Following up on the recommendations made by the Advisory Commission, the Gender Section reviewed the implementation of UNRWA Gender Equality Strategy (2016-2021) and prepared options for the way forward in the next three years. The focus will include preparing for the next UNRWA Medium-Term Strategy that should include a specific high-level result on gender as recommended by the United Nations System Wide Action Plan on gender equality (UN-SWAP).

**UNRWA response to Gender-Based Violence during the COVID-19 pandemic**

UNRWA established since 2010 referral pathways that allow the identification of GBV survivors through its services and their access to services through referrals. From the beginning of 2020 and until 20 April, UNRWA frontline staff identified and provided services to 955 GBV survivors. Among these 559 survivors were identified by health staff, 234 by RSS, and 115 by education. The services provided are first psychosocial support, followed by legal aid, then case management, medical care, and emergency cash assistance. The typology of violence reported is first psychological assault, followed by physical assault, denial of resources, sexual assault, forced marriage and only two rape cases in Lebanon.

In response to the pandemic, UNRWA focused on the provision of healthcare, cash assistance, and remote education with protection concerns progressively integrated. Hotlines were established to provide communities with support and information on available services and how to access them that included information to GBV survivors. Despite the worldwide reported increase in prevalence of gender-based violence, UNRWA like many other service providers witnessed a drop in the identification of cases because of the closure of services. This trend is also corroborated by data from the inter-agency taskforce on GBVIMS (data collection taskforce on GBV) in Jordan that reported a 68 per cent drop in the number of GBV cases reported. Depending on the context of the UNRWA field of operations other initiatives took place:

- In the **West Bank**, case managers contacted GBV survivors with recent history of domestic violence to check on them.
- In **Lebanon**, and in coordination with the inter-agency taskforce information was shared with community-based organizations on available case management services and an increase in legal aid caseload was noticed.
- In **Jordan**, the GBV hotlines were shared on social media and community outreach modalities were discussed with the GBV network.
- In **Gaza**, emergency hotlines were put in place and provide MHPSS services including to GBV survivors in collaboration with the Health programme.
- In **Syria**, modalities for re-opening the Family Support Offices are being established to resume services and support to GBV survivors.
UNRWA is a United Nations agency established by the General Assembly in 1949 and mandated to provide assistance and protection to some 5.6 million registered Palestine refugees. Its mission is to help Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, West Bank and the Gaza Strip achieve their full human development potential, pending a just and lasting solution to their plight. UNRWA services encompass education, health care, relief and social services, camp infrastructure and improvement, protection and microfinance.

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