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# United Nations Population Fund Syria

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UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND – SYRIA

OUR LATEST NEWS

## Peace Is Possible

“From the heart of Damascus, the capital of jasmine and peace, to the world. Damascus, among other cities in the country, Syria, are defeated by war. Believing that peace is close, we decided to walk in its streets. Damascus has been a gate for peace before and it will always remain regardless of the current situations. We are here to bring peace back to the world,” Amr Al-Khiami, National President at JCI.

Supported by the UNFPA CO Syria - United Nations Population Fund, the JCI “Junior Chamber International” organized a march on the International Peace Day, September 21, 2016, themed “Peace Is possible”, “In such ongoing challenges in the Syrian community, it is important to have as many raising awareness campaigns on peace and its possibilities. We aim to spread hope even in war.”, Sulaima, who is a young person taking this initiative as a commitment for making peace, said.

The march aimed to send messages of peace from the oldest inhabited capital in the world.

Over 200 people from different NGOs and other organizations joined the march at Bab Touma Square passing by Bab El Salam, Noufara, Maskie Square, Medhat Basha, and Marryum Church to Bab Sharki.

This big event aimed to spread peaceful messages around Damascus, Syria. The theme “Peace Is possible” is part of the internationally launched campaign to motivate people to make peace happen, especially after war and conflict have dramatically increased around the globe.



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*Young participants during the walk for peace*

See full Gallery:

<https://goo.gl/O9qdko>



**Representatives of youth-led initiatives, JCI members and UNFPA**

## Non-violence is the key for peace

“Violence is a behavior involving force intended to hurt, kill or damage someone, including and not limited to physical force. However, the concept “violence” can be extended to psychological, economic and other types of force. It can also be intended to deprive someone from their rights,” Dr. Rania Al Ahmar, GBV Specialist at UNFPA- Syria, opened the seminar entitled “Non-violence is the key of peace” which was held in Damascus, Al Cham Hotel and organized in cooperation between United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA ) and Junior Chamber International (JCI ) on October 2, 2016.

According to Mr. Omar Al-Khiami, the national president at JCI, “Over 200 youth from local NGOs initiatives are invited to share their points of view, problems and solutions on Gender-Based Violence (GBV). These initiatives are currently working to tackle the issue, yet most of them are not aware of their broader approach.” The seminar aimed to captivate these initiatives and brainstorm group ideas in a step towards building greater and sufficient efforts.

The seminar included a panel where there was representatives from UNFPA-Syria, Dr. Rania Al Ahmar, GBV specialist, the president of Syrian Commission for Family population and Affairs, Dr. Hadeel Asmar, Ms. Maysaa Salahi, the president of board at women development association and Mr. Mahmoud Al-Ali, the director of psychological health department at Ministry of Health.

Dr. Rania Al-Ahmar emphasized that gender equity is absent due to social norms rather than religion. Social norms are usually stated based on males’ desire, which does not apply religion rules, however, in fact, caused a notable fall back in women’s status in communities.

Most societies rejected women movements because men felt it is threatening their existence and masculinity. Therefore, community leaders, leading initiatives and other organizations are working to raise awareness to correct this misconception.



**Dr. Rania Al-Ahmar during her speech**



**JCI, UNFPA and young people discussing solutions to end GBV**

*“UNFPA is a leading UN agency in reproductive health issues and women's rights globally. UNFPA is not only working to tackle these issues from the surface, however, we are dedicated to look at roots of the problems and develop national strategies based on international ones and convenient to the current social situation.” Dr. Rania Al-Ahmar, GBV Specialist at UNFPA- Syria*

## Introductory workshop on UNFPA's key mandates in Syria for media workers

UNFPA office in Syria in partnership with the Ministry of Information hosted a workshop to introduce UNFPA's key mandates and the latest activities on reproductive health and youth and data programs in Syria to journalists in the country. The workshop also included a briefing on UNFPA's mobile teams in the country, as well as the recently opened centers.

Ms. Reem Bajari, Youth and Aids Program Analyst, said: "We are working to empower young people and meet their needs to reach their full potentials. Every youth deserves a chance despite his/her cultural background." The aimed objective is met through "Youth Innovation" project that had been conducted in Damascus, Damascus countryside, Homs and Tartous during 2016.

"Youth Innovation" aimed to captivate young people's potentials to improve a better social cohesion situation. Ms. Bajari emphasized that this can only be done by gathering young people under one purpose, which is to make a better future happen for them through providing assistance and guidance to start their own businesses.



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*Dr. Al Khair is presenting UNFPA's work on reproductive health issues*



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*Media workers discussing best tools to deliver key messages*

Ms. Bajari also provided numbers on successful projects. "Implemented projects reached 16 project in Damascus alone. Our work still continues to make another 24 projects happen in both Homs and Tartus." She, then, noted that these projects' uniqueness comes from their diversity, for e.g., some provide food, mobile maintenance services and others were specifically designed to develop software programs.

Moreover, Dr. Hala Al-Khair, Reproductive Health Analyst, said that 50% of Syrian population are in reproductive age, of which 43% are between 15 and 24 years old. She sees that is imperative to implement reproductive health basics, including safe delivery, healthy motherhood, medical checkups and pre-post marriage consultation. She also noted that it is essential for families to consider family planning application and the importance of early-cancer detection.

*Media is a key stakeholder in delivering messages and raising awareness on social issues*

## Nada's Story. Forced Child Marriage

Qamishli, Northern Eastern of Syria

“Look at her, she is very beautiful. I was afraid she might be born with a disability like other newborns in the village. However, she is perfectly healthy and just needs nutrition.” Nada, 16 years, said after the successful and natural delivery at the hospital.

Nada and her husband live in Qalaat Al Hadi, Qamishli. The small village is 80 km far from the city center. Many villages that are located far from the city, like Qalat Al Hadi, have issues ranging between social, economic and health.

During a field visit for UNFPA mobile team and Al-Ihsan Charity Association to the village, the team realized that there is a severe health issue backs to the low livelihood income, in addition to unhealthy traditional practices there.



*Nada and her daughter, Hala, after birth*

“It is a rule in the place where I live. Since I was a child, I knew that I was going to marry my cousin. It is not something you get to choose here,” Nada said to UNFPA coordinator during his follow up visit to check up on the baby’s health. Such an issue is notable spread in the village, and other villages, to the point that all habitants share the same blood.

Unfortunately, due to the very underdeveloped situations there, people are not aware of the tremendously dangerous effects of such practice. Yet, consequences were diverse, according to the UNFPA coordinator, many children suffer from retardation, physical and mental growth disorders, as well as genes Mutilation and other inherited diseases. Furthermore, records show that many children are being diagnosed to have diabetes before they turn 18.

Nada’s case was special because she is young and this is her first child. She couldn’t realize she is going into labor due to her young age. However, when mobile teams arrived and provided the needed care and checkup they immediately took her to the hospital. She was in labor for two hours before she puts in front of her a very beautiful and healthy little girl, whom she called Hala

UNFPA and Al-Ihsan Charity Association are following up with her case providing her with vitamins and the support needed to maintain a healthy status for the newborn, Hala.

## United Nations Population Fund

Damascus, Syria

UNFPA is the lead UN agency for delivering a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and every young person's potential is fulfilled.

While UNFPA assistance must remain concerned with saving lives and safeguarding human dignity, preparing Syrian people for future recovery, reconstruction, reconciliation and stability, is equally a priority.

UNFPA Syria focusses on:

- Improving access to high-quality reproductive health care.
- Scaling-up gender-based violence prevention and response.
- Enhancing youth participation and inclusiveness.
- Supporting capacities to collect and use gender-and age-disaggregated data for tailoring response and recovery programming.



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