



Tanšeeq

COORDINATION

For Ending Gender Based Violence in Lebanon

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THE SOLUTION LIES WITH YOUNG MEDIA PROFESSIONALS

Although Lebanon is considered to be relatively more open compared to other Arab countries, there remain nonetheless many shortcomings in the fight against Gender Based Violence (GBV), with women constituting 96% of all its victims. Most importantly, any development that takes place in this small country is largely reflected on its surroundings, and it is only natural to consider that supporting women and population issues in Lebanon would go a long way towards advancing them in the Arab world.

In this context, and as part of the "16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence" Campaign activities, the United Nations Population Fund in Lebanon organized a five-day training workshop in November, with the objective of "enhancing information and communication skills among Lebanese University graduate journalism students in the fight against GBV". Journalism students were specifically targeted given the important role played by the media in shaping public opinion and mirroring concepts to society.

The need to push young media professionals towards a better understanding of the topic is particularly relevant as the Lebanese media finds itself engulfed in stereotypes

and confusion when dealing with GBV issues. More so, some veteran media professionals remain barricaded behind antiquated customs; and the practice of GBV is a disease that might infect any segment of society, including media professionals as individuals. From this perspective, it was strategic to start by raising awareness among those exercising a supervisory and reformatory role to enable them to relay a sound message.

Even more, in the Lebanese media, some women media professionals still insist on introducing a clause in their contract stating that "no moral damage will befall them as a result of their gender or outward appearance"... This constitutes yet another surprising and painful illustration of the pervasiveness of GBV among media professionals, one that still needs to be addressed.

This painful phenomenon shows the need for the development of conceptual knowledge and technical skills among journalism students, to raise their awareness, allow them to carry out their role in addressing this urgent topic and make sure that the next time a woman is battered; the news does not fall on deaf ears.

Amine Hamadeh

Graduate student - Faculty of Journalism and Documentation - Lebanese University
Winner of the honorary award of the GBV Article-Writing Contest

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ENGAGING YOUNG JOURNALISTS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST GBV

UNFPA considers the media as a fundamental partner in advocating for the fight against Gender Based Violence (GBV), as it is well positioned to provoke debate and stimulate positive change in different societies, through conveying relevant information and messages as well as raising awareness of the nation at large about various facets of GBV and its implication at multiple levels (e.g. social, economical, cultural, etc). It is in that context that the findings and recommendations of the "Assessment of Media Coverage of GBV in Lebanon", carried out by the Lebanese Council to Resist Violence against Women (LECORVAW) with UNFPA's support, stressed on the vital role of media in fighting GBV. Indeed the study findings specifically called for sensitizing and training journalists/media personnel to acquire the necessary skills for reporting GBV issues. Building on the outcome of this assessment, UNFPA partnered with the Lebanese University, Faculty of Journalism and Documentation, and organized a 5-days training workshop (5-9 November) targeting 24 graduate journalism students. The objective of this training was to strengthen their capacities in different GBV-related competencies i.e. knowledge, understanding, analytical and communication skills in order for the participants to find and use new angles for effectively and ethically addressing and reporting on GBV issues.

Journalism students who participated in the workshop acquired core theoretical knowledge pertaining to GBV, in addition to creative and advanced reporting/journalism techniques and skills. This event was crowned with the launching of an article-writing contest, whereby the participants were asked to write a journalistic piece (investigative report, feature story, etc) in Arabic on a GBV-related topic. As a result, a total of 10 articles were received by the established deadline. The articles were reviewed and scored by a jury including representatives from the media, the National Commission for Lebanese Women, KAFA (Enough Violence and Exploitation), UNOHCHR and UNFPA. The competition culminated in a prize distribution event on December 14 where authors of the best articles - Reine Ibrahim, Jihane El Masri, Ali Madi and Amine Hamadeh - were awarded prizes. (Read the award-winning articles below). This event also constituted an opportunity for disseminating the complete 5 GBV studies supported by UNFPA (Studies are available on: www.unfpa.org.lb/publications.aspx).

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WINNING ARTICLES OF UNFPA-SUPPORTED GBV ARTICLE-WRITING CONTEST

FIRST PRIZE

The following article won the first prize in the GBV Article-Writing Contest among Lebanese University Students - Faculty of Journalism and Documentation, organized by UNFPA Lebanon. The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of UNFPA.

Name: Reine Ibrahim

Major: Masters' Degree - Faculty of Journalism and Documentation

She Waited for Him Longingly... Then He Raped Her. Will the Law Grant Her Justice?

"How could he rape his own wife?" asked one of my classmates, astonished, as I was talking to her about marital rape, a form of gender-based violence, so I told her the following story:

"After living abroad for three years, her husband was coming back home. She was getting ready to welcome him home at three o'clock in the morning, counting the minutes that separated her from her long-awaited reunion with her love. The moment he arrived home, she rushed to meet him. And to her surprise, when she embraced him, he gave her a cold kiss on the cheek then pushed her away.

She stood there dumbfounded trying to grasp the cold and strange behavior of this visitor who only resembled her husband in outward appearance. But moments later, she regained her composure, and kept telling herself that her husband was still tired from the plane ride and the hardships of working abroad. However, she could not remain silent towards his aversion and disaffection, so she decided to confront him about his strange behavior, but he only told her that he was not feeling well and provided no other explanations.

Half a month had passed. One day, in the middle of the night, while she was sound asleep, he viciously attacked her like a mad man. As soon as he was done, he left her bleeding, twisting on the floor and wailing from pain as he watched her without lifting a finger. An hour later, he decided to take her to see his friend, the doctor, who refused to examine her and was content with prescribing medications to stop the bleeding which stopped after three days. As the wife's pain subsided within seven days, her mental anguish never deserted her, and she became a woman who felt disgusted with herself and her body. Her husband whose return she anxiously awaited not only raped her body but her soul as well. He did not beat her, he destroyed her. She did not reject him and she did not refuse him his rights as a husband, so why did he behave in such a violent and cruel manner?

The wife, whose dream of reuniting with her expatriate husband transformed into a nightmare that violated her body and soul. She is not a female lead in a movie or a drama series; she is a real victim of gender-based violence.

To avoid being raped twice, first by her husband and second by the laws and legislations in place, she chose to share her bitter testimony on the stage of Babel Theater, Hamra, in a symbolic court trial on marital rape crimes, alongside three other women who were victims of marital rape. All four women ended their testimony with a call for the Parliament to stop distorting the draft law on the "Protection of Women from Family Violence" and abrogating the marital rape crime.

This symbolic court trial came as a response to the Parliamentary Sub-Committee in charge of studying the draft law, which announced through its Chairman MP

Samir El-Jisr on 2/8/2012 having introduced some amendments to the draft law, and exerting great effort to draft a law that actively protects women from any violence within the family and at the same time takes into consideration community values to safeguard families without neglecting individual rights. The Committee also denied the existence of marital rape, repealed the relevant article in the draft law, as well as the clause on filing a complaint by way of notification.

As soon as the Committee submitted the final draft of the law, the voices of non-governmental organizations rose high against the amendments that they believed were distorting the law. As part of these NGOs, the National Coalition for Legalizing the Protection of Women from Family Violence sent a letter to the Parliamentary Sub-Committee assigned to study the draft law on the "Protection of Women from Family Violence", in which it urged the Sub-Committee to reconsider the amended articles which would empty the law of its content. This letter refuted with legal arguments and proofs the most dangerous amendments made to the draft law, such as the articles related to marital rape, the protection order, and the issue of custody, as well as article 26 on the provisions of the Personal Status Courts. For instance, article (3) was amended as follows:

"Any person, who for the purpose of asserting his marital rights or as a result thereof, abuses and assaults a spouse, shall be punished with one of the sanctions stated in articles (554) to (559) of the Penal Code. In case of recidivism, a heavier penalty shall be imposed in accordance with the provisions of article (257) of the Penal Code. Renunciation by the complainant shall extinguish the public prosecution and the provisions of articles (554) and (555) of the Penal Code shall apply".

The National Coalition for Legalizing the Protection of Women from Family Violence considered that "such a text is unnecessary given that the Penal Code provides for the criminalization of abuse and assault and does not stipulate as a condition to demonstrate the reason that led to the act of abuse and assault. Under the current Penal Code, the victim of abuse and assault during intercourse can file a complaint for battery as per the provisions of article (554) ff. in the Penal Code".

According to the Coalition, "what's required is criminalizing the violation of the sanctity of a woman's body but the proposed text does not criminalize it, i.e. the act of coercion itself. The text, as stated, is an attempt to circumvent the law. If the Committee is convinced that sexual coercion is not permissible, even through threats which are a form of mental abuse, why not seek to criminalize it directly instead of attempting to circumvent the law by way of criminalizing what was criminalized to begin with?"

Furthermore, it is dangerous to ratify this draft law without abrogating article (26) which gives precedence to Personal Status provisions, in the event of a contradiction between said provisions and the provisions of the draft law for the "Protection of Women from Family Violence". In accordance with this article, Family courts shall have the prerogative to pronounce the act as violent or not, and hence if it is punishable or not by virtue of this law.

Amidst this great divide between NGOs working on women's rights and the legislations and laws knitted with the wool of patriarchy, women victims of marital rape are still facing two major worries: the first concerns the husband who is only human in form, and the second concerns the fragility of the laws which destroy the family instead of seeking to safeguard it! When women, wives and mothers are victims of abuse, the family becomes at risk of dissolution.

The four victims of rape, who shared their adversities on the stage of Babel Theater with the hope of sensitizing politicians and legislators, are not alone in this plight. They are only a sample mirroring every woman who was ever

destroyed by violence and alienation until she was filled with despair and lost the will to continue to live a married life. A woman who becomes frail like a fall leaf barely leaning on the tree branch, not knowing when her husband's rage would suddenly turn into a way to prove the moral masculinity that he fundamentally lacks, and is left to fall to her impending doom.

In conclusion, I say to all those who reject the term "marital rape", call it as you wish! Call it coercion, call it abuse, call it asserting marital rights, the act still exists and it is rape and it is the most heinous crime committed against women. Will women, with the support of NGOs working in this regard, finally have a draft law free of societal stereotypes and religious misconceptions that constitutes a lifeline for victims of marital rape?

SECOND PRIZE

The following article won the second prize in the GBV Article-Writing Contest among Lebanese University Students - Faculty of Journalism and Documentation, organized by UNFPA Lebanon. The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of UNFPA.

Name: Jihane El Masri

Major: Masters' Degree - Faculty of Journalism and Documentation

A Story of "Amal" (Hope)

When silence becomes a robe cloaking a battered woman, violence becomes twofold and silence itself becomes a form of violence. Despite the "openness" that Lebanese people claim to have pioneered, everything changes when it comes to cases of gender based violence, let alone cases of domestic violence.

The law on the "Protection of Women from Family Violence", which has not yet seen the light of day, touches upon several segments of society. But for Amal, the woman who drank from the bitterness of violence, this law represents more than a cause and much more than a demand.

"Amal" was the name she chose to identify herself because she felt the need for hope at this determining phase in her life. "Maybe it would help me pick up the pieces of my shredded life". For her, what happened was similar to a children's fairytale which usually begins with "once upon a time in a faraway land..." and ends as all children's fairytales do with "the prince and princess got married and they lived happily ever after", with only one difference: the curtains were not drawn that easily in her life, and she is still dreaming of her happily ever after.

The prince who arrived suddenly while she was preparing to go to college, was a doctor from a "good family", or in short "a once in a lifetime opportunity". So everyone agreed that the marriage was in her best interest and will not stand in the way of her education, especially that the "groom" was encouraging her to pursue her education.

"Amal" got married with the blessing of her parents and her community. What this young lady did not know is that as soon as the door closes, the mask would fall off and new taboos would appear where parents and the community would fall out of the picture, and she would remain all alone as the new "wife".

The doctor began by locking the front door and rationing her relations with the outside world. Little by little, the mask started to fall and she became entrapped in a vicious cycle of sexual and verbal abuse. "Amal" said he was

socially immune because of his position as a doctor, "and was therefore trusted by everyone. I, on the other, was only a young girl who has not yet experienced life. Still, grown-ups deemed me fit for marriage and child-bearing. At first, I did not fathom the reality of what was happening to me and did not dare to tell anyone about it. But as the cycle of violence escalated against me, I had to fight back".

The doctor's violent practices were not limited to marital rape. This was followed by the abortion of the baby that "Amal" was carrying in her womb with one injection. How? He simply told her it was a dose of nutritious vitamins for the baby! Who would have believed me? Amal asks. The story would have seemed closer to a myth for my parents and community. I was simply dumbfounded. I did not know what to do. What can I do? How can I prove what had happened? Will the law be on my side if I sought justice? I was distressed, sad, shattered and weak!"

The cycle "Amal" entered, or was forced to enter, did not last long. Soon, the puzzle was finally complete and her husband started to exhibit other signs. He started to tell her that orgies were a "natural" phenomenon and that bestiality was a "natural" phenomenon as well. When things got that far, Amal started to prepare for her escape from their marital home. "I was terrified and escaping was crucial, regardless of the cost".

"Amal" might have been lucky for her husband's delinquency helped her file for divorce. "Amal" was also lucky to have had a Sharia Judge who was willing to annul the marriage in an expedited manner. But who will prosecute her husband? Who will hold him accountable for his atrocities and violence? Who will hold him accountable for aborting the baby? Who will hold him accountable for the physical and emotional abuse he had caused her?

How many more women would have to suffer in the absence of a clear law that grants them justice and saves them from the clutches of violence? Despite weeks and months of deliberations in the Parliamentary Sub-Committee, the law on the "Protection of Women from Family Violence" has still not seen the light of day, how long will this last?

It is true that "Amal" has chosen today a new name to make her way through life. However, she thinks that unfortunately, her suffering will only be a new story to be added to the other life stories of battered Lebanese women. It should be noted that despite the fact that women summoned their courage to share their suffering with domestic violence on more than one occasion and in more than one venue, despite the horridness of their stories and despite all the awareness campaigns done by concerned NGOs, some still believe the matter is proportional, can be delayed and is the subject of interpretation. Accordingly, the Parliamentary Sub-Committee chose to introduce a proposal stating that the law on the "Protection of Women from Family Violence" should cover the family as a whole, and not just women!

It is true that this is not the first time that Lebanese women fight for their rights, but unfortunately, till this day, they are still saying "protect us from violence in all its forms". The delinquency of the husband protected "Amal" from drowning in a cycle of violence, but who will protect others like her? Unfortunately, above all this, the "doctor" now is free and capable at any moment to practice his violence towards other women. He can simply remarry – and maybe he already has – another young "victim" in a remote region where only his professional achievements are known, and he can become yet again the "one of a kind groom".

Today, "Amal" is struggling in more than one area to recover her life just as the law on the "Protection of Women from Family Violence" is struggling to be ratified in Parliament. But how many "Amal" among us are still suffering in silence, pain and agony?

THIRD PRIZE

The following article won the third prize in the GBV Article-Writing Contest among Lebanese University Students - Faculty of Journalism and Documentation, organized by UNFPA Lebanon. The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of UNFPA.

Name: Ali Madi

Major: Masters' Degree - Faculty of Journalism and Documentation

Violence Abroad

"An Ethiopian maid was found murdered in a forest"...

"A Sri Lankan maid committed suicide after jumping from the seventh floor balcony"...

We often hear these words uttered on TV news bulletins or read them in newspapers... but they fall on deaf ears the same as other daily news articles.

These cases are surely strange where a woman would travel for long distances, enduring the hardships of travel and emigration to earn a living in a country other than her own... only to end up dead.

Emigrating and being away from loved ones and relatives can be a bitter and difficult experience in itself, and what if it were accompanied by human practices that are far from humane? What would happen then? How much suffering would arise from such practices?

Although slavery and human trafficking were abolished decades ago, "domestic placement agencies" in Lebanon are still flourishing and recruiting domestic workers of different nationalities – usually from poor countries – to work in Lebanese homes.

As soon as her voyage commences, the hardships of the "maid" begin... a young lady forced by destitution to face the high tides of life to support her family, amass the expenses of marriage (as required by traditions in some countries), or escape the clutches of poverty by crossing oceans in search of a decent life and a monthly salary barely enough to fill the tank of a car for one day.

As soon as she sets foot on Lebanese soil, her real suffering begins, even if the picture is still incomplete. In the eyes of her importer, she is merely a "commodity" that can be replaced or rejected by the client, to be piled up with her colleagues in a room that cannot normally hold this large number of people... until a client shows up to scrutinize her. However, if she does meet the requirements, the client commences legal procedures and pays "her price" to the agency, in preparation for her transfer to the house. If the right client does not come along, she has to wait until her luck turns.

Only two scenarios govern the first year of the life of a "maid" at home. Either luck is on her side and she ends up with people of high ethics, or she is passed on to less-than-ethical human beings and suffers throughout her employment period – if she completes it.

Various forms of gender based violence are practiced towards migrant domestic workers in Lebanon, including but not limited to a cruel look, reproach and battery, leaving them with only two options; either escape or suicide... Some may believe that the abuse is merely physical, but a closer look will show that

words can sometimes be more hurtful and deadly than an intense beating for 24 hours straight. Some women domestic workers suffer from the unethical behavior of people for whom they work. Those who do not consider them as human beings, but a mere tool that fulfills their demands as soon as possible and in the best way possible, without taking into consideration the mental and physical capacities or language barrier that might impede their work. And if there was any negligence on their part, they would surely be shouted at, insulted and reprimanded.

However, the severity of the punishment would go farther than that. Some would not be satisfied with insults, and would reprimand them with a slap from their hand or simply hurl the cup they are carrying at their face. Some would be more skillful with the use of a belt, wooden ruler, or any sharp tool that could leave traces or scares on a frail body, right up to crimes of rape, while knowing that the victims, being the weakest link, would not dare to refuse or even declare what had happened to them, not even to a member of the household, official Lebanese security offices, or the judiciary which in either case would not guarantee any of their rights.

Some domestic workers may not be inflicted with physical violence, but they do suffer emotionally. They are ostracized by other members of the family that "owns" them, with no friend or companion to talk to or share their worries with. They are only there to work, remove a plate and get another, prepare food, and clean the house. They would not be allowed to partake in their food, and would only be given old second-hand clothes to wear. They would be deprived of communicating with their colleagues, even if they lived in the same building. They do not receive a day off or have any hope of getting some fresh air outside the house. It is believed that their rightful place is that great tomb, bound between the four walls of the house.

Their sleeping arrangements would normally, in the best of circumstances, consist of a small room, unfit to be a jail cell. However, some unlucky ones end up sleeping on the balcony within a small newly-established room, isolated from the rest of the households, or covered with a drape barely providing shelter from the scolding heat of the summer or the harsh cold of the winter... or they merely sleep on a pillow placed on the kitchen floor or in a storage room for discarded objects.

Furthermore, they are forbidden from talking to their families on the telephone and deprived of their basic rights of expressing any problem they may encounter or any disease they may suffer from, in addition to other forms of suffering as a result of the unconscionable or unscrupulous behavior of the members of the household.

These are mere examples; cases witnessed by some and heard of by others. It is strange to see such injustices taking place in this day and age, but you cannot conceal reality and this reality has driven so many domestic workers to escape from these homes to the unknown or with someone seeking to take advantage of them. If by any change they chose to file a complaint with their agency, they could face intense beating and end up being sent back to the house humiliated. Because of all these factors, migrant domestic workers would often feel fed up with this life, so they decide to escape to another world where they can find some peace and regain their rights... this weak choice would only lead to loss, and more often than not, it would be their loss.

For how long will we be satisfied with talking about values? Will the Lebanese people reinstate the age of slavery or will other voices rise high, refusing to go backwards and calling for a safer and less violent society!! All Lebanese citizens should answer this question, while keeping in mind that they should do unto others as they would have them do unto them.

HONORARY AWARD

The following article won the honorary award in the GBV Article-Writing Contest among Lebanese University Students - Faculty of Journalism and Documentation, organized by UNFPA Lebanon. The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of UNFPA.

Name: Amine Hamadeh

Major: Masters' Degree - Faculty of Journalism and Documentation

Marital Rape: A Right or a Common Misconception?

"Leila" was not a female proper noun in the past. It used to be one of the names given to alcohol in the old Arabic language. They thought it was the sweetest of names because it not only meant alcohol but the intoxication that followed as well. Through a common misconception, "Leila" started to embody every female sung by male poets from Qays Ibn al-Mullawwah to Nizar Qabbani who, just like others before him, volunteered to willingly send her off to "sleep with the men of the earth" then come back to him. Henceforth, throughout history, the body of "Leila" became the property of the husband who invaded it as cities are invaded, and a common misconception that not only meant women alone, but the intoxication that followed in gratification or rape!

Truth hurts but as with any pain, it alerts the body to an impairment or a disease, and truth be told, one in every three women fall victim to violence practiced by her partner, according to the United Nations Population Fund. In most cases, this violence is a form of marital rape which in itself is a form of gender based violence. This percentage is highest in the Arab World and Lebanon, in view of traditions calling for "concealment", ie not revealing everything that happens within the walls of the "golden cage".

The calamities of marital rape are many. Maryam K., mother of four, hides her head between her hands and says: "He came home one day angry after having one too many drinks. He started beating me with electric wires and iron rods. Not only that, he shoved my head in the toilet seat and said "this is where you belong" and he raped me afterwards in front of my children who hid in fear of him".

According to traditions and old-fashioned practices, "concealment" or fear of talking, is aimed at safeguarding the family but it still constitutes one of the main reasons for the persistence of marital rape. Maryam's husband was addicted to watching pornographic movies and used to practice what he learned on her without her consent. She said in tears: "Although he knew how tired or sometimes exhausted I would be, even on the night I gave birth to my daughter, he would not stop. I had no other option but to submit to him out of fear for our children and our reputation". This was confirmed by Psychiatrist Dr. Gisele Abi Chahine: "Men are brought up to practice violence, whereas women are brought up to obey their husbands. And since childhood, parents raise their children to play out these stereotypes".

In addition to these traditions, misinterpretation of religion may constitute a cover for marital rape. In our Arab communities, where Muslims are the majority, it is said that the Devil seduced Eve and she was the reason why Adam was deprived of paradise, although the Quran stated in the Surah Al-Araf, verse 20: "But Satan whispered to them", that is to say to both of them. But Eve is left to carry that burden alone till this day. The limited interpretation of religion remains for the benefit of men. The Prophetic Hadith states that "If a husband calls his wife to his bed and she refuses and causes him to sleep

in anger, the angels will curse her till morning'. Although this Hadith is linked to the absence of an excuse, in practice, it is implemented literally instead of figuratively and symbolically.

Not only are the laws of heaven being used to violate and exhaust women's rights, but the laws of the earth are also being used to make sure marital rape is not criminalized. Article (503) of the Lebanese Penal Code stipulates that: "Anyone who forces a woman, other than his wife, to have sexual intercourse with violence and threats, shall be sentenced to at least five years imprisonment with hard labor". That is to say anyone who forces his wife shall not be punished. Maryam wonders about "any law or legislation that allows her husband to treat her with such cruelty?" She goes on saying "my husband was not afraid of anything because he knew the law was on his side".

Despite the grotesque reasons contributing to the reinforcement of marital rape, its catastrophic implications on women specifically and society as a whole – given that women play a main role in education – are still more painful and vary on different levels. However, physical and health implications remain more palpable and widespread. In this regard, UNFPA statistics show that "family violence is the leading cause of death, injury and disability for women over the age of forty five", while knowing that marital rape is the main and most violent form of domestic violence. Sahar K. tears up as she talks about an incident so painful that it remains engraved in her memory. She talks about the man whom she refuses to call her husband and refers to him as her rapist. She says that after spending a long time "pleading and asking for help", he refused to take her to the doctor after raping her and beating her intensely: "The bleeding did not stop till three days later where I nearly lost my life. But it did cost me my womb".

Naturally, physical harm leads to psychological damages. Psychiatrist Dr. Souha Nasreldin reveals that many of her patients exhibit "psychological confusions as a result of being raped by their husbands", indicating that most of them are "divorced after the pain surpassed their ability to tolerate". She also listed many consequences "such as shock, depression, anxiety, isolation, loneliness, loss of self-esteem and loss of trust in men in general as well as many other factors that could lead to suicide". Sahar confirms these torments and says: "I am divorced now but the psychological and emotional pain is still there. He destroyed me and killed my femininity".

As these physical and psychological consequences did not deter marital rape, economic consequences, as a result of the inability of women to fulfill their work obligations after being subjected to violence, did not help deter it either. A U.S. study carried out by "A. Morrisson and M. B. Orlando" indicates that "the loss in terms of wages as a result of GBV was estimated at USD \$1.7 billion in the U.S. alone".

What is certain is that marital rape is still a common phenomenon. What is more certain is that the solution varies in form and falls on every human being, every last one of us. Otherwise, the consequences will extend further. Given that the responsibility borne by the perpetrator and the victim cannot be equal, it is useful to be aware of the difference between a "man with her" and a "man against her". Going back to the Arabic language with which we began our article, we may notice a small difference as important as civilization itself: the only difference between a man and a woman are merely two little letters.

INTER-AGENCY COORDINATION FOR ADDRESSING SGBV AMONG SYRIAN DISPLACED WOMEN AND GIRLS

In Lebanon, more than 70% of Syrian refugees are women and children (including young girls) who are at risk of violence due to forced displacement, separation from families, and increased vulnerability resulting from shifts in basic structural and social protections and limited access to services.

The issue of Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) required special attention from the humanitarian actors operating in Lebanon for the Syria crisis, necessitating the need to strengthen action-oriented coordination mechanisms through the establishment of a national level SGBV Task Force and field-based SGBV sub-working groups (in Bekaa and North Lebanon) in December. The main goal of these coordination mechanisms is to enhance GBV prevention and multi-sectoral response targeting affected Syrian population and recipient communities. The Task Force is composed of representatives from relevant ministries, NGOs/INGOs and UN agencies and is a sub-working group of the Protection Working Group. It is chaired by UNHCR and co-chaired by UNICEF and UNFPA aiming at improved services delivery and coordination. The Task Force has benefitted from the technical assistance of the Inter-Agency Regional GBV Adviser for the Middle East and North Africa of the Rapid Response Team of the GBV AoR.

With the purpose of deepening¹ the understanding of the scope, nature, and challenges related to GBV within the context of the humanitarian crisis, a number of assessments and mapping exercises were carried out by different actors, as follows:

- SGBV Assessment for Syrian Refugee Women (International Rescue Committee - September)
- Reproductive Health and GBV Assessment for the Syrian Refugee Women (UNFPA - June/August)
- Mapping of GBV service providers in North Lebanon and Bekaa (UNFPA - December)

The overall results of the above assessments, in addition to the reports coming from humanitarian actors working on GBV response in the field, showed that intimate partner violence, threat of sexual violence, early marriage and survival sex in addition to verbal and emotional violence are identified by adult women and adolescent girls as the main forms of violence experienced by Syrian refugee women and girls. Some anecdotes indicate that boys and men are also exposed to violence, including sexual violence.

Furthermore, the SGBV Task Force – through UNFPA's support - initiated the roll-out of the GBV Information Management System (GBVIMS) which is currently being piloted in North Lebanon by UNHCR and SGBV service providers. The GBVIMS is a multi-faceted initiative² that enables humanitarian actors responding to incidents of GBV to effectively and safely collect, store, analyze and share data reported by SGBV survivors. The GBVIMS is expected to provide informed programmatic decision-making for service providers, improved data-sharing and collaboration between humanitarian actors, bolstered and coordinated advocacy efforts and improved donor reporting.

¹ Gender-based Violence Area of Responsibility (GBV AoR www.gbvaor.net)

² For more information on GBVIMS, visit www.gbvims.org

At the prevention and response fronts, humanitarian actors are providing a bundle of services including capacity development of humanitarian workers in areas with high concentration of Syrian displaced as well as affected local communities, in addition to psychosocial support, safe spaces for women and girls, shelter, awareness raising, basic social services assistance, cash assistance, and livelihoods opportunities to survivors.

During 2013, the SGBV Task Force and humanitarian actors plan to expand on already achieved results to prevent and respond to GBV within the Syrian refugee's community as well as most vulnerable host community members through the following:

- Continue rolling out the GBVIMS in the North and assessing the possibility to scale it up to other regions;
- Enhance interagency coordination between the Child Protection Working Group and the SGBV Task Force for the undertaking of the Child Protection Assessment with particular focus on SGBV;
- Strengthen SGBV referral system and mechanism among various sectors and entities;
- Ensure provision of survivor's emotional and psychosocial support to affected women, girls and boys;
- Support income generating and livelihood activities towards women's empowerment;
- Intensify awareness raising at community level including prevention activities involving men and boys;
- Support to legal aid providers to strengthen survivor's access to justice;
- Support a wide array of capacity development initiatives targeting various providers (i.e. social, health, education, etc) on SGBV prevention and timely response;
- Create and operationalize women, girls, and boys safe and friendly spaces;
- Engage new implementing and specialized partners/experts for delivering key activities;
- Facilitate trainings on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and establishment of confidential reporting mechanisms including through the appointment of focal points.

Finally it is worth noting that the planned interventions and activities supported by the SGBV Task Force are fully aligned with the Syria Regional Response Plan (January-June 2013) as well as the Government of Lebanon Response Plan to the Syria Crisis.

*Inter-Agency SGBV Task Force
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Lebanon*



REPORT LAUNCH: A MAPPING OF NGO SERVICES TO WOMEN MIGRANT DOMESTIC WORKERS IN LEBANON

On November 27, the ILO launched the report "Working with Migrant Domestic Workers in Lebanon (1980-2012): A Mapping of NGO Services" at the Holiday Dunes Hotel in Verdun. The report was produced in the context of ILO's European Union and Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation funded Action Programme for Protecting the Rights of Women Migrant Domestic Workers (PROWD) in Lebanon. The report traces the history of NGOs involvement with women migrant domestic workers (WMDWs) in Lebanon since the early 1980s to explore the approaches underlying NGO interventions and partnerships. Further to this analytical component, the report includes a directory of the services currently available to WMDWs across Lebanon. The findings of this report are expected to guide NGOs in establishing efficient referral systems for WMDWs, new comers in carving out their niche in the WMDW subfield, and donors in supporting initiatives for the promotion of decent working and living conditions for this population. After the launch, NGOs who had participated in the mapping exercise introduced visitors in this event to the services that they deliver to WMDWs by inviting them into the booths that they had set up just outside the Dune movie theatre. NGOs will continuously update their services, and the report is available online on http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/arpro/beirut/downloads/events/2012/prowd_2012/report.pdf.

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“SAFETY THROUGH MY EYES”: SOUTH LEBANON WOMEN DISCUSS THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF SAFETY

The 2012 “Open Day on Women, Peace and Security in Lebanon” was observed on October 30 in Tyre, South Lebanon. The event was championed by the United Nations Resident Coordinator’s Office who initiated the Gender Thematic Working Group of South Lebanon in collaboration with ABAAD – The Resource Center for Gender Equality, the Union of Municipalities of Tyre, and the UNIFIL Gender Unit. Entitled “Safety Through My Eyes”, the event provided the opportunity for women in the South of Lebanon to discuss women, peace, and security issues from their own perspective. Over 150 women took part in three meetings in Tyre, Marjayoun and Bint Jbeil. During the meetings women from South Lebanon highlighted their understanding of “safety” and how it applies in the context of their respective communities.

Women’s perception of safety varied from one geographical area to another with some important cross cutting issues, including access to education, and a clean environment. Another common perception pertained to an obstacle facing safety and was identified as the lack of women’s participation in decision making, which they reported to have a direct correlation with their quality of life. Women discussed the main challenges faced in trying to engage in the political process in their municipalities, including:

- Cultural obstacles pertaining to the traditional image of leadership and decision-making as the domain of men.
- Women’s perception of their own capabilities and the lack of skills and preparation to allow them to engage politically.
- The structure of Lebanese community - based on family institutional representation in the political and decision making arena.

The recommendations built on the identified challenges and obstacles of ‘safety’ and included the following:

- Engaging South Lebanon women in the development process and needs analysis in their respective communities through their inclusion in the Gender Working Group.
- Establishing robust women’s networks through a ‘twinning project’ between southern villages and the international community, in addition to experience sharing initiatives.
- Building women’s capacities in emergency preparedness, medical support and evacuation procedures in addition to preventive conflict intervention for youth and drug prevention.
- Empowering women economically as well as in decision-making and participation.
- Awareness-raising on women’s rights, UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and gender issues (targeting men).

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JUSTICE FOR WOMEN UNDER THE PERSONAL STATUS LAWS

In the framework of the program to resist violence against women, the Lebanese Women Democratic Gathering organized a roundtable on “Justice for Women under the Personal Status Laws” at the UNESCO Palace, on September 12, with the presence of a number of women NGOs, civil society organizations and media personnel. The Gathering offered its position on the need to change Personal Status Laws given their stagnant state and the fact that they discriminate against women and do not grant them justice. Violations against women as a result of their frail positions in these laws were exposed. Furthermore, a presentation was made on the social reality of personal status in Lebanon and its negative consequences on women in terms of the spouse dynamics and its consequences on family members, marital conflicts and the way to resolve them, personal choices, and the impact on the modern structure of families in Lebanon. Moreover, a discussion was held and recommendations were submitted in order to develop a future action plan consisting of advocacy campaigns and actions for the ratification of the Civil Personal Status Law.

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WHEN WOMEN SPEAK CEDAW

The Partnership Center for Development and Democracy (PCDD), believes that women's rights are human rights, and that development cannot be fully attained if half the population continues to be excluded from equal representation and involvement in the political, social and economic spheres of Lebanon. Recognizing that the majority of Lebanese women are not aware of their rights, PCDD found it crucial to spread awareness on the existence of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) as a legal tool that protects women's rights.

Since April 2012, the project "When Women Speak CEDAW" has generated a wider and more concrete knowledge of CEDAW, its terms and articles by popularizing the Convention to ensure the understanding of its content by women in Lebanon. The project - funded by the Norwegian Embassy- has been facilitating roundtable discussions all over the country, and disseminating the campaign's message through numerous media outlets to enable girls and women to become agents of change in their communities and to claim their rights through CEDAW as a tool.

In August, PCDD, in collaboration with a fellow Lebanese NGO, ABAAD – The Resource Center for Gender Equality, produced a manual that introduces, discusses and explains CEDAW and all its articles in spoken colloquial Arabic to facilitate its comprehension. Women and girls in marginalized areas that are not exposed to the Convention can now be better equipped and knowledgeable with its legal dimensions, which rights they possess and which ones Lebanon has put reservations on. With this powerful weapon in hand, hundreds of women can now successfully create a pool of advocates for CEDAW, able to democratically debate its articles and advocate for their reserved rights.

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THE YWCA MOBILIZES ITS NATIONAL AND GLOBAL LEADERSHIP TO ADDRESS VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Bringing an end to Violence against Women (VAW) has been a long standing priority for the YWCA of Lebanon. Between July and December, an average of 18 women with their children were assisted at the YWCA shelter that was established in partnership with the Lebanese Ministry of Social Affairs, to end the cycle of violence in their lives. The YWCA provided them with social and psychological counselling and economic support.

In September, in order to provide a stronger leadership in addressing VAW, and with support from the World YWCA Power to Change Fund, the YWCA of Lebanon organized a two-day seminar with a focus on leadership skills and women's human rights whereby 15 young YWCA leaders openly discussed gender power relations that lead to VAW and identified new approaches for their work on this issue.

In November, the YWCA of Lebanon participated in the International Training Institute of the World YWCA in Seoul, Korea. The six-day intensive training included sharing best practices in addressing VAW, and participants developed skills and understanding of international mechanisms for the protection of women's human rights, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. Fifty women representing YWCAs from 30 countries endorsed the principles of a global position paper to guide their common efforts on VAW and peace building under the banner of the YWCA movement. The position paper highlighted that in the context of gender inequality, imbalance of power relations and access to resources, violence against women will prevail. (See <http://www.worldywca.org/Member-Associations/International-Training-Institute/YWCAs-mobilise-to-end-violence>)

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INTENSIFYING INTERVENTIONS FOR ENDING GBV

After working for more than three years in reducing the exploitation of women migrant domestic workers in Lebanon, KAFA (Enough) Violence and Exploitation is now convinced that the majority of those workers are not familiar with the work and living conditions awaiting them in Lebanon, thus being in danger of becoming victims of human trafficking after they are recruited without being informed of the necessary information, or deceived by the reality of what awaits them in this country. Therefore, KAFA (Enough) Violence and Exploitation decided to address women in the main sending countries who are likely to be employed in Lebanon as domestic workers through five short films in which migrant women who have already worked in Lebanon provided them with basic information than any woman who decides to come work in Lebanon have the right to and should know prior to her arrival to the country. The five shorts are divided to six parts: the first part covers recruitment and preparation prior to their arrival to Lebanon; the second part talks about the travel stage; the third touches upon the arrival to Beirut airport; the fourth part provides them with basic information about Lebanon; the fifth part talks about working in Lebanese homes; and the six part includes important numbers that migrant workers may need. It should be noted that the film was produced in five languages to be distributed in cooperation with local NGOs in five countries, mainly: Philippines, Sri Lanka, Madagascar, Ethiopia, and Nepal.

In parallel, in the second half of 2012, and during the first phase of a long-term cooperation between KAFA and Internal Security Forces (ISF), a training curriculum on Violence against Women (VAW) was drafted by a joint committee from KAFA and ISF with the support of UNFPA in Lebanon. The curriculum consists of 6 chapters, including a general introduction on gender, types and forms of domestic violence, national and international treaties related to women's rights, national laws related to the subject, basic listening skills, and standards of interrogation. In December, and before finalizing the curriculum on VAW, a pilot testing workshop was held with the participation of 19 ISF officers, in order to collect participants' feedback on the draft of the curriculum. In the second phase, the training curriculum will be adopted within the educational program at the ISF central training center in Worwar. In addition, a series of training on the curriculum is planned to be carried out targeting ISF officers who are in charge of dealing with cases of family violence.

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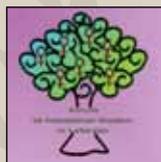
INTERACTIVE THEATRE, AWARENESS ROUNDTABLES, AND NEW PROJECT FOR EMPOWERING WOMEN AT RISK

Between September and December, with the financial support of the European Commission and in partnership with the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) and Association Najdeh, the Palestinian Women's Forum in Lebanon continued presenting interactive theatre shows in North and South Lebanon. As such, 3 shows were conducted in Palestinian refugee camps of Ain El Helweh, Saida and Baddawi and a total of 257 refugees (216 females and 41 males) were reached. A fourth show was planned to be conducted in Nahr El Bared Camp, it was however canceled due to the armed clashes.

Within the same period, the Forum also succeeded in raising awareness on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) by conducting 6 round tables in various regions (Borj El Barajni, Saida, Tyre, Beqaa, Baddawi and Nahr El Bared) followed by one seminar in Beirut, at the Riviera Hotel. These events addressed various sensitive issues related to CEDAW such as political participation of women; violence against women (consequences, relation with traditions and role of men in ending it); economic, social and political empowerment of women; and gaps between local laws and international conventions. A total of 235 persons (59 males and 176 females) took part in these events.

Another great achievement is the Forum's cooperation with the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and the launching of the "Empowerment of Women at Risk in Lebanon" project with the objective of empowering women at risk and/or victims of Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) through prevention and a protection-oriented response based on livelihood support. The project will help promoting economic and personal self-reliance of 300 vulnerable women and raise awareness of duty-bearers about SGBV and human trafficking. The project targets Palestinian, Lebanese and Iraqi women. Under this project in October, the Forum conducted a media campaign in Saida focusing on the importance of equality between men and women and the refusal of discrimination and violence. October also witnessed the opening of a women resource center in Saida which will provide women at risk with social, economic and psychological support.

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AWARENESS RAISING CAMPAIGN AMONG IRAQI WOMEN, MEN, YOUTH AND CHILDREN

During the second half of 2012, in the context of its work with Iraqi refugees in Lebanon and with the support of US Department of State and UNHCR, Caritas Lebanon Migrant Center (CLMC) delivered a series of awareness-raising sessions on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) among Iraqi refugees communities.

Noticing that most refugee women needed to be listened to, CLMC provided them with this opportunity through the establishment of support groups. The latter provided a safe place where women felt free to share their stories and find practical tips for dealing with their respective situation. As such, 20 support sessions were held between July and December with more than 12 women attending weekly. The sessions were led by the social worker in charge. CLMC will maintain this intervention throughout 2013.

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NEW SURVEY SHOWS HIGH PREVALENCE OF GBV AMONG PALESTINIAN REFUGEES

Domestic violence is a well-established phenomenon in the world affecting all segments of the population, including Palestinian refugees residing in Lebanon, shows a new survey by Association Najdeh. Completed in December; the survey sample consisted of 300 households beneficiaries of Najdeh programs' conducted during 2011 in Palestinian refugee camps in North Lebanon and Saida.

The results of the survey show occurrence of sexual violence among married women and sexual harassment among non-married women. Figures generated on physical violence indicate a substantive problem affecting 25% of married women in the Palestinian refugee community. These figures are substantiated by the higher prevalence of verbal and social violence which affects the vast majority of married Palestinian refugee women in the family setting.

By generating quantitative and qualitative information, the survey will serve as a baseline for supporting Association Najdeh's intervention for ending domestic violence. This survey was conducted in the context of the association's three pronged strategy pertaining to violence against women, initiated in 1999, and which involves monitoring, intervening, and advocating.

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WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA IN LEBANON

Women International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) in partnership with ABAAD – Resource Center for Gender Equality - held the "Second National Consultation Meeting on Women, Peace and Security" on November 13. The meeting brought together representatives of civil society organizations, women and human rights organizations, as well as international NGOs and representatives of local ministries. The overall goal of this meeting was identifying key national priorities related to women's rights and their participation in peace and security issues, as well as other possible outcomes that can be built into a larger program in Lebanon pertaining to the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. This meeting was a follow up to phase I of the Lebanon national consultation process held in May.

On the same note, WILPF and ABAAD are coordinating a national discussion on the protection and respect of women's human rights in conflict and post-conflict situations in Lebanon. This national dialogue is designed to help women NGOs to come up with concrete recommendations, in an attempt to influence Lebanon's obligations to respect, protect and fulfill women's human rights in conflict and post-conflict situations. In addition, it comes as a response to CEDAW Committee decision in October 2010 to adopt a General Recommendation on the protection of women's human rights in the conflict and post-conflict contexts.

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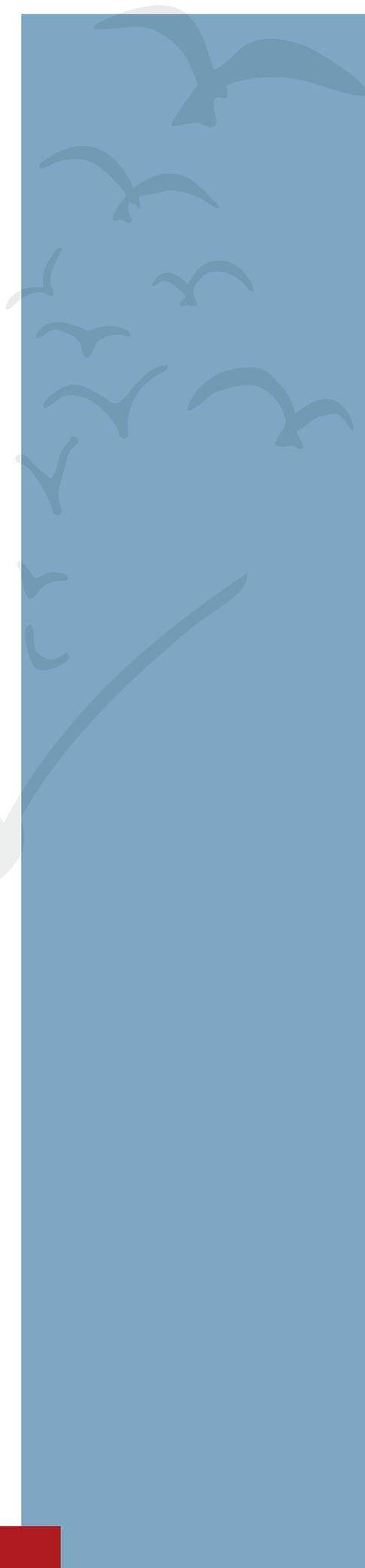
STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITIES OF WOMEN WORKERS IN WOMEN'S PRISON ON HIV/AIDS

Since 1996, Dar Al Amal has been attending to women's prisons and assisting women prisoners through the "Social Rehabilitation and Reintegration Project" with the help of a multidisciplinary team. The project aims at improving living conditions inside prisons and assisting women prisoners to develop their capacities and enable them to integrate society following their release from prison. The project includes awareness activities targeting prison management and guards to provide them with much needed information on how to deal with women prisoners in a way that safeguards their rights and enables them to protect themselves.

During September and October, Dar Al Amal, in partnership with Diakonia, organized training workshops in order to "strengthen the capacities of women workers in women prisons on HIV/AIDS". These training workshops targeted 26 persons working as guards, nurses and managers in Lebanon's three women's prisons (Tripoli, Baabda and Zahle). The workshops aimed at strengthening the capacities of women working in prisons and enabling them to deal with HIV/AIDS with professionalism by introducing participants to the dangers of the virus, the way it spreads and the means to prevent it.

As such, the participants have received the necessary knowledge and information to carry out sound periodic inspections and learned the proper measures to adopt with women prisoners living with HIV/AIDS. Participants also learnt the proper steps to take in the event of exposure to the virus. The training focused on ethical and professional stepping stones for dealing with this issue, mainly the principles of privacy and the dangers of stigma and discrimination. Prisons were equipped with necessary awareness resources available for anyone who enters the prisons, along with educational brochures and necessary phone numbers for inquiries and advice. Furthermore, a first dose of Hepatitis vaccine was given to men and women working in all three prisons.

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COORDINATED EFFORTS

"16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER VIOLENCE" CAMPAIGN

The "16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence" is an international campaign linking violence against women and human rights, organized every year between November 25 (International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women) and December 10 (International Human Rights Day), throughout the world. This year, various actors have marked these campaigns through a series of activities as described below.

AWARENESS RAISING CAMPAIGN AMONG IRAQI WOMEN, MEN, YOUTH AND CHILDREN

During the "16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence" Campaign, and in the context of its work with Iraqi refugees in Lebanon and with the support of US Department of State and UNHCR, Caritas Lebanon Migrant Center (CLMC) implemented a series of awareness-raising sessions on Gender Based Violence (GBV) with the support of accredited psychotherapists. As a result, a total of 10 seminars targeting women, men, children and youth, raised awareness about violence, how the subject is perceived within the family and how they can contribute to changing the situation. The sessions gave grounds for experience sharing and group discussions, in addition to documentary screenings, drawing competitions, and games.

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STARTING POLICY DIALOGUE WITH RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS... FOR ENDING VAW!

Muslim and Christian leaders came together in a roundtable session titled "What Role Does Religious Leader Have in Ending Violence against Women (VAW)?" organized by ABAAD in November in partnership with Oxfam.

This roundtable was first of a series of activities launched as part of ABAAD cutting-edge strategy to start a policy dialogue with religious leaders to end VAW. This strategy envisions a potential partnership between civil society and religious leaders in addressing one of the most violations of women rights: GBV that is.

"We Believe...Partners to End Violence against Women" national campaign launched during the "16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence" came to top up this strategy as a clear-cut evidence for a shared fundamental belief between religious leaders and civil society actors working towards women human rights. Main religious leaders in Lebanon

took active part in this campaign by conveying key messages condemning VAW. Their messages endorsed the culture of respect for the dignity of women and rejection of all forms of violence.

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"TELL YOUR STORY" CAMPAIGN

On the occasion of the "16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence" and starting on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women on 25 November, the Uprising of Women in the Arab World* launched "Tell Your Story" campaign on its Facebook page, a call for women in the Arab world (including Lebanon) to tell their stories if they have been subject to any form of physical, psychological or sexual violence.

The online Facebook campaign lasted for 3 weeks and resulted in the posting and sharing of 68 personal stories from different countries of the Arab world including Lebanon on sexual harassment, rape, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, child marriage, domestic violence, crimes in the name of the so-called honor, and discrimination in laws. The campaign encouraged women to participate and share their personal and often hidden stories helping them to get rid of their feeling of shame and to realize that silence is a self-inflicted punishment and constitutes a form of impunity to the aggressor. Many of the participating women expressed how therapeutic and empowering it felt to speak out...

* "The Uprising of Women in the Arab World" is an independent initiative by 3 female activists from Lebanon and Palestine,

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AWARENESS ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT AGAINST YOUNG GIRLS AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN THROUGHOUT LEBANESE REGIONS

The Lebanese Women Democratic Gathering participated in all its branches in the "16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence" campaign by carrying out the following activities:

- Interactive theatre on sexual harassment against young girls, in Dar Al-Aytam Al-Islamiyah in Noueiry.
- Screening and discussion of a film on family relationships produced by the United Nations Population Fund, in Notre Dame University - Louaize.
- Screening and discussion of the film "Survivors" on violence against women in Oudaba High School in Baalbeck and Jaafariyeh High School in Kasrnaba.
- Lecture on violence against women in the Bekaa branch.
- Two meetings in the North on sexual harassment against

young girls in Andariya Nahass High School and the Gathering's Center in Tripoli.

- Interactive theater on sexual harassment in Ain el-Helwe Camp.
- Meeting on sexual harassment against young girls at the Lebanese American University in Saida.

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"WHITE RIBBON" CAMPAIGN

The "White Ribbon" campaign is an international campaign aiming at engaging men in ending violence against women. In conjunction with the "16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence" campaign, the "White Ribbon" campaign also continued this year for the third consecutive year in Lebanon with activities implemented as described below.

"HERE'S YOUR MASCULINITY?... SEARCH FOR YOUR HUMANITY"

In the context of the EU funded project "Promoting Working with Men and Boys to End Violence against Women in the Middle East" and as part of a regional campaign that was launched during the same period in each of Jordan, occupied Palestinian territories, Egypt and Iraq, KAFA (Enough) Violence & Exploitation launched the White Ribbon campaign 2012 for the third consecutive year in Lebanon, in partnership with Oxfam and UNFPA. This year's campaign was conducted under the slogan "So here's your masculinity...? Search for your humanity", followed by a call to look for "different forms of masculinity".

These messages were delivered widely through a national media campaign consisting of buses advertisements, posters, flyers, and TVCs, and through more than 40 occurrences in media outlets. A number of interventions accompanied the media campaign e.g. silent witness exhibitions were held at universities, awareness sessions on gender based violence were held at schools, discussions with men on masculinity and men's role in ending Violence against Women (VAW) were conducted, a march to end VAW was undertaken in Yammoune, and a comic book on VAW

was released. In parallel, and throughout the country, men from different backgrounds and areas were signing a pledge "not to commit, condone or remain silent about VAW". In addition, the campaign was supported by the Internal Security Forces who wore the white ribbon throughout the campaign's duration.

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