OVERVIEW OF FUNDING NEEDS
REGIONAL SYRIA CRISIS RESPONSE

2023

“WOMEN IN PARTICULAR HAVE STRUGGLED TO COPE WITH THE ESCALATING LEVELS OF VIOLENCE AND EXPLOITATION, ESPECIALLY WITH THE ONGOING ECONOMIC CRISIS.”

— MARAM, a Syrian refugee who accessed gender-based violence programming at a UNFPA-supported Safe Space (cover photo not related)
In light of the extensive humanitarian needs in 2023, compounded by economic collapse and the devastating impact of the February earthquakes, women and girls throughout Syria and host communities are more reliant than ever on humanitarian assistance, making the consequences of underfunding both significant and far-reaching.

This is one of the worst years of a protracted crisis that has now entered its 13th year.

- The year 2023 is proving to be one of the most challenging years of the crisis. Before the February earthquakes, 15.3 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance — the highest number since the onset of the crisis in 2011. This includes 7.7 million women and girls, 4.2 million of whom are of reproductive age. The country also has the largest number of internally displaced people in the world at 6.8 million people.

- Additionally, more than 6.8 million Syrians remain as refugees in five neighbouring countries — Türkiye, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt. Almost half of them are women and girls and they grapple with similar and unique challenges, including escalating risks of GBV. Limited livelihood opportunities, often driven by gender inequality and harmful norms, also reinforce these challenges by inhibiting women’s life prospects and placing them at further risk of exploitation and abuse.

- Meanwhile, around 9 million people in Syria have been affected by the 2023 earthquakes. The earthquakes struck as the humanitarian crisis in north-west Syria was already at the highest level since the conflict began, with 4.1 million people relying on humanitarian assistance to subsist. This has further limited access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services, including for pregnant and breastfeeding women, in addition to exacerbating the risks of GBV as women and girls were displaced from their homes and forced to find refuge. Many ended up in newly-established reception centres, camps, informal settlements, or overcrowded living spaces that lack privacy and adequate WASH facilities, lighting, and security.

Given the dire conditions, the health and well-being of women, girls, and other people in need is a global imperative that must take priority over any political agenda.

- Throughout Syria and the crisis region, women and girls continue to face human rights violations, and violence against them has become normalised. The lives of Syrian women and girls are marked by mutually reinforcing forms of violence and gender inequality, often exacerbated by discriminatory attitudes based on age, displacement status, disability, and/or marital status. This has been conducive to the normalisation of GBV and the creation of an environment in which women and girls are consistently devalued, controlled, exploited, and then blamed for the violence they face.

- In 2023, UNFPA conducted a gender analysis of the 2023 Humanitarian Needs Overview and Humanitarian Response Plan, which revealed glaring gaps when it comes to gender-responsive data collection and analysis as well as humanitarian programming as a whole. This underscores how the unique needs and voices of women and girls are consistently overlooked in the humanitarian programme cycle. A similar gender analysis was conducted of the Whole of Syria earthquake assessments, which further highlighted the impact of gender blind assessments as activities and approaches implemented during an emergency response are not gender neutral.

For millions of Syrians / host communities, there are no alternatives to UNFPA-supported services. Underfunding places lives at risk and derails progress.

- UNFPA-supported facilities provide women and girls with tailored services that are simply unavailable elsewhere in their communities. According to a 2022 regional impact assessment of our services, our health facilities and Safe Spaces were described as “absolutely essential” or “very important” by 95 and 87 percent of people served respectively, with over 99 percent stating that services provided made them feel cared for.

- Underfunding UNFPA-supported programmes deprives entire communities of life-saving SRH services, which translates to more mothers and their infants dying or facing the life-long consequences of obstetric and newborn complications. It also leads to the closure of Safe Spaces and health facilities, which provide life-saving care, protection and pathways to brighter futures for hundreds of thousands of women and girls every year.

- Since the onset of the crisis in 2011, UNFPA has endeavoured to deliver a harmonised regional response to ensure that women and girls are protected from violence while also having access to quality SRH services. UNFPA also leads or co-leads GBV and SRH coordination forums in order to ensure an expert-led response that is directly informed by the needs and voices of the people we serve.
This includes an appeal of $134.9 million to fund UNFPA’s regional Syria crisis response across the Whole of Syria, Türkiye, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt (36 percent funded), in addition to $33.6 million to fund its response to the February earthquakes in the Whole of Syria and Türkiye (43 percent funded), $7.2 million to fund the Lebanon Emergency Response Plan (14 percent funded), and $6.65 million to fund the Sudan Emergency Response Plan (7 percent funded).

In 2022 alone, UNFPA delivered SRH services to more than 2 million people, while more than 815,000 people were reached with services designed to prevent and respond to GBV, including around 290,000 adolescent girls. More than 142,000 women and girls were provided with cash and voucher assistance, and more than 12,000 LGBTQIA+ individuals were served.

“FINDING THE UNFPA-SUPPORTED SAFE SPACE WAS LIKE FINDING A NEW LEASE ON LIFE.”

— MIRA, a Syrian girl from Idleb, on accessing a UNFPA-supported facility
Among the millions of Syrians who have spent the last 12 years surviving conflict, displacement, economic collapse, and mounting risks to their safety, many feel their calls for help have been increasingly drowned out. And yet, despite the enormous challenges levelled against them, Syrians throughout the region refuse to give up. People of different ages and backgrounds, including women and girls who have survived GBV, continue to demonstrate remarkable resilience and determination. Many rise above their challenges and traumas to provide better prospects and opportunities for their children and loved ones, while others defy circumstances to become artists, activists, innovators, and influential voices in their communities.

Includes $33.6 million to fund UNFPA’s response to the February earthquakes in the Whole of Syria and Türkiye (43 percent funded), $7.2 million to fund the Lebanon Emergency Response Plan (14 percent funded), and 6.65 million to fund the Sudan Emergency Response Plan (7 percent funded).
UNFPA in Syria, operating through both its Syria and Türkiye Cross-Border offices, continues working to increase the availability of and access to SRH services throughout Syria, in addition to providing comprehensive GBV prevention and response services to people in need. Integration of reproductive health and GBV programming continues to be expanded through service delivery points such as static health clinics and mobile teams, as do efforts to improve the quality of GBV prevention and response activities at women and girls’ safe spaces.

UNFPA Syria will prioritise further integration of SRH and GBV services in clinics, Safe Spaces, and mobile teams to reach the most vulnerable women and girls in rural areas, camps, and collective shelters. UNFPA will also continue to use cash and voucher assistance and further explore opportunities to support women and girls to access essential GBV and SRH services, in addition to expanding the midwifery group to ensure the most vulnerable women in rural areas have access to essential SRH services, including antenatal and prenatal care and safe delivery.

Meanwhile, the menstrual hygiene management project will also continue in 2023 through supported facilities, particularly targeting communities affected by the drought in the north-east. Efforts will also be made to enhance linkages with early recovery and resilience initiatives, including investment in youth empowerment and livelihood opportunities for women and young people. The first pilot project in Syria to address social norms and practices to prevent intimate partner violence will continue during 2023 and will be piloted in selected communities in Aleppo in 2023.

Other GBV prevention approaches will be also applied in several locations in Syria, with a special focus on the inclusion of different groups such as men and adolescent girls. Inclusion of people with disabilities will be mainstreamed in all interventions with services tailored to their needs.

UNFPA Türkiye Cross-Border (XB) will strengthen the integration of quality SRH and GBV services in north-west Syria throughout 2023. UNFPA Türkiye XB will continue to prioritise social inclusion by targeting services and removing barriers for persons with disabilities, older persons and adolescent girls, vulnerable groups, and minor ethnic groups to ensure they have access to services, including in hard-to-reach areas, new displacement camps, and widow camps. UNFPA will continue promoting a protective environment for women and girls through positive community engagement aiming at challenging harmful behaviours and social norms.

Additionally, UNFPA Türkiye XB will promote resilience throughout north-west Syria by continuing cash and voucher assistance, though individual protection assistance and cash assistance to support case management and uptake of prenatal care. Additionally, building on lessons learnt from the pilot initiative conducted in 2022, UNFPA will scale up the implementation of income-generating activities through supported Safe Spaces.

Localisation is essential to ensuring that the response is effective, efficient, and sustainable. UNFPA believes that local actors have invaluable knowledge and insights, enabling them to design programs and initiatives that are grounded in the realities of the affected population. As such, UNFPA will continue engaging additional local organisations, particularly women-led and grassroots organisations, in addition to working with partners to ensure they have the support they need to co-lead the response, including through partnerships with some international partners.
UNFPA Türkiye will continue to focus on the provision of SRH services and GBV programming to women, girls, youth and refugees through women and girls safe spaces, youth centres, and municipal service centres. Within this framework, SRH and GBV services will include family planning services, antenatal care, postnatal care, counselling, GBV case management, social cohesion activities and empowerment programmes.

Specialised focus will particularly be given to guarantee the availability and accessibility of SRH services and commodities and increasing the effectiveness of GBV prevention and mitigating measures for women, girls and groups with specialised needs, who are survivors of the devastating earthquakes in February 2023. An estimated 9.1 million people living in the provinces were directly affected by the earthquakes, including around 1.7 million refugees.

In addition, capacity building of health service providers in the Ministry of Health (MoH), law enforcement officials in the Ministry of Interior, protection officers and other relevant service providers in the Presidency of Migration Management, municipalities and UNFPA supported service units will continue, especially to rebuild the service provision capacity in earthquake affected region.

As per the request of the MoH, capacity building activities in the health sector will continue as they increase the human capital of both newly recruited/current Syrian health personnel and Turkish health personnel (medical doctors, nurses, midwives) serving refugees at the health centres of the MoH, especially in earthquake affected provinces. In-service training on SRH counselling and MISP are provided to the health personnel to develop their capacities on responding to SRH needs of refugees.

UNFPA will continue to be one of the main providers of SRH commodities and dignity kits for women and girls, especially in earthquake affected provinces. Moreover, UNFPA will continue supporting specialised service units with an array of services that span SRH, GBV prevention and response, psychosocial support, and awareness raising activities for key refugee groups such as refugee LGBTQI+ individuals, sex workers, people living with or at risk of HIV, men and boys who are survivors of and/or at risk of sexual violence, adolescents, and refugees with disabilities.

UNFPA will also prioritise piloting innovative CVA mechanisms that can offer options and/or alternatives for the most vulnerable groups to access SRH commodities, menstrual hygiene management and protection in a safe and sound manner. Additionally, UNFPA will bolster its advocacy efforts on social norms and conduct additional assessments and capacity building training on menstrual hygiene management.
Lebanon continues to respond to various compounding crises, including a collapsing economy, the lack of a functional government, mounting social tensions, fuel and power shortages, and a significant refugee population, all of which are taking place in the midst of an unrelenting pandemic.

Responding to compounding crises, UNFPA Lebanon in 2023 will continue providing essential, lifesaving and life-sustaining SRH and GBV services throughout Lebanon to Syrian refugees, vulnerable Lebanese, Palestinian and migrant workers. SRH service delivery will continue to be subsidised for the poorest and marginalised populations, and GBV integration within public health facilities will be scaled up across humanitarian programme. UNFPA Lebanon will work with partners to strengthen networking and community mobilisation through the midwifery workforce and social workers, specifically aiming to ensure safe deliveries for pregnant women, including those affected by pandemic like Cholera and/or COVID-19.

Cash and voucher assistance programmes will also be expanded, focusing on menstrual hygiene management and GBV case management support making UNFPA the referral point for the sector for GBV recurrent cash assistance. Adolescent girls will be a particular focus group with the development of menstrual hygiene management (MHM) comprehensive approach on supplies and information.

“I OFTEN MEET [UNDER-AGE] GIRLS IN MY AREA WHO EITHER WANT TO GET MARRIED OR ARE FORCED TO. WHEN I WAS AT THEIR AGE, THERE WAS NO ONE TO GUIDE ME THROUGH THIS UNIMAGINABLE PRESSURE AND CONFUSION, BUT I WAS LUCKY ENOUGH TO SURVIVE THE EXPERIENCE. NOT EVERY GIRL WILL BE AS FORTUNATE.”

— INAYA, a Syrian girl living in Lebanon
UNFPA Jordan will continue supporting and strengthening the resilience of the national systems for delivering quality, comprehensive, integrated SRH services, including family planning, for all vulnerable women, youth, and adolescents, especially girls, using a health systems-building approach. This will be implemented through: a) Coordinating and strengthening partnerships with relevant agencies to promote access to SRH services; b) Ensuring the availability and accessibility of integrated, high-quality SRH information, services, and supplies; c) Improving preparedness, readiness, and functionality of public healthcare systems, and scaling up operationalisation of the comprehensive SRHR package, including emergency obstetric and newborn care (EmONC); d) Improving SRH referral pathways and network of services available; and e) Advancing emergency preparedness to respond to future shocks or crises.

Meanwhile, UNFPA will consolidate national partnerships, boosting sustainability and the development/humanitarian nexus but also promoting innovation and quality of survivor centred services. In 2023, a key objective is boosting reach while applying consistent standards, measurable behavioural change, using better data, and sustainably investing in national capacities. UNFPA will continue to support GBV service delivery points in three main refugee camps and urban areas across the country, building on achievements in disability inclusion and adolescent girls target programming. This will include investments in innovative approaches and a shift toward behavioural change programming to challenge gender norms and harmful practices.

“I WANT TO CONTINUE WORKING TO SUPPORT OTHER GIRLS. MY HOPE IS TO LAUNCH A PROJECT TO HELP THEM REALISE THAT THEY HAVE POWER AND PURPOSE; TO HELP THEM FIND THEIR PLACE AMIDST THE FEAR AND CONFUSION AND TO BELIEVE IN THEIR ABILITY TO CREATE A BETTER FUTURE FOR THEIR COMMUNITIES.”

— MAYA, who received support at a UNFPA-supported facility in Jordan

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23% FUNDED
UNFPA Iraq continues the transition from humanitarian to development responses, providing essential, lifesaving multi-sector GBV prevention and response activities and SRH services to host communities, internally displaced persons, refugees, and returnees.

Long-term recovery services will be offered to GBV survivors. In 2023, UNFPA will continue its efforts to hand over Safe Space operations to government agencies, in coordination with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Safe Spaces continue to be improved and expanded, while mental health and psychosocial support to GBV survivors and others in need will continue to be offered, with additional training and services being made available throughout Iraq through capacity building efforts.

UNFPA Iraq is also supporting SRH facilities at the community level and in returnee areas, providing an integrated SRH package to internally displaced people, returnees, refugees, and host communities. As part of this effort, UNFPA is working to generate demand for family planning by increasing awareness of methods, commodity availability, and commodity security. Continued capacity building and advocacy for essential SRH services is also being provided.

**2022 ACHIEVEMENTS**

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24% FUNDED

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“I WANT TO BE A JOURNALIST BECAUSE MY AND MANY OTHER STORIES NEED TO BE HEARD. I WANT TO DOCUMENT EVERYTHING: THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN AND THE COURAGE OF THE PEOPLE WHO CONTINUED TO WORK HARD FOR THE FUTURE OF THE SYRIAN PEOPLE.”

— NALIN, a girl living in Qushtapa Camp, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, who accessed services at a UNFPA-supported Safe Space.
UNFPA Egypt and its partners continue to build on existing good practices and national initiatives to combat various forms of GBV, through interventions with a two-fold focus: (i) to enhance the quality and efficiency of multi-sectoral specialised GBV services in the medical, legal, and social sectors as per the Essential Services Package, and (ii) to invest in raising public awareness, especially among vulnerable communities, on the existing services and how to access them. These interventions are building on UNFPA’s tested and successful initiatives in the field of combating GBV, namely through the support of Safe Women Clinics, currently adopted by the National Council for Women as a national approach to enhance medical response addressing violence against women.

UNFPA will continue to support Safe Spaces in various governorates, delivering vital services to survivors or those at risk of GBV. UNFPA is particularly focusing on mental health and well-being, with women and girls attending multiple MHPSS sessions that span sound therapy, yoga, psychological balance workshop, identity crisis and psychological support, group therapy, and others. GBV awareness raising activities were also delivered with a focus on the types of GBV, sexual harassment, and prevention using sports for GBV. Reproductive health awareness sessions were delivered to women and girls with topics including puberty, menstrual health, and hepatitis prevention.

UNFPA’s vision is to ensure accessibility and equal access to specialised public services for all GBV survivors regardless of their identification documents (undocumented migrants, refugees, displaced people), cultural backgrounds (Egyptians and non-Egyptians), and sex (men and women). These efforts include advocacy with government partners, high-level policy discussions, and public awareness campaigns on social inclusion and combating GBV towards all.

“SINCE I STARTED PARTICIPATING IN THE ACTIVITIES, ESPECIALLY THE SUPPORT GROUP, MY VOICE WENT UP AND I WAS ABLE TO TALK TO PEOPLE. I USED TO BE ISOLATED AND MY HUSBAND PUT ME DOWN, BUT I GOT MYSELF BACK UP AND LEARNED TO SAY ‘NO.’”

— FARAH, who recently accessed GBV programming at a UNFPA-supported facility in Egypt
WE’RE GRATEFUL

UNFPA is grateful for the support of the following donors during the Syria crisis

Current donors: Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, Canada, Denmark, The European Commission, Finland, France, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, USAID’s Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA), and the US Department of State Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (BPRM).

United Nations: The UN Central Emergency Response Fund, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Syria Cross-border Humanitarian Fund, the Syria Humanitarian Fund, and UNFPA core resources and Humanitarian Thematic Fund.

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