



monthly updates on gender issues in UNRWA and the region

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update of the month

UNRWA Gaza and West Bank field offices have participated in the UN Special Rapporteur's visit to the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) by organizing briefings with senior staff, as well as field visits to installations in which UNRWA was able to highlight some of the main issues working on violence against women (VAW) in the oPt.

stories from UNRWA

Community Engagement in Lebanon as part of GBV Prevention Work

Ninety-one per cent of women and girls participating in gender-based violence (GBV) information and sensitization sessions with UNRWA consider GBV to be a problem in their community. This is a part of the data collected through GBV assessments that were carried out as part of the Agency's work on community protection under the two-year programme, Building Safety. The loss of community structures for Palestine refugees from Syria (PRS) as a consequence of displacement and uprooting has translated into the breakdown of traditional protection structures, thus increasing the risk of GBV. As part of strengthening community protection and involvement in the prevention of GBV, a community mobilization initiative, which has been implemented in partnership with the Abaad Resource Centre for Gender Equality since early 2016, seeks to ensure that UNRWA can better meet the self-stated needs of those most at risk of GBV and build a community-based approach to GBV prevention and risk mitigation, focusing in part on involving men and boys as necessary agents and allies for change.

In the groups, participants explore issues related to fears, concerns and needs; resilience and coping mechanisms; access to information and services; stress management; and perceptions about masculinity and gender roles in families and communities. Assessments conducted throughout the implementation of the project indicate that participants are coming out of the programme with improved self-rated life-skill capacities, such as anger management, abilities to reduce tensions in stressful situations, positive communication and empathy. The initiative will continue in 2017 as part of the Building Safety programme funded by the US Government under the 'Safe from the Start' initiative.

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UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women Visit to the OPT

Dubravka Šimonović, the UN Special Rapporteur (SR) on VAW recently concluded her first visit to the oPt, which included Gaza and West Bank. In a statement released following her visit, the Special Rapporteur (SR) welcomed Palestine's accession to The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) as well as the development of the national strategy to combat violence against women and the national action plan on the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, while also highlighting existing gaps and challenges in combatting violence against women, such as the legal system.

As part of her visit, the SR participated in a seminar, 'Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in the Humanitarian Context of the Gaza Strip,' held in Gaza and organized by UN Women, with participation from UNRWA, in addition to other UN agencies and local organizations. The seminar aimed at highlighting the current challenges and opportunities with regard to an integrated response to GBV in Gaza.

Read the Special Rapporteur's end-of-mission statement in [English](#) and [Arabic](#).

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'Building Safety' Update

As part of structuring the work on capacity-building within the Building Safety Programme, work on the e-learning course on GBV in emergencies is progressing. The e-learning course is one of the main components through which the programme aims at building the institutional capacity of UNRWA to address GBV during emergencies. The course will also support the roll-out of the other programme components.

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Inspiring Story

Egyptian Women Athletes at the Rio Olympics

Sara Ahmed, an 18-year-old Egyptian athlete, became the first Arab woman to win a medal at the 2016 Rio Olympics. Sara came in third in the women's 69 kg category winning the bronze medal.

Eight days following Sara's victory, Hedaya Malak, also an Egyptian athlete, won another bronze medal in Taekwondo at the Rio Olympics. Twenty-three-year-old Hedaya competed in the 57 kg category, becoming the second Egyptian woman to get on the Olympics stage following Sara.

Read more about [Sara's](#) and [Hedaya's](#) stories.

Events of Interest

30 September-21 October, Jordan
The fifth edition of the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup and the first FIFA tournament to ever take place in the Middle East will take place in different cities in Jordan: Amman, Irbid, and Zarqa. [Read more.](#)

11 October, Global
This year marks the fifth year in which 11 October is celebrated as the Day of the Girl Child, which brings together UN Agencies, as well as international and local NGOs and activists. The theme for this year is 'Girls' Progress = Goals' Progress: A Global Girl Data Movement.' [Read more.](#)

8-9 November, Brussels
The ninth Gender Summit will be held in Brussels, providing a platform for dialogue for scientists, policymakers, gender scholars and stakeholders in science systems. This year, the summit will focus on gender-based research, innovation and development for sustainable economies and societal well-being. [Read more.](#)

Regional News

Occupied Palestinian Territory
In her first visit to the oPt, the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Dubravka Šimonović, emphasizes the need for women's participation in the peace process. [Read more.](#)

Jordan
In the recent parliamentary elections in Jordan, women members of parliament won 20 out of 130 seats, compared to the previous parliament where women had 18 out of 150 seats. [Read more.](#)

Regional
Concluding a conference organized by ESCWA and the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW) at Lebanese American University (LAU), in partnership with the Danish Centre for Research on Women and Gender (KVINFORM) in Beirut in August, the Beirut Call for Action was launched, advocating for promoting a culture of peace and active protection of women from violence and tackling issue of violence extremism, radical religious discourse and political repression. [Read more](#)

Reports & Resources

The Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW) and UN Women commissioned Al-Hayat Center for Civil Society Development, RASED and Search for Common Ground to conduct a study on the gendered impact of radicalization. The report, *Women and Violence Radicalization in Jordan*, explores risks women and girls face, and how gender-sensitive current efforts addressing radicalization have been. [Read the report in both English and Arabic.](#)

UN Women
The first ever HeforShe *IMPACT 10X10X10 University Parity Report* has been published. In the report, 10 leading universities lay out commitments and the future vision for achieving gender parity. [Read the report.](#)

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)
ESCWA published a policy brief, *Equality in the New Global Agenda: Integrat-*

ing a Gender Perspective in the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals 1 and 2 in the Arab Region presenting an analysis of SDGs 1 and 2 on ending poverty and hunger from a gender perspective. The brief also proposes an adaptation of Goals 1 and 2 to the context of the Arab region. [Read the brief.](#)

In another policy brief by ESCWA, *Conflict, Climate Change and Their Mutually Reinforcing Impact on Gender Imbalances in the Arab Region*, the effects of conflict and climate change on gender imbalances in the region are analyzed. The brief highlights how conflict and climate change create bidirectional dynamics that further exacerbate the vulnerability of women. [Read the brief.](#)

ESCWA/Birzeit University
A joint study was published titled, *A People in Danger*, which analyzes the effects on health of the 2014 Israeli offensive on Gaza. Among other issues, the study looks at the prevalence of domestic violence. [Read the study.](#)

Facts of the Month

Women candidates won **20 out of 130** seats in the recent Jordanian parliamentary elections. [Learn more.](#)

Women's labour force participation in the region, at **27 per cent**, is the lowest in the world. [Learn more.](#)



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UNRWA is a United Nations agency established by the General Assembly in 1949 and mandated to provide assistance and protection to some 5 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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