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LEGAL SOCIAL PROTECTION EMPLOYMENT INDEPENDENCY
AWARENESS ADVOCACY GENDER IN POLICIES



EuroMed Feminist Initiative
المبادرة النسوية الأوروبية
Initiative Féministe EuroMed

| IRAQ |
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A Double Pandemic Looms Over Women & Girls

Gender-based violence (GBV) does not begin with disasters like Covid-19, nor does it end when they are curbed. However, GBV which increases during every type of emergency has witnessed a sharp rise during Covid-19. Understanding the problem may help resolve it:

Why does GBV rise during emergencies? let us look at this through the lens of genders, from the male gender perspective. Pre-existing social and cultural norms that govern patriarchal societies, culminated in significant gender inequality. Add to that the social isolation and quarantine measures enforced during Covid-19, leading to massive economic strain, and ultimately to a palpable tension in households.

Unforeseen factors which gave way to a sharp increase in GBV:

From the female perspective, the scenario is a painful one to grasp; many women are in 'lockdown', at home with their abusers, and violence at home worsens with the prolonged confinement. Women and girls are isolated from the people and resources that can help them, and have few opportunities to distance themselves from their abusers.



Hotlines

54% Increase in the number of calls placed by beneficiaries, when compared to the pre-Covid-19 period.

GBV Victims: An Attempt To Break the Silence

The numbers recorded by the Madad for Women programme partners in Iraq reveal a significant increase in the number of beneficiaries calling the hotline numbers during Covid-19 and a decrease in GBV cases. However, it is safe to consider the likelihood that most women are afraid to seek support when trapped in their houses with their abusers, be it a partner or a family member.

Moreover, Findings from relevant secondary sources have confirmed an increase in the number of domestic violence incidents throughout the pandemic period. For example, the Iraq Information Centre (IIC) received approximately 44% more calls reporting GBV incidents during the lockdown in March and April. Almost all calls reported domestic violence.



How Did We Accompany the Women and Girls Victims of GBV through the Madad for Women Programme?

"Leila's" testimony

"I now feel more powerful, more confident, and better educated about GBV" said "Leila" a 22-year-old girl who participated in an raising awareness session in Karbala on how to face and put a stop to domestic violence and GBV. She added "I was very shy, unable to speak in front of people although I was in university".

She is now confident to address her previous shyness, and is currently one of the most active volunteers at BWA in Karbala.

What measures were taken by the Madad for Women programme to mitigate GBV?

The Madad for Women programme has geared all its efforts towards providing online protective services for women and girls and which have been classified as "vital" during Covid-19. Through domestic violence hotlines, awareness raising sessions, referral pathways, and legal consultations, GBV survivors are supported by having consistent access to sustainable services.

299 Legal sessions
518 women and girls participated in the sessions.



883 Psychosocial Support sessions



407 Awareness Raising sessions on GBV and Covid-19 preventions
Women and girls reached through 37 sessions



*Figures correspond to the 2nd quarter of 2020

In partnership with



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