as a result of 'honour' crimes.¹¹ President Bashar amended the *Personal Status Act* (article 548) in 2009 to make perpetrators more accountable for their actions. His efforts increased sentencing for honour crimes from a maximum of one year to a minimum of two years, but sentencing is still largely at the discretion of the judge. Prior to 2009, men were routinely exempted from punishment if they killed or hurt their spouse or other female relative whom they believed to have engaged in an improper relationship with a man.¹² Another means viewed to preserve family honour is to have an abortion. This practice can be dangerous for the health of the mother because abortion is not legal in Syria and therefore not always performed using hygienic practices.¹³

Societal norms in rural areas of Syria discourage women's participation in the public sphere. There are few local organizations in Syria that could serve as a forum for independent, apolitical community involvement. There is the Gender Women's Union and Syrian Women's League (which are devoted to women's rights and development specifically).¹⁴

There are indications that women, girls, boys and men have been targeted with sexual violence (particularly rape) during the civil war, according to a number of assessments carried out in refugee camps in Jordan since the conflict began.¹⁵ Prior to arriving in Jordan, rape was confirmed as being perpetrated during house searches at checkpoints, and in detention facilities and is often associated with other forms of torture.¹⁶ Women and girls in Za'atri camp identified rape and kidnapping as one of the primary reasons that families fled from Syria, but sexual violence is rarely reported by survivors due to security concerns and associated shame and stigma¹⁷. According to the refugees consulted by Care Jordan, almost all of the female-led households left Syria due to the security situation, the fear of being killed, and because some had lost their homes in bombings.¹⁸

Increased conflict-related violence appears to have broken the silence about the rape of males and other forms of sexual violence in Syria. Human Rights Watch spoke to males who recounted incidences of sexual violence.¹⁹ Evidence suggests that police (among others) are actually perpetrating sexually violent crimes. Multiple sources (journalists, human rights advocates, UN) confirm that conflict-related sexual violence is currently taking place in Syria. Syrian refugees crossing into Turkey and Jordan have described horrific violations ranging from victims having their genitals jolted with electricity to rape. Men also reported penetration with objects, sexual groping, prolonged forced nudity, and use of electric shocks to and beatings of their genitalia. Human Rights Watch has published first-person testimonies given by women, girls, boys and

⁸ UN Women (July 2013)

⁹ Sanja Kelly & Julia Brelin (ed.s) (2010) *Women's Rights in the Middle East and North Africa*, Freedom House, Plymouth

¹⁰ UN Women (2013)

¹¹ UN Women (2013) Reference to: *Women's Right in the Middle East and North Africa: Progress Amid Resistance*.

¹² Jessica Gorham (June 2012) *Final Report –Jordan Mission of the LASC Gender-Based Violence Rapid Response Team*.

¹³ Sanja Kelly & Julia Brelin (ed.s) (2010) *Women's Rights in the Middle East and North Africa*, Freedom House, Plymouth

¹⁴ Kelly & Brelin (ed.s) (2010)

¹⁵ UN Women (July 2013) Reference to: Megavund, Melanie, "Supporting Syrian refugee women." IRC, 18 Oct. 2012, <http://www.rescue.org/blog/supporting-syrian-refugee-women>. Accessed 11-26-12.

¹⁶ UN Women (2013) Reference to *Human Rights Watch In Cold Blood* (April 10, 2012); *Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic* (August 16, 2012), *Stories of Mass Rape: Sifting through Rumour and Taboo in Syria*, TIME World (June 20, 2011) and *Syria ex-Detainees Allege Ordeals of Rape and Sex Abuse* BBC News (Sept 25, 2012)

¹⁷ UN Women (July 2013)

¹⁸ Care Jordan (Oct 2012) *Baseline Assessment of Community Identified Vulnerabilities among Syrian Refugees living in Amman*.

¹⁹ UN Women (2013) Reference to HRW - Syria Sexual assault in Detention (June 2012)

men who were tortured or witnesses others being tortured by armed combatants (primarily identified as soldiers and police working on behalf of the government).²⁰

In Jordan

Traditional patriarchal values have imprinted concepts of masculinity with two significant inter-related elements: responsibility and honour. To be respected, men must be seen as providing for their family's needs, and protecting their family – especially the female members – from all risk. Their honour, and that of the family, depends on their successful assumption of such responsibility.²¹ Fear is used to reinforce traditional gender roles and relations. Men fear failing to be seen to protect the family and to maintain the necessary authority over women so that the women's and family honour are safe. Women fear the dangers described in the public spaces and fear of the punishments that await them from father or brothers, should women move out of the limited private space afforded them. Mothers are complicit: they train brothers to punish their sisters if they move out of prescribed gender roles. Boys are expected to beat their sisters and even be prepared to kill them in the name of honour. Boys are physically abused within their families. The taboos relating to gender-based violence against males have not been explicitly tackled as yet, although data indicate that it exists, especially in the records of services initiated to respond to violence against women. The taboos on discussing sexual abuse of boys may still be very strong.²² A recent study in Amman revealed that 46% adolescent boys and 22% adolescent girls believe killings in the name of honor are justified.²³

In the East Mediterranean Region (Jordan, Egypt, Iran, Iraq and Palestine), 37% of women reported that they experienced physical or sexual violence from their intimate partner.²⁴

Gender and Age Breakdown of Syrian Refugees in Jordan

On 27 June 2013, UNHCR recorded 491,780 Syrian refugees in Jordan out of 1.7 million Syrian refugees in the region. This comprises 126,879 women (25.8%, including 1.9% women aged 60 and over); 131,305 girls (26.7%); 133,764 boys (27.2%) and 99,831 men (20.3%, including 1.3% men aged 60 and over). In comparison with the rates of the registration in the other countries surrounding Syria, Jordan is most comparable with Lebanon, where similar rates of children are being recorded (including a significant dip in the number of boys and girls aged 11-17 years). Unlike Jordan, Lebanon has recorded similar proportions of adult males to adult females. A high proportion of the refugees registered in Iraq are recorded as men (40.1%) with comparatively low figures of women, boys and girls. There are fewer children registered as refugees in Egypt, particularly girls aged 5-17 years. According to UNHCR, there are 143,370 refugees in Za'atri camp, Mafraq governorate. Statistics on the relative proportions of gender and age are not available for those in the camp.²⁵

Domestic Violence

Outside of the camps

Male and female refugees advise that tensions have increased between family members, and particularly between parents and children. There was general consensus among refugee women residing outside of camps there is an increased dependency on male family members which makes women feel more susceptible to men's pressures and demands.²⁶

²⁰ Jessica Gorham (June 2012) *Final Report – Jordan Mission of the LASC Gender-Based Violence Rapid Response Team*.

²¹ JOHUD (2009) *Insights into gender dynamics in marginalised urban communities in Jordan*. JOHUD used the PEER approach; community members are trained to collect data among their peers in the community.

²² UN Women (2011) *Jordan Gender Equality Assessment* (2011) unpublished report

²³ Eisner and Ghuneim (2013) *Honor Killing Attitudes Amongst Adolescents in Amman, Jordan*.

²⁴ WHO (2013) *Global and Regional Estimates of Violence Against Women: prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence*.

²⁵ UNHCR *Syria Regional Refugee Response* <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php> accessed 27/6/2013.

²⁶ UN Women (2013)

Refugee women are concerned about selling their gold to pay either for transportation out of Syria or rent in Jordan, leaving them without their traditional insurance and personal wealth of family wealth (this was reported by almost all of the women surveyed).²⁷

Refugee women spoke of being deprived of privacy and personal space because the living situations were crowded living situations. They spend significant amounts or even all of their time inside the home due to safety concerns²⁸. Overcrowded accommodation can be problematic. Women residing in the Bashabsha facility were forced to sleep in the same building (different floors) and in some cases use the same toilet facilities as single men.

Refugees outside of camps were asked about who was likely to experience violence in the family (the refugees were not asked to comment on the type of violence or the perpetrators – so they may be family members or not). For refugees who are aged 25 and over, women (6.1%) are slightly more likely than men to be subjected to physical violence than men (4.1%). Approximately 12% of girls (this does not change significantly between child and adolescent) are subjected to physical violence. The proportion decreases after the girl reaches 18 years. Girls are twice more likely to be exposed to physical violence than women 25 years and above. More boys (15.9%) than girls (12.1%) under the age of 12 are subjected to physical violence although this decreases as the boy becomes a teenager, and men (4.1%) are less exposed to physical violence than women (6.5%) aged 25 years or older. Boys are 4 times more likely to be exposed to physical violence than men 25 years and above.²⁹

In Za'atri Camp

Key informants believed the following groups perpetrated violence: male spouses (38% of responses), male caregivers (28%), female caregivers (8%), other adult male family members (8%) and other adult female family members (8%). Female refugees aged 18-24 years advised that mothers-in-law also perpetrated domestic violence. Women refugees believed that the violence was happening because of the stress men had because they lacked money and employment. Key informants believed that women are the primary target of sexual violence. The majority of key informants advised females are the most targeted by domestic violence, particularly girls between the ages of 12 to 18 years.³⁰

Isolation in the Home

In general, Syrian refugee women are restricted in their ability to leave the home without a male family member. In turn this limits direct access to basic and specialized services. Adult women are only half as likely as boys to go outside their house daily. The requirement of the accompaniment by a male relative makes it harder for women to engage in economic activities, receive education, participate in social activities, or receive aid. Almost all of the women advised that they did not feel safe going to the marketplace alone, and many mentioned that they were identified by their accents and singled out for harassment and discrimination. Women also noted that Jordanian women were able to go out and about independently and that Syrian women were treated differently from Jordanian women in public places. Women described harassment in the markets and cases where they were not allowed to enter a taxi because they are Syrian³¹.

Outside of Camps

Refugees advised that almost a third of women leave the house daily (26.9%) and 31.5% leave the house a few times a week: in sum, just over half of the women (58.4%) leave the house regularly. Conversely, 41.2% women frequently do not leave the home (23.7% rarely leave and 17.5% do not leave the house). Just over half of the girls (58.3%) leave the house regularly (32.5% of the girls leave the house every day and 25.8% leave a few times a week). Conversely, 40.9% girls

²⁷ UN Women (2013)

²⁸ UN Women (2013)

²⁹ UN Women (2013)

³⁰ CP&GBV SWG Jordan (Jan 2013) *Findings from the Interagency Child Protection and Gender-Based Violence Assessment in the Za'atri Refugee Camp*

³¹ UN Women (2013)

frequently do not leave the home (20.4% rarely leave and similarly 20.5% do not leave the house).³² Some (20%) of the refugee girls did not go outside their house in Syria, and displacement has made it even less likely for girls to be allowed to leave the house. Many spoke of the risk of sexual harassment of girls in schools, and stated that this prevented some girls from attending school altogether.³³

Refugees advised that just less than half of the boys leave the house every day (47.3%), a quarter (23.2%) leaving a few times a week, and a few rarely leave the house (15%) and few never leave the house (13.7%). In other words most boys regularly leave the house (70.5%). Conversely, 28.7% of boys frequently do not leave the home.³⁴ Refugees advised that most men (68.4%) go outside their house every day, some (16.6%) leave the house a few times a week, and few are house-bound (8.2% rarely leave the house and 6.4% never leave). In other words, most men regularly leave the house (85%). Conversely, 14.6% of men frequently do not leave the home.³⁵

In Za'atri Camp

Communal camp kitchens are seen to be particularly unsafe. Men stand outside the kitchen and there is a lack of lighting within the kitchens. Single men enter the family communal kitchen specifically to harass women. Some women prefer to cook on portable gas stoves outside their tents, exacerbating broader concerns about fires and impact on health. Key informants thought women (particularly those heading households because they could not rely on a man to collect distributions) were at risk of violence at food and NFI distribution points.³⁶

Women and girls consider their tent homes in Za'atri camp unsafe: they are unable to lock themselves inside when alone; they lack privacy (due to living in close proximity with others (especially males) and causes difficulties when changing clothes).³⁷

Outside of Home

In Za'atri Camp

Civil unrest is the second most prevalent form of violence in Za'atri camp, mainly involving teenaged boys. The Jordanian Gendarmerie have arrested boys during demonstrations in Za'atri camp and put them in detention. The actions of the boys are tried by the State Security Court rather than being referred to the juvenile police (which is the appropriate action under the Convention on the Rights of the Child). Teenaged boys are also implicated in criminal violence in the camp, advising that they are asked to steal from families in other tents.³⁸ Some men are actively involved in the criminal activity in the camp and/or in gangs, some of which is organized and some of it is petty. Gangs control access to important resources (such as caravans), play a role in determining who gets access to the vendor's area and dictate the price on the black market. Gang members physically threaten those who challenge their authority. Refugees advise that criminal acts affect mostly young men between the ages of 18 to 25 years.³⁹

Most key informants and refugees in focus groups perceived that girls are at risk of violence in their tents (47% of responses), at the latrines and showers or on the way (31%), at the food and NFI distribution points (9%), on the way to school (6%), in kitchens and communal areas (3% each). Most key informants perceived that boys are at risk of violence in their tents (23% of responses), at the latrines and showers or on the way (27%), at the food and NFI distribution points (8%), on the way to school (19%), in kitchens and communal areas (15% and 8% respectively). The two most likely sites of violence that were suggested by the key informants were the home (35% of responses) and at food and NFI distributions (31%) for women, while

³² UN Women (2013)

³³ UN Women (2013)

³⁴ UN Women (2013)

³⁵ UN Women (2013)

³⁶ UN Women (2013)

³⁷ CP&SGBV SWG Jordan (2013)

³⁸ CP&GBV SWG Jordan January 2013

³⁹ UNICEF (June 2013)

refugees mentioned food and distribution points (53%) and at the main camp gates (26%). Boys were most at risk of violence when on the way to school, at the main camp gates, while they were around the camp's periphery and playing areas.⁴⁰ Tear gas is used to quell camp protests.⁴¹

Parents are not confident about adequate security and supervision at sites designated as play areas which leads to children, especially girls, being restricted in their access to playgrounds and friends.⁴² Women and girls generally refrain from using toilets after 7 pm because of lack of lighting in some areas of the camp and broken locks in latrines and showers.⁴³

Men and youth spoke openly about sexual harassment of boys and protection risks both at schools and on the streets.⁴⁴

Outside of the Camps

Young men are feeling a heightened sense of hostility from Jordanians, especially from other young men, when they are out on the street. Those interviewed stated that they would rather go back to Syria and face the 'guns of Assad' than stay in Jordan where they are looked upon with contempt. Both Syrian and Jordanian adults cited tensions about young men as a growing area of concern. Young Jordanian men are quick to blame Syrian refugees for the increased hardships they and their families now face. A group of Jordanian youth attacked on several warehouses owned by the Islamic Society⁴⁵ that was supporting Syrian refugees and are largely responsible for organizing the street protests and tire burnings in the centre of Mafraq City.⁴⁶

Syrian women and girls report growing levels of harassment by young Jordanian men when they are in public. They also noted several incidents since summer 2012 when Jordanian men publicly accused Syrian women of being prostitutes. Host-refugee tensions are breaking down norms of respect, politeness and hospitality as the two groups begin to see each other as direct competitors for jobs, accommodation and resources.⁴⁷

Discussions with Syrian refugees living in Amman confirmed that landlords are reluctant to rent to unaccompanied women because they are perceived as unlikely to be able to pay rent and as 'socially problematic'. Although only 10% of the sample was female-led households, several households were hosting female-led families, which would have brought the total of female-led families to 29%⁴⁸. In a survey the following year, the proportion rose to 31%⁴⁹.

Male refugees stated that they often refrained from going out alone after midnight due to the fear of being stopped by the police, sent back to the Za'atri camp or deported to Syria if he lacked the right documentation.⁵⁰

Early or Forced Marriages

Outside of Camps

Of the women and girls surveyed, 33% married before 18 years; 44% said it was common for girls to marry at ages 15-17, and 6% said average age for girls 12-14 to marry in their community. Refugees believed that the marrying age of Syrian girl in displacement has decreased. Almost half (44.7%) indicated their mothers married before age 18. Some participants revealed that they were

⁴⁰ CP&GBV SWG Jordan January 2013

⁴¹ Education Sector Working Group, Jordan (April 2013) *Joint Education Needs Assessment: Za'atri Refugee Camp, Jordan*

⁴² CP&GBV SWG Jordan 2013

⁴³ CP&GBV SWG Jordan 2013

⁴⁴ UNHCR Participatory Assessment (2012)

⁴⁵ A Jordanian NGO working in Mafraq

⁴⁶ Mercy Corps (2012)

⁴⁷ Mercy Corps (2012)

⁴⁸ CARE Jordan (October 2012) *Baseline Assessment of Community Identified Vulnerabilities among Syrian Refugees Living in Amman*

⁴⁹ Care Jordan (2013)

⁵⁰ UN Women (2013)

married as early as 12 years old. Some refugees debated the age of marriage for participants correlated with their city of origin in Syria, with many women from Damascus and other urban areas stressing that early marriage is a rural tradition, or that it is specific to certain cities e.g. Homs.⁵¹ Syrian Muslim women are not allowed to marry without the consent of their male guardian and marriage contracts are arranged and signed by male family decision-makers. A Syrian woman is considered a spinster if not married before age 25.⁵² Adolescent mothers lack crucial information about family planning.⁵³

The motives for early marriage commonly referred to were the need to ensure the security of daughters, and the economic benefit of having one less mouth to feed. Economic factors came up mostly during discussions with Refugees residing closer Za'atri camp were most likely to raise economic factors. Some female refugees suggested that marrying early facilitated their adjustment to the new family because a younger girl is less likely to disagree, particularly with the mother-in-law. While, younger female participants identified social benefits such as increased respect from the community, many found heading households and rearing children at such a young age to be stressful and challenging.⁵⁴

Conversely, many key informants in the northern and middle regions said early marriage in the Syrian refugee community was not a phenomenon but a rumour hyperbolized by international media. One key informant believed early marriage was prevalent, especially among those without papers. Another key informant was aware of the existence of marriage brokers and of cases where Syrian families would come to the mosque offering their daughters in marriage, but felt that that the main motivation was to protect the girls and alleviate the burden on their families. The majority advised that circumstances had not affected the average age of marriage for Syrian refugees and that there were even fewer marriages in general.⁵⁵

Refugees believed the age of marriage, particularly for girls, is now being delayed due to the prevailing uncertainty in displacement, lack of negotiation and prestige lost due to lack of jobs and wealth as well as the unstable environment not being conducive for the start of long-term relationships, and being disrespected for being refugees. Jordanian men who propose marriage to Syrian girls are generally refused.⁵⁶

Few (6.3%) refugees ranked a dowry as one of their top 3 sources of family income. The pressure from the Jordanian community to marry young Syrian girls had increased with the influx of Syrian refugees. Refugees reacted negatively to the view "Jordanian men think Syrian women are cheap".⁵⁷ Mothers are likely to be approached by both neighbors and strangers with marriage proposals for their young daughters and often feel immense pressure to accept such offers due to their vulnerable position within Jordanian society.⁵⁸ In most cases, proposals were accompanied by extremely low dowry offers. Some have been forced to accept dowries as low as 50 JOD given their current economic situation and status.⁵⁹ Men have reportedly stated that they would readily

⁵¹ UN Women (2013)

⁵² UN Women (2013)

⁵³ UNICEF (June 2013)

⁵⁴ UN Women (2013)

⁵⁵ UN Women (2013)

⁵⁶ UN Women (2013)

⁵⁷ UN Women (2013)

⁵⁸ Care Jordan 2012 and UNHCR Participatory Assessment 2012.

⁵⁹ Mahr is the money, written in to the Muslim marriage contract that the husband gives to the wife, for her use only – it is not money given to the girl's family. In many cases the initial marriage contract is signed with an agreement that the Mahr will not be paid at the time of the marriage but rather if the husband divorces the wife or if she asks for it at a later date. When families are complaining about low levels of dowries or Mahr, they are not complaining that they are not receiving enough money for their daughters. Monies paid to the families as 'bride price' or in kind assistance are almost certainly also changing hands but this was not identified by the survey group and was another issue that focus group participants stated was insulting to their community. In addition to Mahr, a girl's family will usually negotiate how much more a husband has to spend on setting up a house, furniture, how much he will spend on clothing for his

marry a woman who was raped because of the conflict.⁶⁰ Some key informants advised early marriage to be a prevalent issue within the Syrian refugee community, especially among those without papers. Some knew of marriage brokers and of cases where Syrian families would come to the mosque offering their daughters in marriage.⁶¹ One female participant said that a Syrian woman approached her to ask if she wanted to work as a matchmaker for Syrian girls who were willing to marry men from other nationalities. The woman offered her a commission for each successful match. The participant stated that she was horrified by this and she refused and told the other woman that her behavior is immoral and she was taking advantage of people in need.⁶²

Around one in ten refugees knew of at least one woman or girl who had been in a temporary marriage. Some young female refugees reported dropping out because they “didn’t need any more education” or because they were preparing to marry. Still others reported that there were barriers for girls who would otherwise be in school due to parental concerns about their safety or about harassment from Jordanian men.⁶³

In 2013, some refugees in each of the locations surveyed advised they had been asked about daughters for marriage by either a Jordanian or men of other nationalities. In some cases, this had been while they had been in one of the camps and the offer of marriage was accompanied by an offer to bail the family out of the camp.⁶⁴

In Za’atri Camp

A male refugee in Za’atri village described in a focus group how he had seen older Saudi and Jordanian men visit Za’atri camp with the intention of marrying Syrian girls as young as 13; sometimes they would leave with a bride and then come back to the camp to return her later. Some of the other refugees corroborated this account stating that they had either witnessed similar occurrences during their time in the camp, or heard about them from family members in the camp. One participant from Zarqa described how a man in the Za’atri refugee camp offered his daughter in marriage for a bride price of 1 JOD⁶⁵ because she had been sexually abused in Syria, and therefore her honor had been tarnished. Another from the Za’atri village focus group said that “sometimes here in Za’atri there are men in cars who come looking and ask ‘are there any Syrian girls who are ready [to get married]?’” His peers emphasized that this is not uncommon. It is believed that most girls who leave the camps to work are doing so on offers related to marriage proposals. Refugees advised that often proposal were declined. It was not possible to determine the extent to which proposals were accepted.⁶⁶

In Za’atri camp there has been a backlash against a growing number of foreign men who solicit Syrian women and girls for marriage. Refugees formed a vigilante defense coalition in order to prevent exploitative marriages of convenience (in *muta’a* marriages or by soliciting ‘cheap brides’) from non-Syrian men who wish to take advantage of Syrians’ perceived vulnerability. Many of these men are reported to be coming from the Gulf.⁶⁷

Jordanians claim to see Syrian women being sold into marriage for money, then being abandoned by their husbands and becoming prostitutes. Both refugees and aid officials say they see increasing numbers of Arab men and matchmakers making their way to the camps, some of them posing as aid workers. Marriages occur, many of which are brokered and not consensual. The results include increasing numbers of child brides and marriages that, in some cases, end in

new wife etc. Refugees in focus groups suggested the amounts being offered for these are also very low. Care Jordan 2012

⁶⁰ UN WOMEN (2013) Reference to *Stories of Mass Rape: Sifting through Rumour and Taboo in Syria*, *TIME World*, June 20, 2011.

⁶¹ UN WOMEN (2013)

⁶² Care Jordan (2013)

⁶³ UN WOMEN (2013)

⁶⁴ Care Jordan (2013)

⁶⁵ Law requires that there is the exchange of money (minimum 1 JOD).

⁶⁶ UN WOMEN (2013)

⁶⁷ UN WOMEN (2013)

abandonment or forced prostitution. UN and Jordanian relief agencies estimate that some 500 underage Syrians wed in 2012.⁶⁸

Refugees believed that the marrying age of Syrian boy in displacement has decreased. 17% indicated that their fathers were married below the age of 18. They were more likely to see early marriage as positive for girls than for boys.⁶⁹

In Za'atri, male refugees advised that they consider the marriage of girls 13 years and older as normal within their culture. Key informants and refugees advised that boys do not usually marry. Refugees advised that Jordanian mothers who want to marry their sons to Syrian girls, most of whom were reportedly refused.

Young Jordanian men wanting to marry are unable to find affordable accommodation to establish a new family. While the frequency of marriage delay is undocumented, the perception within the Jordanian community (host community –Mafrag) is that it is occurring with greater regularity. Host community members resent and blame refugees for inflated rents.⁷⁰

Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

Shame and the perception of being an additional economic burden to their families were identified as the main reasons for adolescent girls and young women to actively seek marriage. According to the refugees, such arranged marriages are paid off with an estimate average amount of 200 JOD. The females also mentioned some households are reverting to survival sex to bridge their income-expenditure gap. Linking these coping strategies to traditional GBV practices in the region and the high levels of sexual violence experienced in Syria as part of the conflict these trends have been confirmed by numerous sources and assessments.⁷¹

Recruitment into Armed Services

Women advised they cooked for the armed groups, particularly when soldiers had come to their houses. Girls advised they cooked for the armed groups, particularly when soldiers had come to their houses.⁷²

According to the refugees in focus groups in Za'atri camp, “most” of the armed groups are comprised of adolescent boys between the ages of 15-18, and that is was logical that many of the older boys had experience in the armed conflict. A boy as young as 12 years was reported to have run away from an armed group. Some adolescent boys reportedly go to Syria after recuperation to return to the conflict. Key informants and refugees believed that most of the boys who returned to Syria to join armed groups did so of their own choice. A smaller minority believed that peer pressure and pressure from family and relatives could be contributing factors.⁷³

Child Labour

Children are particularly vulnerable to wage exploitation, since they will accept much lower wages than adults, are more willing to work under dangerous conditions. Some refugees state that it is easier for Syrian children than men to get jobs because men need work permits.⁷⁴

Out of Camps

Almost 15% of all households surveyed by UN Women out of camps cited child labor as their primary source of income. A large majority of boys and girls discontinue their education early on in secondary school. Child labor in Syria can begin as early as ages 9 or 10. Overall, child labor is generally most prevalent amongst boys, for whom employment rates increase with age. The

⁶⁸ Mercy Corps (2012)

⁶⁹ UN WOMEN (2013)

⁷⁰ Mercy Corps (October 2012) *Analysis of Host Community Refugee Tensions in Mafrag, Jordan.*

⁷¹ IRC (Nov 2012) *Assessment Report Cash Transfer Program to Syrian Refugees in Jordan*

⁷² UN WOMEN (2013)

⁷³ CP&SGBV SWG Jordan (2013)

⁷⁴ Gorham (2012)

highest labor rates for boys are found in urban settings. Most male and female refugees in focus groups reported that at least one young male family member contributed income to his family. Among the boys who worked, the largest employment sectors were construction (19.8%), agriculture and the service industry (16.8% for each), and retail (14.9%).⁷⁵ A quarter (25%) of female-led households had a member working, all of whom were boys.⁷⁶

There are few references to girls working as refugees expressed it was safest for them to stay home. However, some in Amman mentioned girls working alongside their mothers or other female family picking or selling fruits and vegetables. These girls are at a particularly high risk for exploitation and abuse as they often work long hours in open areas in proximity to older men and with limited supervision.⁷⁷

Syrian girls are more likely to work when they are very young, with employment rates decreasing as their age increases. Girls are more likely to work in rural settings alongside their mothers. Although female focus groups reported instances of economic activities by both girls and adult women, none of the male participants were aware of any girls who worked. Surveyed refugee girls identified five sources of employment for girls: domestic work (46.7% of employed girls), agriculture (33.3%), and 6.7% each in hairdressing, manufacturing, and construction.⁷⁸

In Za'atri Camp

Boys sell goods, beg, work as a cleaner, undertake construction work and stand in line for adults waiting to receive food or NFIs. Some boys steal goods from other tents on behalf of others. Boys are offered work outside of the camp. Girls sell goods, beg and work as cleaners.⁷⁹ Although some Syrian adults report that children are being taken away from the camp for work purposes, Syrian adolescents argue that their attempts to find work in the camp are not generally accepted.⁸⁰

There are few sustainable, safe income generation activities for adolescents. This is especially difficult for male adolescents heading households. Many male adolescents had stopped attending school in Syria and begun formal apprenticeships before they left for Jordan. They lack opportunities to continue apprenticeships in their chosen fields or start new apprentices in Za'atari camp. There is a high demand for vocational training by all adolescents. Males would like training in masonry, metal work, tailoring, car repair, electrical work, plumbing, mobile phone repair and plumbing. Females already have strong domestic skills and would like training in sewing, art, computers and nursing. Given access to materials, many females would like to start weaving and sewing clothes for sale within the camp.⁸¹

Psychological and Social Responses

Refugee women report a lack of safe space to meet psychosocial service providers, spend time with other women and let their children play in a protected environment remains the biggest barrier to meeting the psychological and social needs of women and their children. As a result, women report feeling disoriented, stressed, and isolated; likewise, children are required to play almost exclusively at home due to security concerns. Refugee women reported that children exhibited various indications of distress, whether by acting out, being overly sensitive to loud noises and fearful without reason, by becoming withdrawn, or by playing games featuring graphic violence, death, or representation of weapons and other war-related themes.⁸² Refugees report

⁷⁵ UN WOMEN (2013)

⁷⁶ CARE International (2013) *Syrian Refugees in Urban Jordan*

⁷⁷ UN WOMEN (2013)

⁷⁸ UN WOMEN (2013)

⁷⁹ CP&SGBV SWG Jordan (2013)

⁸⁰ UNICEF (2013) *Shattered Lives: Challenges and Priorities for Syrian Children and Women in Jordan*

⁸¹ UNICEF (2013)

⁸² UN WOMEN (2013)

there is nowhere to take their children and going out is considered shameful and concur women are showing signs of depression.⁸³

Children were increasingly demonstrating symptoms of distress, including bed-wetting, temper tantrums (shouting, crying, and throwing and breaking things), and insomnia.⁸⁴

Men are concerned about the safety and security of their women and children and have generalized anxiety over safety of family members; working conditions (exploitation) and working illegally (consequences if caught); they are depressed and ashamed that their sons (for those who are fathers) are unable to continue their education and are working in very low paying and/or harsh jobs to help support families; and have feelings of uselessness and depression.⁸⁵ The most prevalent fear cited, particularly among men, was that the Syrian secret police could infiltrate their new host community and commit violent acts or kidnap family members for ransom.⁸⁶

A small number of men and women acknowledged that in addition to perpetrating family violence they sometimes harmed themselves, including: banging their heads on walls, burning themselves, and one young man mentioned cutting himself. Two men and one woman mentioned feelings of desperation and suicidal ideation. Refugee men find it more difficult than women to seek assistance, become involved in psychosocial activities, or talk about the challenges they face.⁸⁷

There is a shortage of psychosocial services for males: women perform the majority of psychosocial services.⁸⁸ Men have more mobility than women and often cite mosques as a secure gather place where they can connect with other men, such opportunities are not as readily available for women or children⁸⁹.

Male adolescents in Irbid aged 13–16 years listed their top three challenges as ‘problems with education’, ‘the lack of work opportunities and no income’ and ‘al ghourbeh – a sense of exile and of being a stranger’. Other problems identified were abuse by employers including non-payment of wages, increasing tension between Syrians and Jordanians, and discrimination by community based organisations in the distribution of services to Syrians.⁹⁰

Voices and Agency

Female adolescents age 14–23 years in Za’atri camp identified the following priorities: parents not allowing girls to go to school due to security; disabled people’s issues and needs in the camp not adequately met; services not distributed well in the camp leading to people not being able to get their basic needs met; safety and other issues related to the girls themselves; and the need for places for youth to go to give their complaints.⁹¹ Female adolescents orient new neighbours to their community by explaining available basic social services. Many adolescents want to do more volunteer work, especially to help younger children, the elderly and people with disabilities. Adolescents want opportunities to develop their leadership skills. Important opportunities are being missed for building civic engagement in Syrian youth.⁹²

Access to Humanitarian Service Delivery

Most (83%) do not know of any services available for SGBV survivors in their community. Women were much likelier to report any form of violence to other family members, rather than

⁸³ Mercy Corps (2012)

⁸⁴ Care Jordan (April 2013) *Syrian Refugees in Urban Jordan: Baseline Assessment of Community-Identified Vulnerabilities among Syrian Refugees living in Irbid, Madaba, Mufrqa, and Zarqa*

⁸⁵ Care Jordan (2013)

⁸⁶ UN WOMEN (2013)

⁸⁷ Care Jordan (2013)

⁸⁸ Gorham (2012)

⁸⁹ UN WOMEN (2013)

⁹⁰ UNICEF (June 2013) *Shattered Lives: Challenges and Priorities for Syrian Children and Women in Jordan*

⁹¹ Notes from Youth Committee Meeting of Girls aged 14–23 in Za’atri Camp (April 2013)

⁹² UNICEF (2013)

to service providers or the police, and many felt more comfortable reaching out to a religious official, such as a local imam, to resolve such matters discretely. Women spoke openly about how their husbands were physically or emotionally abusive, with many stating that such behavior results from an increased level of tension due to poor living conditions and the current crisis in Syria. Females advised that if a woman were to come forward, she could face abuse from her brothers or male family members because such claims will disgrace the family, while some male participants added that a woman's ability to disclose depends on her husband.⁹³ Numerous service providers from Jordan's middle and northern regions explained that workshops held for Syrian women were often empty and that they struggle to gather enough participants for their programs. While many key informants from Mafraq believe low participation was due to lack of interest, this is in contrast with the high participation rate of JOHUD's CDC outreach visits to homes. Focus groups suggested many refugee women may not be able to or not feel comfortable accessing services due to feelings of insecurity or inability to leave the home.⁹⁴

Outside of the camps, female refugees through focus groups discussed their knowledge of unfair practices with the distribution of aid. They strongly emphasized frequent and regular cases of fraud around assistance as certain households receive continuous support while others were being left out. Those being left out were identified as female-led households or those with old and sick male heads of household who are not able to enforce their rights as refugees to assistance. On the other hand, all respondents consistently identified the households continuously receiving assistance as those with 'beautiful girls and women'. In one case it was directly reported that community leaders and individual benefactors offered assistance in return for marriage arrangements. This practice is reported as prevalent and has been disclosed to other organizations.⁹⁵

Women are concerned about CBOs wanting to take pictures of people receiving non-food items (NFIs), which make refugees feel cheap and shamed.

Female Syrian refugee youth residing in the north have been subjected to GBV in Jordan by Jordanian men or service providers from different CBOs. There were cases where women had to exchange sex for aid.⁹⁶ A couple of refugees in a focus group advised that girls were being asked for sexual relations over the phone in exchange for NFIs.⁹⁷

One woman in Mafraq was very vocal about sexual exploitation from CBO workers in her area and knew girls who had been coerced into having relations with men in order to receive assistance. Other women stated that they had had to put on makeup to go and receive assistance or flirt with CBO/NGO workers. The women felt insulted and abused by what they perceived as the widespread stereotyping of Syrian women and Syrian girls as potentially cheap wives or prostitutes. No woman reported any direct knowledge of rape in her community.⁹⁸

Both refugees and aid officials say they see increasing numbers of matchmakers making their way to the camps, some of them posing as aid workers. Marriages occur, many of which are brokered and not consensual.⁹⁹ Women encounter harassment from non-camp service providers when trying to access services, particularly if the woman was single, if she came alone, or if she had a marriageable daughter. Women are concerned about being approached for marriage themselves and/or their daughters, or simply marriage with a very low dowry; harassment and offers of transactional sexual relations.¹⁰⁰

⁹³ UN WOMEN (2013)

⁹⁴ UN WOMEN (2013)

⁹⁵ IRC (Nov 2012)

⁹⁶ UNHCR Participatory Assessment 2012

⁹⁷ Care Jordan(2013)

⁹⁸ Care Jordan (2013)

⁹⁹ Mercy Corps (2012)

¹⁰⁰ UN WOMEN (2013)

Za'atri services where males and females were mixed or where services were not provided by female staff hindered women's access. Almost one in five key informants advised that families did not permit women to access services. 18% of key informants said that inappropriate behavior (such as disrespectful behavior) by workers would affect the access by women to services. 22% of key informants reported that women and girls had an issue with not having an influence on the type of services offered.¹⁰¹

One in ten key informants advised that families did not permit boys to access services in Za'atri camp. Key informants and FGDs advised that men and boys are usually present for the distributions of goods and that they routinely experience overcrowding and fighting there. A safety audit assessed the NFI distributions as "unsafe for men and boys". 24% of key informants said that inappropriate behavior (such as disrespectful behavior) by workers would affect the access by boys to services.¹⁰² UNHCR found that men are subjected to violence at the camp gates and at food and NFI distribution points. Men usually take on the task of waiting in line.¹⁰³

Predominantly, men are the representative of families in the needs-assessment process (69–75%) therefore their views on household needs may be determining which types of support are wanted by households. Beneficiaries advised that men represent the families mostly because: conservative gender norms and security concerns are issues that prevent some families from feeling comfortable about women traveling around urban areas. Men are traditionally the heads of households and responsible for providing for the family. This is based on both social and religious precedents, and some families report feelings of shame associated with women being forced to become assistance seekers while men stay at home.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ CP&GBV SWG Jordan (2013)

¹⁰² CP&GBV SWG Jordan (2013)

¹⁰³ UNHCR Participatory Assessment (2012)

¹⁰⁴ Care Jordan (2013)