

## WAR DEVASTATES ALL; AND IT DEEPENS GENDERED INJUSTICE!

Since early March 2026, the resumption of hostilities in Lebanon and across the Middle East has further exacerbated the humanitarian crisis triggered by the ongoing genocide in Gaza and the West Bank.

Across the region, women and girls account for a significant proportion of reported victims in the recent wave of violence. They are disproportionately affected by repeated displacement, the collapse of essential services, and heightened exposure to gender-based violence.

We, members of the *Euromed Rights Regional Working Group on Women's Rights, Gender Justice & Freedoms* express our deep concern over the gendered impact of these wars, which represent a serious regression in the protection of the fundamental rights of women and girls to life, health, dignity, and security across the Euro-Mediterranean region.

This escalation has forced hundreds of thousands of women and girls into overcrowded shelters with no privacy, disrupted reproductive health services, and dramatically increased risks of gender-based violence, including sexual and sexist violence.

More than 1.2 million people have been displaced in Lebanon alone, including an estimated 620,000 women and girls,<sup>1</sup> nearly one quarter of the country's female population. This displaced population includes 325,500 women of reproductive age, of whom around 13,500 are pregnant, with an estimated 1,500 expected to give birth within the next 30 days.<sup>2</sup> Many, including 1,700 pregnant women in southern Lebanon, are now cut off from essential care, with health facilities under attack or forced to close<sup>3</sup>.

Across the wider Middle East, more than 18 million women and girls are currently exposed to heightened risks of gender-based violence due to insecurity, displacement, and the breakdown of protective environments<sup>4</sup>.

The situation in Gaza remains catastrophic. Women and girls represent nearly half of civilian casualties, with adolescent girls accounting for 12% of survivors of reported cases of gender-based violence. Adolescent birth rates have more than doubled compared to pre-war levels<sup>5</sup>.

These wars are inflicting profound and long-lasting effects on women and girls that will extend far beyond the immediate crisis. More than 260 health facilities and 14 mobile medical units have already shut down

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.unfpa.org/resources/unfpa-situation-report-lebanon-26-march-%E2%80%93-1-april-2026>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.unfpa.org/resources/unfpa-situation-report-lebanon-26-march-%E2%80%93-1-april-2026>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.unfpa.org/press/women-and-girls-pay-heavy-price-conflict-escalates-yet-again-lebanon>

<sup>4</sup> <https://arabstates.unfpa.org/en/publications/middle-east-gender-based-violence-emergencies-snapshot-april-2entity26>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.unfpa.org/press/surge-child-marriage-and-adolescent-pregnancy-threatens-generation-girls-gaza>

in affected areas across Gaza, Lebanon, and beyond, severely limiting access to maternal and reproductive healthcare<sup>6</sup>.

Years of repeated displacement, trauma, and violence have left deep psychological scars: in Gaza, four out of ten young people show symptoms of moderate to severe depression or anxiety, while 61 per cent exhibit signs of post-traumatic stress.

The disruption of girls' education risks creating a lost generation, increasing the likelihood of early and forced marriages, child labor, and lifelong economic marginalization.

The war is expected to cost regional economies between 120 billion and 194 billion USD (3.7 to 6 per cent of collective gross domestic product), with women - already overrepresented in informal employment and spending an average of 4.2 hours per day on unpaid care work - facing increased loss of livelihood and heightened risks of poverty<sup>7</sup>.

These disruptions carry severe intergenerational consequences, including higher rates of maternal and child health complications, entrenched gender inequalities, and long-term barriers to recovery and inclusive economic development in the region.

We are deeply concerned by persistent funding gaps that continue to hinder critical gender-based violence and maternal health responses, with many safe spaces for women and girls being closed or under-resourced. Without immediate and decisive action, this crisis will cause irreparable harm to generations of women and girls, while undermining the European Union's credibility as a global defender of human rights and gender equality.

In solidarity with all women and girls affected by war and violence in the Euro-Mediterranean region, we call on the international community to condemn the gendered impacts of these wars and to support coordinated efforts to protect the rights, dignity, and safety of all women and girls in Lebanon, Gaza, Syria, and across the region, without discrimination.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://arabstates.unfpa.org/en/news/unfpa-warns-gender-blind-conflict-analysis-2entity26-middle-east-crisis-failing-women-and>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.undp.org/arab-states/press-releases/escalation-middle-east-reverses-more-year-economic-growth-arab-states-region-according-new-un-development-programme>