

UNFPA IRAQ

QUARTERLY UPDATE



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UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND - IRAQ
صندوق الأمم المتحدة للسكان - العراق

PUTTING SURVIVORS' INTEREST FIRST

On 26 July, UNFPA in Iraq organized a round table in Sulimaniyah on the ways forward and strategies deemed necessary in making mandatory reporting more survivor-centred, especially the response to Article 48 of the Iraqi Penal Code which states that all public servants are required to report misdemeanours and felonies, such as incidents of rape. A survivor should have the freedom and the right to disclose an incident to anyone they wish, yet many survivors are hesitant towards sharing the abuse they are subjected to. The Mandatory Reporting round tables across KRI emphasize the importance of confidentiality and informed consent as the rules state that actors receiving information about certain types of violence are compelled by law or institutional policies to report this information to the police. Therefore, it is important that survivors are made aware of these mandatory reporting rules, the types of information which may trigger them, and the possible consequences of reporting, before beginning an interview. The meeting in Sulimaniyah is one of the series of round tables in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, which started on 2 May, with the support of the European Regional Development and Protection Programme for the Middle East (RDPP).



DISCUSSING THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH SURVEY IN IRAQ

UNFPA Iraq held a consultative meeting on "National Adolescents and Youth Survey" in Beirut, Lebanon on 22-23 July 2018. Representatives from the Iraqi government and Kurdistan Region of Iraq's government discussed survey indicators on health and HIV/AIDS, male/female reproductive health and psychological / social health, nutrition, media and culture, youth and sport, disability Information technology, youth and security, youth participation, civil rights and citizenship among others. Around 54,000 adolescents and young people from 10 to 30 years will be involved in the survey through questionnaires and focus group discussions. The Survey aims at providing baseline indicators on socio-economic wellbeing, civic rights, youth participation, as well as involvement in peace and security to tailor youth-friendly policies, programs and national development plans. In addition, the results of the survey will be the baseline to supporting the Government of Iraq in drafting a National Youth Vision.

ADOLESCENT GIRLS TOOLKIT ROLL-OUT IN DIYALA

In May 2018, UNFPA organised an Adolescent Girls Toolkit Training of Trainers. On 9-13 July, the master trainers from the ToT conducted a roll-out workshop in Diyala targeting 17 social workers, outreach workers and Y-peer focal points working at the UNFPA-supported Women Community Centres in the area. Participants not only learned about the toolkit, but also briefed on the skills required to facilitate sessions for adolescent girls. The toolkit is a collection of learning sessions and tools designed to empower adolescent girls to address key issues on life skills, reproductive health, gender-based violence and financial education. After the training, participants have started identifying target beneficiaries and conducting sessions from the toolkit.

AUGUST 2018

INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY: 12 AUGUST

Youth in Iraq are compelling agents of change; as they become more empowered, they can and should, play a critical role in building back their communities after the three-year war that hit the country. To make changes, young people need safe spaces to develop and recover as well as find stability. Safe spaces are the physical or virtual spaces where they can come together, engage in activities related to their diverse needs and interests, participate in decision-making processes and freely express themselves.



To celebrate the young men and women in Iraq, the Ministry of Youth and Sport (MoYS), under the auspices of Iraqi Prime Minister, Mr Hayder Al-Abadi, with the support of UNFPA in Iraq, held on 10 August a gathering at Al-Rasheed hotel in Baghdad, in presence of high level officials and diplomats, and youth. Speaking at the event, the UNFPA Representative to Iraq, emphasized on the importance of the provision of safe spaces for youth and announced the upcoming launch of the national survey on youth needs for evidence-based policy making & programming, in partnership with the MoYS.

In addition, the MoYS organized round tables in Baghdad, Kerbala, and Najaf as part of the International Youth Peace Forum, from 10 to 16 August, in partnership with the Arab league, supported by UNFPA in Iraq and funded by Germany, on peace building and how to invest in youth to strengthen the methodology of peace building, recovery from conflict, and fighting extremism. The discussions also tackled the most appropriate means to use religious speeches to build the capacity of young people and emphasize on their positive roles in the community.

ADDRESSING FGM IN THE KURDISTAN REGION OF IRAQ

On 8-9 August, UNFPA, with funding from the European Regional Development and Protection Programme for the Middle East (RDPP) conducted a two-day workshop at the end of a series of consultation meetings with the government stakeholders, including the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Ministry of Religious Affairs, NGOs, and survivors, on Female Genital Mutilation. The workshop was attended by 60 stakeholders from Erbil and Sulaymaniyah who worked on reviewing the situation of FGM in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq in the context of gender equality and GBV and considered suggestions put forward by the stakeholders on what strategies and programs (including gender programming, communication strategies, and law enforcement) can be implemented in order to eliminate this negative practice in the Kurdistan Region. The final Communication and Behavioural Impact Plan will be drawn up by UNFPA and will integrate some of the comprehensive suggestions put forward.



CAPACITY BUILDING TRAINING FOR WOMEN SHELTER STAFF

The first capacity building training for women shelter staff took place during 29 July and 5 August 2018 in Erbil, targeting 31 persons from Baghdad, Basra, Erbil, Duhok, Sulaymaniyah and Garmian. The training aimed at strengthening capacities of women shelter staff in managing the women shelter as well as exchanging experiences among shelters in different locations of Iraq. The sessions included orientation on the international legal framework on women's rights and gender equality, the objective of women shelter, guiding principles and standard operating procedures for women shelter. The second and third training are scheduled to be conducted in September 2018.

YOUTH IN IRAQ LEADING THE WAY TOWARDS PEACE

As part of UNFPA strategy to empower Iraqi youth and engage them in the recovery phase of the country, UNFPA and its partners in the Central South region organised sessions on peace-building using transitional leadership and Y-Peer techniques. This September, more than 800 young men and women from Anbar, Baghdad, Dhi Qar, Mosul, and Waset participated in trainings on leadership skills among youth to promote peacebuilding processes, learn communication and negotiation skills to prevent them from the issues of violence and extremism in their societies and demonstrate positive behaviours. UNFPA upholds the agenda of "Youth Peace and Security" and aims to continue supporting youth participation /engagement for peacebuilding processes, conflict resolution and the development of youth.

In addition, UNFPA supported three Advanced Youth Peer Education Training in Erbil, Mosul, and Kirkuk for 69 young men and women on issues related to gender equality, GBV, peace building, interactive theatre techniques, leadership, and sexual and reproductive health. The Kirkuk training was held for the first time since 2013.

TRAINING PESHMERGA ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND GBV LAWS

Understanding and respecting human rights, including women's rights, is not only a moral obligation but a necessity when working in the front line. To guarantee the Peshmerga forces are well acquainted with these rights, UNFPA, the Kurdistan Human Rights Watch (KHRW), and the Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs (MoPA) organised a 10-day workshop on the subject from 3 to 10 September for 20 female and male Peshmerga officers.

The sessions focused on the principles and concept of human rights, International Human Rights Law, the concept of sexual gender-based violence (SGBV), human rights violations, the mechanism to deal with SGVB, and the respect that should be shown when dealing with sensitive cases, such as GBV, women, minorities, and refugees among others. The workshop attendees will, in turn, educate a total of 600 Peshmerga officers on the ways to deal with different human rights and GBV-related cases.

To tackle the negative impacts of the conflict and displacement, which continue to pose significant risks of GBV in different parts of Iraq, the Government of Iraq, the GBV Sub-Cluster in Iraq, and UNFPA rolled out on 3 September the Inter-Agency GBV Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in the Central South region.

On 4 and 5 September, 70 participants of the Central South Working Group providing GBV-related services, endorsed the SOPs and expressed their commitment to implement them in their respective areas.

As a way forward, it was suggested that the Council of Ministers endorses the SOPs and includes them in the ongoing process of updating the National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women.

LAUNCHING THE GBV SOPs IN CENTRAL SOUTH OF IRAQ

119, A FREE HELPLINE FOR GBV SURVIVORS AND A MESSAGE OF HOPE IN KURDISTAN +

Survivors of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) can now dial "119" to receive support, counselling, and referrals to community-based services and resources in the region.

On 26 September, UNFPA and the General Directorate for Combatting Violence Against Women (GDCVAW) in KRI launched the first helpline for gender-based violence survivors. The Helpline is a 24-hour call centre established to provide confidential support and guidance to survivors of GBV. Callers will be connected with trained social workers as well as legal and psycho-social support counsellors, both female and male.

UNFPA also organised two trainings for GDCVAW social workers and phone operators on the helpline procedures and guidelines for answering, probing, supporting, and following up on calls received at the call centre.

The project, supported by the European Regional Development and Protection Programme for the Middle East, is expected to reach more than 3,600 survivors in the first year of its operations. The RDPP is a multi-donor initiative funded by the European Union, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.



THE DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY OF THE KURDISTAN REGION OF IRAQ

The Kurdistan Region Statistics Office (KRSO), UNFPA, and IOM launched today the demographic survey of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), one of the largest statistical exercises conducted in the region since 1987.

The survey provides a comprehensive profile of the current population demographics, employment and income, housing, household possessions, literacy and education levels. This socio-demographic study gathered information from 12,699 households, including long term residents and displaced families in the three KRI governorates of Duhok, Erbil and Sulaymaniyah. This research is timely as it comes at a time where the country is emerging from the conflict and economic hardship; while a significant portion of displaced families have returned or are considering to go back home. The 2014-2017 war against ISIL has had a severe impact on the Kurdistan Region: from the start of the crisis, KRI has provided refuge to more than one million displaced Iraqis and continues to host more than 800,000 internally displaced persons.

DONOR UPDATES

THE EUROPEAN UNION



The European Union continues its support to UNFPA in Iraq through a EUR 5 million contribution to sustain reproductive health and clinical management of rape services across Iraq.

The UN estimates that around 825,000 women of reproductive age are in need of humanitarian assistance in Iraq. The delivery of health care services in both conflict-affected areas and Internally Displaced People's hosting areas has been severely impacted, as a result of the three-year devastating war against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

With this funding, UNFPA will support comprehensive emergency obstetric care in six hospitals in Telafar, Hawija, Qaim, Hammam Aleel, Qayarra and Shirqat, Basic Emergency Obstetric Care, in four facilities in Beiji, Ana, Qayarra airstrip and Sunoni, five reproductive health clinics in Jadaa, Salameya and Hamman Al-Aleel camps, and 26 RH clinics in West Anbar, West Ninewa, North Salahuddin and Kerbala.

The EU has been a strategic partner to UNFPA in Iraq since 2015 with a total contribution of EUR 21 million to the Fund's reproductive health and gender-based violence interventions.



THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

A new commitment from the Republic of Korea will support UNFPA in strengthening services to address sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence in Iraq, to meet the complex needs of women and girls as the country recovers from three years of conflict.

The \$700,000 commitment, signed on 16 August 2018, will fund UNFPA reproductive health interventions in camps for internally displaced people in Duhok and Sulimaniyah in Iraq's Kurdistan Region, and gender-based violence services across the country.



QUARTERLY FIGURES



28,338 women reached through RH services
4,627 women received GBV services people
3,191 women received RH and family planning consultations
4,443 safe deliveries
11 health facilities
7 women centres
4 youth centres

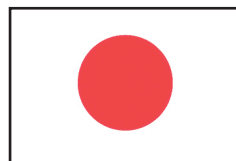
IN REFUGEE CAMPS

93,205 women received RH services
71,257 people received RH awareness sessions
36 RH facilities supported by UNFPA
4 mobile clinic
46,988 women received GBV services
170,433 people received GBV awareness sessions
16,490 dignity kits distributed
134 women centres

**IN IDP CAMPS AND
HOST COMMUNITIES**

OUR DONORS

UNFPA is exceedingly thankful to its donors for their contribution this year towards humanitarian and development programmes and response in Iraq.



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STORY FROM THE FIELD

OVERCOMING THE STIGMA OF INFERTILITY

Many women grow up dreaming about the day when they find their significant other, get married, have children, and create a haven they can call home. However, not all women are able to complete their dreams of bringing life to the world.

"Infertility can rock your very foundation: your sense of control over your future, your faith in your body, and your feelings about yourself as a woman," said Rawa, a 43-year-old Syrian refugee from Damascus.

At the age of 30, kindergarten teacher Rawa met a man and fell in love. "It was perfect back then. We fell in love, decided to get married and start a family. It was all I was looking forward to; after all, I love children, and that's why I worked at a kindergarten," she added.

Things did not go as planned for her and her husband: a year into their marriage and after a series of doctors' visits and tests, the once-happy family discovered that Rawa was unable to conceive. "When people find out about my infertility, their facial expressions change; the smile on their face is immediately replaced by an awkward silence that screams: 'Something is wrong with you,'" she explains.

Years passed and the situation kept worsening for the family-of-two. Rawa eventually discovered that her husband had begun having an affair, and his attitude toward her had shifted considerably. He had taken to calling her "less of a woman," relegating her to the role of a housekeeper and preventing her from leaving the house. Her sadness and despair were immeasurable to the extent that the idea of committing suicide haunted her day and night.

"I eventually summoned the strength to ask for a divorce, but he refused, again and again," explains Rawa. "I resigned myself to suffer in silence and to hope that one day I will manage to break free."

In 2011, eight years into the marriage, the war broke out in Syria and the family was forced to leave Damascus. In 2013, they sought refuge in the Kurdistan Regional of Iraq, more specifically in the Gawelan camp, home to more than 8,300 Syrian refugees.

The burden of displacement took its toll on Rawa as it exacerbated her sense of loneliness and rejection and led her into a complete state of depression. One day, she saw a leaflet in front of her tent about the UNFPA-supported Women's Social Centre at the camp. The leaflet presented the services offered to women, especially those in need of psychosocial support. Despite her lack of hope, she decided to take a chance.

"At the centre, the social workers told me that I am not alone – that I may suffer in silence, but I am far from alone. They restored some of the faith I had lost in myself and made me feel that I should not be judged by my ability to procreate," recalls Rawa of her first visit to the centre. "They made me feel as if I had a place in the world."

The social workers sheltered her and provided her with advice and knowledge on infertility. They also encouraged her to attend the recreational activities and life-skills sessions offered, which she happily took in the hope of ending her isolation.

"The centre and social workers not only held my hand when I needed it, but they also reached out to my husband and convinced him to attend the focus group discussions for men and young boys on gender-based violence and women's rights," explains Rawa.

"I have learned to live with the idea that I am unable to have children, so now I fill my time with arts and crafts instead of feeling sorry for my situation. My husband has also improved considerably. His disrespectful statements have stopped and he is slowly embracing the situation with a more compassionate and understanding attitude," added Rawa, smiling.



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