

Syrian refugee children in Jordan deprived of the most basic needs – UNICEF

Eighty five per cent of Syrian refugee children in Jordan are living below the poverty line and a staggering 94 per cent of those under five in “multidimensional” poverty, meaning that they are deprived of some of the most basic needs such as education, health or protection, an assessment by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) has revealed.

“Seven years into [the Syria] crisis, [we need to collectively continue to do all that we can](#) to support vulnerable refugee children and their families that are struggling to meet their basic needs,” Robert Jenkins, the head of UNICEF programmes in Jordan, said in a news release Sunday.

Based on responses from the refugees, the assessment also showed that close to 65 per cent of Syrian refugee families are either food insecure or on the verge of becoming food insecure – meaning they do not have enough for an adequate diet.

UNICEF teams also reported parents stating that that they skip meals to allow their children to sufficiently eat.

Furthermore, nearly half the children in the 0-5 age group do not have access to proper health services including vaccinations and disability services, and 16 per cent do not have a birth certificate, exposing them to additional risks as they grow up.

In all 38 per cent of Syrian children are not in school; while for children aged 6-17 years, child labour and violence continue to be key challenges.

Responding to the crisis, UNICEF is working with the Government of Jordan as well as donors and partner organizations to provide targeted support and youth to positively engage in their communities and transition to meaningful employment, continuing education and training opportunities.

However, its efforts have been severely affected by a funding crunch. The UN agency currently faces a funding shortfall of \$145.7 million to meet the needs of all vulnerable children in Jordan this year.

“With the unparalleled massive scale of Syria crisis and its prolonged nature, Jordan needs continued support in order to manage the impact of this crisis and meet the needs of vulnerable children,” added Mr. Jenkins.

According to [estimates](#), there are about 660,000 Syrian refugees in the country. Slightly over half that number are children aged 17 or below.

[Impact of Afghanistan's fourth consecutive year of war on civilians 'far too high' – UN report](#)

More than 10,000 civilians have lost their lives or suffered injuries during 2017, according to the latest report by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan ([UNAMA](#)) documenting the impact of the armed conflict on civilians in Afghanistan.

“The human cost of this ugly war in Afghanistan – loss of life, destruction and immense suffering – is [far too high](#)” said the Secretary-General’s Special Representative for Afghanistan, Tadamichi Yamamoto, during the launch of the latest annual report in Kabul.

The report detailed that in 2017, UNAMA and the [Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights](#) (OHCHR) documented 10,453 civilian casualties – 3,438 killed and 7,015 injured.

The findings show that the majority of civilian casualties resulted from suicide attacks, improvised explosive device, ground engagements, targeted killings, explosive remnants of war and air strikes.

UN-backed forums

All sides in the Afghan conflict must do more to protect and respect the civilian population, said Afghans from different walks of life at a series of UN-backed forums around the country.

Representatives from government, women organizations, the Afghan Human Rights Commission, civil society and religious institutions are taking part in numerous events around Afghanistan to discuss the impact of the war on civilians.

Panelists taking part in a radio discussion in the eastern province of Nuristan demanded that both government forces and armed insurgents comply strictly with their obligations under international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law.

On a television roundtable in Jalalabad, participants shared concerns of the conflict’s socio-economic impact on communities and families, particularly women and children. Most cannot access health services, education or engage in employment, subsequently marginalizing and pushing them deeper into poverty.

Several programmes, including television and radio discussions, are planned

in different regions such as Herat, Kandahar and Kunduz, all of which have seen some of the highest number of civilian casualties.

Key recommendations from the report and across the events include stronger measures to protect civilians, and a call for dialogue between warring parties to end the conflict.

“We have to work for a peace agreement to end the conflict. Collective efforts must be redoubled to bring this conflict to an end” Mr. Yamamoto concluded.

UN chief condemns Mogadishu attacks, reiterates support in fight against terrorism

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres strongly condemned the 23 February attacks in Mogadishu, Somalia, which claimed the lives of many civilians and injured numerous others, according to a statement by his spokesperson.

According to Spokesperson, Stéphane Dujarric, Mr. Guterres sends his “profound condolences to the families of the victims and to the people and Government of Somalia, and commends the response of the Somali security forces and AMISOM,” the African Union Mission to Somalia.

“The Secretary-General reiterates the full support of the United Nations to the Somali authorities in their fight against terrorism and their pursuit of a peaceful and stable Somalia,” Mr. Dujarric.

UN Security Council agrees 30-day ceasefire in Syria

The United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted on Saturday a resolution demanding a nationwide ceasefire in Syria for at least 30 days, along with demands for weekly aid convoys, medical evacuations and the immediate lifting of sieges, particularly in eastern Ghouta.

[Asia-Pacific countries pledge women, girl's empowerment at high-level UN forum](#)

At a high-level United Nations regional consultation in Bangkok, senior government representatives from Asia and the Pacific committed to empower rural women and girls, to lift their standard of living and combat structural barriers impacting their human rights.

"If we do not take concrete actions we [risk leaving rural women and girls behind](#)," said. Shamshad Akhtar, Executive Secretary of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific ([ESCAP](#)) in her opening statement at the regional consultation for the 62nd session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW62) on Friday.

Achieving adequate living standards, women's economic empowerment, land rights, food security, health care, quality education, resilience and preparedness to deal with disasters and conflicts are among the main challenges rural women and girls in Asia-Pacific confront.

The High-Level meeting, *Challenges and Opportunities in Achieving Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Rural Women and Girls*, adopted a set of recommendations that will feed into CSW62 to be held at the UN Headquarters in New York from 12 to 23 March 2018.

"Development which does not empower rural women and girls is antithetical to a rights-based approach enshrined in the 2030 Agenda," Ms. Akhtar stressed.

"We must work together to create an enabling environment which supports women and girls in rural areas of Asia and the Pacific to unfold their full potential as powerful agents of change," she added.

The recommendations reflect the urgent need to strengthen normative and legal frameworks, and ensure coordinated action for their social and economic empowerment and meaningful participation in society.

Delegates further highlighted the need for improved availability of data and gender statistics to enhance evidence-based policy making.

"The 2030 Agenda is a commitment to leaving no-one behind," Miwa Kato, Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific for the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women ([UN Women](#)), reminded the participants, adding that the difficulties women face are "partly due to negative gender stereotypes, harmful practices and structural inequalities that must be addressed."

For her part, Kundhavi Kadiresan, Regional Representative of the UN's [Food and Agriculture Organization \(FAO\)](#), underscored, "Evidence shows that if rural women had access to, and control of, the same resources as men, their contributions would increase food production by as much as four per cent," benefiting the entire family.