

# Gender-Based Violence Information Management System

## Overview of Incidents of GBV and Women and Girls' access to services

### Quarter 1-2022

#### Background

Lebanon's protracted economic crisis threatens to drive more people into poverty and food insecurity. Prices of food and other essential needs continued to increase, driven by renewed currency depreciation (from an average of LBP 23,000/USD in March to LBP 26,000/USD in April) and the impact of the Ukraine crisis on international wheat and fuel prices<sup>1</sup>.

This current crisis has worsened the overall protection situation for Syrian refugees and refugees of other nationalities and deepened the vulnerability of the Lebanese host community. The deterioration in the economic condition combined with the social instability urged vulnerable communities to increasingly rely on humanitarian services, including cash and in-kind assistance to respond to their rising and emerging needs.

This gender-based violence information management system (GBVIMS) report<sup>2</sup> aims to analyze the GBV reports in Lebanon as a result of the compounded crisis, with a focus on the linkage between GBV reports and food insecurity. The analysis has been triangulated with other sources, protection monitoring reports, studies, surveys, and assessments conducted in Lebanon such as WFP Situational report, Global protection cluster study on GBV and food insecurity and UNFPA report on cash assistance within GBV case management.

#### Profile of survivors seeking assistance

Most of the survivors who accessed GBV services in the first quarter of 2022 were female, but male survivors were also affected with **6 percent of men and boys reporting GBV incidents**, with similar percentages as reported in the fourth quarter of 2021. Data from the GBVIMS in 2022 indicates that **24 percent of the children subjected to sexual abuse were males, a percentage that doubled compared to the fourth quarter of 2021**. Despite the limited services designed to meet the needs of male survivors in the GBV programming, there is a 3 percent increase in the reporting of male children seeking services in

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<sup>1</sup> World Food Program: "Lebanon Situational Report". Accessed at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/lebanon/wfp-lebanon-situation-report-april-2022>.

<sup>2</sup> The data quoted above are derived from only reported cases and do not represent the total incidences or prevalence of GBV in Lebanon. These statistical trends are generated exclusively by GBV service providers who use the GBVIMS for data collection in implementing GBV response activities across Lebanon, with the informed consent of survivors. Thirteen organizations contributed to the trends. These data should not be used for direct follow-up with survivors or additional case follow-up. This information is confidential and must not be shared outside your organization/agency. Should you like to use this data or access more information on the GBVIMS, please contact the Inter-Agency GBVIMS Coordinator, Lamis Delbani (aldelbani@unfpa.org).



this quarter, compared to the fourth quarter of 2021 (from **4 percent** in Q4, 2021 to **7 percent** in Q1, 2022).

Data from the first quarter of 2022 show that adults accounted for **82 percent** and children accounted for **18 percent of the GBV cases reported through the GBVIMS**. The percentage of children seeking services increased by 5 percent compared to the fourth quarter of 2021. Partners reported an increase in the percentage of child survivors especially in certain regions (South Lebanon recorded the highest proportion of children seeking services, at **35 percent** in the first quarter of 2022). The increased number of children seeking services is probably linked to the increasing risks faced by children in the current crisis but also to the increase in available services targeting children in the region as reported by GBVIMS actors and case management service providers.

Syrian refugees continue to be the majority of the population seeking GBV services, accounting for **73 percent** of all the individuals who sought out support in the first quarter of 2022, with 5 percent increase compared to the fourth quarter of 2021. **25 percent** of the survivors seeking services were Lebanese. Lebanese nationals have also been affected by the escalating socio-economic crisis, with the country's limited capacities to provide basic public services such as electricity, water, health and sanitation services and health care.

Data from the GBVIMS in the first quarter of 2022 indicates that 2 percent of the survivors seeking GBV services are people with disability, similar to the percentage reported in the fourth quarter of 2021. People with disabilities continue to face challenges in accessing and benefitting from the services due to several limitations, including limited capacities and skills of service providers to engage people with disabilities in the activities, community stigmatization and marginalization and the issue of safe spaces that may not be properly equipped and rehabilitated to host people with disabilities. In this regard, several initiatives are taking place on inter-sector levels to have better understanding about the barriers and access of people with disabilities to services, including GBV.

## **Most commonly reported types of GBV incidents**

Women and girls continue to be exposed to several risks and GBV types in the community including sexual violence and forced marriage, which is further supported by data reported through the GBVIMS. In 2022, physical assault, psychological or emotional abuse and forced marriage were the most commonly reported types of GBV incidents against children, accounting for **33 percent, 31 percent and 13 percent** of incidents, respectively.

### ***Intimate Partner Violence***

In 2022, Intimate partner violence reporting increased with 4 percent compared to quarter 4, 2021, accounting for **55 percent** in the first quarter of 2022, according to the GBVIMS. Data extracted from the GBVIMS indicate that both adults and children are subjected to intimate partner violence, with an increase in the reporting of female children, accounting for 20 percent in this quarter.

Data triangulated with the Gender based violence AoR report<sup>3</sup> on food insecurity and GBV indicates that there is a strong linkage between food insecurity and intimate partner violence against adult women and early married girls. According to the report, household's food insecurity elevates household stressors, which in turn contributes to different forms of GBV, including intimate partner violence. Acute food insecurity leads to conflict over food distribution and resources, in addition to the fact that poor households are more prone to stress and shocks, while having reduced capacity to deal with stressors. Additionally, food insecurity impacts individuals on a physiological level, such as impeding the cognitive functioning and ability to control emotions.

As a response on the acute economic crisis, cash assistance within GBV case management is one of the services offered to mitigate the GBV risks on women and girls, with a focus on the recurrent cash assistance (RCA) that aims at mitigating the risk and the consequences of intimate partner violence, sexual harassment, exploitation, or abuse in a longer term. According to UNFPA annual report on cash assistance within GBV case management<sup>4</sup>, 95 percent of the RCA respondents from different nationalities and vulnerabilities including LGBTIQ+ survivors reported that the assistance significantly contributed to mitigating their exposure to sexual harassment, exploitation, or abuse. For 92 percent of survivors experiencing intimate partner violence prior to the intervention, the recurrent cash assistance significantly contributed to decreasing or mitigating IPV. Additionally, 84 percent of beneficiaries considered that cash allowed them to be in a better position to make decisions regarding their recovery from the incident or risk of violence.

### ***Early marriage***

Data reported through GBVIMS in the first quarter of 2022 indicates that reports of early marriage increased with 5 percent compared to the fourth quarter of 2021, accounting for **14 percent**. According to field reports and GBVIMS contributors, there is an increase in the reporting of early marriage incidents due to the new projects that are targeting children's survivors of GBV, including cases of forced marriage.

Child marriage is considered a negative coping strategy that families resort to in times of financial hardship, while having regional differences in Lebanon related to the impact of economic crisis.

In April 2021, the Sunni court raised the minimum age of marriage to 18, in the aim of decreasing the rates of child marriage. Despite of this fact, child marriage rates continue to increase in Lebanon, while having the South of Lebanon reporting the highest percentage of early marriage in Lebanon in 2022.

### **Recommendations**

The GBVIMS Steering Committee and the Sexual- and Gender-Based Violence Task Force offers the following recommendations for safeguarding at-risk populations and responding to survivors' needs based on the data reported through the GBVIMS during the first quarter of 2022:

- Strengthen timely and safe referrals across sectors, and to the GBV sector, through capacity building on GBV core concepts, including disclosures and safe and ethical referrals.

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<sup>3</sup> Gender based violence AoR, Global protection cluster study on Food Insecurity & Gender-Based Violence.

<sup>4</sup> Preliminary findings of United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA Lebanon) Cash assistance within GBV Case Management report, 2021.

- Scale up emergency assistance that ensures direct access to food, both in-kind and through cash-based activities in addition to advocating for meaningful transfer values.
- Strengthen the integration of cash assistance services within GBV case management, and assess the feasibility of multiple payments that address different high priority needs, including transportation to life saving services and forensic medicine.
- Strengthen the linkages between the provision of cash and in-kind support with income-generating and livelihood opportunities to ensure longer-term outcomes for vulnerable individuals and households.
- Improve the availability of analysis on protection risks in relation to food and in-kind assistance, and collect feedback on meaningful access, safety and dignity, participation, and accountability of people in relation to the provision of humanitarian services.
- Collaborate and promote joint initiatives among GBV actors, child protection actors and the Ministry of Social Affairs in working groups and coordination platforms to mitigate the risk of GBV, especially sexual abuse and exploitation.
- Optimize and expand integration between sectors and programs, while ensuring a gender targeted approach that can prevent violence against children by addressing the different determinants of protection violation in a holistic manner.
- Strengthen the collaboration between GBV sector and Ministry of Social Affairs, to introduce the GBV services and improve Lebanese women and girls' access to GBV services.
- Strengthen the collaboration between GBV sector and Ministry of Public Health, to target the increased number of women and adolescent girls accessing primary health care centers and hospitals and introduce the GBV services.
- Raise awareness about GBV to service providers, especially those in direct contact with women and girls such as forensic doctors, nurses, clinical management of rape service providers, to strengthen access to sexual and reproductive health services and sanitary needs for women and adolescent girls.
- Strengthen community-based approaches such as outreach and scale up the work with community volunteers and committees to ensure improved access to services and information for women and girls.