

Whole of Syria
Gender-Based Violence Area of Responsibility



VOICES

*Assessment Findings of the
Humanitarian Needs Overview* **2017**



Global Protection Cluster
GBV Prevention and Response



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Acronyms

AoR	Area of Responsibility
CMR	Clinical Management of Rape
CP	Child Protection
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
HNO	Humanitarian Needs Overview
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
NFI	Non-Food Item
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OCHA	Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PSEA	Protection from Sexual Abuse and Exploitation
UNFPA	United Nations Populations
WoS	Whole of Syria

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Foreword

With the conflict now in its sixth year, the humanitarian crisis in Syria is reaching new levels of complexity and hardship for millions of displaced and hard-to-reach families, besieged communities and refugees. The challenges are ongoing and the extended conflict is making it increasingly difficult for Syrians to cope. For the many women, girls, men and boys who confront the daily threat and reality of gender-based violence (GBV), the need for targeted assistance has become more acute - but also more challenging to provide as survivors are forced to adopt more intricate coping strategies.

This document aims to increase knowledge of the current impact of GBV throughout Syria and to guide humanitarian organizations in delivering an informed response. The report draws on analysis of GBV issues from the findings of GBV expert focus group discussion, community focus group Discussions (FGDs), direct community observations and structured FGDs, secondary data, and other data sets such as the Needs Population and Monitoring (NPM), the OCHA-led multi-sector operational partner assessments and Urban Profiling assessments. These findings will help inform the Syria Humanitarian Response Plan for 2017.

Notable developments since last year's report include a wider geographical reach of assessments and the unprecedented scope of the data obtained. As a result, this publication presents the clearest picture yet of GBV across Syria. While the main protection risks are similar to 2015, the intensity of violence and the level to which GBV has been 'normalized' are shown to have increased as the conflict wears on. To cope from one day to the next, women and girls must now often 'choose' the lesser of different hardships.

This report highlights the constant threat of sexual violence, exploitation and child marriage that many adolescent girls suffer. The discussions also revealed more about the rising stigmatization and discrimination aimed at widows and divorcees, often the main breadwinners for female-headed households.

The title of this publication - Voices - is a tribute to the Syrians who have shared their experiences and who illustrate the situation endured by millions of others, whose voices are not heard. Amid these testimonies of pain, anger and human rights violations, the report also gives an insight into the remarkable tenacity of Syrian society. GBV remains a taboo subject in Syria, where non-disclosure of offences is commonplace. So those who speak out do so with courage, although every effort is made to protect their privacy. The report likewise demonstrates the important role played by women's and girls' services and safe spaces as protection and risk mitigation mechanisms.

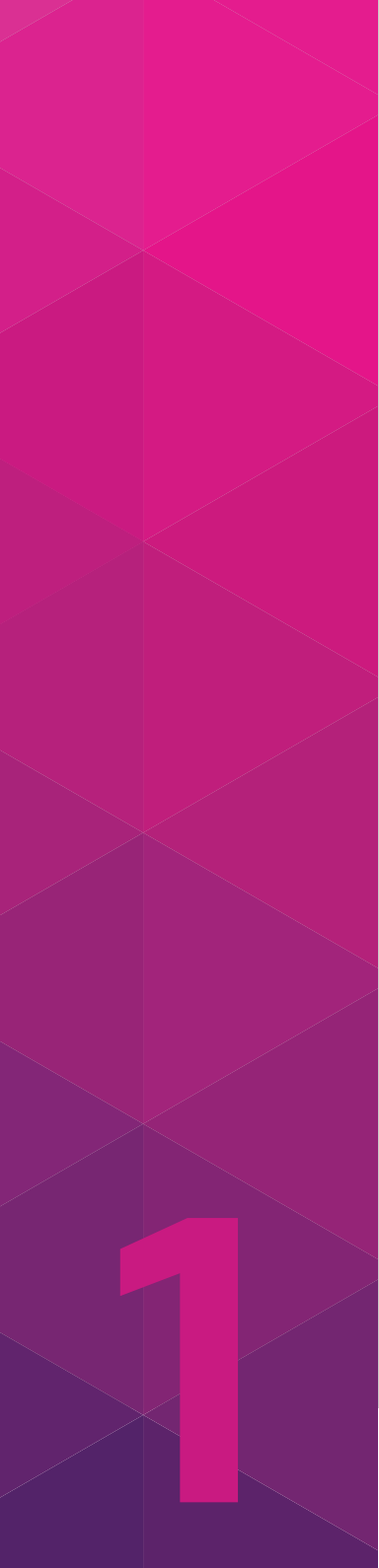
Thank you to everybody who has contributed to these important findings.

Daniel B. Baker

UNFPA Syria Regional Humanitarian Coordinator

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Executive Summary

1.1 Overview of Findings

In 2016, the protection sector collected information on 14 protection issues¹ for the Whole of Syria (WoS) Humanitarian Needs Overview. Results show the widespread prevalence of multiple protection issues throughout most of the country. This report provides a detailed analysis of the protection issues related to Gender-Based Violence (GBV)² that emerged from the assessments. It includes an analysis of the comprehensive qualitative and quantitative data that has come from various assessments in the context of the Humanitarian Needs Analysis in 2017. Across all assessments, the GBV sector focussed on a key set of indicators highlighted below, nevertheless other issues of concern emerged and are described in this report.

While the assessments have shown that all populations inside Syria continue to face multiple ongoing protection risks in the face of immediate and indirect realities of the conflict³, gender-based violence continues to be pervasive throughout women and girls' lives. The length of the crisis combined with the deep-rooted patriarchal structures underpinning Syrian society, are normalising this violence. Husbands reportedly tell their wives, "*Stay at home and preserve your dignity*." Of the assessed sub-districts, 85% report early marriage as a major protection concern, followed by domestic violence (71%) and sexual violence (52%). While women and girls are disproportionately affected by all forms of gender-based violence, boys are seen to be at risk of sexual violence. New concerns are raised about women and girls reportedly being sexually exploited through serial temporary marriages.

Household-level gender roles are changing with women adopting roles more traditionally associated with men, such as paid labour and heading households, resulting in both empowerment of women, but also increased risks of violence against women and girls. Conservative practices imposed by extremist groups in some parts of the country, such as prescribed dress codes, negatively impact women's lives. In 2016, the GBV sectors response improved and expanded to more geographical areas with services being available in 22 additional sub-districts as compared to December 2015. The number of organisations providing GBV services has also double from 22 to 44. However, large gaps remain with 76% of assessed sub-districts stating that more GBV specialised services are needed. Although all women and girls are vulnerable to GBV in the public and private sphere, the assessments found that adolescent girls are perceived to be at particular risk of sexual violence, and divorcees and widows face stigmatization and discrimination, potentially threatening their access to humanitarian aid.

Key Findings:

% of Assessed Sub-Districts reporting Child Marriage: 85%

% of Assessed Sub-Districts reporting Domestic Violence: 71%

% of Assessed Sub-Districts reporting Sexual Violence: 51%

% of Assessed Sub-Districts reporting Movement Restrictions: 97% (*indicator not included in the assessments conducted by the Syria Hub*)

% of Assessed Sub-Districts reporting Kidnapping of Women and Girls: 20%⁴

This report highlights the GBV protection needs of each of Syria's 14 governorates, identifying gaps in service provision. It is intended to inform the development of projects for the 2017 Syria Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) and the GBV response in Syria.

For more information on non-GBV protection data from inside Syria, please refer to the [WoS 2017 Protection Needs Overview](#).

1 Child labour, Child recruitment, Domestic violence, Exploitation (including labour), Explosive remnants, Family separation, Forced/early marriage, Harassment, Housing/land/property issue, Inter-communal disputes, Kidnapping, Lack/loss of personal/civil documentation, Sexual violence, Tension between host and displaced population

2 GBV terminology used in this report is consistent with the IASC GBV guidelines and listed the annex

3 HNO 2016

4 Not all quantitative data sources included data on kidnapping segregated by sex and age. Therefore the percentages of assessed sub-districts reporting kidnapping affecting men, women, boys and/or girls are lower than the percentage of sub-districts reporting kidnapping in general (non-segregated), which amount to 45%.

What's new?

As in 2015, the 2016 assessment has found that GBV continues to be a pervasive threat to women and girls living inside Syria. However, below are issues that have emerged.

- Similar to the 2015 assessment, **domestic violence, child marriage, sexual harassment** and **sexual violence** continue to be the main GBV concerns affecting women and girls. However, the significantly wider coverage of the 2016 assessment has confirmed that these are protection threats affecting women and girls **across the country**.
- The 2016 assessment has also found that the psychosocial toll of on-going conflict is **intensifying the violence** experienced by women and girls; for instance, in the case of domestic violence, female participants within the Community FGDs reported that their husbands were **quicker to resort to violence** within the home as the latter's capacity to handle external pressures wanes.
- New forms of sexual exploitation emerged more strongly during the 2016 assessments, including **serial temporary marriages** (see section 3.1), in which women and girls are forced to enter a series of successive marriages, either for financial gain to themselves or to their families or as rewards for fighters.
- With divorce perceived to be on the rise, the theme of **divorce-related discrimination** came out strongly in the 2016 assessments. Specifically, the assessments found that divorced women and girls face reduced access to aid and stigmatization within their community. They were also seen at risk of losing access to their children following the breakdown of a marriage due to cultural norms dictating that children stay with their paternal family.
- The 2016 data emphasized **the vulnerability of female-headed households**, including **divorcees** and **widows**. **Adolescent girls** were also identified as being at particularly high risk of GBV, especially sexual violence and child marriage.
- **The positive impact that GBV services** are having on women's and girls' psychosocial well-being, providing a safe space where they can talk through their feelings and experiences was mentioned. However, despite an increase in coverage of GBV services, there continue to be significant gaps in service provision that need to be addressed in the Humanitarian Response Plan for 2017.

1.2 Guide to Analysis in the Document

The report is divided into four sections:

After providing an **executive summary** in Section One, the second section gives a brief outline of the **data collection methodology** that contributed to the wider assessment, including limitations of the assessment. In the third section, **key findings** are presented. These include specific types of GBV, negative coping mechanisms women's and girl's access to humanitarian assistance. Linkages between GBV concerns and other sectors.

Section Four provides an **overview of all governorates**, with reference figures and analysis of the data available for each governorate. **In the annexes**, a detailed overview of the various methodologies used for each assessment that was analysed is available, as well as a list of secondary data sources and a glossary of terminology.



2



Data Collection Methodology

2.1 Indicators Guiding the GBV Analysis for the 2017 WoS Humanitarian Needs Overview

The challenges of collecting data on GBV issues are well-documented, where discussions around GBV are considered shameful or taboo. **However, the 2016 assessments represent the largest amount of data gathered on GBV since the start of the Syria crisis. This includes extensive qualitative information on sexual violence, sexual harassment and child marriage, provided by women, men, adolescent girls and adolescent boys.**

Data from multiple sources of assessments, with varying geographic coverage, conducted through April to July 2016, as well as 4W data provided by GBV sub-sector partners between January and June 2016 were combined to do the analysis. In addition, a secondary data review was carried out in August and September 2016.

The HNO assessments were led from all three WoS hubs, namely from the Damascus hub that accessed government-controlled areas as well as the two hubs in Gaziantep and Amman accessing non-government controlled areas through cross-border operations.

The GBV sector chose six indicators to assess for the 2017 HNO. These indicators were selected based on the findings and lessons learned from 2016 HNO assessments.

- % of assessed sub-districts with reports of different types of GBV, namely domestic violence, sexual violence, forced and child marriage, harassment, exploitation and kidnapping
- % of assessed sub-districts where specialized services for GBV survivors are available
- % of assessed sub-districts with reports of negative coping mechanisms affecting women and girls
- % of assessed sub-districts with reports of movement restrictions for women and girls
- % of assessed sub-districts with reports of restricted access to services for women and girls
- % of assessed sub-districts with reports of risks to women and girls when accessing aid, namely risks of exploitation, discrimination, aid not being free or/and money being asked in exchange of services, sexual violence and requests of sexual favours in exchange of aid

All HNO assessments were guided by this common set of indicators to formulate their questions, though not all the assessments were able to gather all the indicators.

The selected indicators were in line with the type of information normally collected for GBV situational assessments and allowed to gather information on developments since 2015 as well as newly emerging trends.

It is understood that in emergency situations, that many forms of GBV are significantly aggravated. However, the aim of the assessments was not to assess overall prevalence of types of GBV. As is stated in the IASC GBV guidelines seeking population based data on the true magnitude of GBV should not be a priority in any emergency due to safety and ethical challenges in collecting such data. GBV is under reported worldwide due to fears of stigma, retaliation, limited availability of accessibility of services.⁵ The WHO ethical and safety recommendations for collecting information on sexual violence in emergencies were taken into account⁶.

5 IASC GBV guidelines (2015). [Gbvguidelines.org](http://gbvguidelines.org)

6 WHO (2007). WHO Ethical and safety recommendations for researching, documenting and monitoring sexual violence in emergencies.

2.2 Overview of Assessments and Combined Assessment Coverage

The assessments were successful in eliciting the GBV concerns of Syrians living in all fourteen governorates. Overall, 264 sub-districts out of 272 sub-districts in Syria were covered by one or more of the assessments, reflecting a 97% country-wide reach. Below is an overview of the coverage by each assessment that informed the GBV analysis.

Coverage of sector/cluster-led assessments

- Community direct observation, expert panel validation and structured focus group discussions through the Syria hub: 172 sub-districts.
- Community focus group discussions through the Jordan and Turkey hubs: 43 sub-districts through 126 discussions focus groups.
- GBV expert focus group discussions at WoS level as well as in Homs, Damascus and Gaziantep
- Secondary sources were also analysed.

Coverage of non-sector/cluster-led assessments

- OCHA-led multi-sector operational partner assessments through Key Informants: 83 sub-districts
- Needs and Population Monitoring project (NPM) through Key Informants: 127 sub-districts
- UNHabitat led Urban Community Profile initiative through Key informants: 35 sub-districts

Syria Arab Republic: Protection Sector - Assessments' Coverage

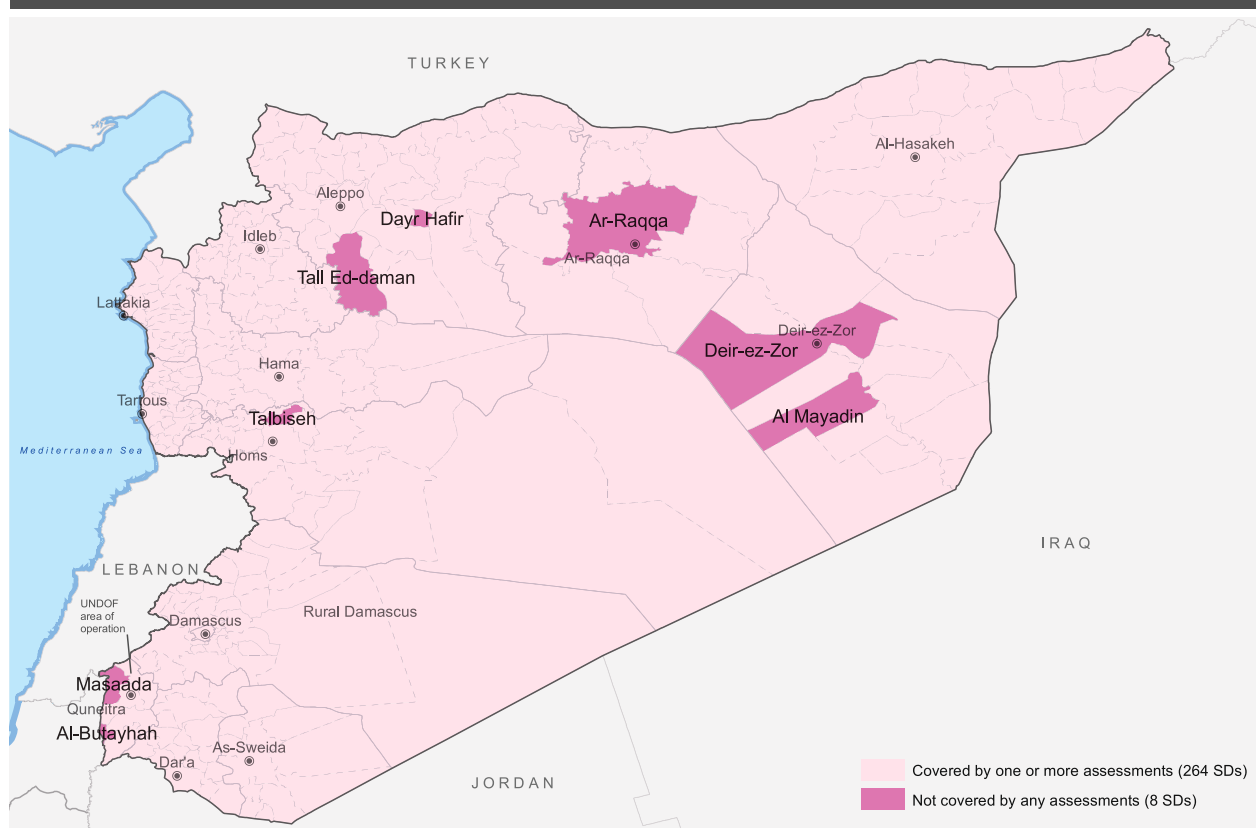


Fig. 2.2.1: Assessment Coverage for HNO 2017

2.3 Limitations of the Assessment Findings

Despite the 2016 assessment representing the largest GBV assessment to date inside Syria, certain limitations do need to be acknowledged.

While efforts were made to streamline indicators and questions into the various quantitative assessment tools across the three hubs, the analysis of several indicators was affected by questions being framed differently and different terminology used. Moreover, the granularity of data in terms of geographical levels and the level of sex and age segregation from the various data sources varied.

The coverage of the 2016 assessments was significantly wider than in 2015, in particular with regards to qualitative data. Nevertheless, eight sub-districts could not be covered by any assessment, namely: Ar-Raqqa, Al Butaynah, Al Mayadin, Dayr-Hafir, Deir-ez-Zor, Masaada, Talbiseh and Tall Ed-daman sub-districts. While quantitative data could be obtained from almost all sub-districts inside the Syria, the qualitative data only covered areas accessed by cross-border operations from the Jordan and Turkey hubs. This affected combining qualitative and quantitative data consistently across all geographical areas in the analysis phase.

Efforts were made to ensure a gender balance when conducting the assessments. Data collectors were trained to seek out female respondents when possible through culturally sensitive best practices and relevant for the method used. Despite these efforts, the overall percentage of female key informants remained very low in the quantitative assessments. (See Annex for further details on limitations).

It should be noted that while this report tries to reflect all available data from assessments inside Syria, some critical GBV-related issues, such as crimes against Yazidi women, that were widely communicated through international media channels, were not included in the report as available assessment data did not provide any information on these issues.



3



Findings

GBV continues to pose a pervasive threat to women's and girls' well-being throughout Syria. This section presents the assessment findings according to the indicators set by the WoS GBV sector:

- Types of GBV reported as a concern
- Negative coping mechanisms used by women and girls
- Movement restrictions for women and girls
- Availability and access to GBV services across Syria
- Risks for women and girls when accessing aid

This section also outlines other recurring thematic areas within the data sets. These include changing family dynamics, social groups most vulnerable to GBV and linkages between GBV and other sectors.

3.1 The Main Types of GBV Reported to be a Concern for Women and Girls

Child marriage, domestic violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, economic violence, and kidnapping of women and girls are all discussed below.



Child Marriage

Child marriage was cited as a major protection concern in 85% of the assessed sub-districts (across all 14 governorates), with girls being the group most at risk. From the data, it was not clear which social groups are marrying girls, although older men and young male recruits were both mentioned within the assessments. Risks that were associated with child marriage were domestic violence, divorce, early pregnancies, curtailed educational opportunities and psychological harm. For example, GBV experts linked child marriage to an increase in abortions. They also noted that girls are more aware than previously of the negative impact of child marriage and may oppose proposed arrangements, leading to conflict with parents and reportedly suicide. In the section on sexual exploitation, a specific form of child marriage is discussed: serial temporary marriages⁷, whereby girls, as well as women, are forced into a series of marriages.

Growing concern

It should be noted that child marriage is not a new phenomenon in Syria. It was a harmful traditional practice before the conflict started. However, while the assessments did not assess prevalence, recent reports by INGOs inside Syria⁸ and GBV experts argued that child marriage is on the increase.

“*Child marriages have increased dramatically in the areas suffering from security tension. (Man, Expert FGD)*

Protection and financial insecurity were repeatedly cited as explaining the perceived increase in child marriages.

Child marriage as a perceived protective strategy

A dominant theme within the Community FGDs was that women's and girls' safety was associated with living under a man's protection. Child marriage was framed as a protective coping strategy in 11 out of 14 Governorates⁹, giving girls the protection that derives from living with a man in the formalized context of marriage.

“*Whoever has a daughter would want to get her married because everybody is afraid of the war situation (Woman, Community FGD, Quneitra Governorate, Camp setting).*

...we only want what will protect her, to have her in the house of a man (Woman, Community FGD, Dar'a Governorate).

However, changing family dynamics (discussed in Box 3b) are contributing to an increase in female-headed households across Syria, a shift that is perceived to place women and girls at greater risk of sexual and physical violence.

⁷ Serial temporary marriages are also explained as a form of sexual exploitation where women may be married to 'fighters' for as little as a few hours. See section on sexual exploitation.

⁸ Buecher, B and Rwampigi Aniyamuzaala, J (2016), Women, Work & War: Syrian women and the struggle to survive five years of conflict. Research Study. CARE Syria Response, and (2026) assessment report.

⁹ Based on both the qualitative and quantitative data sets.

“...the reason why these groups are exposed to sexual violence risk is the absence of a man who is responsible to protect them (Man, Community FGD, Aleppo Governorate).”

However, the risks of child marriage were perceived to be clearly outweighed by the risks of living without a male protector. In other words, child marriage was depicted as a traditional culturally-accepted *harmful necessity* in the current climate of insecurity and changing family structures. It should be noted that not all participants agreed with this view; one single mother, for instance, felt that she was capable of protecting her daughter without the need for a man:

“I do not consider child marriage a good reason to protect the girls. She is safer here with me than any future husband I cannot guarantee (Woman, Community FGD, Quneitra Governorate).”

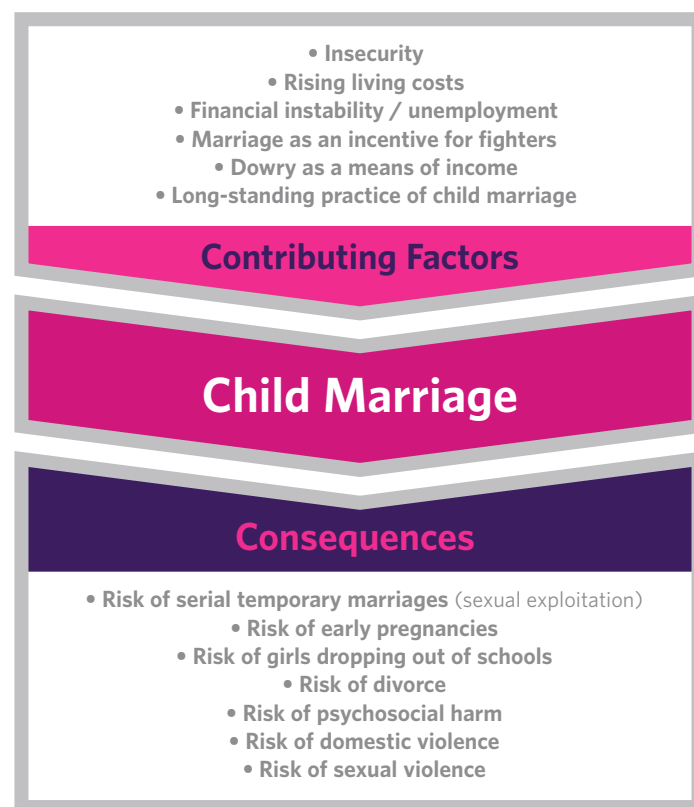


Fig. 3.1.1: Contributing Factors and Consequences of Child Marriage

Financial insecurity as a trigger for child marriage

Child marriage was also depicted as a financial coping strategy. Many participants in the assessments described how the rising living costs and high unemployment have increased the challenges associated with the provision of basic needs.

“Because everything is so expensive you wish to die instead. Pampers (i.e. diapers) are expensive. My husband told me don't put pampers on our baby during the day. I told him, okay, I will only put them at night. He then said never night or day. Keep him on your knees (Woman, Community FGD, Aleppo Governorate).”

Within the quantitative data and Community FGDs, child marriage was framed as a strategy for reducing households' economic burden¹⁰, alongside raising a small dowry.

“Women say, 'I have married my daughter off at an early age because we are unable to meet her requirements' (Adolescent Girl, Community FGD, Idlib Governorate)”

¹⁰ Buecher, B and Rwampigi Aniyamuzaala, J (2016), Women, Work & War: Syrian women and the struggle to survive five years of conflict. Research Study. CARE Syria Response; UN Inter-Agency Mission Report: Daraya Mission, 01 & 09 June 2016

...poor families agree to marry their daughters so they can get a small dowry and alleviate themselves from the burden of the girl's daily expenses (Man, Community FGD, Idleb Governorate).

In households experiencing high levels of financial insecurity, the cultural tradition of dowry exchange places girls at increased risk of being forced to marry at a young age. Although predominantly discussed in relation to girls, boys were also reportedly encouraged into child marriage for economic gain.

“*Young men are obliged to steal or join militias just to satisfy their needs, or compelled to get married at the age of 15 just to receive a relief basket (Woman, Community FGD, Homs Governorate).*

Child marriage was deemed to present fewer risks to boys than girls. Encouraging boys into marriage before they were ready to handle the responsibilities was associated with additional consequences, such as the increased use of physical violence as a means of asserting their authority over their young wives.

Child marriage was also associated with a heightened risk of divorce. Divorce imposes substantive stigma on women and girls (see Box. 3a), reducing their position in society and impeding their access to services and aid.

“*We cannot prevent [divorce] unless we can prevent child marriage for young men and women. Both of them don't have enough awareness, so they get divorced because of any dispute between them; therefore, the solution is to raise awareness about this type of marriage (Woman, Community FGD, Homs Governorate).*



Domestic Violence

Across the qualitative and quantitative data sets, domestic violence¹¹ was cited as a prominent protection concern for women, men and children in 187 of the 264 assessed sub-districts, across all 14 governorates. It was cited as a protection concern in both camp and non-camp settings.

Although emotional and physical violence are often inter-related, domestic violence was predominantly discussed in terms of physical violence perpetrated by a husband against his wife.

“*The wife is supposed to endure the husband because of the financial and psychological situation, and she must endure the violence by the husband (Woman, Community FGD, Quneitra Governorate)*

Violence in all its forms is common in our society, and women are extremely battered depending on the camp situation (Woman, Community FGD, Idleb Governorate).

A report by Women's International League for Peace and Freedom¹² noted that the increasing proliferation of small arms at a household level across Syria has increased the risk of spousal violence escalating into murder. An increase in arms at a community-level may consequently heighten the threats facing women and girls that live in physically abusive relationships.

Many participants of the Community FGDs tried to explain and excuse domestic violence by linking it to men's stress, especially related to being unemployed and living in a conflict area.¹³

“*Violence exists because men witness a lot and they go back home and use their wives as an outlet (Woman, Community FGD, Aleppo, Governorate).*

Women who identified themselves as survivors of domestic violence discussed how the sustained psychological toll of the conflict was eroding men's capacity to control their anger. The threshold at which they resorted to violence was therefore getting lower. Male violence also appeared to have been normalized, widely discussed by men and women alike as an 'understandable' consequence of the psychological effects of living in areas of high insecurity.

Moreover, whilst men have traditionally been the family breadwinner within the Syrian context, high unemployment and rising living costs have made basic needs provision increasingly difficult. The stress associated with failing to

11 Unless specified otherwise, where domestic violence was reported in both the qualitative and quantitative data, it was taken to mean physical violence.

12 Cited in Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (2016), Violations Against Women In Syria And The Disproportionate Impact Of The Conflict On Them - Universal Periodic Review Of The Syrian Arab Republic Submission To The Human Rights Council. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom: www.wilpf.org

13 This issue was discussed in Community FGDs in 5/7 governorates (Aleppo, Rural Damascus, Idleb, Quneitra, Dar'a).

fulfil the culturally-esteemed role of household provider was explicitly linked to domestic violence in the Community FGDs.

“When they ask us for anything that we cannot provide, we beat them to make them shut up (Man, Community FGD, Idlib, Governorate).”

A study by CARE in Syria, observed an association between domestic violence and changing gender roles at a household level.¹⁴ The study concluded that men’s feelings of inadequacy for failing to provide for their family were being exacerbated by women’s increasing involvement in the paid labour market, resulting in violence. Domestic violence therefore tended to be framed as a reaction to insecurity and changing gender roles, rather than being recognized as an abuse of power, or of women’s basic right to safety and gender inequality.

Female participants in the assessments reported using local GBV services to discuss their experiences of domestic violence (see section 3.4). However, it was widely perceived to be a rights violation for which women had little legal recourse, framed as a private family matter. Furthermore, it was strongly linked to stigma. Thus, as highlighted in fig. 3.1.2, women and girls reported finding themselves in a cycle of violence which was hard to break.



Fig. 3.1.2: The Cycle of Domestic Violence

¹⁴ Buecher, B and Rwampigi Aniyamuzaala, J (2016), Women, Work & War: Syrian women and the struggle to survive five years of conflict. Research Study. CARE Syria Response.

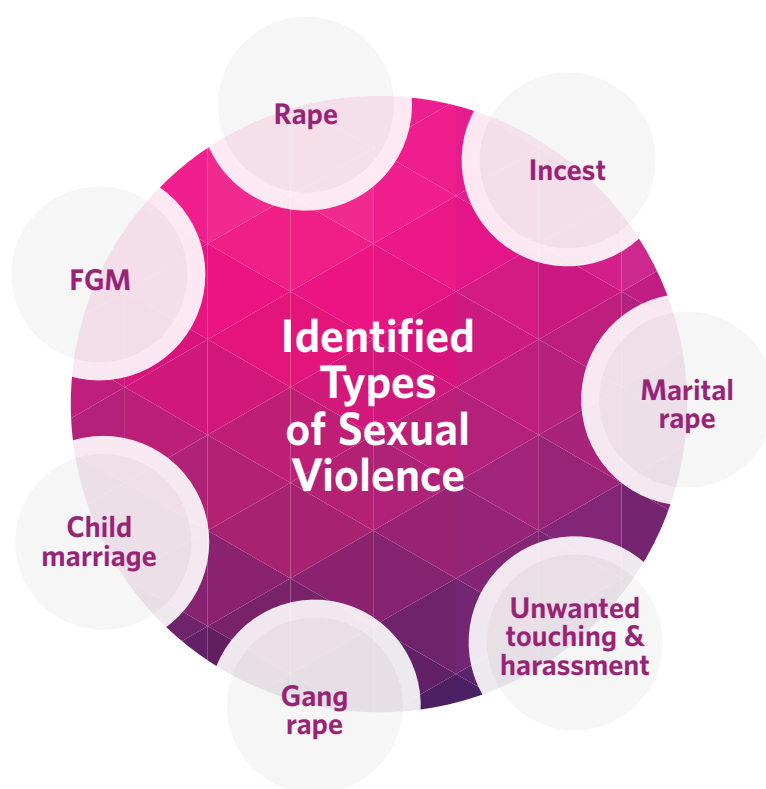


Fig. 3.1.3: Identified Types of Sexual Violence



Sexual Violence

Sexual violence was reported to be a major protection concern in 51% of the assessed sub-districts, across 13 out of 14 governorates. Rape was the most commonly discussed form of sexual violence. Marital rape (especially in the context of child marriages) and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)¹⁵ were also identified as protection concerns.

Across the different data sets, sexual violence was predominantly a female concern with adolescent girls depicted as the group most vulnerable to it. Reports state that females aged 14 to 21 years were at greatest risk of sexual violence¹⁶.

“Certainly girls, and especially young girls between 12-16 years old [are at greatest risk of sexual violence] (Woman, Community FGD, Homs Governorate).

However, across the assessment data, it was not clear which social groups are perpetrating this form of violence.

Although sexual violence was overwhelmingly discussed in relation to women and girls, there were also mentions of the risk of boys being raped.

“...this even means a male child not only a female child. Rapes are scary even for male children (Woman, Community FGD, Dar'a Governorate).

Whilst rape of boys was explained in terms of children's 'innate' vulnerability, rape of men was constructed as a sexual act intended to 'insult' or 'humiliate' the victim. It was not clear which social groups are perpetrating these attacks.

¹⁵ The reference to FGM was made especially for Al Hasakeh and Quamishly where foreign fighters (Sudanese and Egyptians) were forcing women to undergo FGM

¹⁶ Secondary data source available upon request to WoS GBV IMO.

Sexual violence is considered deeply shameful and, thus, likely to be substantially under-reported. Despite cultural barriers potentially impeding discussion of sexual violence, this protection concern was explicitly discussed in the assessments.

“...yes, of course there have been many [cases of rape] (Woman, Community FGD, Dar’a Governorate).

Crowded areas where men and women are mixed were understood to be high risk areas for sexual violence perpetrated against women and girls. Such areas include communal washrooms, distribution points and camp settings. The risk of sexual harassment, in the form of unwanted touching or verbal provocation, was also closely associated with these sites. There was one report of sexual violence occurring amongst children in schools, whilst sexual harassment was perceived to affect girls at school, or when travelling to and from school.

In a culture where respectability and virginity remain highly esteemed, sexual violence does not only carry the risk of physical and psychological harm, but also it is perceived to threaten the honour of the survivor and her family. As such, so-called honour killings and the risk of suicide were discussed in relation to sexual violence.



Sexual Exploitation

Building on the findings from the 2015 Humanitarian Needs Overview, sexual exploitation continues to be a significant protection concern. Across the data sets, requests for sexual favours in exchange for aid were reported in half of the governorates. Where segregated data is available, this was a protection concern predominantly affecting female beneficiaries. Sexual exploitation was also discussed in terms of transactional sexual abuse affecting women and girls; key areas of concern include survival sex, transactional sex¹⁷ and serial temporary marriages. However, no substantive information was provided about who was offering money or food in return for sex.

Survival sex (involving women and girls) were discussed as forms of GBV and framed as negative economic coping strategies:

“Sometimes, armed men offer girls rice and sugar in return for having sex with them (Woman, Community FGD, Rural Damascus Governorate).

Survival sex is perceived to be on the increase, and becoming more visible. A study by CARE¹⁸ found that adolescent girls in economically-deprived, besieged areas were compelled to engage in transactional sexual relationships, such as survival sex, in order to meet their basic, subsistence needs.

There were also reports of fathers offering sexual access to their daughters in return for money.

“We heard about some immoral cases where girls had to sell their bodies in order to meet their needs, and in some cases, the father was involved in it (Woman, Community FGD, Aleppo Governorate).

A second form of sexual exploitation, closely associated with child marriage, is serial temporary marriages.

“I witnessed a case of a woman, who got married more than 17 times, all by virtue of “sheikh agreements”. In the absence of suitable solutions, we will shortly be facing an enormous number of unregistered children...We have witnessed many cases, which, in my opinion, are disguised prostitution, such as marriage for a dowry. In addition, many women travel to Turkey, where they are married off by their relatives to someone in exchange for a dowry. After a short period of time, she is divorced and married off once again to another man for a new dowry (Woman, Expert FGD)

Although data about serial temporary marriages is still limited, it appears that women and girls are being married multiple times through a series of Islamic marriage agreements that can allow a husband sexual access to his wife. GBV experts noted that women may be married to ‘fighters’ for as little as a few hours, before being ‘re-married’ again. Thus, women are sexually exploited by a process which grants men short-term sexual access under the guise of marriage. The lack of civil registration of these ‘marriages’ also places any resultant children at risk of being unregistered.

¹⁷ When elaboration was provided, transactional sex was typically discussed as a form of survival sex (sex for unmet basic needs). However, not all FGDs participants explained their understanding of this term; it is therefore unclear whether there were substantive differences in terms of the dynamics, location and motivation underpinning survival sex.

¹⁸ Buecher, B and Rwampigi Aniyamuzaala, J (2016), Women, Work & War: Syrian women and the struggle to survive five years of conflict. Research Study. CARE Syria Response.

When considering why serial temporary marriages are being encouraged, multiple reasons emerged. The overriding understanding was that these marriages are motivated by families' financial gain, with divorce being initiated after a short time. This allows another union to be arranged, accompanied by another dowry. Thus, the GBV experts presented a picture in which the solemn practice of a religious marriage agreement is being manipulated. Rather than protecting women's and girls' honour, the practice is being used as a tool to legitimize the repeated sexual exploitation of women and girls.

“In a case [of temporary marriage] I have witnessed, an 18-year-old girl does not even know her husband's name because she sees him only during intercourse. In my opinion, this is a legitimate cover for prostitution (Man, Expert FGD)

Parents were legitimizing commodified sexual access to their daughters through short-term marriages.

“Parents [are] marrying off their daughters for two weeks to foreign fighters for money (Woman, Community FGD, Rural Damascus Governorate).

However, there were also suggestions that parents may not feel able to refuse a request for marriage from a member of an armed group, fearing the consequences if they refuse. GBV experts noted that women and girls may also decide to marry multiple times if their husbands were forcibly detained. This practice appears to be tied to the need for a male protector, discussed earlier in relation to child marriage.

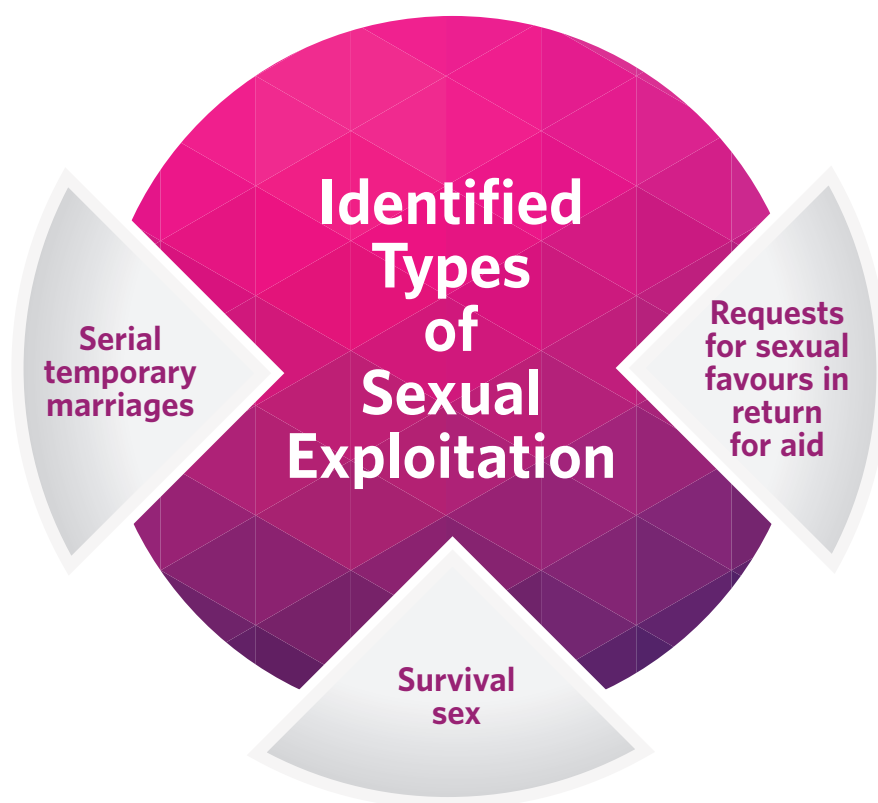


Fig 3.1.4: Identified Types of Sexual Exploitation



Economic Abuse/Violence

Economic abuse was reported in the data sets, and refers to cases where men use their disproportionate power to limit women's access to or control over resources. Economic violence was most closely associated with control of aid at a household level. When aid was being sold by their husband, women reported receiving no support.

I get nothing. My husband takes the money and puts it in his pocket and buys cigarettes and spends it for himself (Woman, Community FGD, Aleppo Governorate).

What I mean is that some women never benefit from the basket because the husband sells it and keeps the income. He doesn't even give the money to his family (Woman, Community FGD, Dar'a Governorate).

Economic abuse was also linked to polygamy. Women from polygamous marriages were reported to be at risk of reduced access to aid due to their husband choosing which wife should benefit.

Or if the husband got married to more than one women, then he gives to one and deprives the others (Adolescent Girl, Community FGD, Aleppo Governorate).

GBV experts re-affirmed women's vulnerability to economic abuse. Alongside men denying women access to aid, they had also witnessed cases of men taking their wives' salaries. Thus, although changing gender roles may be increasing women's participation in the labour market (see Box 3b), patriarchal structures continue to support this type of violence at a household level.



Kidnapping

Kidnapping was discussed as a protection concern affecting women, men, boys and girls within 45% of the assessed sub-districts¹⁹. Kidnapping was specifically cited as a concern affecting women and girls in 20% of the assessed sub-districts. It was understood from the assessments that men were kidnapped for ransom, however kidnapping of girls was closely associated with sexual violence and/or murder in 8/14 governorates.

One of my acquaintances, his daughter works at a store and, as she was leaving, people in masks came and took her...I asked him where she is and he responded and covered his head. He said they probably killed her by now (Man, Community FGD, Idleb Governorate).

There are girls who have been subjected to sexual violence after being kidnapped (Adolescent Girl, Community FGD, Idleb Governorate).

Within the data sets, it was not clear who is responsible for the kidnapping of girls.

When kidnapping of girls was discussed, a strong sense of fear tended to be expressed with regards to this type of violence. For example, concerns were raised about girls going to school due to the fear of kidnapping. As such there were reports that some families were keeping their girls home to limit the risk. In addition to curtailing their right to education, this also reduces girls' opportunities for social interaction with peers and friends.

Many families prevent girls to go to school or even to leave their houses out of fear of kidnapping (Man, Community FGD, Idleb Governorate).

However, kidnapping's close association with sexual violence means that it not only threatens a girl's physical and psychological well-being, but also threatens her reputation and honour, and therefore her family's honour. By way of illustration, a case was cited where a girl was killed by her family after they felt that her honour was compromised through kidnapping.

¹⁹ The threat of kidnapping was assessed in 145 sub-districts across Syria.

Box 3a: Populations at particular risk of GBV

The assessments found that although **women and girls** are all at high risk of violence, certain groups were perceived to be at greater risk than others. When asked who was at particular risk of violence, **women, adolescent girls and children** were overwhelmingly cited. These groups were often cited as being 'weak' or unable to defend themselves. Women and children tended to be depicted as 'inherently' vulnerable groups.

Certain groups of women and girls were perceived to be at higher risk of forms of GBV than others. For instance, the threat of sexual violence was closely associated with **adolescent girls**.

“*[explaining adolescent girls' vulnerability to GBV] They are like a tree with weak branches. Such a tree needs to be supported in order to grow stronger (Woman, Community FGD, Dar'a Governorate).*”

A female participant in the assessments also noted that **girls aged 10-14** years were too young to work, so were left home alone, placing them at higher risk of sexual violence. GBV experts estimated that in a certain camp setting, 75% of **girls do not go to school** for fear of sexual violence. Across the data sets, **adolescent girls** were also the group overwhelmingly perceived to be most at risk of child marriage, including sexual exploitation through serial temporary marriages.

Within the Community FGDs, **female-headed households** were also understood to be at particularly high risk of violence. This was tied to them not having a man to safeguard their honour. Linked to this, stigma was also attached to **widows and divorced women**. Divorced women were reported to face considerable stigma, stripped of the perceived respectability attached to marriage and at high risk of sexual violence and harassment.

“*For the widow and divorced woman, it is known that there are no men in the house which makes it easier for her to be affected by violence (Woman, Community FGD, Aleppo Governorate).*”

Female-headed households were reported to be at high risk of sexual harassment, since they were forced to enter areas perceived to pose a high threat of sexual harassment, such as the crowds that gather around aid distribution. As discussed further in section 3.5, in some communities, they were also at risk of having restricted access to aid if their household had originally been registered under their husbands' name.

3.2 Coping Strategies

Against a backdrop of violence and insecurity, the assessments found that women and girls are using a variety of coping strategies to minimize the risks and effects of GBV and unmet basic needs. These included mothers accompanying their daughters to the toilets in camp settings. However, as noted in the earlier sections examining child marriage and sexual exploitation, some coping strategies do not prevent harm. Instead, potential threats are replaced by (perceptively) less harmful ones. Thus, in the case of child marriage, the risks of being married in childhood were seen to outweigh the risks of being without a male protector at a time of conflict and insecurity. Across the different data sets, a range of negative coping strategies were reported. The most common were:

- Survival Sex
- Child Marriage
- Non-Disclosure of Abuse
- Dress Restrictions
- Movement Restrictions

Survival sex and child marriage have been discussed in section 3.1. Within this section, two of the remaining most commonly cited negative coping strategies are outlined: non-disclosure and dress restrictions. Reflecting the GBV sector's five indicators, movement restrictions are discussed in section 3.3.



Non-Disclosure

Non-disclosure refers to survivors of GBV choosing to keep their abusive experiences hidden. It was one of the most frequently discussed ways in which women and girls cope with domestic and sexual violence²⁰. Although non-disclosure was most frequently reported in relation to sexual violence, it was also mentioned in relation to domestic violence. Women and children were the social groups most likely to hide their abuse.

“Sexual violence against women or children is being concealed because the society is reserved, fearing scandal. (Man, Community FGD, Aleppo Governorate).”

Whether men are actually reporting sexual violence is unclear from the assessment findings. Nonetheless, it appears that women and children are being socialized into the position of ‘silent survivor’, afraid of the violence they have experienced becoming public.

The potential harms associated with non-disclosure are substantial: failure to disclose abuse limits survivors’ access to specialized services, such as healthcare (including reproductive health services), psychosocial support and legal assistance (where available). However, the reasons for non-disclosure are linked to stigmatization and possible reprisals.

“I don’t get upset because if I do there will be beatings. So I keep quiet and let him alone (Woman, Community FGD, Aleppo Governorate).”

Our society is dominated by males, and it is always the girl’s fault (Woman, Community FGD, Dar’a Governorate).

As is common worldwide, female survivors of domestic and sexual violence are at high risk of being blamed for the abuse. Non-disclosure was thus understood as a means of avoiding secondary victimization in the form of (violent) displays of blame and stigmatisation. Blame could manifest itself in so-called honour killings or suicide²¹. Non-disclosure therefore serves to protect the survivor’s reputation as well as that of her family. These findings support a study by CARE, which also found non-disclosure to be a likely response to GBV, observing that coping mechanisms focused on maintaining family reputation rather than on survivor-centred approaches to services and rights.²²

“Women choose to remain silent because of traditions, customs, and in the absence of laws to protect them (Woman, Community FGD, Al Hasakeh Governorate)”

20 In 56% of assessed districts. Non-disclosure was not assessed in the quantitative assessments.

21 Syrian medical staff perceived that suicide among adolescent girls in particular was increasing.

22 CARE (2016), Gender, Protection, And Inclusive Governance Preliminary Data Results: August 2016 (covering Dara’a and Quneitra governorates), CARE.

Community-based justice systems were mentioned as possible sources of recourse, such as local Shari'a courts and customary law imposed by tribal elders. The aforementioned study by CARE noted that whilst community and religious elders have a strong role to play in maintaining the moral compass of the people as a preventative strategy against GBV, not all of their solutions promote women's and girls' rights or autonomy²³. There is therefore little incentive to make abuses known.



Dress Restrictions

The assessment found that many women and girls are expected to wear more conservative clothes to minimize the risk of GBV, such as veils and non-colourful clothes. Where mentioned, enforcers of dress restrictions included soldiers at checkpoints, guards at IDP camps, and one woman's 17 year old son.

Some women and girls discussed dress restrictions as a strategy for reducing the risk of GBV.

“*[I protect myself] by dressing modestly of course and by not wearing bright colours like green and red. We would only wear black (Adolescent Girl, Community FGD, Aleppo Governorate).*

This supports observations of GBV experts who noted that dress restrictions are being accepted by communities. By internalizing the dress restrictions, the girls re-framed sexual violence as an offence which women and girls have a responsibility to avoid by not provoking men's sexual interest.

Dress restrictions were also framed as a necessary step to avoid violence. However, these restrictions were recognized as an abuse of women's and girls' rights.

“*In areas controlled by ISIS, they ask you why you are not wearing a veil; they ask about everything. A while ago I went to the camp and the guard asked me why I was not dressed in the proper way. I told him I had escaped ISIS because of that, and that I was not naked or revealing parts of my body. Why should you judge me? (Woman, Community FGD, Aleppo Governorate).*

I suffered from psychological abuse at a roadblock because I do not like to wear the veil. At roadblocks they forced us to wear the veil (Adolescent Girl, Community FGD, Idleb Governorate).

Failure to adhere to the dress codes placed women and girls at risk of physical abuse or sexual harassment at checkpoints, or when they moved around their communities.

“*Whenever they see a girl in the street lifting her abaya up they take her. Isn't this violence? Or they spit in her face or they throw juice and water at her (Woman, Community FGD, Idleb Governorate).*

23 CARE (2016), Gender, Protection, And Inclusive Governance Preliminary Data Results: August 2016 (covering Dara'a and Quneitra governorates), CARE.

3.3 Movement Restrictions

Across each of the sub-districts where this indicator was assessed, there were reports of movement restrictions experienced by all social groups. Specifically, movement restrictions were reported in 97% of assessed sub-districts, affecting women, girls, boys and men. Limiting movement of women and girls was the highest reported negative coping mechanism, in areas where this was assessed.

These restrictions were linked to insecurity, lack of civil documentation, activities of armed groups and rules imposed by extremist groups. This supports an IRC study into civil documentation which found that difficulties obtaining or replacing civil documentation contributed to restricted movements.²⁴

Across the data sets, women's and girls' movements were specifically reported to be impeded in 13 out of 14 governorates. Some of these movement restrictions were self-imposed. For example, girls and women reported restricting their own movements due to safety concerns.

“*[Men from armed groups] gaze at me strangely as if there is something suspicious... this often forces me to make a detour in order to avoid anything that might occur (Woman, Community FGD, Rural Damascus Governorate).*

If one of us wants to go to the toilet she won't feel safe unless she was accompanied by an adult. Some girls go with their moms. For example my mom takes us at 2 AM. We once saw two ISIS members near the women's toilets, and we became afraid and returned back (Adolescent Girl, Community FGD, Aleppo Governorate).

However, movement restrictions were also influenced by cultural norms. However there were reports of women and girls being prevented from venturing outside their home without a male escort.

“*The person can't leave or enter. You are not allowed to go out, but you have to stay inside. Going out is not allowed. If someone passes by you have to close the door and get covered, as you don't want anyone to see you (Adolescent Girl, Community FGD, Aleppo Governorate).*

When my friends and I go out to play, we are insulted by people, saying that we have grown up and should stay in a tent (Adolescent Girl, Community FGD, Idlib Governorate).

Whilst justified as a means of safeguarding women's and girls' honour, culturally-based movement restrictions violate women's and girls' basic rights to sanitation and health care. For example, a man described how young girls are forced to suppress their bodily functions if they do not have a male escort.

“*The young woman may not be able to go to the toilet if her brother or father does not accompany her. In this case she has to suppress her bodily functions until the morning (Man, Community FGD, Aleppo Governorate).*

Female participants lamented that widows were prevented from taking their sick children to a doctor if they could not find a suitable male escort.

“*...the [widowed] woman cannot go out of her house in late hours if her child is sick because her society does not accept this idea (Woman, Community FGD, Idlib Governorate).*

Thus, in addition to forcing women and girls to spend their time in relative isolation, women's and girls' basic rights to sanitation and healthcare are impeded by cultural movement restrictions. This supports findings from a 2016 study by CARE which found that 47% of women (and 64% of unaccompanied women), reported that their movement was restricted due to lacking someone to accompany them²⁵.

24 International Rescue Committee (2016), Accessing Civil Documentation in Opposition-Controlled Areas of Southern Syria. IRC.

25 CARE (2016), Gender, Protection, And Inclusive Governance Preliminary Data Results: August 2016 (covering Dar'a and Quneitra governorates), CARE.

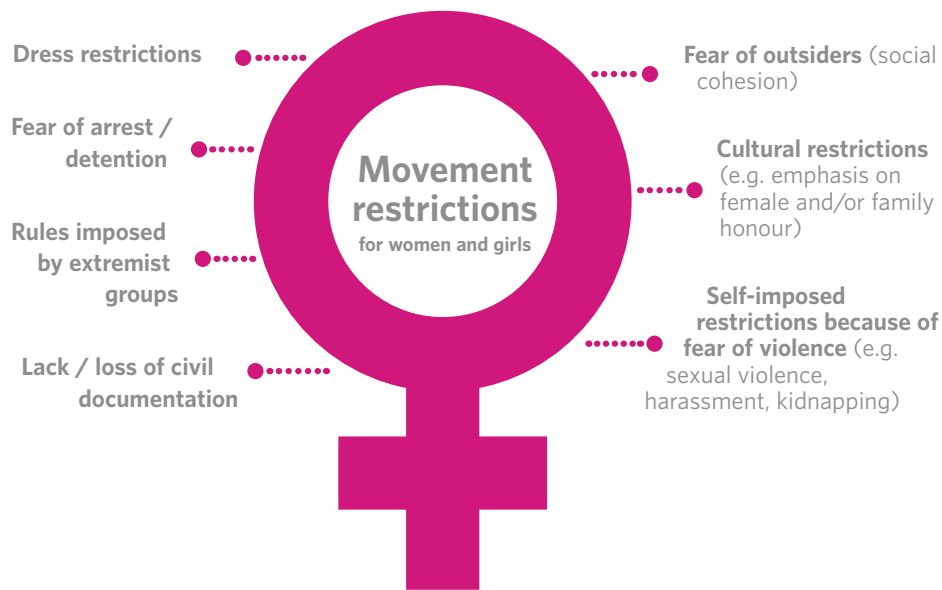


Fig. 3.3.1: Factors Affecting Movement Restrictions for Women and Girls

The perceived increased movement restrictions experienced by men was a re-occurring theme. This was explained by the threat of kidnapping and arrest and detention of men at checkpoints.

We prevent our men from going outside the tent at night because we fear things like gangs, guns and kidnapping (Woman, Community FGD, Quneitra Governorate).

[Men], who are wanted for one of the two sides of the conflict, are restricted from moving. On the contrary, they must stay at home and this will make him a burden on the family especially for the housewife (Man, Community FGD, Rural Damascus Governorate).

There were consequently reports of men staying home, whilst women undertook day-to-day errands or paid employment. However, it is important to recognize that men's restricted movements place women at greater risk of violence. They are forced into public places, such as markets or checkpoints, which are strongly associated with the threat of air strikes, robbery, sexual harassment, rape and kidnapping. CARE's study²⁶ noted that women's increased movement for employment has placed them at greater risk of protection threats, such as bombings or sexual harassment. Thus, mitigation strategies for reducing the risks posed to men's security simultaneously increase the risks to women's safety.

²⁶ Buecher, B and Rwampigi Aniyamuzaala, J (2016), Women, Work & War: Syrian women and the struggle to survive five years of conflict. Research Study. CARE Syria Response.

Box 3b: Changing Family Dynamics

The 2015 Humanitarian Needs Overview for the WoS observed the changing nature of marriages, with increased reports of child marriage, divorce, short-term marriages and polygamy. Intra-family violence at a household level was also noted, with domestic violence creating a vicious circle of violence in the community (men towards women, mothers towards children, children towards each other, etc.). The 2016 assessment has found that these issues continue to be pertinent concerns, transforming family-level dynamics. Divorce, death of husbands, detention, husbands moving abroad to look for work and temporary absences due to conscription are resulting in female headed households. Changing employment roles at a household level were also frequently mentioned within the Community FGDs.



Divorce

The issue of divorce was commonly cited as factor increasing the vulnerability of women and children. Participants in the assessments specifically stated that they felt divorce was on the increase.

“...Before the revolution, you rarely saw a man threaten his wife with divorce. Before there was understanding, solutions and discussions. Now most of the girls are divorced (Woman, Community FGD, Rural Damascus Governorate).

In society, there's an increased number of cases of rapid divorce, coming just a few months after marriage. I think that the reason is the lack of a healthy environment for young married couples to live in and the difficult conditions experienced by the Syrian families (Man, Community FGD, Dar'a Governorate).

This perceived rise in divorce cases was linked to child marriage (young people not being ready for the responsibilities of marriage), domestic violence and economic pressures.

“Men get violent with young wives and they divorce them after a short period of time (Woman, Community FGD, Quneitra Governorate).

A wife says to her husband: "If you cannot secure your family needs, you are a failure." This drives him mad so he replies: "This is all I can do for you. If you are not satisfied with it you can go and stay in your parents' house," which encourages the wife to actually go and stay there. Then many people try to solve the problem, causing the husband to get angry because everyone knows about his problem, which leads to divorce and eventually child separation (Woman, Community FGD, Aleppo Governorate).

Participants in the assessments, also linked increasing divorce rates to reduced opportunities for civil documentation, noting that men do not treat marriages as 'official' without the appropriate paperwork. This leads to men marrying more than one woman (polygamy) or deserting their wives. Although data was limited, it appeared that divorce was predominantly initiated by men, highlighting women's reduced power within marriage.

Where mentioned, divorce was depicted as especially harmful for the woman and any children born during the marriage. Divorced women were reported to face considerable stigma, stripped of the perceived respectability attached to marriage. For example, a woman explained how her status within the community had plummeted following divorce.

“... when I say I am divorced, everybody is shocked...as if I have committed a crime or done something very sinful...I am not talking about me, I am talking about every divorced woman; it's not their fault. Maybe there was issues at home which lead to a divorce...the way our society views it weakens the woman...Other countries don't look at a divorced woman the same as we do; they respect and cherish her. [There] she will not be viewed as an outcast (Woman, Community FGD, Dar'a Governorate).

Divorced women were also reported to be at especially high risk of sexual violence and harassment.

Divorce was also reported to place children at risk of being separated or unaccompanied. This was due to cultural norms which dictate that children should live with their father or a male relative when a marriage breaks down. Thus, divorced women lose both their social respectability and (potentially) their children.



Polygamy

The issue of polygamy²⁷ was raised as a protection concern in the data sets. Polygamy was perceived to be on the increase, according to GBV experts. Although the reasons for this perceived increase were not discussed in detail, it was reported that boys were being enticed to enlist in the armed militia by the promise of multiple wives.

“They convince them to join using faulty religious beliefs, or by luring them with prizes or money or even marrying two or three women (Woman, Community FGD, Quneitra Governorate).

Thus, polygamous marriages were presented as sexual prizes for fighters. The proliferation of widows, as a result of the conflict, was also cited as a factor explaining the rise of polygamous marriages.

“...the number of women especially widows has increased as a result of husbands and young men dying. Sheikhs of mosques also started to call for marriage of more than one woman to take care of orphans, whereas some people even started to offer financial aid (money) for men who marry a martyr's wife and bring up his children (Woman, Community FGD, Aleppo Governorate).

Polygamy was reportedly being promoted by religious elders as a means of safeguarding widows, possibly also through the use of cash incentives. When discussed within female Community FGDs, women's fear of their husbands entering polygamous marriages was evident.

“...many men in this community have multiple wives, which stretches already-limited resources and makes the 'first wives' feel abandoned and vulnerable (Woman, Community FGD, Aleppo Governorate).

As noted by the woman from Aleppo Governorate, in many households resources are very limited due to rising living costs. A second or third wife therefore impacts not just a woman's relationship with her husband and status within the family, but also jeopardizes her well-being and that of her children, with basic subsistence provisions becoming further stretched.



Changing Work Responsibilities at a Household Level

The combination of men's restricted movements, an increase in female-headed households and elevated living costs are forcing women and children to enter paid employment. This changes the traditional family model, in which men are the primary breadwinners.

“The inability of parents to support their families (has) destroyed the role of the father being the caregiver...forcing him to lose control over the family when the children have to work (Man, Community FGD, Idlib Governorate).

These changing gender roles were widely understood to contribute to domestic violence, with men no longer fulfilling the role of the provider for the family.

GBV experts noted that changing work responsibilities at a household level had, to some degree, empowered women. For example, one GBV expert commented.

27 The issue of polygamy was hereby not prompted or included in the tool used for discussion, but instead brought up by participants.

“Before the crisis, women were strong, but the crisis contributed to making them feel strong. In the wake of their husbands' absence, women have become responsible for the whole family. This has contributed to boosting their self-esteem. Also, most women in rural areas have skills that qualify them to start their own income-generating projects (Woman, Expert FGD).”

Another GBV expert presented a slightly less optimistic view, noting that whilst the conflict had empowered women to enter paid employment, it had done little to further women's rights, including their right to safety.

“Women have become more powerful because of having to go out and work on all social levels, but on the other hand, their rights have decreased while violence against them has increased (Woman, Expert FGD, Damascus Governorate).”



Family Violence

The 2015 HNO noted concerns regarding family violence, from domestic violence to violence against children. In the 2016 assessment, a similar picture emerged. Within the Community FGDs²⁸ there were specific reports of brothers beating their sisters.

“...recently many boys are resorting to beating their sisters especially the adolescent sisters to prove their personality and their responsibility towards them by taking the role of the father (Adolescent Girl, Community FGD, Aleppo Governorate).”

In a small sample of Community FGDs, women were also reported to be expressing their frustrations by beating their children.

28 Reports from Aleppo, Dar'a, Quneitra, Idleb Governorate.

3.4 Availability and access to GBV services across Syria.

As highlighted in figure 3.4.1, in 2016, the geographical **reach of GBV services has significantly increased**, alongside the number of services being provided. In July 2016, 22 more sub-districts were being reached with GBV services compared to December 2015. Furthermore, during this period, the number of partner organizations offering GBV services has increased from 22 to 44. Partners were able to set up Women and Girls Safe Spaces in several besieged locations, despite working in the most difficult circumstances.

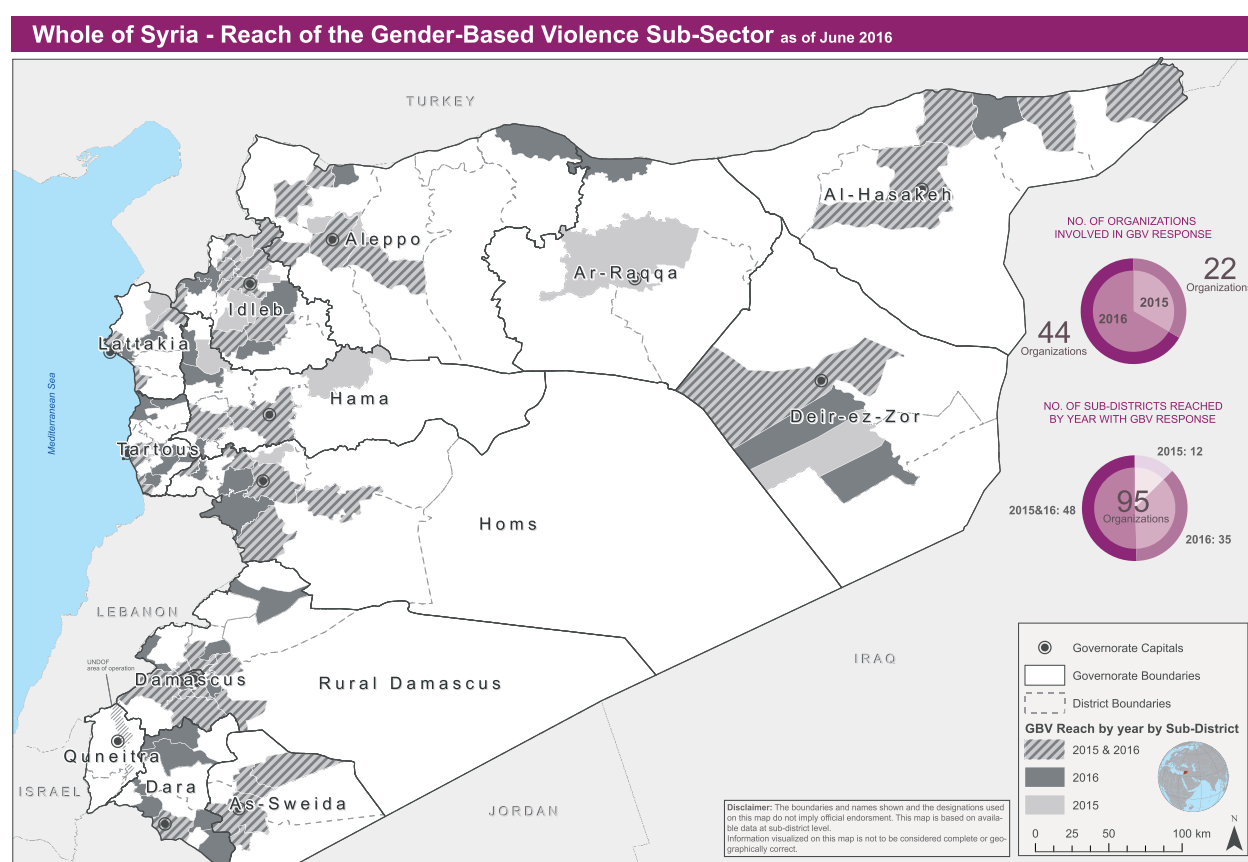


Fig. 3.4.1: GBV Reach: 2015 versus 2016, July 2016

Within the Community FGDs, female participants expressed satisfaction with the GBV services they had personally accessed, especially in relation to the provision of psychosocial support.

“I cannot file a report, my husband would divorce me - but I talk over about violence with the specialized person in the Centre (Woman, Community FGD, Rural Damascus Governorate).

...The moral support here is very good. If they don't exist women will explode. They need a place to come to and talk (Woman, Community FGD, Aleppo Governorate).

This supports observations from GBV experts that noted in areas where programming is more established, women are accessing services to disclose GBV rather than only participating in more generic activities. Increased disclosures

should not be interpreted as increased levels of GBV, but rather as the result of improvements in the quality of services. Survivors are prepared to disclose more, if they trust that they are entering a safe and confidential space, where their wishes are respected.

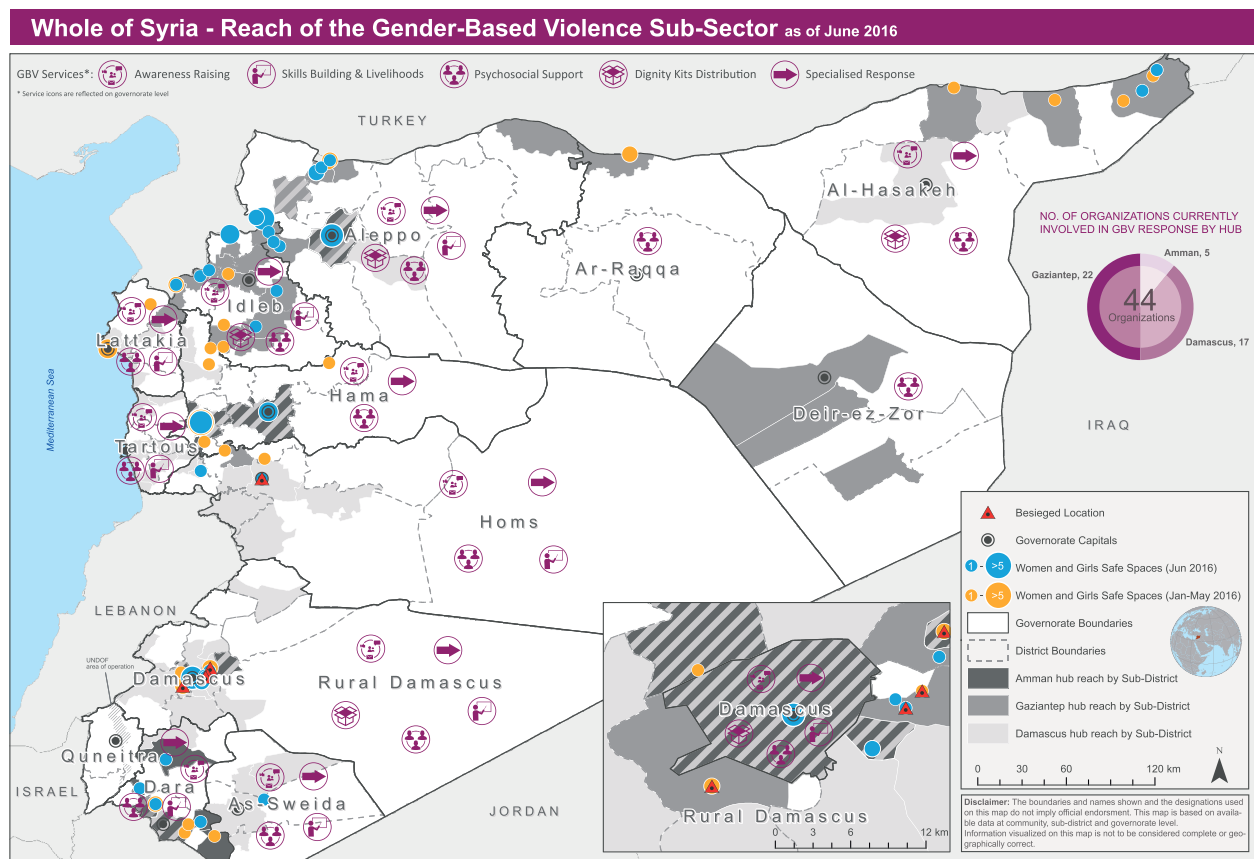


Fig. 3.4.2: GBV Reach and Services in July 2016

Figure 3.4.2 reflects the types of GBV services that were implemented across Syria until mid-year 2016. Specialised response services for survivors, including GBV case management, psychosocial support, legal services, emergency material support and the establishment of referral mechanisms, could be implemented in 49 sub-districts. In addition, the health sector in coordination with the GBV sub-sector staff increased the availability of Clinical Management of Rape (CMR) at health facilities in Syria and trained medical staff on specialised front-line response in this regard.

However, whilst these specific women were able to access GBV services, the continued dire need for more specialised services across the whole country came out clearly from the quantitative and qualitative needs assessments. In 76% of the assessed sub-districts, respondents said that specialised services for GBV survivors are needed, and in particular the need for adequate psychosocial support and medical treatment was mentioned.

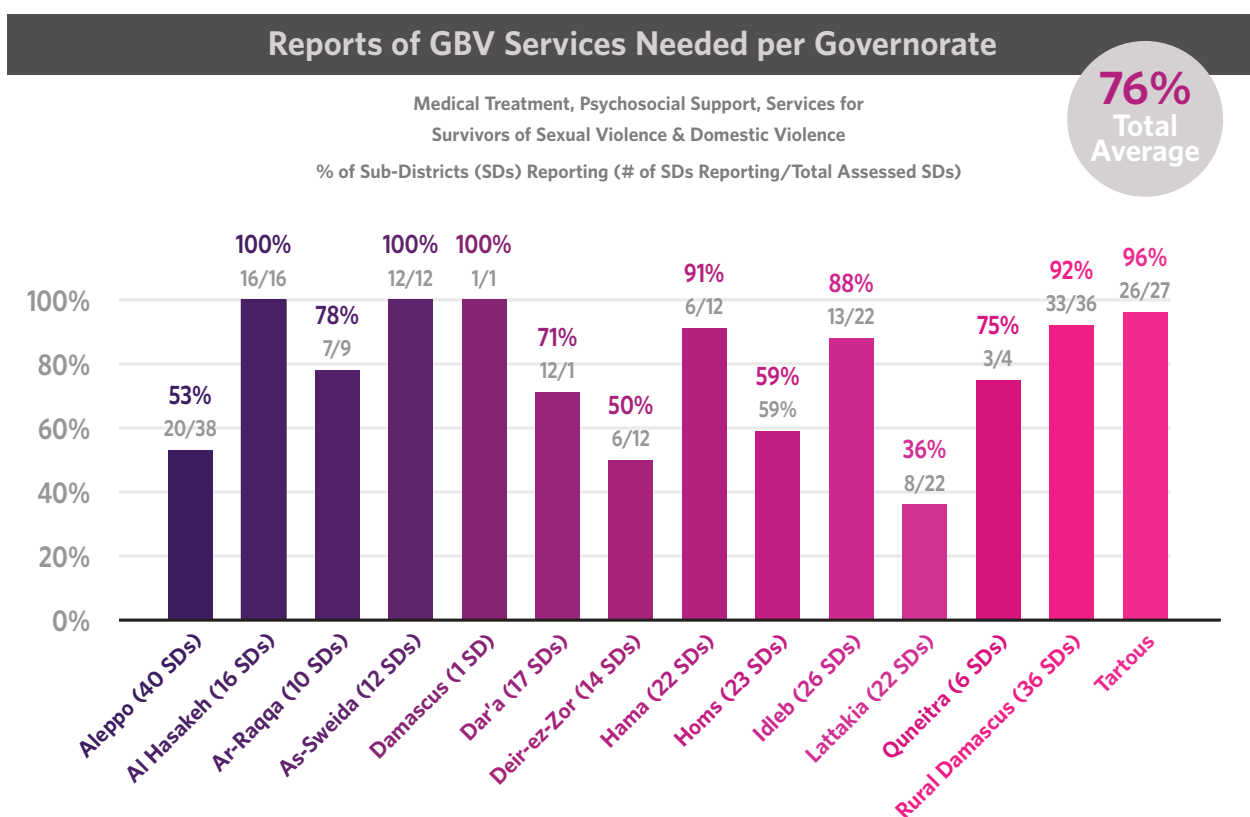


Fig. 3.4.3: Need for Specialised GBV Services

Multiple barriers were cited impeding access to GBV services. These ranged from a **lack of nearby services** and **poor coordination** with other services, to services reportedly not being allowed in a camp. Furthermore, the fear that services will not be **confidential** was also reported to restrict access to GBV services. Participants from Community FGDs also reported that **husbands prevented** their wives from accessing women's services.

“There are [services for survivors of violence] but no one goes to them. People are scared. For example, if the wife is getting beaten by her husband she will not go and report it because if he find out he will divorce her. So she just doesn't do anything about it (Woman, Community FGD, Aleppo Governorate).”

Reflecting this, midwives in Southern Syria noted that female survivors of GBV who require surgery prefer to be treated in a private residence rather than a hospital, as it was understood to increase the likelihood of their abuse being kept secret. Despite the importance of confidentiality in the delivery of GBV services, concerns were raised about the extent to which GBV services could be accessed safely.

“One women's centre was identified by participants but there is a challenge as the centre is affiliated with the local authorities and people of 'certain orientations' (Women's Community FGD, Al Hasakeh Governorate).”

3.5 Women's and girls' access to humanitarian assistance²⁹

A recurrent theme across all data sets was the restricted access to humanitarian assistance. In 61% of Community FGDs, strong concerns were raised that aid was being distributed unfairly, with friends or relatives of the distributors disproportionately benefiting from the assistance on offer. However, whilst this affected men's and women's access to aid, women were also reported to experience further restrictions, relating to sexual harassment, gender discrimination and economic violence. A study by CARE found that only 34% percent of women were registered with local councils under their own name, compared to 94% of men. Most women who were not registered in their own name were registered under their husband's name³⁰. This provides opportunities for economic abuse, with men controlling the household resources.



Sexual Exploitation and Harassment

The 2015 Humanitarian Needs Assessment for WoS found sexual exploitation at the point of accessing aid to be a major protection concern. Within the 2016 assessment, requests for sexual favours in exchange for aid were reported in 8% of sub-districts in half of the governorates.

I had a case of a girl with two disabled children and she was referred to an organization. There, they asked for her personal address and then they went to her house and asked for sex (GBV expert, Expert FGD).

A specific question was asked in the Community FGDs about whether sexual exploitation was occurring during aid distributions, with the majority of participants stating that this was not the case. This could reflect the humanitarian response work on Protection from Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (PSEA). However, in a culture where sexual violence and exploitation are shrouded in shame, these findings could also reflect non-disclosure.

Sexual harassment remains a major concern for women accessing humanitarian assistance. It was specifically mentioned as a barrier to aid across the majority of governorates.

Those who are responsible for the distributions are the ones who harass (Woman, Community FGD, Quneitra Governorate).

Distributors were reported to be harassing and humiliating women. The threat of harassment was also reported to be heightened by the crowds associated with distributions, where women are forced to queue in close proximity with men.



Discrimination

Although the assessments found that women were more likely to report difficulties in accessing aid, the Community FGDs highlighted that certain groups of women are at greater risk of impeded access. These included **widows³¹, female divorcees and wives of detainees**.

There is also the problem of organizations' distribution. Many single, divorced or widowed women do not receive their full rights. If she lives within a family or have children, she benefits from organizations and from social cohesion (Man,

²⁹ For more information about access to humanitarian assistance please see Protection HNO Report.

³⁰ CARE (2016), Gender, Protection, And Inclusive Governance Preliminary Data Results: August 2016 (covering Dara'a and Quneitra governorates), CARE.

³¹ It should be noted, though, that in some Community FGDs it was reported that widows were given preferential treatment during distributions, reflecting their status as wives of martyrs.

Community FGD, Dar'a Governorate).

In the case of divorcees, it appeared that the stigma attached to being divorced potentially impedes women's access to aid within some communities. For example, a woman in Homs reported that she had been unable to access medical care for her broken hand because she is divorced.

“*My hand was broken six months ago, and it needed a cast. Now it is disabled because no one agreed to treat me and all of them drove me out because I am a divorced woman (Woman, Community FGD, Homs Governorate).*”

It is understood that women married to men associated with a particular group or armed faction, were at risk of being denied assistance because of that association. Wives of detainees were also seen to be at risk of not being able to access aid.

“*Sometimes wives are prohibited from receiving relief distributions because their husbands are considered dead [detained], so she is called a wife of the “shabbeeh” (gangster), and does not deserve the distributions (Woman, Community FGD, Aleppo Governorate).*”

Lack of documentation was also cited as a barrier impeding certain women's access to aid and services. With men being registered with local councils to access aid, this means that women are reliant on their male relatives for accessing aid. However, in the event a husband dies or separates from his wife, women risk being left with no paperwork to prove their eligibility to assistance. Widows and divorcees therefore risk being denied aid due to their status as single women.

“*Organizations' representatives demand unavailable documents. If a man is dead, his documents are lost. Also his family book and his home might be burnt. They demand something that a woman couldn't possibly attain and she comes with a personal identification and document and yet they refuse to distribute aid for her although she has no one to depend on (Man, Community FGD, Quneitra Governorate).*”

My sister is divorced; she gets nothing. She's not registered in records. Even her uncle doesn't support her; she lives off charity (Woman, Community FGD, Dar'a Governorate).

Box 3c: Linkages between GBV concerns and other humanitarian sectors

Throughout the assessment, clear linkages were evident between GBV concerns and other sectors. This highlights the need for holistic, multisector approaches to GBV prevention and response. The following table highlights reported linkages with other sectors.

Sector	GBV Concerns
CHILD PROTECTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Linkages between divorce and child marriages; this increases the risk of unaccompanied and/or unregistered children ▪ Linkages between domestic violence and psychological harm to children ▪ Serial temporary marriages increasing the risk of unregistered children ▪ Sexual harassment was perceived to affect girls at school, when travelling to and from school ▪ Girls and adolescent girls perceived to be most at risk of sexual violence <p><i>Please contact the Child Protection AoR or refer to the WoS 2017 Protection Needs Overview for more information.</i></p>
EDUCATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fear of sexual violence and harassment in schools (affecting girls) <p>“There is gender based violence (sexual harassments) whether verbal (commenting on clothes or body parts) or by sending letters (adolescent boys sending letters to girls). This type of violence takes place after girls finish school (Woman, Community FGD, Quneitra Governorate).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fear of sexual violence and harassment and kidnapping travelling to and from school and college (affecting girls) <p>“Girls and young women are getting sexually assaulted when leaving the school and parents can't do anything about it (Woman, Community FGD, Dar'a Governorate).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mixed toilets in schools as a place of high risk for violence ▪ Fear of kidnapping causing parents to keep girls away from school <p>“Many families prevent girls to go to school or even to leave their houses out of fear of kidnapping (Man, Community FGD, Idleb Governorate).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Child marriage preventing girls' access to education ▪ Girls' movement restrictions (based on traditions) restricting their access to education and play <p>“In camps it is different - big crowds, husbands and fathers can forbid girls to go to school and women to go out in the evening (Woman, Expert FGD).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ GBV experts estimated that in a certain camp setting, 75% of girls do not go to school for fear of sexual violence.

FOOD SECURITY & LIVELIHOODS (FSL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survival sex in return for food <p>“There are women who are forced to sell their honour (bodies) to be able to buy bread. Many sold their dignity to be able to survive (Man, Community FGD, Aleppo Governorate).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linkages between limited livelihood opportunities for women and girls and survival sex <p>“Unfortunately, some girls and women commit adultery in order to get money. I’m saying it and my heart is full of sorrow (Woman, Community FGD, Dar’a Governorate).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A study into women’s work in Syria by CARE³², found that adolescent girls in economically-deprived, besieged areas engaged in transactional sexual relationships in order to meet their basic, subsistence needs.
HEALTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate health care for women, including maternal and reproductive healthcare <p>“There is but one PHC centre, but it is not well-serviced as it contains no medical equipment. The female gynaecologist at the PHC centre tells the women to go to her private clinic because it has medical equipment, but women do not go there because they do not have the money for it (Woman, Community FGD, Idleb Governorate).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficulties accessing healthcare due to movement restrictions for women and girls Inadequate MHPSS services for women and girls In 2015³³, a private pharmacy study was conducted by IFRC and WHO³⁴, in collaboration with the Health and Nutrition Sector Working Group, in Damascus, Rural Damascus, Dar’a and Quneitra. The survey of 268 pharmacies found that there was only limited availability of family planning services, putting women and girls at risk of unwanted and dangerous pregnancies. A 2015 sexual and reproductive health situational analysis, conducted by UNFPA³⁵ found that a shortage of equipment in Comprehensive Emergency Obstetrics Care, placing women’s health at risk during delivery.
SHELTER / NFI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crowded areas where men and women are mixed were understood to be risk areas for sexual violence, such as distribution points and camp settings.

32 Buecher, B and Rwampigi Aniyamuzaala, J (2016), Women, Work & War: Syrian women and the struggle to survive five years of conflict. Research Study. CARE Syria Response.

33 Conducted between August 26 and September 10th 2015.

34 IFRC and WHO (2015), Health & Nutrition Sector Working Group: Private Pharmacy Survey. HNSWG

35 Hamedanizadeh, K (2015), Southern Syria Sexual and Reproductive Health Situation Analysis: Roving Inter-Agency SRH Coordinator. UNFPA

WASH

- Fear of sexual violence at communal washrooms (in camp settings, affecting women and girls)

“We can't carry the jug or go to the bathroom because of the people. We can't because there are many guys in the camp, and they keep looking at us and watching us and following us like our shadows, whenever we want to go they just gather in front of the bathrooms (Adolescent Girl, Community FGD, Aleppo Governorate).

- Fear of sexual violence and harassment travelling to and from communal bathrooms (in camp settings, affecting women and girls)

“You cannot go out at night alone to the bathrooms. I ask my husband to accompany me when I go to the bathroom at night. There is no security at all (Woman, Community FGD, Aleppo Governorate).

- Supporting these findings, an assessment of WASH concerns in collective shelters by the WASH Working Group (Amman) identified safety concerns relating to access of latrines, including 'being bothered on the way' (0.82%), no separation between men and women (14.75), lack of lighting (8.2%) and no locks on latrines (9.84%)³⁶.

- An assessment by CARE³⁷ found that 84% of IDPs did not have access to toilets separated between men and women. Many IDPs preferred to separate toilets by family rather than gender. However, 19% of the sample nonetheless said toilets are not safe for women to access.

- Women's and girls' fear of sexual violence restricted their movements and behaviours: For instance, in a camp setting, girls explained how they avoided going to the communal toilets after dark, as nightfall was understood to increase the risk of kidnapping and rape.

“We are scared of going to the bathrooms...we are also scared of being raped or kidnapped there (Adolescent Girl, Community FGD, Dar'a Governorate).

- A Gender and WASH analysis by Oxfam Syria³⁸ found that the lack of piped water significantly increase women's domestic labour. The need to prioritise water for drinking was also a strong concern for women, who explained feeling unable to maintain adequate personal hygiene during or after their menstrual cycle, causing feelings of shame. This issue was exacerbated by poor quality and expensive sanitary towels.

- The same report also noted that water trucking potentially restricted female-headed household's access to clean water. This was due to the trucking stations being situated far from residents' homes, meaning residents had to carry very heavy jerry cans long distances. This task therefore tended to be assigned to men and older children, an option not necessarily available for female-headed households. Furthermore, women reported that they found the trucking stations an unsafe environment due to hitting and pushing during water collection.

36 WASH Working Group Amman (2016), Amman Hub WASH Assessment in Collective Shelters. July 2016.

37 CARE (2016), Rapid Needs Assessment – Dara'a 17-19 April 2016 Assessment Report. CARE

38 Oxfam Syria (2016), Gender and WASH analysis. Oxfam GB and Cimigo



4



Results by Governorates

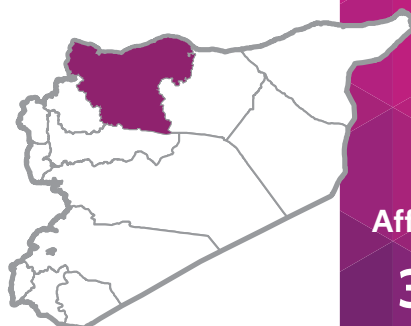
Section Four provides an overview of the GBV concerns reported in each of the 14 governorates³⁹ across Syria:

Aleppo	Al Hasakeh	Ar-Raqqa	As-Sweida	Damascus	Dar'a	Deir-ez-Zor
Hama	Homs	Idleb	Lattakia	Quneitra	Rural Damascus	Tartous

The findings from the four Expert FGDs are also presented.

³⁹ Source of all population and access status data for 2017: OCHA, 01 Oct 2016. The People in Need (PIN) figures are based on the inter-sectoral PIN for 2017 used by the Whole of Syria Protection Sector. Source of all geographical data: OCHA, 05 Sep 2016. For updated data, please contact OCHA. Source of all data on GBV services: WoS GBV AoR.

Governorate Overview



Male **1,495,332**



Adolescents
ages 15-17 **198,812**



Female **1,637,852**



Youth
ages 15-24 **662,711**

4.1 Aleppo

Types of GBV Reported as Protection Concerns



Sexual Violence

The threat of sexual violence was discussed in 9/38 assessed sub-districts. Types of reported sexual violence included rape and incest (affecting women and girls).

Women and girls were reported to be at particularly high risk of sexual violence, although rape of boys was also mentioned.

“We are scared of going to the bathrooms... We are also scared of being raped or kidnapped there. Many girls got kidnapped there.

(Adolescent Girl, Community FGD, Aleppo Governorate, Camp Setting).

Perceived high-risk sites for sexual violence include checkpoints, distribution centres (due to congestion), camp settings (especially communal bathrooms), and specific roads.

Fear of sexual violence was reported to limit women's movements.

“[Women] are concerned about travelling because a woman might be abducted or raped (Woman, Community FGD, Aleppo Governorate).



Fig. 4.1.1: Population Data, Aleppo



Domestic Violence

The threat of domestic violence (physical) was mentioned in 18/40 assessed sub-districts (in comparison to other governorates, this is low and most likely reflected the other perceived more threatening protection concerns, such as bombing at the time of the assessment).

Domestic violence was perceived to be as a result of male unemployment, and therefore heightened stress. Concerns were raised about the difficulties of leaving an abusive partner, since cultural norms dictate that children stay with their father.

Women who reported living with physically abusive husbands linked domestic violence with risk of depression.

“She suffers abuse from her husband [...] A couple of days ago she suffered from severe depression and sat outside crying (Woman, Community FGD, Aleppo Governorate, Camp Setting).”

Sexual harassment carries the threat of victim-blaming; adolescent IDP girls reported fearing their reputations would be tarnished if they were seen to ‘interacting’ with men, even if this interaction was in the form of unwanted verbal sexual harassment.

“People will follow you and won’t leave you alone. They will start to talk about you and damage your reputation [...] If I look at a guy they will say I am not well behaved and if I talk to guys and joke with them by the sinks, they will say that I talk to guys in public and that I don’t care about our customs. They will not only talk about me, but they will talk about every girl. (Adolescent Girl, Community FGD, Aleppo Governorate, Camp Setting).”



Child Marriage

Child marriage was reported as a protection concern in 30/38 assessed sub-districts.

In 68% of sub-districts, child marriage was understood to be motivated by economic reasons; in particular a desire to secure a dowry and reduce household expenses.

59% of sub-districts reported that child marriage was motivated by the wish to protect girls and to reduce the recruitment by armed groups.

Men in a camp setting in Azaz sub-district linked child marriage to a need to cover the extra expenses associated with polygamous marriages.

Adolescents reported that girls sometimes choose to marry early in order to escape family violence within the home.



Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment was reported to affect girls and women.

The threat of sexual harassment was associated with movement to and from schools and college, in camp settings (especially around communal bathrooms) and on the roads. There were reports of parents keeping girls from school due to the threat of sexual harassment.

“Sometimes they seek to get married early to run away from the miserable situation their families live in (Adolescent Boy, Community FGD, Aleppo Governorate).”

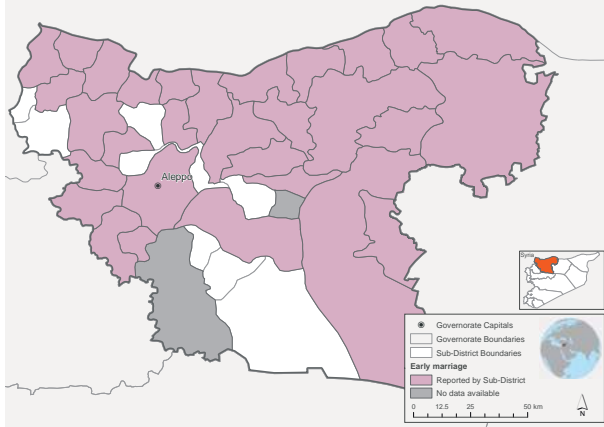


Fig. 4.1.2: Sub-districts with Reports of Child Marriage



Kidnapping

The threat of kidnapping of women and girls was reported in one out of three Community FGDs. The threat was reported in camp and non-camp settings, affecting both IDPs and members of the host communities.

The threat of kidnapping was tied to the intention of committing rape.

Sites perceived to pose a high threat of kidnapping for girls included camp settings (especially communal bathrooms). For women, the threat was associated with the camp setting and movement along roads (for example the route to the hospital in Azaz was mentioned).



Sexual Exploitation

Sexual exploitation, in the form of survival sex was reported to be a form of violence or negative coping strategy affecting women and girls.

“If the widow has a son who is hungry, this son is different from the other children, and she is prepared to sell her body and honour for his sake (Man, Community FGD, Aleppo Governorate, Camp Setting).”

There were specific references of fathers forcing their daughters to engage in transactional sexually abusive relationships.

Sexual exploitation was framed as a ‘moral’ problem

in Darat Azza and Afrin sub-districts, triggered by increasing poverty.

“We are witnessing moral degeneracy due to poverty. Some girls and women are working in prostitution (Man, Community FGD, Aleppo Governorate)”



Economic Violence

Economic violence was reported predominantly in relation to women. In a camp setting in Azaz sub-district, adolescent girls reported that they may not have access to humanitarian assistance if the recipient is male.

Concerns were raised about husbands selling aid.

“I heard about many cases whereby the male recipient sells these distributions (Woman, Community FGD, Aleppo Governorate).”

Concerns were raised about women being denied their inheritance rights.



Honour Killings

In Atareb sub-district the issue of honour killings was discussed in relation to girls. The participants noted that so-called honour killings are viewed as a more culturally appropriate way of dealing with (sexual) violence against children than specialised child protection centres.

“We don’t have a centre here that cares for victims of violence. We need such centres here though because of the ignorance and lack of awareness of families, leading them to make mistakes to the extent that a lot of fathers kill their girls. [...] Existing centres that protect victims of sexual violence are not in use because the community completely rejects them and instead is fanatic about the idea of “disgrace must be washed away and the girl must die”. (Woman, Community FGD, Aleppo Governorate).”



Organ Harvesting

In a discussion among IDPs in Azaz sub-district, girls reported being frightened of the threat of organ harvesting. It was not clear, though, why girls feel they are being targeted over other groups or who is perpetrating these alleged crimes.



Gender Discrimination

Concerns were raised by men and women that women and girls were facing gender discrimination on a daily basis.

Concerns were raised that women were not being given sufficient choice over their career path, choice of educational studies or partner. Girls' voices were also reported to be ignored.

Gender discrimination was perceived to increase women's and girls' vulnerability to violence.

Widows were reported to be especially affected, having to 'abandon their femininity' in order to push for their rights.

“...in our community a girl's opinion doesn't matter (Adolescent Girl, Community FGD, Aleppo Governorate, Camp Setting).

There is no such thing as the freedom of women, or the free choice of women. Everything is forced on women. For example, the father, her brother, or anyone for that matter may force his will on her. As a woman, she cannot do anything and she has to follow their orders

(Man, Community FGD, Aleppo Governorate, Camp Setting).

If a woman loses her husband, she tends to abandon her femininity turning to another thing known as “istirjaal”, which means “acting like men”, in order to procure her requirements and those of her children (Man, Community FGD, Aleppo Governorate, Camp Setting).

Groups at High Risk

Social Groups reported to be at high risk of violence included women, girls, children, orphans, elderly, widows and divorcees. .

Coping Strategies

Men in Atareb sub-district raised concerns that women and children were being **sent to the streets to beg** in order to fulfil unmet needs.

Accessing Community Centres (e.g. women and girls' centres, child friendly spaces) was reported as a coping strategy.

Reported Coping Strategies in Response to Violence and Unmet Needs

Child Marriage

Survival Sex

Movement Restrictions

Women Entering the Labour Market

Accessing Community Centres, Women's Centres and Child Friendly Spaces

Dress Restrictions

Violence as a response to violence
(e.g. in the form of domestic and family violence)

Non-Disclosure

Suicide

Begging (Women) and Working (Girls)

Aleppo



Dress Restrictions

Dress restrictions were discussed in relation to adolescent girls and women and included wearing an *abaya* and wearing black.

“I can't get dressed and go out like this. To come here I wore an *abaya*. (Adolescent Girl, Community FGD, Aleppo Governorate, Camp Setting)



Non-Disclosure

Non-disclosure was reported to be a coping mechanism used predominantly by women and girls in response to domestic and sexual violence. Men and women both discussed the difficulties facing female victims of GBV. These were reported to include further violence and stigmatization by their family and members of the community.

“Most girls and women stay silent and don't talk and if they talk they are targeted by their families and community (Woman, Community FGD, Aleppo Governorate)

Violence exists at home mainly because of the inability for girls to move freely without somebody accompanying her by virtue of customs and traditions (Adolescent Girl, Community FGD, Aleppo Governorate).

Adolescent girls in Daret Azza sub-district depicted movement restrictions as a form of psychological violence, affecting girls' opportunities to socialize with friends.

“Girls suffer from psychological violence, by preventing them from going out by their own to visit their friends, or using the mobile phone (Adolescent Girl, Community FGD, Aleppo Governorate).

NO. OF ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED IN GBV RESPONSE BY HUB (JUNE 2016)



Movement Restrictions

76% of sub-districts reported movement restrictions for women and girls.

In 22/34 assessed sub-districts, women required a male escort in order to move outside the house, a restriction also affecting girls in 21/34 assessed sub-districts.

“There are some girls who don't have freedom. They have been stuck in their tents for three years (Adolescent Boy, Community FGD, Aleppo Governorate, Camp Setting).

The person can't leave or enter. You are not allowed to go out. You have to stay inside and going out is not allowed. If someone passes by you have to close the door and get covered, as you don't want anyone to see you (Adolescent Girl, Community FGD, Aleppo Governorate, Camp Setting).

Movement restrictions linked to rules imposed by extremist groups were widely reported, although did not account for all movement restrictions experienced by women and girls.

“According to some faction leaders and sheikhs, women must be escorted by 'mahram' (an adult relative) to move from place to place. (Woman, Community FGD, Aleppo Governorate)

Access to GBV Services

The map in fig. 4.1.3. highlights available GBV services in Aleppo governorate, as of June 2016.

There were no specialized services for women and girls in 87% of assessed sub-districts. Whilst this reflects gaps in services across Aleppo governorate, it also highlights a lack of awareness about existing local services.

20/38 assessed sub-districts reported a specific need for services that provide medical and psychosocial support to survivors of GBV.

Other identified service gaps included a need for women's centres, better training of staff, and a better geographical spread of services.

Barriers affecting access to GBV services were noted in female and male discussions. Women and adolescents girls were most likely to highlight issues relating to stigma and trust. In contrast, men and adolescent boys highlighted a perception that staff lacked the necessary specialized skills and raised issues such as over-charging of services and GBV services not being allowed in the specific camp setting.

“Firstly, there are few facilities. They are inadequate and do not cover the general needs. Most of the staff members are incompetent because they are

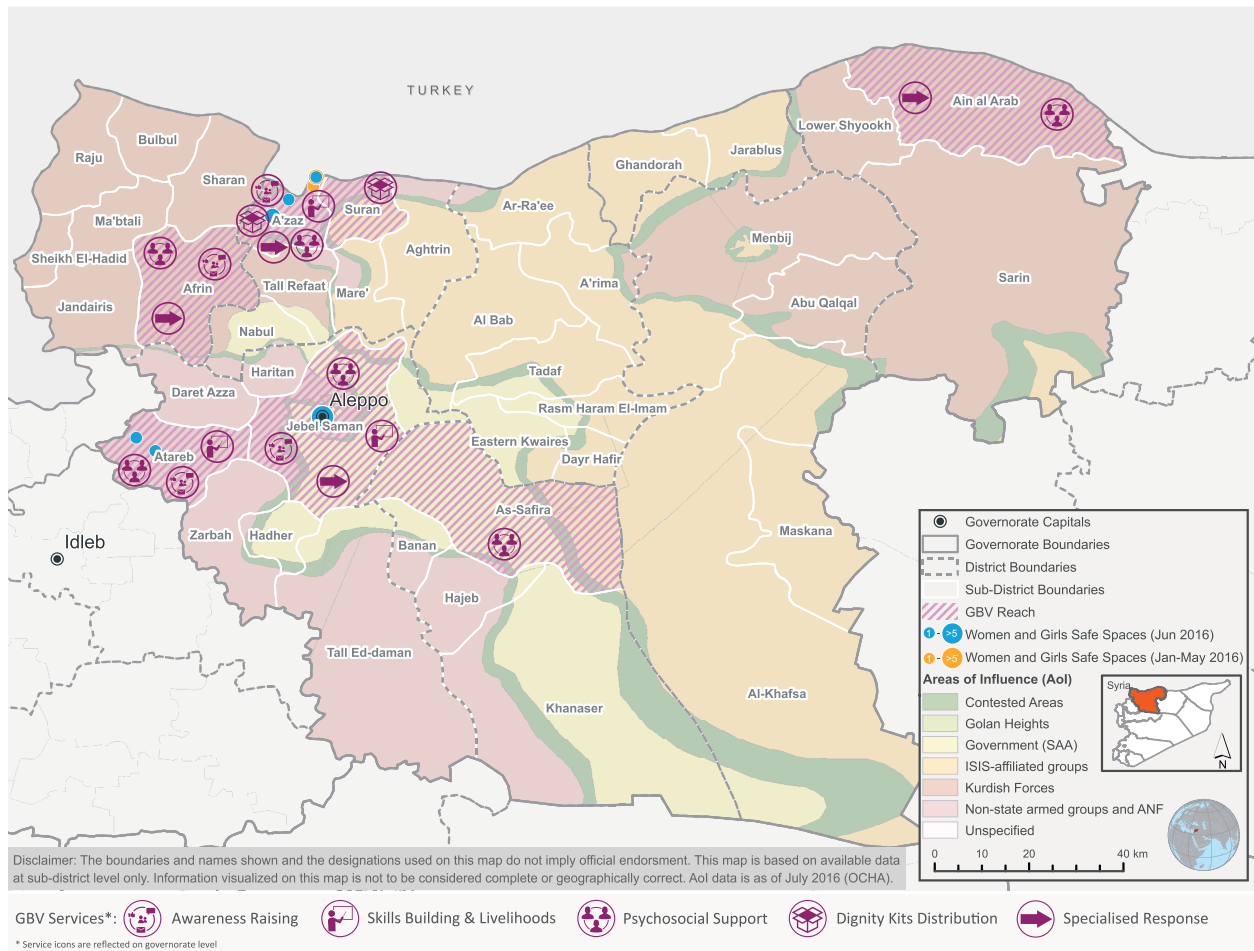
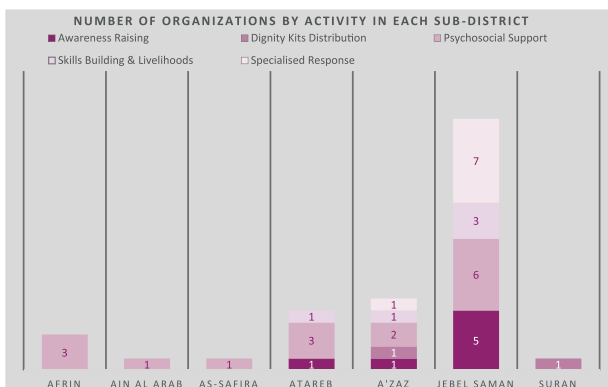


Fig. 4.1.3: Reach of GBV Services in the Governorate as of June 2016 (Reflected on Sub-district Level)

young men and women who underwent a course of no more than twenty-five days and then became psychosocial support staff. [...]Is this right?? How can anyone become an expert in psychological support in less than a month, especially when we all live in 24-hour bombardment? (Man, Community FGD, Aleppo Governorate)

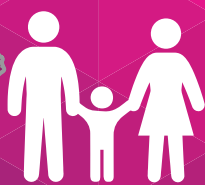
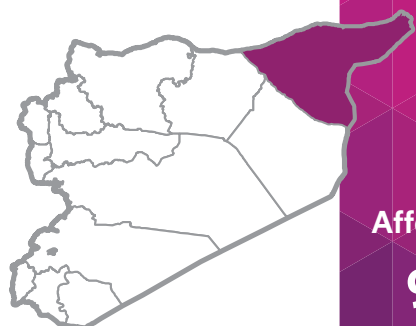


Risks When Accessing Humanitarian Assistance

Reported risks associated with women's and girls' access to aid include exploitation, discrimination, sexual harassment and requests for sexual favours in return for aid.

“Women and girls were also reported to have restricted access to aid. Reasons included not having a male relative to collect aid on their behalf; women and girls being too shy to access aid; the male head of household not signing up for aid; wives of men who had fought for one side or the other being denied aid; and not all wives having access to aid within a polygamous marriage.”

Governorate Overview



Affected Population
973,944



Male

445,078



Adolescents
ages 15-17

56,909



Female

528,866



Youth
ages 15-24

189,696

4.2 Al Hasakeh

Types of GBV Reported as Protection Concerns



Domestic Violence

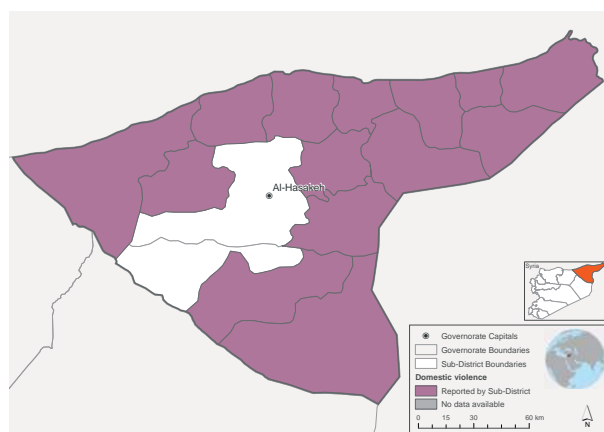


Fig. 4.2.2: Sub-districts with Reports of Domestic Violence

Domestic violence perpetrated against females was reported in 86% of assessed sub-districts⁴⁰.

The risk of domestic violence was linked to the psychological pressure affecting men, shortage of resources, lack of education, child marriage and marital disputes.

⁴⁰ 16 sub-districts were assessed in Al Hasakeh.



Fig. 4.2.1: Population Data, Al Hasakeh

Women in Al-Malikeyyeh sub-district linked domestic violence to the possibility of suicide.

“Some of the battered women may resort to committing suicide (Woman, Community FGD, Al Hasakeh Governorate).”



Sexual Violence

Sexual violence was reported as a protection concern in 94% of sub-districts.

Groups perceived to be at highest risk of sexual violence included adolescent girls, women, and IDPs (gender not specified).

Areas identified as posing a high risk for sexual violence included schools and homes.

Factors perceived to increase girls' risk of sexual violence included the absence of accountable bodies (rule of law) and insecurity.

“The groups that are most at risk of sexual violence are girls at the age of 14 or older...Because of a number of reasons such as the lack of security and safety, the indiscretion of young men, and the absence of accountable bodies (Man, Community FGD, Al Hasakeh Governorate).”



Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment was reported to be a protection concern affecting teenage girls (specified as 15 years

and older in discussions).

Young men were reported to be the perpetrators of sexual harassment.

The threat of sexual harassment was perceived to be especially high in public or crowded areas (such as overcrowded camps), with the threat highest at night or during siesta time (1-5pm).

“We are concerned about our daughters' safety when they have to leave the house during [the] night or in the siesta between 1pm and 5pm (Man, Community FGD, Al Hasakeh Governorate).”



Child Marriage

Child marriage was reported to be a protection concern and/or a negative coping strategy in 100% of assessed sub-districts.

In 94% of sub-districts, child marriage was understood to be motivated by financial reasons. Child marriage was also framed as a protective strategy for girls (i.e. having a male protector).

In 88% of sub-districts, preventing recruitment by armed groups was cited as a possible reason for child marriage.

All discussions linked child marriage to an increased risk of divorce.

“This [divorce] problem could be abolished by forbidding child marriage which is very common (Man, Community FGD, Al Hasakeh Governorate).”

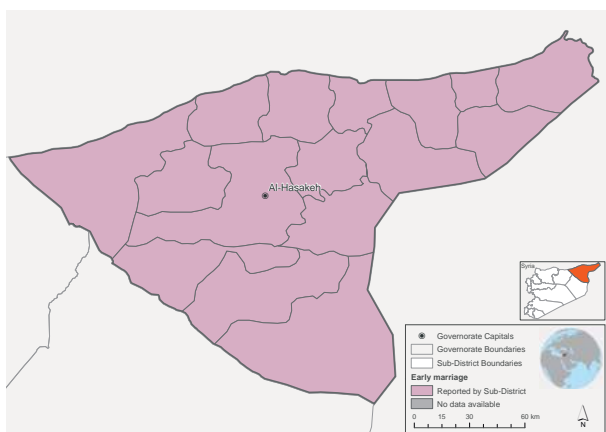


Fig. 4.2.3: Sub-districts with Reports of Child Marriage



Kidnapping

The threat of kidnapping involving women was discussed in Darbasiyah and Markada sub-districts.

Concerns were raised about ISIS taking women as 'spoils of war'.

“...[there are] concerns about armed factions such as Daesh [ISIS] gaining entry and taking women as spoils of war and children as hostages, just like what happened at Tal-Tamar town and other areas (Man, Community FGD, Al Hasakeh Governorate).”



Sexual Exploitation

Men in Quamishli sub-district raised concerns about sexual exploitation within IDP communities. However, no details were given about the form that this sexual exploitation takes.

Groups at High Risk

Specific groups reported to be at higher risk of violence than others included children, poor people and girls (especially in relation to sexual violence and harassment).

Movement Restrictions

All 14 assessed sub-districts reported limited movement for women and girls. This includes restrictions on moving alone and needing a male escort.

100% of assessed sub-districts reported movement restrictions were linked to rules imposed by extremist groups. Tribal custom and traditions were also cited as reasons for restricted movement.

“We are able to move freely and safely, but tribal customs and traditions forbid girls from leaving alone from home (Man, Community FGD, Al Hasakeh Governorate).”

Coping Strategies



Non-Disclosure

Non-Disclosure was reported as a coping strategy in all discussions among women.

“Women choose to remain silent because of traditions, customs, and the absence of laws to protect them (Woman, Community FGD, Al Hasakeh Governorate).”

Reported Coping Strategies in Response to Violence and Unmet Needs



Access to GBV Services

In 88% of assessed sub-districts there were reports of having no specialised services for women and girls. This highlights a lack of awareness of existing local services.

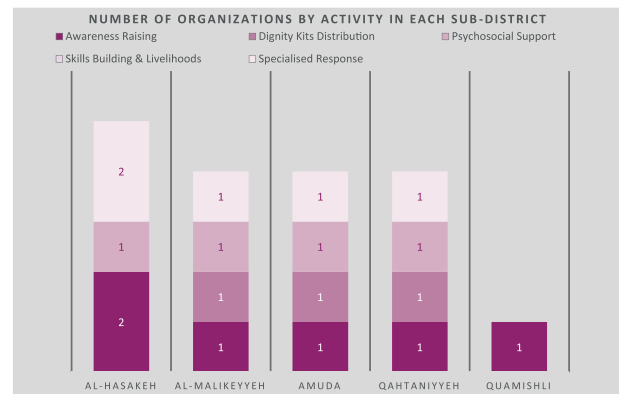
In addition, in all sub-districts in Al Hasakeh there were reports of specialized GBV services being needed. Thus, whilst reach has expanded in 2016, as highlighted in fig. 4.2.3, significant service gaps still remain.

Reported **barriers** affecting access to services included stigma and cultural barriers, a perception that services were biased against men, lack of trust in service providers and a perception that staff lacked specialized skills. Women raised concerns that local women's centres could be affiliated with the local authorities and certain groups.

“There is [an organisation] with a department to protect the battered and the abused women. However, it is not used, mostly due to traditions and customs. (Woman, Community FGD, Al Hasakeh Governorate).”

Risks When Accessing Humanitarian Assistance

Reported risks associated with women's and girls' access to aid included exploitation, discrimination and requests for sexual favours in return for aid.



NO. OF ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED IN GBV RESPONSE BY HUB (JUNE 2016)

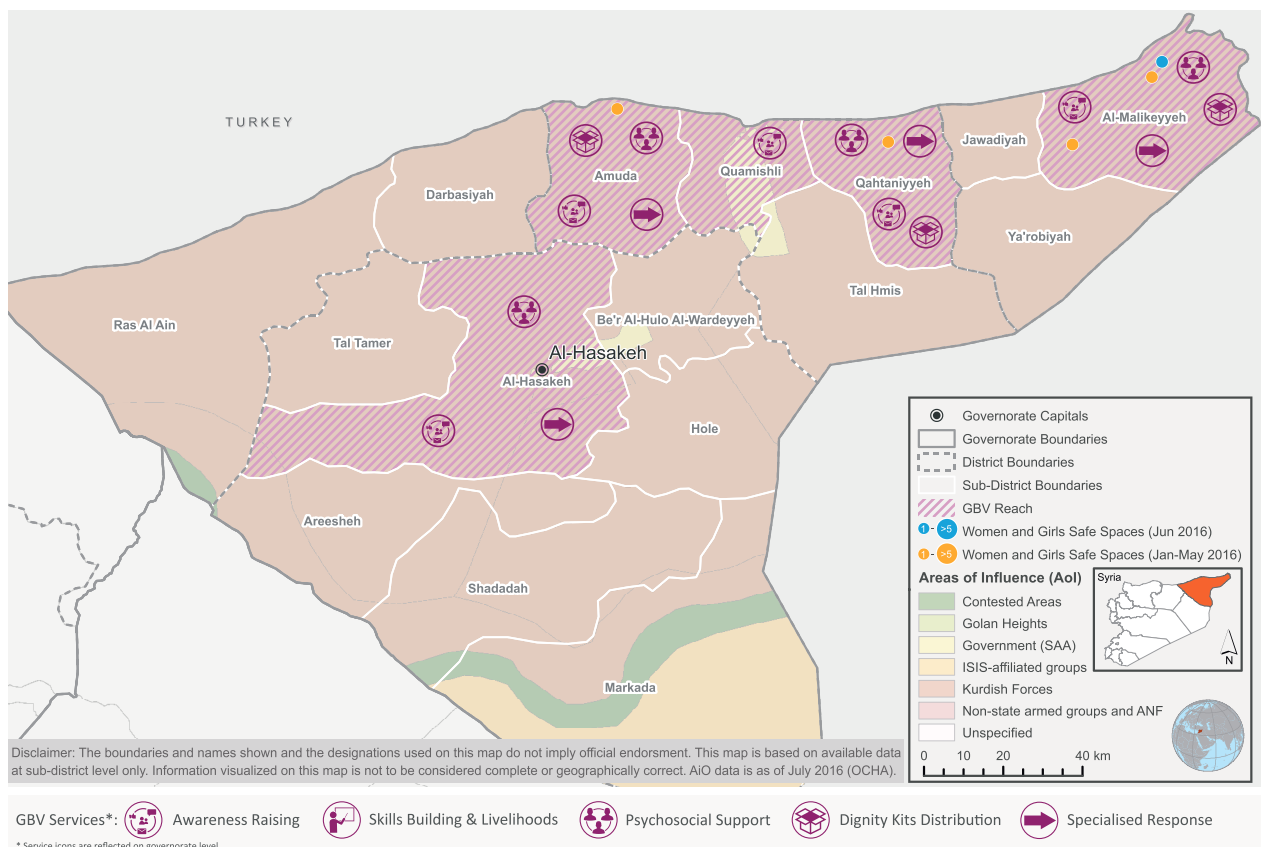
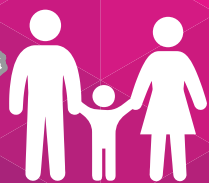
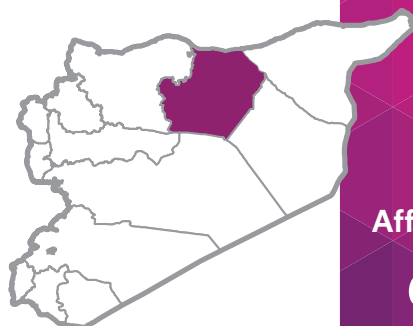


Fig. 4.2.4: Reach of GBV Services in the Governorate as of June 2016 (Reflected on Sub-district Level)

Governorate Overview



Affected Population

655,097



Male

313,446



Adolescents
ages 15-17

30,711



Female

341,651



Youth
ages 15-24

102,370

4.3 Ar-Raqqa

Types of GBV Reported as Protection Concerns



Domestic Violence

Domestic violence was identified as a protection concern mainly affecting women.

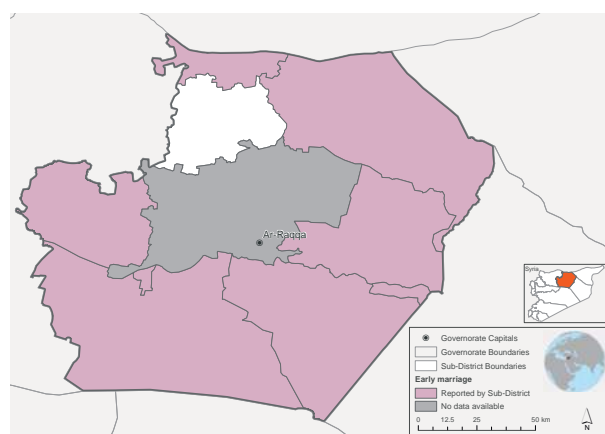


Fig. 4.3.2: Sub-districts with Reports of Domestic Violence



Fig. 4.3.1: Population Data, Ar-Raqqa



Child Marriage

Child marriage was cited as a protection concern in 89% of sub-districts (8/9).

In 100% of sub-districts, child marriage was understood to be motivated by financial and protective reasons.

In 89% of sub-districts, preventing recruitment by armed groups was also cited as a reason for child marriage.



Kidnapping

Kidnapping was cited as a protection concern in Tell Abiad sub-district but it is unclear from the data whether this was specifically affecting women and girls.

Risks When Accessing Humanitarian Assistance

Discrimination was cited as a concern when accessing humanitarian assistance, especially affecting girls.

Reported Coping Strategies in Response to Violence and Unmet Needs

Child Marriage

Accessing Community Centres, Women's Centres and Child Friendly Spaces

Movement Restrictions

Ar-Raqqa



Movement Restrictions

In 100% of assessed sub-districts, girls and women were reported to experience movement restrictions.

Girls were reported to need to travel with a male companion in all assessed sub-districts.

In 100% of assessed sub-districts, movement restrictions were linked to rules imposed by extremist groups.

Access to GBV Services

In 100% of sub-districts there were reports that no services existed for women and girls. This reflects the limited coverage of GBV services at present and the lack of awareness about existing GBV services in some locations.

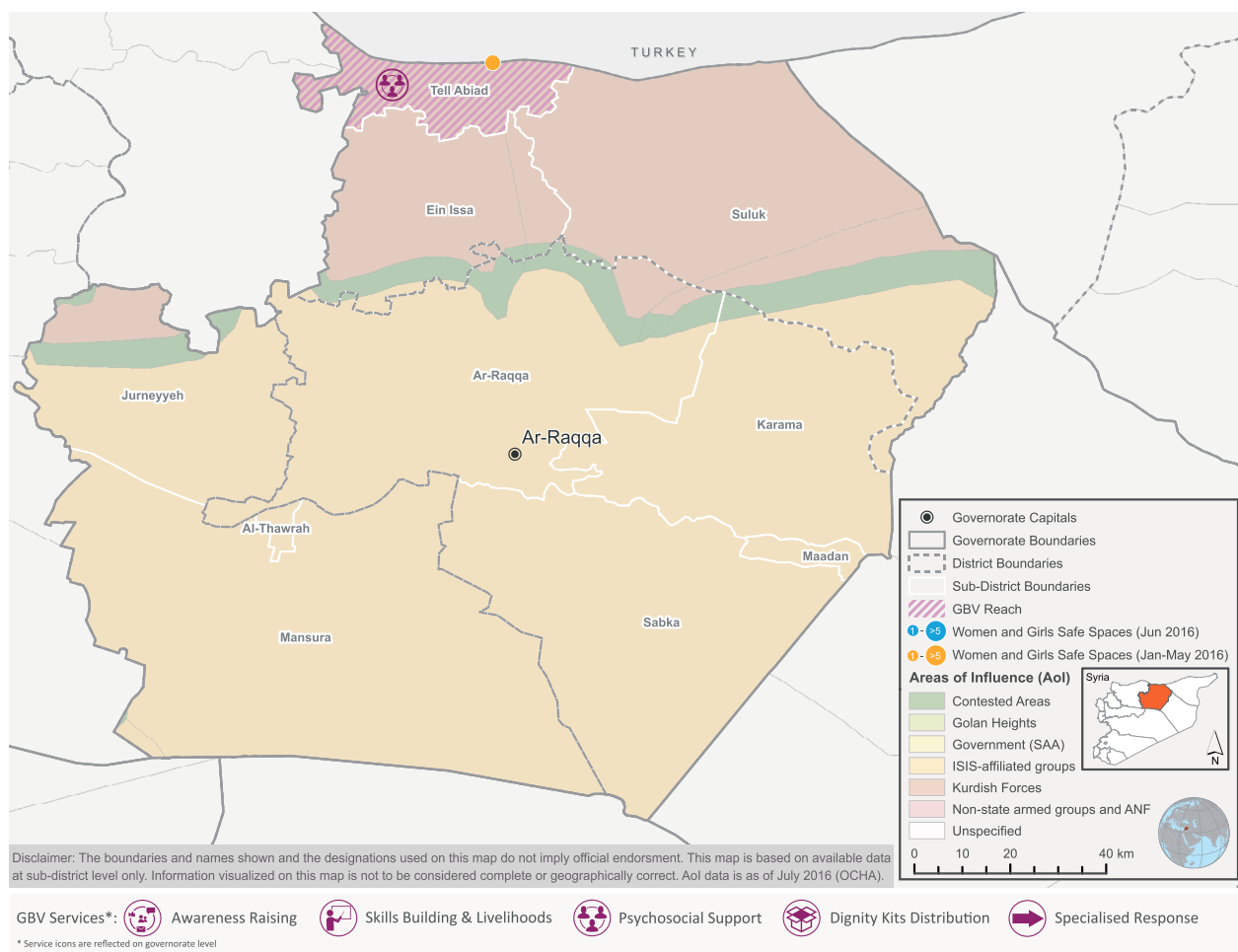
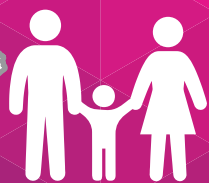
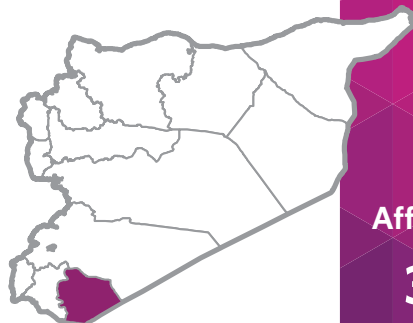


Fig. 4.3.3: Reach of GBV Services in the Governorate as of June 2016 (Reflected on Sub-district Level)

Governorate Overview



Affected Population

320,690



Male

159,560



Adolescents
ages 15-17

19,201



Female

161,130



Youth
ages 15-24

64,007

4.4 As-Sweida

Types of GBV Reported as Protection Concerns



Domestic Violence

Domestic violence was cited as a protection concern across As-Sweida governorate.



Sexual Violence

Sexual violence was cited as a protection concern in 50% of sub-districts.

In the 7 sub-districts where sexual abuse of children was specifically assessed, it was identified as a major threat for children.



Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment was cited as a protection concern in 50% of sub-districts. This was discussed in relation to accessing aid.



Fig. 4.4.1: Population Data, As-Sweida

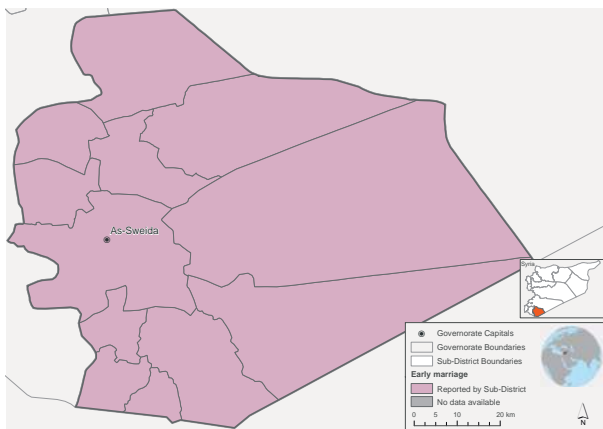


Fig. 4.4.2: Sub-districts with Reports of Child Marriage



Kidnapping

Kidnapping of females was reported in three sub-districts. This represents 50% of assessed sub-districts where segregated data was available.



Sexual Exploitation

Sexual favours being requested in return for aid in was cited as a protection concern in 33% sub-districts.



Child Marriage

Child marriage was cited as a protection concern in 100% of sub-districts.

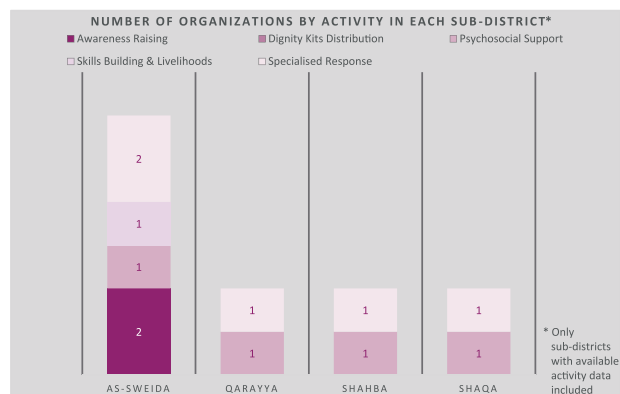
In 83% of sub-districts, child marriage was reported to be motivated by improved protection.

In 75% of sub-districts, child marriage was understood to be motivated by financial reasons.

Movement Restrictions

In 67% of assessed sub-districts where segregated data was available, movement restrictions were reported to affect women and girls.

In 83% of assessed sub-districts there were specific reports that women and girls cannot move alone, but need a male escort.



NO. OF ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED IN GBV RESPONSE BY HUB (JUNE 2016)



Access to GBV Services

In 50% of sub-districts there were reports that no services existed for women and girls.

100% of sub-districts reported a need for specialized GBV services, especially psychosocial and medical support.

Identified services included community centres and psychosocial support.

Risks When Accessing Humanitarian Assistance

The threat of sexual harassment when accessing aid was identified in 50% of sub-districts. This was specifically reported to affect girls.

Sexual favours being requested in return for aid in was cited as a protection concern in 33% sub-districts.

Reported Coping Strategies in Response to Violence and Unmet Needs

Child
Marriage

Accessing
Community
Centres, Women's
Centres and Child
Friendly Spaces

Movement
Restrictions

As-Sweida

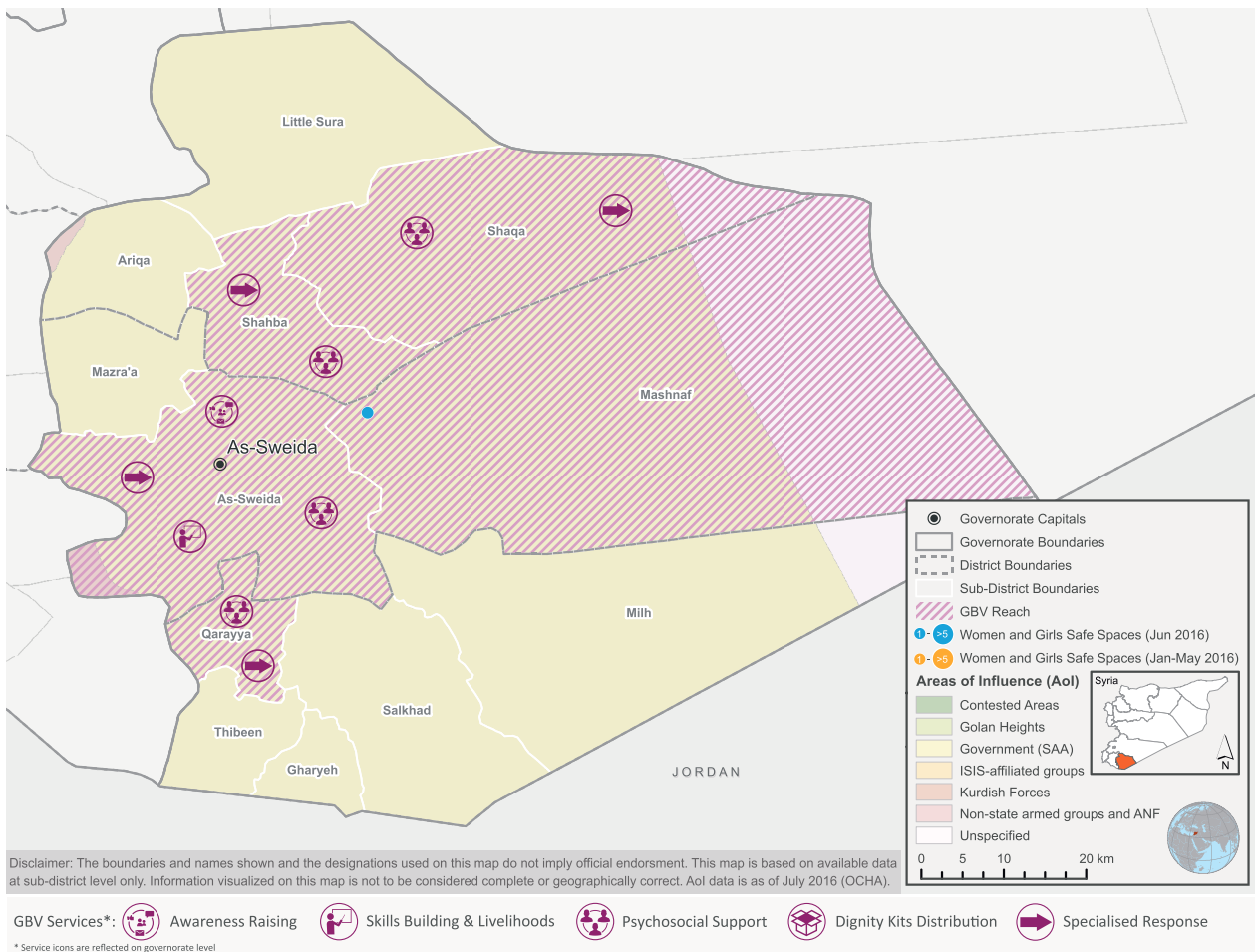
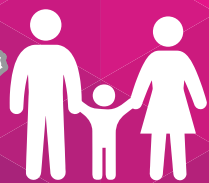


Fig. 4.4.3: Reach of GBV Services in the Governorate as of June 2016 (Reflected on Sub-district Level)

Governorate Overview



Affected Population

1,759,800



Male

862,130



Adolescents
ages 15-17

105,577



Female

897,670



Youth
ages 15-24

351,923

4.5 Damascus

Types of GBV Reported as Protection Concerns



Domestic Violence

Domestic violence was cited as protection concern in Damascus sub-district.



Sexual Violence

Sexual violence was cited as protection concern.

Sexual abuse of children was cited as a protection concern.



Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment was reported as a protection concern in relation to accessing aid.



Fig. 4.5.1: Population Data, Damascus



Child Marriage

Child marriage was reported as a protection concern in Damascus sub-district.

Reasons for child marriage included financial reasons, improved protection and prevention of recruitment into groups.



Kidnapping

Kidnapping was reported as a protection concern in the Damascus sub-district, although it is not clear if this especially affects women and girls.



Sexual Exploitation

Sexual harassment and requests for sexual favours in exchange for aid were reported as a protection concern.

Movement Restrictions

Within the Damascus sub-district, there were 17 sources of data covering the issue of movement restrictions. Of these, nine reported limited movement of women and girls. There are no reports on the reasons behind the restricted movements for women and girls.

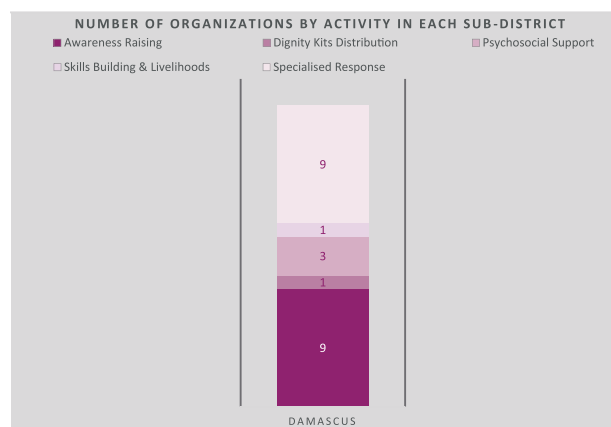
Reported Coping Strategies in Response to Violence and Unmet Needs

Child Marriage

Accessing Community Centres, Women's Centres and Child Friendly Spaces

Movement Restrictions

Damascus



Access to GBV Services

50% of data sources reported that no services existed for women and girls. This potentially highlights a lack of awareness of existing local services.

33% of data sources covering this indicator reported a need for specialized GBV services.

Risks When Accessing Humanitarian Assistance

In the Damascus sub-district, risks when accessing aid reported included sexual harassment and requests for sexual favours in exchange for aid.

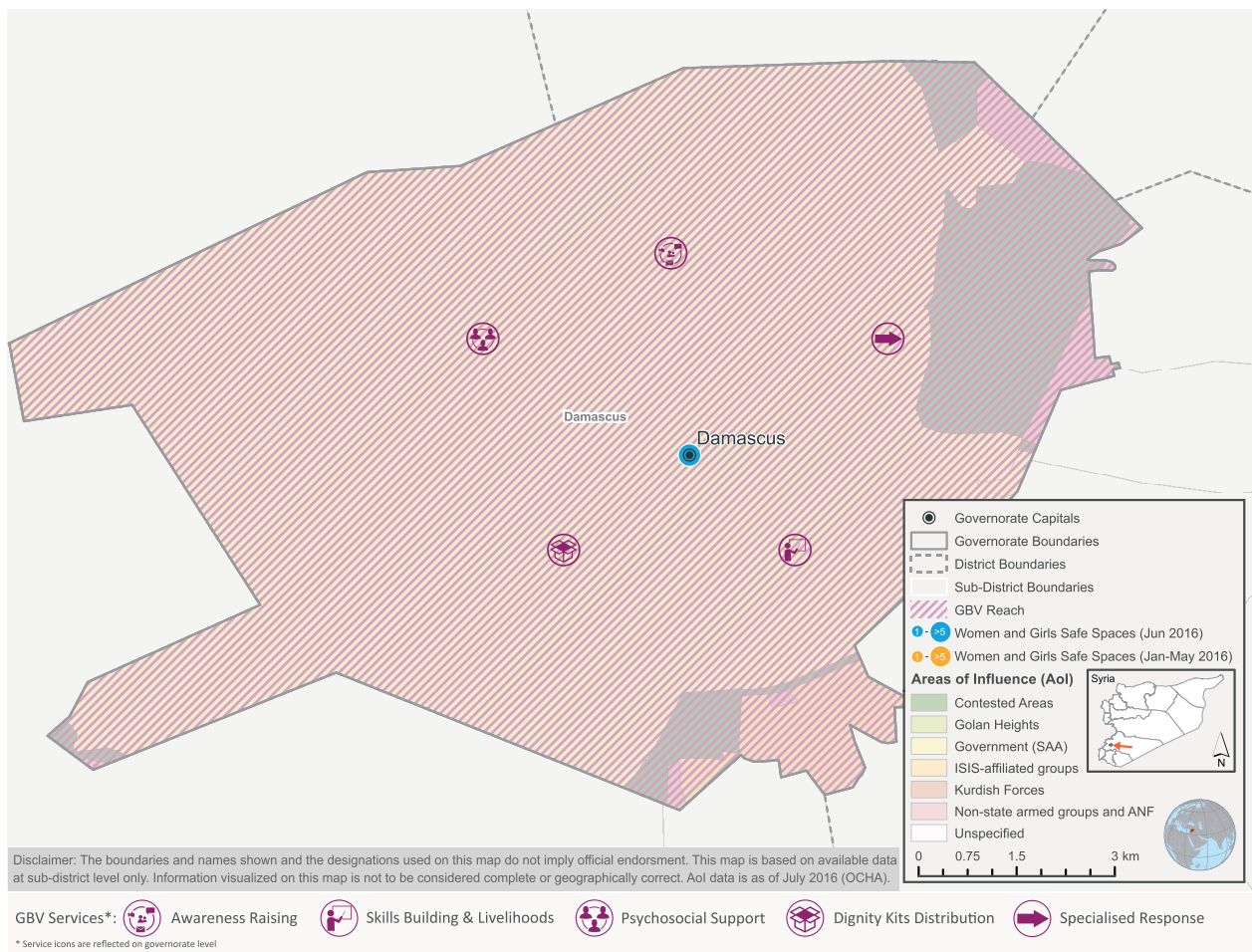
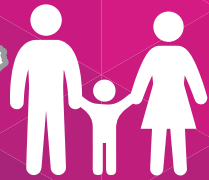
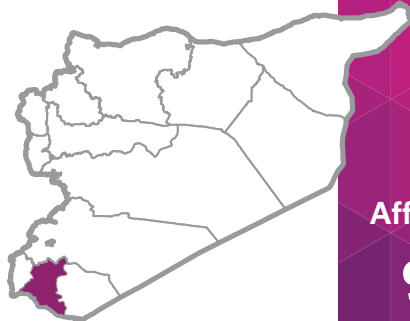


Fig. 4.5.2: Reach of GBV Services in the Governorate as of June 2016 (Reflected on Sub-district Level)

Governorate Overview



Affected Population

940,022



Male

463,908



Adolescents
ages 15-17

56,075



Female

476,114



Youth
ages 15-24

186,918

4.6 Dar'a

Types of GBV Reported as Protection Concerns



Domestic Violence

The threat of domestic violence was reported as a protection concern in 82% of assessed sub-districts.

Men were less likely to report domestic violence as a protection concern. This suggests domestic violence was given less emphasis by men than women. Supporting this observation:



Participant: Thank God violence only takes the form of spanking.

Facilitator: Hitting whom? Women? Men? Children? Please explain.

Participant: Anything that you could imagine. A man hitting his wife is one example (Man, Community FGD, Dar'a Governorate).

Factors perceived to increase the risk of domestic violence included living in an IDP camp (not explained further), male stress, male unemployment and child marriage, due to girls not being 'mature enough' to handle marriage. Thus, male violence was either excused or blame was attributed to the female victim.



Let us not forget that violence also exists at home... At home, people are convinced that a man should be domineering while the wife should be weak. (Man, Community FGD, Dar'a Governorate).



Fig. 4.6.1: Population Data, Dar'a

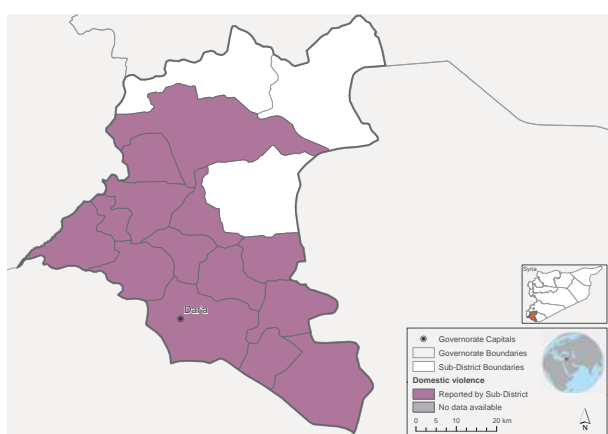


Fig. 4.6.2: Sub-districts with Reports of Domestic Violence

in unsafe hands, rape is being committed by gun force, and I think everyone has heard of this (Man, Community FGD, Dar'a Governorate).

In one discussion with a women, concerns were raised about alleged cases in which girls were videotaped whilst being raped, with the video then being used for blackmail purposes.

Education was closely linked to sexual violence with movement to and from school and university perceived to carry a high risk of sexual violence (especially at checkpoints). Schools were also reported to be sites where sexual abuse was a threat.

Girls and young women [are] getting sexually assaulted when leaving the school and parents can't do anything about it (Woman, Community FGD, Dar'a Governorate).



Sexual Violence

Sexual violence was reported in 60% of assessed sub-districts and 63% of Community FGDs (by both male and female participants).

Of course there have been many [cases of rape]. Some people are very discreet about this (Woman, Community FGD, Dar'a Governorate).

Specific concerns included the threat of being raped at gunpoint (linked to the availability of small arms at a community level), gang rape (affecting men) and rape (affecting boys).

...after the war and the widespread number of firearms



Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment was depicted as a protection concern predominantly affecting women and girls, although in one discussion, young boys were also reported to be at risk of being sexually harassed.

Where potential perpetrators were specified, these included 'immature troublesome boys'.

There were reports of sexual harassment when accessing aid in Dar'a sub-district.

Women's clothes were reported to affect their chance of being harassed, with veils being used to reduce attention.

“The veil is used by extremely beautiful women to stop harassment (Woman, Community FGD, Dar'a Governorate).”

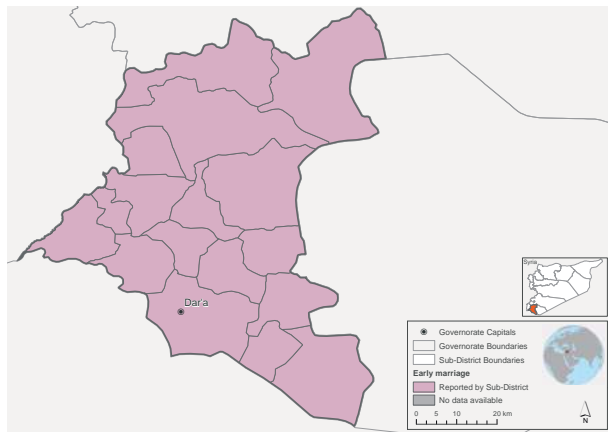


Fig. 4.6.3: Sub-districts with Reports of Child Marriage



Child Marriage

Child marriage was discussed as a protection threat and/or coping strategy in 100% of sub-districts.

“Most parents are concerned about their daughters who are still young (13 years old and older). They are concerned that their daughters might be detained or abducted by extremists, which makes parents arrange child marriages (Woman, Community FGD, Dar'a Governorate).”

In 100% of sub-districts, child marriage was reported to be motivated by financial reasons.

In 88% of sub-districts, child marriage was reported to be used as a strategy for preventing children's recruitment into armed groups. 82% of sub-districts also reported improved protection as a motivation for child marriage.

These findings were supported by the qualitative data, which framed child marriage as a protective strategy for both boys and girls. Boys were reportedly married early by their parents in order to discourage them from joining armed groups. Girls were married early in order to secure the protection of a man.

“We only want what will protect her, to have her in the house of a man. (Woman, Community FGD, Dar'a Governorate).”



Kidnapping

The threat of kidnapping, involving women and girls was discussed in five sub-districts.

“With regards to getting exposed to sexual assault, there is a possibility that a girl is kidnapped and raped while on the road (Woman, Community FGD, Dar'a Governorate).”

Kidnapping of women and girls was linked to sexual violence.

Girls were perceived to be at particularly high risk when travelling to school, with other young people cited as possible perpetrators.

“While girls are going to school, they get exposed to verbal and nonverbal abuse and might get kidnapped by other young people (Woman, Community FGD, Dar'a Governorate).”

The threat of kidnapping by 'extremist' groups was reported to be a factor encouraging parents to marry their daughters early.



Sexual Exploitation

Sexual exploitation termed 'adultery' was discussed by women in Mzeireb sub-district. Hereby, women and girls were reported as engaging in these transactional sexual relationships in order to get money. It was thus framed as form of survival sex.

“Unfortunately, some girls and women work in 'adultery' in order to get money. I'm saying it and my heart is full of sorrow (Woman, Community FGD, Dar'a Governorate).”



Economic Violence

Economic violence was discussed in Mzeireb and Tassil sub-districts, specifically in relation to men selling aid in order to buy personal effects for himself, such as cigarettes.

“...he takes the money to buy cigarettes. He doesn't want to run out of cigarettes. This is sometimes the only thing a father does (Woman, Community FGD, Dar'a Governorate).”



Gender Discrimination

Gender discrimination (in terms of women and girls not being afforded their full rights) was discussed by men FGDs in Mzeireb and Tassil sub-districts.

“...if we are talking about girls, they are not given all their rights to be honest (Man, Community FGD, Dar'a Governorate).

There is a great marginalization of the role of women and girls in the society (Man, Community FGD, Dar'a Governorate).



Honour Killings

Women in Da'el and Jasim sub-districts depicted so called honour killings as a strategy for reducing the collective shame associated with sexual violence and loss of honour.

“We have many cases of rape. [There was a case of] a 12 year-old daughter who was walking to the local shop and she got kidnapped by a group of masked men in a van. She was raped and her honour destroyed. After that her family killed her. The girl did not even know who kidnapped and raped her (Woman, Community FGD, Dar'a Governorate).

Groups at High Risk

Social Groups reported to be at high risk of violence included adolescent girls, widows, women and children. This was due to them being perceived as 'weak' (a term used by female participants). Adolescent girls were reported to be at particularly high risk of sexual violence.

“I think that women are the only people who attract violence because they are “minor ribs” i.e. weak creatures (Woman, Community FGD, Dar'a Governorate).

Coping Strategies

Men in Nawa sub-district discussed the practice of marrying a sexual violence survivor to the perpetrator. This coping strategy was intended to hide the shame associated a girl's loss of honour.

“When such cases occur people try to let the attacker marry the victim, for fear of shame, to cover and hide it (Man, Community FGD, Dar'a Governorate)



Dress Restrictions

Dress restrictions, reported to affect women and girls, included wearing veils and shoes that are not too high or shiny. Restrictions are enforced in the streets and at checkpoints, with non-compliance carrying the risk of a beating.

Reported Coping Strategies in Response to Violence and Unmet Needs

Child Marriage

Survival Sex

Movement Restrictions

Marrying Survivor to the Perpetrator of SGBV

Accessing Community Centres, Women's Centres and Child Friendly Spaces

Dress Restrictions

Non-Disclosure for DGV

Begging (Women) and Working (Girls)

Dara'

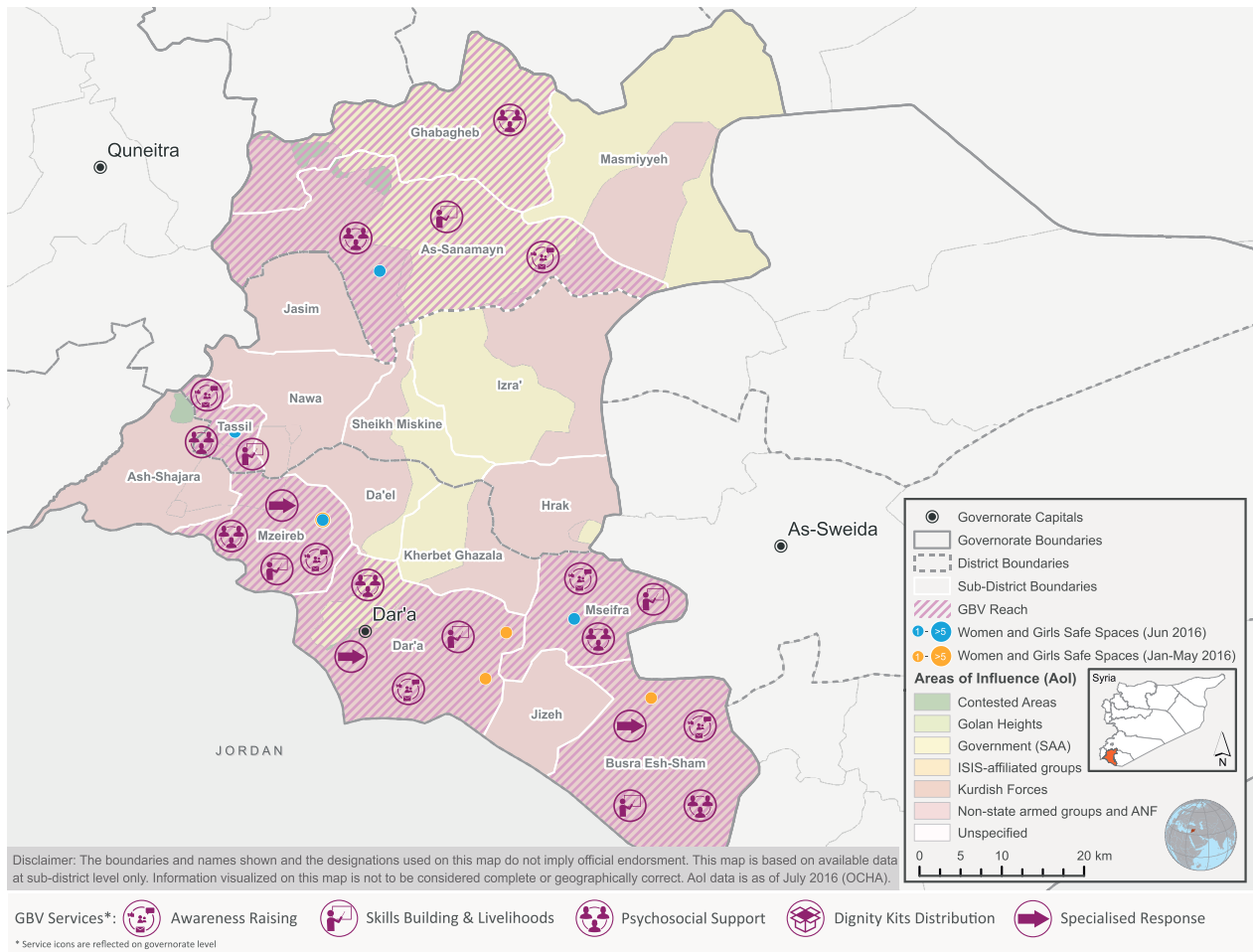


Fig. 4.6.4: Reach of GBV Services in the Governorate as of June 2016 (Reflected on Sub-district Level)

“You have to comply with the outfit regulations. They have women, whom, if you make a small mistake, will beat you (Woman, Community FGD, Dar’a Governorate).”



Non-Disclosure

Non-disclosure was discussed as a coping strategy used by women and children. Men in Mzeireb sub-district perceived non-disclosure to be driven by women engaging in ‘self-shaming’. From this perspective, women internalize the stigma attached to GBV.

“Due to excessive self-shaming a woman keeps everything to herself and represses her feelings. She fears that telling her brother for example would cause trouble with the person who harassed her (Man, Community FGD, Dar’a Governorate).”

Movement Restrictions

In 100% of sub-districts, movement restrictions were reported in relation to women and girls. In all sub-districts, there were reports of women and girls being unable to move alone.

Women’s and girls’ movement restrictions were not just linked to insecurity but also to restrictions imposed on them by members of their family or the ruling party, such as not being allowed out without a male escort.

There were reports that women self-impose movement restrictions due to fear of being detained or humiliated at checkpoints. Furthermore, as men were reportedly unable to travel due to the threat of conscription or detention, women were forced to take the added risk of travelling outside.

“My neighbour went to do some things in Dar’a. They stopped her and detained her. [...] She was imprisoned for 14 days. She is just a normal housewife. She doesn’t work. [...] She just went to get aid (Woman, Community FGD, Dar’a Governorate).”

Access to GBV Services

In 88% of sub-districts, there were reports that no services existed for women and girls. This highlights a lack of awareness of existing services.

However, participants were aware of GBV services, including women's centres, health centres for women and girls and psychosocial support.

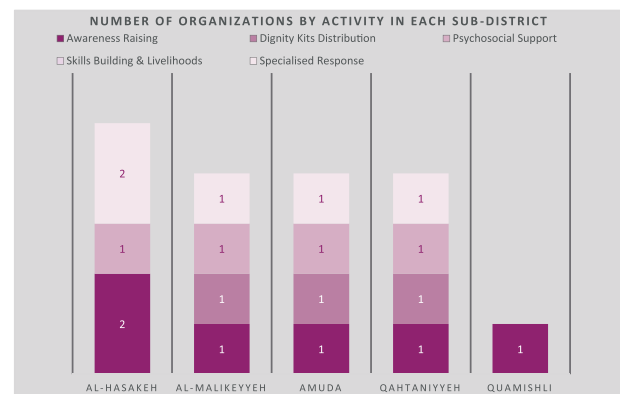
Specific service gaps reported included a need for more psychosocial support centres and more skilled medical staff (female medical staff, gynaecologists).

“Some health care services are offered, but those are still not enough (Man, Community FGD, Dar'a Governorate).

Multiple **barriers** affecting access to GBV services were noted in discussions, including being unable to access specialized services in Damascus from Dar'a without a male escort, lack of locally available GBV services and lack of faith in the effectiveness of psychological services (i.e. talking therapies were perceived to do little to change the environment).

“There are no centres for women, no psychological support, and nothing for children or adults. (Woman, Community FGD, Dar'a Governorate).

There's supposed to be a women's union... A women's union to support women and children (Woman, Community FGD, Dar'a Governorate).



NO. OF ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED IN GBV RESPONSE BY HUB (JUNE 2016)



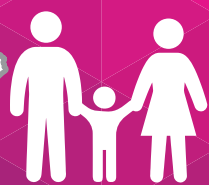
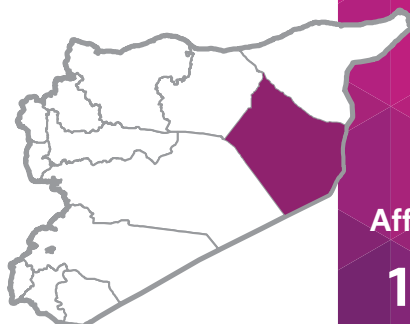
Risks When Accessing Humanitarian Assistance

Protection risks identified when accessing aid included restricted access, sexual harassment and sexual favours in return for aid.

Women (especially widows, divorcees, elderly women living alone and displaced wives of detainees) and unaccompanied children were reported as being at risk of having restricted access to aid. This was explained in terms of female-headed households being without a male supporter or for their association with a certain group.

“Wives of those who are arrested [...] they suffer negligence and absence of supporters (Man, Community FGD, Dar'a Governorate).

Governorate Overview



Affected Population

1,097,930



Male

524,841



Adolescents
ages 15-17

63,794



Female

573,089



Youth
ages 15-24

212,647

4.7 Deir-ez-Zor

Types of GBV Reported as Protection Concerns



Domestic Violence

Domestic violence was reported in 42% of sub-districts, possibly due to the low number of female key informants.



Sexual Violence

There were very low reports of sexual violence in Deir-ez-Zor governorate, which is likely due to the low number of female key informants.



Sexual Harassment

25% of assessed sub-districts reported harassment of females when accessing aid. This was not specified as being sexual harassment.



Fig. 4.7.1: Population Data, Deir-ez-Zor



Child Marriage

58% of assessed sub-districts reported child marriages as a protection concern.

41% of assessed sub-districts reported improved protection as a reason for child marriage, 35% as a means of preventing recruitment to armed groups and 24% of assessed sub-districts reported that child marriage was motivated by financial reasons.



Kidnapping

25% of assessed sub-districts reported kidnapping as a protection concern, although it was not specified whether this specially affected women and girls.

Movement Restrictions

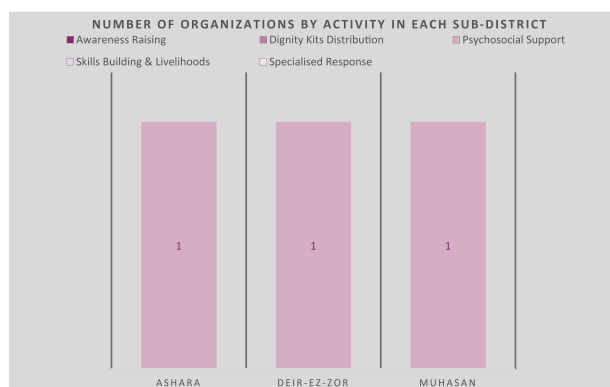
100% of assessed sub-districts reported movement restrictions for women and girls. All assessed sub-districts reported that women and girls cannot move alone, with girls especially affected.

Reported Coping Strategies in Response to Violence and Unmet Needs

Child Marriage

Movement Restrictions

Deir-ez-Zor



NO. OF ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED IN GBV RESPONSE BY HUB (JUNE 2016)



Gaziantep, 1

Access to GBV Services

In 100% of assessed sub-districts there were reports that no services existed for women and girls. This likely reflects the relatively limited coverage of GBV services at present, in addition to the fact that a third of the sub-districts where GBV services currently exist were not covered by the assessment.

50% of assessed sub-districts reported a need for medical treatment, psychosocial support and services for survivors of sexual and/or domestic violence.

Risks When Accessing Humanitarian Assistance

25% of assessed sub-districts reported harassment of females when accessing aid.

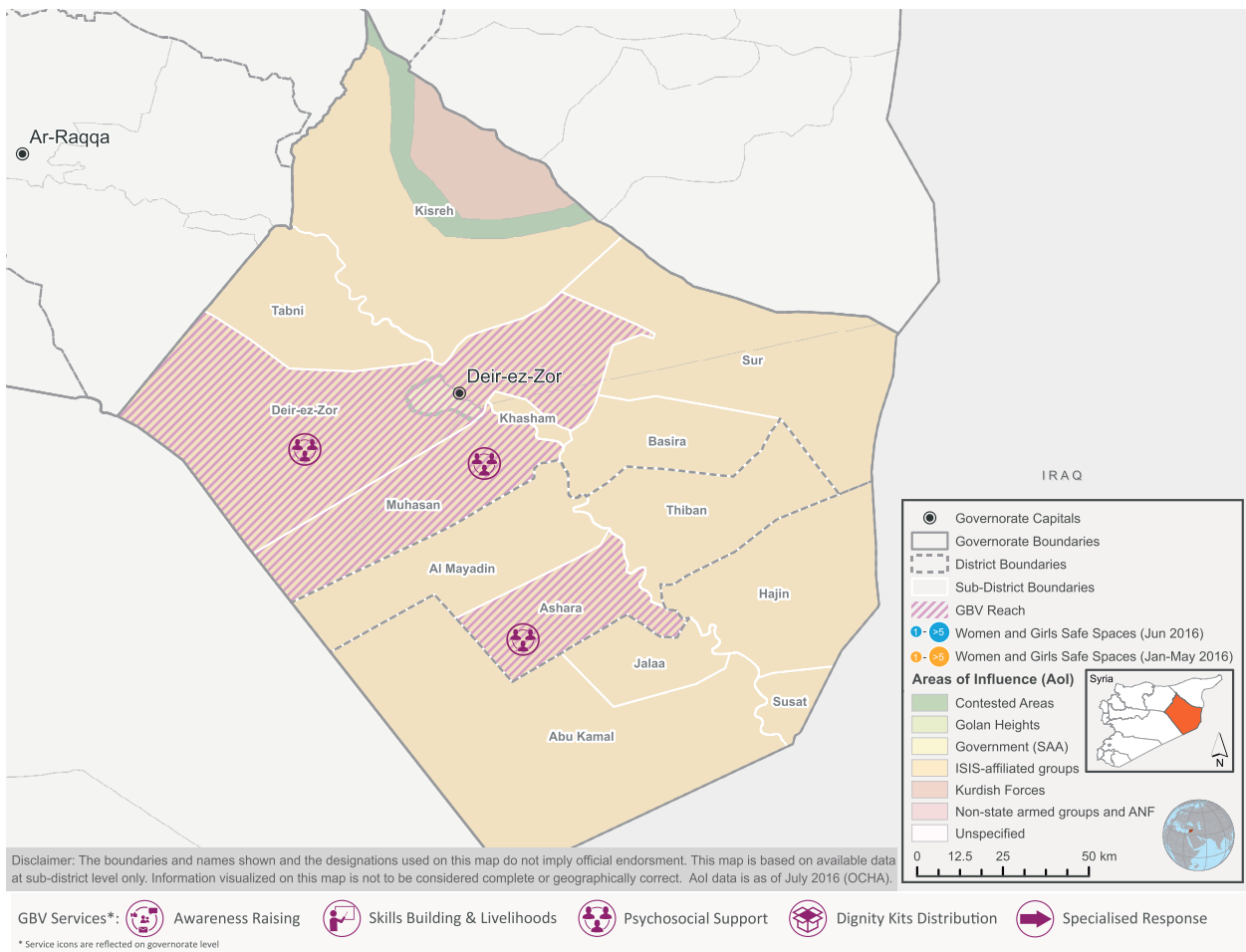
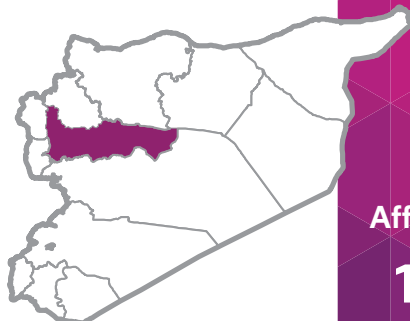


Fig. 4.7.2: Reach of GBV Services in the Governorate as of June 2016 (Reflected on Sub-district Level)

Governorate Overview



Male

741,248Adolescents
ages 15-17**80,192**

Female

616,527Youth
ages 15-24**267,304**

4.8 Hama

Types of GBV Reported as Protection Concerns



Domestic Violence

Domestic violence was reported as a protection concern in 64% of sub-districts.



Sexual Violence

Sexual violence was reported as a protection concern in 59% of sub-districts.

60% of assessed sub-districts reported sexual abuse as the most direct threat to children.



Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment was mentioned in two sub-districts in the context of accessing aid, although it was not specified whether women and girls were specifically targeted.



Fig. 4.8.1: Population Data, Hama

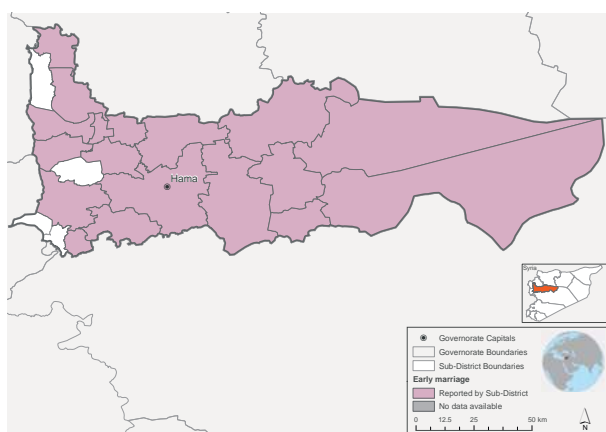


Fig. 4.8.2: Sub-districts with Reports of Child Marriage



Child Marriage

82% of sub-districts reported child marriage as a protection concern.

In 59% of sub-districts, child marriage was understood to be motivated by financial reasons.



Kidnapping

Kidnapping was reported as a protection concern in 38% of assessed sub-districts, including kidnapping that specifically targets women.

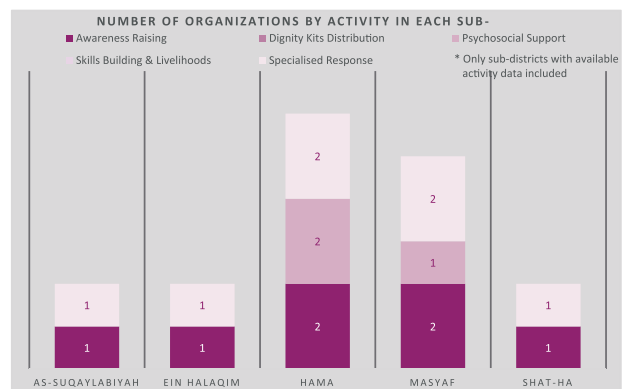
Reported Coping Strategies in Response to Violence and Unmet Needs

Child Marriage

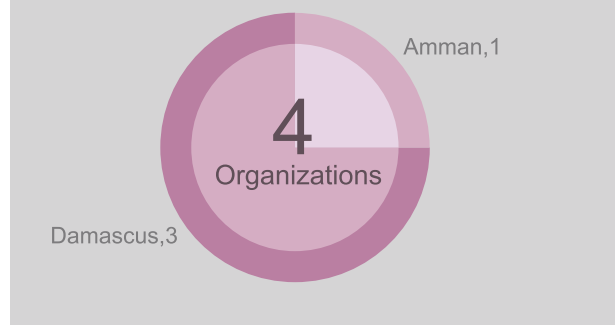
Accessing Community Centres, Women's Centres and Child Friendly Spaces

Movement Restrictions

Hama



NO. OF ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED IN GBV RESPONSE BY HUB (JUNE 2016)



Movement Restrictions

78% of assessed sub-districts reported movement restrictions for women and girls.

Access to GBV Services

In 32% of assessed sub-districts there were reports that no services existed for women and girls. However, there were accounts of participants' having knowledge of community centres.

91% of assessed sub-districts reported a need for medical treatment, psychosocial support as well as services for survivors of sexual and/or domestic violence.

Risks When Accessing Humanitarian Assistance

Risks reported when accessing aid included sexual harassment, exploitation and discrimination of women and girls.

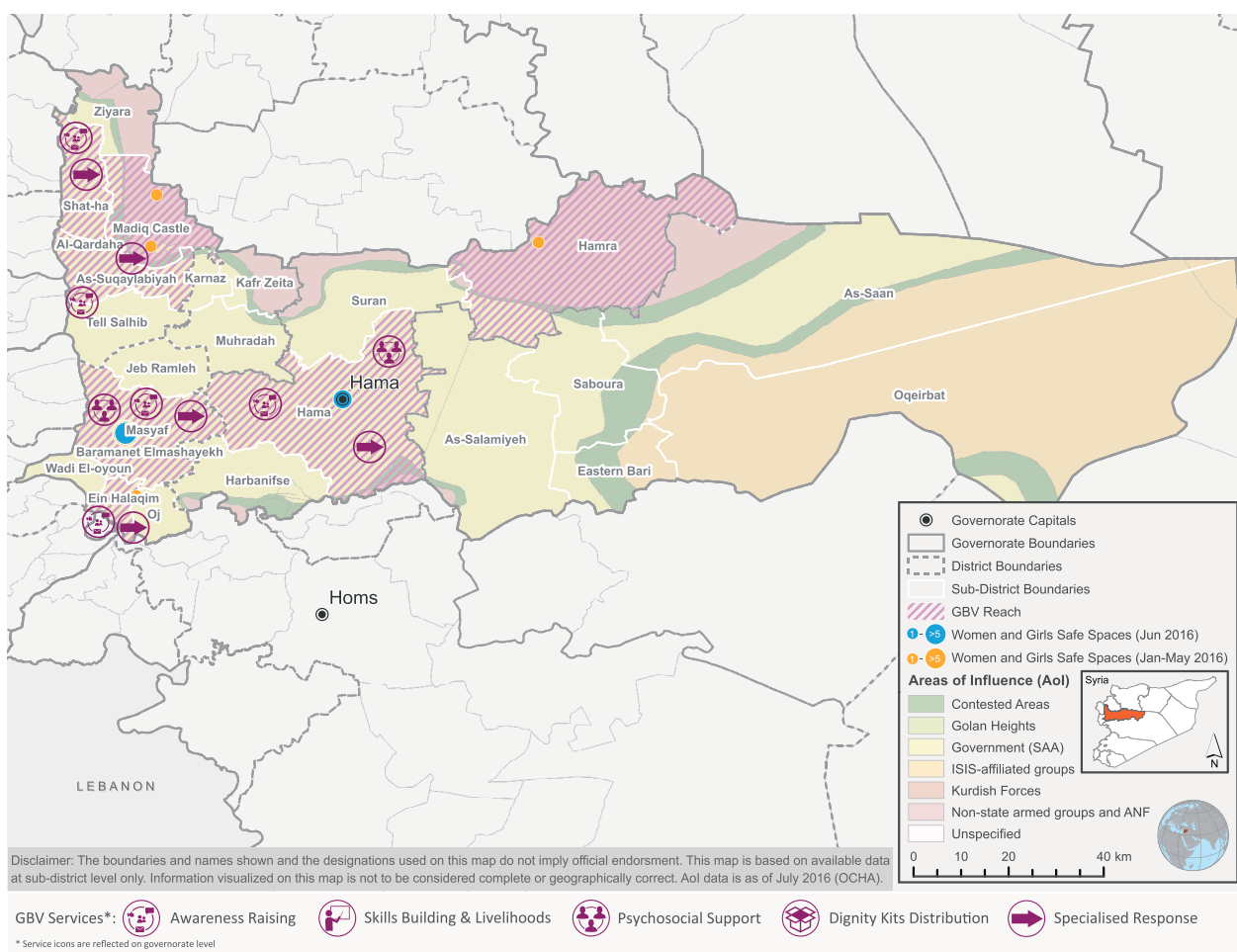
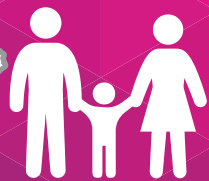
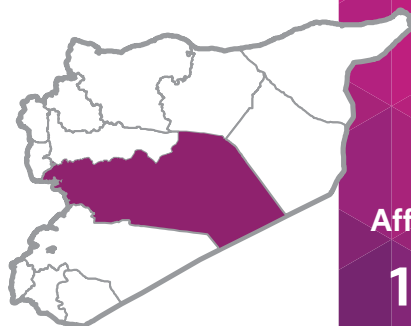


Fig. 4.8.3: Reach of GBV Services in the Governorate as of June 2016 (Reflected on Sub-district Level)

Governorate Overview



Affected Population
1,522,720



Male

735,855



Adolescents
ages 15-17

86,190



Female

786,865



Youth
ages 15-24

287,301

4.9 Homs

Types of GBV Reported as Protection Concerns

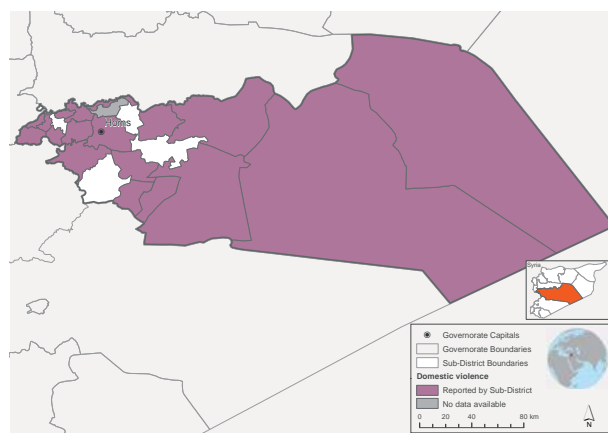


Fig. 4.9.2: Sub-districts with Reports of Domestic Violence



Domestic Violence

Domestic violence was reported as a protection concern in 82% of assessed sub-districts.

In Taldu sub-district a survivor of domestic violence explained that she had divorced her husband as a result of his physical and verbal abuse. However, she noted that although she was now free of the domestic violence, she was forced to contend with the strong stigma attached to being a female divorcee.



Fig. 4.9.1: Population Data, Homs

“My husband hit me a lot; therefore, I could not stand him, and asked for a divorce [...] Not only beating, but verbal abuse as well – all types of swearwords and insults [...] The phrase “she is divorced” became something against me as if I am a bad person [...] People start to say: she is divorced who will marry her? (Woman, Community FGD, Homs Governorate).



Sexual Harassment

The threat of sexual harassment was discussed in the form of verbal insults to girls or insults to divorced women (through ‘miserable’ marriage offers).

Girls’ employment in houses or the streets was understood to increase their risk of sexual harassment.

Distributions were also cited as a site of high risk of sexual harassment.



Sexual Violence

Sexual violence was reported as a protection concern in 57% of assessed sub-districts.

75% of assessed sub-districts reported sexual abuse as the most direct threat to children.

In the Homs sub-district sexual violence was discussed in the context of child marriage (involving girls aged 12-16 years), with husbands inflicting sexual violence on their young wives.

Victim-blaming was reported with the violence linked to girls’ lack of knowledge about the responsibilities associated with marriage.

“Certainly the girls and exclusively the young girls between 12-16 years [...] They know nothing about what it means to be a wife, or the responsibilities of a house or marriage. Thus, the husband is the first person who exercises sexual violence against her, especially here...as the situation becomes unbearable (Woman, Community FGD, Homs Governorate).



Child Marriage

Child marriage was reported to be a protection concern in 77% of assessed sub-districts, affecting both boys and girls.

In 30% of sub-districts, child marriage was understood to be motivated by economic reasons at a household level and as a response to financial constraints; boys were reported to get married in order to qualify for a relief basket, whilst fathers were reported to permit their daughters to get married because they could no longer afford their daily upkeep.

“Men let their daughters get married because they cannot feed them (Woman, Community FGD, Homs Governorate).

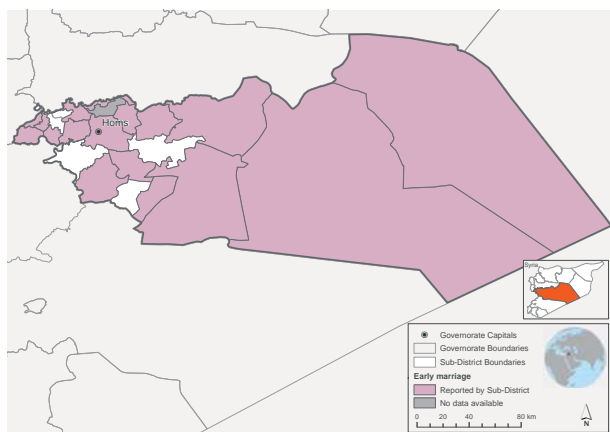


Fig. 4.9.3: Sub-districts with Reports of Child Marriage



Sexual Exploitation

Exploitation was discussed as a concern in relation to accessing aid. However, it is not clear if this is specifically affecting women and/or girls.



Gender Discrimination

Gender discrimination was mentioned in relation to young women having no control over decisions about education or who to marry. Brothers were also reported to sometimes deprive their sisters of inheritance.

Groups at High Risk

Social Groups reported to be at high risk of violence included adolescent girls (sexual violence and harassment), divorced women (sexual harassment) and widows (sexual harassment).

Adolescent girls' vulnerability to sexual violence in camp settings was explained by girls being left unsupervised when the rest of the family went out to work. Girls aged 10-14 years were deemed 'too young' to work.

“Girls are the group that is most insulted here, in addition to divorced women who are exploited by miserable marriage offers, or sexual harassment (Woman, Community FGD, Homs Governorate).”

Movement Restrictions

67% of assessed sub-districts reported movement restrictions for women and girls.

67% of assessed sub-districts reported that women and girls cannot move alone, requiring a male escort.

Girls' movement restrictions were linked to a fear of harassment or being arrested.

“[Discussing movement restrictions] Girls are afraid of getting harassed or arrested (Woman, Community FGD, Homs Governorate).”

Reported Coping Strategies in Response to Violence and Unmet Needs

Child Marriage

Accessing Community Centres, Women's Centres and Child Friendly Spaces

Movement Restrictions

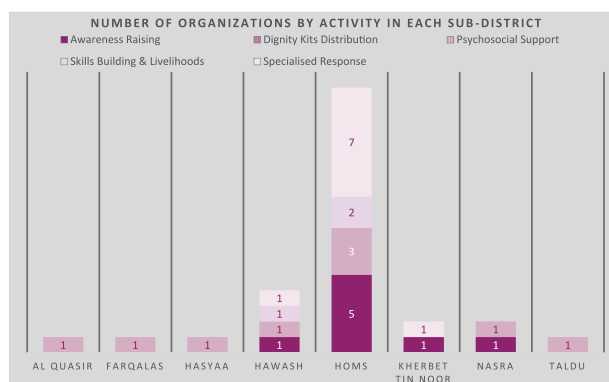
Homs

Access to GBV Services

As highlighted in the map, GBV services have expanded in Homs in the first half of 2016.

In 25% of assessed sub-districts, there were reports that no services existed for women and girls.

62% of assessed sub-districts reported a need for medical treatment, psychosocial support and services for survivors of sexual and/or domestic violence.



Risks When Accessing Humanitarian Assistance

Risks when accessing aid included exploitation, sexual harassment and discrimination of women and girls.

In one discussion, a woman complained that she had been denied access to emergency treatment for her broken hand due to her status as a divorced women. She was now disabled.

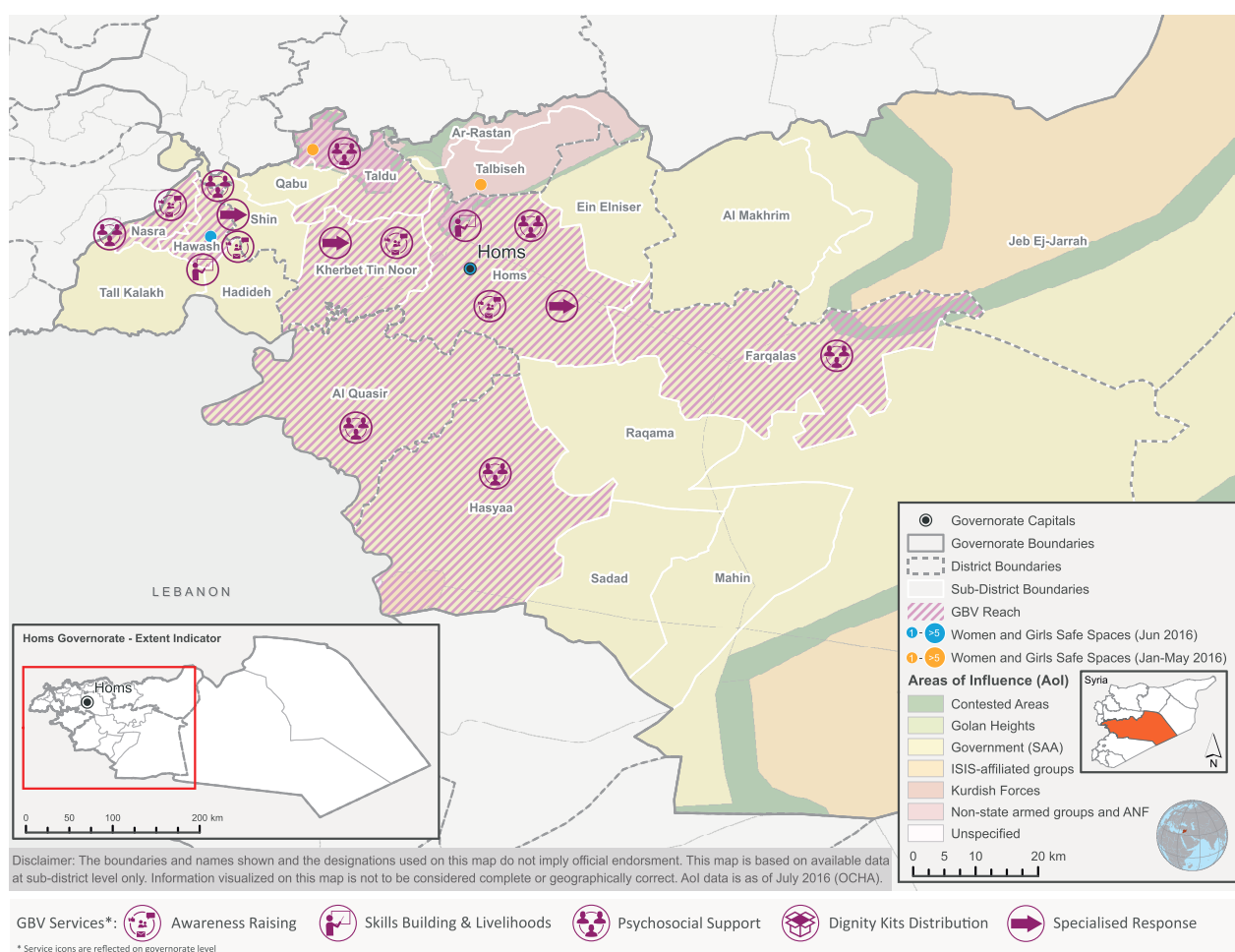
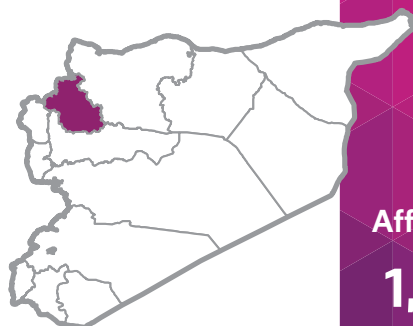


Fig. 4.9.4: Reach of GBV Services in the Governorate as of June 2016 (Reflected on Sub-district Level)

Governorate Overview



Male

864,316Adolescents
ages 15-17**106,304**

Female

916,584Youth
ages 15-24**354,348**

4.10 Idlib

Types of GBV Reported as Protection Concerns

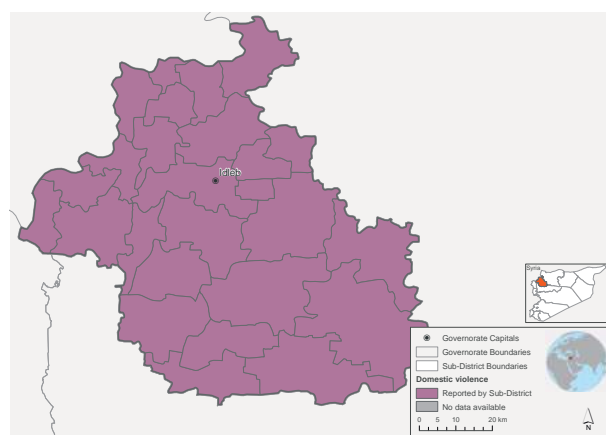


Fig. 4.10.2: Sub-districts with Reports of Domestic Violence



Domestic Violence

Domestic violence was reported as a protection concern in 100% of assessed sub-districts. It was predominantly discussed as physical violence by a husband against his wife.

Men reported that husbands also sometimes force their wives into 'dangerous professions'. Whilst the types of profession were not cited, this highlights the disproportionate power held by some men at a household level.



Fig. 4.10.1: Population Data, Idleb

Factors increasing the risk of domestic violence included the stress associated with male unemployment or a man's failure to provide for his family, and women failing to adhere to dress restrictions.

“My husband beats me because he could not find a job, and he beats the children with the excuse that he needs to let off his distress (Woman, Community FGDs, Idleb Governorate)”

Domestic violence was associated with the survivor experiencing depression and possibly attempting suicide.

“Because of domestic violence, some girls leave their family homes or commit suicide by drinking quantities of medicine to take revenge on their parents. Some do nothing and keep quiet which causes psychological complications (Adolescent Girl, Community FGDs, Idleb Governorate).”



Sexual Violence

Sexual violence was reported as a protection concern in 61% of all sub-districts.

Sexual violence was predominantly framed as a female concern, affecting women, adolescent girls (due to their perceived lack of awareness and 'attractiveness') and children as young as 5 years old.

Concerns were raised that girls were being sexually abused by family members. Sexual violence perpetrated against boys was cited as a concern in four discussions.

Places understood to pose a high risk of violence included rivers (associated with water collection), crowded places, and communal toilets.

Factors perceived to increase the risk of sexual violence included weakened legal deterrents and employment of women.

“The absence of a deterrent caused an increase in the sexual violence problem, compared with the pre-war era in Syria (Man, Community FGDs, Idleb Governorate).”

In one discussion the threat of sexual violence was associated with foreign fighters. There were stories of these men using violent sexual practices, such as forcing the sisters of their wives to have sex.

“For women and girls, the presence of foreign fighters (Muhajirun) is a significant safety concern due to their [reportedly] violent sexual practices. Stories in the community range from foreign fighters demanding to sleep with the sisters of their newlywed wives to cannibalism (Woman, Community FGDs, Idleb Governorate).”



Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment of girls and women was discussed as protection.

Areas perceived to pose a high risk of sexual harassment included camp settings, crowded living spaces (leading to reduced privacy), public spaces, paths leading to the river (due to insufficient water in camps) and markets.

Factors increasing the risk of sexual harassment include women and girls moving without an escort and widowhood (which was reported to encourage harassment).



Child Marriage

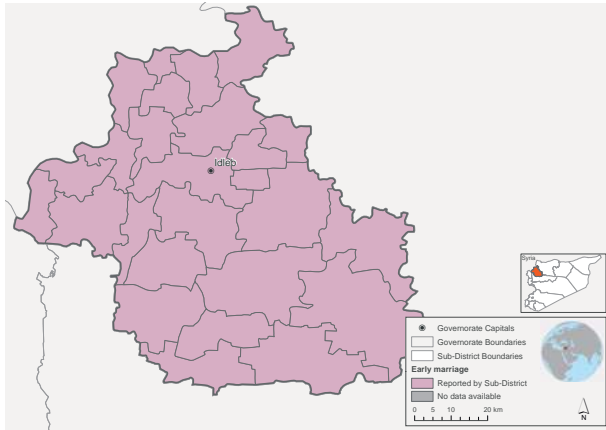


Fig. 4.10.3: Sub-districts with Reports of Child Marriage

Child marriage was discussed as a protection concern in 100% of sub-districts.

In all sub-districts, child marriage was understood to be motivated by financial reasons and improved protection.

“Child marriage spread due to instability and claims like: “I want to secure my daughters” were common (Woman, Community FGDs, Idlib Governorate).”

In 85% of sub-districts, preventing recruitment by armed groups was cited as a possible reason for child marriage.

In one discussion a displaced woman coming from ISIS-held areas reported that in these areas girls were being forced to marry ISIS members.

“[Discussing ISIS-held areas outside of Idlib Governorate] I saw them take the neighbour’s daughter for forced marriage. They follow girls to know where they live, and if the families deny having a girl then...I have stayed home for months, and we left in the dark. You can only imagine the fear we had while running away fearing that they find us, as we will only face slaughter or enslavement (Woman, Community FGDs, Idlib Governorate).”



Kidnapping

Kidnapping was mentioned as a protection threat in 81% of sub-districts. Although affecting men, women and girls, females (and especially girls) were reported to be more affected.

Where mentioned, kidnapping was depicted as a prevalent threat.

“We heard about many girls being kidnapped (Woman, Community FGDs, Idlib Governorate).”

Kidnapping was linked to the threat of sexual violence and organ harvesting (in the case of girls).

Places of high risk for kidnapping included travel to and from school; camp settings; Dana sub-district (where kidnapping cases had been reported) and Darkosh sub-district. Travelling outside the home at night was also seen to increase the risk of kidnapping.

“There are concerns about kidnapping girls while they are going to school (Man, Community FGDs, Idlib Governorate).”



Sexual Exploitation

Sexual exploitation was discussed as a protection concern and/or negative coping strategy. It was also reported in the context of accessing aid (exploitation and request of sexual favours for aid).

Sexual exploitation termed ‘prostitution’ was a specific concern, mentioned especially in Darkosh sub-district.

Survival sex was specifically linked to besieged areas where poverty is high. The note taker in one group discussion reported that participants appeared uncomfortable discussing this issue, highlighting the extent to which it disrupts social norms.



Honour Killings

One man reported that a father had tried to kill his son after he witnessed his sister being raped, but was unable to prevent it. This example highlighted the role of brothers as protectors, and the importance assigned to girls’ honour.

“[There was] another instance where a father tried to kill his son since the daughter got raped and the brother was present when that happened and could not prevent it (Man, Community FGDs, Idlib Governorate).”

Women discussed the fear of so-called honour killings.



Gender Discrimination

Reports indicated that women and girls face significant gendered discrimination at a household and community level. Restrictions included reduced employment opportunities for women; limited opportunities to voice opinions; and a perception that girls are incapable of making decisions.

“Women are not allowed to give an opinion unless it is under the authority of the brother or the husband (Woman, Community FGDs, Idleb Governorate).”

We cannot do anything. We are girls in the eyes of society, and girls have no ability to solve problems (Adolescent Girl, Community FGD, Idleb).



Organ Harvesting

Organ harvesting was discussed as a protection concern affecting girls in two female Community FGDs. It was linked to an increased risk of kidnapping.

Groups at High Risk

Certain groups were understood to be a higher risk of violence than others. These included women, children (including those living in camp settings and orphans) and girls. Divorcees and widows were singled out as groups especially vulnerable to violence (e.g. verbal harassment and sexual advances).

Adolescent girls were understood to be especially vulnerable to sexual violence because they are ‘weaker’ and cannot defend themselves.

“Yes, women are exposed to violence more than anyone, (sexual violence), beating, kidnapping, imprisoning, some cases have occurred (Adolescent Girl, Community FGDs, Idleb Governorate).”

Coping Strategies



Dress Restrictions

Dress restrictions included wearing ‘decent’ or modest clothes and *abaya*.

Failure to adhere to dress restrictions was linked to a higher risk of domestic violence, as well as public

Reported Coping Strategies in Response to Violence and Unmet Needs

Child Marriage

Survival Sex

Non-Disclosure

Movement Restrictions

Dress Restrictions

Suicide

Begging

Violence as a response to violence
(Women physically abusing their children)

physical violence by those tasked with enforcing the dress restrictions in public spaces.

The most important factor is the Shari'a clothes, as women who commit a breach in this and do not wear those clothes will be vulnerable to verbal and sometimes physical violence such as beating by husbands and even parents (Woman, Community FGDs, Idleb Governorate).

When a girls wants to go out of her house to anywhere, she has to wear decent clothes, and she has to minimize the number of times she goes out of her home (Adolescent Girl, Community FGDs, Idleb Governorate).



Non-Disclosure

Non-disclosure was cited as a potential coping strategy, closely associated with women and girls. It was linked to shame, fear of scandal, fear of being blamed for abuse and especially to cases of domestic and sexual violence. In one discussion, participants stated that girls could be beaten as punishment for being sexually abused.

In the case of sexual violence, a woman will experience a state of psychological shock that prevents her from speaking because of fear of a scandal in her community. So she prefers to keep silent (Woman, Community FGDs, Idleb Governorate).

Movement Restrictions

100% of sub-districts reported movement restrictions for women and girls.

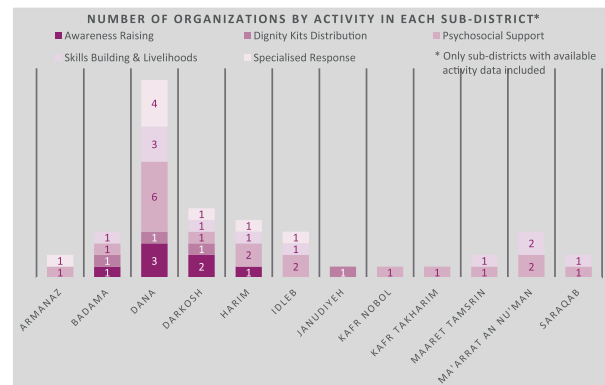
96% of sub-districts reported that women cannot move alone whilst 100% reported this restriction for girls. Instead, they require a male escort.

Girls cannot leave and go out alone, they must have an escort, a father, brother or mother (Adolescent Girl, Community FGDs, Idleb Governorate).

The stigma of women and girls movement without an escort was reported to lead to girls having reduced opportunities to meet their friends and women's opportunities for employment being limited.

People look strangely at a woman who, sometimes, leaves the house without her husband. This makes her stop working, which is a disadvantage for her (Woman, Community FGDs, Idleb Governorate).

[Women] do not go out, during daytime or at night, without an escort because they will be criticized and face a lot of censure (Adolescent Girl, Community FGDs, Idleb Governorate).



NO. OF ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED IN GBV RESPONSE BY HUB (JUNE 2016)



Access to GBV Services

In 96% of sub-districts there were reports that no services existed for women and girls. However, at the same time, there were reports of existing community/women's centres in 81% of sub-districts. This highlights that knowledge of services exists, but is not consistent across the governorate.

There are no services, no support centres available in the area. If there was a centre it might put women at more harm because of gossiping and shame (Adolescent Girl, Community FGDs, Idleb Governorate).

88% of assessed sub-districts reported a need for medical treatment, psychosocial support and services for survivors of sexual and/or domestic violence.

There are health clinics and psychological counselling centres but they are not enough because of the large number of people who have been subjected to different kinds of violence (Woman, Community FGDs, Idleb Governorate).

Specific service gaps that were reported included MHPSS and health services for women; women's centres; specialized services for survivors of GBV and services for male survivors of violence.

Multiple **barriers** affecting access to GBV services

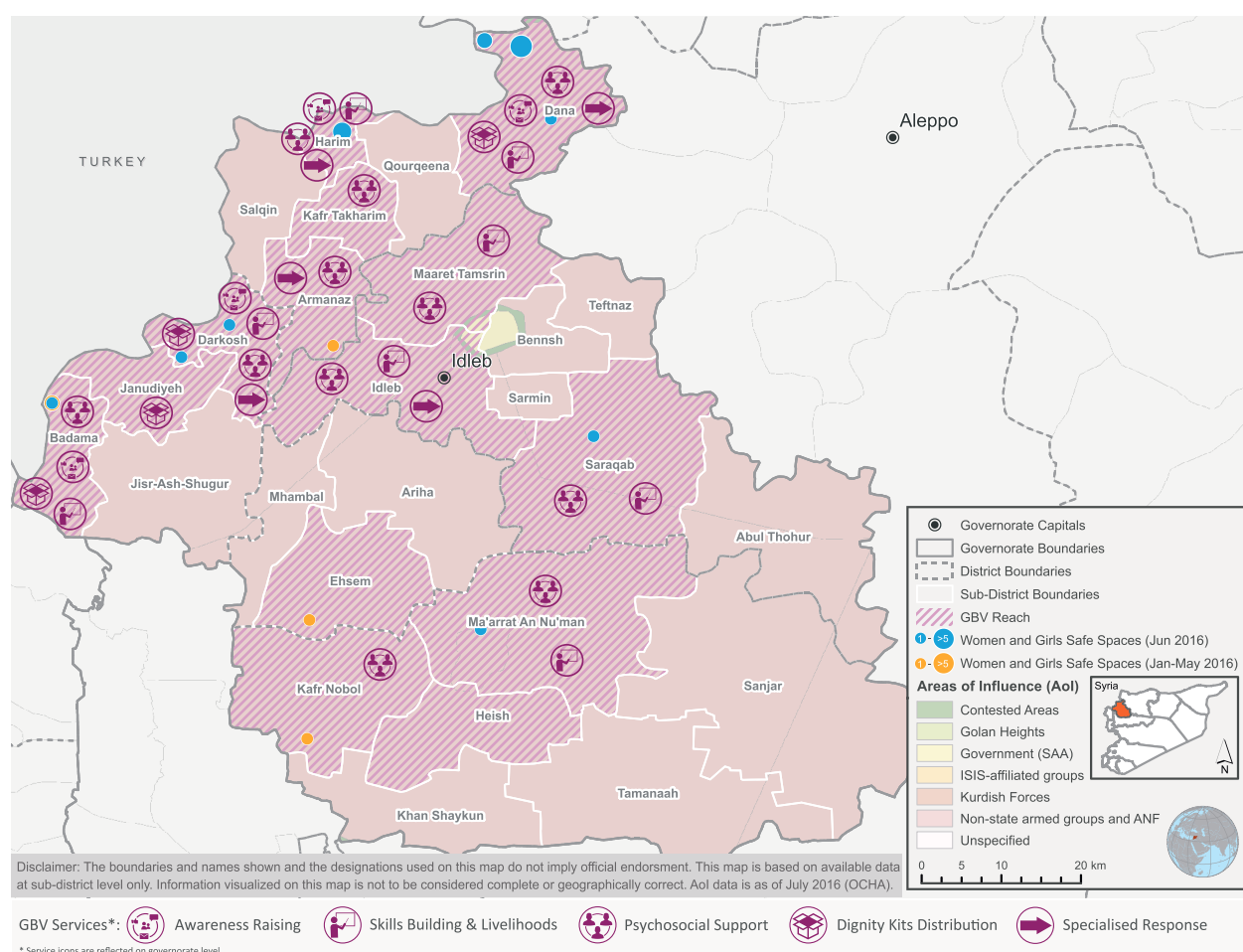


Fig. 4.10.4: Reach of GBV Services in the Governorate as of June 2016 (Reflected on Sub-district Level)

were noted, including poor awareness of GBV services, location of services (too far from communities), stigma and shame associated with accessing services, threat of divorce (for reporting cases of domestic violence), lack of trust in GBV service providers and lack of services for male survivors of violence.

“*(Services for survivors of violence) are used; however, they don't exist in every single town. Moreover, some people might not know whether such centres exist even in their own town (Woman, Community FGDs, Idlib Governorate).*

I cannot file a report. My husband would divorce me. But I talk about violence with the specialist person in [the women's] centre (Woman, Community FGDs, Idlib Governorate).

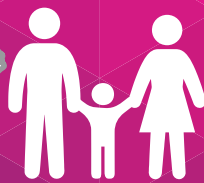
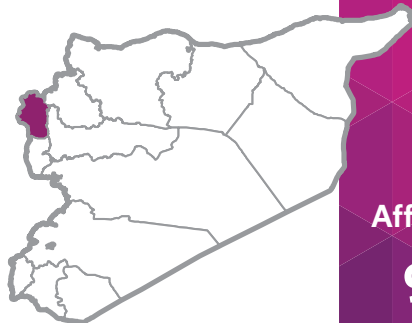
Risks When Accessing Humanitarian Assistance

Reported risks affecting females when accessing aid were exploitation, sexual harassment, requests of sexual favours in return for aid and discrimination. The latter was reported as being especially high for women, and especially widows, divorcees and women in polygamous marriages. This was linked to inequality between wives in polygamous marriages (with one wife taking the aid); exploitation of women when accessing aid (not clear what types of exploitation); women's movement restrictions; and women's reliance on men to access aid on their behalf.

“*Distributions do not cover everyone, but we have them (medical care, sanitation and food). Men benefit the most (Woman, Community FGDs, Idlib Governorate).*

Whilst widows were highlighted as a group at risk of having restricted access to aid, discussions reported special measures for widows that recognized their potential vulnerability. These included targeting of widows with food baskets and the provision of cash relief.

Governorate Overview



Affected Population

909,520



Male

409,677



Adolescents
ages 15-17

54,276



Female

499,843



Youth
ages 15-24

180,920

4.11 Lattakia

Types of GBV Reported as Protection Concerns

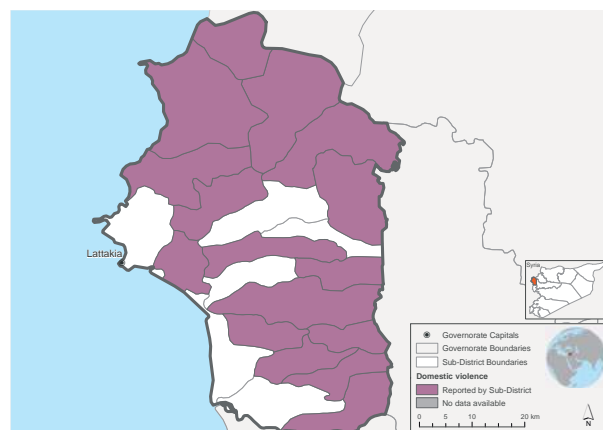


Fig. 4.11.2: Sub-districts with Reports of Domestic Violence



Domestic Violence

Domestic violence was cited as a protection concern in 73% of assessed sub-districts.



Sexual Violence

Sexual violence was cited as a protection concern in 50% of assessed sub-districts.



Fig. 4.11.1: Population Data, Lattakia

32% of sub-districts identified sexual abuse as a major threat for children.



Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment was cited as a protection concern in relation to accessing aid.



Child Marriage

Child marriage was cited as a protection concern in 68% of sub-districts.

In 23% of sub-districts, child marriage was reported to be motivated by improved protection.

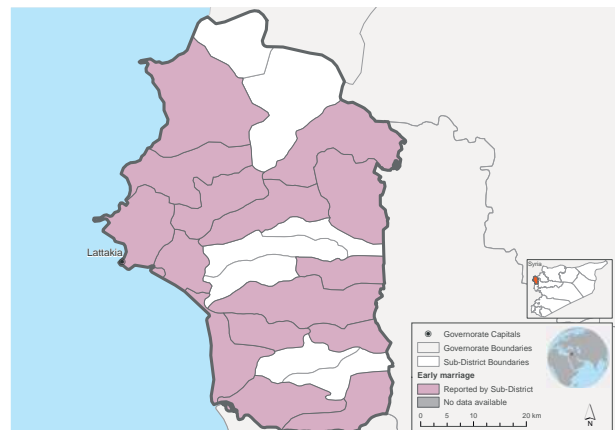


Fig. 4.11.3: Sub-districts with Reports of Child Marriage

Access to GBV Services

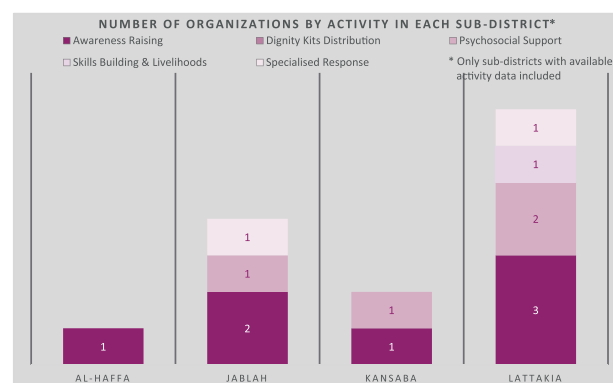
In 5% of sub-districts there were reports that no services existed for women and girls.

Specific services were identified in 68% of sub-districts, including community centres.

36% of sub-districts reported a need for medical treatment, psychosocial support and services for survivors of sexual and/or domestic violence.

Risks When Accessing Humanitarian Assistance

The threat of sexual harassment when accessing aid was identified in one assessed sub-district. Discrimination was raised as a concern in relation to accessing aid, but it is not clear whether this specifically affected women and/or girls.



Reported Coping Strategies in Response to Violence and Unmet Needs

Child
Marriage

Accessing
Community
Centres, Women's
Centres and Child
Friendly Spaces

Movement
Restrictions

Lattakia

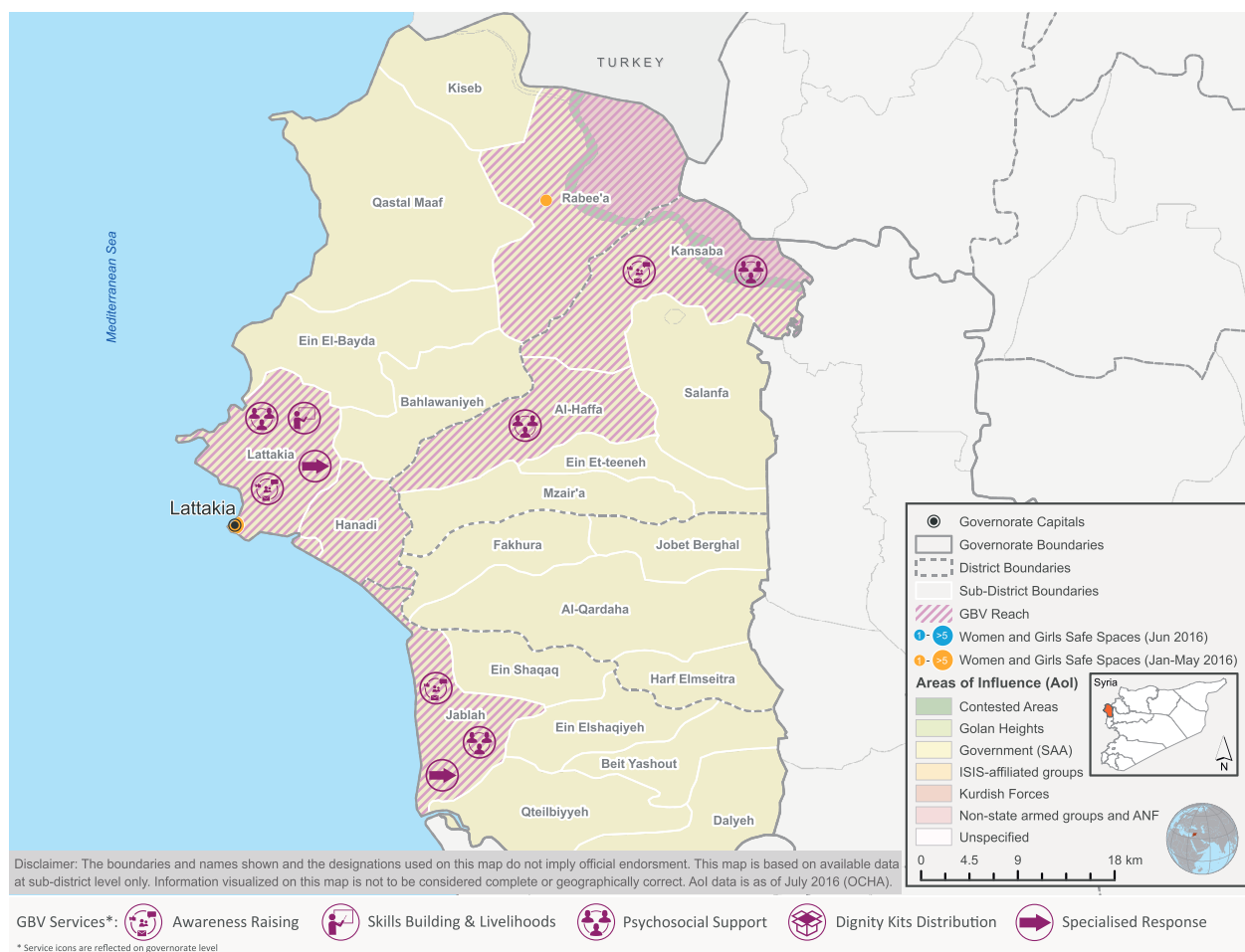
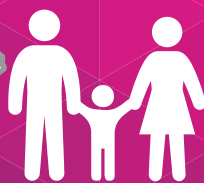


Fig. 4.11.4: Reach of GBV Services in the Governorate as of June 2016 (Reflected on Sub-district Level)

Governorate Overview



Affected Population

95,645



Male

47,359



Adolescents
ages 15-17

5,774



Female

48,286



Youth
ages 15-24

19,248

4.12 Quneitra

Types of GBV Reported as Protection Concerns



Domestic Violence

Domestic violence was cited as a protection concern in 100% of assessed sub-districts.

Financial and psychological stress was cited as significant triggers for male violence against one's wife. Women were expected to 'endure' the violence.

“A wife is supposed to endure her husband's moods because of the financial and psychological situation, and she must endure the violence by the husband (Woman, Community FGDs, Quneitra Governorate).”

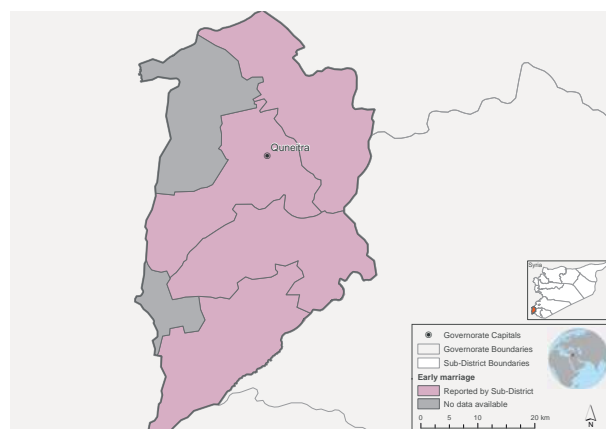


Fig. 4.12.2: Sub-districts with Reports of Domestic Violence



Fig. 4.12.1: Population Data, Quneitra



Sexual Violence

Sexual violence was cited as a protection concern in 75% of assessed sub-districts (3/4 assessed sub-districts).

Although few details were given the risk of sexual violence was associated with crowded places and camp settings.

reported avoiding crowded places due to the threat of sexual violence and harassment.

“Women are increasingly harassed by members of armed groups (Woman, Community FGDs, Quneitra Governorate).”



Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment was cited as a protection concern in one sub-district. This was discussed in relation to accessing aid.

Two forms of sexual harassment were discussed in relation to girls: verbal comments on the girls' physiques and letters from boys. Sexual harassment was reported to occur following school.

“There is gender based violence (sexual harassments) whether verbal (commenting on clothes or body parts) or by sending letters (guys sending letters to girls). This type of violence takes place after girls finish school (Woman, Community FGDs, Quneitra Governorate)”

Boys' separation from their caregivers was perceived to increase the risk of them sexually harassing girls.

Women were reported to be sexually harassed by armed groups and during aid distributions. Women also

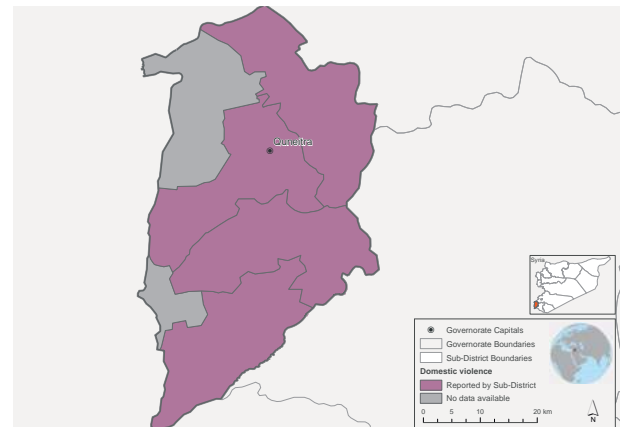


Fig. 4.12.3: Sub-districts with Reports of Child Marriage



Child Marriage

Child marriage was cited as a protection concern in 100% of assessed sub-districts (4/4).

In all assessed sub-districts, child marriage was reported to be motivated by improved protection. Although in one discussion, a woman argued that she felt her daughter was safer with her than a husband.

“I do not consider child marriage a good reason to protect the girls. She is safer here with me than any future husband I cannot guarantee (Woman, Community FGDs, Quneitra Governorate)

Child marriage was also understood to be motivated by financial reasons and the prevention of recruitment by armed groups.



Kidnapping

Kidnapping of females was reported in 100% of assessed sub-districts (4/4).

The threat of kidnapping was perceived to be low in the conducted discussions. However, women nonetheless feared for their daughter's safety, with kidnapping discussed alongside the threat of rape.



Gender Discrimination

Men were reported to be in a stronger position to find paid employment than women. The reasons for this were not stated.

Groups at High Risk

Social Groups reported to be at high risk of violence included women (sexual violence), children (sexual violence) and girls (sexual violence, due to being 'fragile' and 'gullible').

Coping Strategies



Non-Disclosure

Non-disclosure was discussed as a coping strategy. It was linked to the 'social implications' (stigma) of making abuse known.

Movement Restrictions

In 100% of assessed sub-districts (4/4), movement restrictions were reported to affect women and girls, specifically reporting that they cannot move alone.

In camp settings, women's and girls' movement was reported to be heavily restricted, with women and girls only allowed out with a male escort. This contributes to a sense of isolation.

“Some armed groups do not allow women to pass and they violently force them to go back to their shelters (Woman, Community FGDs, Quneitra Governorate).

We cannot go outside the camp except in the company of a father, a brother, or a husband. Most of the time, women do not go out. The men bring everything home (Woman, Community FGDs, Quneitra Governorate).

Movement restrictions (due to insecurity) were also linked to women's restricted access to emergency health care at the onset of labour.

“Our situation is tough. If a woman is expecting a baby to or is in labour we have to take her to Kodneh or Jasim. It is not secure enough to go there and so the woman may die (Man, Community FGDs, Quneitra Governorate).

Access to GBV Services

In 100% of assessed sub-districts (4/4) there were reports that no services existed for women and girls. However, there were also reports of community centres in 50% of the sub-districts. This highlights that knowledge of GBV services is not shared across the community. Furthermore, in one discussion, it appeared that participants did not understand the types of services that could be offered to survivors of GBV.

75% of assessed sub-districts reported a need for specialized GBV services, especially psychosocial and medical support for GBV survivors. Until June 2016 the GBV AoR received no reports of GBV services in Quneitra Governorate (i.e. no map available).

The lack of services was linked to many facilities being destroyed in the conflict.

Women expressed a desire to have centres to support survivors of violence, but also noted that men would likely prefer such issues to be handled at home.

Risks When Accessing Humanitarian Assistance

Reported risks when accessing aid included sexual violence, sexual harassment and discrimination, especially affecting women. Women were reported to experience restricted access to humanitarian assistance, with those heading female-headed households (widows and divorcees) perceived to be at particular risk.

“Those who are responsible for the distributions are the ones who harass [women] (Woman, Community FGDs, Quneitra Governorate).

Restricted access to assistance was linked to divorcees and widows lacking the appropriate civil documentation (held by men). Concerns were raised that widows may struggle to collect aid distributions due to cultural norms that prevent them leaving the house during the period of mourning following their husbands' death.

“One widowed woman, who was spending her “iddah” after the recent death of her husband, mentioned that during the distribution of the detergent basket the person responsible for distribution refused to give the basket to her brother unless she comes personally. Her brother got into an argument with that person until he got the basket. (Iddah in Islam is the period a woman must observe after the death of her spouse or after a divorce, during which she may not marry another man and she usually cannot leave her house, except in the case of emergency) (Woman, Community FGDs, Quneitra Governorate).

Reported Coping Strategies in Response to Violence and Unmet Needs

Movement Restrictions

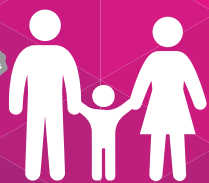
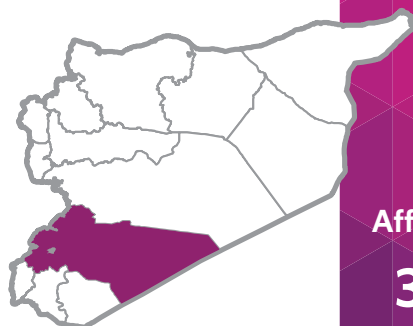
Accessing Community Centres, Women's Centres and Child Friendly Spaces

Child Marriage

Non-Disclosure

Quneitra

Governorate Overview



Affected Population

3,319,481



Male **1,536,948**



Adolescents
ages 15-17 **202,428**



Female **1,782,533**



Youth ages
15-24 **1,900,690**

4.13 Rural Damascus

Types of GBV Reported as Protection Concerns



Domestic Violence

Domestic violence was cited as a protection concern in 72% of all sub-districts. Factors understood to increase the risk of (and thus to some extent excuse) physical violence perpetrated by a husband against his wife included stress linked to unemployment, poverty and being unable to provide for the family.



Women suffer psychological pressure [...] The problem is that her husband does not work. What is she going to do with housekeeping matters? This kind of a psychological pressure did not exist before. Sometimes the husband beats his wife if she does not bring him food or anything else (Woman, Community FGDs, Rural Damascus Governorate).



Sexual Violence

Sexual violence was cited as a protection concern in 56% of assessed sub-districts, with sexual violence affecting women and girls being specifically reported.

50% of assessed sub-districts reported sexual violence as one of the most direct threats to children. It was



Fig. 4.13.1: Population Data, Rural Damascus

perceived to be on the increase and hereby also children with special needs and especially young girls were mentioned.

“Children are the most vulnerable to sexual violence and particularly of those who remained without families or shelter [...] The number of children exposed to sexual violence has increased lately (Man, Community FGDs, Rural Damascus Governorate).”



Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment was discussed as a protection concern in half the community FGDs, affecting both women and girls. Harassment was reported to be verbal and physical.

Sexual harassment was also discussed in relation to unaccompanied and disabled children.

“...A disabled girl was repeatedly sexually harassed by members of the committees until she started going to them on her own (Woman, Community FGDs, Rural Damascus Governorate).”

Areas of high risk for sexual harassment were perceived to include the streets, checkpoints and shelters.

Girls who were sexually harassed might be blamed for this abuse.

“In Qudsiya, if a girl is harassed she will be the one blamed. [...] Because it is easier to blame her than to deal with the cause. [The perpetrator] is often an irresponsible person who has gun or authority (Man, Community FGDs, Rural Damascus Governorate).”

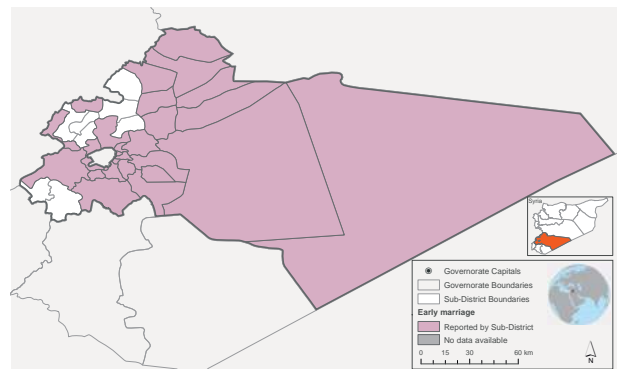


Fig. 4.13.2: Sub-districts with Reports of Child Marriage



Child Marriage

Child marriage was cited as a protection concern in 78% of all sub-districts.

In 53% of sub-districts, child marriage was reported to be motivated by perceived improved protection.

In 53% of assessed sub-districts, child marriage was also understood to be motivated by economic reasons at a household level (e.g. source of income; reduced burden on household).

Concerns were raised about girls as young as 12 years being married to foreign fighters or members of ISIS for money. These marriages were expected to last as little as two weeks, thus representing a form of sexual exploitation.

“Men marry their daughters to ISIS members out of fear that they might be raped and they wouldn't be able to defend them or be sent them away. There are some cases as young as 12 years old (Man, Community FGDs, Rural Damascus Governorate).

Parents marrying off their daughters for two weeks to foreign fighters for money (Woman, Community FGDs, Rural Damascus Governorate)

UN Inter-Agency Mission Reports from May and June 2016 in Rural Damascus noted that child marriage (affecting girls) was reported to be a common coping mechanism, primarily to divert the onus of subsistence to another person.



Kidnapping

Kidnapping was reported in 38% of assessed sub-districts (3/8), with one sub-district especially mentioning the threat to women.

In discussions women associated kidnapping with the threat of sexual violence.



Sexual Exploitation

Sexual exploitation, in the form of survival sex and prostitution and serial temporary marriages, was mentioned as a protection concern and/or negative coping strategy.

Women and girls were exchanging sex for money or food (e.g. rice or sugar).

“[Discussing women and girls exchanging sex for money or food] Sometimes sexual relations are consensual due to poverty and need for money or food, and sometimes innocents are deceived to do such acts consensually (Man, Community FGDs, Rural Damascus Governorate).

Homeless children were cited as a group especially vulnerable to these forms of sexual exploitation.

“Homeless children, who have no caregivers, might be molested by force or through being tempted by food (Woman, Community FGDs, Rural Damascus Governorate).

In 7/36 of the assessed sub-districts there were reports of sexual favours being requested in return for aid.

Reported Coping Strategies in Response to Violence and Unmet Needs

Child
Marriage

Dress
Restrictions

Accessing
Community
Centres, Women's
Centres and Child
Friendly Spaces

Movement
Restrictions

Reported
Coping Strategies
in Response to
Violence and
Unmet Needs

Non-
Disclosure

Begging
(Women)
and Working
(Girls)

Rural Damascus



Gender Discrimination

Gender discrimination was cited as protection concern affecting women's access to employment and girls' position within the family (with girls reportedly being suppressed by their fathers).

Movement Restrictions

In 50% (4/8) of assessed sub-districts, movement restrictions were reported to affect women and girls. Female participants discussed that women felt uncomfortable moving around.

“*[Members of armed groups] gaze at me strangely as if there is something suspicious...and this often forces me to make a detour in order to avoid anything that might occur (Woman, Community FGD, Rural Damascus Governorate, Camp setting).*”

50% (4/8) of assessed sub-districts specifically reported that women and girls cannot move alone and are in need of a male escort.

Coping Strategies

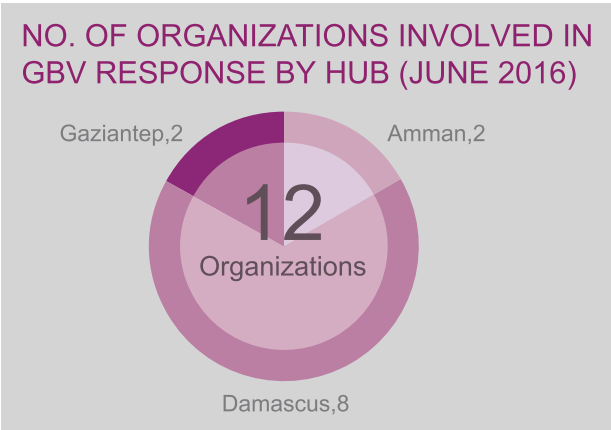
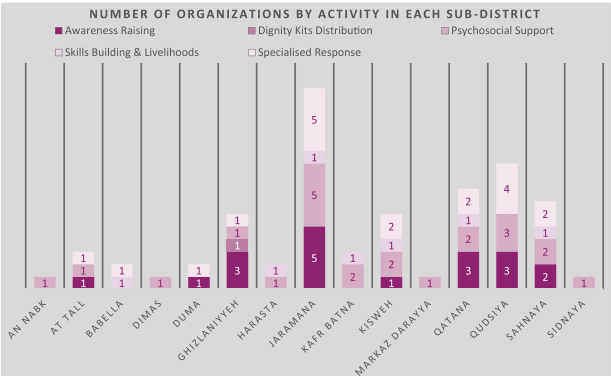


Non-Disclosure

Non-disclosure was mentioned as a coping strategy, used by women, men and girls. Female participants noted that women stayed silent following an act of domestic violence in order to reduce the risk of further attacks or violence against their children.

Groups at High Risk

Social Groups reported to be at high risk of violence included divorcees, girls (in relation to sexual violence), disabled children, unattended children and young boys and girls living in housing centres.



Access to GBV Services

In 17% of assessed sub-districts there were reports that no services existed for women and girls. There were reports of community centres in 39% of the sub-districts.

92% of assessed sub-districts reported a need for medical treatment, psychosocial support and services for survivors of sexual and/or domestic violence.

Risks When Accessing Humanitarian Assistance

Reported risks when accessing aid included exploitation, sexual harassment and discrimination of women. In 7/36 of the assessed sub-districts there were reports of sexual favours being requested in return for aid.

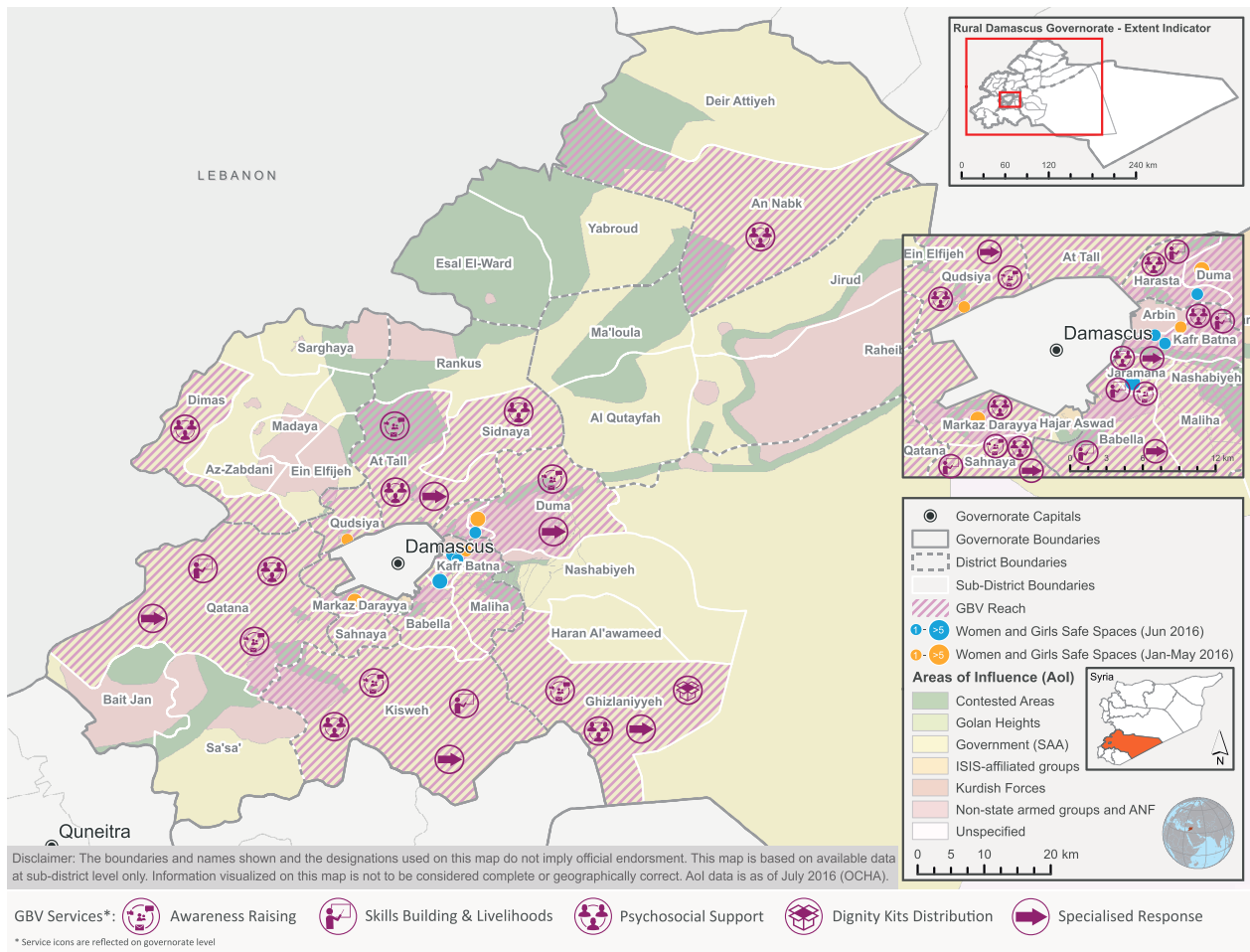
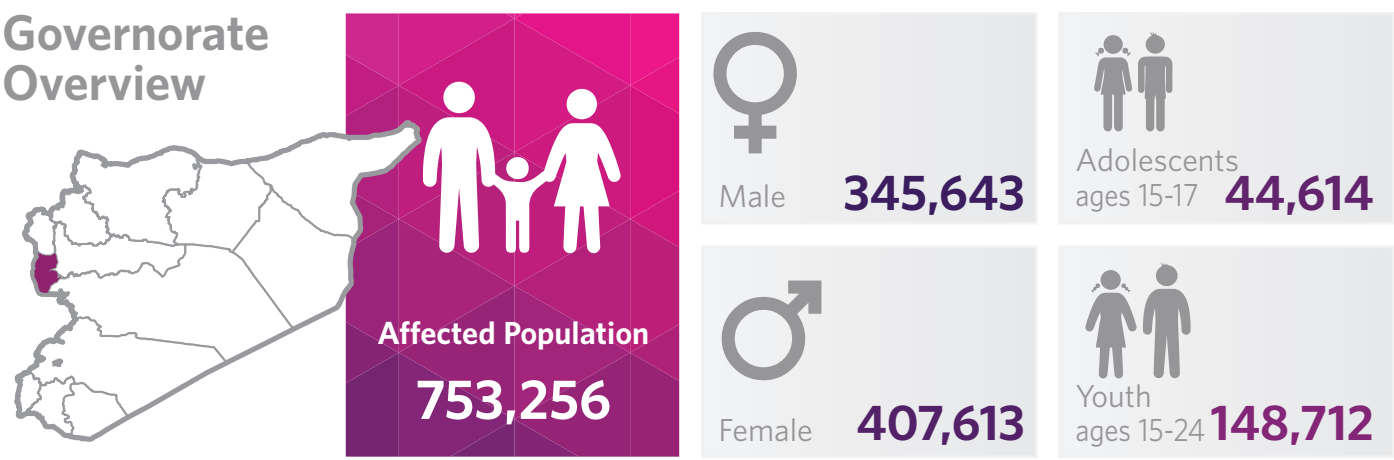


Fig. 4.13.3: Reach of GBV Services in the Governorate as of June 2016 (Reflected on Sub-district Level)



4.14 Tartous

Types of GBV Reported as Protection Concerns

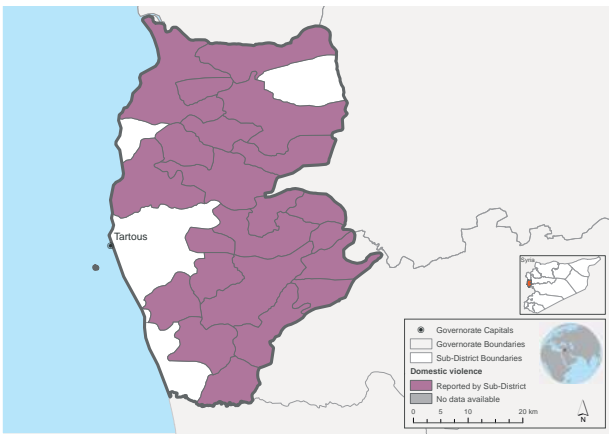


Fig. 4.14.2: Sub-districts with Reports of Domestic Violence



Domestic Violence

Domestic violence was cited as a protection concern in 85% of sub-districts.



Fig. 4.14.1: Population Data, Tartous



Sexual Violence

Sexual violence was cited as a protection concern in 74% of sub-districts.

In 88% of assessed sub-districts, sexual abuse was identified it as a major threat for children.



Sexual Harassment

The threat of sexual harassment was reported in relation to women and girls when accessing aid. This was reported in a very small sample of segregated data.



Sexual Exploitation

Sexual exploitation was cited as a protection concern in relation to sexual favours being requested in return for aid. However, it was not clear if this was specifically concerning women and/or girls.



Child Marriage

Child marriage was cited as a protection concern in 96% of sub-districts.

In 70% of sub-districts, child marriage was understood to be motivated by financial reasons.

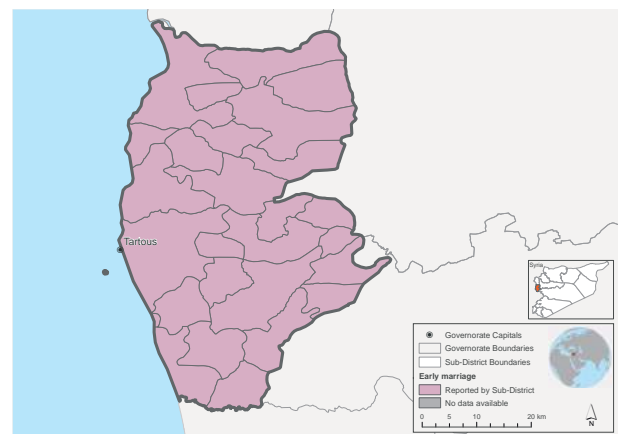
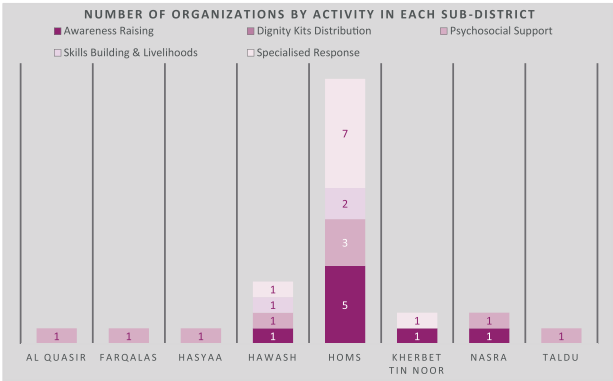


Fig. 4.14.3: Sub-districts with Reports of Child Marriage



Movement Restrictions

Limited movement of women and girls was reported in one out of two sub-districts where segregated data on this indicator was available.

Access to GBV Services

In 30% of sub-districts there were reports of community centres in the quantitative data.

96% of sub-districts reported a need for specialized GBV services, in particular psychosocial support.



Risks When Accessing Humanitarian Assistance

The threats of sexual harassment and requests for sexual favours were reported in relation to women and girls when accessing aid. Other risks included exploitation and discrimination of women and girls. The available segregated data, however, was very small.

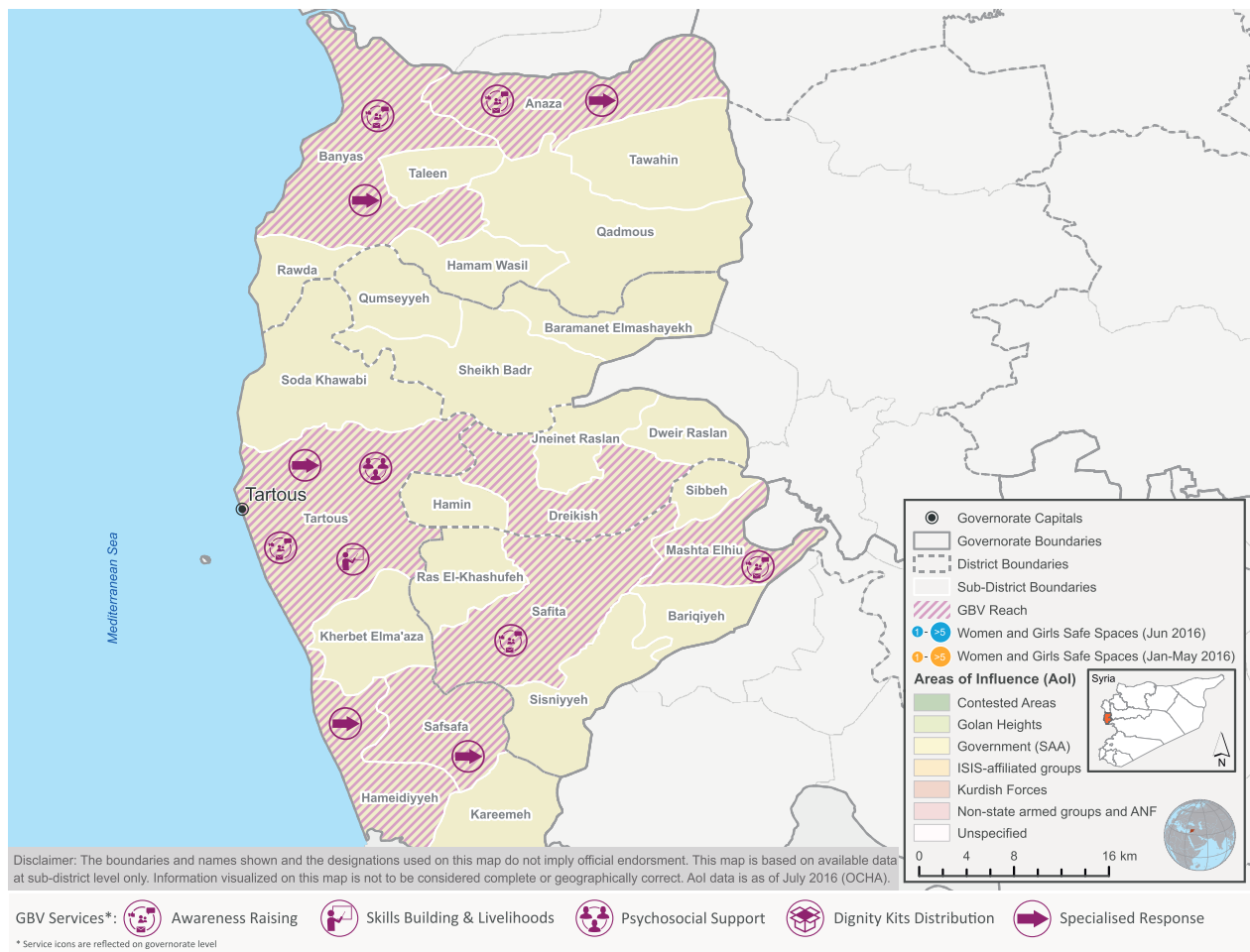


Fig. 4.14.4: Reach of GBV Services in the Governorate as of June 2016 (Reflected on Sub-district Level)



5



Annex

Annex 1:

Detailed Methodological Approaches

The following table gives an overview of data sources and their scope:

Assessment	Led By	Level of Data	Type of Data Received for Analysis	# of Sub-Districts	# of Communities
Community Direct observation & Expert validation (Syria Hub)	Sector-led	Sub-district	Quantitative	172	N/A
Damascus Structured/Focus Group Discussions (Syria Hub)	Sector-led	Sub-district	Quantitative	128	N/A
Community Focus Group Discussions (Turkey & Jordan hubs)	Sector-led	Community	Qualitative	43	55
OCHA-led Multi-sectoral Assessment Through Operational Partners	OCHA-led	Sub-district/Community (Mixed)	Quantitative	113	861
Needs and Population Monitoring	IOM-led	Community	Quantitative	142	2,815
Urban Community Profile Key Informants	UNHABITAT-led	Community	Quantitative	17	17
GBV Expert Focus Group Discussions	Sector-led	N/A	Qualitative	N/A	N/A
Secondary Data	Sector-led	N/A	Qualitative	N/A	N/A

More analysis of the quantitative protection data obtained through these assessments can be found in the [WoS 2017 Protection Needs Overview](#).

Limitations

Section 2.5 highlighted the main issues limiting the analysis of the available GBV data for this report.

This included inconsistent streamlining of indicators and definitions across the various assessments, different levels of granularity of geographical data across the tools, limited sex/age segregation of data, limited number of female key informants in some of the quantitative assessments and different geographical coverages of quantitative versus qualitative data.

The usage of different assessment modalities was also reflected in varying response rates for specific indicators, such as kidnapping of women and girls, or movement restrictions. Due to operational and access limitations, the sample sizes, in particular in the governorates Ar-Raqqa and Deir Ez-Zor, remained low. Overall, it should therefore be noted that assessment samples were non-representative and hence the analysis in this report is based on transferability of the data rather than its generalizability.

The majority of assessment data that contributed to this GBV analysis was collected through operational partners inside Syria. This might have affected responses due to the conflation of service delivery and humanitarian data collection. Saying this, most operational partners however were aware of this inherent conflict of interest and efforts were undertaken to firewall data collection efforts from aid delivery and project implementation. Across the tools used, questions were thus designed to mitigate the bias of needs-based questions and data collectors were sensitized to the issue.

Below is an overview of the different assessments and their methodological approaches used as data sources for this report.

The data sets of the community direct observation; expert panel validation and structured group discussions through the Syria hub; the OCHA-led multi-sector operational partner assessments; the Needs and Population Monitoring project; and the Urban Community Profile initiative were all quantitative estimates, and thus combined into one comprehensive dataset for analysis. Data was hereby aggregated and analysed on sub-district-level⁴¹. The datasets of the community focus group discussions through the Jordan and Turkey hubs as well as the GBV expert focus group discussions were qualitative and analysed as such, informing and complementing the findings of the quantitative assessments. Hence, throughout this document, these FGDs are referred to in the qualitative analysis mentioning 'Community FGDs'. Where data answering to the defined GBV indicator set emerged from the qualitative datasets, these data points were also incorporated into the overall combined quantitative data set.

Direct observation, expert panels and structured/focus group discussions (Syria hub)

The protection sector coordination based in Damascus assessed 172 sub-districts in government-controlled areas using a mixed method; namely community direct observation combined with expert panel validation as well as structured focus group discussions. Details are as given below.

- 729 Focus Group Discussions and Structured Community Discussions (of which 581 UNHCR-led Structured Community Discussions), in which 8,300 beneficiaries participated.
- 349 Direct Community Observations by protection partners for the areas where they work.
- 9 Expert Panel Discussions at sub-national level, covering 11 governorates, in which 140 protection experts took part (of which 134 Syrian) representing 36 organizations (22 of which Syrian NGOs).

While the modality used for discussing indicators was of qualitative nature, the raw data obtained and used for analysis was quantitative, compiled at sub-district-level, and thereby enabling a quicker analysis. In the tools used, a small set of prioritized indicators was segregated by sex and age with regards to the affected population.

Tools used for these assessments can be found here: [Syria hub Community Direct Observations \(CDO\) and Expert Panel Discussion tool](#)

For more information, please refer to the assessment guidelines in the links below or contact the Protection Sector at the Syria hub.

Syria hub – [Methodology for Community Direct Observation](#)

Syria hub – [Methodology for Structured/focus Group Discussions](#)

Community focus group discussions (Jordan and Turkey hubs)

The protection sector cross-border coordination mechanisms based in Amman and Gaziantep coordinated an assessment through 29 partner organisations with 137 focus group discussions with community members across 8 governorates, 46 sub-districts and 60 communities in July and August 2016. This reflects an 84%-reach of the sub-districts accessible by cross-border operations from the Jordan and Turkey hubs, which were taken into account when determining the sample during preparation phase of the assessment. The non-assessed sub-districts could not be reached due to security and other access constraints during the assessment period. Assessed sub-districts were chosen based on a clearly outlined set of selection criteria, such as population data and accessibility, and efforts were made to conduct at least one FGD with female participants and one FGD with male participants per sub-district. Depending on the capacity of the implementing partner, more FGDs were conducted in some of the sub-districts, segregating by age as well as sex.

Of the obtained data sets, 126 FGDs in 7 governorates, 43 sub-districts and 55 communities could be used for analysis. Governorates covered were Aleppo, Al Hasakeh, Dar'a, Homs, Idleb, Quneitra and Rural Damascus. The modality FGD was chosen because of it being a particularly effective, and ethical method for research on sensitive topics, such as sexual abuse and other forms of gender-based violence, since participants can choose which questions

⁴¹ While this report gives an analysis on sub-district-level, more detailed information on GBV at community-level can be provided for all locations covered by the community focus group discussions through the Jordan and Turkey hubs, the OCHA-led multi-sector operational partner assessments, the Needs and Population Monitoring project and the Urban Community Profile initiative upon request.

to answer⁴². FGDs also allow participants to shift between being active participants and passive observers⁴³.

Overall, 56% of the participants of analysed FGDs were female and 44% were male. 73% of FGD participants were adults (age 18+) and 27% were adolescents (age 10-17). Divided by age, 55% of adult participants were female and 45% were male and a very similar split was seen among the adolescents' FGDs with 56% of participants being female and 44% being male.

The FGD tool used by facilitators during the discussions consisted of open-ended questions to guide an open discussion on protection, gender-based violence (GBV) and child protection issues, around safety, security and access to services. Specific protection terminology was defined in a glossary annexed to the FGD tool. Facilitators were trained on the tool and glossary during preparation for the roll-out. All discussion points in the FGD tool were segregated by age and sex in order to enable more poignant conclusions in analysis in terms of vulnerable groups and affected populations. The tool was based on the FGD tool used in 2015, but revised based on lessons learned from last year's assessment and analysis. Questions, prompts and probes were developed in close coordination with the protection sector coordinators of all sub-sectors in the two hubs.

All FGDs were led by skilled facilitators and captured by trained note-takers. Facilitators were of the same sex as the FGD participants and trained on the FGD tool. They were selected on the basis of having had training on protection issues, on how to respond to disclosures during or after the FGD and on guiding principles of respect, confidentiality, non-discrimination and safety. Before the roll-out, the protection sectors in the Turkey and Jordan hubs offered a training package in Arabic language on FGD facilitation and note-taking to all organizations that were part of the assessment initiative. The package was specifically developed for remote set-ups and included a (i) basic introduction to FGDs (presentation), (ii) a video explaining good practices and minimum standards for the preparation for, facilitation of and follow-up after conducting a FGD with practical examples, (iii) a guide for trainers explaining how to use the package with their teams on the field, (iv) a video explaining the specific FGD tool used in the assessment as well as (v) templates for the attendance sheet and consent form.

Participants constituted a representative sample of the community, i.e. different types of people, professions and backgrounds within the community. At the same time, groups were as homogenous as possible with regards to social status of participants, given that this has proved more successful in past FGDs. All focus groups were separated between male and female participants as well as between adults and adolescents.

The humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, independence and neutrality underpinned the implementation of the data collection. Based on the 'Do No Harm' principle, it was made clear to participants that by engaging in the discussion, humanitarian aid would not be delivered in exchange for information. All participants were given the opportunity to make an informed decision about their potential participation in the focus group discussions and informed consent was obtained by the facilitators. Respect for the participants by protecting the individual and family's privacy was essential to the process and hence the privacy of participants and confidentiality of data was ensured and communicated before the FGDs were conducted.

The analysis of the qualitative FGD data was done by the GBV AoR at WoS level, based on translations of the Arabic raw data into English. All translations were done by translators experienced in translations on protection issues; however, different qualities of translations were noted and had to be addressed during the analysis phase.

The tool used for this assessment can be found here: [Community FGD tool used by the Turkey and Jordan hubs](#)

GBV expert focus group discussions

In the context of the HNO assessments, four GBV expert FGDs using the Delphi Method took place in Beirut, Damascus, Homs and Gaziantep. One (in Beirut) gathered GBV experts on the WoS-level, while the other three expert FGDs were conducted on hub-level.

All expert FGDs tried to answer to the key GBV indicators for the 2017 HNO (what is the current situation with regards to GBV in Syria), discussed what has changed in 2016 and what recommendations would be for an improved response. While the WoS-level expert FGD focused on thematic topics, the hub-level FGDs built on the discussion of the WoS-expert FGD and then also focused more on geographical areas.

⁴² Basch, C. E. (1987). Focus Group Interview: An Underutilized Research Technique For Improving Theory And Practice In Health Education. *Health Education & Behavior*, 14(4), 411- 448; Leach, F. (2006). Researching Gender Violence In Schools: Methodological And Ethical Considerations. *World Development*, 34(6), 1129-1147.

⁴³ Oliveira, D. L. (2011). The Use Of Focus Groups To Investigate Sensitive Topics: An Example Taken From Research On Adolescent Girls' Perceptions About Sexual Risks. *Ciência & Saúde Coletiva*, 16(7), 3093-3102.

The Delphi Method is a widely-used technique for gathering data from respondents within their domain of expertise. It is a method which is especially well-suited for consensus-building and has the objective of developing agreed-upon, joint statements of experts on specific issues. The Delphi Method process comprises several 'rounds' during which participants, one after another, state their opinion on a specific issue. During HNO assessment exercises, GBV expert participants heard a list of "GBV issues in Syria" in round one of the discussion and were asked to rank-order issues in order to establish preliminary priorities among them. The facilitator then selected the five most pressing issues identified by the experts. In round two, the facilitator then initiated discussions on each of the selected most pressing GBV issues. Experts were asked to state their rationale, concerning ranking priorities among issues. As consensus began forming, participants were asked to revise their judgement or to specify the reasons for remaining outside the consensus. In round three of the discussion, the list of remaining issues, their ratings, minority opinions, and issues achieving consensus were distributed to the experts. This round provided a final opportunity for participants to revise their judgement and agree on joint statements in GBV issues.

Throughout the expert FGDs that were conducted in Arabic language by a skilled facilitator, notes were taken in Arabic and English. The comparison of the English and Arabic notes aimed at feeding into analysis discussions, leading to the clarification of any potential mistranslations and/or misunderstandings at the start of the analysis. After each expert FGD, the note-takers and facilitators held debrief sessions discussing the main themes that emerged for the WoS or per governorate during the discussion. The notes of the notes-takers as well as the written debrief notes were then shared for analysis.

Participants were GBV experts and staff from organizations working on the Syrian crisis. Emphasis was put on having a good mix between experts from the different hubs, Syrian nationals and international staff, men and women. All participants had worked on GBV programming inside Syria for at least one year.

The analysis of the qualitative expert FGD data was done by the GBV AoR at WoS level.

OCHA led multi-sector operational partner assessments

The OCHA led multi-sector operational partner assessments collected areas across Syria between July and August 2016, which were identified as areas with assessment coverage gaps by sectors beforehand. Units of analysis were both sub-district and community levels depending on location and operational partner. The data collection methodology was mixed, including key informant interviews and information from operational partners. For this, GBV analysis data from 113 sub-districts and 861 communities was used.

The tool used for this assessment can be found here: [OCHA led multi-sector operational partner assessments](#)

For more information on the OCHA led multi-sector operational partner assessments, please contact OCHA Regional Office in Amman, Jordan.

Needs and Population Monitoring project (NPM)

Needs and Population Monitoring (NPM) is a set of tools and methods to identify, assess and monitor target population categories within Syria in relation to needs and population mobility dynamics at the lowest geographical level (also referred to as community/ village/ neighbourhood). The NPM approach consists of primary data collection through multiple direct interviews with key informants (KIs) and direct observations in the field. Local and knowledgeable KIs are selected in target locations to get the best quality and reliability of the collected data.

NPM and the Protection Cluster had several meetings to discuss the assessment. During these meetings, the thematic questionnaire was jointly developed.

NPM conducted a Training of Trainers (ToT) training in Gaziantep for its implementing partner, targeting the team leaders (TLs) and data processing assistants (DPAs). The Protection Cluster was also invited to participate in the training and to provide technical support if needed. After the ToT, the TLs and DPAs conducted trainings in Syria for the enumerators.

The coverage for the Protection thematic assessment was identified by the cluster. The cluster also provided a list of preferred KIs to be interviewed. Through the extensive KI network NPM has in the field (considering NPM's presence for more than one year on the ground), the enumerators were able to find the cluster preferred KIs and conducted the face-to-face interviews.

Data was collected between mid-June and mid-August 2016. Data collection in the field was done by the

enumerators. When the data collection was completed, the team leaders in each governorate received the collected data and controlled it before it was entered into the system by the DPA. NPM developed a windows application for data entry for the thematic assessment. Once the data was entered into the system by the DPA, the NPM team in Gaziantep received it for further control and verification. NPM team in Gaziantep cleaned and structured the data before sharing it with the cluster.

The tool used for this assessment can be found here: [NPM Protection sector questionnaire](#)

Urban Community Profile initiative

The urban community profiling exercise collected household, neighbourhood, and city level data in 75 urban areas across Syria between July and August 2016. Cities were chosen based on a clearly outlined set of selection criteria. The main unit of analysis of the urban areas was the neighbourhood level. For larger urban centres, neighbourhoods were grouped into Urban Focus Areas (UFA). The data collection methodology integrated qualitative and quantitative methods consisting of household level interviews, focal point interviews, and focus group discussions; however, for this GBV analysis only data collected through focal point interviews from urban centres in 17 sub-districts was used.

For more information on the Urban Profiling methodology, please contact UN-Habitat Regional Office in Cairo, Egypt.

Secondary Data Review

A secondary data (SDR) review was carried out as a desk study in August and September with the aim of compiling all available 2016 data on GBV inside Syria. Hereby, data was intentionally limited to include only 2016 data to ensure up-to-date and thus relevant data that informs the analysis. Information for the SDR was gathered by the GBV coordinators of all three WoS hubs as well as the WoS GBV Focal Point.

Sources of information for the SDR included: various sector assessment reports from partners working inside Syria, in particular from the health and protection sectors; UN Inter-Agency Mission Reports of convoys into besieged and hard-to-reach areas; OHCHR reports.

Annex 2:

Definitions of Key Terminology⁴⁴

Besieged Location

An area surrounded by armed actors with the sustained effect that humanitarian assistance cannot regularly enter, and civilians, the sick and wounded cannot regularly exit the area. The list is reviewed by the UN Security Council on a quarterly basis. (Source: OCHA)

Child or minor

Article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) defines a child as “every human being below the age of 18 years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.” The Committee on the Rights of the Child, the monitoring body for the Convention, has encouraged States to review the age of majority if it is set below 18 and to increase the level of protection for all children under 18. Minors are considered unable to evaluate and understand the consequences of their choices and give informed consent, especially for sexual acts.

Child labour

The term ‘child labour’ is often defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development. It refers to work that:

- is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children; and interferes with their schooling by:
- depriving them of the opportunity to attend school;
- obliging them to leave school prematurely; or
- requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work.

In its most extreme forms, child labour involves children being enslaved, separated from their families, exposed to serious hazards and illnesses and/or left to fend for themselves on the streets of large cities — often at a very early age. Whether or not particular forms of ‘work’ can be called ‘child labour’ depends on the child’s age, the type and hours of work performed, the conditions under which it is performed and the objectives pursued by individual countries.

Confidentiality

An ethical principle associated with medical and social service professions. Maintaining confidentiality requires that service providers protect information gathered about clients and agree only to share information about a client’s case with their explicit permission. All written information is kept in locked files and only non-identifying information is written down on case files. Maintaining confidentiality about abuse means service providers never discuss case details with family or friends, or with colleagues whose knowledge of the abuse is deemed unnecessary. There are limits to confidentiality while working with children or clients who express intent to harm themselves or someone else.

Conflict-related sexual violence:

‘Conflict-related sexual violence’ refers to incidents or (for SCR 1960 listing purposes) patterns of sexual violence, that is rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity, against women, men, girls or boys. Such incidents or patterns occur in conflict or post-conflict settings or other situations of concern (e.g. political strife). They also have a direct or indirect nexus with the conflict or political strife itself, i.e. a temporal, geographical and/or causal link. In addition to the international character of the suspected crimes (that can, depending on the circumstances, constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity, acts of torture or genocide), the link with conflict may be evident in the profile and motivations of the perpetrator(s), the profile of the victim(s), the climate of impunity/weakened State capacity,

⁴⁴ Definitions of ‘protection terminology’ are based on: IASC / Global Protection Cluster (2015) Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action: Reducing risk, promoting resilience and aiding recovery, 321-326. Source of ‘geographical terminology’: OCHA.

cross-border dimensions and/or the fact that it violates the terms of a ceasefire agreement'.

Consent/informed consent

Refers to approval or assent, particularly and especially after thoughtful consideration. Free and informed consent is given based upon a clear appreciation and understanding of the facts, implications and future consequences of an action. In order to give informed consent, the individual concerned must have all adequate relevant facts at the time consent is given and be able to evaluate and understand the consequences of an action. They also must be aware of and have the power to exercise their right to refuse to engage in an action and/or to not be coerced (i.e. being persuaded based on force or threats). Children are generally considered unable to provide informed consent because they do not have the ability and/or experience to anticipate the implications of an action, and they may not understand or be empowered to exercise their right to refuse. There are also instances where consent might not be possible due to cognitive impairments and/or physical, sensory or intellectual disabilities.

Domestic violence (DV) and intimate partner violence (IPV)

While these terms are sometimes used interchangeably, there are important distinctions between them. 'Domestic violence' is a term used to describe violence that takes place within the home or family between intimate partners as well as between other family members. 'Intimate partner violence' applies specifically to violence occurring between intimate partners (married, cohabiting, boyfriend/girlfriend or other close relationships), and is defined by WHO as behaviour by an intimate partner or ex-partner that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm, including physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse and controlling behaviours. This type of violence may also include the denial of resources, opportunities or services.

Economic abuse/violence

An aspect of abuse where abusers control victims' finances to prevent them from accessing resources, working or maintaining control of earnings, achieving self-sufficiency and gaining financial independence.

Emotional abuse (also referred to as psychological abuse)

Infliction of mental or emotional pain or injury. Examples include: threats of physical or sexual violence, intimidation, humiliation, forced isolation, social exclusion, stalking, verbal harassment, unwanted attention, remarks, gestures or written words of a sexual and/or menacing nature, destruction of cherished things, etc. 'Sexual harassment' is included in this category of GBV.

Empowerment of women

The empowerment of women concerns women gaining power and control over their own lives. It involves awareness-raising, building self-confidence, expansion of choices, increased access to and control over resources, and actions to transform the structures and institutions that reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination and inequality.

Forced marriage and child (also referred to as early) marriage

Forced marriage is the marriage of an individual against her or his will. Child marriage is a formal marriage or informal union before age 18. Even though some countries permit marriage before age 18, international human rights standards classify these as child marriages, reasoning that those under age 18 are unable to give informed consent. Therefore, child marriage is a form of forced marriage as children are not legally competent to agree to such unions.

Gender

Refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as the relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. They are context/ time-specific and changeable. Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context. In most societies there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as decision-making opportunities. Gender is part of the broader socio-cultural context.

Gender-based violence

An umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will and that is based on socially ascribed (i.e. gender) differences between males and females. The term 'gender-based violence' is primarily used to underscore the fact that structural, gender-based power differentials between males and females around the world place females at risk for multiple forms of violence. As agreed in the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993), this includes acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life. The term is also used by some actors to describe some forms of sexual violence against males and /or targeted violence against LGBTI populations, in these cases when referencing violence related to gender-inequitable norms of masculinity and/or norms of gender identity.

Gender-disaggregated data

The collection of data on males and females separately in relation to all aspects of their functioning—ethnicity, class, caste, age, location, etc.

Gender roles

A set of social and behavioural expectations or beliefs about how members of a culture should behave according to their biological sex; the distinct roles and responsibilities of men, women and other genders in a given culture. Gender roles vary among different societies and cultures, classes, ages and during different periods in history. Gender-specific roles and responsibilities are often conditioned by household structure, access to resources, specific impacts of the global economy, and other locally relevant factors such as ecological conditions.

Hard-to-Reach Area (HTR)

An area that is not regularly accessible to humanitarian actors for the purposes of sustained humanitarian programming as a result of denial of access, including the need to negotiate access on an ad hoc basis, or due to restrictions such as active conflict, multiple security checkpoints, or failure of the authorities to provide timely approval. The list of HTR areas in the Whole of Syria Context is reviewed on a quarterly basis. (Source: OCHA)

Harmful traditional practices

Cultural, social and religious customs and traditions that can be harmful to a person's mental or physical health. Every social grouping in the world has specific traditional cultural practices and beliefs, some of which are beneficial to all members, while others are harmful to a specific group, such as women. These harmful traditional practices include female genital mutilation (FGM); forced feeding of women; child marriage; the various taboos or practices that prevent women from controlling their own fertility; nutritional taboos and traditional birth practices; son preference and its implications for the status of the girl child; female infanticide; early pregnancy; and dowry price. Other harmful traditional practices affecting children include binding, scarring, burning, branding, violent initiation rites, fattening, forced marriage, so-called honour crimes and dowry-related violence, exorcism or 'witchcraft'.

Perpetrator

Person, group or institution that directly inflicts or otherwise supports violence or other abuse inflicted on another against his/her will.

Physical assault/violence

An act of physical violence that is not sexual in nature. Example include: hitting, slapping, choking, cutting, shoving, burning, shooting or use of any weapons, acid attacks or any other act that results in pain, discomfort or injury.

Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA)

As highlighted in the Secretary-General's 'Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse' (ST/SGB/2003/13), PSEA relates specifically to the responsibilities of international humanitarian, development and peacekeeping actors to prevent incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse committed by United Nations, NGO, and inter-governments (IGO) personnel against the affected population, to set up confidential reporting mechanisms, and to take safe and ethical action as quickly as possible when incidents do occur.

Rape

Physically forced or otherwise coerced penetration—even if slight—of the vagina, anus or mouth with a penis or other body part. It also includes penetration of the vagina or anus with an object. Rape includes marital rape and anal rape/sodomy. The attempt to do so is known as attempted rape. Rape of a person by two or more perpetrators is known as gang rape.

Separated child

A child separated from both parents, or from their previous legal or customary primary caregiver, but not necessarily from other relatives. These may, therefore, include children accompanied by other adult family members.

Sexual abuse

The term ‘sexual abuse’ means the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

Sexual assault

Any form of non-consensual sexual contact that does not result in or include penetration. Examples include: attempted rape, as well as unwanted kissing, fondling, or touching of genitalia and buttocks.

Sexual exploitation

The term ‘sexual exploitation’ means any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power or trust for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. Some types of forced and/or coerced prostitution can fall under this category.

Sexual harassment

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Sexual violence

For the purposes of these guidelines, sexual violence includes, at least, rape/attempted rape, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. Sexual violence is “any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic a person’s sexuality, using coercion, threats of harm or physical force, by any person regardless of relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work.” Sexual violence takes many forms, including rape, sexual slavery and/or trafficking, forced pregnancy, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and/or abuse, and forced abortion.

Survivor

A survivor is a person who has experienced gender-based violence. The terms ‘victim’ and ‘survivor’ can be used interchangeably. ‘Victim’ is a term often used in the legal and medical sectors. ‘Survivor’ is the term generally preferred in the psychological and social support sectors because it implies resiliency.

Trafficking in persons

“...the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.”

Unaccompanied child

A child who has been separated from both parents and other relatives and is not being cared for by an adult who, by law or custom, is responsible for doing so. This means that a child may be completely without adult care, or may be

cared for by someone not related or known to the child, or not their usual caregiver, e.g. a neighbour, another child under 18, or a stranger.

Victim

A victim is a person who has experienced gender-based violence. The term recognizes that a violation against one's human rights has occurred. The terms 'victim' and 'survivor' can be used interchangeably. 'Victim' is a term often used in the legal and medical sectors. 'Survivor' is the term generally preferred in the psychological and social support sectors because it implies resiliency.

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