

16 Days of Activism 2019 Report



HIGHLIGHT: UNFPA commemorates 16 days for the first time in Al-Hol Camp, North-East Syria (NES).

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO TELL

من حقك تحكي

Introduction:

The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence (GBV) is an international campaign, which takes place between 25th November (marking the International Day against Violence against Women and Girls) and 10th December (marking International Human Rights Day). The 16 Days symbolically link violence against women and human rights, and emphasizes that violence against women and girls is a violation of human rights. The 16 Days Campaign has been used by organizations, individuals and groups around the world to call for the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls.

UNFPA is the lead agency in the GBV Sub-Sector in Syria. Every year, the GBV Sub-Sector with its partners mark the 16 Days campaign to advocate for a world without gender-based violence.

Objective Aiming to encourage women and girls, especially GBV survivors, to speak up and claim their rights, the theme of this year's campaign was "You Have the Right to Tell – من حقك تحكي". The wide range of objectives included:

Raising awareness on GBV, with a focus on sexual violence among women, adolescent girls, boys and men both at the local community and

National levels and ensuring that the messages reach the furthest behind in rural areas.

Advocating for the Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) services, through awareness about SRH services and how to access them, with the aim of encouraging women and adolescent girls to benefit from them via existing RH/GBV referral pathways.

Enhancing and increasing partnerships with the government, the private sector, faith-based organizations, the civic society and the media to reach more people and have greater reach and awareness.

Orienting people on the new Syrian law regarding marriage age through Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) and Syria Trust NGO lawyers.

Combine **the use of technology**, social media, arts, journalism and activism to draw attention to the many ways in which violence against women is taking place.

Ensuring mass mobilization of all communities to promote collective responsibility in the fight to eradicate GBV.

Providing an opportunity for women and adolescent girls to voice out their thoughts and express themselves freely.

16 Days Campaign in Al-Hol Camp

2019 marked an especially impactful 16 Days campaign because for the first time, UNFPA, Syria commemorated the campaign with IDPs in Al-Hol camp.

Since 04 December 2018, approximately 66,101 people, who were fleeing hostilities in rural areas of neighboring Deir-ez-Zor, have arrived in Al-Hol camp. The physical, psychological trauma and vulnerabilities suffered by the camp population has been immense. The GBV and protection concerns in the camp persist, and Psycho-social support needs remain a key concern. Of the camp's population today, approximately 94% are women and children, many of whom have experienced abuse, exposure to extreme violence, and now live in challenging conditions in the camp.

Women and children in the camp face specific threats to their safety and wellbeing. The vast majority of families in the camp are headed by women, who - with limited means to earn an income – are often the sole caregiver responsible for their children and elderly relatives. With such a large camp population and complex humanitarian response, the situation remains to be dire for those living in the camp.

As of January 2020, the population of Al-Hol is 66,101 people of different people including third country nationals.

The 16 Days Campaign in Al-Hol Camp focused on generating and increasing awareness of the negative impact of sexual violence against women and adolescent girls as well as the availability of the Reproductive Health (RH) services as part of the comprehensive service response to GBV.

UNFPA implementing partner, through the WGSS in Al-Hol camp conducted awareness sessions. The awareness sessions covered the different ways in which GBV manifests in societies and covered topics such as domestic violence, equality between men and women, women's right to work, divorce, marital law, reporting violence and psychological support for survivors of GBV, intimate partner violence etc.

In addition to the awareness sessions, participants partook in activities such as self-defense classes, psychological assessments and recreational activities.

UNOCHA: humanitarian update December 2019



Activities

UNFPA launched the campaign through social media platforms and implemented the campaign activities in partnership with 16 national implementing partners. Through all the 14 Syrian governorates, a wide range of activities were held in various GBV facilities such as Women and Girls Safe Spaces, and a community wellbeing center. The activities included: awareness raising sessions, self-defense workshops, open days, theatre shows, empowerment songs, art galleries, and women products' exhibitions.

In Deir-ez-zour, on the 25th November 2019, a street march was held with high participation from governmental officials for the first time ever, UNFPA team, UNFPA IPs, INGOs and NGOs. The march aimed to bring public attention and rally support for ending GBV. The march started from Al Nubala'a Park and went through the most crowded and famous square and street in Deir-ez-Zour, and ended in the governorate office where all participants had the opportunity to attend the first awareness raising session about the 16 Days' Campaign objectives and how each individual can play a role in ending GBV for a safer and more peaceful society for all.

The exercise of Tree of Life was conducted during the 16 Days of Activism aiming to give an opportunity to adolescent girls to think about their own stories, the challenges experienced and the resilience they have demonstrated. It encouraged adolescent girls to get inspired by stories of others which are similar to their own, and to identify factors that may be important for their wellbeing and protection. Indirectly, this exercise aimed to give Syrian adolescent girls a voice, give them the opportunity to re-write these stories, and even choose a different ending or outcome for themselves.



Activities



Approximately 460 activities were carried out by 16 partners in over 13 governorates (Aleppo, Tartous, Latakia, Homs, Hama, Sweida, Dara'a, Qunietra, Hassakeh, Raqqah, Idlib, Damascus and Rural Damascus), reaching a total number of 54,000 women, men, boys and girls from refugees, internally displaced persons and host communities. All activities were in line with UNHCR Age Gender and Diversity approach, targeting women, men boys and girls from all ages and backgrounds. In addition, special activities targeting people with disabilities were also implemented in various locations.

UNHCR Partners interpreted the theme of the campaign differently as per their assessments and observations of the community needs. Different topics were tackled through awareness sessions, puppet shows, interactive theaters, self-defense classes and other activities in the UNHCR-supported community centers and through mobile teams in their catchment areas, collective shelters and camps.

UNHCR partners focused on targeting different locations to ensure improved reach and access of different groups, this also included lectures, debates, different sports and arts activities in schools, universities, hospitals, mosques, factories, streets, farming land and other public spaces.

A highly effective and active participation from community-based entities, such as community-based women committees, children's clubs, outreach volunteers and other self-managed committees, was noted. These community members took part in planning and conducting awareness activities in their own communities, schools, cultural centers and other locations. The activities varied from 'Hakawati' sketch performed by a women committee in a traditional men's café setting where men usually gather to a Zajal competition with lyrics advocating for women's rights.

The campaign also targeted community members who can make a difference in their communities. This included employers, factory owners, police members, health workers, teachers, parents, religious leaders etc. where in Tartous, an awareness session targeting approximately 40 police officers and forensic doctors, who come across GBV survivors in their daily work, was conducted aiming to raise their awareness on dealing with GBV related complaints while maintaining the dignity and confidentiality of survivors. A similar session was implemented in Latakia where a conference meeting with community leaders was conducted to discuss the situation of women in the area, incidents of GBV and the way forward to combat GBV. The conference was concluded with an action plan for 2020 focusing on awareness sessions on different levels within the community and advocating for combating GBV through local social media platforms.



Awareness & recreational activities in Aleppo

Awareness & recreational activities in Aleppo

Awareness & recreational activities in Rural Hama

Activities

UNDP focused on “rape as a specific form of violence against women and girls, in times of peace and war.” And in order to contribute to the national and regional campaign for the next two years. The theme objective is to highlight that gender issues especially violence, harassment and rape were used as **weapon for war**. The focus was on harassment in the workplace, home and everywhere in peace and times of war times.

UNDP followed the **multi-sectorial** approach and participated effectively in UN agencies, INGOs and LNGOs’ plan by focusing on preventive action and raising awareness on GBV topics, available channels for referrals, etc. **UNDP** campaign adopted the GBV sector slogan: “من حقك تحكي - You have the right to tell” as well as the **UNDP** hashtag: “**#16daysandAdecadeforactiontoaddressGBV&Harassment** “. The hashtag was developed in participatory approach with **UNDP** internal gender focal points and focused on a linking between gender and global sustainable development goals.

Since the campaign slogan focuses on “You have the right to tell”, **UNDP** conducted a community **dialogue workshop** with local communities, survivors and advocates engagement. This workshop was conducted in line with the UNDP strategy to ensure that women’s needs are addressed, their leadership is encouraged, and they actively participate in decision making, project designing and implementation to reduce women’s overall vulnerability to disasters. The workshop followed “**Survivor-centered**” approach. **33** men and women (70% female) from different cultural, economic and social background initiated the dialogue to understand what Gender-Based Violence, violence, and different types of GBV are in addition to what they can do to address those challenges.

At community level, the first step started by the implementation of **Tree of Life exercise** as an initial phase for gender justice awareness raising focusing on roles, responsibilities, power dynamics, law and traditions, GBV, impact of negative coping strategies, etc. The exercise targeted UNDP projects’ beneficiaries

Around **180** women, adolescents’ girls, men and adolescents’ boys participated in the activity.

At institutional level, **UNDP** aimed to **increase the level of awareness amongst UNDP staff** concerning the incidents of violence perpetrated against women and girls, how it manifests itself within the Syrian society and the negative impact on vulnerable groups. Furthermore, the workshop aimed to better understand the changing in roles and responsibilities during the crises, and to mainly encourage change in stereotyping behavior through highlighting the negative effects of gender stereotyping on gender equality and power balances. To achieve that, **7** gender facts were shared via email with staff members. This mechanism was adapted, so that all staff members can refer back to it as a simple way for receiving information.



Tree of Life exercise



A community dialogue workshop



Awareness raising

Activities



Terre des hommes Italy worked with women, men, boys and girls in Aleppo and Rural Damascus.

Awareness raising sessions were conducted for boys and girls focusing on their psychical protection and enhancing the adolescents' ability to say NO.

In addition, women received GBV awareness raising sessions on GBV types and safety measurements in case of domestic violence, while men discussed the concept of masculinity trying to break misconception that links masculinity with violence.



Awareness raising session in Jaramana



SSSD conducted several interactive activities were in Al-Hassakeh, Aleppo, Damascus, Rural Damascus, Der Ez-zour, Daraa, Hama and Homs. The activities included silent and interactive theater shows, songs and dances, candles marching and peace walking for women peace, and awareness sessions for men and boys.



Al-Hakawati Activity - GBV - Aleppo



UNRWA shared awareness messages through puppet and theatre shows, self-defense and communication skills workshops, musical shows, vocational trainings and legal sessions in Aleppo, Rural Damascus, Daraa, Homs, Hama and Latakia.



women and girls rights - Damascus



Decoration in OXFAM office in Damascus



OXFAM made a video on the occasion of the 16 Days Campaign and presented it to all its staff, volunteers, partners and consultants.

OXFAM also decorated its office with feminist messages and used the orange color in all the social media platforms during the campaign.



IMC shared awareness messages and conducted sessions through its community centres in Rural Damascus focusing mainly on early marriage, gender equality and GBV types.



"**Women** who suffer from violence need someone to **listen, believe**, empathize and **stand by** them to support them to get their **self-confidence** back"

"The sexual violence cycle will keep going and being fed by our silence, the only way we can stop it is by **break** this silence, **seek** help and **support** survivors"

"Take a photo for me while am printing my hand then send it to me because I want to tell **my future daughter** that I said **NO** to violence for both of us"

"Now **I know** it's not a scandal or taboo when you **speak** out, you're taking a step towards **STOPPING** harassment"