



United Nations Population Fund



REPORTING ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN THE SYRIA CRISIS

GOOD PRACTICES IN THE MEDIA



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The images used in this handbook portray a mixture of UNFPA activities at work.
All images taken by David Brunetti







The global media provides a window into world affairs. The way the media frames key social issues influences the opinions of people who peer through this window, and the lives of those depicted.

With regard to gender-based violence, media portrayals can amplify women's voices, counteract myths, and stimulate dialogue and public action. When the media covers the stories of Syrian women, who have often been portrayed as passive victims and objectified as a silent, suffering group, a change in approach that focuses on their rights and dignity can open opportunities for these women to take an active role in forging their own futures. With this goal in mind, we have published a Handbook on Reporting on Gender-Based Violence.

By partnering with journalists, UNFPA aims to shine a brighter, dedicated light on Syrian women, highlighting human rights violations, inspiring increased support and services, and empowering the survivors to achieve positive change in their lives. For this to happen, the media must help to ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice. Moreover, journalists and broadcasters need to emphasise the illegitimacy of gender-based violence in all its forms, and help to clear a path for women and girls to regain their rightful roles in the wider community.



Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin,
UNFPA Executive Director





FOREWORD

“Women and children account for the vast majority of those adversely affected by armed conflict, both as refugees and internally displaced persons.”¹

Five years of conflict in Syria has left more than five million women and girls of reproductive age, both inside and outside of the country, caught at the centre of this expanding humanitarian crisis; vulnerable to many different forms of gender-based violence.

Major media outlets have dedicated columns and considerable airtime to capturing the predicament of Syrian women. These are often provided in the form of individual stories of Syrian women and girls, and with their corresponding images shared with the world. Some of these stories put gender-based violence on the international and national agenda, but many have failed to focus on the core, delicate issues that underpin gender-based violence.

Shortsighted, inconsistent or unethical reporting on gender-based violence has even served to worsen the plight of these women and girls. Single stories which focus on the survivor offer audiences an isolated episode, from which they might sympathize with the survivor, feel outrage at the perpetrators, but from which they cannot understand the larger, systematic themes which have led to their suffering.

In many countries beyond Syria, including Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq and Egypt, many Syrian women and girls lack shelter, protection or access to education and health services. Women from these societies also live in a world where gender-based violence can be common and seen as normal under certain circumstances. Reporting that focuses just on the situation of a single woman or girl, or a small group, can stigmatise and alienate survivors and their families and in some cases also result in their lives being put at risk, while failing to highlight the larger social, policy or service issues that allow gender-based violence to continue.

Gender-based violence survivors often express reluctance to talk about their experiences; many fear inaccurate articles which will expose them within their families or communities. In certain cases, media reports on underage marriage have divulged names and physical descriptions of survivors or perpetrators that have incited those affected to seek revenge on the girl, and induced fear in other survivors to speak out. Likewise, in some cases, parents or communities have limited women and girls freedoms because of their worries over their dignity or their own reputation.

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is a key member in the UN's taskforce for implementing Resolution 1325 and Resolution 1820, as well as a major humanitarian partner in the regional response to the Syria crisis. Since the beginning of the crisis, UNFPA has supported a multi-partner approach with a view to responding to and preventing gender-based violence, as well as protecting gender-based violence survivors.

Partnering with the media has become an integral part of UNFPA's programme, based on a strong belief that the media can play a crucial role in changing the minds of decision makers by ensuring the stories of voiceless women and girls are heard while also exposing the larger and often more complex conditions that lead to their suffering.

Journalists are morally bound to cover the issue from angles that look wider than individual accounts, whilst being certain their stories cause no harm to survivors in their new communities. In this way, the media can change attitudes about women and gender-based stereotypes, and ultimately improve their lives.

Cordially,

Daniel Baker
UNFPA Syria regional coordinator





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Despite the efforts and engagement of local and regional media in highlighting and denouncing gender-based violence against women and girls in the six countries affected by the Syrian crisis (Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq, Egypt), the bulk of coverage still - whether directly or indirectly - attributes stereotypical and predictable social images to women and girls. They are often represented as 'victims' of forced and early marriage, who are submissive to an oppressively patriarchal and conservative community. Reports often focus too much on the subjects rather than exposing the full extent of the human rights violations or the underlying root causes that allow these actions to emerge and maintain their prominence in the region.

All journalists are required to provide factual reports. But the media should seek opportunities to not only provide facts, but also change the situation of women and girls for the better. By promoting a survivor-centered approach, based on the nine ethical principles of reporting on gender-based violence in the Syria crisis², UNFPA aims to help journalists add depth to their articles, and provide their readers with relevant background information, such as social, political and economic context in which these conditions exist. Through this initiative, UNFPA hopes journalists will be better equipped to write or produce news articles and features that go beyond 'yet another profile' and create far-reaching stories based on insights of gender-based violence survivors and experts in a well-referenced, objective, thematic and factual context.

With the support of financial aid from the UK Department for International Development (DFID), UNFPA developed this best practices guide for journalists and media professionals as part of the regional gender-based violence media programme to enhance the quality of reporting on gender-based violence in the Syrian crisis. The booklet is intended to complement other materials, and be used in workshops, but also as a self-learning guide for journalists and media producers to use on their own.

Introduction to the Best Practice Book

The best practice book aims to demonstrate how the nine ethical principles of reporting on gender based violence in a humanitarian context can be practically incorporated by journalists to improve the lives of women and girls affected by the Syrian crisis.

In this book, UNFPA presents real examples from well-written media reports published in 2015 that represent effective gender-based violence reporting. For each example, the booklet provides context and explanations of how they represent best practices.

The book is divided into two sections:

1. Good practice in action: in this section each of the nine ethical principles is explained through extracts from selected articles published between January and October 2015;
2. Articles on gender-based violence: in this section full length articles developed by UNFPA-trained journalists are followed by a brief note highlighting where and how they succeeded in capturing the essence of good gender-based violence reporting.

The links to all the articles highlighted can be found at the end of the book.



Gender-based Violence

UNFPA uses definitions of gender-based violence as provided in several core documents to help identify and prevent harmful practices. Below are two of the key documents with their definitions of gender-based violence.

- A. The Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979) defines gender-based violence as a form of discrimination, which is "...violence directed at a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately. It includes acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty."
- B. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee Guidelines for Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings defines gender-based violence as³ "... any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will, and that is based on socially-ascribed (i.e., gender) differences between males and females".

Gender-based violence is therefore a human rights violation which can be physical, psychological, sexual in nature, or be manifest as real or perceived threats, coercion and deprivations of liberty. Violence can also be of an economic, legal, institutional and socio-cultural nature (i.e. embedded in legal systems or educational curriculum for example)⁴.

This book represents a sample of 20 articles that exemplify the nine principles of reporting on gender-based violence. These materials are just a sample, and do not represent all of the many articles or other productions that adhered to these principles, but were chosen by a team of professionals to exemplify how journalists can better apply these approaches.



Good Practice in Action - Respecting the Nine Ethical Principles

UNFPA has identified nine principles to help guide journalists and others who produce media content to improve their coverage in a way that will have a positive impact on women and girls affected by the Syrian crisis. The nine principles are in alignment with common ethical approaches to journalism, sometimes called the canons of journalism practices, but are broader in their scope and more focused in their purpose. The nine principles are as follows.

1. Accuracy
2. Fairness
3. Impartiality
4. Duty to inform
5. Respecting privacy
6. Underage interviewee protection
7. Sources
8. Interviewee payment
9. Do no harm

These principles will be familiar to almost all journalists, and this booklet does not propose to offer new theories or principles, but rather to demonstrate how established principles can be evoked and put into practices. The following pages will offer more information on each of these nine principles, along with examples of good journalism that demonstrates the principle and actions needed. The nine ethical principles complement one another and often overlap.

The principles listed below all describe how journalists should respect the privacy and dignity of gender-based violence survivors and their family.



Principle

1

Accuracy

Factual and
Referenced



"Business marriages are matrimonial contracts sealed outside of courts records that end a few months later when the husbands disappear." An expert in a Jordanian NGO working with Syrians in Mafraq

ACTION: Journalists should ensure their reporting is factually correct, be specific when mentioning crimes, and not attempt to report on criminal proceedings unless they understand the legal processes involved. Try to not use euphemistic language (e.g., 'had his way with her') rather than accurate language (e.g., 'he raped her'). This approach leads to misleading reports, which can have subjective or ambiguous interpretations.

Journalism and the media professions consider accuracy, fact-checking and well-researched reporting the absolute basic necessity, even against tight editorial deadlines. Inaccurate or one-sided reporting does more than ignore or alienate different voices in a news story. It can also mislead the public and jeopardize the media institution's future credibility. Years spent building a reputation can be undermined overnight.

The following examples illustrate how journalists have written accurate reports covering gender-based violence in the Syria crisis:



"At the beginning, he was nice. But after three months, his behaviour changed. He started beating me," Noor recounted.

Example 1: The investigative piece 'How economic hardship is pushing Syrian refugees into child marriages' looks at the different factors contributing to the rise of early marriage among Syrian refugees. The journalist combines testimonies of Syrian girls, themselves gender-based violence survivors, alongside interviews with experts in the field of gender-based violence and the wider humanitarian context to combine storytelling with research as well as legal sources and expert advice.

Further, the article presents four sets of differing perspectives to offer a balanced story:

- The personal perspective: "At the beginning, he was nice. But after three months, his behaviour changed. He started beating me," Noor recounted.
- Scientific data: According to a report 'Too Young to Wed' by the international NGO Save the Children, one in every four marriages between Syrian refugees in the country involves a girl under the age of 18.
- Legal context: Child marriage contravenes the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, currently in Lebanon, as in Syria, personal status laws are dependent on the individual's faith.
- Expert advice: Maria Semaan, program coordinator of the Child Protection Program for Lebanese women's rights NGO KAFA Violence and Exploitation, identified that early marriage is rooted in religious and cultural traditions.

Example 2: In another article 'Underage girls under torture', the author presents religious-based evidence that undermines the legality of underage marriage.

"The religious position emanates from the concept of 'do no harm'. Jordanian law has evolved from Sharia Law, and therefore forbids marriage for people younger than 18 years old. Only in very strict conditions can an underage marriage be approved, either for protection or to correct a severe mistake."

Accuracy also requires all due care from the author to properly introduce and signpost sensitive issues, explain technical terminology that might be unfamiliar, and use clear language that is audience-friendly.

Many journalists choose to introduce the geographical context and technical definitions at the beginning of their article to set the tone for the rest of the article. Others prefer to start with poignant testimonies by gender-based violence survivors, followed by definitions and contexts.

Example 3: In 'Business marriages and Syrian minors', which investigates the news of Jordanian police detaining a human trafficking cell, and then explores the business of arranged underage marriages, the author launches this investigative piece by defining the term 'business marriage'.

"Business marriages are matrimonial contracts sealed outside of courts records that end a few months later when the husbands disappear."

The article then provides context for the report to help audiences gain a thematic perspective.

"Preventive Security Forces, in northern Amman, finally detained a human trafficking cell composed of Syrian refugees that were perpetrating crimes against Syrian women, most of them minors. The cell struck deals with the minors' parents with a view to marrying their daughters to Arab men, but with fake contracts."

Example 4: Opening with a different style, in 'Syria: the hidden war on women', a report that reveals unspoken facts about sexual harassment, which is considered taboo in Syrian refugee camps, the writer starts with a geographical and statistical introduction to prepare the readers for sensitive material that details sexual harassment in refugee camps.

"Some have been living in refugee camps like Zaatari in Jordan for over 4 years. But the biggest concentration of refugees lives outside the formal camps. Over 80% per cent of Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon live in urban areas. And it is these refugees who are the most vulnerable."

There are no formal camps in Lebanon, and many lone Syrian refugee women I met in the Bekaa valley have to live in rented apartments or small informal tent settlements. There are thousands of Syrian refugee women whose husbands were either killed fighting in Syria or are simply missing - their fate unknown."

These women are increasingly falling prey to sexual harassment, exploitation and the expectation of trading sex in return for aid. Unscrupulous landlords and local charity organisations abuse their power and exploit the vulnerable position of these women who can't pay their rent or have to rely on aid agencies for help."

Using quotes and interviews to illustrate key terminology that is pre-defined by international organizations and international human and women rights conventions is a useful step for writing accurate journalism. It has the power of enlightening the public about important human right violations, particularly the different forms of gender-based violence in the Syria crisis. Terms like early marriage, child marriage, early pregnancy, sexual harassment or human trafficking are a few of the most common.

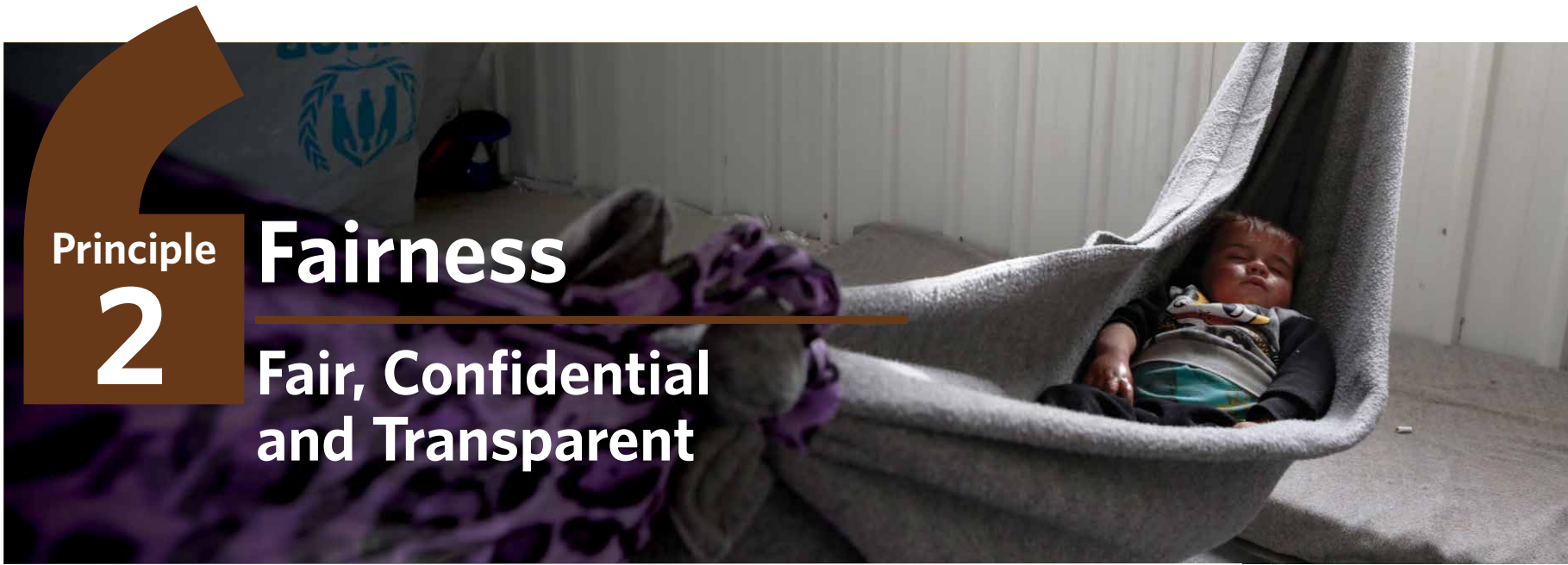
Example 5: A good example of this approach comes in the article 'Syrian women in refugee camps: harassment and violence' which highlights economic challenges as the leading issue for the Syrian community in refugee camps. In this article, discrimination based on gender and sexual exploitation is illustrated in examples explained by an expert interviewee:

"Sabah Al-Hallak emphasises that several cases of sexual harassment were reported where even aid workers would only give beautiful women assistance, care and priority, while they would use the worst language and humiliations against the others."

Example 6: In 'How economic hardship is pushing Syrian refugees into child marriages' the definition of 'early marriage' as a form of gender-based violence, is made more accessible by quoting an interviewed survivor:



"It's a psychological impact. You miss your childhood, you miss your friends, you have many responsibilities that no one has taught you. It's hard when you are still a child to take care of another child. Also you must be mature to live with another person and to develop with him a relationship of equality. Early marriage deprives the girls of the opportunity to be equal and to grow up in a healthy way," said Samaan



Principle

2

Fairness

Fair, Confidential
and Transparent

"The person you interview should be made fully aware of the consequences of appearing in the media," said UNFPA

ACTION: You should always be fair with people you interview and when speaking to people who have experienced gender-based violence; you have an extra duty of care to protect potentially vulnerable sources. In this context, the concept of 'informed consent' is particularly important: this means that the person you interview should be made fully aware of the consequences of appearing in the media. However, even with informed consent, you need to protect potentially vulnerable sources beyond informing your interviewee of these potential risks by limiting personal or specific information that could put the source in danger.

Good reports are written with due diligence and bring to the forefront the issue(s) that the gender-based violence survivors and experts are sharing, while preserving the dignity and privacy of survivors. Survivors need to be well informed in advance of interviews about how their story will be broadcast and published. They should know that they can request to change their name, refuse to be photographed or choose to be only partially photographed, including photos that disguise or do not reveal personal features, identity or location.

Example 1: Photo anonymity is a crucial ethical consideration when reporting a story. Articles and reports that promise to expose human rights violations ‘in pictures’ without consent are not good practice and do not qualify as ethical journalism.



The use of the following two photos offers good examples of: a) interviewee-informed consent, in which the photographer has respected the wish of the interviewees to remain anonymous, b) photos that portray the reality of refugee life without geographical or personal identifications and c) composition that has its own storytelling quality, suggesting that there is light facing darkness.

Example 2: By leaving out physical descriptions, full names, and geographical addresses – especially when sharing the testimonies of gender-based violence survivors – journalists show that they respect the vulnerable situation of the women and girls at risk of repeated or additional violence.

The first corresponding example UNFPA provides is ‘Syrian women caught in the mayhem: physical and sexual abuse’. This article carries an investigative report that captures the different forms of physical and sexual violence endured by female captives of extremists and armed groups involved in the Syria crisis.

“Kawkab remembers how she was kidnapped two years ago. Afraid of appearing in front of the camera, she did not however hesitate to express the extreme fear that armed groups had planted inside of her. Kawkab revealed what happened by saying, “they kidnapped me, imprisoned me and beat me, just like other captive women”.

As for Souad, who was raped by an armed group, she confirms that her husband made a financial deal with the leader of the free army faction to facilitate her rape.”

Example 3: Withholding an interviewee's identity and discrete handling of survivors' identity is also relevant when discussing the economic discrimination and exploitation that refugees face today.

Two excellent articles illustrate how to protect identity. The first is ‘How to help ‘Farah’ rebuild her life’ where the author draws attention to the reality of Syrian women becoming the single breadwinners of their households.

"Two years ago, Farah was a nurse and her husband a lawyer. Here, he found work tiling on construction sites, but was arrested three times for working illegally.

'Now my husband stays at home, depressed and afraid of being sent to the camps,' Farah said. She is now the family breadwinner, working at a local organisation providing educational programmes to Syrian and Jordanian children. Every day she must confront the dangers of Zarqa's crime-ridden streets and ignore sexual advances from men."

Likewise, in 'Syrian Women Struggling for Survival', which describes the lives of Syrian refugees who work to provide for their families, the women's identity was changed to keep them confidential.

"Sana'a didn't like to leave work early, and preferred to stay in the clinic for as long as possible, not only because she liked her secretary job, or because she should earn extra money, but so she could avoid going back home where it was too crowded with her own family and another family too. Unfortunately Sana'a wasn't employed for long. She was fired from her job as her employment constituted a 'violation' of the Jordanian labour code."

The second article is 'Syrian women in refugee camps: harassment and violence' and the confidentiality of the interviewed women lies in preserving the family secrets they're sharing, particularly when discussing the inability of their spouses to find decent employment or indeed the absence of these spouses. These factors are considered the main triggers for domestic violence or sexual exploitation.

"Fatima says: 'I feel social, economic and psychological pressure. I work 14 hours a day to provide for my five children having lost my husband.'



Aisha says: 'After losing my husband, I cry when my children cry. I'm lost and do not know what to do. I have been widowed at the age of 28 and do not even have a secondary school diploma.'"



Principle

3

Impartiality

Do not judge or discriminate

CNN Regions U.S. Money Entertainment Tech Sport Travel Style Features Video

WIN 40,000\$ CLICK HERE

How to help 'Farah' rebuild her life

By Jina Krause-Vilmar
Updated 1910 GMT (0310 HKT) March 7, 2015

6 photos: Vibrant camp for Syrian refugees

More than 2,000 shops have popped up at the Zaatari camp in northern Jordan over the past three years, many of them lining a street that has been dubbed Champs-Élysées.

ACTION: The responsible journalist will go the extra mile to avoid judging or discriminating against the subject. It is particularly important to ensure that no details can be interpreted as implying blame towards the gender-based violence survivor. If you mention the clothes worn at the time of an attack, for example, or other aspects of a survivor/victim's appearance, this can be seen to imply judgment of them. This can be particularly true in feature writing: some journalists may attempt to add detail and 'colour,' which can unintentionally shift the focus of blame away from the perpetrator.

Reports should focus on advocating against gender-based violence, raise awareness and inform on the negative impact of gender-based violence. However the journalist should always maintain an objective stance that avoids pointing the finger of guilt at the survivor.

Example 1: In the report entitled 'Islamic State: burnt alive for refusing to perform an extreme sexual act', the journalist focuses on warnings issued by senior UN official regarding the 'widespread and systematic' use of sexual violence in Syria.

The following extract shows how reporting the facts – in this case, a quote by an expert – results in poignant, impactful journalism:

“Sexual violence is part of the strategy applied by the Islamic State to spread terror, persecution of ethnic and religious minorities and cleanse entire populations who oppose their ideology,” said a UN report. “Barbaric acts against women are at the heart of the strategy of the black flag jihadists: women and girls are the prey that allow them to finance their system, recruit fighters and satisfy their sexual needs.”

Example 2: In ‘How economic hardship is pushing Syrian refugees into child marriages’, journalistic impartiality comes in a different form. The author presents examples of women who were planning to marry off their underage girls, but then realized their error before it was too late:

“Aaliya’s mother managed to break off her 12-year-old daughter’s engagement, despite having had a hand in arranging it. She admits that had they remained in Syria, such a decision would not have been possible due to the overwhelming pressure of traditions, customs and family norms.”

In the same article the author draws on the role that patriarchal supremacy plays in early marriages... but without giving his own opinion:

Mira Faddoul, programme officer of the KAFA Child Protection programme, argued that forced marriages and marriages involving minors result from the patriarchal mentality present in the region. ‘Men are the ones used to taking all the decisions, and they believe they are entitled to decide who their daughters will marry,’ Faddoul said.”

Example 3: Similarly in ‘Syria: the hidden war on women’, the journalist presents family involvement in the early marriage of their underage girls from an impartial point of view:



“Farah’, a 17-year-old Syrian refugee living outside the camps in Jordan was under great pressure from her family to marry early. She was officially engaged three times and informally several times - the first at the age of 12 years old. Each time she refused, she was beaten by her family. First by her father, and then by her brother, who ‘became his father’s deputy’. The beatings she endured were severe.”



Principle

4

Duty to Inform

Relevant and Sensitive

“Sheikh Haidar says: ‘Overcrowding in the camps and shelters where the women live, forcibly removes their privacy and their ability to take care of themselves and their children, whilst exposing them to harassment and bullying.’

ACTION: When reporting on gender-based violence, it is important to distinguish between what is ‘in the public interest’ and what is ‘of interest to the public.’ Some gender-based violence stories feature high-profile figures and contain lots of personal detail: this tends to treat the subject in a sensationalist way, with no useful information given for gender-based violence survivors.

Survivor-centered reports will avoid creating stereotypes, causing scandals or chasing ‘scoops’. Journalists should use gender-based violence survivors stories only as entry points to develop the underlying causes of gender-based violence and the need for action in combatting it.

Example 1: In the OpEd ‘How the media can help Syrian women’, the author explained the importance of the media’s focus on the diversity of Syrian women’s experiences, and its contribution in giving an accurate and fair view of the experiences and needs of different women.

"Media coverage helps to increase the flow of humanitarian assistance and ensure it is suitable for the diverse refugee needs. Moreover, the media can act as watchdog, helping to mobilize and empower women who can participate significantly in the negotiation process, and demand the political representation of women in any political transition process and transitional justice in Syria."

Example 2: In 'Syrian women in refugee camps: harassment and violence' the lack of infrastructure in camps is a recurring factor in the rise of gender-based violence in the Syria crisis.

"Sheikh Haidar says: 'Overcrowding in the camps and shelters where the women live, forcibly removes their privacy and their ability to take care of themselves and their children, whilst exposing them to harassment and bullying.'

"On this note, Sana'a adds: 'Common bathrooms in the camps are not safe. I'm always escorted by my brother, despite the distance from our tent. Many of my friends have been subjected to harassment there.'"

سوريات في المخيم.. هموم وتحرش وتعنيف

حلب - ليني سالم
7 مارس 2015



لجنة سورية تعمل بالخياطة في أحد مخيمات لبنان (GETTY)
تحمل النساء السوريات في مخيمات اللجوء، مسؤوليات كبيرة، بسبب تربي الأوضاع المعيشية، وتضطر كثيرات منهن، لممارسة دور الرجل بسبب غيابهن، وتلقى عليهن أعباء الرعاية والحماية والعمل.

Example 3: In the article 'How economic hardship is pushing Syrian refugees into child marriages' the evidence provided by the journalist raises awareness about the shortfalls in personal status laws that contribute to gender-based violence in the Syria crisis.



"Maria Semaan, program coordinator of the Child Protection Program for Lebanese women's rights NGO KAFA Violence and Exploitation, identified that early marriage is rooted in religious and cultural traditions.

'Early marriage is related to traditions and culture,' said Semaan. 'All of the religions here allow it, so it has become a tradition, or at least culturally accepted. At the same time, it is considered a way to prevent sexual intercourse before marriage.' "



Principle

5

Respecting Privacy



État islamique : brûlée vive pour avoir refusé un acte sexuel extrême

La Rédaction | Le 26 mai 2015

Partager

ACTION: Principled, ethical journalism means respecting the privacy of both gender-based violence survivors, bereaved families and their communities. You should also be wary of 'jigsaw identification' when granting anonymity. This happens where audiences piece together details - such as location, age, clothing, or family members - even though you don't name a survivor, or show their face.

Depending on editorial style and the sensitivity of the survivor's story, the journalists might choose to not only change the names of the respective people in their piece, but also provide a narrator or a third person to tell their story.

Similarly, Nawal Yazeji of the Syrian Women's League presented a case of a woman who transformed her own home in Damascus into a shelter for women escaping violence. In another example, she told of young women who organized their own self-defense classes, if only to strengthen the women's sense of being in control.

Example 1: One effective example of this style - which takes extra steps to preserve the identity and dignity of the survivor - appeared in the article entitled 'Shelters without walls: women building protective barriers against rape'.

"These are just a few small but important examples. There may be many more women like this, but this war makes it difficult for us to communicate and share our stories," Nawal explained. "But we Syrian women are active, trying to protect each other and to create peace."

Example 2: Quoting UN officials or statements made by public figures and opinion makers that raise the stories of survivors is another recommended approach, particularly for more sensitive examples. In the article 'Islamic State: burnt alive for refusing to perform an extreme sexual act', which exposes the use of sexual terror by extremist groups in Iraq and Syria, the journalist quoted UNSG's special representative for sexual violence in conflicts to tell the story of a sexual harassment survivor.

"Ms. Zaynab Bangura said: 'We've heard about a story of a 20-year-old girl who was burned to death for having refused to perform an extreme sexual act. We've also gathered reports on several other sadistic sexual acts.'"



Principle

6

Underage Interviewees

ACTION: Privacy becomes an even more important consideration for younger interviewees and children who are gender-based violence survivors. Depending on the age category, the younger a gender-based violence survivor is, the more fragile she/he is, and therefore the greater level of diligence and attention needed from journalists.

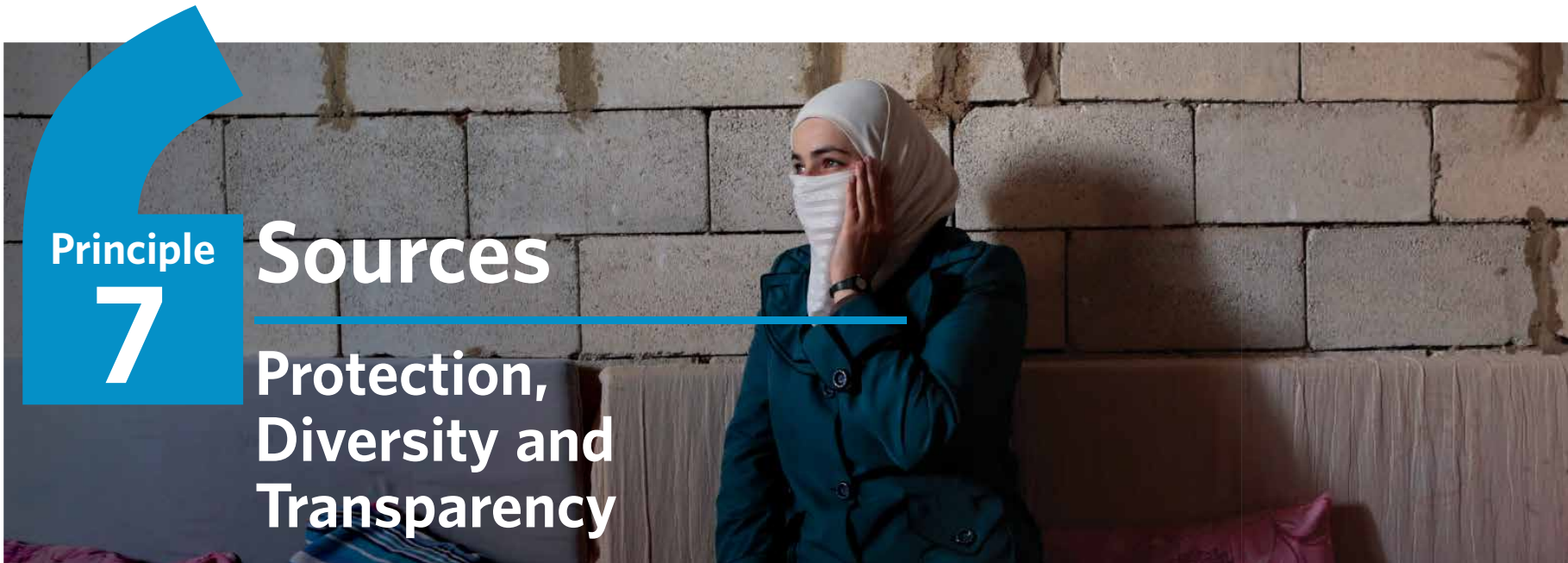
Example 1: In his article 'Underage girls under torture', which widens the angle to discuss the impact of gender-based violence on underage boys too, the author tells the story of a young boy and girl who were married off by their parents. Importantly, the article succeeds in preserving the children's identity.

It is important to note that when interviewing underage girls or boys, the consent of parents or legal guardians is required.

"In another incident, a couple married off their young son, who was younger than 17 years old, with a girl who was two years even younger than him, forcing the young husband to quit school and work with his father to provide for his new family."

The mother of the young man said that they wanted to see the grandson of their only son. But they later accepted that, as a result of their intervention, they had robbed their son and his wife of their childhood."

* Extracted from the published articles.



Principe 7

Sources

Protection, Diversity and Transparency

Femme et réfugiée : double discrimination !
Des Droits humains, Femmes, Réfugiés | août 17, 2016 | à Naz Dine



Le bureau d'aide judiciaire contre l'agression sexuelle et le viol durant une garde à vue - a publié un rapport intitulé « Les femmes réfugiées victimes de guerre » (Gözet, Mâğdurü Sığınmacı Kadınlar). Il s'agit d'un groupe de juristes qui accompagnent gracieusement les femmes victimes.

L'Avocate Eren Keskin, a donné un entretien aux journalistes İdil Kafetsioğlu et Sorya Bayık à propos de leur reportage publié sur StarNet, ainsi que sur le rapport qui a pour objectif d'identifier les problèmes essentiels des femmes qui ont fui depuis novembre 2014, du fait de la guerre en Syrie, des violences de Daesh, et qui sont venues se réfugier en Turquie.

Les enquêtes sur lesquelles le rapport se base, ont été effectuées (elles sont toujours en cours) - à

Facebook 1

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TAGS
camps, femmes, migrants, réfugiés, turquie



Action: For reporters unfamiliar to the region, it is particularly important to gain relevant local knowledge as to the most effective and ethical use of sources. This can be done through local organizations and agencies. You should always protect your sources and extend this protection to your fixers, translators, drivers, interviewees, and others helping you with your story. Some communities have been known to shun those who have spoken openly about gender-based violence and, in some cases, so-called 'honour crimes' have been carried out in retribution for speaking out.

Well-researched and well-referenced information is another quality that is immediately associated with accurate and ethical journalism. Reporting the facts as a journalist is the ultimate goal, and so by gathering different sides of the story and identifying the crossovers, the journalists can get as close to the truth as possible.

Example 1: In the article 'Woman and refugee: the double discrimination' the author showcases severe forms of human exploitation – in particular prostitution and forced labour – that face Syrian refugees in Turkish camps, especially those of different ethnic background, like the Kurds, or those of a different religious affiliation, like the Yazidis.

The journalist confirms the occurrence of gender-based violence – in particular, high levels of discrimination in Antep – by comparing two sources that come from different perspectives:

Another civil society organization, Mazlumder Islamist (which focuses on Muslim survivors and is against LGBT rights, for example) had already published a very detailed report on this subject in 2014. The audio records of interviews authenticate and bring to life the information their researchers collected. They gathered reports of organized prostitution, marriages of minor girls as second wives, or putting them 'on sale' for the night – a practice made legitimate as they were only temporary marriages – as well as the exploitation of migrant laborers.

The findings of the two reports are entirely consistent, despite the difference in policy approach of the organizations that published them. Over the last year, it seems the situation in these camps has not changed but rather worsened."

"We spoke in person to women who said they do not want to live in Antep because they are discriminated against and are faced with practices that do not respect their basic human rights.

The fiercest discrimination exists in Antep, they said. We learned that women are forced into prostitution and that underage girls are married off to older men. Moreover, they are exploited as cheap labourers and abused by employers.

Example 2: Diversity of sources and reference checking is well illustrated in the article 'Syrian wives for sale: a campaign led by human brokers across cyberspace'. This article discusses a text message campaign led by human traffickers that targeted men in the Gulf to arrange marriages to Syrian women and underage girls. The writer went the extra mile in retrieving a document that the human dealers use to 'prove' the legality of their work:

Al-Hayat received the allegedly-official document which was promoted on a large scale to marry off Syrian girls, supposedly signed by the Vice-secretary of the Ministry of Interior Affairs, which allowed a specified orphan charity to arrange marriages for Syrian girls – who were described as the daughters of martyrs – to Saudi men.



"We spoke in person to women who said they do not want to live in Antep because they are discriminated against and are faced with practices that do not respect their basic human rights." A social worker in Turkey



Principle

8

Interviewee Payment

Shelters without walls: women building protective infrastructures against rape

YIFAT SUSSKIND 19 April 2015

Women from Colombia, Syria, Nicaragua and Iraq are implementing multi-layered prevention strategies in their communities against rape being used as a weapon of war, offering immediate protection and countering stigma.



Action: Paying for an interview is considered poor ethics; not only is this likely to influence the nature of the interview, it can also make it harder for other journalists to get future interviews as people will expect rewards. Offers made in cash or kind can also pressurise survivors into speaking to the media. It is recommended that journalists contact organisations working on gender-based violence issues in the first instance before attempting to secure an interview. Officials at local and international NGOs may be able to talk more freely about gender-based violence and are likely to have a useful overview of the topic. Rather than paying an interviewee directly, reporters may feel that a discreet donation to an organization working with gender-based violence survivors is appropriate.

While UNFPA was not able to provide an extract from a news article report that could illustrate this principle, it is however necessary to stress the negative impact that payment has on the survivors and their families as well as on the journalist's credibility and professional reputation.

Refugee women and girls are often living in poor conditions, caused by economic disadvantage, therefore offering them or their families remuneration, financial support or tangible gifts, might influence the information they give and its accuracy.

In 2014, a reporter caused a scandal by paying to fake a photograph of a Syrian woman searching for food in garbage bins. Not only did the image damage the credibility and status of the media institution he worked for, but it also helped create a stereotype of refugee women who are extremely vulnerable and who can be easily exploited.

A policy of no payment applies to all parties involved in researching journalist articles, including when using local contacts to find information. Sources who are paid may be tempted to turn research into a profitable and manipulative business, leading to unreliable or fabricated information and stories.

Ignoring the temptation of high profile stories, journalists should avoid paying for their interviews, as this practice undermines their investigative integrity and their ability to gather information in the future. Importantly, they cannot be sure of the information's accuracy.



In 2014, a reporter caused a scandal by paying to fake a photograph of a Syrian woman searching for food in garbage bins. Not only did the image damage the credibility and status of the media institution he worked for, but it also helped create a stereotype of refugee women who are extremely vulnerable and who can be easily exploited.



Principle

9

Do No Harm

الوطن العربي / سوريا

سوريات في مهبط الأزمة: إعتداءات جسدية وجنسية

نشر: 19 نيسان/أبريل 2015، 03:33م 71669 قراءة

رضا الهاشا

مأساة عدة خلفها الأزمة المستمرة في سوريا، حيث أن الكثير من الفتيات والنساء تعرضن لإعتداءات جسدية وجنسية على يد الجماعات المسلحة، ما يعيق عودتهن للإندماج في حياة اجتماعية طبيعية.

سوريات في مهبط الأزمة: إعتداءات جسدية وجنسية

ACTION: As a general rule, journalists should be guided by harm limitation principles; this includes showing sensitivity to people who have experienced grief or trauma and a respect for their privacy, an awareness that subjects and interviewees may be inexperienced in dealing with the media, an understanding that there is a balance between the public's right to information and a criminal suspect's right to a fair trial.

This final ethical principle aims to help journalists adopt a survivor-centered approach. UNFPA selected two passages from articles, which illustrate good practice and keep the best interests of the survivors at heart.

The examples below do not pose intrusive questions to the interviewees or dig up painful memories. Instead, the reporter offers straightforward replies by gender-based violence survivors.

Example 1: In the article 'Many child marriages among Syrian refugees driven by economics',

"Deeba, also from Idlib, was panicked and scared on the first night she spent with her husband two years ago. She was 18, but no one had told her anything about sexual relations.

'It was painful,' she said quietly, remembering the occasion. Her husband was nine years older than her and they did not know each other before the wedding. (from 'How economic hardship is pushing Syrian refugees into child marriages')

Example 2: In the article 'Syria: the hidden war on women', the reporter allows the interviewee to be frank, but also lets the interviewee use their own words and opinions in describing what happened.

"The rent was very expensive, at around \$400USD a month. I could not afford the rent, so I asked the landlord for a reduction. He refused, saying 'I told you - you shine the light on me and I will shine the light on you. But you refused.' I didn't know what he meant," says Mona. Later she realized he was expecting sex in return for rent.

Example 3: On another note, it is important that the report adopts a survivor - not victim - approach. According to the article 'How the media can help Syrian women' when media coverage takes a victim-oriented angle, it can end up blaming the Syrian crisis for the suffering of Syrian women and girls, as if women are isolated objects from the historical, economic and political environment surrounding them. It would be far better for the media coverage to shed light on the long-standing regional and global political and economic systems, and demonstrate how women and girls can rise beyond these circumstances to embrace their fundamental human rights.

Further, reports should incorporate positive gender-based violence survivor perspectives into their storytelling and address

their message directly to the international community, including policymakers and donors. We can see in 'How to Help 'Farah' rebuild her life how this approach is used.

"On March 8, we celebrate International Women's Day and the empowerment of women globally. These celebrations should recognize the resilience of nearly six million refugee women and girls who, like Farah, Fatiya and Zainab, continue to adapt to life in their new surroundings with determination, creativity and skill, despite increasingly difficult circumstances. Aid agencies must match the strength of these women's resilience. To truly assist them, we must empower them with opportunities and choices."

A Survivor-Centered Approach

A survivor-centered approach seeks to empower survivors by putting them at the centre of the healing process. It recognises that each person is unique, reacts differently to gender-based violence, has different strengths, resources and coping mechanisms, has the right to decide who should know about what has happened to them, and what should happen next.



Articles Published by Trained Journalists



Journalists produced the following articles on gender-based violence as a follow-up to a three-day training workshop organised by UNFPA in June 2015.

Article 1

Headline: Gender-based violence in the Syria crisis



Author:

Hamida AbdulMenim

In total, 23 million Syrians today live with the effects and threat of widespread death and destruction, of which 6.2 million - nearly a quarter of the entire population - have become refugees after being forced to flee their country and escape from a living hell.

Since the start of the crisis, several stakeholders have been involved in assisting Syrian refugees, particularly the United Nations which dedicated \$5 billion of aid to help refugees (\$3 billion) as well those Syrians inside Syria (\$2 billion). The World Food Program (WFP) has alerted the international community to the food shortages facing half of all Syrian residents, while a third remain in urgent need of food aid to survive.

Neighbouring Arab countries have become the largest refugee host communities with approximately 4.5 million Syrian refugees on their soil, while other countries share the remaining 2.9 million. WFP provides food assistance for 240,000 children aged up to two years old, as well as for 15,000 pregnant or breastfeeding women. Next year, the WFP's food assistance program aims to reach 2.9 million Syrian refugees in Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Turkey and Egypt.

The rising numbers pose two key questions. Firstly, why is this situation occurring and intensifying? Secondly, what is Egypt's

position in this situation, being considered the 'elder sister' in the Arab nation as well as a traditional guardian of marginalised individuals, in particular women and children?

In my opinion, what is happening today in Syria is a serious demographic revolution that aims to replace the indigenous Syrian people with an entirely new population. Palestine offers a modern example of this process. For the second question, regarding Egypt's hosting capacity, it is important to note that throughout its history, the country has always integrated arrivals into the fabric of its community. The country has never needed to resort to establishing refugee camps.

Amidst this turmoil, media reports are quick to present the extreme suffering endured by Syrian refugees, particularly by women and children, who are often the individuals worst affected by war. However, when covering topics of violence against women or gender-based violence in the Syria crisis, nine ethical principles identified and adopted by the United Nations, should be meticulously followed by journalists:

- Accuracy: the facts presented in the report or story should be correct and selected from one-on-one interviews.
- Fairness: the journalist should treat fairly the interviewee and protect potentially vulnerable sources.

- Impartiality: the journalist should refrain from advancing his opinion in the making of the article.
- Duty to Inform: when informed about a gender-based violence story a journalist should be able to draw a distinction between making a scoop (personal benefit) and presenting the issue in an informative manner (survivor-centered approach).
- Respecting Privacy: it is the duty of the journalist to protect the confidentiality of the gender-based violence survivors and members of their families.
- Sources: journalists should always protect their sources' anonymity.
- Payment for Interviews: despite refugees' challenging economic conditions, journalists should abstain from paying them or their family members for interviews.
- Do No Harm: it is essential that the journalist covering gender-based violence in the context of the Syria crisis understands the sensitivity of the subject and shows sympathy to the survivor(s).
- Survivor-centered approach: the journalist should approach his or her task with the best interests of the gender-based violence survivor at heart. Refugees and survivors should understand they have the right to share information with the journalist that will not end up in the public arena.

Those nine guiding principles were drafted to help media professionals improve their skills at reporting gender-based violence in the context of a crisis. They also aim to inform journalists about the role of media and the way it portrays society, the importance of coordination between the private and public media, as well as the impact of media-based advocacy in support of refugee women.

An example of media-based advocacy could be a news bulletin in the form of a story. Here is the story of Sara, a Syrian refugee in Egypt, who gives her opinion why Egypt did not need to build refugee camps. According to our interviewee, Egypt did not build refugee camps due to the welcoming nature of the Egyptian community, which is accustomed to integrating local and foreign populations.

"When the crisis erupted in Syria," Sara said, "We immediately headed to Egypt. Here we've learnt to adapt to Egyptian habits and customs. On Mothers' Day, most refugee women also celebrated the occasion, despite being gender-based violence survivors. The Egyptian government has supported us by establishing a psycho-educational centre for Syrian children who are gender-based violence survivors."

Highlights of this Article

- This article skillfully introduces readers to gender-based violence while putting it in the context of the humanitarian Syria crisis.
- The OpEd style deployed in parts of the articles reflects the author's intention in engaging the public in a friendly discussion around gender-based violence and the role of Egypt in protecting its refugees. When she voices her own opinion, she makes it clear this is her opinion, allowing the reader to agree or disagree for themselves.
- Statistics can be misleading, confusing or even overwhelming, but the author uses them with care, achieving notable impact.
- The article also defines the nine ethical principles of reporting on gender-based violence in the Syria crisis and offers a good reference case to other journalists who are not well versed on the issue. The author interprets them within a working context, which helps make them practical and true to working life.
- The author illustrates his key point - that Egypt does not require refugee camps, as it intends to integrate refugees into the community - through the words of a survivor. This is not only a more convincing approach, but demonstrates the resilience of the survivor and places refugees in a favourable light among the local Egyptian community.

Article 2

Headline: Gender-based violence against displaced women



Author:

Sanarya Abdwla

The deteriorating political situation in the region, the disintegration of families as well as the extreme living conditions, place gender-based violence survivors in ever more vulnerable conditions.

In a camp located in the province of Sulaymaniyah, near to Erbet, 1,480 families are currently living in 1,540 tents. From a total of 8,847 refugees, 4,622 are women. Several of the women there shared their stories with us. Their names have been withheld to protect their identity.

"Two days ago JN, aged 31 years old, visited my tent and threatened me, demanding that I should agree to marry him. When I refused he came to my tent at 11.30 the next evening with the intention of assaulting me but I managed to escape." This is the story of SD, a 27-year-old Syrian refugee widow who explained how JN - despite being a refugee himself - persists on threatening to kill her if she will not marry him. SD told us that she filed case with the camp's court, and that she's waiting for court's decision and police protection.

Yet, it is also important to note that gender-based violence perpetrators are often family members of the survivors. JH is

a 35-year-old tall brunette woman who was initially reluctant to tell us her story, but decided it would draw attention to circumstances in the camp. "My husband always beats me. He's unemployed, while my 16-year-old son is the one who works and provides for the family. When I asked him yesterday to stop eating all our food and go hunt for a job, rather than sending our child to work, he beat me again and threatened to burn me alive if I didn't shut up."

JH is determined to file a complaint against her husband if the situation gets worse, but she also expressed her deep fears for her children. "He always threatens to kill us," she said.

Violence against women persists despite the creation of a specialized division in the camp to combat domestic violence, as well as the active and permanent presence in camps of nine human rights organizations and other stakeholders providing continuous support and follow-up care for refugees.

The domestic violence division works under the umbrella of a local directorate to combat violence against women in Sulaymaniyah, part of the Ministry of Internal Affairs' wider directorate to combat violence against women throughout Iraqi Kurdistan.

The division comprises a woman police officer and four employees. The division director is Second Lieutenant Sazkar Rahim who spoke

to us about the different forms of violence in refugee camps. "On some occasions, neighbours would inform us of a woman who has been locked up, assaulted or exposed to violence, upon which we'd mobilise to the crime scene and arrest the perpetrator. The division also collaborates with other organisations, in organising awareness lectures targeting refugees and focusing particularly on the domestic violence laws and women rights in Kurdistan to raise their awareness and contribute to reducing violence in households, and so protect women".

The person in charge of Erbet's domestic violence division re-emphasised that in cases of assault or violence against women, the division mobilises immediately by carrying out investigations, follow-ups and imprisonment of the abuser, in line with legal procedures which have been drawn up to protect gender-based violence survivors.

The Erbit camp follows the same administrative system as the Erbit region, and the First Brigade Police Center of Sulaymaniyah is in charge of protecting all the camps in the region. It is also important to note that the region so far has allocated two schools, a hospital, a fire station as well as a number of offices that provide assistance to refugees.

Highlights of this Article

- The author is careful to preserve the privacy of his interviewees. Note how stating that their identity has been concealed does nothing to undermine the authenticity or impact of the story. There is no real gain in playing 'fast and loose' with survivors' identity.
- The author shows too that interviewees were given every opportunity to give their consent. JH, for example, initially chose not to, then changed her mind.
- The author achieves a good balance between factual information and personal storytelling. The result is both authentic and informative, but with enough 'colour' to give the reader a greater sense of the real situation in refugee camps.
- By interviewing members of the law enforcement agencies, the author gives the article increased gravitas and adds validity to the women's stories. Highlighting some the good work by the police – and giving praise where it is merited – helps build relationships and advance the cause of gender-based violent survivors.
- The exact detail of the story – eg 8,847 refugees, 11.30 p.m. the next evening – again demonstrates that the author has researched his article fully and demonstrates accuracy.



Article 3

Headline: Refugee women battling the consequences of war and the impacts of alienation



Author:

Iman Al-Darby

In today's troubled times, the Arab woman suffers most from the devastation of wars and the aftermath of bloody revolution. In articles and photographs that represent the human impact of war, she often takes centre stage, where she is presented in extreme conditions of displacement, and as a recipient of appalling physical and sexual abuse. Unfortunately, even the most desperate refugee women often do not have access to necessary services such as basic healthcare, nutrition or education. They also shoulder the worst forms of oppression and injustice.

This investigative article focuses on the difficult circumstances and hardships faced by refugee women.

We started by meeting a group of women refugees living in the area of Saqr Qureish in Maadi. They described the problems they have suffered since their arrival to Egypt.

Natalia - a girl from Eritrea - told us her story. "We do not find decent jobs and if we did the salary would not fairly reflect the qualifications many of us have. In truth, many employers treat us inappropriately when they discover that we're living on our own." The bigger 'disaster', according to Natalia, is the monthly requirement to renew residence documents through a United

Nations organisation. "There are families with children who have to visit the UN premises frequently for the validation or extension of their residency permits."

However for Fatima - from South Sudan - the problem encountered was different. She has suffered grievously since coming to Egypt. She took a job as a private nanny, but her employers immediately locked up her identity papers, paid her half the promised salary and ill-treated her. Luckily, she was able to escape them, albeit without her papers, and is currently living with a group of Sudanese friends.

Perception of Inferiority

Rahma from Sudan is another of my interviewees who confirmed that her problem is the perception of inferiority that some Egyptians try to impose on her as a result of her skin color and her curly hair. These people ignore the decency of treating others fairly, based on their ethics and their qualities, rather than their race, skin color or religion. Rahma has also pointed out the different style of treatment shown to Sudanese and Syrian refugees, due to their difference in skin color and appearance.

"More sympathy is shown towards Syrian women because of their beauty in the eyes of Egyptians," explained Rahma. "Syrians often talk about their problems, but we Sudanese and Eritreans have the same problems and sometimes many more besides," she added.

Lamia from Syria spoke to me about her distressing situation. She came to Egypt with her children, leaving her husband in Syria to sell their things and then follow later. Unfortunately new sanctions were adopted to limit the rising numbers of Syrian refugees, and therefore her husband could not join her in Egypt, which caused the break-up of her family. She stays here alone, enduring two great adversities: her sadness in living alone and the daily pressure to hunt out a decent living for herself and her two children.

For Noor, another woman from Syria, the story had a different start, but brought the same challenges. When she came to Egypt with her husband and her three children, her husband was unable to find any job opportunities in Egypt, so he left for Turkey to work there. Noor and her children were expected to follow him but unfortunately she could not obtain the necessary documentation from UNHCR, which would allow her to immigrate legally. As a consequence, she stayed in Egypt with her kids, where she is forced to sell sweets in front of a mall in Nasr City. Everyday, she feels displacement, humiliation and alienation. She also spoke to me about her fears for how her children will secure entry to schools and gain an education: a fear that keeps her awake at nights.

Presidential Speech

Writer Farida Al-Naqqash spoke to me about the suffering of refugee women and how women are the first to be affected by armed conflicts and problems in their countries.

Farida said: "I will start by quoting a very significant passage of President Sisi's speech in the Sharm el-Sheikh conference where he said 'Egypt has five million refugees who share with us our lives'."

Indeed, refugees share with us life in all its conditions and difficulties, and refugee women face many troubles from Egyptian bureaucracy. These complexities, unfortunately, create a perception that questions the integrity of our administrators.

Women flee their country escaping war and famine. In Syria for example we've met refugee women who are experiencing heartbreaking situations.

We have repeatedly witnessed cases of 'marrying off' Syrian women, a hardship perpetrated by dealers empowered by a sense of religious entitlement, who treat refugee women as a commodity for trade.

Egypt signed international conventions of the United Nations that safeguard the rights of refugees and call for their treatment in the most humanitarian and ethical manner. Therefore our country offers a safe haven for those escaping from armed conflicts and family collapse - in particular children and women.

There is also the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, which calls for the protection of women and children in armed conflicts.

Refugee women require a different approach from community members as well as greater sympathy from their host communities.

This poses some important questions. What constitutes a refugee? And what do United Nations agencies offer for refugee women?

Dr. Nervana Khader, United Nations consultant, answers them.

A refugee is a person who has been granted the refugee status by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), also referred to as a 'blue card holder'. UN agencies provide refugees with an array of services. For example, the International Labour Organization (ILO) has programs to support refugee women as well as a regional action plan. Syrians have widely benefited from these programs.

The World Food Program (WFP) also works to respond to the basic nutritional needs of these women refugees; UNIFEM, which operates under another mandate, works on the needs of refugee women as well, such as psycho-social support projects to help rehabilitate them. Part of the United Nations budget is therefore directed to establish camps and centers for these women. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is another organization of the United Nations that focuses its programs on children, their education and their protection; as well as the International Organization for Migration (IOM), which assists women refugees in obtaining residence documents.

Ultimately, we should not lose sight of the fact that the severe situation for refugee women still requires further care and attention from their host countries.

The National Council

The National Council for Women (NCW) also plays a vital role in supporting and assisting refugees and internally displaced women. Syrian women have seen widespread benefits from this support. The NCW board has signed a memorandum of understanding to set up the project 'Economic Empowerment of Women in the Host Communities of Syrian Refugees'.

During the signing of the memorandum, the head of the NCW, Ms. Mervat Tallawy emphasised the dangerous living conditions of Syrian refugee women and their children in host countries.

The project was funded by the Japanese government and implemented by the UN Women Regional Office in partnership with the NCW in Egypt and in cooperation with local authorities in the targeted communities.

The project provides training opportunities for the women to build their professional and administrative capacities. The support aims to enable women to manage businesses and build self-reliance in providing for themselves and their families, so increasing their protection from all forms of exploitation and violence, including domestic violence and early marriage of minor girls.



Additional context

Egypt is a generous host country, which opens its borders to many refugees from different Arab countries. The scale of displacement has escalated alarmingly in recent years. In 2007, the total numbered approximately 7,500 refugees, including all nationalities, according to UNHCR Cairo data. Their estimates at the end of December 2013 put the total number of Syrians in Egypt at 300,000 people. However, following the wars in Sudan, Iraq and Syria, huge numbers of refugees have poured into the country since 2014.

The number of Syrian, Libyan, as well as other African refugees in Egypt is now estimated at five million.

Additional context

The following agreements and conventions are related to refugee women and armed conflicts:

The four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and additional protocols of 1979; the Resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1974 on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict, which was also adopted by Egypt; and the UNSCR 1325 on women and peace and security which constitute a landmark calling for the inclusion of women in all levels of decision making inside the state; UNSCR 1820 of 2008 which demands an immediate and complete halt to acts of sexual violence against civilians in conflict zones; UNSCR 1889 of 2009, recalls the broad agenda of resolution 1325 and urges renewed measures to improve women's participation in peace processes, reaffirming the key role women can play in rebuilding war-torn societies; UNSCR 1960 of 2010, which places attention on the issue of sexual violence, with a focus on accountability and punishment of perpetrators.

In addition to the above there is also UNSCR 2106 (2013) to prevent sexual violence in armed conflict and post armed conflict as well as UNSCR 2122 (2013), which explains the procedures and due measures to ensure women's participation in decision making.

Highlights of this Article

- The article achieves a notable success in balancing both detail and facts with personal stories and experiences. It is both a valuable reference and a poignant insight into gender-based violence in the Syria crisis.
- The introduction puts the situation in context and prepares the reader for the sensitive and potentially shocking information that will follow. There is no attempt to sensationalize or make a 'scoop'.
- The readers are left in no doubt that the stories have been gathered in person by the reporter, rather than 'recycled'. This reveals depth of research and authenticity.
- Showing the competition and bitterness between different refugee communities adds a different level of emotion, so revealing the full complexity of the situation. It finds a new angle, which sheds light on the difficult conditions faced by survivors.
- By quoting different women from a range of nations, the author comes across as fair and impartial. There's no attempt to be one-sided or point the finger of blame.
- The quotes by the women are easy to relate to and therefore make the women feel relevant to the reader. Issues such as loneliness, children's education, lack of hope will resonate with the audience. This is an important step in raising awareness and breaking down barriers.
- Quoting the President can help bring the article to the attention of decision makers.
- The additional context at the end provides useful accurate information - it is more effective to collate it at the end, rather than trying to weave it through story, where it might upset the flow.
- The author has protected the identity of the survivors and adopted a 'do no harm' approach.



Article 4

Headline: No longer victims but gender-based survivors, these Syrian women are now helping fellow refugees to rebuild their lives



Author:

Nadine El Nemri

Amman – This article highlights the transition that women make from a ‘victim’ of gender-based violence to a ‘survivor’ extending help and support to neighboring refugee women, assisting them in facing their cruel experiences of violence, displacement and forced adaptation.

At the end of 2013, Neyrouz arrived with her five sons in Jordan, escaping the war in Aleppo, Syria. Neyrouz made the journey without her husband, and unaware of his fate.

In a discussion with Al-Ghad, Neyrouz (her name has been changed) explained how she was arrested in Al-Raqqa by the regime forces “to snitch on my husband. During detention I was tortured, and after my release I took the decision to flee the country with my sons not thinking of anything else but to escape.

“When I reached Amman I managed to arrange for a rented home in the suburbs with the money that I had,” Neyrouz continued. “But our financial situation was dire and I found myself a single mother of five underage children, without a provider and with the ghosts of what had happened to me in the prison haunting me every day.

“My son dropped out of school for a year, and started working in a dangerous occupation to provide for us. It wasn’t easy to see my child go through such hardship.

“I had lived through a big trauma, which left me considering whether to take my own life. I wanted to die, but I couldn’t do it. When I reached rock bottom, I met a fellow Syrian who told me about a safe and friendly place that was providing services to women in my situation.”

The Family Care Center, working under the umbrella of the Noor Al Hussain Foundation, and supported by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), provides services to respond to and prevent gender-based violence. The Center also lays on health services that specifically help children living in Jordan, in addition to providing psychological and medical support to refugees.

Neyrouz is now one of the center’s beneficiaries. She has attended counseling sessions in the main premises in the area of Suwaileh.

“When I first started talking to the counselor it wasn’t easy at all. But I got used to participating in support groups as well as counselling sessions where I met Syrian women like me who are gender-based violence survivors, or their family’s sole breadwinners, and it was my chance to talk with them and identify ways of moving forward in our lives.”

"I've now started looking at my life differently. I have my sons and that is reason enough for me to live. I've registered my family with the UNHCR, earning a monthly income. I've also enrolled my son again in school and he has stopped his dangerous job. My Jordanian neighbours noted my talent in sewing and they gave me a sewing machine as a present that I use, every now and then, to fix neighbors' clothes and make a little extra income."

She added: "Things seem even better today. My husband has contacted me again from Turkey, after an absence of a year. He told me that has been trying to cross the sea to seek asylum in a western country, which he has indeed succeeded in achieving. Now, he's trying to reunite with us."

"Yes, I live on, waiting daily, hoping to be with him again. But my life will not stop. I'm taking care of my children and maintaining their education. My sewing helps to provide the basics for my family, and most importantly I am giving a hand to other Syrian women around me, so that they too can face their desperate situation and daily challenges. I have recently convinced 12 gender-based violence survivors to join the centre and I always seek to reach out to more women."

Al-Ghas has met in the same centre with another woman, Nivine (her name has also been changed), who is likewise a beneficiary of the centre's psychological and medical services. Nivine escaped Syria's war and came to Jordan with her 5 children and husband at the beginning of the crisis in 2011.

Nivine said: "My husband endured a dramatic period of change in his life. It was extremely difficult for him to provide for five children, especially as our eldest is only nine-years-old. My husband couldn't work because of our nationality, however he found part-time labour on construction sites. Employment opportunities are very limited and we could not obtain financial aid from UNHCR as we didn't meet their pre-conditions."

"Disappointments came one after another, and they have made my husband a violent person. I've endured the worst pain from

him, regular beatings and humiliation. This has also reflected negatively on my relation with my children, and I have started beating them too everyday."

"I used to feel guilt every time I beat them," she added, "So I was introduced to the psychologist in the centre who provides advice on developing stronger parent-child relationships."

"I started attending sessions for two months. During this period, I realised that beating my children would not resolve my marital problems. I now manage to control my anger, but unfortunately my marriage is still suffering."

"I try to sign my husband onto psycho-support sessions, but he refuses to go. I'm still working my way through the treatment and have not reached the end of my problems yet."

The centre also houses a group of volunteers who help out in filling out applications and support individual cases by referring them to the corresponding state departments. Some of these volunteers are Syrian youngsters, themselves survivors of gender-based violence.

Ameer (his name is also changed) joined this group of volunteers a year ago. He said: "The first time that I visited the center was to seek psychological support, as a result of the hard conditions that I suffered. I now work as a volunteer to help women and children."

"In the middle of 2012 I was severely beaten for hours and then shot by a group who were determined to kill me. I went into a coma and doctors thought I had died, but divine intervention saved me when the pathologist discovered that I was still alive!"

"I was registered as a casualty, and then fled to Jordan where I followed treatment. I struggled with the trauma and felt like I was living through a nightmare. But the psychological counselling services helped me a lot, and turned me into the volunteer you're seeing today."



When asked about his responsibilities, Ameer explains: "I carry out short, preliminary interviews with new applicants. Also, I gather information from returning applicants and help refer them to the right department, such as the women and children department, or psychological services, or medical units."

Ameer sees his volunteering as a way of supporting and easing the pain of his compatriots, and helping them to find new pathways. He always tries to stay positive and smile at all times so that he can spread hope and joy in their hearts.

Nabila is another Syrian young woman who is a volunteer at the centre. She joined the group after hearing its call for volunteers. She's found the centre a welcome opportunity to stay connected to Syrians and provide them with valuable advice.

Shirz Nsoor, a psychologist at the centre told Al-Ghad that the most important characteristic of the centre is the provision of integrated services. She explained that the centre provides both psychological and medical services at the same time, which encourages women to come, without the fear of being stigmatized for seeking psychological counseling.

"Women often come asking for medical support, and when they start chatting and getting on with the staff, they start asking for psychological support."

Al-Nsoor also defines the most important challenges when dealing with women. "The biggest problem is understanding violence and not accepting it as a normal thing," she said. "Most women do not express any objection to violence against them. They also often justify it by saying their husbands are under a lot of pressure or that they (the women) deserve to be beaten."

"Other challenges are the acceptance of child marriage, or repeated and continuous pregnancies, which often lead to complications on women's health or deteriorates the financial situation of the couple. Husbands also tend not to participate in the sessions."

"We receive on a daily basis around five cases of counselling, in parallel to four support groups throughout the year, each comprising ten women." Al-Nsoor considers this a sign of great progress in women's acceptance of psychological services."

According to UNFPA's journalists' toolkit for reporting on gender-based violence in the Syria crisis, early marriage rose among Syrian refugees to 25% in 2013 and then 31% in the first quarter of 2014.

The toolkit also highlighted that many Syrian women have become sole providers to their families, and that about a third of these women rarely or never leave their homes.



Gender-based violence soared with the Syria crisis, and almost half of the Syrian women in Jordan are survivors of at least one form of gender-based violence.

Some names and facts have been changed to respect the wishes of the interviewees.

Highlights of this Article

- This article represents a good example of factual and ethical reporting, as it preserves the privacy of the survivors, but still succeeds in painting an impactful picture of what it is like to be a gender-based violence refugee.
- The story about Neyrouz is basically one of transition and resilience. This demonstrates the difference between 'survivor' and 'victim' in stark terms. The message is empowering. It says that these survivors do not seek pity - they just want help to get their lives back on track.
- As the reader, you get a sense that the author has the women's best interests at heart, rather than personal gain. It feels like the author senses a duty to inform on the facts, rather than shock or prejudice.
- The story about Nivine brings to life the desperate complexities of gender-based violence. Both her and her husband were unlikely to have beaten their children or wife respectively, had they continued living their 'normal' life. By using such impactful - and clearly authentic - stories, the reader is forced to empathise with the subjects.
- Ameer's story demonstrates that violence against refugees happens to both men and women, so widening the angle of the story. His ability to smile and willingness to help others after all he has been through can help show Syrians in a better light to Jordanian readers who might resent having refugees in their country.
- The article uses official voices and then statistics at the end to add authority and context to the story.

Article 5

Headline: Undocumented marriages among Syrian refugees



Author:

Samar Haddadin

She's not yet sixteen years old, but she hasn't been a child for three years. She has just given birth to her second child. Meet "Amal" (her name has been changed), a Syrian girl who came to Jordan as a refugee fleeing the war in Syria, where she'd been married before leaving.

Amal still has childish dreams and games, such as hide and seek and hopscotch. When she closes her eyes, she still plays. But in the real world, she could not pursue her education beyond the eighth grade. When she married, she had to leave school, along with her aspiration of becoming a pharmacist. Any childhood dreams or hopes for the future were shattered by her early marriage.

Amal's story echoes thousands of other stories of underage Syrian girls, who became refugees in the Zaatari camp during the Syrian crisis in 2011, and who were either married in their home country or when they arrived in the camp.

"Hoda" (again, not her real name) got married in Syria with a man eleven years older than her, to protect her from war-related violence and the risk of rape in conflict zones. Like so many others, her marriage was conducted by a Sheikh in a mosque and has not been properly registered or documented.

Customs and traditions held sacred by the majority of refugees in Zaatari, who come from South Syria, increase the suffering of these young girls. Early marriages have become a daily occurrence in the camp.

According to the Chief of Justice Office, the number of early marriages among Syrian refugees has risen dramatically, reaching 35% of the total number of Syrian marriages in Jordan. According to the same source, the number of Syrian underage girls marriages was 18% in 2012, increasing to 25% in 2013, 32% in 2014, and now 35% in 2015.

Underage marriage is prohibited by international conventions because it affects young girls' health and violates their right to education and childhood. In Jordan, early marriage cannot be legally registered as it opposes the civil status law, which considers it a void marriage contract that carries a number of different sanctions. This ruling further complicates the situation for underage married girls in the Zaatari camp, as children born from these illegal marriages cannot be registered until their parents' marriage is first registered.

Bassam's Addamour, a legal specialist, explained that when the first Syrian refugees came to Jordan, many did not possess proper identification or documentation. Some even carried old documents or handwritten papers that could be easily forged and were not sufficiently credible. Also, several Syrian families entered the camp

with children under their care, and claimed to be their parents, but they lacked any registration evidence or identification.

Addamour also noted that it is not universal practice in Syria for families to register marriages. He estimated the number of undocumented marriages of the total Syrian marriages in the Zaatari camp at 80%. He added that the focus of Jordanian government was initially on authenticating the identities of the Syrian refugees, for security-related reasons. However, authentication of marriages was not a priority, therefore large numbers of children remain unregistered and effectively stateless.

The following passage appears in a report by the Chief of Justice. "Zaatari camps await a huge humanitarian crisis if decision-makers do not implement the appropriate measures. Verbal marriages, early marriages, as well as marriages by Gulf men, are widely expanding in the camp, without proper documentation. These practices are maintained by Syrian refugees following customs and traditions long held in their homeland. This has led to many undocumented marriages and fatherless children. Often, Syrian families face difficulties in registering their marriages due to the complicated procedures in the religious courts. If husbands leave their wives to return to Syria, and then die, they leave single mothers who are unable to register their children. This is a ticking time bomb for a society where children are growing up without fathers."

Addamour explained that the increase in early marriages has alarmed the Jordanian government, which has duly collaborated with UNHCR on public awareness campaigns related to registering marriages and children. This has succeeded in lowering the number of non-registered marriages according to Addamour.

Dr. Deema Diab, director of female clinics at the Jordanian Welfare Association, agrees that public awareness campaigns implemented with the support of UNFPA and other aid organisations have helped to lower the rate of early marriages, although they haven't yet eradicated the practice. The reasons behind early marriage and undocumented marriage lie in the deeply rooted traditions of the Syrian people.

Her views are shared by Addamour: "Syrian refugees carry their customs and traditions to the Zaatari camp. They continue to marry off their underage girls without documentation or registration, and this has created a generation of paperless children".

Addamour goes on to explain two root causes that hinder the registration of marriages: firstly, the absence of identity papers; secondly, the refugees' inability to pay the fines resulting from non-registration.

The Jordanian government has collaborated with UNHCR in the registration process. UNHCR and the Ministry of the Interior issued official documents to help refugees register their marriages and they have issued birth certificates for children.

Art 63 J from the Jordanian civil status law (2010) "In the case of undocumented marriage, sanctions from the Penal law apply to the married couple, witnesses, as well as the officiant, with fines of 200 JD for each".

A UNHCR report during 2013 entitled "The Future of Syria. Refugee Children in Crisis" confirmed the increase of these so-called "paperless children". The statement was used by the Ard Al Aoun organisation to draw attention to the severity of a situation that is leading to a generation of fatherless children.

These reports made an impact. The Prime Minister, acting on the recommendations of the Chief Justice department, approved the exemption of spouses and witnesses from these fines. Two public information campaigns were then organised to spread awareness among the refugees about the importance of documenting marriage contacts and registering births in the official records.

Both campaigns were carried out through the cooperation of the Chief Justice Department, the Ministry of the Interior, the Directorate of Syrian Refugees' Affairs, and the Office of the High Commissions for Refugees (UNHCR). The first campaign was organised in the last two months of 2014, from which 2000 families took advantage, while the second campaign benefited around 1300 families.

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Dr. Ashraf Omari, a personal status judge, said that the presence of a Sharia court in the Zaatari camp has helped contain the problem of illegitimate marriages, and increased documentation of marriages that were conducted without official record. He said that the fines exemption granted by the Chief Justice Department has also encouraged the registration of undocumented marriages.

However, despite this progress, the campaign has faced some obstacles such as marriages of girls under the age of 15 years, which cannot be documented under the law of personal status, even in the case of pregnancy or childbirth.

Another obstacle affects those girls, who are married, by means of customary or undocumented marriages, to Syrians who do not reside in Jordan. In this case, the girls – who often have children – claim to be married to a person who does not officially exist. As a result, the marriage cannot be registered, creating illegitimate children from this undocumented marriage.



Another example is the predicament of Syrian women who are married to Syrian men who crossed the border illegally, or were smuggled in, and therefore live in Jordan without identification. Some spouses even remain out of sight, in fear of being deported, since their names are not registered at the UNHCR.

In some cases, Syrian men entered Jordan under different names or under the names of one of their brothers who remain in Syria. Some arrived with their sisters, claiming they are their wives.

Ali El Damour believes these cases can be solved with the right security, technical, and legal expertise, and with the cooperation of the Chief Justice Department, although he notes that the technical and legal considerations are particularly complex.

Judge Omari explained that cases of early marriage were usually determined by the age of the girl. If she exceeds 15 years of age, the marriage is registered. If she is under the legal age of marriage, the union is terminated.

In addition, he warned against the disastrous repercussions that a lack of official documentation would have on the girl's civil rights, state identity, nationality and access to medical care. Their children will suffer likewise. The judge stressed that the termination of the marriage contract, if the girl is under the legal age, does not prevent the documentation of children born in illegitimate marriages, nor will it remove their family name.

In the same context, another judge, who preferred to remain anonymous, said, "Marriage under the age of 15 years is considered null and void in accordance with Jordanian law, and is therefore terminated. Yet, when the couple have children, they are still [documented] to their family." The same judge described the contradictions of customs and traditions of Syrians within the provision of the personal status law, dubbing it a "dilemma that remains unresolved". He had doubts that a strict response would end up solving the problem, but if Jordan were too lenient with Syrian refugees, he was concerned about how this approach would affect the community around the refugee camp.



He further warned against resorting to customary marriages among the Syrian refugees or the surrounding community, stressing that customary marriages are considered void in accordance with personal status law, and whoever officiates them would be punished.

Judge Omari reiterated the tension between the law, customs and traditions among the Syrian refugees, indicating that the laws in Jordan prohibit marriage under the age of 15 under any circumstances or for any reason. Conversely, Syrians do not see any cause that would prohibit these marriages.

According to a fatwa issued by the General Ifta Department [office of Islamic Mufti], the law related to customary marriages in Jordan states that such marriages are considered null and void, and documentation is required for the preservation of civil rights.

The Jordanian Penal Code duly punishes undocumented marriages that do not comply with the Family Rights Act or Sharia law. Those who knowingly violate the law by conducting or being involved in marriage ceremonies can expect a jail sentence of between one to six months.

The General Ifta [Mufti] Department is the only official party in Jordan whose fatwas [Islamic laws] are recognised. Article 12-A of the Jordanian Ifta [Mufti] Law states: "It is not permitted for

any person or entity to address the issuance of fatwas on public matters, contrary to the provisions of this law."

Several judges have expressed concern that the situation will affect the community surrounding the [refugee] camp. They stressed the importance of setting strict penalties against such marriages. They recommended that the state organises public awareness campaigns that draw attention to the severe consequences of early marriage by outlining the legal, social and financial repercussions that will arise from subsequent fines and fees.

"Huda", who is aged 17 and the mother of two children born in the Zaatari camp, registered her marriage in the Sharia Court after the state's decision to exempt couples from fines. However, she did not register the birth of her children, because she, like her husband, is afraid of going to the court to raise a lawsuit that will prove the legitimacy of their children. This fear is due to her family's inability to pay the fines imposed on them due to the delayed registration of the children. The fine might total as much as 100 dinars per child, while her husband works outside the camp, when he can, for just for a few dinars per day.

Dr. Diab believes that "the percentage of marriages under the legal age is still high, yet it is less than it was at the beginning of the [refugees'] settlement in the camp". She noted that it is difficult to practically limit the number [of these marriages], however the

number of registrations that occurred for early marriages after the exemption of fees indicates the extent of this phenomenon.

From a professional perspective, Dr. Diab worries about the health risks that accompany early marriages, such as stress, pre-eclamptic toxemia and complications during childbirth, in addition to the high rate of Caesarean deliveries. She also noted the increase of birth rate per woman, averaging between five and six births per woman. By comparison, research suggests that the Jordanian birth rate equates to 3.6 children per woman.

With the consent of her husband, "Amal" is considering using contraceptives, as they would prefer to keep a reasonable gap between each child. After she became a mother of two children at the age of sixteen, the prospect of having a new baby after a short break makes her feel exhausted.

Health risks to young girls, according to Dr. Diab, are accompanied by violence in the marital home, either from her husband, his family, or even her own family.

"Huda" is one such victim of domestic violence. As she stated in her own words, she faces severe verbal and psychological violence from her husband's mother and father. She indicated that her mother-in-law is pressing her husband to marry another woman, under the pretext that "Huda" is young and naïve, and that, according to her husband's mother, she is suffering from health issues that are delaying her next pregnancy, even though her second child hasn't yet reached his second birthday.

Huda admits that she does not know how to raise her children, and that her mother is the one who is raising them. She further believes that she does not know how to cope with her husband, stating that marital responsibility is very difficult.

Huda recalled when her child suffered a disease that led to dehydration, bleeding and bronchitis, and said, "I didn't know what to do."

It's clear that the problem of registering births from early marriages of girls under 15 years still exists in the Zaatari camp and in the

Syrian refugee community outside the camp. The official Jordanian records only have the names of registered children. Since the arrival of the first Syrian refugees in 2011, until November 2015, the number of births registered in the Civil Status was around 50,000 Syrian children. According to the media spokesperson of the Civil Status Department, Malek al-Khoswana, the number of registered children is expected to increase. If the totals for 2015 are included, the statistics show that 2014 saw the registration of 16,000 Syrian children in Jordan.



While Amal hopes to return one day to her hide and seek and hopscotch, Huda accepts that the hands of time will not turn back. Her wish is that her children live in better circumstances than the ones that forced her to seek refuge and an early marriage. She would like them to become educated, so they have the skills and opportunities to make the most of their lives.

Highlights of this Article

- This article meticulously respects the nine ethical principles. It maintains the anonymity of the gender-based violence survivors, but skillfully succeeds in shedding light on a new angle of gender-based violence in the Syria crisis
- This sensitive issue - the plight of non-registered marriages and children - brings to life the bureaucratic complications that refugees and gender-based related violence survivors face. The author draws the reader deeper into the world of survivors. It is less sensationalist than articles that talk about violence, but not less interesting
- Interviews with legal and medical experts, as well as references to recent court decisions give the article authority. As a result, it has the gravitas to raise awareness to both the general public and the refugee community.
- The author evokes sympathy for the girls, without giving her own opinion on the matter. This approach - rather than an OpEd one - is often more effective at turning minds
- The author doesn't conceal the complexity of the situation, but gives hope that a solution can be found with the right attitude and cooperation



METHODOLOGY

1. Material research and selection process:

- **Phase 1:** Using a professional media monitoring system:
 - A. In the first phase of research, we used a professional media analysis application. This offered us a range of media tracking and evaluation products, including an advanced keyword search engine, a measuring and ranking system, as well as other insights.
 - B. Keywords: drawing on UNFPA Syria Response’s expertise in tracking and monitoring media stories on gender-based violence, we created a long list of keywords.

- **Phase 2:** Implementing objective selection criteria:

To identify 20 good practice articles in the field of reporting on gender-based violence from a vast number of search results, we meticulously adopted the following checklist:

Criteria	To Approve	To Decline
Ranking & Republishing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Report on gender-based violence in the Syria crisis ranks among top 50 most read articles for the year 2015⁵ ▪ Report on gender-based violence in the Syria crisis has been quoted and/or republished by a number of media and social media platforms ▪ Report on gender-based violence in the Syria crisis received international or national recognition (i.e. award for investigative journalism, contributed to policy change, winner of a contest). 	
Source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Report on gender-based violence in the Syria crisis is published in a local, regional or international media outlet. ▪ Report on gender-based violence in the Syria crisis is published (and searched) on the online platform of a local, regional or international media outlet. 	<p>Reports on gender-based violence in the Syria crisis published in print media solely (without an online presence or track) were not included in the selection.</p> <p>Audiovisual reports on gender-based violence in the Syria crisis broadcasted on TV, Radio, YouTube were not included in the selection.</p> <p>Reports on gender-based violence in the Syria crisis published on social media communication tools were not included in the selection.</p>
Type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Op-Ed articles ▪ Investigative report ▪ Storytelling article ▪ Blog entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Activity reports ▪ Crime reports

Criteria	To Approve	To Decline
Author	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The author is a UNFPA trained journalist on gender-based violence in the Syria crisis. The author is an editor, journalist, columnist, reporter or contributor to the media outlet. 	
Language⁶	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arabic French English 	Reports written in other languages of the region, i.e. Turkish and Kurdish were not included in the selection.
Topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report tackles one or different forms of gender-based violence pertaining to the Syria crisis. Report compares and/or showcases gender-based violence stories of refugee and gender-based violence survivors. 	Reports focusing on gender-based violence outside the perspective of the Syria crisis were not included in the selection.
Geographical scope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report has a particular emphasis on Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt and Turkey.⁷ 	Reports that do not focus on the Syria crisis and host communities were not included in the selection.
Ethical Principles⁸	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accuracy: the reporting is factually correct – well researched and referenced, and the gender-based violence terminology used is clear and direct. Fairness: the report adopted extra duty of care to protect potentially vulnerable sources, including having the ‘informed consent’ of the gender-based violence survivors (please refer to the following points). Impartiality: the report does not mention details that can be interpreted as implying blame towards the gender-based violence survivor. Duty to Inform: The nature of the information presented is more factual than personal (i.e. readers of the articles will have been informed about the different forms of gender-based violence in refugee camps rather than presenting it as a ‘domestic dispute’). Respecting Privacy: the confidentiality of the gender-based violence survivor(s) interviewed is properly preserved (i.e. no full names are reported, names are changed, location is mentioned in a general manner etc.). The identity of the underage girls or boys interviewed is strictly confidential - articles showing real images of underage survivors were not considered in the selection process. Sources: the report respects and protects the anonymity of the sources. Payment for Interviews: the report was based on transparent journalistic investigation and work. Payment for gender-based violence interviews is considered poor ethics and is likely to influence the nature of the interview (lack of accuracy, manipulation of facts etc.). Do No Harm: the report shows sensitivity to people who have experienced grief or trauma. The questions of the interview do not aim to reiterate the trauma lived by the survivor(s) and refrain – unless unavoidable – from discussing violent details. The report does not aim to generate pity but rather present a survival story and reflect information on the realities of gender-based violence in the context of mass displacement. 	Reports that did not match and comply with all nine criteria were not included in the selection.
Publication Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report published, between Jan. 1, 2015 and Oct. 30, 2015 	Reports published against the indicated timeframe were not included in the selection.

LIST OF SELECTED ARTICLES (Jan - Oct 2015)

Title of Article	Source	Author
How economic hardship is pushing Syrian refugees into child marriages	Middle East Eye bit.ly/1CBykod	Oriol Andrés Gallart
Syrian wives for sale: a campaign led by human brokers across cyberspace	Al Hayat Newspaper bit.ly/1Q9g6IS	Issa Ashamani
Business marriages and Syrian minors	Al Ghad Newspaper Ammon News bit.ly/1Qs1GsV	Muafaq Kamal
Syria: the hidden war on women	Channel 4 bit.ly/1LWfZqh	Sharron Ward
Syrian women caught in the mayhem: physical and sexual abuse	Al Mayadeen bit.ly/216EdZv	Rida Al Basha
How to help 'Farah' rebuild her life	CNN cnn.it/1Lc7n1T	Jina Krause-Vilmar
How the media can help Syrian women	Syria Untold: bit.ly/1R1jOph	Katie El-Hayek
Syrian Women in refugee camps: harassment and violence	Al-Araby Al-Jadeed bit.ly/1QxXFmT	Lubna Salem
Woman and refugee: the double discrimination	Kedistan bit.ly/1Qs1PfU	Naz Oke
Underage girls under torture	Khaberni bit.ly/21g3XCW	Manar Hafez
Shelters without walls: women building protective barriers against rape	Open Democracy bit.ly/1RfM7aZ	Yifat Susskind



Title of Article	Source	Author
Islamic State: burnt alive for refusing to perform an extreme sexual act	Femme et réfugiée: double discrimination! Les femmes syriennes esclaves sexuelles de l'Etat Islamique Détenue des femmes en Syrie: le rapport glaçant qui met en cause le régime Comment violer et battre des femmes: l'ignoble guide de l'Etat Islamique État islamique: brûlée vive pour avoir refusé un acte sexuel extrême MailOnline dailym.ai/24jMnNn	Jay Akbar and Simon Tomlinson
Marrying off Syrian women: Social media witness the violence	Arabby al Jadeed bit.ly/1oHc9e7	Layal Haddad
Syrian women struggle to survive	Al Jazeera bit.ly/1SWpZ8I	Nariman Othman
Hidden crisis: violence against Syrian female refugees	The Lancet bit.ly/1TyWQzh	Stephanie Parker
The risk of harassment and sexual violence hovering around Syrian women	DW	Manasi Gopalakrishnan / Zaman Badri
Financial burden, risk of violence pressure Syrian girls to marry	AL Monitor	Brenda Stoter
Activists call for more funds to support efforts to end child marriage among Syrian refugees in Jordan	AL Ghad bit.ly/1WInDZv	Rania Al Sarayra
Double-layered veils and despair ... women describe life under Isis	The Guardian	Mona Mahmood

ARTICLES BY THE GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE JOURNALISTS' NETWORK

Title of Article	Source	Author
Gender-based violence in the Syria crisis	Al Joumhouria	Hamida AbdulMenim
Gender-based violence against displaced women	Directorate of Violence Against Women, Kurdistan Region in Iraq	Sanarya Abdwla
Refugee women battling the consequences of war and the impacts of alienation	Hawaa magazine	Iman Al-Darby
No longer victims but gender-based survivors, these Syrian women are now helping fellow refugees to rebuild their lives	Al Ghad Newspaper bit.ly/21i2NmV	Nadine El Nemri
Undocumented marriages among Syrian refugees	Al Rai Newspaper bit.ly/1RURiiC	Samar Haddadin

References

1. Resolution 1325 (2000) Adopted by the UN Security Council at its 4213th meeting, on 31 October 2000
2. Reporting on Gender-based Violence in the Syria Crisis: A Journalist's Handbook
<http://www.unfpa.org/resources/reporting-gender-based-violence-syria-crisis-journalists-handbook>
3. Inter-Agency Standing Committee Guidelines for Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings, 2005, (bit.ly/1lja17J)
4. Review of Gender Based Violence Research in Lebanon, UNFPA - Lebanon, 2012
5. This criteria is optional. Articles that did not make it to the top rankings were still considered if they conformed to other mandatory criteria.
6. The three principle languages of the MENA region.
7. Being the countries hosting the largest numbers of Syrian refugees.
8. The nine principles listed have to be all checked, these criteria are obligatory and not selective.

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