



ASRO MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Issue June 2020

ASRO



World Elder Abuse Awareness Day
#SafeguardOlderPerson

Safeguard older persons during COVID-19 and beyond

Shaping opinion

UNFPA ASRO Regional Director, Dr. Luay Shabaneh, penned two op-eds to mark World Elder Abuse Awareness Day to highlight the scarcity of data on older people and their struggle amid COVID-19 pandemic.

The op-eds: [نبرة البيانات الدقيقة والمسرح يهدد جهود حماية كبار السن خلال جائحة فيروس كورونا-19 وما بعدها](#), and [We need better data to protect older populations amid COVID-19 pandemic](#) were published on Alkhabar Alyoum on 13 June, and on The Daily Star website on 14 June respectively.

To commemorate the day, ASRO created a social media campaign [#SafeGuardOurElder](#) [#نحمي كبار السن](#) that was shared widely throughout the region.



High level event on Yemen

ASRO's Regional Director, Dr. Luay Shabaneh penned an op-ed titled [على مؤتمر](#) [الماتحين حول اليمن، التحرك لإنقاذ الأرواح](#) and had an interview on [AlGhad TV](#) on the occasion of the Virtual High-Level Pledging Event for the Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen, which was convened by The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the UN on 2 June. ASRO and country offices covered the event, boosting the efforts of our donors and partners, to advocate for urging immediate action and funding to save millions of Yemenis who continue to suffer due to the ongoing humanitarian crisis and COVID-19. © UNFPA Yemen

COVID-19

REPORTING ON

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

DURING PUBLIC HEALTH CRISES

AN ONLINE SYMPOSIUM.
LIVE ON FACEBOOK.

THURSDAY, JUNE 18, 2020
12:00 — 13:00 AMMAN (GMT + 3h)



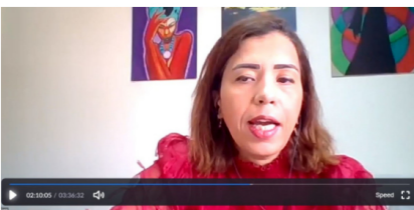
Supporting the future of Syria and the region

The European Union and the United Nations co-chaired the fourth Brussels Conference on 'Supporting the future of Syria and the region' on 30 June. 80 countries, international organizations, the EU and UN agencies participated in the virtual conference. As the conflict enters its 10th year, ASRO's Regional Director penned two op-eds to highlight the critical reproductive health and protection needs of women, adolescent girls and young people affected by the Syria crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic. The articles [In 2020, Syrians need the international community more than ever](#), and [رياء داخل جائحة](#) were published on AhramOnline, The Daily Star, and Alarabiya on 29 June. © UNFPA Syria



SWOP 2020 global launch

On 30 June, UNFPA launched its flagship report the State of World Population 2020 with the theme Against my will: defying the practices that harm women and girls and undermine equality. The report focuses on the three most prevalent harmful practices: female genital mutilation, child marriage, and extreme bias against daughters in favour of sons. ASRO supported the global launch by reviewing and proofreading the Arabic version of the report and all its related materials. On the media front, ASRO identified a group of journalists representing main media outlets in the region to join the global media brief held on 29 June. Among the key media outlets was Aljazeera that covered the launch with a story and had a [live interview](#) with UNFPA Executive Director, Natalia Kanem. Also, ASRO Regional Director, Luay Shabaneh, had an interview on [BBC Arabic radio](#).



New ways to reach GBV survivors

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, its containment measures, and movement restrictions, the availability of critical support services for survivors of gender-based violence was impacted. GBV service providers reported an increase in the risks and challenges that women and girls face when seeking help in the presence of their perpetrators. In response to the emerging need, UNFPA ASRO jointly with the regional offices of WHO, UNDP, UNODC, and UN Women arranged a webinar with the Health, Social, Justice, and Policing sectors to share best practices on how to reach GBV survivors during lock down in many countries in the region. The webinar came as part of the roll out of the global guidelines on the '[Essential Service Package for Women and Girls Subject to Violence](#)'. A recording of the event is available [here](#) (Access Password: DN?^b!?). © UNFPA ASRO



Algeria: Protecting mothers who risk their lives when giving birth

Morocco: Midwives ensure the elimination of preventable maternal deaths through strong regulatory mechanisms

Oman: The maternal health services are just a call away for women

Tunisia: SRH Task force: a locomotive to enhance continuity of care – Establishing a new institutional coordination mechanism during COVID-19 outbreak

Yemen: Midwives: Saving mothers lives under the barrel of a gun amid the covid-19 pandemic!

We congratulate the winning teams, and praise the other country offices for their efforts. Photo from archive © UNFPA Jordan

The HR Corner



Breaking gender barriers

UNFPA ASRO and Sudan country office are proud to announce the hiring of Ms. Alaa Elmedani, the first female driver for the organization in the Arab region. Although driving is a male dominated profession in the region, the hiring process of Ms. Elmedani came in line with UNFPA mission to promote gender equality, and break gender barriers. @UNFPA Sudan



New Staff Counselor

Continuing with efforts on prioritizing staff welfare as priority, DHR in collaboration with ASRO and EECARO appointed a dedicated staff counselor, Catherine Bean, for both regions. Kate's first joint session on [Self-Care: What is this and Why is it Important Video](#), took place on 8 June. Kate is with us for the next three months. She will hold sessions for all staff, as well as individual consultations on Mondays and Tuesdays weekly (from 8:00 AM to 10:00 AM Cairo time/ 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM Melbourne time). The individual appointments can be made here: <https://katebean.simplybook.it> @UNFPA ASRO

LEBANON

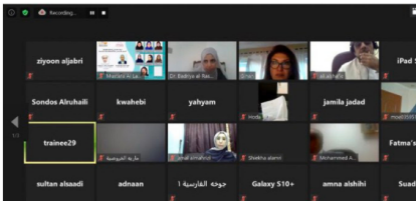
Abou Samir grows the best vegetables and he's known for his expertise. I visit him regularly to buy my fresh produce.

How are you supporting your elderly?



Campaign to #SupportOurElderly

To mark World Elderly Abuse Awareness Day, UNFPA Lebanon released a set of illustrations and key messages designed to raise awareness about the role that older persons play in our daily lives, especially during COVID-19. UNFPA works government and non-government institutions in Lebanon to safeguard the well-being of older people, and to promote their dignity through the provision of personal protection equipment for elderly institutions during the pandemic.



Ageing women and women with disabilities – Situation analysis

On 18 June, UNFPA GCC, in co-operation with the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) in Oman, held a multi-stakeholders virtual workshop to discuss the available services provided to the ageing women and women with disabilities; the legal framework that safeguards their rights in the country; and the social protection and inclusion mechanisms in place. More than 45 participants and six speakers took part in this event to shed light on the current situation of these vulnerable population categories, particularly during the pandemic, and on the legal and social measures taken by the respective government partners, including the Ministries of Health, Education, and Social Development. Six papers, discussed during the workshop, will feed into a policy brief that will be developed by UNFPA in consultation with the MoSD. This key document will pave the way for the development of a national strategy to help improve the conditions of this target population. © UNFPA Jordan

ALGERIA



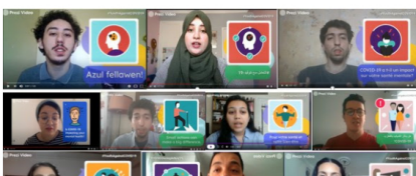
Responding to the most affected areas by COVID-19

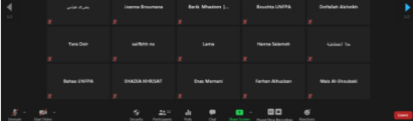
On 2 June, a team from UNFPA Algeria, and the Algerian Red Crescent distributed protection equipment to the health workers in the gynecology-obstetric department, particularly the maternity ward, and to women seeking services in the Boufank hospital, wilaya of BLI – the most affected wilaya by COVID-19. This initiative was part of UNFPA and the Algerian Red Crescent joint agreement to strengthen the health response to COVID-19, and to ensure the continuity of the maternity services, including reproductive health and family planning services. © UNFPA Algeria



Shedding light on the rise of violence amid the pandemic

On 21 June, UNFPA Algeria Officer in charge, Ouahiba Sakani, joined a round table discussion - organized by the web radio 'Voix de Femme' of the Women in Communication Association – along with the President of the Association of Women in Communication, Nafissa Lahrache, and the President of the Association for women's Empowerment, Soumia Salhi. The discussion aimed to sensitize the public to the rise in the risks of violence against women and girls during the COVID-19 pandemic, and to advocate for its prevention and response. Among the main issues raised were: UNFPA aspiration to collaborate with the civil society and national institutions as part of its response efforts; the need for reliable data on the available GBV services during the pandemic; and the important role of the media in covering this critical issue with ethics and accuracy. © UNFPA Algeria





Youth against sexual violence in conflict

On the occasion of International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in conflict 19 June, UNFPA Jordan in collaboration with the Jordan Youth Peace and Security 2250 National Coalition organized an [online interactive session](#) to mobilize young people, and representatives of youth organizations, and networks on conflict-related sexual violence. Young participants discussed with experts how sexual violence impacts their lives and their communities seeking ways to put an end to it. © UNFPA Jordan



Launching the Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action

Under the patronage of the Ministry of Youth, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNHCR, UNDP, and NRC organized the launch of the Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action and a discussion on youth and COVID-19 in a virtual high-level event on 29 June, in Jordan. The meeting was attended by H.E. the Minister of Youth, the UN Resident Coordinator, and representatives of UN agencies, NGOs, CBOs, and youth groups, and networks. UNFPA Jordan Representative, Enshrah Ahmed, emphasized the need to ensure that COVID-19 response plans are sensitive to the adolescent and youth specific health care needs, including reproductive health, mental health, and psychosocial support.

PALESTINE



Research paper on family dynamics and domestic violence during COVID-19

UNFPA, Juzoor for Health and Social Development, Haya programme, and the GBV Sub Cluster launched a research paper on the [Impact of the COVID-19 Outbreak and Lockdown on Family Dynamics and Domestic Violence in Palestine](#). Some of the key findings were:

- 65% reported that the family became more supportive during the lockdown, while only 14% reported an increase in family problems
- There is an increase in family violence and domestic violence against children and spouses due to the lockdown, and 71% of Palestinians believe that domestic violence will continue to increase with the extension of lockdown
- More than 90% of participants reported parents as the source of help for victims of violence. *Photo from archive © UNFPA Palestine*



Responding to the hygiene and protection needs of women and girls

On 17 June, UNFPA distributed 1,570 dignity kits to women and girls in quarantine centres in Gaza to meet their hygiene and protection needs with support from OCHA.

COVID-19 restrictions measures. The distribution came as part of the OCHA project.

"The voucher is better than the packs, it gave us space and flexibility to consume based on our needs and family members" said one of the recipients. © UNFPA

Palestine

EGYPT



Women at the forefront facing COVID-19

Tens of Syrian women at UNFPA-supported Safe Spaces participated in an initiative to produce reusable facemasks to include in dignity kits provided to women and girls in the Syrian and African communities. 8,000 masks will be distributed, including 3,500 to the safe spaces operated by CARE International Egypt, and 4,500 to the Safe Spaces operated by Etijah Youth and Development Consultancy Institute and the Ministry of Youth and Sports. © UNFPA Egypt



National campaign against FGM

On 14 June, UNFPA and UNICEF launched a campaign in partnership with the National Council for Women, and the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, under the global Joint Programme to Eliminate Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). The campaign included two public service announcements (PSA) addressing the harmful effect of the FGM practice, and the role of [father](#) and [mother](#) in protecting their daughters. It included as well social media cards with messages that correct myths and misconceptions around FGM. The two PSAs reached over 2 million views on social media. © UNFPA Egypt

YEMEN



Meeting the urgent reproductive health needs of women

UNFPA received a contribution of US \$2.6 million from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

equipped with personal protection equipment and 4U ventilators. This support will meet the needs of nurses and midwives to continue providing life-saving reproductive health services to mothers and their newborns safely. © UNFPA Yemen



New manual on the provision of reproductive health during COVID-19

UNFPA, in coordination with the Ministry of Public Health and Population, UN agencies, and national partners, developed a national manual for the reproductive health services' (RH) providers. The manual included chapters on: COVID-19 prevention, provision of RH services, mental health and psychosocial support, gender-based violence, and protection against sexual exploitation and abuse during the pandemic. In June, UNFPA conducted multiple trainings (virtual and face-to-face) on the new manual for reproductive health directors across the country, 164 community and home-based midwives, and midwives in health facilities in Taizz, Ibb, Aden, Lahj, Shabwa and Marib governorates. Some 100 community midwives who will continue providing free-of-charge services received personal protection equipment after the trainings. © UNFPA Yemen

MOROCCO



SALAMA operation reaches 16 million people

On 12 June, UNFPA concluded its [SALAMA initiative](#), which started on 31 March in response to the COVID-19 outbreak during lockdown. The six-phase initiative gave priority to the protection of the most at risk populations. Among its activities were: online campaigns that reached over **16 million** people; field interventions carried in **275** facilities in more than **90** urban and rural areas; Salama Kits distributed to nearly **8,000** people; distance-learning sessions, to ensure the continuity of maternal health services, conducted for more than **700** health professionals, including midwives; and essential care and services provided to **106** women and girls survivors of violence. © UNFPA Morocco



SALAMA at work: new initiative targeting working women

On 29 June, UNFPA launched a post-lockdown initiative 'SALAMA at Work' targeting women at the workplace to ensure safe working environment, and respect for their rights and dignity. The first phase will be carried out in a number of industrial companies in Tangiers in close partnership with the Club of Spanish Entrepreneurs, the General Confederation of Moroccan Enterprises, and the Association of Women Entrepreneurs. The main objectives of the new initiative are: raise awareness on how to prevent COVID-19 infection, ensure access to care and support services, promote healthy behaviors, and improve gender equality in the workplace. © UNFPA Morocco



المركز الوطني محمد السادس للمعاقين
Centre National Mohammed VI des Handicapés

المركز الوطني محمد السادس للمعاقين وصندوق الأمم المتحدة للسكان ينظمان:

ندوة افتراضية في موضوع

الصحة الإيجابية والعاطفية

ومناقشة الصب المبني على النوع الاجتماعي

لدى الأشخاص ذوي الإعاقة

تسيير الندوة:

الدكتور خالد بنحسين

مدير المركز الوطني



تسيير الندوة:

السيد لوس مور

ممثل صندوق الأمم





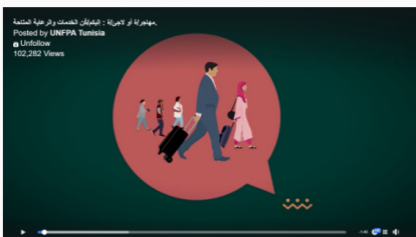
New campaign to protect older people

On 26 June UNFPA Algeria, in partnership with the Ministry of Women, Children, the Family and Seniors, organized a national seminar titled 'Ageing people from protection to human rights' to mark World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. 100 participants joined the event and witnessed the launch of the [#نحمير كبارنا](#) campaign; the release of the results of two qualitative studies on the impact of COVID-19 on ageing people, and on violence against elderly; and the Minister's announcement about a Code on Elder status that will be finalized and adopted before the end of the year. A [video](#) was screened at the event advocating for the protection and social inclusion of older people. © UNFPA Tunisia



Advocating for the Nairobi commitments

UNFPA held a meeting with the newly appointed Minister of Health, and the Heads of partner organizations to present the main achievements of 2019, and the planned activities of 2020. The meeting was an opportunity to highlight the fruitful partnership with the MoH, and to advocate for the importance of following up on the Nairobi Summit on ICPD25 commitments made by Tunisia. UNFPA emphasized the importance of the generalization of the essential package of maternal and newborn health services - currently piloted in two governorates, the implementation of the national maternal and newborn health strategy, and the adoption of the national youth and adolescent health strategy. © UNFPA Tunisia



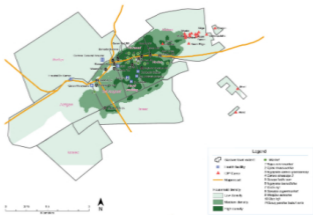
Reaching out to migrants via social media

UNFPA launched a social media campaign 'Reach out, Inform, Engage' targeting migrants in Tunisia to raise their awareness about the available support services. Two videos in [Arabic](#) and [French](#) were disseminated to provide them with a one stop-shop reference. The videos reached 281,398 persons, and resulted in an increase in the number of migrants seeking support services. © UNFPA Tunisia

SOMALIA

COVID-19 Vulnerability Mapping by Risk Factors

Garowe Town | June 2020



COVID-19 vulnerability mapping by risk factors

In June, UNFPA Somalia launched an initiative that consists of mapping [COVID-19 vulnerability by risk factors](#). The aim of the mapping process is to inform stakeholders on the best modalities of responding to the pandemic, and on where resources should be allocated. The mapping showed that IDPs are one of the most vulnerable populations to the spread of the pandemic due to the nature of their settlements, and to the inadequate social amenities available to them. © UNFPA Somalia

IRAQ



Scaling up the COVID-19 interventions

The Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) contributed SEK 16 million (approximately US\$ 1.73 million) to support UNFPA response to COVID-19 in Iraq. [The grant was signed in an online ceremony](#) in the presence of the Ambassador of Sweden to Iraq, Lars Ronnås. The funding will help scale up the COVID-19 interventions to ensure that women and girls, especially pregnant women, and survivors of gender-based violence, including those in quarantine, have timely and safe access to health and protection services. It will also help provide reproductive health supplies, including modern contraceptives, and maternal health medicines, and personal protective equipment (PPE) to the Ministry of Health. © UNFPA Iraq



National determination to carry out the census

On 22 June, the newly appointed Iraqi Prime Minister, Mustafa Al-Kadhimi, headed the meeting of the Higher Population Council. The PM reiterated the government's determination to hold the census as soon as the health situation permits, and he emphasized UNFPA role in the preparatory stages of the Census, which included the national document on population policies, the various equipment, and South-South cooperation experiences. The Council instructed the Ministry of Planning, and the working team to start preparing all the requirements of the Census, within a period to be determined by specialists, in coordination with the Ministries of Health and Finance, and to identify the main challenges to address them. © UNFPA Iraq



Engaging youth in the COVID-19 response

UNFPA organized two trainings for 30 Syrian refugees from the refugee camps in Duhok governorate. The first training focused on life skills and, the second training on conflict management. With the support of UNFPA and Canada, the Y-Peer network conducted awareness-raising sessions on COVID-19 in eight governorates across Iraq, where they distributed more than 2,380 awareness booklets. Community mobilisers, through UNFPA partners, conducted online awareness raising sessions on COVID-19 reaching a total of 576 young men and women. In collaboration with the Ministry of Youth and Sports, UNFPA and UIMS engaged 40 volunteers in seven camps in disinfection campaigns, which included the distribution of more than 1,800 brochures on COVID-19. Furthermore, volunteers from the Y-Peer network sew 4,500 face masks and distributed them free of charge to the UNFPA-supported reproductive health facilities, security checkpoints and quarantine locations in Anbar, Baghdad, Basra, Najaf and Diyala. © UNFPA Iraq

SYRIA

