



ASRO MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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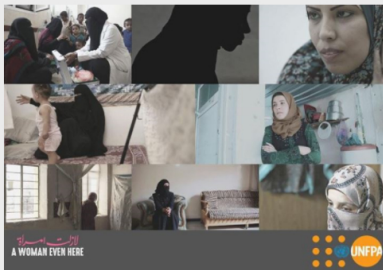
ASRO



Shaping public opinion

The Arab States Regional Office published two op-eds penned by the Regional Director to mark International Women's Day. The op-eds: '[Voice support to end women's silent suffering](#)' and '[كلنا خذل المرأة وجن أبوان تخير المسار](#)' were published on Ahramonline and Bajnews news websites on 7 and 8 March respectively.

On 30 March, UNFPA placed two more op-eds '[عند نقشي الوباء بحرق خطر أكبر بالنساء](#)' and '[The coronavirus pandemic puts pregnant women at risk – let's take care of them](#)' on Al Arabya news website. The op-eds aimed to highlight the impact of COVID-19 on the lives of women and girls and call to action to help of all those affected by the crisis. © UNFPA Yemen



A Women Even Here: Awareness and fundraising campaign

On 6 March, UNFPA ASRO marked International Women's Day by launching a digital awareness and fundraising campaign '[A Woman Even Here](#)'. The campaign highlights the resilience of six women and their struggles during humanitarian crises. Each of the six women endured hardships and experiences that can break most, but they survived to tell their stories. The campaign was launched in cooperation with France 24 Arabic with hashtags [#AWomanEvenHere](#) - #لارئت امرأة.

Funds raised from the campaign will be used to support women and girls in humanitarian settings. There are three different donations: **\$20 for 2 DIGNITY KITS:** each kit will contain: underwear, sanitary pads, soap, toothpaste, and toothbrush to meet the personal hygiene needs of one displaced woman or girl for one month. **\$50 for 10 SAFE BIRTH KITS:** each kit contains (plastic bag, hand soap bar, plastic draw sheet, scalpel, umbilical tape, cotton cloth,

latex exam gloves, exam. **\$100 can support a midwife:** support a midwife for 1 month to provide life-saving care for pregnant women. The campaign website is currently live in [Arabic](#) and [English](#).

UNFPA launches its Journalist's Handbook

In an effort to promote more ethical and professional reporting on gender-based violence, UNFPA launched its second edition of [the Journalist's Handbook](#) - a detailed guidebook on the principles of reporting on this essential subject. Developed by UNFPA Arab States Humanitarian Response Hub, It offers guides, tips and insights on the fundamentals of GBV, its root causes, and the principles of reporting on it. It was launched to mark International Women's Day, and encourage media organizations to increase and strengthen their coverage of GBV and other issues impacting the lives of women and girls in humanitarian settings throughout the region.



HR Corner: Mental wellbeing and staying focused when working from home

These are tiring times and many of us are feeling a myriad of emotions. The most important is to take care of ourselves to the best of our abilities. Staff counselors have typically provided simple to follow tips: Create a wellbeing plan for yourselves and your families. Stick to routines. Or start new ones. Get dressed, exercise, do your daily chores, sleep at your regular time

- Stay connected, open up about your feelings and ask others, check in with those who are alone
- Engage in hobbies you enjoy
- Give yourself permission to acknowledge your worries
- Engage in well-being practices like meditation, yoga, reading, family time

At the same time, we need to continue to deliver on the UNFPA programmatic mandate. Please do take a moment to read this [article](#) from Harvard Business Review on how to stay focused when you're working from home.

GCC



Strengthening the sexual reproductive health and rights

On 2-4 March, UNFPA organized a three-day workshop as part of its partnership with the Oman Human Rights Commission (OHRC). This partnership came to pave the way for Oman's submission of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in November 2020 - a unique mechanism of the Human Rights Council (HRC) to improve human rights. The workshop aimed at strengthening the technical capacity of the OHCR staff, and included several simulative modules to ensure mainstreaming and addressing the sexual reproductive health and rights in the UPR of Oman this year. © UNFPA GCC

ALGERIA



Marking IWD

UNFPA and the Canadian Embassy marked together International Women's Day in an event held on 4 March. The event was an opportunity to explore potential partnerships with donors and NGOs. On this occasion, UNFPA produced a radio spot in three languages (Arabic, French, and Amazigh) to

LEBANON



New agreements addressing GBV and enhancing RH services

UNFPA Lebanon signed agreements with eight partners targeting the most vulnerable Syrian and Lebanese in host communities, with special attention to persons with disabilities through funding from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency. The partnerships intend to mitigate and respond to gender-based violence, and enhance access to reproductive health services across the country while engaging men and boys, adopting a peer-to-peer approach, involving non-traditional stakeholders, and developing the capacity of partners and their local counterparts. © UNFPA Lebanon



Responding to pregnancy during COVID-19

UNFPA partnered with the Ministry of Public Health to establish a technical committee in response to pregnancy during COVID-19. The committee includes representatives of the medical community, particularly obstetricians and gynecologists, as well as the Lebanese Order of Midwives. The role of the committee is to establish a surveillance system to monitor pregnant women's health and their risk of infection of COVID-19, elaborate standard operating procedures and protocols for service providers, develop training resources, enhance capacities for health care front liners, and produce awareness material and messages for pregnant women. © UNFPA Lebanon

YEMEN



Frontline response to COVID-19

UNFPA is one of the frontline responders to mitigate the risk of transmission of COVID-19 in Yemen by supporting the Reproductive Health Department at Al Kuwait Hospital, the main referral hospital for the treatment of identified cases in Sana'a Governorate. The support includes pre-positioning equipment, including 40 ventilators for ICUs ready for immediate deployment in case of an outbreak. The UNFPA-led Rapid Response Mechanism is assisting those in quarantine. As of 29 March, a total of 4,046 individuals have been assisted through 25 distribution teams. A kit includes, ready to eat food provided by WFP, hygiene kits by UNICEF, and women dignity kits by UNFPA. Women and Girls Safe Spaces and other women's protection platforms continue to provide key awareness messages on COVID-19 via dedicated hotlines and information leaflets. © UNFPA Yemen



Expanding women's protection services

The Governments of Sweden, the Netherlands and Switzerland contributed 8 million US Dollars to support the most vulnerable women and girls in nine governorates of Yemen over the next two years. This funding will help UNFPA continue the provision of lifesaving protection services, and expand services in areas where vulnerabilities of women and girls have grown due to increased fighting and conflict. This includes increasing the number of women's shelters, safe spaces, and community networks; and engaging more women in livelihood activities to help them support their families. Since 2017, UNFPA has been able to establish nine Women and Girls Safe Spaces, build two new women shelters, maintain the services in four existing shelters, and help over 500 women start their own businesses through the financial support of the Governments of Sweden, Netherlands and Switzerland. © UNFPA Yemen



Emergency response as displacement soars in northern parts of Yemen

The upsurge in hostilities that began mid-January in Marib, Al Jawf and Sana'a Governorates resulted in heavy displacement. On 1 March, intense clashes broke out in Al Hazm city, Al Jawf Governorate, causing massive displacement of civilians - over 12,000 people estimated to be displaced within 24 hours. Fighting across the three governorates has led to an estimated 40,000 people fleeing their homes between 19 January and 18 March 2020. UNFPA, as lead of the UN's Rapid Response Mechanism through its RRM partners, is responding to 200 households per day with an average response time between 48 to 72 hours from the onset of displacement. As of 18 March, 38,490 individuals received RRM kits. More than 6,200 displaced persons were provided with essential reproductive health services through mobile reproductive health teams; while 21 UNFPA-supported health facilities provided emergency obstetric care services within the three governorates. UNFPA deployed mobile protection teams to provide psychological first aid and transit kits, assisting 7,744 women between January and March 2020. © UNFPA Yemen

PALESTINE



Responding to COVID-19

UNFPA Palestine responded to the needs of its partners, mainly the Ministry of Health, by providing personal protection equipment (PPE) for health workers in primary health care centres and maternity hospitals. In Gaza, UNFPA and the MoH distributed 3,500 leaflets on safety measures for those released from quarantine, including pregnant and lactating women. The GBV sub-cluster, led by UNFPA, established a GBV emergency service directory and provided psychosocial consultations/support remotely, organized social media, radio and TV campaigns, and established toll-free helpline services. UNFPA rolled out its '[Majd and Majd](#)' social media campaign with COVID-19-related messages, and worked closely with the health cluster and the Humanitarian Country Team to develop the Covid-19 response plan, which seeks to mobilize 34 million US Dollar to cover the urgent needs for the next three months. © UNFPA Palestine



She Leads – Campaign to celebrate women

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, UNFPA Palestine marked this year's International Women's Day launching an e-campaign from 8 March to 28 April, funded by the Representative Office of Denmark, Bank of Palestine, and implemented by Sharek Youth Forum. The campaign '[She Leads](#)' includes an online photo exhibition and human interest web stories featuring young Palestinian women leaders to shed light on their accomplishments.



Efforts to close the gap in supplies in Gaza

UNFPA delivered sexual and reproductive health medical disposables, pharmaceuticals, contraceptives, and nutritional supplements for pregnant and



lactating women and infants as part of the United Nations occupied Palestinian Territory Humanitarian Fund. The supplies were distributed to partners in Gaza: the Ministry of Health, Palestinian Medical Relief Society, Red Crescent Society, and UNRWA to reach around 100 thousand beneficiaries. UNFPA is working closely with its partners to meet the high levels of demand for maternal health supplies. © UNFPA Palestine

EGYPT



COVID-19 emergency response plan

As part of its COVID-19 emergency response plan, UNFPA supported the Ministry of Health and Population by procuring EGP 1,518,000 worth of personal protective equipment (protective goggles, gloves, and N95 masks) for frontline health workers, in collaboration with the World Health Organization and UNHCR. Together with the Ministry of Health and Population, UNFPA is working to ensure the continuity of care and services at primary healthcare centres, and to strengthen family planning commodity security and procurement.

The UNFPA emergency response plan to COVID-19 focuses on three main pillars; support the national healthcare system, ensure that case management and referral pathway accommodate the needs of pregnant women with COVID-19, and address the immediate sexual and reproductive health, maternal and family planning needs, and the consequences of the pandemic on GBV and gender overall. © UNFPA Egypt



Distributing dignity kits for most vulnerable

UNFPA mobilized several private sector partnerships to distribute over 45,000 dignity kits to help women and girls maintain their dignity during the COVID-19 outbreak. In coordination with the Ministry of Health and Population and the Ministry of Social Solidarity, UNFPA is set to distribute the kits to key vulnerable and most affected population groups. These include frontline health workers; women and girls quarantined for prevention, screening and treatment; girls and young women in locked down areas; confined facilities, including orphanages and prisons; vulnerable girls and women in highly populated areas with disrupted water and sanitation facilities and refugees, asylum seekers and undocumented migrants. The kits will include sanitary pads, hand soaps, disinfectants, toilet paper/tissues, tooth paste, tooth brushes, and leaflets providing information on preventive measures against COVID-19 and addressing stigma, as well as information on menstrual hygiene. © UNFPA Egypt

JORDAN



Eliminating preventable maternal deaths

On 5 March, UNFPA supported a two-day consultation workshop of the Ministry of Health (MoH) to review and adopt the national guidelines, and clinical pathways for prevention and management of maternal mortality. The workshop came as one of the actions recommended by the Maternal Mortality Response Implementation Plan endorsed by MoH in February. Among the participants were members of the National Advisory Group for maternal mortality and a number of specialists from the public and private health care system. © UNFPA Jordan



Intergenerational dialogue on women's rights and SRHR

On the occasion of the International Women's Day, UNFPA organized an intergenerational dialogue on women's rights movement and sexual and reproductive health and rights on 5 March. With "I am Generation Equality: Realizing Women's Rights" as a theme, the discussion - led by eight women pioneers from different age groups – focused on sexuality education, marital rape, and the challenges that women with disabilities face. Among the participants were gender activists, and representatives of civil society organizations and academia. © UNFPA Jordan



Engaging youth in the response to COVID-19

As part of the national response to COVID-19, The Jordan Youth Peace and Security 2250 National Coalition arranged a virtual meeting led by youth to work with the national campaign 'Elak o Feed' (For you and the benefit of others) on disseminating awareness messages through different social media platforms and WhatsApp groups to youth networks across Jordan. UNFPA was re-elected as the co-chair of the Secretariat of the Coalition in Jordan together with the Generations for Peace for year 2020. © UNFPA Jordan

SYRIA



Raising awareness on COVID-19

On 26 March, three mobile teams of Aoun NGO conducted individual awareness-raising sessions on COVID-19, with the support of UNFPA. The sessions targeted people in Homs city (Al Shammas Neighborhood, Baba Amr), and its North Rural (Al Hawli, Taldaw, Kafarlaha, DeirFol, Teir Maali, Dar Kbireh). Staff who participated in this initiative took necessary precautions to protect themselves. The initiative included distributing brochures and hygiene kits for both women and men.

On 23 March, the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) mobile teams conducted house visits to 30 targeted areas in Homs and rural Homs with the support of UNFPA to raise awareness about COVID-19. As part of the precautionary and preventive measures, the SARC reproductive health clinics were disinfected and sterilized, and some measures were taken to avoid crowding, and protect people from the risk of infection.

On 19 March, Misyaf Charitable Association in cooperation with SARC and SAYYAR voluntary team participated in a joint social awareness initiative about COVID-19 preventive measures, with the support of UNFPA. The campaign distributed 1000 hygiene kits to the poorest families in Misyaf city, rural Hama. The kits included antiseptic, masks, and WHO awareness brochures. © UNFPA Syria

SOMALIA



Midwives and youth gear for COVID-19

As part of the UN-wide coordinated response to the COVID-19 pandemic, UNFPA Somalia worked closely with the Federal Ministry of Health and Human Services to ensure the accessibility and availability of reproductive health and gender-based violence services, with a focus on pregnant women.

On 16 March, UNFPA and the Somaliland Y-Peer network carried out a youth

caravan to sensitize the public on how to prevent the spread of COVID-19. ©

UNFPA Somalia



New batches of graduate midwives

On 2 March, 25 midwifery students completed a two-year midwifery programme at the Mogadishu Midwifery School, supported by UNFPA and the Ministry of Health of the Federal Government of Somalia.

On 1 March, 40 midwives graduated from the Hargeisa School of Health Sciences in Somaliland, with the support of UNFPA and the Somaliland Ministry of Health Development. UNFPA received a certification of recognition from MoHD for its support. © UNFPA Somalia

MOROCCO



SALAMA campaign in response to COVID-19

On 24 March, UNFPA launched the SALAMA campaign to provide the most vulnerable populations, and the medical and paramedical personnel with the means of protection against COVID-19. The campaign was launched through a partnership with the Ministry of Health; the Ministry of Solidarity, Social Development, Equality and Family; the Mohammed VI National Centre for persons with Disabilities; the Moroccan Association of Midwives (AMSF); the National Association of Midwives in Morocco (ANSFM); the Moroccan Association of Family Planning (AMPF); and the Pan African Organization for the Fight against Aids (OPALS); ANARUZ Network, Initiatives for the Protection of Women's Rights (IPDF); and the Y-Peer network. UNFPA along with its institutional and civil society partners will make available the 'SALAMA kits' for women and girls, with a particular focus on pregnant women, GBV survivors, ageing people, migrants and persons with disabilities. © UNFPA Morocco



Using arts to promote SRHR and gender equality

12-24 March, UNFPA supported the Y-Peer PETRI Morocco (Peer Education Training and Research Institute) to train a pool of arts teachers and school club facilitators in Marrakesh-Safi directorate to strengthen their knowledge of the sexual and reproductive health and rights, and build their capacities on peer education techniques. 21 participants from different cities (Marrakesh, El Kelaâ des Sraghna and Essaouira) participated in the workshop to reach out to adolescents and youth and participate in the Artathon regional competition with artistic productions that promote gender equality and raise awareness about GBV. © UNFPA Morocco

LIBYA



Supporting COVID-19 preparedness and response efforts

On 31 March, UNFPA provided the only maternity hospital in Tripoli, namely Aljala Hospital, with a three-month supply of reproductive health kits, including surgical consumable items to ensure access to reproductive health services for an estimated 150,000 people. In parallel, the GBV and psychosocial support hotline 1417 - sustained by UNFPA through a local partner in Tripoli - continues to function with more than 285 calls in the last

partner in Tripoli continued to function with more than 200 calls in the last week of March only, 17% of which were related to COVID-19. Phone operators were trained on COVID-19 information and referral to the official national COVID-19 hotline operated by the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC). In coordination with the health authorities, UNFPA prepared to provide trainings to national health stakeholders and medical staff on prevention and precaution measures for COVID-19 with a sexual and reproductive health approach, and to support the Y-Peer network in conducting an awareness raising campaign on COVID-19, targeting people who work at grocery stores, bakeries, and banks. © UNFPA Libya



Engaging youth in peacebuilding and stabilization efforts in Sirte

On 10 March, UNFPA organized a consultative meeting with over 15 young female entrepreneurs in Sirte to discuss their needs, how to better address them and positively impact on entrepreneurship in Sirte, through the ongoing peacebuilding project jointly implemented with UNDP, UNICEF and WFP. On the same day, UNFPA and its local partner were hosted at Sirte Local Radio on a live show to introduce the project to the general public of Sirte. 26 young activists from different CSOs attended two training sessions on the concept of civil society, and strategic planning in service delivery sectors on 12-14 March. © UNFPA Libya



Celebrating IWD

UNFPA Libya and the French Embassy brought together women's right activists, journalists, and officials in Tunis to announce the release of new funds aimed at enhancing access to lifesaving care for women and newborns, and supporting GBV survivors in the Libyan south.

"Ensuring access to quality reproductive and maternal health services in the underserved areas of South Libya will directly contribute to ending preventable maternal and newborn death and is essential to improving family and community well-being," said UNFPA Libya Representative, Bérangère Böell-Yousfi

UNFPA local implementing partners held open discussions at the Women and Girls Safe Spaces in Tripoli and Sabha to raise awareness on the available activities and services provided at the centres and on the role of women in peacebuilding efforts at community level. © UNFPA Libya

TUNISIA



Supporting SGBV services during COVID-19 outbreak

UNFPA supported the Ministry of Women Affairs to extend the SGBV hotline working hours to 24/7 to ensure the continuity of SGBV counseling services. Before the outbreak of COVID-19, the hotline used to function during official working hours.

Three UNFPA-supported shelters continue their services, including accommodation and psychosocial support while ensuring that necessary precaution and protection measures are in place. However, the centres were reluctant to receive new cases as part of their precautionary measures. In response, UNFPA supported the Ministry of Women Affairs to establish a new shelter to serve the new cases suspected to be positive to COVID-19 to address the arising violence against women, multiplied by five according the hotline services data. UNFPA provided PPE products, Dignity kits and medical equipment.

SUDAN





Strengthening the national response to COVID-19

On 29 March, UNFPA Sudan organized, in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Health, trainings on how to deal with COVID-19 cases for 20 health workers to help them understand the protocols issued by the Ministry in this regard; and Training of Trainers for 20 midwives to help them adapt the best practices and save lives of mothers and babies.

On 30 March, UNFPA supported the Health Promotion Programme of the MoH in Blue Nile state (Al- Damazin and Roseires localities) to raise public awareness in several rural areas about the precautionary measures, and to distribute hygiene tools and sanitizers to the families.

UNFPA provided painting tools, designs, and information to volunteers from Al-Fashir, North Darfur State, to draw COVID-19 awareness messages on the walls of the city. © UNFPA Sudan

DJIBOUTI



Emergency plan to maintain GBV services during COVID-19 outbreak

UNFPA, in collaboration with its partners, activated an emergency plan to coordinate the GBV national response to ensure the continuity of services during the outbreak of COVID-19. The plan consists of involving the police in the management of the GBV hotline, and strengthening the capacities of the health sectors in terms of human resources and equipment. © UNFPA Djibouti

IRAQ



UNFPA-women centres provide support in times of the COVID-19 pandemic.

With the increasing need for medical masks, the women and social workers at the UNFPA-supported women centres in the central south areas, produced more than 6,000 masks and distributed them to health workers, police officers, cleaners, as well as vulnerable families, under the guidance of the Ministry of Health. © UNFPA Iraq



UNFPA works in 20 Arab countries to respond to the reproductive health needs of people, including in situations of conflicts or humanitarian emergencies. As a human rights-based organization, it engages with governments, civil society and fellow UN agencies to ensure that people, adolescents and older persons included, have access to sexual and reproductive health and rights.