



THE UNFPA MOBILE TEAM WAS VERY HELPFUL AND MADE SURE THAT THE LANGUAGE BARRIER DID NOT PREVENT ME FROM RECEIVING THE CARE I NEEDED.

— SENE, who received medical assistance at a UNFPA-supported health facility in Turkey

UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND

REGIONAL SITUATION REPORT

FOR THE SYRIA CRISIS

ISSUE# 102
FEBRUARY 1-28, 2021

In March 2021, the Syria crisis passed the ten-year mark, with the situation worse than it has been in years.

The crisis region, which spans the Whole of Syria, Turkey, 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 challenges. 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 due to the impacts of a far-reaching economic crisis.

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 Syria Response Hub in Amman, Jordan, and spans operations conducted by UNFPA offices in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt, in addition to operations conducted inside Syria and managed from cross-border Turkey. 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, in addition to underscoring the positive impact of the response services provided by UNFPA in the areas of sexual and reproductive health, gender-based violence, youth, and others.

As of February 2020, the report also covers UNFPA's efforts to ensure continuity of operations throughout the Syria crisis region during the COVID-19 pandemic.



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All photos shown in this issue, unless otherwise stated, are courtesy of the UNFPA Arab States Regional Response 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.

UNFPA'S MISSION

THE UNITED NATIONS SEXUAL AND
REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS AGENCY

The core mission of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is to deliver a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe, and every young person's potential is fulfilled. UNFPA calls for the realization of sexual and reproductive rights for all, and supports access to a wide range of services, including voluntary family planning, maternal healthcare, and comprehensive education on sexuality.

Since the crisis in Syria erupted in 2011, UNFPA has worked consistently to ensure that every woman and girl in need has the right to access to affordable sexual and reproductive healthcare (SRH) and be effectively protected from gender-based violence (GBV). UNFPA and its partners are scaling up efforts to empower and improve the lives of Syrian women, youth, and impacted communities inside Syria and in host countries by advocating for human rights and gender equality to better equip individuals and communities to cope with the far-reaching ramifications of this protracted crisis.

These efforts continue in 2021 as communities withstand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has presented an array of unprecedented challenges, including consistently changing priorities and severe restrictions on movement. UNFPA continues to mobilize its resources and expertise to maintain the availability of quality SRH and GBV services to people in need in the region.

THE GIRLS I'VE MET HERE HAVE
BECOME MY ENTIRE LIFE. I HAVE MADE
FRIENDSHIPS THAT HELP ME THROUGH
MY BAD EXPERIENCES EVERY DAY.

— *DIYA, a survivor of sexual violence from Qamishli, Syria*

WHAT'S NEXT?

CURRENT AND UPCOMING EVENTS AND DEVELOPMENTS TO WATCH OUT FOR.



Upcoming Knowledge Series Product: *Transcending Norms*

Women and girls safe spaces (safe spaces) are formal or informal places where women and girls feel physically and emotionally safe. The term 'safe' in this context refers to the absence of trauma, excessive stress, violence (or fear thereof), or abuse. It is a space where women and girls, being the intended beneficiaries, feel comfortable and enjoy the freedom to express themselves without the fear of judgment or harm.

These spaces, often among a few limited lifelines available to those in need, provide women and girls with the opportunity to heal, socialise, and rebuild their community networks, in addition to receiving social support, cultivating life skills, accessing safe gender-based violence responses, among many other vital services.

Still, gaps remain with regards to ensuring that safe spaces are gender transformative to the services and activities offered, as identified in the last [Regional Impact Assessment](#) of the Syria crisis. In particular, the aspects related to the empowerment of women and girls through vocational trainings, skill-building, and livelihood activities often reiterate stereotyped gender norms, which is an area where improvements will have lasting benefits on both individual and community scales.

To that end, the UNFPA Regional Syria Response Hub (The Syria Hub) aims to develop a guide to help UNFPA programmes and organizations managing safe spaces ensure that all empowerment and vocational activities are transformational and do not perpetuate traditional (and harmful) social norms. To be published under the heading of *Transcending Norms*, the Syria Hub intends to liaise with UNFPA country offices throughout the region to ensure full ownership on the development and finalization of the product.

Upcoming Knowledge Series Product: *Informed Programming*

Data gathering is one of the foundational steps of effective humanitarian response, making it imperative for organisations to invest in cultivating and instilling good practices. It has been demonstrated repeatedly in various contexts around the world that more accurate, more inclusive, and more effectively communicated data consistently results in more impactful responses. This becomes even more integral in humanitarian settings, which present a wide array of challenges that could potentially impact the quality of data gathering during assessments.

The Syria Hub, which was founded in 2013 to improve the coordination of humanitarian programmes in both the countries hosting high numbers of Syrian refugees in the region, has since provided continuous technical support to country offices and partners in the hope of improving the overall integrity and efficiency of data collection in the context of the Syria crisis. This support has encompassed the harmonisation of partner reporting tools, clearer definitions, improved beneficiary tracking, advocacy and communications, among others.

The core guidelines and lessons learned will be presented in an upcoming publication under the heading of *Informed Programming: Better Decisions through Enhanced Programme Data Generation*. This Knowledge Series publication will provide a holistic overview of the data collection process, anticipated challenges and potential solutions, as well as recommendations for future improvements.

In Her Words: Stories by Adolescent Girls in the Arab States

In Her Words is a pilot initiative that aims to support adolescent girls living in humanitarian settings to communicate their voices in as accurate and unadulterated manner as possible, and to gauge their worldviews on key subjects and issues that impact their daily lives. Building on the resilience-focused approach adopted in UNFPA's *Unbroken*, this initiative aims to to underscore the depth, strength, and potential of adolescent girls, even in the midst of turmoil and especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Adolescent girls may face a broad range of challenges when it comes to expressing their thoughts and feelings, particularly in the Arab States region. Social restrictions on freedoms of speech (particularly on that of women and girls), taboos related to gender and sexuality, gender discriminations and inequalities, and a multitude of other factors cultivate an environment that is not conducive to individual self-expression. In humanitarian settings, these challenges are exacerbated by the impact of conflict and displacement, likely creating additional risks of gender-based violence, including forced and child marriage, which further complicates the difficulties that adolescent girls face when verbalising their often deep and insightful thoughts about various topics that impact them.

In Her Words is an attempt to help bring the voices of adolescent girls to the fore. This will be achieved by featuring narratives written by girls themselves, in their own words, as part of an extended mentorship programme that guides them along the process. All of the participating girls have witnessed conflict, displacement, and unimaginable violence, and yet all continue to defy their challenges by demonstrating an unyielding resilience that allows them rise above their challenges to reach their potential.

In addition to amplifying the voices of adolescent girls, the objective of this initiative is to accompany girls in an empowering journey to better explore and understand their thought processes, feelings and experiences in relation to their lives as adolescent girls in a humanitarian context. The project serves as a safe and open platform for them to narrate their stories as creatively as uninhibitedly as possible, using words, drawings, journaling, photos, voice recordings, videos, and others.

Eventually, all products developed through this initiative will find their way back to the adolescent girls themselves in order to foster a dialogue and showcase the universality of the issues impacting them across the region.

SITUATION OVERVIEW

THE PROTRACTED CRISIS IN SYRIA HAS CREATED ONE OF THE MOST DIRE HUMANITARIAN SITUATIONS IN RECENT HISTORY.

UNFPA is gravely concerned about the worsening situation in Syria, which marked a decade of crisis on March 16, 2021.

Ten years on, the crisis in Syria is worse than it has been in years. Protracted instability and disruptions in community networks, a worsening economic crisis, and the COVID-19 pandemic have converged to create an unprecedented situation, further placing the lives, dignity, and fundamental freedoms of Syrians at risk. An estimated 13.7 million people remain in need inside Syria, while more than 11.7 million people – half of the Syrian population – remains internally displaced or are living as refugees in host communities throughout the region.

UNFPA has [appealed](#) for a total of \$132.1 million to fund its regional response. UNFPA has also issued this [factsheet](#) to highlight the needs in 2021.



13.4 MILLION
ESTIMATED IN NEED IN SYRIA



3.6 MILLION
WOMEN AND GIRLS OF
REPRODUCTIVE AGE IN
NEED IN SYRIA



11.7 MILLION
INTERNALLY DISPLACED OR
LIVING AS REFUGEES
IN THE REGION



500,000
ESTIMATED PREGNANT WOMEN
AND GIRLS IN THE REGION

General Overview

In 2021, Syria faces an unprecedented crisis. Years of instability, a worsening economic situation, donor fatigue, and the COVID-19 pandemic have converged to place lives at risk, with women and girls continuing to bear the brunt of these challenges. With no political solution to the crisis in sight, the situation is a stark reminder that the international community must continue to support the needs with innovative programmes.

Even before COVID-19, the combination of years of geopolitical unrest, severe economic collapse, and the disintegration of social and protection networks had rendered the challenges substantial and the needs high. COVID-19 has directly and disproportionately jeopardized women's social and economic capabilities globally and it is not different in the Syria crisis region. Meanwhile, the rapidly worsening economic crisis has exacerbated many of the risks faced by individuals, families, and communities.

The World Food Programme (WFP) reports that a record 12.4 million people – 60 percent of the Syrian population – are now food insecure, according to the results of the nationwide food security assessment conducted in late 2020. This is by far the highest number ever recorded and will contribute further to the risks of gender-based violence and harmful practices, such as child marriage and sexual exploitation, as families struggle to meet their basic needs. It is estimated that – among those in need – close to 7 million are women and girls of reproductive age and close to half a million are pregnant, requiring access to quality SRH services.

Gender-based violence continues to pervade the lives of women and girls caught in this crisis. 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 online harassment and sextortion, have also been observed in recent years.

Among women and girls, adolescent girls face a wide range of unique challenges that usually accompany them throughout their lives. It begins with restrictions on movement and domestic violence, and progresses as the girl grows to include child and serial marriage, domestic violence, early pregnancy, sexual violence, and sexual exploitation, among others. Adolescent girls are being denied their education and growth opportunities, which further limits their life prospects and can entrap them in an unending cycle of violence and exploitation.

In northwestern governorates of Syria, the situation continues to be severe, with ongoing hostilities causing mass displacements and disruptions in community networks and services. Access to protection services remains extremely limited, particularly as more people take refuge in informal settlements. Operations implemented cross-border via Turkey remain the only available means of delivering aid to those in need.

Even in these circumstances, UNFPA believes that every Syrian woman, adolescent girl, and child has the right to sexual and reproductive health and protection from gender-based violence.

UNFPA is continuing to tailor its programmes to meet the emerging needs of Syrian and host communities throughout the region. In 2021, UNFPA will continue to pilot cash and voucher assistance where possible to help ensure that no one is left behind, particularly among women and girls, and is working with local partners and authorities including women's networks, health clinics, health workers, and GBV case managers. In Jordan, UNFPA is piloting cash in GBV case management, and in Egypt, UNFPA is complementing UNHCR's cash assistance to refugees by expanding coverage to include women and older girls at risk and survivors of GBV. In Syria, responding to women's feedback that they needed hygiene and baby items in addition to food, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, UNFPA is "piggybacking" on WFP's existing voucher scheme by broadening the scope of the services.

UNFPA operations in Syria are run from the Syria Country Office, as well as from the UNFPA hub in Gaziantep, Turkey for cross-border operations. While the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted UNFPA's operations in the field, efforts are ongoing to ensure that critical services are being delivered to people in need throughout the region.

COVID-19 Updates

As of February 28, 2021, the Syria crisis region, which encompasses the Whole of Syria, Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt, recorded a total of 4,291,811 cases of COVID-19, as outlined by the figure below.

Despite the relatively low number of confirmed cases in Syria, it is worth noting that the capacity for testing throughout the country remains extremely limited. Moreover, the steadily rising number of infections clearly shows that the epidemiological situation in the country has rapidly evolved and remains extremely volatile. According to the Syrian Ministry of Health (MoH), infections among healthcare workers in Syria continue to rise and humanitarian actors continue to receive reports that healthcare workers in some areas do not have sufficient personal protective equipment (PPE).

Meanwhile, the pandemic continues to exacerbate an ongoing economic crisis that has substantially increased humanitarian needs. An inter-agency socio-economic impact assessment of COVID-19 noted a major economic downturn and significant social impacts, amplified by the ongoing financial crisis in Lebanon. An estimated 200,000 - 300,000 jobs were permanently lost, while the informal sector and businesses have been heavily impacted, with 15 percent of small and medium sized businesses reporting permanent closure.

Throughout the region, curfews, lockdowns, and movement restrictions continue to present challenges to response operations. Turkey, for example, has been under fluctuating social distancing and movement restriction requirements since the onset of the pandemic, with some regions faring better than others. Jordan also saw a marked increase in the number of daily reported cases in January, triggering a resumption of certain restrictions, including Friday lockdowns and nightly curfews. Meanwhile, despite a continuing rise in infections across Iraq and the Kurdistan region, both governments have maintained a reserved approach towards the restrictions previously imposed. The pandemic also continues to have an impact on operations in Egypt, despite the general slowdown in reported case-loads in recent months.

TOTAL CONFIRMED CASES	SYRIA	TURKEY	LEBANON
	19,641	2,701,588	301,052
	JORDAN	IRAQ	EGYPT
As at February 28, 2021	391,090	695,489	182,951

**I WANT MY DAUGHTER
TO HAVE EN EDUCATION.
I WANT HER TO HAVE
EVERYTHING THAT WAS
TAKEN FROM ME.**

– THORAYA, a mother and survivor of child marriage from Aleppo, Syria

FROM ALL OPERATIONS

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

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

	SINCE JANUARY	% FEMALE
People reached with sexual / reproductive health	252,135	97%
Family planning consultations	59,984	99%
Normal / assisted vaginal deliveries	6,111	100%
C-Sections	2,972	100%
Ante-natal care consultations	97,736	100%
Post-natal care consultations	22,220	100%
People trained on SRH-related topics	374	82%

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

	SINCE JANUARY	% FEMALE
People reached with GBV programming	120,957	86%
People reached with Dignity Kits	30,859	79%
People provided with GBV case management	4,628	98%
People reached with GBV awareness messages	122,566	90%
People trained on GBV-related topics	1,131	84%

YOUTH SERVICES

	SINCE JANUARY	% FEMALE
People reached with youth engagement activities	10,051	50%
People trained on youth topics	60	85%

CASH AND VOUCHER ASSISTANCE

	SINCE JANUARY	% FEMALE
People reached with cash and voucher assistance	76,633	99%

SOCIAL INCLUSION

	SINCE JANUARY	% FEMALE
People with disabilities reached	2,822	88%
Number of adolescent girls reached	43,690	100%
Number of LGBTQI+ individuals reached	1,274	47%

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 Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt. The crisis has permanently altered the fabric of society in the country, 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 their remarkable resilience, with many rising above their challenges to become artists, activists, innovators, and other influential voices in their communities.



115
PRIMARY HEALTHCARE
FACILITIES*



93
WOMEN AND GIRLS
SAFE SPACES



9
YOUTH CENTRES



96
OPERATIONAL
MOBILE CLINICS



33
EMERGENCY OBSTETRIC
CARE FACILITIES



43,690
ADOLESCENT GIRLS
REACHED



2,822
PEOPLE WITH
DISABILITIES REACHED



1,274
LGBTQI+ INDIVIDUALS
REACHED



76,633
PEOPLE REACHED WITH
CASH AND VOUCHER
ASSISTANCE

* 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.

UNFPA's operations in Syria are run from the Syria Country Office, as well as from the UNFPA hub in Gaziantep, Turkey for cross-border operations. While the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted UNFPA's operations in the field, efforts are ongoing to ensure that critical services are being delivered to people in need throughout the region.

IN THE END, ALL YOU CAN DO IS ENDURE AND PROTECT THOSE YOU LOVE. I HAD TO MAKE DIFFICULT DECISIONS AND CREATE RIFTS WITH FAMILY MEMBERS TO DO THAT.

– MANAR, a survivor of family violence from Damascus, Syria

ACROSS THE WHOLE OF SYRIA

ENSURING THAT ALL COMMUNITIES INSIDE SYRIA HAVE ACCESS TO LIFE-SAVING ASSISTANCE AND QUALITY SERVICES.

In 2014, the Whole of Syria (WoS) approach was introduced across the United Nations, authorized initially by UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2165 in 2014. This allowed cross-border humanitarian assistance from Iraq, Jordan, and Turkey. Successive UNSCRs extended and adapted this, eventually reducing to cross-border assistance from Turkey exclusively. The most recent resolution, 2533 on July 10, 2020, extends cross-border aid from Turkey for another year, but reduced to one crossing point only.

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 Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Turkey.

The Harshness of Winter

"I feel more at ease now," explains Mariam, 18. "After so much strife, I will finally be able to focus on taking care of my new-born baby, particularly during this pandemic."

Mariam was fragile, exhausted, and frightened when she first accessed the UNFPA-supported shelter for survivors of gender-based violence. At the time, she was at the tail-end of her pregnancy, alone, with no social network to provide support. The worsening economic conditions in Syria had taken its toll on her, both physically and psychologically, particularly in light of the fuel and power shortages that rendered the colder weather unbearable and forced her to withstand extreme conditions in her weaker state.

At the centre, which provides protection for at-risk women and girls, a medical examination was carried out, confirming that both she and her baby were at risk and needed immediate medical care. She was referred to the nearest hospital where she was able to safely deliver her baby boy, Kareem.

"Every mother deserves the opportunity to deliver safely, no matter the circumstances," explains Dr. Iyad Nasr, UNFPA Representative in Syria. "Women and girls in fragile settings in Syria face a wide range of challenges that place their lives at risk on a daily basis. Going through pregnancy and childbirth worsens these risks, particularly in the case of adolescent girls, whose bodies are often too fragile to withstand the process."

When Mariam returned to the centre with her baby, she was provided with postnatal care services by the medical team as well as the basic necessities to enable her to care for her new-born child, who was still in critical condition and under monitoring at the centre. She was also offered accommodations at the centre, giving her much-needed respite from the harsher environment to which she was exposed prior to arrival. Winter in Syria is harsh, with frequent snow and freezing temperatures. For vulnerable families, this can lead to a doubling of their budget to cover heating, winter clothes, food and medicine.

UNFPA's presence in the field and the efficient coordination with local partners have enabled its teams to become the first point of contact for support, with the agency's winter assistance delivering much-needed hope during one of the darkest times in the history of this crisis.



As she recovered, Mariam reflected with the team on her experience and how far she has come since her arrival. "I certainly feel more secure. When I first arrived, I was very anxious about giving birth, particularly in these circumstances. I felt alone and that no one in the universe cared about me or my unborn child. But during my delivery, I received the best care and felt genuine concern for my physical and mental wellbeing, which I had not felt in a long time. It was comforting that there were people waiting outside the delivery room who were concerned for my health and safety."

Sarab, the case manager who supervised Mariam's case, also reflected on her progress. "Mariam is recovering now. When she first came two weeks ago, she was extremely frightened. Today, she is reassured and knows that both she and her baby are in safe hands. We have begun providing her with specialised psychological treatment to address any residual trauma. She is a strong, young woman who continually demonstrates incredible resilience and clings to life with all her might, and I have no doubt that Kareem will continue to recover and thrive under her care."

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

	SINCE JANUARY	% FEMALE
People reached with sexual / reproductive health	214,642	97%
Family planning consultations	54,453	99%
Normal / assisted vaginal deliveries	5,730	100%
C-Sections	2,902	100%
Ante-natal care consultations	89,396	100%
Post-natal care consultations	20,966	100%
People trained on SRH-related topics	229	86%

GENDER -BASED VIOLENCE

	SINCE JANUARY	% FEMALE
People reached with GBV programming	94,068	88%
People reached with Dignity Kits	15,925	100%
People provided with GBV case management	3,706	99%
People reached with GBV awareness messages	105,983	90%
People trained on GBV-related topics	308	88%

YOUTH SERVICES

	SINCE JANUARY	% FEMALE
People reached with youth engagement activities	337	44%

CASH AND VOUCHER ASSISTANCE

	SINCE JANUARY	% FEMALE
People reached with cash and voucher assistance	76,633	99%

SOCIAL INCLUSION

	SINCE JANUARY	% FEMALE
People with disabilities reached	2,351	90%
Number of adolescent girls reached	36,143	100%



88

PRIMARY HEALTHCARE FACILITIES *



62

WOMEN AND GIRLS SAFE SPACES



2

YOUTH CENTRES



84

OPERATIONAL MOBILE CLINICS



32

EMERGENCY OBSTETRIC CARE FACILITIES



36,143

ADOLESCENT GIRLS REACHED

SYRIA COUNTRY OFFICE

DELIVERING EMERGENCY AND LONG-TERM ASSISTANCE TO SYRIAN COMMUNITIES IN NEED THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY.

“I really do not feel safe anymore. None of us feels safe. There have been too many cases of girls being attacked, kidnapped, or killed, and this makes it hard to feel safe again.”

— Mira, an adolescent girl from Rural Damascus



As the Syria crisis marks its 10th anniversary, the situation is worse than it has been in years. The worsening economic situation and the COVID-19 pandemic have converged to place lives at risk, with women and girls continuing to bear the brunt of these crises. With no political solution to the crisis in sight, the situation is a stark reminder that the international community must continue to support the needs.

Even before COVID-19, the combination of years of geopolitical unrest, severe economic collapse, and the disintegration of social and protection networks had rendered the challenges substantial and the needs high. COVID-19 has directly and disproportionately jeopardized women's social and economic capabilities globally and it is not different in the Syria crisis region. The rapidly worsening economic situation has exacerbated many of the risks faced by individuals, families, and communities. Women and girls pay the highest cost of this deterioration.

The World Food Programme (WFP) reports that a record 12.4 million people — 60 percent of the Syrian population — are now food insecure, according to the results of the nationwide food security assessment conducted in late 2020. This is by far the highest number ever recorded, and will contribute further to the risks of gender-based violence and harmful practices, such as child marriage, as families struggle to meet their basic needs. Estimates indicate that, as of early 2021, more than 13.4 million people remain in need within Syria, while more than 5.5 million continue to live as refugees in host communities throughout the region. It is estimated that over 6.1 million remain internally displaced (OCHA).

Among those in need, close to 7 million are women and girls of reproductive age and close to half a million are pregnant, requiring access to quality SRH services.

Women and girls suffer the worst impacts of the crisis. 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 online harassment and sextortion, have also been observed in recent years.

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

	SINCE JANUARY	%FEMALE
People reached with sexual / reproductive health	175,475	99%
Family planning consultations	46,484	99%
Normal / assisted vaginal deliveries	1,750	100%
C-Sections	1,750	100%
Ante-natal care consultations	70,096	100%
Post-natal care consultations	12,033	100%
People trained on SRH-related topics	207	86%

GENDER -BASED VIOLENCE

	SINCE JANUARY	%FEMALE
People reached with GBV programming	61,929	96%
People reached with Dignity Kits	4,493	100%
People provided with GBV case management	3,266	99%
People reached with GBV awareness messages	84,801	97%
People trained on GBV-related topics	78	99%

YOUTH SERVICES

	SINCE JANUARY	%FEMALE
People reached with youth engagement activities	337	44%

CASH AND VOUCHER ASSISTANCE

	SINCE JANUARY	%FEMALE
People reached with cash and voucher assistance	75,431	100%

SOCIAL INCLUSION

	SINCE JANUARY	%FEMALE
People with disabilities reached	1,312	81%
Number of adolescent girls reached	26,347	100%



75

PRIMARY HEALTHCARE FACILITIES*



47

WOMEN AND GIRLS SAFE SPACES



2

YOUTH CENTRES



77

OPERATIONAL MOBILE CLINICS



19

EMERGENCY OBSTETRIC CARE FACILITIES



26,347

ADOLESCENT GIRLS REACHED

TURKEY CROSS-BORDER

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

Of the 4.3million people living in northwest Syria, more than half — 2.7 million — are living in displacement, while 2.8 million remain in need of humanitarian assistance. Hostilities have continued to impact communities across northwest Syria. Daily shelling, intermittent airstrikes, in-fighting between non-state armed groups and the prevalence of explosive hazards in residential areas and public spaces has continued to pose a particular risk to civilians.

According to UN OCHA, between 20 January to 23 February, the UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR) verified that around ten incidents of ground-based strikes in northwest Syria resulted in the death of at least ten civilians (including two women and four children) and the injury of at least 47 others (including seven women and 17 children). Seven incidents of improvised explosive devices (IED) and two incidents of explosive remnants of war (ERW) in northwest Syria also resulted in civilian casualties, with at least 18 civilians killed (including one woman and five children) and 55 civilians injured (including five women and 17 children). On 16 February, a humanitarian worker was killed, and two others injured in Al Bab city as a result of an IED that had been attached to their vehicle.

Planning for the COVID-19 vaccination campaign has continued, with the initial request accepted in February to secure vaccines for some 20 percent of the population through the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access Facility (COVAX). This equates to some 855,000 people, and would prioritize around 130,000 health and social workers, 320,000 people over 60, and 400,000 people between the ages of 20 - 59 with underlying health conditions. Talks remained ongoing to secure further vaccines in addition to the preparation of a vaccine roll-out plan including logistics and cold chain delivery, as well as a social mobilization and engagement strategy.

Programme Update

Several UNFPA-supported Comprehensive Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care (CEmONC) facilities have ensured dedicated delivery rooms for mothers with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 diagnoses. With strict adherence to technical protocols on how to manage such cases in line with IPC measures, access to lifesaving and life-sustaining SRH services has been safely enhanced also for confirmed or suspected COVID-19 cases in need of antenatal, postnatal, and family planning consultations. Such measures include a separate route at the health facility for pregnant women with COVID-19 to avoid unnecessary contact with other patients. UNFPA's implementing partners have continued to roll out trainings to sexual and reproductive health staff to ensure protocols and measures are fully understood and implemented with the objective of providing safe services to all in need, including confirmed COVID-19 cases. Telemedicine has also remained a key modality to ensure safe and continued service delivery.

During February, the distribution of 11,432 dignity kits to women and girls continued to provide an effective entry point to the provision of gender-based violence services, including psychosocial support (PSS), awareness raising, and referrals to specialized services. However, a \$2.9 million funding gap for the provision of dignity kits in northwest Syria has placed the continuation of these lifesaving and life-sustaining services at risk. IDP sites exclusive to widowed and divorced women have continued to be the cause for significant protection concerns. The GBV

Subcluster is aware of at least 46 such sites across northwest Syria with a population of approximately 13,000 women, girls and boys. Among this population, widowed and divorced women and girls are a high-risk group with their segregation further exacerbating the risk of harm. GBV Subcluster partners require at least \$1.3 million to provide lifesaving gender-based violence programming to these sites.

Ensuring Safe Deliveries during Emergencies

26-year-old Nidal was in labour when she entered the primary healthcare center in Marret Tamsrin, Idleb. With a fully dilated cervix, the midwife assessed that an emergency delivery was inevitable. The level of care at the center did not cover deliveries. However, a UNFPA-provided Clean Delivery Kit came to the rescue and ensured that the midwife could ensure a hygienic environment during the emergency delivery. This ensured a safe delivery of the baby girl and healthy mother.

The family had been waiting for their first baby for more than six years. "Can you imagine if this delivery had taken place in our health centre without the tools provided for by the Clean Delivery Kit!" the midwife exclaimed.

Sexual and reproductive health services have remained overstretched in northwest Syria largely due to the mass influx of internally displaced persons and ongoing conflict. Moreover, some facilities have also been damaged and forced to relocate due to persistent bombardments, while COVID-19 has further compounded access to SRH services. UNFPA has received reports of women giving birth outside of safe SRH facilities, such as in makeshift shelters, where basic hygiene standards are lacking. The Clean Delivery Kit is a key component of ensuring safer, healthier births in emergencies and helps save the lives of pregnant woman and their babies. The kit provides the most basic essentials for preventing fatal infections: a bar of soap, a clear plastic sheet to lie on, latex gloves, a razor blade for cutting the umbilical cord, a sterilized string to tie off the umbilical cord, and a cloth to keep the mother and baby warm.

The risk of dying in childbirth increases substantially in disaster settings, where typically one in five women is pregnant. In northwest Syria, there are about 1.2 million women and girls of reproductive age, with around 10,800 pregnant women giving birth each month. During 2020, UNFPA provided Clean Delivery Kits for both individual and birth attendants to cover the needs for 137,735 births.

UNFPA is the sole provider of lifesaving and life-sustaining SRH supplies in northwest Syria - including Clean Delivery Kits concerns.

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

	SINCE JANUARY	% FEMALE
People reached with sexual / reproductive health	39,167	91%
Family planning consultations	7,969	100%
Normal / assisted vaginal deliveries	3,980	100%
C-Sections	1,152	100%
Ante-natal care consultations	19,300	100%
Post-natal care consultations	10,419	100%
People trained on SRH-related topics	22	91%

GENDER -BASED VIOLENCE

	SINCE JANUARY	% FEMALE
People reached with GBV programming	32,139	73%
People reached with Dignity Kits	11,432	100%
People provided with GBV case management	440	99%
People reached with GBV awareness messages	21,182	66%
People trained on GBV-related topics	230	84%

CASH AND VOUCHER ASSISTANCE

	SINCE JANUARY	% FEMALE
People reached with cash and voucher assistance	1,202	63%

SOCIAL INCLUSION

	SINCE JANUARY	% FEMALE
People with disabilities reached	1,039	100%
Number of adolescent girls reached	9,796	100%



13

PRIMARY HEALTHCARE FACILITIES



15

WOMEN AND GIRLS' SAFE SPACES



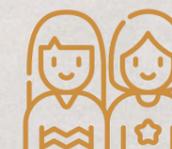
13

EMERGENCY OBSTETRIC CARE FACILITIES



7

OPERATIONAL MOBILE CLINICS



9,796

ADOLESCENT GIRLS REACHED



1,202

PEOPLE REACHED WITH CASH AND VOUCHER ASSISTANCE

TURKEY COUNTRY OFFICE

WITH THE LARGEST NUMBER OF REFUGEES WORLDWIDE, UNFPA TURKEY CONTINUES TO PROVIDE MUCH NEEDED ASSISTANCE TO DISPLACED SYRIANS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY.

Programme Updates

During February, UNFPA Turkey continued to liaise with local partners to provide services to vulnerable refugee groups, either online or — in some provinces — face-to-face, depending on the preferences and needs of each beneficiary. UNFPA women and youth support centres and rural mobile units continued to provide face-to-face services exclusively.

Outreach activities were resumed by all service units with a notable increase in requests for awareness raising sessions by women and men. UNFPA Turkey conducted online trainings for 319 partner staff on different aspects of protection services to increase their capacity to respond to emerging needs among different vulnerable groups. The online training sessions covered topics on PSS, self-care, case management, child and forced marriage, and working with vulnerable refugee groups.

In an effort to reach out to a broader range of service providers and to respond to the challenges imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, UNFPA has transitioned all major training programmes online, including SRH, GBV, and orientation trainings provided at service centres.

Not My Happy Ending

Guardian angels may be the stuff of fairy tales, but girls in the real world need someone on their side, too. Through a UNFPA-run safe space, Hele, an Iraqi teen migrant living in Turkey, was able to access education. "They convinced [my family] that I should go to school without being a wife." She is finishing secondary school now and dreaming of going to a university. "If we didn't come to Turkey and find this centre, I would be out of school and subject to a child marriage right now" says Hele, a refugee from Iraq, lives in Eskişehir, Turkey. Hele is a 16 years old adolescent girl who had fled from Iraq to Turkey in 2017 with her family due to the war. She had to leave the school in the 5th grade.

"In our culture, girls get married at an early age. This is very common especially if the girl is out of education. I don't want to get married at an early age," says Hele. Thanks to the Women and Girls Space (WGSS) in Eskişehir, run by UNFPA and its implementing partner Eskişehir Osmangazi University, Hele will be able to continue her education in Turkey. "They have first gained trust of my family and then convinced them that I should go to the school without being a wife to someone at this age. My life has completely changed" she says.

Having fled to Turkey in 2017, she was about thirteen years old. She grew up into a world in which girls might feel worthless, didn't have the equal opportunities with boys such as the right to education, often forced by families and communities to stay at home and limit their movements and interactions with the outside world, and even encouraged to get married at child age. When they first moved to Turkey everything was the same until they met with UNFPA's humanitarian aid services and the change started.

"The first few months were so difficult. I didn't speak or write the language. My family felt insecure and didn't even let us go outside. They didn't even plan to send

us back to school and we would probably end up getting married at child age. Then, I heard that there was a centre which provided Turkish language courses. We went to this WGSS with my parents and they attended an orientation training, organized for refugees and migrants. At this point, a ray of hope arose but after was beyond that I imagined."

As she learns the language and is empowered with the services offered by the centre, her fear of getting married at an early age vanishes and turns out to be a dream of studying in a university suddenly.

"My parents trusted the centre and acknowledged that their services are just not beneficial if not life-changing in a very good way. They let me attend Turkish courses as well as complementary courses for completing my school degree. I did not only learn how to speak Turkish but also started attending preparatory courses to finish secondary school remotely. There is more. I have attended theatre and archery courses and made many friends. I have gained my self-confidence back."

Hele is now dreaming of studying in a university and gaining an occupation to enable her help people just like UNFPA has helped her.

The Women and Girls Safe Space project aims to empower women and girls including refugees and migrants by providing sexual and reproductive health services, prevention and response to gender based violence, psychosocial support and activities such as language and occupation courses, training, crafting, theatre, picnics etc. thanks to the financial support of SIDA - Sweden's government agency for development cooperation.

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

	SINCE JANUARY	% FEMALE
People reached with sexual / reproductive health	8,405	80%
Family planning consultations	1,040	100%
Ante-natal care consultations	641	100%
Post-natal care consultations	96	100%

GENDER -BASED VIOLENCE

	SINCE JANUARY	% FEMALE
People reached with GBV programming	13,072	64%
People reached with Dignity Kits	14,496	56%
People provided with GBV case management	9	100%
People reached with GBV awareness messages	5,558	75%
People trained on GBV-related topics	401	73%

YOUTH SERVICES

	SINCE JANUARY	% FEMALE
People reached with youth engagement activities	2,863	91%
People trained on youth topics	58	86%

SOCIAL INCLUSION

	SINCE JANUARY	% FEMALE
People with disabilities reached	386	74%
Number of adolescent girls reached	2,294	100%
Number of LGBTQI+ individuals reached	1,274	47%



4

PRIMARY HEALTHCARE FACILITIES *



4

WOMEN AND GIRLS' SAFE SPACES



4

FUNCTIONAL YOUTH CENTRES



2,294

ADOLESCENT GIRLS REACHED



12

OPERATIONAL MOBILE CLINICS



39

OTHER SERVICE DELIVERY POINTS

LEBANON COUNTRY OFFICE

DESPITE THE ESCALATING POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC INSTABILITIES IN LEBANON, UNFPA CONTINUES TO PROVIDE LIFE-SAVING SERVICES TO PEOPLE IN NEED.

WITHOUT THIS SAFE SPACE, I WOULD HAVE NOT SURVIVED. IT'S BEEN REALLY LIFE-CHANGING TO BE AROUND SO MANY OTHER WOMEN WHO UNDERSTAND MY STRUGGLES AND OFFER REAL SUPPORT.

– JIHAN, a survivor of forced marriage from Aleppo, Syria

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH	SINCE JANUARY	% FEMALE
People reached with sexual / reproductive health	140	100%
Normal / assisted vaginal deliveries	14	100%
People trained on SRH-related topics	122	74%

GENDER -BASED VIOLENCE	SINCE JANUARY	% FEMALE
People reached with GBV programming	573	100%
People provided with GBV case management	29	100%
People reached with GBV awareness messages	2,898	100%
People trained on GBV-related topics	422	92%

YOUTH SERVICES	SINCE JANUARY	% FEMALE
People reached with youth engagement activities	51	92%

SOCIAL INCLUSION	SINCE JANUARY	% FEMALE
People with disabilities reached	6	50%
Number of adolescent girls reached	76	100%



2

PRIMARY HEALTHCARE FACILITIES *



2

WOMEN AND GIRLS' SAFE SPACES



76

ADOLESCENT GIRLS REACHED

Programme Update

The lockdown imposed in mid-January 2021 following the escalating rates of COVID-19 infections and deaths started being eased with partial reopening of some sectors. However, many restrictions were still in place for certain humanitarian activities (for instance, activities at women and girls' safe spaces) and the need to access special permits for humanitarian workers to move.

The rate of COVID-19 infections remained worrisome, with over 3,000 daily cases reported at the end of the month. The country's intensive care bed occupancy rate reached close or higher to 90 percent, with many hospitals continuing to operate beyond capacity.

Toward the end of the month, the fluctuation of the exchange rate and political deadlock have triggered protests that contributed to increased social instability. The economic situation and rapidly increasing poverty level continued to expose the most vulnerable to the risk of abuse and exploitation.

In these circumstances, UNFPA and partners, in line with government and inter-agency guidelines, continued providing support through remote modalities of service delivery except for life saving interventions (such as the provision of life saving medical care or for high risk and urgent GBV cases in need of immediate support). Among the activities conducted remotely, partners continued to raise awareness on COVID-19, sexual and reproductive health, and women's wellbeing, in addition to facilitating individual and groups mental health and psychosocial support sessions. Activities conducted in person included the deployment of medical mobile unit that provided medical care to persons in need.

UNFPA continued to advocate to ensure in-person support and services to high-risk cases even during lockdowns and at the same time has developed tools to help partners provide assistance remotely, including guideline for remote case management.

Hope for the Future

Fatima, a 35-year-old Syrian refugee, found herself alone with five children after being divorced and abandoned by her husband, who went back to Syria.

When Fatima tried to stand up on her feet and find a decent living, she found a job in agriculture, and was persuaded by the landowner to work in the field; tilling the earth, picking produce, and supporting the staff. She took the opportunity, believing it would be a door that leads to better living. What she did not know is that the landowner would rape her.

"I felt as if my body was a dirty floor," explains Fatima who, after the incident, rushed home filled with grief and guilt. "I stood under the running water for more than an hour, but the feeling of disgust was only worsening."

Fatima sought help and was referred to a UNFPA-supported safe space. She was deeply in need of support and was provided with both case management services and cash assistance to address her most immediate needs. She began her psychological treatment, attended livelihood trainings, and agreed on an action plan to address the trauma caused by the incident and the years of strife. In a major testament to her resilience, she also launched a small business from home, selling pastries and other foods to order. Her children are also receiving child protection services as she continues to rebuild her life.

"I know now that I have to stay strong to be able to keep my children around me," added Fatima, who also applied for resettlement with her children seeking better quality of life.

Fatima's story is shared by countless women and girls who have been ensared by the Syria crisis, many of whom are consistently subjected sexual violence, rape, and sexual exploitation. As the economic crises impacting Syria and refugee communities throughout the region continue to worsen, such risks are likely to increase, particularly in among more vulnerable groups such as widows, divorcees, and adolescents.

I Am Stronger

"People thought that I am a false rebel. They did not know that I was a weak obedient".

Lama, a 20-years old Syrian Refugee married to a Lebanese man, is a survivor of domestic violence. At the hands of her husband, she suffered both physical and psychological abuse, including the fact that he exercised control over her movements.

For much of their marriage, Lama was imprisoned at their house, unable to see anyone or seek help. He also prevented her from achieving the one dream she had prior to their marriage: to complete her high school education. Instead, her husband forced her to undergo a pregnancy, which he later also forced her to terminate.



When she contacted a UNFPA-supported facility seeking help, Lama had become severely depressed and needed immediate attention. She had tried to take her own life twice, believing that to be her only remaining path to freedom and safety. For 3 months, she received case management services from at a UNFPA-supported safe space, cultivating the healing and skills needed to escape the cycle of violence. She was also provided with psychotherapy sessions to address her depression and, when she made the decision to challenge the norms of her community and file for a divorce, she was provided with legal support services to facilitate the process.

Today, Lama is back with her family, attending online classes and applying for scholarships to complete her university studies. "I'm no longer the refugee who is waiting to be rescued. I'm my own hero now. I want to share my story with the world, which is why I will study journalism and mass communication, and share the experiences that I have had in the hope of helping other women and girls feel empowered."

JORDAN COUNTRY OFFICE

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

Programme Update

UNFPA is partnering with JHU's Bloomberg School of Public Health to conduct a mixed-method evaluation of the UNFPA cash and voucher assistance (CVA) programme targeting survivors of gender-based violence, with a focus on protection outcomes. In order to measure the effect of CVA distribution on survivors, the UNFPA Jordan Country Office will leverage Kobo forms to implement pre- and post-cash assistance survey to gauge the impact, challenges, and gaps, and make recommendations adjustments accordingly.

Moreover a training was provided by JHU for UNFPA staff on research methodologies, sampling criteria, and the tools used throughout the process, which was in turn replicated for the counsellors working with the implementing partner piloting the cash programme. Meanwhile, as part of its ongoing support to the Ministry of Health's response to COVID-19, UNFPA has finalized drafting messages targeting the general population on ensuring the availability, accessibility, and acceptability of quality sexual and reproductive health services during the pandemic. The messages lend special attention to family planning by focusing on prioritizing the provision of SRH services throughout the response, including the official COVID-10 Response Plan adopted by the Ministry of Health.

UNFPA also continues to support 10 women and girls safe spaces in partnership with the Institute for Family Health, which provides integrated sexual and reproductive health, gender-based violence, and youth engagement services. During February, a virtual art gallery was launched by the space's youth educators to provide a for talented youth among refugee communities to showcase their various artworks. Currently, the gallery includes 25 paintings that are accessible to anyone in the world via [this link](#).

Overall, the initiative had a positive impact on young Syrian women and men, with one female participant saying: "I used to feel shy when I go to the university as I feel I am a less of a person because I come from a refugee camp. However,



One of the works displayed during the virtual exhibition. More works can be found [here](#).

when I began sharing my work with the world, I started to develop more confidence. My colleagues expressed their admiration for my work and I was seen and valued for my work, not my refugee status."

UNFPA continues to support the only dedicated youth centre in Zaatar Camp, providing adolescents and youth with essential services. Face-to-face services at the center have been suspended due to COVID-19 restrictions, however virtual alternatives continue, including psychosocial support, mentorship programmes, and general health awareness on both sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence.

In Search of a Community

At 34, Hana never imagined that she would be on the run with her husband and three daughters. Five years ago, she had escaped mounting violence in her hometown of Daraa, taking refuge in the Azraq camp in Jordan since.

Ever since Hanaa got married, she was constantly exposed to emotional abuse by her husband. When they arrived to Azraq camp, her husband became even more aggressive and physically abusive. Hanaa has no one to confide in about the abuse and how it is affecting her self-confidence and the mental wellbeing of her daughters.

As her situation gradually worsened, she was referred to a UNFPA-supported facility by an outreach team working in the area. She came to the centre and was immediately given a private session with on-site counsellor, during which she had her first true opportunity to share her concerns safely. As the session concluded, Hana and the counsellor agreed on an action plan that included stress management through relaxation

techniques, communication skills, group counselling to help her build a support network, especially considering her isolation from her community in Syria. The action plan would specifically focus on developing Hana's self-confidence and self-worth, which had been severely impacted by the repeated violence and mistreatment. The counsellor also referred her daughters to the child protection services based on their mother's concerns for their physical and emotional well-being.

After proceeding with the action plan, Hana showed noticeable signs of improvement. She quickly adapted to the new support network, building friendships with other women who understand her experiences and desire live in peace and dignity. Her story, shared by countless women and girls who are impacted by this crisis, continues to inspire others in her community to seek support in rebuilding their lives and community networks.

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

	SINCE JANUARY	% FEMALE
People reached with sexual / reproductive health	12,965	100%
Family planning consultations	3,574	100%
Normal / assisted vaginal deliveries	174	100%
Ante-natal care consultations	5,758	100%
Post-natal care consultations	622	100%
People trained on SRH-related topics	23	91%

GENDER -BASED VIOLENCE

	SINCE JANUARY	% FEMALE
People reached with GBV programming	6,861	89%
People provided with GBV case management	523	89%
People reached with GBV awareness messages	3,113	92%

YOUTH SERVICES

	SINCE JANUARY	% FEMALE
People reached with youth engagement activities	1,477	70%
People trained on youth topics	2	50%

SOCIAL INCLUSION

	SINCE JANUARY	% FEMALE
People with disabilities reached	69	100%
Number of adolescent girls reached	2,253	100%



16
PRIMARY HEALTHCARE FACILITIES*



19
WOMEN AND GIRLS SAFE SPACES



1
YOUTH CENTRES



69
PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES REACHED



1
EMERGENCY OBSTETRIC CARE FACILITIES



2,253
ADOLESCENT GIRLS REACHED

IRAQ COUNTRY OFFICE

UNFPA IRAQ CONTINUES TO PROVIDE ESSENTIAL SUPPORT TO MORE THAN 316,000 SYRIANS CURRENTLY LIVING AS REFUGEES IN THE COUNTRY.

IN THE END, ALL YOU CAN DO IS ENDURE AND PROTECT THOSE YOU LOVE. I HAD TO MAKE DIFFICULT DECISIONS AND CREATE RIFTS WITH FAMILY MEMBERS TO DO THAT.

– MANAR, a survivor of family violence from Damascus, Syria

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH	SINCE JANUARY	% FEMALE
People reached with sexual / reproductive health	15,361	100%
Family planning consultations	917	100%
Normal / assisted vaginal deliveries	193	100%
C-Sections	70	100%
Ante-natal care consultations	1,941	100%
Post-natal care consultations	536	100%

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE	SINCE JANUARY	% FEMALE
People reached with GBV programming	5,186	100%
People reached with Dignity Kits	438	100%
People provided with GBV case management	39	100%
People reached with GBV awareness messages	4,765	98%

YOUTH SERVICES	SINCE JANUARY	% FEMALE
People reached with youth engagement activities	5,323	23%

SOCIAL INCLUSION	SINCE JANUARY	% FEMALE
People with disabilities reached	10	100%
Number of adolescent girls reached	2,924	100%



5
PRIMARY HEALTHCARE FACILITIES*



4
WOMEN AND GIRLS' SAFE SPACES



2,924
ADOLESCENT GIRLS REACHED

COVID-19 Updates

Almost a year after the first case of COVID-19 was detected in Iraq, the country finds itself struggling to maintain a balance between enforcing necessary restrictions and reviving the economy. Nationwide lockdown measures were extended in late February to curb the spread of the virus – and while infection rates have decreased, people across the country are struggling to make ends meet.

As of end of February 2021, there were 695,489 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Iraq and 14,177 deaths. To find out how restrictions were affecting access to services and how people felt about the response, Ground Truth Solutions (GTS) partnered with the Iraq Information Centre (IIC) conducted of interviews with 545 returnees, refugees, and IDPs across Anbar, Dahuk, Erbil, Ninewa, Salah al-Din, and Sulaymaniyah. It was found that:

- People are very concerned about meeting their needs, accessing healthcare, and sending their children to school.
- One-third of respondents who consulted a health professional during the pandemic were dissatisfied with the care they received.
- Most people (80%) feel there are no silver linings to COVID-19. They are preoccupied with financial instability and deteriorating mental and physical health.
- Over two-thirds of respondents (69%) are satisfied with the response to the pandemic, but less than half (44%) believe the authorities are equipped to handle future challenges.

Programme Update

While Iraq continues to steadily recover from years of conflict, thousands of vulnerable families across the country remain displaced and in critical need of protection and assistance. As of January 31, 2021, 316,117 Syrian refugees (61% urban, 39% camp) and 40,875 refugees of other nationalities resided across Iraq, with over 99% of Syrian refugees located in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I).

Across Iraq, public health facilities are available to refugees and asylum-seekers free of charge, including for many emergency services. Despite a reduction in COVID-related restrictions, financial constraints and access issues pre- and post-COVID-19 continue to impact access to healthcare.

Given diverging COVID-19 responses across governorates, service continuity differed across the country. Adapted activities have included the provision of psychological first aid at camp primary healthcare centres and awareness raising. One-to-one counselling was adapted to tele-counselling, with face-to-face for critical cases. Focus also continued on mental well-being techniques, prevention of stress and anxiety, and response to emerging needs in adapted modalities. Very limited services are available in urban areas given current conditions.

And I was Born Again

Noora was only 12 years old when her family fled Al Hassakah, Syria, looking for shelter in the Duhok governorate of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The living conditions at the camp were difficult and her father could barely make ends meet. He took Noora out of school and sent her younger brother to work to support the family. Three years later, the situation worsened as her father became unemployed.

One day, he received an offer he thought he could not refuse: marry off his daughter to a man 25-years her senior in exchange for a given fee. She was only 15 at the time. Luckily, Noora was a regular at the UNFPA-supported Adolescent Toolkit Programme and was aware of the dangers of child marriage. She begged her father not to give her away to man she knew was not going to be kind to her. He cried and told her he had no other choice.

"I was desperate, so I decided to get the social worker at the women's centre to help me", she explained. Past experiences would make her right; engaging men and boys in awareness programmes on child marriage and gender-based violence is one of the most effective ways of promoting social progress.

The next day, the social worker conducted a home visit to Noora's family and discussed the dangers and risks of child marriage. She told Noora's father of her daughter's immense potential and the fact that she was a gifted artist whose work has amazed plenty at the centre. She told him that if he helps nurture her talent, she would be able to sell her paintings and help him with some income. Towards the end of the conversation, he reluctantly acquiesced, making the choice to invest in his daughter's future and wellbeing.

Today, Noora takes art classes at the youth centre and, when opportunities arise, she displays and sells her art at various exhibitions.

"Had I been married, my life would have ended but now, I am able to see a bright future and dream big," said Noora.



EGYPT COUNTRY OFFICE

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

Egypt remains one of the countries most impacted by COVID-19 in the region, with close to 165,951 cases reported by end of January. The restrictions on movement placed during the early months of the pandemic have since eased, but the epidemiological status of the country remains unpredictable. These measures had forced extended though temporary disruptions in various facilities supported by UNFPA, including women and girls' safe spaces.

During February, UNFPA supported safe spaces continued to offer awareness-raising and case management services for GBV survivors, with a focus on women and girls. UNFPA has invested in discussing and developing sustainability mechanisms with its implementing partners on the ground (CARE, Etijah and the Ministry of Youth and Sports) to make sure that safe spaces continue to operate beyond the programmatic cycle. While COVID-19, social distancing, and lockdowns have affected the ability of safe spaces to offer physical meetings, training programs and interactive social activities for community members, UNFPA and its implementing partners have opted for digital learning tools, developing online activities for young people while continuing to offer case management services in person.

UNFPA Egypt will continue to support primary, secondary, and tertiary healthcare, including reproductive health and family planning services, for Syrian refugees and the Egyptian host community through equal and non-discriminatory access. In 2021, despite continuing challenges of COVID-19 and related concerns, secondary and tertiary healthcare for Syrian refugees, particularly pregnant women with complications, will be a key priority. Additionally, efforts to reduce and mitigate the impacts of gender-based violence will be made by strengthening access to legal, medical, psychosocial, and emergency shelter services. UNFPA Egypt will continue to strengthen community-based protection and community-led activities to address GBV, along with developing governmental capacities to respond and provide refugee-friendly services.



2

WOMEN AND GIRLS'
SAFE SPACES



482

PEOPLE REACHED WITH
SRH SERVICES



1,197

PEOPLE REACHED WITH
GBV PROGRAMMING

IT MADE ALL THE DIFFERENCE BEING AROUND OTHER WOMEN AND GIRLS [IN THIS SAFE SPACE]. THEY UNDERSTOOD ME, THEY WENT OUT OF THEIR WAY TO HELP ME, AND THEY NEVER JUDGED ME OR MY CHOICES. WITHOUT IT, I WOULD NOT HAVE RECOVERED AS QUICKLY.

– GHAEER, a survivor of domestic violence from Qamishli, Syria

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.

To ensure good coordination when emergencies occur, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) has introduced the Cluster Approach. Clusters are groups of humanitarian organizations, both UN and non-UN, in each of the main sectors of humanitarian action such as water, health, and logistics. In contexts where the IASC Cluster Approach has been activated, UNFPA is mandated to co-lead the GBV Area of Responsibility (GBV AoR), a part of the Global Protection Cluster, which is led by UNHCR.

As lead, UNFPA is accountable for working closely with national authorities, partners, and communities to ensure that minimum standards are in place to prevent and respond to gender-based violence in emergencies. In non-clustered and refugee contexts, UNFPA is co-leading with UNHCR.

Through its Damascus-based operation, UNFPA is the main lead, while in its Turkey Cross-Border operation UNFPA co-leads with Global Communities. In the refugee response in Turkey and Iraq, UNFPA co-leads with the Government of Turkey and International Medical Corps (IMC), respectively. In Jordan and Lebanon, UNFPA co-leads the refugee GBV response with UNHCR.

In February, in the framework of the Humanitarian Programme Cycle, the Whole of Syria (WoS) GBV AoR finalised the framework of the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) and began working on the main narrative. The GBV AoR also worked with the Health and Shelter/NFI sectors to finalise the GBV risk mitigation components in the HRP, and discussions are still ongoing with the WASH sector. The GBV AoR is also working on sector inputs to for the Brussels V conference, including GBV identified needs and priorities.

The Syria Hub finalised the review of the 2018-2020 Whole of Syria Adolescent Girls Strategy, finding that "there has been advancement under all four objectives of the Strategy in the WoS hubs" and that "some of the work done in neighbouring countries also fits well under these objectives." The report also noted "disparities between progress observed on the different objectives, which can largely be attributed to contextual challenges, and different hubs have shown varying levels of progress on different objectives, reflecting the contextual opportunities and challenges specific to their areas of operation." A new strategy will be developed over the course of 2021, taking into consideration the outcomes and recommendations of this review.

Lastly, in preparation for the 10th anniversary of the Syria crisis, The Syria Hub contributed to the No Lost Generation advocacy with a blog post under the heading of "[Adolescent Girls: Vital voices in any humanitarian response](#)," which focused on the challenges and risks faced by adolescent girls, particularly in humanitarian settings.

In Turkey, the National Protection Working Group (WG) took place, focusing on the lessons learnt from remote service delivery, digitalization of services and innovative approaches to community engagement were reviewed. The meeting also stressed the need to revive the GBV WG at the national level, with participants unanimously agreeing on the benefits of a centralized GBV coordination mechanism. Meanwhile, the Southeast Turkey Regional GBV SWG meeting, co-chaired by UNFPA, tackled the three output results for the GBV sub-sector in 2021 and the work plan actions needed to achieve them. Among the key actions discussed was protection mainstreaming, which should be carried out in close coordination with non-protection actors, providing services in areas such as psychosocial support, health, livelihood, and education. Participants also underlined the need to conduct trainings for protection and non-protection actors on matters such as guiding principles for working with GBV survivors, basic case management skills, and interviewing techniques. Lastly, the February Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Network meeting was also chaired by UNFPA and saw the revision and endorsement of the UN Country Team PSEA work plan.

In Jordan, the GBV Subworking Group (SWG) members endorsed the [Jordan GBV Working Group Strategy](#), which covers the years 2020 – 2022 and is aligned to the Jordan Response Plan for the Syria Crisis. Moreover, the GBV SWG [Quarterly Dashboard](#) was published to show progress in project implementation and funding status, in addition to summarising achievements, challenges, and anticipated needs for the following quarter. Also presented was the GBV SWG coordination performance report, which highlights the results of a yearly survey conducted to gauge the feedback of group members on the performance over the course of 2020. A total of 35 respondents and more than 95 percent of respondents stated that the GBV SWG is a useful forum. Lastly, a report was published to showcase the GBV Working Group activities during the [16 Days of Activism Campaign](#) for the year 2020.

In Iraq, UNFPA has continued to contribute to the development of various 2021 response plans, including the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO), the HRP, and the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP). UNFPA led a number of advocacy initiatives to prioritize GBV mainstreaming and GBV risk mitigation in key sectors and provided technical support to GBV actors in need of specific guidance on different areas of GBV programming.

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In Syria: Ministry of Health (MoH), Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC), Syrian Family Planning Association (SFPA), Agha Khan Foundation, Masyaf Charitable Association, Al Bir and Social Welfare Hama, Al Bir Charitable and Sociable Qamishly, Pan Armenian Charity Association, Al-Ihsan Charity Association, Al Bir and Al-Ihsan Charitable Association in Ras Alain, Albatoul Charity for Humanitarian Services, Islamic Charity Association – Aoun for Relief and Developments (AOUN), Monastery of Saint James the Mutilated (MSJM), Nour Foundation for Relief and Development, Syrian Commission for Family Affairs and Population, SCS, SEBC, OCHA / SHF, UNICEF, WFP, UNHCR, ILO, UNDP, UNHCR.

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

In Jordan: IFH (Institute for family health), MOH (Ministry of health), JHAS (Society Aid Health Jordanian), JWU (Jordanian Women's Union), the National Council for Family Affairs (NCFA), YPEER (Youth Peer Education Network), Questscope, IRC, RHAS.

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, Care International.

In Turkey: The Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD) of the Prime Ministry of Turkey; Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA); Ministry of Health (MoH); Ministry of Labour, Social Services and Family; ASAM (Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants); KAMER (Women's Centre Foundation); Osmangazi University; Harran University; YAHA (Youth Approaches to Health Association); PYD (Positive Life Association); Red Umbrella; Bilgi University.

Turkey Cross-Border: Syria Relief and Development (SRD), Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS), Syrian Expatriate Medical Association (SEMA), Ihsan for Relief and Development (IhsanRD), Shafak, and their sub-implementing partners Masratt (Ihsan), Maram (SAMS), Women's Support Association (SEMA) and Hope Revival Organization (HRO) (SEMA).



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