

**Joint Statement by UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator in Syria
a.i. El-Mostafa Benlamlih, and Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Syria
Crisis, Muhannad Hadi, on the 16 Days of Activism**

Damascus and Amman, 10 December 2022

Today concludes this year's 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence (GBV), a 30-year global mobilization calling attention on the violence that disproportionately affects women and girls everywhere. In Syria, it is women and girls who are paying the heaviest price of the crisis. It is estimated that 7.3 million people in Syria, the overwhelming majority of whom are women and girls, need GBV services.

Gender-based violence regrettably continues to be a persistent and living reality in Syria, taking the form of physical, sexual, psychological and economic abuse. Every day, Syrian women and girls are confronted with movement restrictions and limited access to employment opportunities, protection services, healthcare, and other critical assistance. Displaced women and girls across Syria are particularly at risk, including in north-west Syria where 2.9 million people are internally displaced, 80 per cent of whom are women and children. GBV is a global crisis, and a critical health and human rights issue. Worldwide, it is estimated that in crisis contexts, one in three women are exposed to different types of GBV, and one of five women can be exposed to sexual abuses in her lifetime.

The UN in Syria is committed to help end gender-based violence across the country. We believe this is a shared responsibility by all – including public institutions, civil society, community members and leaders, humanitarian actors in Syria and the international community.

Safeguarding the rights and well-being of women and girls will require significant scaled-up investments in prevention and response, addressing not only the fundamental causes but also providing life-saving support and sustained essential services to survivors. Such support includes GBV prevention, and women and girl's empowerment activities, training on GBV risk mitigation, legal services safe referral pathways and case management, providing dignity kits and sanitary napkins to vulnerable displaced populations in collective shelters, camps and during the national student exams, and other types of comprehensive inter-sectoral response programs that address the impact of the Syria crisis on women, and girls.

This work however comes with many challenges. Syria's continuing socio-economic downturn, ongoing hostilities and violence in parts of the country, access constraints, to name a few, are of alarming concern. Rising food prices in the country have increasingly forced families to adopt negative coping mechanisms such as child marriage.

As the 16 Days of Activism draw to an end, our efforts need to continue year-round. We are restating our unwavering commitment to help eradicate all forms of gender-based violence in Syria and beyond. We continue to count on the support of our local partners, donors, and the international community to make that vision a reality.

For further information:

Olga Cherevko, Spokesperson, OCHA Syria, Damascus, cherevko@un.org
Madevi Sun-Suon, Public Information Officer, OCHA Türkiye Gaziantep, madevi.sun-suon@un.org
Yannick Martin, Humanitarian Affairs Officer, Amman, martiny@un.org