



Leitner Center

for International Law and Justice

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Gendered-Approach Inputs to UNHCR for the Global Compact on Refugees (2018): Lessons from Abuses faced by Syrian Female Refugees in Lebanon, Turkey, and Jordan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In September 2016, the UN General Assembly adopted the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, expressing Member States' commitments to protect refugees and migrants. The Declaration paves the way for Member States to adopt a Global Compact on Refugees in 2018. Consistent with the New York Declaration, the Compact will "mainstream a gender perspective, promote gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and fully respect and protect the human rights of women and girls."¹

This report was produced by the **Walter Leitner International Human Rights Clinic in the Leitner Center for International Law and Justice** at Fordham University School of Law in New York City. The Clinic provides education and practical human rights training to law students while furthering the Center's core objectives of strengthening access to justice and promoting the rights of marginalized populations.

This report provides gendered recommendations to strengthen the upcoming Global Compact on Refugees. The recommendations are based on case-studies, which highlight and analyze the gendered issues faced by female Syrian refugees in Lebanon, Turkey², and Jordan. It is our hope that these recommendations will be incorporated into the Global Compact on Refugees in order to help strengthen the compact's protection of women and girl refugees around the world. As these case-studies demonstrate, women and girls are disproportionately burdened by the consequences of displacement. These burdens should be considered when drafting each provision of the compact.

The Syrian refugee crisis is one of the largest refugee crises in the world. Since 2011, nearly 4.8 million Syrians have fled their homes in search of refuge abroad. Currently, Lebanon,

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¹ G.A. Res. 71/1, New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants ¶ 31 (Oct. 3, 2016).

² There is limited gender specific information available regarding the Syrian refugee population in Turkey. Due to this limitation, we have chosen not to include an analysis of Turkey in certain subsections.

Turkey, and Jordan host the largest populations of Syrian refugees, the majority of whom are women and girls. During times of conflict and forced displacement, women and girls are disproportionately exposed to human rights abuses and violations. In Lebanon, Turkey, and Jordan, female Syrian refugees face the threat of labor exploitation, discriminatory housing practices, lack of access to sexual and reproductive health services, sexual assault and harassment, child marriage, barriers to education, domestic violence, human trafficking, discrimination and violence based on their sexuality or gender identity, and lack of access to justice.

- **Employment:** Female Syrian refugees face a number of gendered barriers to employment, including discrimination, family responsibilities and lack of childcare, and the threat of sexual harassment and exploitation. Syrian refugee women who work are largely limited to the informal sector, especially domestic and agricultural labor, where they are subject to exploitative wages and working conditions, including sexual harassment and violence. Women in female-headed households are particularly at risk of extreme poverty.
- **Housing:** Female Syrian refugees are burdened by restricted access to affordable and adequate housing. Limited supply and high rent prices have led to overcrowding, poor sanitation, and little privacy. Female-headed households are especially affected by these conditions, and anecdotal evidence indicates that discriminatory housing practices often force women to live on the street or in makeshift shelters.
- **Sexual and Reproductive Health:** Female Syrian refugees face barriers in accessing sexual and reproductive healthcare, including limited resources, high costs, and lack of information regarding existing services. These barriers result in a number of adverse health outcomes, including complications during pregnancy.
- **Sexual Assault and Harassment:** Statistical data collected from a variety of surveys indicate that female Syrian refugees feel insecure within their communities and fear sexual harassment and assault on a daily basis. This forces many female Syrian refugees to remain in their homes, limiting their access to necessary goods and services. Currently, there are limited services for victims/survivors of sexual assault and harassment.
- **Child Marriage:** Rates of child marriage have risen among Syrian refugees, driven by factors including economic and physical insecurity. Child marriage exposes Syrian refugee girls to a wide range of harms, including an elevated risk of domestic violence and social isolation, interrupted education and loss of employment opportunities, and the health consequences associated with early pregnancy.
- **Domestic Violence:** Female Syrian refugees report that domestic violence incidents have increased within refugee populations since the start of the crisis due to the prolonged conflict, displacement, poor living conditions, and changing gender roles.
- **Education:** Many school-aged Syrian refugee girls are not enrolled in school. While there is not a significant disparity between the number of Syrian refugee boys and girls

enrolled in schools, girls face gendered barriers to education, including the rise in child marriage and fear of street-based sexual harassment going to and from school.

- **Human Trafficking:** Female Syrian refugees are vulnerable to international, intra-regional, and internal human trafficking. The most common forms of human trafficking in the region are forced prostitution, child marriage, and “temporary” marriage.
- **Queer Females:** Queer female Syrian refugees are subject to violence and harassment by members of their family, refugee communities, and host country communities. Transgender female refugees, face heightened forms of gender-based violence.
- **Access to Justice:** Lack of valid residency permits adds an additional barrier to female Syrian refugees when trying to report sexual and gender-based crimes. This barrier, combined with corrupt police systems and social stigma, hinder many female refugees from reporting gender-based violence.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

We urge all states to ratify the 1951 Refugee Convention and Protocol, which is a foundation to the success of the Global Compact on Refugees, and commit to protecting and promoting the fundamental rights of all refugees. Further, with respect to the rights of female refugees, the Global Compact on Refugees should include the following commitments:

I. EMPLOYMENT

- 1) *Reaffirm states' obligations to the human rights of female refugees with respect to work, including the obligation to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women in employment.*
- 2) *Remove barriers to refugee women's employment, including onerous work permitting procedures, irregular residency status, and restrictions on or barriers to travel or changing employers, with particular attention paid to the needs of female-headed households, including opportunities for home-based labor and childcare support.*
- 3) *Ensure that national laws provide female refugees with the same rights and protections that are extended to all workers, including by creating avenues to protect women working in informal and seasonal sectors, such as domestic and agricultural labor.*
- 4) *Provide humanitarian assistance sufficient to meet the needs of refugee families, such that refugee women and girls are not forced to accept exploitative work conditions.*
- 5) *Expand employment opportunities available to refugee women, including by providing vocational training, with a focus on those entering the workforce for the first time as a result of their displacement.*

II. HOUSING

- 1) *Ensure that female refugees have equal access to affordable and adequate housing from the onset of any refugee crisis.*
- 2) *Work with UN concerned agencies, NGOs and civil society to create plans and procedures that would allow host countries to provide all refugees with regularized residency status at the moment they arrive into the country.*
- 3) *Establish an emergency plan for the rapid creation of adequate housing for refugees and provide UN concerned agencies, international organizations and NGOs with the necessary funds to implement these plans within the first 30 days of a refugee crisis.*
- 4) *Establish clear guidelines for host countries that will ensure that appropriate action is taken to provide housing for female refugees who are the heads of their households.*

III. SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTHCARE

- 1) *Work with UN concerned agencies, NGOs and non-profit and grassroots organizations to increase humanitarian aid organization's presence and funding in host countries to provide a wide variety of sexual and reproductive healthcare*

services to all women and girl refugees, and ensure they are located in areas near refugee populations.

- 2) *Have humanitarian organizations increase awareness of services to female refugees by actively reaching out to female refugees to provide and inform them of services offered, and how to access them when needed.*

IV. SEXUAL ASSAULT AND HARASSMENT

- 1) *Work with civil society and NGOs to create comprehensive programs that seek to prevent sexual abuse.*
- 2) *Ensure that healthcare and related services are available to women and girls who are victims/survivors of sexual abuse from the onset of any refugee crisis.*
- 3) *Take action against police and local officials who fail to investigate allegations of sexual assault and harassment committed against female refugees.*

V. CHILD MARRIAGE

- 1) *Partner with relevant parts of the government and NGOs to create and implement programs designed to better understand the root causes of increased child marriage within refugee communities during humanitarian crises, create programs taking steps to end child marriage, and monitor its effectiveness to improve programming.*
- 2) *Consult relevant parts of the government, grassroots organizations, faith-based leaders, and members of the refugee community to develop and implement a national plan to end child marriage within refugee communities, which addresses the drivers of child marriage.*

VI. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- 1) *Partner with UN concerned agencies, NGOs and civil society to create places for female refugees to report abuse, receive legal counseling, support, and services.*
- 2) *Partner with UN concerned agencies, NGOs and civil society to establish safe places for female refugee victims of domestic violence.*
- 3) *Create plans for integrating refugees into the host country through employment and education opportunities, to avoid populations living in mass poverty, which has been a catalyst to the increase in domestic violence among refugee communities.*
- 4) *Consult humanitarian organizations to develop educational programs training both men and women about domestic violence and its consequences, and helping men to develop new coping mechanisms to deal with the stress of being refugees.*

VII. EDUCATION

- 1) *Develop emergency plans in consultation with relevant parts of the government, UN concerned agencies, NGOs, grassroots organizations and members of refugee communities for current and future refugee crises that involve ensuring that young refugees, especially girls, are afforded opportunities to continue their education.*

- 2) *Partner with NGOs and humanitarian organizations to monitor and provide adequate educational services to refugee students and ensure that female students do not leave school early and complete their education.*

VIII. HUMAN TRAFFICKING

- 1) *Dedicate significant resources to combating the human trafficking of refugees and work collaboratively with regional governments to prevent transnational human trafficking.*
- 2) *In order to reduce instances of trafficking in persons among refugees, States should commit to providing safe and legal routes to migration.*
- 3) *States should commit to providing resources for survivors of trafficking.*
- 4) *Commit to enforcement of anti-trafficking policies in a manner consistent with the human rights of female refugees.*

IX. QUEER FEMALES

- 1) *Partner with NGOs and humanitarian organizations working on LGBT issues to execute programs that provide legal and healthcare services.*
- 2) *Take affirmative steps towards implementing comprehensive programs that seek to protect members of the LGBTI refugee community during times of humanitarian crisis.*

X. ACCESS TO JUSTICE

- 1) *Recognize that all refugees have a right to access justice services. This provision should clearly state that States have an affirmative obligation to ensure that refugees have access to these services, regardless of their legal status, gender identity, and sexual orientation.*
- 2) *Partner with NGOs and civil society to conduct public information campaigns to create awareness among refugee women and girls about their rights and the procedures for accessing justice in cases of gender-based violence.*
- 3) *Take affirmative steps towards implementing alternative programs, such as safe-houses, to allow female refugees to report abuses in a safe environment, regardless of their legal status, gender identity, and sexual orientation.*

DISCUSSION:

I. EMPLOYMENT

The majority of Syrian refugees living in Lebanon, Turkey, or Jordan live in poverty.³ Throughout the region, Syrian refugee women's access to employment is limited by gendered factors including discrimination, sexual harassment, lack of childcare, and family responsibilities.⁴ Restrictions on the right to work limit formal employment opportunities for all Syrian refugees, and the vast majority of Syrian refugee women who work do so in the informal sector.⁵ Syrian refugee women who work are typically paid considerably less than men,⁶ restricted to low-skilled sectors like agriculture and domestic work,⁷ and vulnerable to exploitative working conditions and sexual harassment.⁸ Lack of economic opportunity for Syrian refugee women also increases poverty and reliance on child labor in female-headed households.⁹

A. Lebanon

In September 2015, UNHCR estimated that 70% of Syrian refugee families were living below the Lebanese poverty line.¹⁰ In addition to extreme poverty, residency enforcement efforts targeting Syrian refugee men have forced some women and children into abusive work conditions, as they are less likely to be arrested for lack of legal status than men.¹¹

Syrian refugees in Lebanon, especially women, have limited access to employment. Access to the formal labor market is particularly limited: in 2014, 1,814 Syrian refugees applied for work permits, and only 758 were granted.¹² Overall, less than half of Syrian refugees were

³ See UNHCR, *UNHCR and Partners Warn in Syria Report of Growing Poverty, Refugee Needs* (July 5, 2016), <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/press/2016/7/577b717a4/unhcr-partners-warn-syria-report-growing-poverty-refugee-needs.html> [hereinafter UNHCR, *UNHCR and Partners*].

⁴ See ILO, *Assessment of the Impact of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon and Their Employment Profile*, at 42 (2014), http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_240134.pdf [hereinafter ILO, *Assessment of the Impact of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon*] (Lebanon); UN Women, *Women Working: Jordanian and Syrian Refugee Women's Labour Force Participation and Attitudes Towards Employment*, at 10 (2017), <http://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20jordan/attachments/publications/jordanian%20and%20syrian%20refugee.pdf?la=en&vs=1300> [hereinafter UN Women, *Women Working*] (Jordan).

⁵ See UNHCR, *Woman Alone: The Fight for Survival by Syria's Refugee Women*, at 30 (2015), <http://www.unhcr.org/ar/53bb8d006.pdf> [hereinafter UNHCR, *Woman Alone*].

⁶ See, e.g. Amnesty Int'l, Index No. MDE 18/001/2014, *Agonizing Choices: Syrian Refugees in Need of Health Care in Lebanon*, at 6 (2014), available for download at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/MDE18/001/2014/en/> [hereinafter Amnesty Int'l, *Agonizing Choices*] (Lebanon).

⁷ See, e.g. ILO, *Assessment of the Impact of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon*, at 25 (Lebanon).

⁸ See, e.g. Human Rights Watch, "I Just Wanted to Be Treated Like a Real Person": How Lebanon's Residency Rules Facilitate Abuse of Syrian Refugees, at 28 (2016), https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/lebanon0116web.pdf [hereinafter Human Rights Watch, *I Just Wanted to Be Treated Like a Real Person*] (Lebanon).

⁹ See UNHCR, *Woman Alone*, at 39-40.

¹⁰ See UNHCR, *Syrian Refugees: Inter-Agency Regional Update 2* (Sept. 2016), available for download at <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=9617> [hereinafter UNHCR, *Syrian Refugees*].

¹¹ See Human Rights Watch, *I Just Wanted to Be Treated Like a Real Person*, at 25.

¹² See *id.* at 23.

economically active, and almost a third of Syrian refugees in the labor market were unemployed.¹³ For Syrian refugee women, workforce participation rates were considerably lower: only one in five women participated in the economy, and two-thirds of women seeking work were unemployed.¹⁴ ILO and others have identified a number of gendered barriers to work in Lebanon, including limited opportunities, family and childcare responsibilities, and lack of skills.¹⁵ Syrian refugee women who work in Lebanon overwhelmingly work in either agriculture or as domestic workers; 71% of Syrian women who work are in unskilled jobs.¹⁶ These positions are characterized by low pay and little job security.¹⁷

Syrian refugee women in Lebanon report a range of exploitative work conditions. Employers take advantage of Syrian refugee women's desperation by paying low wages, or offering housing in lieu of wages.¹⁸ In 2016, a Syrian refugee woman's average monthly income was only \$115 – a full \$100 less than the average for Syrian refugee men.¹⁹ Syrian refugee women report instances of employers refusing to pay agreed wages or changing terms of work.²⁰ Syrian refugee women are also more likely to accept certain unhealthy working conditions than men: 75% of working Syrian refugee women suffer from back or joint pain, compared to 55% of working men.²¹ Three quarters of employed Syrian refugee women feel they have been forced to accept unfair working conditions,²² and some refugees and aid workers report that employers prefer to hire female refugees specifically because they will accept lower wages and other exploitative work conditions.²³

Syrian refugee women are also vulnerable to sexual harassment and exploitation in the workplace.²⁴ These abuses constitute a barrier to Syrian refugee women's employment, as some women leave jobs following sexual harassment or assault, and others decline to seek employment out of fear of sexual harassment.²⁵ One female refugee told Human Rights Watch that her boss had grabbed her at work: "If you don't accept your boss's advances you will get fired. For me, I prefer to stay at home to avoid sexual exploitation, even if my family barely has

¹³ See ILO, *Assessment of the Impact of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon*, at 23-24.

¹⁴ See *id.* at 22.

¹⁵ See *id.* at 42; see also Amnesty Int'l, Index No. MDE 18/3210/2016, 'I Want a Safe Place': Refugee Women from Syria Uprooted and Unprotected in Lebanon, at 34 (2016), available for download at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde18/3210/2016/en/> [hereinafter Amnesty Int'l, I Want a Safe Place] (refugee women cite childcare and difficulty obtaining work as barriers to employment in Lebanon).

¹⁶ See ILO, *Assessment of the Impact of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon*, at 25-26.

¹⁷ See *id.* at 9.

¹⁸ See Amnesty Int'l, I Want a Safe Place, at 34; Interview with Hiyam Alfassam, Head of Education Unit, Layan Campaign in New York, N.Y. (Oct. 20, 2017) (reporting an instance of a woman accepting a job doing domestic work in exchange for shelter for herself and her five children in a horse stable).

¹⁹ See UNHCR et al., *Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon*, at 56 (2016), <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/VASyR2016.pdf> [hereinafter UNHCR et al., *Vulnerability Assessment*]. In 2014, the ILO found similarly stark disparities between the wages paid to Syrian refugee men and women: working Syrian refugees had an average monthly income of LBP 418,000, well below both the minimum wage (LBP 675,000) and the 2007 poverty line (LBP 6,000 per person per day); for women, wages averaged only LBP 248,000, a rate 43% lower than that paid to Syrian refugee men. See ILO, *Assessment of the Impact of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon*, at 27-28.

²⁰ See Amnesty Int'l, I Want a Safe Place, at 34.

²¹ See ILO, *Assessment of the Impact of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon*, at 31.

²² See Amnesty Int'l, I Want a Safe Place, at 34.

²³ See Human Rights Watch, *I Just Wanted to Be Treated Like a Real Person*, at 28.

²⁴ See *id.*

²⁵ See *id.*

enough food.”²⁶ Another Syrian refugee woman reported that she had been fired after refusing several of her boss’ advances.²⁷ Syrian refugees typically lack recourse for workplace abuses because they commonly lack documentation and fear reporting to Lebanese authorities.²⁸

Child labor is also a significant issue among Syrian refugees. Nearly three quarters of street-based child laborers in Lebanon are Syrian; 27% of these Syrian child laborers are girls.²⁹ Almost all female street-based child laborers in Lebanon are engaged in begging, street vending, car-windshield cleaning, or fortunetelling.³⁰ Street-based child laborers are particularly vulnerable to abuse: 75% report verbal harassment and aggression by passers-by, 46% report physical harassment by passers-by, and 6% report sexual assault or rape while working.³¹

B. Turkey

Female Syrian refugees in Turkey face barriers to labor market participation. Although Syrians with temporary protection status are formally permitted to apply for work permits in Turkey, a number of barriers exist to obtaining permits.³²

The intersection of these factors leaves Syrian refugee women particularly vulnerable to exclusion from, and abuse within, the Turkish labor force. Faced with sexual, physical, and verbal harassment, lack of childcare, and discrimination, fewer than one in five female Syrian refugees were employed in Turkey in 2014.³³ By contrast, more than 80% of male Syrian refugees reported some income from employment.³⁴ The limited data available on Syrian refugee women’s employment in Turkey suggests that the majority of women who do find work are engaged in agricultural or domestic labor outside the formal labor market.³⁵ Syrian refugee women have reported pay rates less than half that of Turkish coworkers.³⁶ Disparities are particularly extreme in the case of domestic labor, for which Syrian refugee women are paid as

²⁶ *See Id.*

²⁷ *See id.*

²⁸ *See id.*

²⁹ *See* ILO et al., *Children Living and Working on the Streets in Lebanon: Profile and Magnitude*, at 33, 35 (2015), https://www.unicef.org/lebanon/Final_Study_SBC_En.pdf [hereinafter ILO et al., *Children Living and Working on the Streets in Lebanon*].

³⁰ *See id.* at 36.

³¹ *See id.* at 49.

³² *See* Human Rights Watch, *EU: Don’t Send Syrians Back to Turkey: Lack of Jobs, School, Health Care Spurs Poverty, Exploitation* (June 20, 2016), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/06/20/eu-dont-send-syrians-back-turkey> [hereinafter Human Rights Watch, *EU*]. Barriers to obtaining permits include long delays in the registration process for temporary protection status, requirements for employer sponsorship and that Syrians compose no more than 10% of an employer’s workforce, and limits on permits to a province where the applicant has been registered for at least six months. *See id.*

³³ *See* Disaster & Emergency Mgmt. Auth. (AFAD), *Syrian Women in Turkey*, at 28 (2014), <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/54512> (reporting 86.9% of Syrian refugee women in Turkey describe themselves as either “housewives” or having “no occupation”); Yasemin Mert, *Dangerous Journeys: Violence Against Women Migrants in Turkey*, openDemocracy (Dec. 8, 2016), <https://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/yasemin-mert/dangerous-journeys-women-migrants-in-turkey>.

³⁴ *See* Disaster & Emergency Mgmt. Auth. (AFAD) at 28.

³⁵ *See* Mert at 28; Diego Cupolo, *The Never-Ending Harvest: Syrian Refugees Exploited on Turkish Farms*, IRIN, Dec. 15, 2016, <https://www.irinnews.org/photo-feature/2016/12/15/never-ending-harvest-syrian-refugees-exploited-turkish-farms>.

³⁶ *See* Human Rights Watch, *EU*.

little as a tenth of a Turkish worker's wages.³⁷ Syrian women in Turkey also report instances of physical abuse by managers.³⁸ Others report experiencing wage theft, verbal harassment, and discrimination in the workplace.³⁹

These abuses are particularly harmful in the case of the approximately one third of Syrian refugee households in Turkey headed by women or children, which are reliant on women's income.⁴⁰ In a 2014 study conducted by the Turkish Disaster and Emergency Management Authority, 96.7% of female Syrian refugee heads of household reported having earned no income at all in the previous month.⁴¹

C. Jordan

More than 90% of Syrian refugees registered in Jordan live below the national poverty line of \$87 per month.⁴² Almost half of Syrian refugees in one survey reported cutting other needs, such as education or healthcare, to pay for food.⁴³ Poverty rates are even higher among female-headed households, which have an average expenditure that is 1.6 times greater than their income.⁴⁴ Households headed by women have less access to income from employment than households headed by men: a UNHCR survey in Jordan in 2013 found that 26% of Syrian households in Jordan reported some income from work, but only 9% of female-headed households had income from work.⁴⁵ The number of these households has increased significantly: 39% of Syrian refugee households in Jordan were female-headed in 2016, compared to 25% only a few years earlier.⁴⁶

Enforcement efforts that target male refugees, as well as low wages for men and a high cost of living, have pushed some women and girls into the workforce.⁴⁷ Syrian refugee women

³⁷ See M Mazlumder, *The Report on Syrian Women Refugees Living Out of the Camps*, at 43 (2014), [http://world.mazlumder.org/webimage/files/The%20Report%20on%20Syrian%20Women%20Refugees\(2\).pdf](http://world.mazlumder.org/webimage/files/The%20Report%20on%20Syrian%20Women%20Refugees(2).pdf).

³⁸ See Human Rights Watch, *EU*.

³⁹ See *id.*

⁴⁰ See Zeynep Kivilcim, *Legal Violence Against Syrian Female Refugees in Turkey*, 24 *Feminist Legal Stud.* 193, 204 (2016), <https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007%2Fs10691-016-9323-y.pdf> [hereinafter Kivilcim, *Legal Violence*].

⁴¹ See Disaster & Emergency Mgmt. Auth. (AFAD) at 30.

⁴² See Int'l Rescue Comm., *In Search of Work: Creating Jobs for Syrian Refugees: A Case Study of the Jordan Compact*, at 5 (2017), <https://www.rescue.org/sites/default/files/document/1343/insearchofworkweb.pdf> [hereinafter Int'l Rescue Comm., *In Search of Work*].

⁴³ See CARE, *Six Years into Exile: The Challenges and Coping Strategies of Non-Camp Syrian Refugees in Jordan and Their Host Communities*, at 11 (2016), <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2016AssessmentoftheSituationofUrbanSyrianRefugees%26VulnerableJordanians-FullReport.pdf> [hereinafter CARE, *Six Years into Exile*].

⁴⁴ See UNFPA, *More Than Numbers: Regional Overview: Responding to Gender-based Violence in the Syrian Crisis*, at 13 (2016), https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/SYRIA%20CRISIS%20_%20MORE%20THAN%20NUMBERS%20%20GBV%20%20ENG%20_0.pdf [hereinafter UNFPA, *More Than Numbers*]; Sarah Aziza, *Dignity in Displacement: Syrian Widows in Jordan Take Charge of Their New Lives*, *Intercept*, Sept. 24, 2017, <https://theintercept.com/2017/09/24/syria-women-refugees-jordan-karama/>.

⁴⁵ See UNHCR, *Woman Alone* at 30.

⁴⁶ See CARE, *On Her Own: Women Forced to Flee from Syria Are Shouldering Increased Responsibility as They Struggle to Survive*, at 5 (2016), https://www.care.org/sites/default/files/documents/care_on-her-own_refugee-media-report_sept-2016.pdf [hereinafter CARE, *On Her Own*].

⁴⁷ See CARE, *Six Years into Exile*, at 20, 67.

are increasingly the primary wage earners in their family: the number of households reporting a female primary wage-earner increased 10% between 2015 and 2016.⁴⁸

However, Syrian refugee women face substantial barriers to employment in Jordan. According to a UN Women assessment carried out in 2016, only 6% of Syrian refugee women in Jordan are employed.⁴⁹ In the same assessment, 17% reported that they had worked in Syria prior to the conflict, a rate comparable to the 20% of Jordanian women who are employed.⁵⁰ Accordingly, UN Women has concluded that Syrian women's low employment rate is likely a consequence of displacement rather than attitudes toward work.⁵¹

Nearly half of Syrian refugees employed in Jordan lack work permits.⁵² Even after the Jordanian government announced a fee waiver for Syrian applicants in April 2016, paperwork required from employers and landlords have made permits unobtainable for many Syrian refugees.⁵³ Permits are tied to a single employer and valid for only one year.⁵⁴ Women are much more likely than men to be working without a permit: the Jordanian Ministry of Labor issued 25,455 work permits to Syrians between January and mid-September 2016, but issued only 357 permits to women.⁵⁵ Only 2% of Syrian refugee women hold work permits, and women hold about 5% of the total number of permits issued to Syrian refugees.⁵⁶

UN Women concluded that gender discrimination is a likely barrier to employment for Syrian refugee women.⁵⁷ Additional gendered barriers to employment include lack of affordable childcare, fears of harassment while travelling, and workplace harassment, violence, and exploitation.⁵⁸

⁴⁸ See *id.* at 76.

⁴⁹ See UN Women, *Women Working* at 6. UN Women notes it is likely that Syrian economic activity is underreported because it commonly infringes Jordanian labor law. See *id.* at 7. Rates of employment are likely considerably higher in outside refugee camps: the Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium estimates 20-30% of Syrian refugee women are engaged in some form of paid part-time work in the city of Irbid, and even more participate in annual olive harvests, but estimated women's employment rate in the Zaatari refugee camp as less than 5-10%. See Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium, *Uncertain Livelihoods in Refugee Environments*, at 15-18 (2016),

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5902069740f0b606e700024e/Uncertain_livelihoods_in_refugee_environments_-_Between_risk_and_tradition_for_Syrian_refugee_women_in_Jordan.pdf

⁵⁰ See UN Women, *Women Working*, at 6, 10.

⁵¹ See *id.* at 28.

⁵² See ILO, *Work Permits and Employment of Syrian Refugees in Jordan: Towards Formalising the Work of Syrian Refugees*, at 30 (2017), http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_559151.pdf [hereinafter ILO, *Work Permits and Employment of Syrian Refugees in Jordan*].

⁵³ See Int'l Rescue Comm., *In Search of Work*, at 12.

⁵⁴ See *id.*

⁵⁵ See Ann M. Simmons, *Widowed, Divorced, Abandoned: Syrian Refugee Women Forge New Lives in Jordan*, L.A. Times, Oct. 24, 2016, <http://www.latimes.com/world/global-development/la-fg-global-women-syrian-refugees-snap-story.html>. [hereinafter Simmons, *Widowed, Divorced, Abandoned*].

⁵⁶ See UN Women, *Women Working*, at 23; Dina Mansour-Illé & Emma Samman, *The Future of Work for Syrian Refugee Women in Jordan: Is the "Gig Economy" an Opportunity?*, Jadaliyya, July 11, 2017, <http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/26861/the-future-of-work-for-syrian-refugee-women-in-jor>; ILO, *Work Permits and Employment of Syrian Refugees in Jordan*, at 52.

⁵⁷ See UN Women, *Women Working*, at 24.

⁵⁸ See *id.* at 21 (Syrian refugees are nearly twice as likely as Jordanian women to perceive childcare and household responsibilities as an obstacle to employment.); Simmons, *Widowed, Divorced, Abandoned*; Int'l Rescue Comm., *In Search of Work*, at 12, 16; UN Women, *Women Working*, at 24.

Economic insecurity has led to a high rate of child labor among Syrian refugees in Jordan. In 47% of households where someone works, a child is contributing, and households headed by women are more likely to rely on child labor than households headed by men in Jordan.⁵⁹ Eighty percent of employed girls work in domestic work or agriculture, both high-risk sectors for physical abuse and sexual exploitation.⁶⁰

II. HOUSING

One of the principle concerns of female Syrian refugees in the region is access to adequate and affordable housing.⁶¹ Due to limited supply and high rental prices, many female Syrian refugees live in overcrowded and substandard housing.⁶² Women who are the head of their household are particularly effected and often face discrimination in accessing housing, difficulty in paying for housing and harassment by landlords.⁶³ Many female Syrian refugees also report being approached by landlords for sex in lieu of rent.⁶⁴

A. Lebanon

Housing is a major concern for the refugee community in Lebanon.⁶⁵ Due to high rent prices and limited income generating opportunities, 55% of Syrian refugees live in informal tented settlements or other substandard shelters.⁶⁶ Female Syrian refugees are disproportionately impacted by inadequate living conditions, which negatively impact their health, physical safety and emotional wellbeing.⁶⁷

Female-headed households are among the most vulnerable in terms of shelter.⁶⁸ Due to the precarious legal status of most female Syrian refugees in Lebanon, landlords have a considerable amount of power over their female tenants.⁶⁹ Amnesty International found that landlords often exploit their female tenants and routinely increase rent.⁷⁰ Women who are unable to pay high rental fees often face eviction or are propositioned for “survival sex” – an offer to reduce rent in exchange for sex.⁷¹ Anecdotal evidence obtained by Amnesty International suggests that eviction is a major concern for female Syrian refugees.⁷² One woman who was

⁵⁹ See UN Women, *Gender-based Violence and Child Protection Among Syrian Refugees in Jordan, with a Focus on Early Marriage*, at 3 (2013), available for download at <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=4351> [hereinafter UN Women, *Gender-based Violence*]; UNHCR, *Woman Alone*, at 40.

⁶⁰ See *id.* at 3.

⁶¹ See CARE, *Six Years into Exile*, at 11.

⁶² See, e.g. *id.*

⁶³ See, e.g. *id.*

⁶⁴ See Int’l Rescue Committee, *Are We Listening?: Acting on Our Commitments to Women and Girls Affected by the Syrian Conflict*, at 8 (2014), available at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20150524195128/http://www.rescue-uk.org/sites/default/files/Women%20of%20syria%20-%20For%20web%20version2.pdf> [hereinafter Int’l Rescue Comm., *Are We Listening?*].

⁶⁵ See UNHCR, *Woman Alone*, at 8.

⁶⁶ See Amnesty Int’l, *Pushed to the Edge: Syrian Refugees Face Increased Restrictions in Lebanon* AI Index: MDE 24/1785/2015 22 (2015), available for download at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde24/1785/2015/en/>.

⁶⁷ See UNHCR, *Woman Alone*, at 17.

⁶⁸ See *id.*

⁶⁹ See *id.*

⁷⁰ See Amnesty Int’l, *I Want a Safe Place*, at 41.

⁷¹ See *id.*

⁷² See *id.* at 34.

interviewed by the group stated that the longest period of time she had remained in a single place was six months due to evictions.⁷³

High rental fees for apartments and formal housing also force women to seek alternative forms of shelter for their families.⁷⁴ Hiyam Alfassam, Head of Education Unit in Layan Campaign, noted that during a 2013 trip to Beqaa Valley, she encountered a woman who was living in a horse stable with her five children.⁷⁵ The woman, who had previously been living on the streets, had agreed to work the lands of a local farm in exchange for the ability to live in the stable with her children.⁷⁶

B. Jordan

Syrian refugees in Jordan face prohibitively expensive rent prices and a limited supply of housing.⁷⁷ A 2016 poll conducted by CARE International found that the primary concern of Syrian refugees in Jordan is paying rent.⁷⁸ The majority of refugees who are able to secure housing live in cramped accommodations where they lack both privacy and security.⁷⁹

Women are particularly burdened by the limited supply of accommodations and high rent prices. Due to the limited economic opportunities available to working age women, female-headed households struggle to keep up with rising rent.⁸⁰ In 2016, CARE reported that nearly 10% of households headed by women refugees in Jordan faced the immediate threat of eviction, and a third were in debt with their landlords.⁸¹ Female-headed households also face barriers to finding adequate housing in the first place.⁸² According to several female refugees interviewed by CARE, landlords often refuse to rent to women-headed households because they are viewed as “socially problematic” and unlikely to keep up with rent.⁸³ Additionally, some Syrian refugee women report sexual harassment by landlords, including offers of free accommodation or money in exchange for sex.⁸⁴

III. SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTHCARE

Syrian refugee women throughout the region have had their sexual and reproductive health compromised by common factors, including gender-based violence (rape, assault, harassment, intimate partner violence, and child marriage), early pregnancy, frequent UTIs, and

⁷³ *See id.*

⁷⁴ Interview with Hiyam Alfassam, Head of Education Unit, Layan Campaign in New York, N.Y. (Oct. 20, 2017).

⁷⁵ *See id.*

⁷⁶ *See id.*

⁷⁷ *See* CARE, *On Her Own*, at 11.

⁷⁸ *See* CARE, *Six Years into Exile*, at 11.

⁷⁹ *See id.*

⁸⁰ *See* CARE, *On Her Own*, at 11.

⁸¹ *See id.*

⁸² *See* CARE, *Syrian Refugees in Urban Jordan: Baseline Assessment of Community-Identified Vulnerabilities Among Syrian Refugees Living in Irbid, Madaba, Mufraq, and Zarqa*, at 37 (2013), <http://www.care.org/sites/default/files/documents/EMER-JOR-2013-Syrian-Refugees-in-Urban-Jordan.pdf> [*hereinafter* CARE, *Syrian Refugees in Urban Jordan*].

⁸³ *See id.*

⁸⁴ *See* CARE, *On Her Own*, at 11.

complications during pregnancy.⁸⁵ Barriers to accessing healthcare include cost, distance, fear of mistreatment, unavailability of female doctors, insufficient services, and lack of awareness regarding those services that do exist.⁸⁶ Women's health is further compromised by the prioritization of other family members and general fear of seeking services.⁸⁷ Regionally, UNFPA provided 23,949 reproductive health services in July 2017 to a population of more than 1,264,500 Syrian refugee women and girls of reproductive age, 110,000 of whom were pregnant.⁸⁸ In the same month, only 5,557 Syrian refugee women received family planning services or consultations.⁸⁹

A. Lebanon

Although data on Syrian refugee women's health in Lebanon is limited, Syrian refugees report sexual and reproductive health problems, including menstrual irregularity, infections, and severe pelvic pain.⁹⁰ Access to contraception is also lacking in Lebanon with nearly 60% of Syrian women reporting using contraceptives prior to the conflict, but only 34.5% report using family planning in Lebanon.⁹¹ A study by BMC Women's Health revealed that of the person's surveyed, 65.5% of female Syrian refugees between the ages of 18 and 45 did not use any form of birth control.⁹² As a result, the average age for a Syrian woman to become pregnant was 19.⁹³ The study further noted that almost half (49.7%) of Syrian refugee women identified cost as a barrier to accessing reproductive health services, with the distance to travel to clinics (25.4%), fear of mistreatment (7.9%), security concerns (6.2%), shame or embarrassment (6.2%), and other unspecified reasons (4.5%) following in that order.⁹⁴ Furthermore, only 37.8% of the refugees surveyed were aware that reproductive health services were available, while 44.7% perceived services as unavailable and 16.8% were unsure on availability.⁹⁵ Based on its research, BMC found that female Syrian refugees in Lebanon have poor reproductive health, including "gynecologic conditions, pregnancy and delivery complication, and poor birth outcomes."⁹⁶

Access to medical care in Lebanon is severely limited by high costs and other factors.⁹⁷ UNFPA delivered only 197 reproductive health services to female Syrian refugees in Lebanon in July 2017.⁹⁸ Limited information about those services that are available also poses a barrier to

⁸⁵ See Goleen Samarai, *The Response to Syrian Refugee Women's Health Needs in Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan and Recommendations for Improved Practice*, Human. in Action (2015),

<https://www.humanityinaction.org/knowledgebase/583-the-response-to-syrian-refugee-women-s-health-needs-in-lebanon-turkey-and-jordan-and-recommendations-for-improved-practice>. [hereinafter Samarai]

⁸⁶ *See id.*

⁸⁷ *See id.*

⁸⁸ *See* UNFPA, *More Than Numbers*, at 1, 3.

⁸⁹ *See id.* at 1.

⁹⁰ *See* Samarai.

⁹¹ *See* Samarai.

⁹² Amelia Reese Masterson et al., *Healthcare Access and Health Concerns among Syrian Refugees Living in Camps or Urban Settings Overseas*, BMC Women's Health (Feb. 20, 2014),

<https://www.cdc.gov/immigrantrefugeehealth/profiles/syrian/healthcare-diet/index.html#twenty-four>,

⁹³ *See id.*

⁹⁴ *See id.*

⁹⁵ *See id.*

⁹⁶ *See id.*

⁹⁷ *See* Amnesty Int'l, *Agonizing Choices*, at 23.

⁹⁸ *See* UNFPA, *More Than Numbers*, at 3.

healthcare as Syrian refugees report finding eligibility criteria for UNHCR healthcare subsidies extremely confusing.⁹⁹

B. Turkey

Fewer NGOs are working to deliver refugee healthcare in Turkey than in Lebanon and Jordan, and authorities have restricted access to camps to evaluate existing services.¹⁰⁰ However, female Syrian refugees' sexual and reproductive health in Turkey's refugee camps is known to be compromised by lack of access to basic hygiene.¹⁰¹ Syrian refugees in Turkey have reported a variety of sexual and reproductive health issues associated with the trauma and stress of the conflict and their displacement, ranging from menstrual irregularities to miscarriage.¹⁰²

Despite extensive need, access to treatment is severely lacking. UNFPA delivered only 8,386 reproductive health services to female Syrian refugees in Turkey in July 2017.¹⁰³ Long delays in the registration process for temporary protection status impose a barrier to accessing healthcare.¹⁰⁴ For those who are not registered, access is limited to emergency and private healthcare; for those who are registered, primary care is in principle available.¹⁰⁵ However, women have reported being turned away from hospitals. For example, one family lacking registration reported that a hospital refused to deliver a baby without payment.¹⁰⁶ Curfews impose an additional barrier to accessing medical services, as healthcare is denied altogether during curfew periods.¹⁰⁷

Syrian women attempting to enter Turkey are also at risk, and pregnant women in camps on the border between Syria and Turkey have been denied medical treatment.¹⁰⁸

C. Jordan

Syrian refugee women and girls' healthcare needs have escalated since arriving in Jordan. For example, women and girls are giving birth at earlier ages as child marriages become more common in Jordan.¹⁰⁹ Despite this need, Syrian refugees in Jordan face increasing obstacles to accessing healthcare, including financial barriers, medical centers with limited resources, long wait times, rude staff, lack of information about where to access care, unavailability of female medical providers, and availability of family planning services limited to married female Syrian

⁹⁹ See Amnesty Int'l, *Agonizing Choices*, at 6.

¹⁰⁰ See Samarai.

¹⁰¹ See *id.*

¹⁰² See Global Fund for Women, *Spotlight on Turkey* (April 27, 2016),

<https://www.globalfundforwomen.org/women-discuss-crisis-in-turkey/#.WeTTbxNSxE4>. [hereinafter Global Fund for Women]

¹⁰³ See UNFPA, *More Than Numbers*, at 3.

¹⁰⁴ See Human Rights Watch, *EU*.

¹⁰⁵ See *id.*

¹⁰⁶ See Global Fund for Women; see also Human Rights Watch, *EU*.

¹⁰⁷ See Global Fund for Women.

¹⁰⁸ See MADRE et al., *Human Rights Violations Against Women and Girls in Syria: Submission to the United Nations Universal Periodic Review of the Syrian Arab Republic*, at 3 (submitted Mar. 24, 2016), <https://www.madre.org/sites/default/files/PDFs/Syria%20UPR%20submission%20Final.pdf>.

¹⁰⁹ See Amnesty Int'l, Index No. MDE 16/3628/2016, *Living on the Margins: Syrian Refugees in Jordan Struggle to Access Health Care*, at 18 (2016) [hereinafter Amnesty Int'l, *Living on the Margins*].

refugees.¹¹⁰ An assessment of women in refugee camps found 17% lacked access to prenatal care during pregnancy, and half of Syrian refugee women living in urban areas are unable to afford the fees or transport costs associated with prenatal care.¹¹¹ Overall, only 56.3% of Syrian refugee participants of a 2016 CARE survey who have pregnant women in their families reported access to prenatal care, and only 47.9% of participants with lactating women in their families reported access to postnatal care.¹¹²

IV. SEXUAL ASSAULT AND HARASSMENT

Sexual assault and harassment is a part of everyday life for many female Syrian refugees in Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan. In 2014, UNHCR surveyed female Syrian refugees across the Middle East and found that 60% felt insecure and were afraid of both violence and harassment.¹¹³ According to those surveyed, sexual harassment and assault is perpetrated by a variety of actors, including cab drivers, landlords, service providers, and strangers in public spaces.¹¹⁴

Harassment has psychological, physical, and economic consequences.¹¹⁵ These consequences may include shame, domestic violence, loss of employment and limited access to services due to self-imposed limitations on mobility.¹¹⁶ Nearly half of the Syrian refugee women interviewed by UNHCR indicated that they leave their homes less often than they did when they lived in Syria, and one in three women stated that they no longer leave their homes at all.¹¹⁷ The pervasiveness of sexual assault and harassment has also contributed to an increase in the rate of child marriage as families seek the protection of a male guardian for their daughters.¹¹⁸

Regionally, services for victims/survivors of sexual assault and harassment are very limited. In July 2017, UNFPA reported that 17,870 Syrian women accessed women's safe spaces, UNFPA facilities that provide a variety of services to women and girls, including women's health and maternal health services, psychosocial support and legal counseling.¹¹⁹ The UNFPA also reported that only 3,189 Syrians in the region received gender-based violence services.¹²⁰ The number of female Syrian refugees who have accessed these services is miniscule considering that there are an estimated 2.37 million female Syrian refugees in the region.¹²¹

¹¹⁰ See Amnesty Int'l, *Living on the Margins*, at 18-19; *CARE, Syrian Refugees in Urban Jordan* at 34 (noting that 23% of women in refugee camps were unaware of reproductive health services); Ctrs. for Disease Control & Prevention, *Healthcare Access and Health Concerns Among Syrian Refugees Living in Camps or Urban Settings Overseas* (Jan. 10, 2017), <https://www.cdc.gov/immigrantrefugeehealth/profiles/syrian/healthcare-diet/index.html>.

¹¹¹ See Samarai; Amnesty Int'l, *Living on the Margins*, at 18-19.

¹¹² See *CARE, Syrian Refugees in Urban Jordan*, at 60.

¹¹³ See UNHCR, *Woman Alone*, at 46.

¹¹⁴ See *id.*

¹¹⁵ See Int'l Rescue Comm., *Are We Listening?*, at 7.

¹¹⁶ See *id.* at 7-8.

¹¹⁷ See *id.* at 7.

¹¹⁸ See Amnesty Int'l, *I Want a Safe Place*, at 50.

¹¹⁹ See UNFPA, *Regional Situation Report for Syria Crisis*, Issue No. 59, at 3 (1-31 July 2017), http://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/Regional_Situation_Report_for_Syria_Crisis-Issue_59-July.pdf [hereinafter UNFPA, *Regional Situation Report 59*].

¹²⁰ See *id.*

¹²¹ See UNFPA, *Syrian Regional Refugee Response Inter-agency Information Sharing Portal*, <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php> (accessed Oct. 29, 2017) [hereinafter UNFPA, *Syrian Regional Refugee Response Inter-agency Information Sharing Portal*].

A. Lebanon

Female Syrian refugees in Lebanon are subjected to pervasive harassment in public spaces by a wide variety of state and non-state actors, including police officers, government employees reviewing residence permits, employers, neighbors, transportation providers, and strangers.¹²² Female heads of households are particularly vulnerable to abuse and harassment from landlords, employers and neighbors who are aware that there is no adult male in the household.¹²³ One female Syrian refugee interviewed by Amnesty International reported that men in her neighborhood constantly offer to do favors for her in exchange for sex because they know her husband does not live with her.¹²⁴

The prevalence of this harassment traps many women and girls in their homes.¹²⁵ Anecdotal evidence suggests that some female Syrian refugees in Lebanon choose to remain in their homes out of fear of public harassment, while others are forced to remain inside by family members who claim to be protecting them.¹²⁶ The International Rescue Committee noted that during interviews with focus groups of female Syrian refugees, many of the women reported that they were incapable of leaving their homes due to restrictions placed on them by family members.¹²⁷

Services for female victims/survivors of sexual harassment and abuse are extremely limited. UNFPA only operates 11 facilities that are designated as safe spaces for female Syrian refugees.¹²⁸ Further, sexual violence is rarely reported in Lebanon.¹²⁹ Women and girls who lack valid residency permits are reluctant to seek assistance from local officials who may detain them.¹³⁰ Additionally, women and girls may refrain from reporting abuse due to the social stigma attached to sexual violence and the trauma associated with confiding in officials that lack appropriate training.¹³¹

In 2013, Human Rights Watch reported that it had interviewed a dozen female Syrian refugees in Lebanon who had been sexually harassed by employers, landlords, and aid workers; the women reported being groped, harassed, and pressured to have sex.¹³² None had reported the incidents to local authorities, citing fear the authorities would not take action, fear of reprisals by their abusers, and fear of arrest for lacking valid residency permits.¹³³

¹²² See Amnesty Int'l, *I Want a Safe Place*, at 6; see also Human Rights Watch, *I Just Wanted to Be Treated Like a Real Person*, at 28 (noting that Syrian refugee women in Lebanon report sexual harassment and abuse by a variety of actors, including government officials, employers, and sponsors of residency documents).

¹²³ See Amnesty Int'l, *I Want a Safe Place*, at 57.

¹²⁴ *Id.* at 6.

¹²⁵ *Id.* at 51.

¹²⁶ See Int'l Rescue Comm., *Syrian Women & Girls: Fleeing Death, Facing Ongoing Threats and Humiliation: A Gender-Based Violence Rapid Assessment, Syrian Refugee Populations, Lebanon*, at 8 (2012) [hereinafter, Int'l Rescue Comm., *Syrian Women & Girls*].

¹²⁷ *Id.* at 8-9.

¹²⁸ See UNFPA, *Regional Situation Report 59*, at 3.

¹²⁹ See Human Rights Watch, "It's Part of the Job": Ill-Treatment and Torture of Vulnerable Groups in Lebanese Police Stations, at 33 (2013), https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/lebanon0613_forUpload_1.pdf [hereinafter Human Rights Watch, *It's Part of the Job*].

¹³⁰ See Amnesty Int'l, *I Want a Safe Place*, at 6.

¹³¹ See Human Rights Watch, *It's Part of the Job*, at 33.

¹³² See Human Rights Watch, *Lebanon: Women Refugees from Syria Harassed, Exploited* (Nov. 26, 2013), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2013/11/26/lebanon-women-refugees-syria-harassed-exploited> [hereinafter, Human Rights Watch, *Women Refugees*].

¹³³ See *id.*

B. Turkey

Fear of sexual assault and sexual harassment is a part of the everyday lives of female Syrian refugees in Turkey. Since the beginning of the refugee crisis, incidents of sexual assault and harassment have increased as tensions have risen within Turkey.¹³⁴ Syrian women reported escalating levels of rape and sexual harassment in Turkey to the Global Fund for Women in 2016.¹³⁵

Female Syrian refugees in Turkey also report being targeted by police for verbal abuse, threats, rape, and sexual abuse.¹³⁶ Services and support for victims/survivors in Turkey is also limited.¹³⁷ The UNFPA supports only 20 safe spaces for women and girls in Turkey.¹³⁸

C. Jordan

Syrian refugee women in Jordan report near-constant harassment, including offers of transactional sexual relations.¹³⁹ Women heads of households are particularly vulnerable to this harassment.¹⁴⁰

Fear of harassment has severely limited the mobility of Syrian women and girls in Jordan. Adult women are only half as likely as boys to go outside their homes on a daily basis (26.9% and 47.3%, respectively) and 41.2% of women and 34.1% of girls rarely or never leave the house.¹⁴¹ According to UN Women, Syrian women in Jordan are 23% less likely to go out alone than men.¹⁴² Additionally, UN Women found that fear of harassment has discouraged Syrian women from seeking employment.¹⁴³ As in both Lebanon and Turkey, there are limited resources available for victims/survivors of sexual assault and harassment and the UNFPA only supports 14 facilities that are designated as safe spaces for women in Jordan.¹⁴⁴

V. CHILD MARRIAGE

Child marriage was practiced in some Syrian communities prior to the refugee crisis: in 2011, 13% of girls under the age of 18 were married in Syria.¹⁴⁵ However, throughout the region, the conditions of displacement have contributed to an increasing rate of child marriage among

¹³⁴ See *Spotlight on Turkey*, Global Fund for Women (June 29, 2016), <https://www.globalfundforwomen.org/women-discuss-crisis-in-turkey/#.WeZOgUzMygQ>. [hereinafter *Spotlight on Turkey*].

¹³⁵ See *id.*

¹³⁶ See *Spotlight on Turkey*.

¹³⁷ See UNFPA, Regional Situation Report 59.

¹³⁸ See *id.*

¹³⁹ See CARE, Syrian Refugees in Urban Jordan, at 5.

¹⁴⁰ See *id.* at 37.

¹⁴¹ See UN Women, Gender-based Violence, at 3.

¹⁴² See *id.* at 23.

¹⁴³ See UN Women, Women Working, at 24.

¹⁴⁴ See UNFPA, Regional Situation Report 59.

¹⁴⁵ See Save the Children, Too Young to Wed, at 1; see also UN Women, Gender-based Violence, at 29-30 (More than half of Syrian refugee women surveyed in Jordan indicated that they had themselves married before the age of 18, and many indicated that they considered marrying daughters at 17 to be an element of their culture rather than a result of the conflict or refugee status.).

Syrian refugees, particularly among girls. Some estimates place the rate of child marriage among Syrian refugees at four times the rate that had existed among Syrians before the crisis.¹⁴⁶ Throughout the region, this escalation in child marriage is driven by refugees' extreme poverty, physical insecurity, and vulnerability to sexual violence.¹⁴⁷

Child marriage exposes girls to a heightened risk of sexual and domestic violence, health risks associated with violence and early childbirth, disrupted education, limited economic opportunities, and social isolation, among other harms.¹⁴⁸ A girl who marries before 18 is more likely to experience domestic violence than a peer who marries later.¹⁴⁹ A girl under the age of 15 is five times more likely to die in childbirth than an adult woman.¹⁵⁰

In the context of conflict and humanitarian crises, child marriage is particularly dangerous, as social systems allowing families to vet husbands' capacity to support their wives are disrupted, and marriages are likely to be conducted without formal registration or other mechanisms intended to protect the girl in the event of divorce.¹⁵¹ Greater age disparities between a child bride and her husband also increase the risk of violence, abuse, and exploitation.¹⁵² In 2012, 16.2% of Syrian refugee girls in Jordan who married between the ages of 15 and 17 married a man who was fifteen years or more older than themselves.¹⁵³

A. Lebanon

A UNFPA survey of Syrian women and girls conducted in Western Bekaa in 2016 found an "alarming rise" in the rate of child marriage among Syrian refugees in Lebanon.¹⁵⁴ That survey indicated that nearly 35% of women ages 20-24 had married under the age of 18, and that 24% of girls ages 15-17 were already married.¹⁵⁵ There is no Lebanese law prohibiting child marriage, and religious courts are permitted to sanction marriages of girls as young as 15.¹⁵⁶ Aid workers report that marriages sometimes occur involving girls as young as 12.¹⁵⁷

¹⁴⁶ See UNFPA, *New Study Finds Child Marriage Rising Among Most Vulnerable Syrian Refugees* (Jan. 31, 2017), <http://www.unfpa.org/news/new-study-finds-child-marriage-rising-among-most-vulnerable-syrian-refugees> [hereinafter, UNFPA, *New Study*].

¹⁴⁷ See Amnesty Int'l, *I Want a Safe Place*, at 50 (Lebanon); *Girls Not Brides, Child Marriage Around the World: Turkey*, <https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/child-marriage/turkey/> (last visited Oct. 15, 2017) [hereinafter, *Girls Not Brides, Turkey*] (Turkey); *Save the Children, Too Young to Wed*, at 1 (Jordan).

¹⁴⁸ See *Save the Children, Too Young to Wed*, at 2; *Girls Not Brides, Child Marriage and the Syrian Conflict: 7 Things You Need to Know* (June 20, 2017), <http://www.girlsnotbrides.org/child-marriage-and-the-syrian-conflict-7-things-you-need-to-know/> [hereinafter, *Girls Not Brides, Child Marriage and the Syrian Conflict*].

¹⁴⁹ See *Save the Children, Too Young to Wed*, at 2.

¹⁵⁰ See *id.*

¹⁵¹ See Int'l Rescue Comm., *Are We Listening?* at 8.

¹⁵² See *Save the Children, Too Young to Wed*, at 6.

¹⁵³ See Int'l Rescue Comm., *Are We Listening?* at 10. Compare this number to the 7.0% of Jordanian girls who married early who married a man fifteen years or older than herself. See *id.*

¹⁵⁴ See UNFPA, *New Study*.

¹⁵⁵ See *id.* *Girls Not Brides* estimates the rate of child marriage among Syrian refugees is even higher. See *Girls Not Brides, Child Marriage and the Syrian Conflict* (Reporting 41% of Syrian girls in Lebanon are married before the age of 18 and noting that, because many marriages are not registered, actual rates of child marriage may be higher).

¹⁵⁶ See Human Rights Watch, *Lebanon: Pass Bill to End Child Marriage* (April 12, 2017), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/04/12/lebanon-pass-bill-end-child-marriage> [hereinafter Human Rights Watch, *Pass Bill*].

¹⁵⁷ Interview with Hiyam Alfassam, Head of Education Unit, Layan Campaign in New York, N.Y. (Oct. 20, 2017).

In a 2012 focus group, Syrian refugee women in Lebanon attributed increased rates of child marriage to economic pressure and a need to “protect” girls from pervasive sexual harassment and violence.¹⁵⁸ Amnesty International also reports that child marriage among Syrian refugees results from financial pressures and the risk of sexual harassment and violence.¹⁵⁹ For female-headed households, which are among the most economically vulnerable, child marriage may be viewed as an opportunity to alleviate financial pressure.¹⁶⁰

Child marriage dramatically increases Syrian refugee girls’ risk of marital rape, domestic violence, economic exploitation, and health issues related to early childbirth.¹⁶¹ High rates of child marriage in Lebanon are linked to widespread disruptions in girls’ education: while more than 70% of Syrian refugee girls in Lebanon are in school at age 9, less than 17% are still enrolled at age 16.¹⁶² Child marriage is particularly dangerous in the context of displacement: in Lebanon, Syrian girls are likely to marry younger and to older men, and are more likely to marry outside their community, placing them at greater risk of isolation.¹⁶³

B. Turkey

Child marriage has reportedly become more common in Turkey since the beginning of the Syrian refugee crisis, alongside the development of a system of “fixers” or “matchmakers” accepting fees to arrange marriages with Syrian girls.¹⁶⁴ In 2014, the average age of a female Syrian refugee who married was between 13 and 20, and 14% of Syrian refugee girls aged 15-18 in Turkey were already married.¹⁶⁵ Many of these marriages are polygamous marriages between Syrian girls and older Turkish men driven by intense poverty in the refugee community.¹⁶⁶ Refugee families report that financial insecurity is the primary driver of child marriage and that, absent this insecurity, they would not subject their daughters to child marriage.¹⁶⁷ However, these marriages provide girls little stability or protection. Turkey does not register marriages involving Syrians lacking passports, girls under the age of 16, or polygamous relationships; absent registration, Syrian women or girls lack legal protections, including rights upon divorce and, for those married to Turkish men, Turkish citizenship for their children.¹⁶⁸

¹⁵⁸ See Int’l Rescue Comm., *Syrian Women & Girls*, at 6; Telephone Interview with Alexia Nisen, GBV Specialist, Lebanon Country Office, UNFPA in New York, N.Y. (Oct. 26, 2017) (Child marriage functions as a coping mechanism in response to economic pressures and sexual harassment and assault for Syrian refugees in Lebanon.).

¹⁵⁹ See Amnesty Int’l, *I Want a Safe Place*, at 50.

¹⁶⁰ See UNFPA, *New Study*.

¹⁶¹ See Human Rights Watch, *Pass Bill*.

¹⁶² Gabriella Canal, *Child Marriage Rising Among Syrian Refugees, According to New Study*, Global Citizen, Feb. 2, 2017, <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/child-marriage-rising-among-syrian-refugees-accord/>.

¹⁶³ Interview with Alexia Nisen, GBV Specialist, Lebanon Country Office, UNFPA in New York, N.Y. (Oct. 26, 2017).

¹⁶⁴ See Mazlumder, at 36; Telephone Interview with Bora Ozbek, National GBV Expert, Turkey Country Office, UNFPA in New York, N.Y. (Oct. 26, 2017).

¹⁶⁵ See Disaster & Emergency Mgmt. Auth. (AFAD) at 27; *Girls Not Brides, Turkey*.

¹⁶⁶ See Fariba Nawa, *Syrian Influx in Turkey Prompts Upsurge in Polygamy*, PRI, July 25, 2016, <https://www.pri.org/stories/2016-07-25/syrian-influx-turkey-prompts-upsurge-polygamy>.

¹⁶⁷ See *Girls Not Brides, Turkey*.

¹⁶⁸ See Osman Bahadır Dinçer et al., *Turkey and Syrian Refugees: The Limits of Hospitality*, at 29 (Brookings Institution 2013), https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Turkey-and-Syrian-Refugees_The-Limits-of-Hospitality-2014.pdf; Kivilcim, *Legal Violence*, at 201; Interview with Bora Ozbek, National GBV Expert, Turkey Country Office, UNFPA in New York, N.Y. (Oct. 26, 2017).

C. Jordan

UN Women has found that drivers of child marriage, such as economic and physical insecurity, have intensified for Syrians in Jordan.¹⁶⁹ Consequently, child marriage has escalated dramatically among Syrian refugees in Jordan: in 2011, 12% of marriages involved girls under 18; in 2012, 18%; in 2013, 25%; and in the first quarter 2014, almost 32%.¹⁷⁰ The number of child marriages recorded by CARE nearly quadrupled between 2015 and 2016.¹⁷¹ The practice of child marriage is particularly prevalent among girls, with 51.2% of female Syrian refugees in Jordan, and 13% of males, reporting having married before the age of 18.¹⁷²

According to Save the Children, the primary drivers of rising rates of child marriage among Syrian refugees in Jordan are financial insecurity and girls' vulnerability to sexual violence.¹⁷³ Girls are especially at risk because they are less likely to be working and helping to support their families.¹⁷⁴ Women and girls may also be forced to marry if they are victims of sexual violence.¹⁷⁵ However, girls who marry are at a heightened risk of domestic and sexual violence.¹⁷⁶ Child marriage is also linked to high rates of early pregnancy among Syrian refugees in Jordan: 11% of the beneficiaries of UNFPA-supported antenatal services in April 2015 were girls under the age of 18.¹⁷⁷ In one clinic in the Zaatari camp, 58 pregnant girls under the age of 18 were registered in one week in February 2013.¹⁷⁸

Girls in Jordan are also likely to be married to men who are much older than themselves. In 2012, 48% of Syrian child brides in Jordan married men who were ten or more years older than themselves.¹⁷⁹ Syrian refugee women report receiving marriage proposals for girls as young as 12.¹⁸⁰

¹⁶⁹ See UN Women, *Gender-based Violence*, at 3; see also Save the Children, *Too Young to Wed*, at 1 (identifying financial insecurity and girls' vulnerability to sexual violence as the primary drivers of child marriage among Syrian refugees in Jordan).

¹⁷⁰ See Save the Children, *Too Young to Wed*, at 1; UNICEF, *A Study on Early Marriage in Jordan 2014* 8 (2014), https://www.unicef.org/mena/UNICEFJordan_EarlyMarriageStudy2014%281%29.pdf; USAID & Jordan Commc'n, *Advocacy, & Policy Project, Family Planning Among Syrian Refugees in Jordan* 20 (2016), https://docs.euromedwomen.foundation/files/ermwf-documents/6616_3.24.familyplanningamongsyrianrefugeesinjordan0.pdf.

¹⁷¹ See CARE, *Six Years into Exile*, at 76.

¹⁷² See UN Women, *Gender-based Violence*, at 30.

¹⁷³ See Save the Children, *Too Young to Wed*, at at 1.

¹⁷⁴ See *id.* Approximately 85% of reported Syrian child laborers in Jordan are boys. See UN Women, *Gender-based Violence*, at 3.

¹⁷⁵ See Save the Children, *Too Young to Wed*, at 5.

¹⁷⁶ See Lin Taylor, *Syrian Girls Flee War Only to Become Mothers in Jordan Camp*, Reuters, Dec. 15, 2016, http://www.reuters.com/article/us-jordan-refugees-childmarriage/syrian-girls-flee-war-only-to-become-mothers-in-jordan-camp-idUSKBN1441FO_

¹⁷⁷ See UNFPA, *Regional Situation Report for Syria Crisis*, Issue No. 32, at 5 (1-30 Apr. 2015), <https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/UNFPA%20REGIONAL%20SITUATION%20REPORT%20FOR%20SYRIA%20CRISIS%2C%20ISSUE%2032%20APRIL%202015..pdf> [*hereinafter*, UNFPA, *Regional Situation Report 32*].

¹⁷⁸ See Save the Children, *Too Young to Wed*, at 8.

¹⁷⁹ See *id.* at 6.

¹⁸⁰ See UNHCR, *Woman Alone*, at 42.

VI. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

A 2011 study by UNFPA found that one in three women living in Syria prior to the conflict was a victim/survivor of domestic violence.¹⁸¹ However, throughout the region, refugees and aid organizations report an increase in domestic violence and attribute this rising violence to the conditions of displacement, including lack of employment, economic pressures, and lack of privacy in crowded housing.¹⁸² For example, in 2014, UNFPA reported that 70% of violent acts against female Syrian refugees in Lebanon and Jordan occurred in the home and 80% of those acts were perpetrated by an intimate partner or someone the victim knew.¹⁸³ Honor killings and other violence inflicted by family members in response to women's experiences with sexual assault and harassment are also a problem among refugees in the region.¹⁸⁴

A. Lebanon

Refugees and aid organizations report a sharp increase in domestic violence among Syrian refugees in Lebanon.¹⁸⁵ This escalation of violence has been attributed to the pressures of refugee life, including economic stress and crowded housing.¹⁸⁶ Similarly, participants in a 2012 focus group reported rising domestic violence linked to stress, anxiety, and feelings of powerlessness among men.¹⁸⁷

Hiyam Alfassam, Head of the Education Unit of the Layan Campaign, who has been on several research trips to Syrian refugee camps in Lebanon, further noted that the longer that families are displaced, living in poor conditions, and mishandling mental and physical sicknesses, the more frustrated families become, which can result in domestic violence.¹⁸⁸ The level of violence is at times extreme: in June 2014, two Syrian teenage boys admitted to killing their sister in Lebanon after she left the house without telling anyone where she was going.¹⁸⁹

B. Jordan

Women report that domestic violence has increased in Syrian refugee households in Jordan.¹⁹⁰ NGOs have pointed to men's lack of economic opportunity and consequent shifts in gender roles, as a driver of frustration and domestic violence.¹⁹¹ Domestic violence has become a

¹⁸¹ See Int'l Rescue Comm., *Are We Listening?*, at 9.

¹⁸² See *id.* at 8.

¹⁸³ See UNFPA, *More Than Numbers*, at 22.

¹⁸⁴ See MADRE et al., at 3.

¹⁸⁵ See Kristen Chick, *To Fight Domestic Violence Among Syrian Refugees, an Outreach to Men*, Christian Science Monitor, Apr. 26, 2017, <https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2017/0426/To-fight-domestic-violence-among-Syrian-refugees-an-outreach-to-men>.

¹⁸⁶ *Id.*

¹⁸⁷ See Int'l Rescue Comm., *Are We Listening?*, at 9.

¹⁸⁸ Interview with Hiyam Alfassam, Head of Education Unit, Layan Campaign in New York, N.Y. (Oct. 20, 2017).

¹⁸⁹ See MADRE et al. at 3.

¹⁹⁰ See CARE, *Syrian Refugees in Urban Jordan*, at 32.

¹⁹¹ See CARE, *Six Years into Exile*, at 20; Ann M. Simmons, *Widowed, Divorced, Abandoned: Syrian Refugee Women Forge New Lives in Jordan*, L.A. Times, Oct. 24, 2016, <http://www.latimes.com/world/global-development/la-fg-global-women-syrian-refugees-snap-story.html> (“Some refugee men, unable to provide for their families and humiliated at having working wives, feel inadequate and emasculated, humanitarian workers said.”)

“coping mechanism” of sorts for men.¹⁹² Due to economic insecurity there are high levels of emotional and physical violence.¹⁹³ Other NGOs, such as CARE, attribute rising violence within Syrian refugee families in Jordan to poor living conditions, lack of activities and social interactions outside the household, and lack of food.¹⁹⁴

VII. EDUCATION

The majority of Syrian refugee children are not enrolled in school, including most school-aged girls.¹⁹⁵ The most common barriers to education are economic, meaning children in female-headed households may be particularly vulnerable to loss of educational opportunities.¹⁹⁶ Gendered barriers, including child marriage and fear of sexual harassment, further affect Syrian refugee girls’ access to education.¹⁹⁷

A. Lebanon

Many school-aged Syrian refugees in Lebanon are not enrolled in school.¹⁹⁸ Commonly cited barriers to education include an inability to pay school fees (47%) and lack of nearby schools or open spots in nearby schools (27%).¹⁹⁹ Because female Syrian refugee workers in Lebanon are paid significantly less than Syrian refugee men, children in female-headed households may have particularly limited access to education.²⁰⁰

A 2014 ILO study found approximate parity between Syrian refugee boys and girls in enrollment for the 2012-13 school year, with 31% of boys and 30% of girls enrolled in school.²⁰¹ While enrollment rates barely differ between girls and boys, girls face several gendered barriers to education that disproportionately affect their ability to attend school.²⁰² Barriers include sexual harassment, insufficient access to private and clean sanitation facilities in schools, which results in a disruption in their education during menstruation, and child marriage.²⁰³ Furthermore, Human Rights Watch reported that girls, children, and children with disabilities face particularized barriers to enrolling in Lebanese schools.²⁰⁴ Female Syrian refugees are frequently

‘Domestic violence is very common among the Syrian refugees because of the level of frustration,’ said Layla Naffa Hamarneh, director of projects for the Arab Women Organization of Jordan.”).

¹⁹² Interview with Lama Al-Sa’d, Gender-Based Violence Associate, Jordan Country Office – UNFPA in New York, N.Y. (Oct. 26, 2017).

¹⁹³ *Id.*

¹⁹⁴ See CARE, *Syrian Refugees in Urban Jordan*, at 32.

¹⁹⁵ See UNHCR, *UNHCR Reports Crisis in Refugee Education* (Sept. 15, 2016), <http://www.unhcr.org/afr/news/press/2016/9/57d7d6f34/unhcr-reports-crisis-refugee-education.html> [hereinafter UNHCR, *UNHCR Reports*] (noting that in Turkey, only 39% of school-aged refugee children and adolescents were enrolled in primary and secondary education, 40% in Lebanon, and 70% in Jordan).

¹⁹⁶ See, e.g. ILO, *Assessment of the Impact of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon*, at 21.

¹⁹⁷ See, e.g. UN Women, *Gender-based Violence*, at 35.

¹⁹⁸ See UNHCR, *UNHCR Reports*.

¹⁹⁹ *Id.* at 21.

²⁰⁰ See Amnesty Int’l, *Agonizing Choices*, at 6.

²⁰¹ See ILO, *Assessment of the Impact of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon*, at 21.

²⁰² Human Rights Watch, “Growing Up Without an Education”: Barriers to Education for Syrian Refugee Children in Lebanon (2016), https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/lebanon0716_brochure_web.pdf [hereinafter Human Rights Watch, *Growing Up Without an Education*].

²⁰³ *Id.*

²⁰⁴ *Id.*

the targets of sexual harassment in Lebanon.²⁰⁵ The common propositioning of girls on the streets makes it difficult for girls to travel to and from school without being harassed.²⁰⁶ One Syrian refugee parent in Lebanon shared with Human Rights Watch that his daughters were being offered money for sex on their way to school, and as a result, he is afraid to allow them to go to school.²⁰⁷ Child marriage has become common for girls due to economic hardship on their families, and as a result of marrying before the age of 18, many girls are taken out of school to start bearing children.²⁰⁸

B. Jordan

According to a CARE survey conducted in 2016, more than 30% of Syrian refugee boys and 28% of Syrian refugee girls aged 7-18 were not enrolled in school.²⁰⁹ Barriers to education for Syrian refugees in Jordan include auxiliary costs, travel distances, safety to and from school, bullying and discrimination in school, prior gaps in education, and children's psychological issues.²¹⁰ Although girls are marginally more likely to be enrolled in school, they face a number of gendered barriers to attendance, including child marriage and fear of sexual harassment.²¹¹ Save the Children U.K. shared testimony from a father of a young Syrian refugee girl in Jordan who said he married his daughter off at a young age to keep her safe from harassment from men in the streets and near the schools.²¹² Girls who marry before age 18 are expected to leave school to care for their husbands and start bearing children.²¹³

VIII. ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Throughout the region, women and girls face obstacles in reporting sexual and gender-based crimes. Female Syrian refugees, however, face additional barriers due to their precarious legal status.²¹⁴ In all three countries, the vast majority of female Syrian refugees do not have valid residency permits and are limited to working in the informal labor market. Because of their irregular residency and employment status, some Syrian refugee women and girls fear deportation or arbitrary detention and often refrain from seeking justice when they are victims of

²⁰⁵ *Id.*

²⁰⁶ *Id.*

²⁰⁷ *Id.*

²⁰⁸ See *id.*; Interview with Hiyam Alfassam, Head of Education Unit, Layan Campaign in New York, N.Y. (Oct. 20, 2017).

²⁰⁹ See CARE, *Six Years into Exile*, at 61.

²¹⁰ See CARE, *Syrian Refugees in Urban Jordan*, at 32.

²¹¹ See UN Women, *Gender-based Violence*, at 35.

²¹² *Id.*

²¹³ Save the Children, *Too Young to Wed: The Growing Problem of Child Marriage Among Syrian Girls in Jordan*, at 7 (2014), http://www.savethechildren.org/atf/cf/%7B9def2ebe-10ae-432c-9bd0-df91d2eba74a%7D/TOO_YOUNG_TO_WED_REPORT_0714.PDF [hereinafter Save the Children, *Too Young to Wed*].

²¹⁴ See, e.g. Amnesty Int'l, Index No. MDE 18/3210/2016, 'I Want a Safe Place': Refugee Women from Syria Uprooted and Unprotected in Lebanon, at 5 (2016), available for download at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde18/3210/2016/en/> [hereinafter Amnesty Int'l, *I Want a Safe Place*].; see also, Int'l Rescue Comm., *Are We Listening?: Acting on Our Commitments to Women and Girls Affected by the Syrian Conflict 3* (2014), available at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20150524195128/http://www.rescue-uk.org/sites/default/files/Women%20of%20syria%20-%20For%20web%20version2.pdf> [hereinafter Int'l Rescue Comm., *Are We Listening?*].

crimes.²¹⁵ Additionally, female Syrian refugees may not report crimes to local authorities because (1) they do not trust local authorities to fairly and adequately help them seek justice;²¹⁶ (2) they fear retaliation by abusers;²¹⁷ or (3) they feel stigmatized.²¹⁸ Alternatives for female Syrian victims are also often missing, as these refugees often lack access to quality and trusted services.²¹⁹

A. Lebanon

Women and girls in Lebanon face a number of obstacles in reporting sexual and gender-based crimes, including lack of legal assistance, and lack of knowledge and sensitivity to women's rights among justice officials.²²⁰ This lack of access to justice is exacerbated in the case of Syrian refugees, who are at risk of arrest on the basis of residency restrictions and consequently are afraid to report crimes to the Lebanese authorities.²²¹ Female Syrian refugees in Lebanon also reported an inability to report instances of harassment and gender-based violence to family members out of fear of a violent response.²²²

In 2013, Human Rights Watch documented the sexual assault and harassment of 12 female Syrian refugees by employers and others in Lebanon.²²³ None of the women reported these abuses to local authorities, citing a belief that the authorities would not act, fear of reprisal by their abusers, and fear of arrest for lacking valid residency permits.²²⁴ An interview with the manager of Layan Campaign reported that the Lebanese police are “not dealing with [Syrian refugees] as humans.”²²⁵

Amnesty International found that Syrian refugee women rarely report instances of sexual harassment or abuse to authorities, believing reporting would lead to them being questioned about their legal status with the possibility of being deported.²²⁶ Of the women who attempted to report crimes committed against them, none had a positive experience.²²⁷ A woman shared that she would not report any crimes committed against her because once authorities learn that she is Syrian, they say that she does not have any rights.²²⁸ Several women interviewed by Amnesty International indicated that they were harassed by police officers after filing complaints about

²¹⁵ See, e.g. Amnesty Int'l, *I Want a Safe Place*, at 52-53 (Lebanon).

²¹⁶ See *id.* at 53 (citing Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Fourth and Fifth Periodic Reports: Lebanon, CEDAW/C/LBN/4-5, 15 May 2014, para 21, available at: http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fLBN%2f4-5&Lang=en) (Lebanon).

²¹⁷ See, e.g. Human Rights Watch, *Women Refugees*, at 153.

²¹⁸ See FIDH, *Violence Against Women in Syria: Breaking the Silence*, at 5 (2012), https://fidh.org/IMG/pdf/syria_sexual_violence-web.pdf.

²¹⁹ See Int'l Rescue Comm., *Are We Listening?*, at 8.

²²⁰ See Amnesty Int'l, *I Want a Safe Place*, at 52-53.

²²¹ See Human Rights Watch, *Lebanon: Syrian Women at Risk of Sex Trafficking* (July 28, 2016), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/07/28/lebanon-syrian-women-risk-sex-trafficking> [hereinafter Human Rights Watch, *Syrian Women*].

²²² Int'l Rescue Comm., *Syrian Women & Girls*, at 8.

²²³ See Human Rights Watch, *Women Refugees*, at 153.

²²⁴ See *id.*

²²⁵ Interview with Hiyam Alfassam, Head of Education Unit, Layan Campaign in New York, N.Y. (Oct. 20, 2017).

²²⁶ See Amnesty Int'l, *I Want a Safe Place*, at 52-53.

²²⁷ See *id.* at 52.

²²⁸ See *id.*

separate incidents.²²⁹ One woman stated that the police officers used the information included in her complaint to repeatedly harass her at her home and proposition her for sex.²³⁰

B. Jordan

Female Syrian refugees report feeling vulnerable and at risk of exploitation or abuse, but are unlikely to report any crimes committed against them to Jordanian authorities.²³¹ The majority of Syrian refugee women have stated they would not seek help from anyone, including family members or police officials, and that the best course of action is to “remain silent and pray to God for help.”²³² In Jordan, only 22.8% of Syrian refugee women and girls indicated that they would report instances of gender based violence to police.²³³

Syrian refugee women do not report abuses because they do not feel safe reaching out to authorities.²³⁴ UN Women has found that Syrian refugee women are unwilling to report out of fear of further abuse.²³⁵ One Syrian refugee woman, for example, engaged in domestic work was sexually harassed by her male employer, whose wife reported her to the police for allegedly attempting to seduce her husband; the refugee was forcibly relocated to a refugee camp.²³⁶

Generally, women in Jordan do not report the abuses they face at home to the authorities because they feel stigma around the issue of intimate partner abuse.²³⁷ Because of this social stigma, many women do not seek out services for gender-based violence and thus, are not aware of available services. UN Women found in 2013 that women were not aware of the limited services that did exist for victims/survivors of gender-based violence.²³⁸ Moreover, the IRC found that reported cases of violence increased significantly as quality and trusted services became available to women and girls in Jordan; however, that rates of reporting are still considered low.²³⁹

IX. HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Syrian refugees, including women and girls, are vulnerable to trafficking in all three host countries.²⁴⁰ Forced prostitution and child marriage are among the two most common forms of

²²⁹ *See id.* at 52-53.

²³⁰ *See id.* at 53.

²³¹ *See* UN Women, Gender-based Violence, at 2-3.

²³² *See id.* at 28.

²³³ *See id.*

²³⁴ *See id.*

²³⁵ *See id.*

²³⁶ *See* Int'l Rescue Comm., In Search of Work, at 16.

²³⁷ *See* FIDH, at 5.

²³⁸ *See* UN Women, Gender-based Violence, at 2.

²³⁹ *See* Int'l Rescue Comm., Are We Listening?, at 17 (reporting instances of violence to IRC increased as it increased its services and outreach to women and girls in Jordan, from 13 reports in January 2014 to 160 reports in June 2014).

²⁴⁰ *See, e.g.* Kareem Shaheen, *Dozens of Syrians Forced into Sexual Slavery in Derelict Lebanese House*, Guardian, Apr. 30, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/apr/30/syrians-forced-sexual-slavery-lebanon>.

trafficking in the region.²⁴¹ Deep economic depression and limited income generating opportunities make women and girls particularly vulnerable to human trafficking.²⁴²

A. Lebanon

Female Syrian refugees living in Lebanon are at risk of international, intra-regional and internal trafficking.²⁴³ Between 2015 and 2016, a series of raids conducted by Lebanese security personnel uncovered dozens of Syrian women being held against their will and resulted in the arrest of over a dozen individuals on charges of trafficking women into forced prostitution.²⁴⁴ During one raid in March 2016, as many as 75 Syrian women were rescued from two separate brothels.²⁴⁵ Human Rights Watch interviewed several of the women who were freed during the March raid and found that they were lured into Jordan from Syria by traffickers who promised them marriage and employment.²⁴⁶ These traffickers then forced the women into prostitution where they were never paid and routinely beaten.²⁴⁷

Human Rights Watch has expressed concern that victims of human trafficking do not receive necessary services and support in Lebanon.²⁴⁸ Additionally, many individuals are reluctant to report trafficking crimes due to the criminalization of sex work and lack of legal residency status.²⁴⁹

B. Turkey

Turkish activists report that human trafficking in the form of “temporary marriages” has been on the rise in Turkey since 2012.²⁵⁰ The system of temporary marriages involves the transportation and sale of Syrian women and girls to Turkish men as temporary brides.²⁵¹ The Turkish men who engage in this practice typically use their Syrian brides for sex before divorcing them after a few months.²⁵²

²⁴¹ See *id.*; see also Constanze Letsch, *Syria's Refugees: Fears of Abuse Grow as Turkish Men Snap Up Wives*, Guardian, Sept. 8, 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/sep/08/syrian-refugee-brides-turkish-husbands-marriage>. [hereinafter Letsch, *Syria's Refugees*].

²⁴² See Letsch, *Syria's Refugees*.

²⁴³ See Sarah Craggs, *Trafficking Risks and Prevention of Exploitation in Times of Crisis: The Case of the Middle East and North Africa*, International Organization for Migration (Nov. 20, 2014), <http://weblog.iom.int/trafficking-risks-and-prevention-exploitation-times-crisis-case-middle-east-and-north-africa>.

²⁴⁴ See Human Rights Watch, *Syrian Women*.

²⁴⁵ See *id.*

²⁴⁶ See *id.*

²⁴⁷ See *id.*

²⁴⁸ See *id.*

²⁴⁹ See *id.*

²⁵⁰ See Letsch, *Syria's Refugees*.

²⁵¹ See *id.*

²⁵² See *id.*

C. Jordan

Syrian refugee women and girls in Jordan are vulnerable to trafficking for labor and marriage purposes.²⁵³ Because many Syrian refugees have limited access to the formal labor market, Syrian women and girls in Jordan are susceptible to being tricked into working without pay in Jordan.²⁵⁴ Additionally, Syrian refugee girls are particularly vulnerable to being trafficked for sexual exploitation through “temporary” or forced marriages to older men.²⁵⁵ Men from both Jordan and Gulf countries seek Syrian child brides in order to exploit them sexually before divorcing them.²⁵⁶ The Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, reported a case of a 17-year-old Syrian girl who was forced to marry 13 different men from both Jordan and Gulf countries over a period of two years.²⁵⁷ The marriages lasted between a day and a month.²⁵⁸

X. QUEER FEMALES

UNHCR found that efforts to protect LGBTI refugees generally are a global concern.²⁵⁹ Of particular concern to LGBTI refugees are violence and harassment by members of their community, including family members, and by both state and non-state agents in host countries.

After conducting thorough research on Syrian LGBTI refugees in Lebanon, Turkey, and Jordan, it is clear there has been limited studies concerned with the security concern of LGBTI refugees. LGBTI refugees report they face gender-based violence.²⁶⁰ Because of fear of potential abuse, many LGBTI refugees are silent about their identity. One interviewee reported that members who identify with the Syrian refugee LGBTI community in Lebanon do not want to show their affiliation to a particular identity nor do they want to talk about their identity in fear that they would be killed.²⁶¹

²⁵³ See *Report of the Special Rapporteur Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, on Her Mission to Jordan*, Advance Edited Version, A/HRC/32/41/Add.1 (June 2016) [hereinafter *Report of the Special Rapporteur*].

²⁵⁴ See *id.*

²⁵⁵ See *Report of the Special Rapporteur* at para. 18 (noting that “Syrian refugee women and girls are also trafficked for sexual exploitation through the practice of ‘temporary’ . . . marriages to Jordanians and older men from Gulf countries. . . . Once married, trafficked wives are likely to end up in a situation of sexual exploitation and domestic exploitation.”).

²⁵⁶ See *id.*

²⁵⁷ See *id.*

²⁵⁸ See *id.* (the Special Rapporteur noted that “[f]or each ‘marriage’ . . . the victim was forced to undergo hymen reconstruction surgery at a private clinic in Aman . . .”).

²⁵⁹ See UNHCR, *Protecting Persons with Diverse Sexual Orientations and Gender Identities: A Global Report on UNHCR’s Efforts to Protect Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex Asylum-Seekers and Refugees*, at 7 (Dec. 2015), <http://www.refworld.org/docid/566140454.html> [hereinafter UNHCR, *Protecting Persons*].

²⁶⁰ See Women’s Refugee Commission, *Mean Streets: Identifying and Responding to Urban Refugees’ Risks of Gender-Based Violence*, at 7 (Feb. 2016), <https://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/gbv/resources/1272-mean-streets>.

²⁶¹ Interview with Hiyam Alfassam, Head of Education Unit, Layan Campaign in New York, N.Y. (Oct. 20, 2017).

A. Lebanon

Many LGBTI refugees in Beirut report that they engage in sex work as a form of employment and survival.²⁶² Women’s Refugee Commission found that 95% of transwomen that they consulted with reported as current or former sex workers.²⁶³ Transwomen have reported physical violence as a regular incidence. Many transwomen have a consistent fear of being harmed not only by the Syrian community, but also police and sex work clients because they are in situations where they must exchange sex for food or shelter.²⁶⁴ One transwoman refugee in Beirut stated, “[a] lot of us are beaten up and robbed in the street or even raped just by random people and they destroy our life and move onto the next transperson.”²⁶⁵ This fear is shared amongst many LGBTI refugees.²⁶⁶

For example, lesbian Syrian refugees reported fear of being harmed by their families in practices such as “corrective” rape and forced marriage even before the crisis in Syria. However, this fear has been exacerbated because these incidents occur more often now in Beirut. This is due to women having restrictive movement in Lebanon; these women in Syria had more mobility and thus were able to create distance between themselves and their families.²⁶⁷

LGBTI refugees in Lebanon also face higher risks of gender-based violence than LGBTI non-refugees.²⁶⁸ Thus, many LGBTI refugees mitigate their risks of violence by isolating themselves from the public.²⁶⁹ One Syrian transwoman refugee reported “[w]e live in fear and anxiety and we don’t leave the house very much.”²⁷⁰ In addition, many LGBTI refugees are not aware of the many LGBTI organizations and thus are unable to utilize resources.²⁷¹

B. Turkey

LGBTI Syrian refugees in Turkey face harassment, discrimination and violence from their families, neighbors, employees and members of the Turkish police.²⁷² Although there is no Turkish law targeting LGBTI persons, broad criminal offenses such as “offenses against public morality” are used by Turkish authorities to harass homosexual and transgender people.²⁷³ Due to the threat of harassment or arrest, Syrian LGBTI refugees are less likely to pursue their legal rights under Turkish law than other Syrian refugees.²⁷⁴ Additionally, Turkish authorities have

²⁶² See Women’s Refugee Commission, *Mean Streets: Identifying and Responding to Urban Refugees’ Risks of Gender-Based Violence*, at 8 (Feb. 2016), <https://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/gbv/resources/1272-mean-streets>.

²⁶³ See *id.* at 9.

²⁶⁴ *Id.*

²⁶⁵ *Id.*

²⁶⁶ *Id.*

²⁶⁷ See *id.* at 9.

²⁶⁸ See *id.* at 12.

²⁶⁹ See *id.* at 13.

²⁷⁰ See *id.*

²⁷¹ See *id.*

²⁷² See Zeynep Kivilcim, *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transsexual (LGBT) Syrian Refugees in Turkey*, in *A Gendered Approach to the Syrian Refugee Crisis*, at 32 (Jane Freedman et al. eds., 2017) [hereinafter Kivilcim, *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transsexual (LGBT) Syrian Refugees in Turkey*].

²⁷³ See *id.*

²⁷⁴ See *id.*

refrained from punishing individuals who commit crimes against LGBTI people.²⁷⁵ A Syrian refugee transwoman, for example, was stabbed to death in Istanbul in her home on December 2016 by a man posing as a customer.²⁷⁶ An activist with the Istanbul LGBTI Association reported that transgender refugee women are subjected to more violence in Turkey than transgender women of Turkish origin.²⁷⁷ The same activist reported that transgender Syrians are exposed to police violence, and consequently lack access to justice.²⁷⁸

C. Jordan

One Syrian transwoman refugee, since resettled in Canada, has told the press that she and her friends in Jordan were picked up by the police, who cut their hair and then drove them across the Syrian border.²⁷⁹ She was arrested herself with two transgender friends several weeks later, taken to a government building by authorities where their jewelry and cellphones were confiscated and they were subjected to torture.²⁸⁰ Police then demanded sex in exchange for them not being taken back to Syria.²⁸¹ Weeks later, she was assaulted again, this time by members of the public who beat her and her transgender friends with wooden rods; one of the friends was never seen again.²⁸²

²⁷⁵ *See id.*

²⁷⁶ *See Refugee Transgender Woman Was Killed in Istanbul*, KaosGL, Dec. 22, 2016, <http://www.kaosgl.org/page.php?id=22676>.

²⁷⁷ *See id.*

²⁷⁸ *See id.*

²⁷⁹ *See Laura Fraser, Transgender Woman Survives Rape, Assault While Fleeing Syria*, CBC News, Nov. 30, 2015, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/trans-refugee-syria-1.3342724>.

²⁸⁰ *See id.*

²⁸¹ *See id.*

²⁸² *See id.*