

UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND

# REGIONAL SITUATION REPORT

## FOR THE SYRIA CRISIS

ISSUE# 117  
MAY 2022

“ IF I HAD THE POWER, I WOULD CREATE A WORLD WITHOUT VIOLENCE, WHERE EVERY WOMAN AND GIRL CAN HAVE THE FREEDOM TO LIVE THE LIFE SHE WANTS.

— SAMAR, a young woman from Aleppo

### SNAPSHOT

As of May 2022, Syrians and host communities throughout the region continue to face the escalating impact of a protracted humanitarian crisis, further complicated by a deteriorating economy, continuing hostilities, and an unrelenting pandemic.

The crisis region, which spans the Whole of Syria, Türkiye, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt, continues to face a multitude of challenges, particularly in light of the recurrent waves of COVID-19 infections that continue to exacerbate existing needs. A decade into this protracted crisis, people in need continue to endure the cumulative effects of years of instability, the risks of which are even higher now due to the impacts of a far-reaching economic meltdown.

The Regional Situation Report for the Syria Crisis offers a bird's eye view of UNFPA's operations within the context of the Syria crisis. The report is prepared by the UNFPA Regional Humanitarian Hub for Syria and the Arab States in Amman, Jordan, and spans operations conducted by UNFPA offices in Türkiye, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt, in addition to operations conducted inside Syria from Damascus and cross-border via Türkiye.

In addition to providing aggregated quantitative results for each country involved in UNFPA's regional Syria response, this report also brings stories from the field that highlight the plight of communities inside Syria and in host countries, underscoring the positive impact of the response delivered by UNFPA in the areas of sexual and reproductive health, gender-based violence, youth engagement, and others. The report also covers UNFPA's efforts to ensure continuity of operations throughout the Syria crisis region during the COVID-19 pandemic.



# ISSUE #117

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VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS HAS BECOME A SERIOUS PROBLEM AFTER THE WAR. WE SIMPLY DO NOT FEEL SAFE ANYMORE.

– YUSRA, a Syrian woman from Qamishli

## IN THIS REPORT

SITUATION OVERVIEW	3
RESPONSE FROM ALL OPERATIONS	4
WHOLE OF SYRIA	5
SYRIA COUNTRY OFFICE	6
TÜRKİYE CROSS-BORDER	8
TÜRKİYE	10
LEBANON	12
JORDAN	14
IRAQ	16
EGYPT	18
COORDINATION	19
DONORS & PARTNERS	20

All photos shown in this issue, unless otherwise stated, are courtesy of the UNFPA Regional Humanitarian Hub for Syria and the Arab States (The Hub). Moreover, unless otherwise stated, photos do not directly correlate to the stories next to which they appear. Real names of survivors have been changed for confidentiality.

DEVELOPED BY THE UNFPA REGIONAL HUMANITARIAN HUB FOR SYRIA & THE ARAB STATES

[www.unfpa.org](http://www.unfpa.org)  
[www.ocha.org](http://www.ocha.org)  
[www.unhcr.org](http://www.unhcr.org)  
<http://syria.humanitarianresponse.info>

# THE SITUATION | 2022

## 11 YEARS ON, SYRIAN WOMEN AND GIRLS FEEL LEFT BEHIND

The year 2022 marked another grim milestone for Syrians throughout the region as the crisis entered its 12<sup>th</sup> year. For women and girls, the cumulative impact has been catastrophic, upending decades of progress on women's issues and bringing unprecedented risks that have fundamentally altered their realities.

Despite the continuing efforts of humanitarian actors, the situation in Syria remains dire, further complicated by a worsening economy, waves of hostilities and mass displacement, and the lingering aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. The crisis remains one of the world's most complex humanitarian and protection emergencies, with 14.6 million estimated in need of assistance, among them 7.2 million women and girls. This reflects a steep increase from the number of people in need reported in 2021 (13.4 million) and in 2020 (11.7 million).

When the crisis passed the decade mark in 2021, the world was already a year into the COVID-19 pandemic, and an array of other humanitarian situations were emerging. Among the millions of Syrians who have spent the last 11 years surviving conflict, displacement, economic collapse, and mounting risks to their safety, many feel their calls for help have been increasingly drowned out.

### Women and girls pay the steepest price

The crisis has created a daunting array of challenges for women and girls, who are paying the steepest price of ongoing hostilities, economic collapse, climate-related challenges, among others. The lives of Syrian women and girls are marked by mutually reinforcing forms of gender-based violence and gender discrimination. Highly unequal gender practices, often exacerbated by discriminatory attitudes based on age, displacement status, disability and/or marital status, create an environment in which women and girls are devalued, controlled, and blamed for the violence they face.

"Violence against women and girls has become so common after the crisis," explains Shaza, an adolescent girl from Qamishli. "Many women in my family are struggling and cannot find the right support. I see more women being beaten by men in their families, and sometimes in public."

Moreover, these risks are further compounded by the deteriorating economy and widespread poverty, lack and loss of livelihoods, destruction and loss of housing and property, protracted and multiple cycles of displacement, substandard living conditions (even for people in areas of relative stability), and shortage of natural resources. This is further increasing reliance on negative coping mechanisms such as early and forced marriage and sexual exploitation and abuse.



Even more alarming are the reports by women and girls stating that the violence against them has become normalised as a result of years of instabilities. Harassment, intimate partner and family violence, child and forced marriage and subsequent pregnancies, and sexual violence and exploitation are consistently reported, while new trends, such as various forms of technology-facilitated violence, have also been observed in recent years.

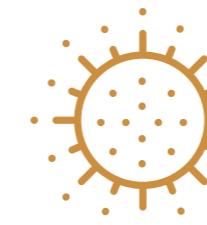
And yet, despite the enormous challenges levelled against them, Syrians throughout the region refuse to give up. People of different ages and backgrounds, including women and girls who have survived gender-based violence, continue to demonstrate remarkable resilience and determination. Many rise above 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.

### UNFPA continues to show up

UNFPA and humanitarian actors will continue to advocate for the rights and well-being of women and girls like Maram.

Between January and May 2022, as part of its regional response to the crisis, UNFPA delivered SRH services to more than 640,000 people, while more than 320,000 were reached with services designed to prevent and respond to gender-based violence, including more than 113,000 adolescent girls. Around 96,000 women were provided with cash assistance, and more than 3,200 LGBTQI+ individuals were served.

In 2022, UNFPA is appealing for a total of USD 144.3 million to fund its regional Syria crisis response, which spans the Whole of Syria, Türkiye, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt.



### TOTAL CONFIRMED CASES OF COVID-19 SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC

As of May 31, 2022

	SYRIA	TÜRKİYE	LEBANON
JORDAN	55,780	15,071,772	1,100,405
IRAQ	1,696,937	2,328,154	514,008



14.6 MILLION

Estimated people in need in Syria



3.7 MILLION

Women and girls of Reproductive age in need in Syria



7.1 MILLION

Refugees, asylum seekers, or stateless people in the region



500,000

Estimated pregnant women and girls in the crisis region

# RESPONSES FROM ALL OPERATIONS

OPERATIONS IMPLEMENTED THROUGHOUT THE REGION, INCLUDING THE WHOLE OF SYRIA, TÜRKİYE, LEBANON, JORDAN, IRAQ, AND EGYPT.

**643,135**

PEOPLE REACHED WITH  
REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES  
**92% FEMALE**

**11,436**

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES  
REACHED WITH VARIOUS SERVICES  
**75% FEMALE**

**321,739**

PEOPLE REACHED WITH  
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE SERVICES  
**92% FEMALE**

**22,784**

YOUNG PEOPLE ENGAGED  
THROUGH VARIOUS ACTIVITIES  
**71% FEMALE**

**95,983**

PEOPLE PROVIDED WITH  
CASH & VOUCHER ASSISTANCE  
**99% FEMALE**

**113,098**

ADOLESCENT GIRLS SUPPORTED  
THROUGH VARIOUS PROGRAMMES

**3,283**

LGBTQI+ INDIVIDUALS SUPPORTED  
THROUGH VARIOUS SERVICES

**7,584**

PEOPLE TRAINED ON  
VARIOUS TOPICS  
**81% FEMALE**

## REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

TOTAL % FEMALE

Family planning consultations	381,535	99%
Normal and assisted vaginal deliveries	10,908	100%
C-Sections	5,957	100%
Ante-natal care consultations	233,538	100%
Post-natal care consultations	51,122	100%
People trained on SRH-related topics	2,799	84%



**128**

PRIMARY HEALTHCARE  
FACILITIES \*



**104**

WOMEN AND GIRLS  
SAFE SPACES

## GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

TOTAL % FEMALE

People reached with dignity kits	45,070	97%
People provided with GBV case management	14,620	94%
People reached with GBV awareness messages	237,308	92%
People trained on GBV-related topics	3,433	79%



**27**

EMERGENCY OBSTETRIC  
CARE FACILITIES



**19**

YOUTH CENTRES

## YOUTH SERVICES

TOTAL % FEMALE

People trained on youth-related topics	1,352	79%
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**100**

MOBILE CLINICS



**76**

OTHER SERVICE  
DELIVERY POINTS

## AS THE CHALLENGES WORSEN, WOMEN AND GIRLS CONTINUE TO PAY THE PRICE.

The conflict in Syria has created one of the most severe and protracted humanitarian crises in the world today. Millions have been displaced both inside the country and outside as refugees, especially in Türkiye, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt. The crisis has permanently altered the fabric of society in Syria itself, with far-reaching ramifications for its future resilience.

Assessments and interviews conducted by UNFPA since 2016 have also been able to illustrate the profound effect that years of instability have had on women and girls, particularly adolescent girls, who face a variety of unique risks. Lack of individual autonomy, movement restrictions, forced and early marriage, denial of resources and opportunities, and sexual and physical violence continue to be part of their daily reality, creating a web of violence that can transcend generations.

Despite testing their limits, however, the crisis has also revealed the remarkable resilience of women and girls, many of whom defy enormous odds to become artists, activists, innovators, and other influential voices in their communities.

\* Above figures reflect fully-supported service-delivery points. Inside Syria, an additional 638 primary healthcare facilities are being partially supported through the Ministry of Health.

# ACROSS THE WHOLE OF SYRIA

ENSURING THAT ALL COMMUNITIES INSIDE SYRIA HAVE ACCESS TO LIFE-SAVING ASSISTANCE AND QUALITY SERVICES, EVEN IN LOCATIONS THAT ARE HARD TO REACH.

**415,353**

PEOPLE REACHED WITH  
REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES  
**91% FEMALE**

**4,322**

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES  
REACHED WITH VARIOUS SERVICES  
**92% FEMALE**

**245,328**

PEOPLE REACHED WITH  
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE SERVICES  
**94% FEMALE**

**9,306**

YOUNG PEOPLE ENGAGED  
THROUGH VARIOUS ACTIVITIES  
**60% FEMALE**

**95,023**

PEOPLE PROVIDED WITH  
CASH & VOUCHER ASSISTANCE  
**100% FEMALE**

## REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

TOTAL % FEMALE

Family planning consultations	160,323	99%
Normal and assisted vaginal deliveries	10,171	100%
C-Sections	5,883	100%
Ante-natal care consultations	202,287	100%
Post-natal care consultations	38,348	100%
People trained on SRH-related topics	964	89%



**98**  
PRIMARY HEALTHCARE  
FACILITIES \*



**50**  
WOMEN AND GIRLS  
SAFE SPACES

## GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

TOTAL % FEMALE

People reached with dignity kits	15,889	100%
People provided with GBV case management	11,550	98%
People reached with GBV awareness messages	193,448	94%
People trained on GBV-related topics	1,057	77%



**25**  
EMERGENCY OBSTETRIC  
CARE FACILITIES



**13**  
YOUTH CENTRES

## YOUTH SERVICES

TOTAL % FEMALE

People trained on youth-related topics	82	57%
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**87**  
MOBILE CLINICS



**61**  
OTHER SERVICE  
DELIVERY POINTS

In 2014, the Whole of Syria (WoS) approach was introduced across the United Nations, authorised initially by UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2165 in 2014. This allowed cross-border humanitarian assistance from Iraq, Jordan, and Türkiye. Successive UNSCRs extended and adapted this, eventually reducing to cross-border assistance from Türkiye exclusively. On July 11, 2021, the resolution was extended for an additional six months, with the proposed extension of a further six months subject to the Secretary General's report. The continuation of this large, UN-led humanitarian operation is vital to reach those most in need. In addition to the Whole of Syria approach under the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), there has been a succession of comprehensive Regional Refugee and Resilience Plans (3RPs) since 2014, which aim to coordinate and align responses to Syrian refugees and affected host communities across Türkiye, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Türkiye.



WHEN I FINALLY FOUND MY WAY TO THE SAFE SPACE, I WAS SURPRISED AT HOW QUICKLY I BEGAN TO FEEL A CHANGE. THE KIND PEOPLE THERE GAVE ME THE HOPE I THOUGHT I'D NEVER GET BACK.

— RULA, a Syrian woman from Damascus

\* Above figures reflect fully-supported service-delivery points. Inside Syria, an additional 638 primary healthcare facilities are being partially supported through the Ministry of Health.

# SYRIA COUNTRY OFFICE

DELIVERING EMERGENCY AND LONG-TERM ASSISTANCE TO SYRIAN COMMUNITIES IN NEED  
THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY, WITH A FOCUS ON WOMEN AND GIRLS.

**370,199**

PEOPLE REACHED WITH  
REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES  
99% FEMALE

**201,640**

PEOPLE REACHED WITH  
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE SERVICES  
98% FEMALE

**9,306**

YOUNG PEOPLE ENGAGED  
THROUGH VARIOUS ACTIVITIES  
60% FEMALE

**94,153**

PEOPLE PROVIDED WITH  
CASH & VOUCHER ASSISTANCE  
100% FEMALE

**2,681**

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES  
REACHED WITH VARIOUS SERVICES  
93% FEMALE

**62,929**

ADOLESCENT GIRLS SUPPORTED  
THROUGH VARIOUS PROGRAMMES

**1,234**

PEOPLE TRAINED ON  
VARIOUS TOPICS  
84% FEMALE

## REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

	TOTAL	% FEMALE
Family planning consultations	155,178	99%
Normal and assisted vaginal deliveries	3,961	100%
C-Sections	3,883	100%
Ante-natal care consultations	177,752	100%
Post-natal care consultations	26,425	100%
People trained on SRH-related topics	834	90%



92  
PRIMARY HEALTHCARE  
FACILITIES\*



35  
WOMEN AND GIRLS  
SAFE SPACES

## GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

	TOTAL	% FEMALE
People reached with dignity kits	15,889	100%
People provided with GBV case management	10,643	97%
People reached with GBV awareness messages	163,724	99%
People trained on GBV-related topics	318	74%



19  
EMERGENCY OBSTETRIC  
CARE FACILITIES



13  
YOUTH CENTRES

## YOUTH SERVICES

	TOTAL	% FEMALE
People trained on youth-related topics	82	57%



86  
MOBILE CLINICS



61  
OTHER SERVICE  
DELIVERY POINTS

“WE HAVE TO SHOW COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION AND MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO KEEP LEARNING BECAUSE IT IS THE ONLY WAY TO MAKE OUR DREAMS COME TRUE.”

– HANIN, a young woman from Deir-ez-Zor

\* Above figures reflect fully-supported service-delivery points. Inside Syria, an additional 638 primary healthcare facilities are being partially supported through the Ministry of Health.

# IN SYRIA, UNFPA CONTINUES TO PROVIDE SUPPORT TO THOSE MOST MARGINALISED, WITH A FOCUS ON WOMEN AND GIRLS.

AS THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC WOES CONTINUE, WOMEN AND GIRLS FACE MOUNTING CHALLENGES, INCLUDING DENIAL OF RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES.

UNFPA Syria continues to focus on building the capacities of partners and community members who are supporting the implementation of its programmes throughout Syria.

In May, UNFPA focused on the city of Deir-ez-Zor, where 15 members of community-appointed committees were trained on various aspects of the cash and voucher assistance (CVA) process. Over the course of three days, the members, who serve a crucial function in the delivery of cash and voucher assistance to those most in need, were given an in-depth overview of UNFPA's approach to CVA, including the objectives of these programmes, their roles and duties in the process, the criteria for identifying beneficiaries, and ways of monitoring and evaluating the impact of these programmes. The training was conceived to ensure that all individuals involved in CVA delivery have a solid understanding of the protection aspects of CVA programming as well as the established good practices for delivering such services.

In Damascus, UNFPA's GBV team also organised a training programme for staff from UNFPA and partner organisations, with a focus on establishing a more solid understanding of GBV, its underlying causes, UNFPA's survivor-centred approach, among other key topics. The training brought together representatives from all response hubs UNFPA is operating throughout Syria who will in turn pass on the knowledge learned to other teams involved in the response.

The city of Deir-ez-Zour also saw an increasing number of students arriving from neighbouring areas to undertake their national secondary education examinations, with hundreds of students reaching accommodation centres throughout the city often following exhausting and potentially dangerous journeys. UNFPA worked with a local partner to ensure that integrated SRH and GBV services are available at least twice a week, providing dignity kits, essential medical examinations, and referral to those seeking services. These teams operated in tandem with a static clinic in the city as well as two mobile teams covering rural locations to the east and west.

## Keeping the dream alive against all odds

"There were many challenges along the way that could have pushed us beyond our capacities to give up on our goals, but we refused to do that," says 19-year-old Hanin, who went back to school after 7 years of dropping out. Like her, many girls surviving the ongoing crisis in Syria are being forced out of school due to displacement, economic factors, the lack of functional schools, or – in many cases – simply because they are girls.

**'There were many challenges along the way that could have pushed us beyond our capacities'**

"Perhaps the most painful aspect of it is the fact that while many believe in us and in nurturing our dreams, for others we are simply girls who are unworthy of an education," explains Hanin, the words clearly heavy on her heart. Despite the injustice of it, girls like Hanin continue to defy these harmful norms, refusing to "raise the white flag." Instead, they've grown accustomed to making use of every available opportunity to learn new skills, feel empowered, and realise their full potential.

Hanin is among 66 other girls and 150 students of grades nine through twelve who braved the long journey from hard-to-reach areas in eastern Syria to the city of Deir-ez-Zor, where they are undertaking their national secondary education examination for this school year. Hanin's journey began in her native Baghuz village, taking her and her peers through 140 km of rough, dry desert, where temperatures can reach as high as 45° celsius. The journey, which sees students spending up to a month in the city, is an expensive ordeal that is often out of reach for many, costing around USD 200 per student.

**'While many believe in us and in nurturing our dreams, for others we are simply girls who are unworthy of an education'**

"I've come to a city where I don't know anyone, and where I have no safe place to stay. I've come only with the hope and the will to pass the exams," adds Hanin, whose dream is to pursue a university degree in English or psychology.

For Hanin's family, the costs of formal education have become prohibitive in recent years, made worse by the continuing aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and the crippling economic crisis facing the country. The rising cost of living became particularly prohibitive after her father, who is the sole breadwinner in their household, reached retirement age. Fortunately, Hanin's resourcefulness has allowed her to traverse this challenge by resorting to the internet, where a growing number of Syrian educators are uploading free classes in the hope of preventing students in her situation from being left behind.

**'I've come only with the hope and the will to pass the exams'**

"I have not seen the inside of a classroom since I dropped out of school in the sixth grade," says Hanin, who passed her Grade 9 exams last year with flying colours and fully intends to do the same this year. "I've been simply relying on self-learning and the online courses being made available."

In an effort to alleviate some of the stress the students often face on their journeys, UNFPA and other UN agencies continue to prioritise their needs in their responses, providing accommodation, transportation, integrated health and protection services, healthy meals and clean drinking water, and supplementary education sessions throughout the examination period. UNFPA continues to liaise with local partners to focus on delivering quality integrated SRH and protection services, including the delivery of dignity kits as well as essential medical and referral services. UNFPA-supported mobile teams are also conducting visits to accommodation sites hosting female students to provide specialised SRH and psychosocial support services.

"We have to show commitment to education and make every effort to keep learning because it is the only way to make our dreams come true," concludes Hanin.



# TÜRKİYE CROSS-BORDER

ENSURING THAT ALL COMMUNITIES INSIDE SYRIA HAVE ACCESS TO QUALITY SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE SERVICES.

**45,154**

PEOPLE REACHED WITH  
REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES  
**24% FEMALE**

**1,641**

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES  
REACHED WITH VARIOUS SERVICES  
**91% FEMALE**

**43,688**

PEOPLE REACHED WITH  
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE SERVICES  
**76% FEMALE**

**20,651**

ADOLESCENT GIRLS SUPPORTED  
THROUGH VARIOUS PROGRAMMES

**870**

PEOPLE PROVIDED WITH  
CASH & VOUCHER ASSISTANCE  
**57% FEMALE**

**869**

PEOPLE TRAINED ON  
VARIOUS TOPICS  
**79% FEMALE**

## REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

TOTAL % FEMALE

Family planning consultations	5,145	100%
Normal and assisted vaginal deliveries	6,210	100%
C-Sections	2,000	100%
Ante-natal care consultations	24,535	100%
Post-natal care consultations	11,923	100%
People trained on SRH-related topics	130	84%



**6**  
PRIMARY HEALTHCARE  
FACILITIES\*



**15**  
WOMEN AND GIRLS  
SAFE SPACES

## GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

TOTAL % FEMALE

People provided with GBV case management	907	99%
People reached with GBV awareness messages	29,724	69%
People trained on GBV-related topics	739	78%



**6**  
EMERGENCY OBSTETRIC  
CARE FACILITIES



**1**  
MOBILE CLINIC



IT WAS NOT EASY TO ENGAGE PEOPLE OR TO OPENLY TALK ABOUT THESE SUBJECTS, BUT IT WAS VERY IMPORTANT BECAUSE VIOLENCE IS WIDESPREAD AT THE CAMP.

– MONA, a Syrian woman from Idlib

# IN NORTH-WESTERN SYRIA, UNFPA CONTINUES TO RESPOND TO ONGOING DISPLACEMENTS, HOSTILITIES, AND EXTREME CONDITIONS

AS NEW DISPLACEMENTS ARE RECORDED IN MAY, UNFPA CONTINUES TO FOCUS ON EMPOWERING WOMEN AND GIRLS THROUGH VARIOUS PROGRAMMES DESIGNED TO COMBAT AND RESPOND TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE.

A far-reaching humanitarian crisis continues to unfold in north-western Syria, with 9,852 new displacements recorded in May 2022 – the highest number recorded since December 2021. According to UN OCHA, despite 1,039 trucks having delivered urgent supplies through the Bab-Al-Hawa crossing-point, the humanitarian needs continued to outweigh the response. UNFPA estimates that 1,250,000 women in north-western Syria are of reproductive age and in need of life-saving and life-sustaining protection and services. It is estimated that an average of 96,750 women are pregnant at any given time and around 10,230 pregnant women give birth on a monthly basis. At present, 1.2 million women and girls, including pregnant and lactating women, are dependent on United Nations cross-border assistance authorised by the Security Council.

In May, artillery shelling occurred almost daily and an increase in airstrikes was reported, placing the lives of women and children at greater risk. Women and girls in particular continue to face the growing risks of gender-based violence, particularly among more vulnerable groups such as displaced women and adolescent girls. Meanwhile, the overall COVID-19 situation continued to improve in north-western Syria, with only 51 new COVID-19 cases and 10 deaths officially recorded, compared to 284 cases and 14 deaths in April.

As the sole provider of SRH medicines and supplies to north-western Syria, UNFPA has continued to tranship goods from Türkiye into Syria to serve those most in need. So far this year, more than 500 SRH kits, including 50 post-rape treatment kits, have been distributed to health facilities, which provide a wide range of essential services that include emergency obstetric and newborn care and primary health care with SRH outpatient and mobile clinics. The delivered kits are covering the needs of around 1 million beneficiaries for six months.

UNFPA's partners continued to prioritise targeted efforts towards shifting unequal and negative social norms that underpin GBV, especially intimate partner violence, child marriage, and sexual violence. In May, 9,475 beneficiaries were reached through GBV prevention initiatives and partners continued to use standardised GBV messages to reach women, adolescent girls, men, and adolescent boys. This has fostered consistency and complementarity in GBV messaging shared by all partners and personnel involved. In May, UNFPA's partners delivered 7,869 structured awareness raising sessions aimed at shifting negative perceptions, attitudes and behaviours around gender equality and power imbalances of a diverse range of community groups, including men and boys and religious leaders.

UNFPA also continued to provide comprehensive support to women and girls in north-western Syria through cash and voucher assistance. CVA has been provided both in the context of protection (case management), and to reduce the existing barriers to essential services. In May, 22 women experiencing gender-based violence, including denial of resources, received cash assistance to buy essential items, such as clothes, hygiene products and other essential items. The assistance received significantly contributed to mitigate psychological and economic pressure, foster their resilience, and enhance their mental wellbeing.

## In the words of Mona, a woman from Idlib, north-western Syria, who is among the millions currently displaced

"One day, my four-year old son, Omar, came to me and told me that a boy he didn't know had done something very bad to him. I wasn't sure what had happened because he had been alone at home at the time. He was visibly distraught and complained of strong abdominal pain, so I decided to take him to the health centre. After a first medical check, the doctor referred us to a caseworker.

## 'I disclosed to her what I had feared: that Omar had been sexually assaulted by a stranger'

"I disclosed to her what I had feared: that Omar had been sexually assaulted by a stranger. Since my husband's death, I've been forced to leave him alone all day to earn a living to provide for the family. I was shaking. I did not know what to do. The caseworker tried to reassure me, saying that it was not my fault.

"After asking for my consent, she immediately referred us to a paediatrician to receive urgent medical care. She also proposed to develop an action and safety plan for Omar and myself

given the additional risks we were facing. Omar received psychological support in a children's centre and I received a similar service directly at the health facility. This was very useful to relieve some of the stress caused by the situation and to understand how to better support my son through this difficult journey.

## 'I thought it was living in relative safety, but I was wrong ... After the incident, I became terrified of everyone around me'

"I also attended a vocational training programme that helped build my professional skills and secure additional income for my family.

"Finally, I shared with the caseworker my concerns about the security situation in the camp. I thought it was living in relative safety, but I was wrong. After the incident, I became terrified of everyone around me.

"The caseworker agreed with my concerns and organised awareness raising sessions to exchange with other parents and neighbours about the risks related to violence and its consequences. It was not easy to engage people or to openly talk about these subjects, but it was very important because violence is widespread at the camp."



# TÜRKİYE COUNTRY OFFICE

WITH THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF SYRIAN REFUGEES IN THE CRISIS REGION, TÜRKİYE CONTINUES TO PROVIDE MUCH-NEEDED ASSISTANCE TO DISPLACED SYRIANS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY.

**49,731**

PEOPLE REACHED WITH  
REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES

78% FEMALE

**5,606**

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES  
REACHED WITH VARIOUS SERVICES

55% FEMALE

**28,894**

PEOPLE REACHED WITH  
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE SERVICES

78% FEMALE

**5,863**

ADOLESCENT GIRLS SUPPORTED  
THROUGH VARIOUS PROGRAMMES

**9,775**

YOUNG PEOPLE ENGAGED  
THROUGH VARIOUS ACTIVITIES

84% FEMALE

**2,548**

LGBTQI+ INDIVIDUALS SUPPORTED  
THROUGH VARIOUS SERVICES

**456**

PEOPLE PROVIDED WITH  
CASH & VOUCHER ASSISTANCE

49% FEMALE

**3,181**

PEOPLE TRAINED ON  
VARIOUS TOPICS

71% FEMALE

## REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

TOTAL % FEMALE

Family planning consultations

17,713 91%

Ante-natal care consultations

10,136 100%

Post-natal care consultations

7,093 100%

People trained on SRH-related topics

821 65%



4

WOMEN AND GIRLS  
SAFE SPACES \*



14

OTHER SERVICE  
DELIVERY POINTS

## GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

TOTAL % FEMALE

People reached with dignity kits

14,398 91%

People provided with GBV case management

1,189 63%

People reached with GBV awareness messages

19,884 82%

People trained on GBV-related topics

1,272 63%



10

MOBILE CLINICS



4

YOUTH CENTRES

## YOUTH SERVICES

TOTAL % FEMALE

People trained on youth-related topics

1,088 85%

“THESE DAYS WHEN I FEEL THE LOSS OF MY MOTHER, I FEEL THE SUPPORT OF THE WOMEN HERE, AND I FEEL BETTER.”

— RIMA, a Syrian woman from Raqqa, who accessed services at a UNFPA-supported Safe Space

\* Safe Spaces in Türkiye are providing an integrated response to refugees in need, including both gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health services in the same facility.

# IN TÜRKİYE, UNFPA CONTINUES TO CHAMPION THE RIGHTS AND WELLBEING OF THOSE MOST MARGINALISED POPULATIONS

AS TÜRKİYE CONTINUES TO FACE A MOUNTING ECONOMIC CRISIS, UNFPA IS COMMITTED TO WORKING WITH GOVERNMENT AND LOCAL PARTNERS TO ENSURE THAT WOMEN AND GIRLS ARE NOT LEFT BEHIND.

As of May 2022, the well-being of the Syrian refugees in Türkiye continues to deteriorate. A report published by the Community-Based Protection and Social Cohesion Task Force in May revealed a number of stark findings, including the fact that Syrian nationals are increasingly feeling a shift in the local community's perception of them following the economic downturn and marked inflation Türkiye is experiencing. Many participants shared their hesitation of speaking Arabic in public due to hostile reactions by the host community, indicating that the negative discourse on Turkish media does not only affect their psychological wellbeing but is increasingly reinforcing their fears due to discriminatory statements and attitudes. Peer bullying cases are increasing among school students, while almost half of participants stated that they do not feel secure in their neighbourhoods.

Moreover, findings from other studies on social cohesion, highlighted that these tensions are being fuelled by a multitude of factors which, in addition to economics, include the growing politicisation of refugees, misinformation, and poor planning by service providers (such as aid programmes that exclusively target refugees). Meanwhile, language barriers and geographical divisions due to "Ghettoization" are also contributing to the divide, further exacerbated by an overall lack of interest by members of both communities to take part in joint events.

In an effort to respond to these alarming challenges, UNFPA has been consistently integrating social cohesion and economic empowerment activities into its SRH and GBV programming. The social cohesion activities aim to bring together women and young people from refugee and host communities for casual discussions,

outdoor and sport activities, visits to historical sites and cultural events, culinary activities, among others. In the context of life skills education and socioeconomic empowerment activities, refugees attend language courses (including Arabic, Turkish and English), literacy courses, and speaking clubs that offer a safe environment where they can practice their language skills and gain the confidence to express themselves more freely.

In May, in order to strengthen the capacity of partner staff on the provision of SRH and GBV services, UNFPA conducted a series of training sessions on various topics, including sexual violence against children, as well as outreach activities for refugees. One training programme focused on good practices in reproductive health, benefiting 49 health professionals from migrant health centres operated by the Ministry of Health in Diyarbakır, Batman, Malatya, Mardin, Ankara, İzmir, Muğla, Manisa, and Denizli. Also, supervision and monitoring visits were conducted to these centres.

Moreover, in an effort to strengthen referral pathways within the response, UNFPA provided a training for UNHCR's Refugee Protection Unit and the Istanbul Bar Association on key refugee groups (i.e. LGBTQI+, refugees living with HIV, sex workers) to raise awareness of service providers on the group-specific needs and gaps when it comes to accessing services. In addition, four training sessions were provided to members of the Ankara Metropolitan Municipality ANFA Security Unit on violence against women and the ways of responding to it, with each session reaching around 30 attendees.

## 'I feel the support of the women here': How Rima found hope at a UNFPA-supported Safe Space

Rima is a thirty-four year old woman, born in Raqqa, Syria. She's illiterate, having never gone to school or provided informal education. When she was fourteen, she had a prearranged marriage to her first cousin – a coping mechanism that has become all too common, particularly following the Syria crisis. Today, she has three children, two of whom were born with moderate mental and physical disabilities.

**'Citizens of Türkiye who are living with disabilities are able to benefit from rehabilitation services, but we Syrians cannot'**

Eight years ago, together with her husband and children, she immigrated to Türkiye and has since been unable to see her parents and siblings in Syria. The staff at the UNFPA-supported Safe Space in Diyarbakır first met Rima on a household visit, during which they listened to her story and provided basic information on the services provided at the space. Shortly after the household visit, Rima visited the Safe Space to

meet with a social worker – a meeting that proved essential to her wellbeing. In addition to suffering from extreme anxiety due to her financial situation, she also suffered from a sleeping disorder caused by several factors, including the recent passing of her mother and the feelings of regret that plagued her for not being able to go to Syria and see her for the last time. She was also the primary caregiver of two children with disabilities, which further contributed to her anxiety.

**'It's very difficult to take care of two children with disabilities'**

In Türkiye, refugees under temporary protection status cannot receive special education and rehabilitation services – a fact that affects caregivers in many ways. As Rima explained in the meeting, "it's very difficult to take care of two children with disabilities, I am responsible for all of their needs. They are growing day by day, and I find it more difficult to take care of them. I started to have pain in my back. Citizens of Türkiye who are living with disabilities are able to benefit from rehabilitation services, but we Syrians cannot. If my

children were able to access specialised education and services, they would be better. They'd at least be able to get their own water or go to the toilet by themselves."

**'I've made many friends at this Safe Space'**

At the Safe Space, the social worker helped Rima to complete an application for support to the Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundation. Additional support was also requested from a local NGO to provide healthcare for one of Rima's boys with disability. Rima was invited to group awareness sessions to help reinforce her resilience with new information and general advice on critical issues facing migrants and refugees, particularly women and girls.

"I've made many friends at this Safe Space," said Rima after the sessions. "I started thinking about things I had never thought of before. I am trying to change the way I communicate inside the house. I'm trying to take time for myself. These days when I feel the loss of my mother, I feel the support of the women here, and I feel better."



# LEBANON COUNTRY OFFICE

UNFPA CONTINUES TO ADAPT ITS PROGRAMMES TO PROVIDE LIFE-SAVING SERVICES TO PEOPLE IN NEED, WITH A FOCUS ON WOMEN AND GIRLS.

**27,444**

PEOPLE REACHED WITH  
REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES

100% FEMALE

**19,514**

PEOPLE REACHED WITH  
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE SERVICES

95% FEMALE

**448**

PEOPLE PROVIDED WITH  
CASH & VOUCHER ASSISTANCE

100% FEMALE

**812**

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES  
REACHED WITH VARIOUS SERVICES

100% FEMALE

**5,338**

ADOLESCENT GIRLS SUPPORTED  
THROUGH VARIOUS PROGRAMMES

**733**

LGBTQI+ INDIVIDUALS SUPPORTED  
THROUGH VARIOUS SERVICES

**1,573**

PEOPLE TRAINED ON  
VARIOUS TOPICS

99% FEMALE

## REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

TOTAL % FEMALE

Family planning consultations

3,509 100%

Ante-natal care consultations

250 100%

Post-natal care consultations

2,143 100%

People trained on SRH-related topics

479 100%



5  
PRIMARY HEALTHCARE  
FACILITIES



12  
WOMEN AND GIRLS  
SAFE SPACES

## GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

TOTAL % FEMALE

People reached with dignity kits

12,955 100%

People provided with GBV case management

179 98%

People reached with GBV awareness messages

3,706 81%

People trained on GBV-related topics

1,072 98%



3  
MOBILE CLINICS

## YOUTH SERVICES

TOTAL % FEMALE

People trained on youth-related topics

22 100%



MANY COMMUNITIES DO NOT REALISE THAT WAY THEY TREAT US WOMEN IS UNFAIR AND HARMFUL. THIS IS WHY I AM COMMITTED TO THESE AWARENESS SESSIONS. THEY ARE HELPING WOMEN UNDERSTAND THEIR RIGHTS.

– NARJIS, a Syrian woman from Idlib

# DESPITE A COLLAPSING ECONOMY AND MOUNTING CHALLENGES, UNFPA LEBANON CONTINUES TO TARGET THOSE MOST IN NEED

## UNFPA is targeting marginalised communities as Lebanon experiences another difficult year.

Lebanon continues to be assailed by compounding crises that span ongoing economic collapse, recurrent waves of COVID-19, and a growing food security crisis exacerbated by the ongoing war in Ukraine and the lingering effects of the 2020 Beirut Port blast. The Lebanese Lira continues to deteriorate massively accompanied with a disastrous inflation. The deleterious situation is worsening the hardships faced by all population groups, but women and girls continue to face greater risks of gender-based violence and discrimination.

Lebanon's parliamentary elections, which took place on May 15, continued to dominate public discourse in Lebanon, sparking unrest and social tensions. The UN Special Coordinator for Lebanon Joanna Wronecka congratulated Lebanon on holding timely parliamentary elections as a "first step in response to people's expectations." Wronecka had met with Lebanese House Speaker Nabih Berri as well as new women parliamentarians who won seats in the election, expressing the UN's commitment to supporting increased women's participation in politics.

The Lebanese lira reached an all-time low in May, trading at 37,900 against the U.S. dollar on the black market – a daunting 95 percent depreciation in its pre-crisis value. The World Bank estimates that four out of every five people in Lebanon are considered poor, particularly given the unprecedented rise in fuel prices and the overall costs of living. Queues at gas stations have been observed across Lebanon, with shortages linked to delays due to the parliamentary elections.

The situation has led to many protests taking place by various segments of the population, including owners of private hospitals and healthcare personnel, retirees of the national security and peacekeeping sectors, and disgruntled voters. Multiple standoffs were recorded

between voters and delegates from political parties inside and in the vicinity of polling stations across Lebanon, leaving several people injured. Employees of major mobile networks in Lebanon held an open strike that led to the closure of all corporate stores and bill payment services. Patients undergoing treatment for cancer and other life-threatening diseases also staged a sit-in demanding additional funding to procure their essential medications.

UNFPA continues to respond to the volatile situation by prioritising the well-being of women and girls and other marginalised groups, including LGBTQI+ individuals, people with disabilities, refugees, and others. UNFPA works closely with government partners, local NGOs, and UN agencies to ensure that SRH and GBV are integrated into emergency responses. UNFPA also responds to increased risk of GBV supporting services for survivors, both as a stand-alone focus and as an integrated into the sexual and reproductive health supported programs. UNFPA applies a unique approach that bridges protection, gender equality, and sexual and reproductive health and rights in humanitarian action.

In 2022, UNFPA is also focusing on delivering cash and voucher assistance to those most in need, adopting a unique approach that lends particular attention to protection risks and outcomes. Increased transportation fees continue to negatively affect the ability of potential beneficiaries from reaching service delivery locations; however, UNFPA is tackling the challenge by providing Cash for Transportation assistance (Cft). In May, 171 cases benefited from CFT allowances based on the distance they need to travel and how often they attend support sessions.

## 'Her story proves that nothing is impossible': A GBV specialist reflects on the importance of serving women in need

With a background in medical social work, Rayane has been working as a GBV Officer at a UNFPA-supported facility for the past four years. Her work consists of following up with individuals who have either survived or are at medium to high risk of GBV. Her responsibilities involve conducting assessments for cash and voucher assistance and monitoring psychosocial support activities to ensure that standards of quality are met. She's also part of the SGBV Taskforce and is currently a focal point on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse.

*'I know the challenges they endure, especially when they're vulnerable, as I myself was at that position'*

Rayane has always had a dedication to helping others, particularly pregnant women in need. As she explains, "I know the challenges they endure, especially when they're vulnerable, as I myself was at that position. I've even given awareness sessions while pregnant myself."

Rayane has always believed that standing by women is a must, particularly in areas where GBV persists. "I know that my work makes a difference every single day, but I remember one particular time where my

efforts really counted in one woman's life," says Rayan. "She was a survivor of gender-based violence who was able to access psychosocial support as well as cash and voucher assistance to escape her abusive environment. Not only was she able to relocate to a safer location but she felt incredibly motivated by the support sessions that she registered for vocational training, which helped her find work and become fully self-reliant. Her story proves that nothing is impossible."

*'Not only was she able to relocate to a safer location but she felt incredibly motivated by the support sessions that she registered for vocational training'*

Rayane has also been participating in training programmes conducted by UNFPA to further broaden her skills and expertise on the topics of GBV and women's empowerment. "These training sessions have helped me become more experienced in GBV mitigation and response and to share knowledge and expertise with others working in different contexts. They also serve as good reminders of the work we still have to do to eradicate this phenomenon."



# JORDAN COUNTRY OFFICE

WITH 1.3 MILLION SYRIANS NATIONWIDE, UNFPA IN JORDAN CONTINUES TO PROVIDE ESSENTIAL SERVICES TO REFUGEES AND HOST COMMUNITIES NATIONWIDE.

**42,448**

PEOPLE REACHED WITH  
REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES

100% FEMALE

**533**

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES  
REACHED WITH VARIOUS SERVICES

97% FEMALE

**22,621**

PEOPLE REACHED WITH  
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE SERVICES

86% FEMALE

**3,572**

ADOLESCENT GIRLS SUPPORTED  
THROUGH VARIOUS PROGRAMMES

**3,407**

YOUNG PEOPLE ENGAGED  
THROUGH VARIOUS ACTIVITIES

65% FEMALE

**181**

PEOPLE TRAINED ON  
VARIOUS TOPICS

69% FEMALE

**56**

PEOPLE PROVIDED WITH  
CASH & VOUCHER ASSISTANCE

100% FEMALE

## REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

TOTAL % FEMALE

Family planning consultations	7,589	100%
Normal and assisted vaginal deliveries	542	100%
Ante-natal care consultations	14,570	100%
Post-natal care consultations	1,907	100%
People trained on SRH-related topics	51	100%



16  
PRIMARY HEALTHCARE FACILITIES

19  
WOMEN AND GIRLS SAFE SPACES

## GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

TOTAL % FEMALE

People provided with GBV case management	955	92%
People reached with GBV awareness messages	11,455	82%
People trained on GBV-related topics	30	100%



1  
EMERGENCY OBSTETRIC CARE FACILITY

1  
YOUTH CENTRE

## YOUTH SERVICES

TOTAL % FEMALE

People trained on youth-related topics	100	43%
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**I FELL TO THE FLOOR AND BURST INTO TEARS, AND I SIMPLY RECALL MYSELF PLEADING FOR PROTECTION. THE ANXIETY HAD REACHED SUCH DEEP LEVELS THAT IT MADE ME FEEL OVERWHELMED.**

— SALMA, who recently received gender-based violence support at a UNFPA-supported facility in Jordan

# UNFPA JORDAN CONTINUES TO WORK WITH LOCAL PARTNERS TO PROTECT AND EMPOWER WOMEN AND GIRLS

## 'I was able to turn the page and start over': Salma's triumphant journey

At 37, Salma, a Syrian refugee living in Jordan, is no stranger to life-altering experiences. As she narrates her story, she describes experiences shared by countless women and girls in the wake of the Syria crisis, many of whom are yet to find their way to a better life.

**'I experienced the worst forms of abuse, humiliation, and sexual violence, and I lived through the most gut-wrenching moments.'**

Before she was able to escape the war, Salma had been detained by the military and subjected to various forms of gender-based violence. As she recalls, "I experienced the worst forms of abuse, humiliation, and sexual violence, and I lived through the most gut-wrenching moments. I wished for death many times; I wished to close my eyes forever, to erase from my memory all the painful and disturbing images."

As she speaks to the case manager at the Institute for Family Health (IFH), one of UNFPA Jordan's partners operating in the Zaatari refugee camp, Salma recalls the questions that plagued her as she survived these experiences.

"Why me? What did I do?"

For nearly a year, Salma endured sexual violence and exploitation while in detention. In 2013, she was able to flee with her three children to Jordan, but the trauma continued to haunt her every day and night. To this day, she still lives in fear and uncertainty.

"The experience of sexual violence destroyed me and made me weaker. I was tired of self-blame. I became surrounded by memories that exhausted me, nightmares and vivid dreams that prevented me from enjoying my life even after my release from prison, and these experiences are still vividly there when I close my eyes," says Salma.

Like many other refugee women, Salma faced difficulties adjusting to the camp's environment. She was also forced by her family to marry a man she did not want, who also turned out to be abusive. As she explains, "I couldn't take it anymore. I hated my life and hated men. I only married him because my family forced me to! When we are in a closed room, all the memories from the detention return. I feel afraid, but where can I escape?... I did not want this life anymore."

**'The experience of sexual violence destroyed me and made me weaker'**

In addition to living with constant fear, anxiety, and distrust in herself and others, Salma experienced recurring physical pain as well as disturbances in her sleep and appetite. She isolated herself from everyone she cared about, the negative thoughts gradually chipping away at her psyche.

Through the outreach team in Zaatari camp, Salma was introduced to the services provided at the UNFPA-supported Safe Space operated by IFH. "When I arrived at the Safe Space, I quickly felt that everything would change, and indeed that is what happened!"

Salma was attended by a case manager at the space. That was the first time she spoke about the

incidents that had occurred during the previous years. She was provided with case management services to identify her needs, such as psychosocial support. She was also referred to the SRH services provided by another UNFPA partner – the Jordanian Health Aid Society (JHAS), and she received cash assistance to secure her basic needs. Lastly, she participated in recreational activities that helped rebuild her social network and give her a sense of belonging.

**'When I arrived at the Safe Space, I quickly felt that everything would change, and indeed that is what happened!'**

After a year of continuous follow up, Salma's health began to improve. She was gradually letting go of the past that tormented her and finding her way to recovery. Today, she feels more independent, empowered, and able to reach her potential and play a part in shaping her community.

"I honestly did not expect that one day I would reach where I am now," she reflects triumphantly. "I thought that no one could help me or even get me out of the nightmare I was in. But after the healing journey at the Safe Space, I was able to turn the page and start over. Today, I am empowered, strong, working, taking care of myself, my family, and those around me."



# IRAQ COUNTRY OFFICE

IN IRAQ, UNFPA CONTINUES TO PROVIDE ESSENTIAL SUPPORT TO MORE THAN 316,000 SYRIAN REFUGEES AS 1.2 MILLION PEOPLE REMAIN DISPLACED NATIONWIDE.

**8,607**

PEOPLE REACHED WITH  
REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES

100% FEMALE

**148**

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES  
REACHED WITH VARIOUS SERVICES

98% FEMALE

**1,633**

PEOPLE REACHED WITH  
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE SERVICES

92% FEMALE

**280**

YOUNG PEOPLE ENGAGED  
THROUGH VARIOUS ACTIVITIES

50% FEMALE

**291**

ADOLESCENT GIRLS SUPPORTED  
THROUGH VARIOUS PROGRAMMES

**62**

PEOPLE TRAINED ON  
VARIOUS TOPICS

52% FEMALE

## REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

TOTAL % FEMALE

Family planning consultations

8,313 100%

Normal and assisted vaginal deliveries

195 100%

C-Sections

74 100%

Ante-natal care consultations

5,974 100%

Post-natal care consultations

1,631 100%



9 PRIMARY HEALTHCARE FACILITIES



9 WOMEN AND GIRLS SAFE SPACES



1 EMERGENCY OBSTETRIC CARE FACILITY



1 YOUTH CENTRE



1 GBV MOBILE TEAM

## GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

TOTAL % FEMALE

People reached with dignity kits

343 100%

People provided with GBV case management

50 100%

People reached with GBV awareness messages

8,030 82%

People trained on GBV-related topics

2 100%



OF COURSE, I SEE THEM ALL THE TIME. GIRLS AS YOUNG AS 14 AND 15 GIVING BIRTH, OFTEN MANY TIMES BY THE TIME THEY'RE WOMEN. MANY OF THEM BECOME SERIOUSLY ILL OR EVEN DIE.

– RUQAYYA, a Syrian midwife living in Duhok

# IN IRAQ, UNFPA CONTINUES TO EMPOWER WOMEN AND GIRLS TO OVERCOME GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

**As Iraq transitions to focus on development programming, UNFPA continues to serve those marginalised**

Nearly 1.2 million Iraqis continue to live in protracted situations of internal displacement and the country hosts over one-quarter of a million refugees. These displaced populations are often more vulnerable to protection risks—such as arbitrary arrest and detention, trauma and psychological stress, the threat of eviction from their homes, and lack of access to essential services than the population at large. Nearly one-in-five Syrian refugees rely on charity and cash assistance for food, and more than half report experiencing difficulties accessing healthcare services.

While significant humanitarian support is still crucial for many, efforts in the country are gradually transitioning from humanitarian interventions and placing more focus on development interventions to support public institutions to deliver basic services and ensure their socio-economic integration. At the same time, Iraq's overall political, economic, and security environment remains unpredictable.

Iraq's Health Ministry has said that more than 4,000 people received medical help for breathing problems amidst a new severe sandstorm that engulfed large parts of Iraq. The storm shut down government offices, grounded flights, and closed Iraq's seaports in Basra.

UNFPA Iraq continues to provide SRH services in nine refugee camps throughout the country. These include antenatal care, family planning consultation, postnatal care, gynaecological consultations and referral pathways to secondary hospitals for the purpose of normal delivery, caesarian sections and complication cases.

In May, the SRH team in refugee camps started an awareness campaign that saw teams going tent-to-tent, reaching more than 2,300 women with vital information on the importance of family planning. UNFPA also partnered with the Ministry of Youth and Culture to conduct activities to raise awareness on peace-building, reproductive health and gender-based violence at its youth centre and also through its three-day sports tournament for girls.

## 'I have a goal, and I am single-mindedly working towards achieving it'

When 34-year-old Amina fled Aleppo at the end of 2021, she was heartbroken and traumatised for having to leave two of her five children behind. The decision was not her choice; she was forced out of her home by an abusive husband, who also prevented her from taking all her children. And so, with only three of her children, she made the difficult journey to join her family in Kawrgosk Camp in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The road was brutal, taking her through arid mountains and expansive, exhausting terrains, often under gunfire.

## 'Upon my arrival, I learned that my husband had travelled to Turkey and left my two older children alone in Syria'

"As if the exhaustion and terrifying road to Kurdistan were not enough, upon my arrival, I learned that my husband had travelled to Turkey and left my two older children alone in Syria," says Amina, fighting back her tears.

The wait at the camp was excruciating, and Amina describes crying herself to sleep every day fearing for her children's safety. One day, she was approached by a UNFPA-supported outreach team at the camp who offered her

support. As she spoke to the social worker and heard about the services available to her, she began to open up about her experiences with her husband.

"He used to love me and spoil me," she recalls. "I don't know what happened, but he changed, cheated on me, and beat me in front of our children. Life became an unbearable hell."

## 'I don't know what happened, but he changed, cheated on me, and beat me in front of our children'

Amina regularly visited the UNFPA-supported Safe Space at the camp and received multiple therapy sessions. As she regained her strength, she managed to get her own place with her three children, living close to her mother and brother. She not only continued to attend the support sessions but also began attending sewing and vocational training courses.

Eventually, she was able to find a decent job with the support of the social workers at the space, which allowed her to give her children a much better life and to invest in their education in the hope of securing their futures. Her priority today is to save enough money to bring her two children from Syria to Kurdistan.

"I have a goal, and I am single-mindedly working towards achieving it," adds Amina. "I want my children to complete their education, learn how to respect each other, and lead successful lives."



# EGYPT COUNTRY OFFICE

UNFPA EGYPT CONTINUES TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO SYRIAN REFUGEES IN THE COUNTRY.

**99,552**

PEOPLE REACHED WITH REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES

100% FEMALE

**3,749**

PEOPLE REACHED WITH GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE SERVICES

99% FEMALE

**15**

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES REACHED WITH SPECIALISED SERVICES

87% FEMALE

**667**

ADOLESCENT GIRLS SUPPORTED THROUGH VARIOUS PROGRAMMES

**484**

PEOPLE TRAINED ON VARIOUS TOPICS

91% FEMALE

## REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

TOTAL % FEMALE

Family planning consultations

184,088 100%

People trained on SRH-related topics

484 91%

## GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

TOTAL % FEMALE

People provided with GBV case management

697 95%

People reached with GBV awareness messages

785 99%



10  
WOMEN AND GIRLS  
SAFE SPACES

UNFPA continues to tailor its programmes in Egypt to respond to the needs of women and girls caught in the crisis

More than 280,000 refugees and asylum seekers from 66 countries of origin are currently living in Egypt, around half of whom are Syrians. Most refugees and asylum-seekers are located in urban areas of Greater Cairo and on the northern coast. During May, UNFPA continued to support 10 Safe Spaces in six governorates, delivering vital services to survivors or those at risk of gender-based violence. UNFPA is particularly focusing on mental health and wellbeing, with more than 460 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.



THIS SAFE SPACE HAS ALLOWED ME TO FIND MY OWN WORTH AND COMMUNITY. I FEEL STRONGER AND READY TO START LIVING.

— YOSRA, a Syrian woman from Rural Damascus

## Celebrating Menstrual Hygiene

Picture this: over 20 girls are scattered around the room collecting messages as part of a treasure hunt.

"Did you know that there are 28 days on average between the first day of your period and the first day of your next period?" one message read. "Did you know that menstruation can affect your mood and emotional state?" read another. "Rest assured, periods are a natural occurrence during puberty and it is nothing to worry about," said the final message.

*'Menstrual Hygiene Day is a global advocacy initiative to promote good menstrual health and hygiene for all women and girls'*

The treasure hunt activity is part of the Menstrual Hygiene Day celebration at the UNFPA-operated Safe Spaces in Giza and Damietta. The Safe Spaces are operated by the Ministry of Youth and Sports with Etijah, supported by UNFPA. They are designed for women and girls from refugee and host communities, where they can access gender-based violence prevention and response services – including psychosocial, legal, and medical – as well as reproductive health services. They can rebuild their social networks, receive social support, and acquire different vocational and livelihood skills.

Aside from the Treasure hunt, multiple activities were held to raise awareness on menstrual health and hygiene management and to dispel stigma and taboos surrounding menstruation. Through open and constructive dialogue, participants learn essential knowledge on MHM and also share their own experiences on managing their health and hygiene.

Activities also included a yoga class focused on encouraging girls to embrace themselves and their own bodies, even during menstruation, through breathing and other mindfulness exercises. Girls also made "Menstruation Bracelets" – a global symbol for menstruation that consists of 28 white beads representing the average length of the menstrual cycle, and five red beads which stands for the average length of the period (this is also why May 28 had been designated Menstrual Hygiene Day).

Menstrual Hygiene Day is a global advocacy initiative to promote good menstrual health and hygiene for all women and girls. Over the last three years, the movement has been calling for more action and investment in menstrual health and hygiene. Through its Safe Spaces and supported facilities, UNFPA will continue to reach out to refugee women and girls to educate about menstruation, break the taboos, and end the stigma surrounding menstruation.

*'Multiple activities were held to raise awareness on menstrual health and hygiene management and to dispel stigma and taboos surrounding menstruation'*

# COORDINATION UPDATES

## UNFPA CONTINUES TO LEAD THE GBV AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY, ENSURING THAT MINIMUM STANDARDS ARE IN PLACE TO PREVENT AND RESPOND TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN EMERGENCIES.

The Whole of Syria GBV AoR began preparations for the 2023 humanitarian needs overview (HNO), including reviewing existing Multi Sectoral Needs Assessment (MSNA) tools for the household assessment and the protection key informant interviews. A plan has been initiated to organise the qualitative GBV assessment that will feed into the HNO and the Voices from Syria report. This included the review of community focus group discussion tools, the sampling of the communities where the discussions will be conducted, and the selection of the protection actors that will conduct the FGDs.

The Whole of Syria GBV AoR also started the development of the training package associated with the Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response to Older Women guidance note. The goal of the package is to provide training participants with a participatory learning platform to engage with the guidance and help them implement essential actions for the inclusion of Older Women into GBV programming. Additionally, the GBV AoR presented Beyond Numbers, the methodology to develop the Voices from Syria report, to the Regional GBV coordinators. Libya expressed the interest and intention of replicating the practice. The UNFPA Regional Humanitarian Hub for Syria and the Arab States will coordinate with regional colleagues to support their efforts to contextualise and adapt the data collection and analysis to their contexts.

The Hub continues its efforts to coordinate sharing and exporting best practices and technical resources across the region. Iraq and Yemen are discussing plans for adapting the existing cross-border Türkiye GBV SC Awareness Raising toolkit as they recognise its added value for GBV prevention. The Hub is also supporting the Iraq and Yemen GBV coordination team in identifying the process and the support required. Moreover, the work to replicate and adapt the GBV M&E Toolkit for GBV coordination groups continued, with the Palestine GBV SC conducting consultations with its SC members. Once a Palestinian version of the GBV M&E toolkit is ready, the team will proceed with the roll-out of the tool.

Meanwhile, The Hub printed 2,000 copies of the Rebel Girls Journal for adolescent girls in the Arab region and initially shipped the copies to eight UNFPA offices in the Region (Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Sudan, Syria, and Turkey). Furthermore The Hub developed an activity to support the distribution of the Journal. During the event, awareness-raising activities will take place to sensitise different population groups on the potential of adolescent girls.

In Syria through cross-border Türkiye, the GBV Sub Cluster organised a two-day training for GBV SC members on enhancing legal support for GBV Survivors in north-western Syria, a half-day workshop with the mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) Technical Working Group to discuss mutual challenges and ways to improve coordination and referral of GBV cases. In addition, a one-day workshop was conducted with GBV Sub Cluster members to raise awareness about technology-facilitated GBV in north-western Syria. Meanwhile, the GBV Sub Cluster and the SRH Thematic Working Group conducted their regular quarterly workshop on GBV and SRH integration in Idlib and Aleppo. Through an interactive exchange, 22 participants, representing 12 NGOs, discussed the objective and strategic focus of the newly developed SRH and GBV Integration Plan, as well as the challenges faced by service providers to timely deliver quality and comprehensive care to GBV survivors. Participants also exchanged existing resources and best practices to activate cross-sectoral referral pathways to connect GBV survivors and others at risk groups with needed services.

The Protection Working Group members held an ad-hoc meeting to discuss the situation of the Ukrainian refugees, focusing on arrivals to Türkiye and the regional response to the crisis. Meanwhile, UNFPA, through its implementing partner Eskişehir Osmangazi University, which is operating the Safe Space in Eskişehir, reached out to almost 157 Ukrainian refugees (111 women and children and 46 men). The Eskişehir Safe Space staff, which include a midwife,

psychologist, and social services expert, are regularly visiting the dormitories provided by the government of Türkiye to host refugees, where they distribute dignity and maternity kits and inform the Ukrainian refugees about the SRH and GBV services available to them at the space. These include basic health screening, SRH counselling (pre and postnatal care, newborn care, breastfeeding, sexually transmitted infections, among others), information counselling and PSS, and referrals. In addition, Ukrainian refugees were also provided with a tour of the city to familiarise themselves with key governmental buildings and service units.

As the chair of the PSEA network, UNFPA initiated the process of developing the Inter-Agency Investigation Guidelines (a part of the 2022 Action Plan) by adapting the international guidelines to the Türkiye context with the support from the member organisations. UNFPA also contributed to the Health Sector Working Group meeting that discussed (i) overall situation of COVID-19 and updates, (ii) sharing information on the health situation and access to health services for Ukrainian arrived in Turkey and (ii) 3RP plans and implementation for health and any potential obstacles

In Jordan, the monthly subworking group meeting was held jointly between the child protection and gender-based violence subworking groups on the topic of child marriage. The in-person meeting included a presentation from the Sharia Supreme Court on the latest child marriage statistics and one from the National Task Force against Child Marriage, in addition to an overview of good practices and programmes implemented by organisations represented in both groups.



I'VE SPENT MY LIFE TRYING TO FIND THE KIND OF SUPPORT AND UNDERSTANDING THAT I FOUND IN THIS SAFE SPACE, AMONG THESE REMARKABLE WOMEN WHO REFUSE TO SURRENDER TO CIRCUMSTANCES.

— RAYA, who received protection services at a UNFPA-supported facility

# DONORS & PARTNERS

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Australia, Bulgaria, Canada, Denmark, The European Commission, Finland, France, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, 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: OCHA/CERF, UNDP, SCHF, and UNFPA Emergency Funds.

## IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

**In Syria:** (MOH) Ministry of Health, (MOHE) Ministry of Higher Education, (Mosaic) for Human Relief & Dev., (ICDA) Ihsan Charity Development Association, (NFRD) Nour Foundation for Relief and Development, (SSSD) Syrian Society for Social Development, (Al Tamayouz) Altamayouz for Orphan Sponsorship, (SFPA) Syrian Family Planning Association, (Yamama) Syria Al-Yamama, (Agha Khan) Agha Khan Foundation, (ASSLS) Amelioration of Sanitary and Social Level Society, (CCA) Circassian Charity Association, (Ghiras) Ghiras Ass. for Development, (PACA) Pan Armenian Charity Association, (Sham) Al-Sham Association for Health, (BSWH) Al Bir & Social Welfare Hama, (SARC) Syrian Arab Red Crescent, (SCFAP) Syrian Commission for Family Affairs and Population, (MAC) Mar Asia, (PRCS) The Palestine Red Crescent Society, (IECD) European Institute of Cooperation and Development, (Sanad) Sanad team for development, UNDP, UNICEF, FAO, and WFP.

**In Lebanon:** Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Social Affairs, Amel Association, Al Mithaq, Akkarouna, and ABAAD.

**In Jordan:** Institute for Family Health (IFH), Ministry of Health (MOH), Society Aid Health Jordanian (JHAS), Jordanian Women's Union (JWU), the National Council for Family Affairs (NCFA), National Women's Health Care Centre (NWHCC), Questscope, Higher Population Council (HPC), Generations for Peace (GFP), Health Care Accreditation Counsel (HCAC), International Rescue Committee (IRC), Royal Health Awareness Society (RHAS), the Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW), and Save the Children Jordan.

**In Iraq:** AL Massela, Harika, Zhian and Civil Development Organisation.

**In Egypt:** UNHCR, Ministry of Health and Population (MOHP), Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS), Etijah, and Care International.

**In Türkiye:** ASAM (Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants); KAMER (Women's Centre Foundation); Eskisehir Osmangazi University; Harran University; YAHA (Youth Approaches to Health Association); PLA (Positive Living Association); Red Umbrella Sexual Health and Human Rights Association. For the service units that are under direct implementation, UNFPA is collaborating with Ankara Municipality, Sanliurfa Municipality and RASAS (Refugees and Asylum Seekers Assistance and Solidarity Association).

**Türkiye Cross-Border:** International Rescue Committee (IRC), Relief International (RI), Shafak, Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS), Ihsan for Relief and Development (IhsanRD), and their sub-implementing partners Masrrat (IhsanRD), Women Support Association (IhsanRD), Hope Revival Organization (IRC) and Relief Experts Association- UDER (IRC).

THE ESSENTIAL SERVICES BEING DELIVERED TO SYRIANS REGION-WIDE WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF OUR DONORS AND PARTNERS.

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## RELEVANT RESOURCES

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