



**“STRENGTHENING FIRST LINE RESPONDERS AND EMPOWERING REFUGEE
WOMEN AND GIRLS IN TURKEY TO COMBAT AND OVERCOME SGBV”**

Final Recommendations

GBV on Syrian refugee women and girls

In light of their long-standing work with Syrian CSOs and of the results of the field work with Syrian refugees living in Turkey, NPWJ and its local partners have jointly formulated a series of recommendations for international organisations, Turkish public institutions and civil society with a view to amplifying the voice of Syrian women and girls and preventing any form of sexual and gender-based violence on this population.

The following stems from the results of an extensive field research in five Turkish districts and sub-districts (Istanbul, Gaziantep, Nizip, Antakya, and Kilis), which involved more than 200 Syrian women, men, adolescents, and elders. The recommendations aim at summarising and voicing their needs and remarks as a basis for advocacy and policy making, implementing a participatory approach to eradicate GBV against women and girls in the context under analysis.

Recommendations for International Organisations

- Treat and engage with migrant and refugee women and girls in need of protection as right holders with agency rather than passive service receivers;
- Consolidate an approach to protection which is community-based, continuing to build survivor-centred responses;
- Make sure that every segment of the humanitarian response by all involved stakeholders is gender-responsive (e.g. considers and acts upon the indirect repercussions that said response may have in terms of GBV and gender equality in general);
- Make sure that every segment of the humanitarian response at all levels (national, regional and multilateral) is based on the active and meaningful involvement of affected communities in the elaboration, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of inclusive policies and practices;
- Base GBV response on an intersectional approach, cooperating with organisations working on supporting women with disabilities in order to enable societal participation of girls and women with disabilities;
- Fight stigma around GBV survivors and ensure their reintegration into their communities;
- Encourage views of cultural and religious discourse that respect and promote women's and girls' rights and do not perpetuate GBV through television, radio, or any other means;
- Develop long-term, sustainable psychological support programs to help survivors overcome trauma – if necessary refraining from using clinical language to avoid perceived stigma around psychotherapy;
- Organise awareness-raising sessions with women and girls, men and boys, on GBV for a perspective shift that encourages survivors to speak up and perpetrators to frame their acts as rights violations (e.g. marital rape, child marriage);
- Implement effective legal, judicial and reporting mechanisms to ensure accountability for GBV perpetrators;
- Elaborate and implement plans to foster intergenerational work (awareness-raising, discussion) with groups of both men and women to eradicate negative coping mechanisms which perpetuate GBV within families and communities;
- Strengthen interinstitutional collaborations among national and international agencies and civil society actors in order to improve data collection and optimise existing mechanisms of response against GBV;
- Manage cases of sex trafficking within the camps ensuring that individuals fundamental rights are not hampered or stymied due to mere association to the perpetrators (e.g. expelling individuals who are involved in sex trade may have negative repercussions on other people who are not directly involved);

Recommendations for Turkish public institutions

- Create safe spaces for women and girls to engage with each other, build solidarity and support with other women and girls, exchange information, rebuild community networks and empower female population, especially in the context of the COVID crisis which has seen an increase of IPV and other forms of GBV especially in the family context ;
- Provide clear follow-up mechanisms for women and girls survivors of GBV, including medical and psychological care, with the objective of preventing societal stigmatisation, further violence and negative coping mechanisms and reintegrating them into society;
- Ensure the presence of an adequate number of legal centres for legal advice, as well as websites and helplines in Arabic that provide legal assistance;
- Provide female translators in Turkish protection centres and public institutions that Syrian population may need to resort to and improve Turkish language training for Syrian refugees;
- Prepare an in-depth study on Syrian girls and women who are sexually exploited through human trafficking and sex trade to conduct a more in-depth analysis of violence occurring against women and girls across different sectors and gather reliable, disaggregated data on the conditions of Syrian girls and women in Turkey;
- Carry out awareness campaign on the illegality of child marriage (marriage under 18 years of age) in Turkey;
- Ensure that the level of coverage of social and health insurance costs for refugee women allows for increased autonomy and economic independence;
- Secure job opportunities for Syrian refugee women in accordance with their experiences and education, to achieve and improve economic independence and thus tackle this important root cause of violence towards them;
- Provide direct economic support to women with a view to provide a sense of security and dignity and preventing violence stemming from economic disempowerment within the family;
- Provide women with IT devices and with workshops on how to use them in order to enable them to network amongst them and reach out for help outside the home or community if needed;

Recommendations for Civil Society

- Raise awareness amongst Syrian refugees, particularly women and girls, on their rights under Turkish law and under international human rights law;
- Advocate for Turkish authorities to enact anti-discrimination campaigns on Syrian population and fight hate crime on-line;
- Establish protection and special care centers for refugee women and girls to provide an inclusive and safe entry points for services, information, as well as to build resilience and begin rebuilding community networks;
- Raise awareness amongst refugees, especially women and girls, on the existence and functioning of available care centres and helplines, as well as possibilities of seeking redress when experiencing any form of violence;