

REPORT

Mapping of initiatives and identification of strategic entry points in the area of sexual and gender-based violence prevention, protection and response in Egypt



Figure 1: Photo courtesy of UNHCR Egypt/ Pedro Costa Gomes. Samaher (L), a Syrian refugee, shows off a brooch of late Egyptian actress Ragaa El Geddawy that she made for Red Sea's El Gouna Film Festival (GFF).

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Abbreviations

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease
CSOs	Civil society organizations
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
DPG	Development Partners Group
EGP	Egyptian pound
ERC	Egyptian Red Crescent
EU	European Union
EVAW	Ending Violence Against Women
FDFA	Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs
FGM	Female genital mutilation
GDP	Gross domestic product
GoE	Government of Egypt
ILO	International Labour Organization
INGOs	International non-governmental organizations
IOM	International Organization on Migration
JICA Japan	Japan International Cooperation Agency
MCIT	Ministry of Communications and Information Technology
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoSS	Ministry of Social Solidarity
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders
NCCM	National Council for Childhood and motherhood
NCCPIMTIP	The National Coordinating Committee for Combating and Preventing Illegal Migration and Trafficking in Persons
NCW	National Council for Women
NGOs	Non-governmental organisations
OAU	Organization of African Unity
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SGBV	Sexual and gender-based violence
StARS	St. Andrew's Refugee Services
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCWA	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for West Asia
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations

UNICEF

United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

USAID

The United States Agency for International Development

VAW

Violence Against Women

Introduction

Globally, Switzerland through its Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) provides humanitarian and development assistance, through direct cooperation with governments and with international organizations. In 2017, gender equality became a major pillar of the Swiss foreign policy after the adoption of the Equal Opportunities and Women's Rights Strategy by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA). Switzerland commits to implementing the 1325 UN Security Council Resolution through strengthening its efforts in SGBV prevention and protection in post-conflict and humanitarian settings. Its work is directed towards enhancing women's participation in local peace, transformation and state-building, while involving men and boys in its work on gender.

For decades, Switzerland has been providing long-standing and sustained support to Egypt's socio-economic development. This has enabled the Swiss cooperation to play a strategic role in creating space for dialogue, development, exchange and networking and in supporting civil society. Switzerland has remained committed to support Egypt's comprehensive reform agenda since 2011. The cooperation between Switzerland and Egypt supports Egypt's 2030 Vision and Egypt's progress towards the SDGs. This bilateral cooperation focuses on economic growth and stability in the region, inclusive and accountable governance, and migration management.

The Swiss Cooperation Strategy in Egypt (2017–2020) works on 3 main domains that are translated into policy and programmatic actions: Domain 1: Democratic processes and human rights, Domain 2: Inclusive sustainable economic growth and employment and Domain 3: Protection and migration. In its support to aid coordination and development effectiveness, Switzerland finances the secretariat of the Development Partners Group (DPG), part of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)-led aid structure in Egypt, and had chaired two sub-groups (migration and democratic governance). Switzerland supports Egypt's commitment to regional migration management; (such as the Khartoum Process and the Plan of Action of the Valetta Summit), trans-boundary resource management (such as the Nile River) and securing peace and stability in the region.

While gender has been cross-cutting and streamlined across the Swiss cooperation's areas of work in Egypt, a more focused gender programming is deemed needed. This report aims to support the Swiss cooperation in advancing on gender-specific programming under the Protection and Migration area of work (Domain 3). More specifically, the suggested interventions are directed towards support and protection for migrant and refugee women against SGBV. This was done through two complimentary approaches; first, a review of existing material on SGBV in Egypt and the region, focusing on migrants and refugees' situation. The second is first-hand conversations with stakeholders to map current initiatives responding to the issues of concern.

2. INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON GENDER, SGBV, AND PROTECTION OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

a. Sexual and gender-based violence

Sexual and gender-based violence is one of the gravest human rights violations, it threatens a person's physical and psychological wellbeing, it threatens the welfare of families, societies and nations at large. Statistics show that most victims of gender-based violence are women and girls, however, men and boys are often victims as well. The United Nations defines violence against women as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life."¹ WHO estimates that 1 in 3 women worldwide have experienced physical and/or sexual violence, mostly by an intimate partner, in their lifetime². The 1979 Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)³ establishes the international principles on ensuring the protection of the economic, social and political rights of women. The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is the global intergovernmental body concerned with the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. During the CSW annual meeting, nations discuss the progress on the 1995 Beijing Declaration for Action⁴ on accelerating progress on the economic, social and political empowerment of women.

b. Status of migrants and refugees globally

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) recognizes the complexity of the range of people on the move who are in need of special protection and support. This includes, inter alia, trafficked persons, exploited migrants, separated or unaccompanied migrant children, refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons, displaced, stranded migrants, migrants caught in crisis, minority groups, as well as women, the elderly, disabled and youth⁵. For refugees, protection in their country of asylum is often complicated and requires comprehensive measures to ensure their safety and wellbeing until their voluntary return to their home country, permanent settlement or re-settlement to a third country. Migrants face the same complexities such as refugees despite the fact that some of them may have or previously had legal status in the host country. SGBV is among the gravest violations to the rights of women and girls' refugees and migrants, during times of crisis and displacement, during crossing of borders, and within the host countries⁶.

UNHCR estimates 79.5 million forcibly displaced people globally by the end of 2019, among them are 26 million refugees, half of which are women and children (under the age of 18)⁷. Furthermore, despite the fact the migrants contribute to economies, in many cases their rights are not fully recognized. In 2015, IOM estimated a \$6.7 Trillion contribution to the global GDP by migrants. The number of irregular migrants is estimated to be 58 million by the end of 2017, and by the nature of their situation, they would be found in irregular/informal employment⁸.

Additional to the principle of leaving no one behind outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a recent achievement was the integration of a specific indicator on refugees. Including an indicator on refugees allows for advocacy for their protection and policy recognition for finding developmental solutions to the refugee crisis.

3. SGBV IN EGYPT AND THE REGION: OVERVIEW, STATISTICS AND CURRENT POLICY FRAMEWORKS AND PROTECTION OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

C. OVERVIEW

Despite the progress made at the strategic and legislative levels in Egypt, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is a persisting challenge for women, migrants, refugees and vulnerable populations. According to the study on the Economic Cost of Gender-based Violence (UNFPA, 2015), almost 7.8 million women in Egypt (ages 18–64) suffered from all forms of violence yearly, perpetrated by spouses, fiancés or other family members, and in public spaces. Additionally, the economic cost of violence against women in Egypt is estimated to be 2.17 Billion EGP⁹. The study shows that 31% of ever-married women are victims of any form of physical, whereas 12.3% reported being subjected to sexual violence. 9 out of 10 women underwent female genital mutilation (FGM), additionally, 27% of women were married off before the age of 18. 7% of reported being exposed to sexual harassment in public transport, while 10% of women were subject to various forms of harassment on the streets in the 12 months prior to the survey alone.

According to the 2019 UNESCWA report, the Arab region hosts over 38 million migrants and refugees and around 15 million internally displaced persons. Over 29 million people from Arab countries are living outside of their countries of origin¹⁰. At the national level, Egypt has always been a destination and transit country for refugees and asylum seekers¹¹, and according to the Egyptian government, there are about 5 million refugees and asylum seekers. Moreover, as of June 2020, only 258,855 refugees and asylum-seekers are registered with UNHCR Egypt, half of which are from Syria¹².

Egypt's international commitment to the protection of refugees comes under the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol, as well as to the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa¹³. In October 2020, the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) announced the launch of “a regional strategy to respond to and support Syrian refugees residing in Egypt and to empower communities hosting them, this is under the Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan 2020 – 2021 in response to the Syria Crisis (3RP)¹⁴. The ministry also launched a 2020–2021 plan to respond to refugees and asylum seekers from sub-Saharan Africa (the African Appeal for Africans), Iraq and Yemen.”¹⁵ MOFA affirmed Egypt's commitment to providing protection and support access of asylum seekers and refugees to services.

Newer COVID-19 pandemic-specific data on VAW has been produced, a recently conducted poll reflected on women's lives during the current pandemic in the world – data focused on Egypt, showing the consequences of the social restrictions on women's wellbeing. 33% of women reported an increase in family disputes, while 19% reported an increase of violence among family members.

The UNHCR's 2018 report on rates of sexual violence resulting from conflict in the MENA region¹⁶ reveals that rates of sexual violence have elevated in 6 Arab countries– namely Sudan, Iraq, and Syria, all three of which are armed conflict zones. The report referred to around 140 cases of rape in one state in South Sudan, in addition to various forms of violence inflicted by armed groups and

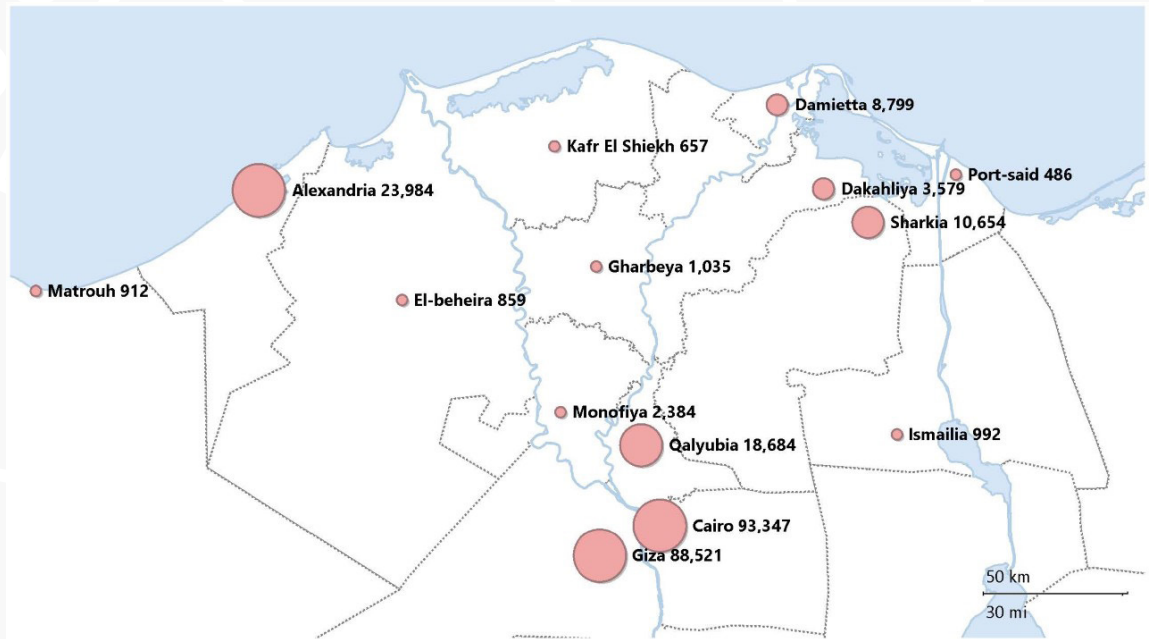


Figure (1) - map of refugees locations in Egypt. Source: UNHCR

militias, as well as 138 male survivors were subject to rape in Syrian prisons.

In armed conflict zones, there is an increased level of sexual violence against both women and men, and a multiplied number of immigrants and refugees documented by international reports. In response to that, Security Council issued resolution number 2467¹⁷ in 2019 on conflict-related sexual violence. It necessitates the provision of essential services, needed care and protection for victims of sexual violence especially women and children. This obliges host countries to adopt practical interventions and policies to protect refugees from sexual violence, since it is the most prevailing form of violence among refugees and migrants in the MENA region.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the refugee situation has grown worse and more vulnerable, especially for female refugees and children. The refugee countries economy has witnessed significant deterioration, that has substantially further worsened in conflict countries, as well as unemployment rates. Social distancing required as a safety measure has taken a toll on refugee protection allocations and has negatively impacted the capacity for providing psychological support and healthcare and has led to the reduction of financial aid¹⁸. Also, UNHCR stopped registering people for asylum as they closed their office because of COVID-19 restrictions, less migrants were coming to the country due to borders closure and mobility restrictions, curfew and lockdown meant severe loss of livelihoods for refugees.

Until December 2020, there are huge threats to the capabilities of national, regional, and international development organizations concerned with refugee protection, to provide the same VAW protection programs through the waves of the pandemic. VAW has reached unprecedentedly elevated rates, a huge proportion of which is among refugees, despite the absence of official figures and statistics thus far as a result of the challenge posed by social distancing. Consequently, a need arises for methods to guarantee safe access to VAW services that should be designed by governmental and non-governmental stakeholder, especially in the MENA region which has become even more vulnerable to eruption of more conflicts according to the most recent literature on conflict zones.¹⁹

D. NATIONAL STRATEGIES

National Strategy to end VAW 2015 – 2020

The National Council for Women announced in 2015 the National Strategy for Combating Violence, in cooperation with 12 ministries, and several feminist and women's civil organizations. The strategy included general and specific objectives. Additionally, it included an action plan for each participating ministry and civil organization. Among the participant ministries are Ministries of Interior, Education, Culture, Media, Health, Justice, Youth and Sports and others. The national strategy was considered a good step forward towards ending VAW. The strategy came after the incidents of sexual assault that took place in Tahrir Square²⁰ and it topped many official follow-up reports of the Egyptian government.

Being an important step towards the struggle to end VAW, below were some limitations of the strategy:

- The strategy lacked comprehensive definitions of forms of VAW, and consequently confining it to general definitions of VAW and restricting its ability to include various forms of VAW.
- The strategy is based on adopting an action plan that puts the civil society on equal footing with governmental bodies such as ministries in terms of points of strength and weakness, despite being of unequal influence and ability to access tools, as ministries have disproportionately higher capability to adopt intervention and widen the scope of its work than that of the civil society. Nonetheless, the strategy adopted an extensive action plan that monitors similar commitments where ministries serve as feminist and women's civil society.
- The strategy also lacked a monitoring tool and periodical reports that would allow the civil society to do the required commitments, as well as allow other stakeholders to monitor and measure the impact, therefore making the strategy open for interpretation by issuing irregular and infrequent reports.

Despite the shortcomings of the strategy build, and its follow-up strategy, it includes official interventions towards EVAW that were adopted by official bodies, most important of which is establishing safehouses and shelters, increasing the number of ministries that include Equal Employment Opportunities units to look into violence and discrimination in the workplace reports, and increasing the number of units concerned with EVAW in Universities.²¹

The strategy ends by the end of 2020, despite of the selection of some of the outputs of the strategy to be included in 2030 women empowerment strategy issued in 2017 – namely the axis of protection, it is important to reconsider issuing a strategy dedicated to eliminating VAW that follows a clearer reporting mechanism and has clearer allocations for goal achievement.

The National Strategy for Reproductive Health 2015 – 2020

The end of 2020 concludes the National Strategy for Reproductive Health issued by the National Council of Population²². It is a VAW elimination strategy that closely intersects with fighting sexual violence, as it is concerned with provision of pre-natal and post-natal services as well as services related to abortion and STDs. This is in addition to family planning services which intersect with population,

development plans.

Despite the importance of this strategy, it faces the same challenges that the other national strategies face. The strategy lacks a clear follow-up tool to monitor goal achievement and implementation of action plans, and most importantly, it fails to produce information or renew the conclusive health survey, last of which took place in 2014.

The Ministry of Social Solidarity has adopted “Two is Enough” program, one of the ministry’s programs most related to achieving the national strategy for reproductive health, nonetheless, there is an obvious absence of connection between the reproductive health programs and the strategy which indicates absence of coordination among programs and poor distribution among the different relevant authorities as well as failure to place them within organized strategic frameworks of specific goals with clear follow-up plans and indicators.

National Strategy for Combating and Preventing Illegal Migration and Trafficking in Persons (2016–2020)

The National Coordinating Committee for Combating and Preventing Illegal Migration and Trafficking in Persons²³ was founded in 2017 by resolution of the cabinet. It comprises of 20 ministries and national authority concerned with preventing illegal migration and human trafficking. This dossier has received remarkable official support at the national, regional, and international levels for its close relevance to peace, security, enhancing chances for preserving life, and reducing crime rates.

The National Coordinating Committee for Combating and Preventing Illegal Migration and Trafficking in Persons’ official website is rich with materials. Within three years, the committee was able to promulgate a package of laws against irregular migration²⁴, in addition to another law that prevents human trafficking²⁵. Furthermore, in 2010 and 2016, the laws were passed along with their bylaws. Other relevant laws were refined to avoid conflict of texts and establish the phenomenon as a crime, which is an efficient intervention at the level of legislative reform that is, in comparison to other attempts for legislative reform and VAW issues rare. This confirms the state’s concern with the issue of preventing irregular migration and human trafficking and achieving a remarkable international status in regard to this dossier.

When comparing the efficiency of various VAW elimination national strategies, NCCPIMTIP comes as the most efficient when compared to other national strategy committees concerned with VAW. Perhaps this is due to the centralized political administration that ensured the fast and efficient intervention in this dossier.

COVID-19 and VAW Issues at the National Level

The NCW has issued four extensive reports²⁶ to monitor official policies and interventions that were implemented by the Egyptian government to provide protection for women during the partial and complete lockdown. According to the consecutive follow-up reports issued by NCW, psychological support services were provided in collaboration with specialized initiatives. Additionally, the reports documented MOSS’s emergency interventions regarding temporary housing and shelters during the lockdown. This is in addition to a specialized campaign developed by VAW units in university campuses, which have intensified their

campaigns through social media as a method of protection from violence and physical abuse.

Despite the diverse forms of emergency interventions to protect women from violence by MOSS, only two remarkable interventions, which were the most impactful and empowering for women were reported. The first of which is concerned with providing emergency economic support to informal employment, and attempting to develop a database of female informal employment. The second intervention is authorizing exceptional leave for the entirety of the lockdown interval for working mothers of children below the age of 12, especially with schools and daycares closed.

Reports have confirmed the need to work on issues of reproductive health and provide contraception as well as the need to control fertility and pregnancy rates especially during full lockdown. However, official reports on provision of reproductive health, especially family planning services, were few and inadequate, which reflects a dire need to consider permanent and effective services related to sexual and reproductive rights, especially through the new waves of the pandemic.

COVID-19 and VAW Issues at the Regional Level

The pandemic took a toll on gender equality. An information brochure²⁷ produced by United Nations Women in the Arab world shows numerous ways the pandemic has negatively affected women's status including increased rates of domestic violence, forced habitation in unsafe domestic environments throughout complete lockdown and consequently decreased numbers of reports received by hotlines. With the increased numbers of domestic violence incidents, victims are unable to report through hotlines and request intervention.

The brochure also documents elevated unemployment rates among women, especially in the informal sector, which is one of the most vulnerable, impoverished, and unstable sectors, which in turn allows for the increase of violence against them. It also pointed out the threats related to childhood, especially female children, the increased chances of domestic violence, involuntary confinement, and unsafe labor.

The brochure also highlights the delayed and poor reproductive health and family planning services as well as neglect of reproductive health right services by the relevant parties during the lockdown. Therefore, the need to work on providing interventions and control in fertility rates, as well as providing pre-natal and safe abortion services is constantly and increasingly highlighted.

The brochure includes general recommendations regarding the imperative of providing quick training to police personnel and aid centers to qualify them to provide gender-sensitive protection, namely protection against violence and sexual violence, in addition to adopting security interventions biased to protecting women against violence including facilitating reporting and filing police reports.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime has released a statement²⁸ on World Day Against Trafficking in Persons warning against the increased potential risks during the pandemic, and the elevated rates of human trafficking among women and girls vulnerable to migration and asylum. The statement also urgently calls onto governments to adopt protection policies against VAW, especially in

groups vulnerable to forced displacement, migration, and border crossing. Over 32% of cases of human trafficking among migrants and refugees are women and children subject to violence and sexual abuse, which directly requires adoption of more efficient interventions for protecting migrant and refugee women from sexual violence.

Over 32% of cases of human trafficking among migrants and refugees are women and children subject to violence and sexual abuse

E. ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN LEGISLATIONS: AN OVERVIEW

Unified law against VAW

The national strategy to end VAW and the national strategy for women's empowerment 2030, guide promulgating a uniform law against VAW. Also, the NCW has recently published the eighth draft for a uniform law against VAW. On the other hand, a taskforce of feminist and human rights NGOs²⁹ was formed to produce a uniform law against VAW, and a draft of seven chapters was produced containing broader and more conclusive definitions of different forms of violence, such as sexual violence. It also addresses facilitation of reporting and litigation. Articles on protection and prevention against VAW are also included. The taskforce was able to have the bill presented in the parliament in 2019, and obtain the required number of signatures for the law to be reviewed by legislative committee in hopes of promulgating it, but until now the situation is unclear regarding the adaption of the law.

Working on a uniform law against VAW is an urgent demand, especially with the numerous forms of violence, namely sexual violence which goes beyond the conventional patterns of sexual harassment serious as rape and abuse. This situation leaves many of the parties concerned with empowering women and enhancing their status obligated to issue a uniform law against all forms of VAW.

It is worth mentioning that the uniform law addresses 1) broad and conclusive definitions of different forms of violence, especially sexual violence, assault, rape, and incest. 2) facilitating and providing means of litigation and urgent proceedings of laws of violence as well as facilitating reporting process and protecting reporting parties and witnesses. 3) adopting policies of protection from violence including training judges and police officers and family courts and safehouses officials. 4) legal measures concerned with prevention of violence including targeting education and health and producing information and making it available for study and research, as well as rehabilitating the predator and the survivor, providing measures and environment to raise the community's awareness against violence and increasing gender sensitivity.

Latest VAW Relevant Law Amendments

Latest amendments to sexual harassment article, which included 6 articles criminalizing sexual harassment and cyber harassment. The article 306 passed in 2014 criminalizing sexual harassment to be punishable by imprisonment or fine, sexual harassment was defined in the law for the first time in Egypt. Later, as a step towards broader legislative interventions, a uniform law against VAW came into consideration during the last 2019 parliament by the legislative committee, it was presented by the NGOs task force.

3. SGBV IN EGYPT AND THE REGION: OVERVIEW, STATISTICS AND CURRENT POLICY FRAMEWORKS

In 2020, as a result of the NCW's and the cabinet's concern after the viral reports of rape incidents³⁰, amendments to the code of criminal procedures are being considered in order to protect the anonymity of the reporting parties and the witnesses in incidents of sexual violence. The cabinet has in fact approved passing the amendments as a protection intervention, however it has not been passed by the parliament thus far.

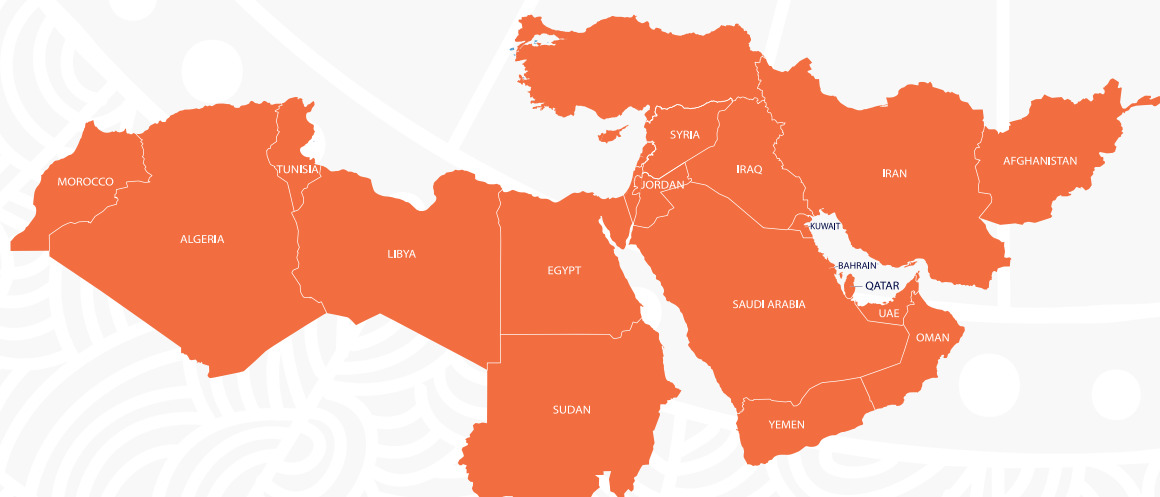
Amendments to child law regarding FGM in 2016. A new child law has been passed, and unlike the old one, it includes articles criminalizing FGM, including convicting guardians and shutting down medical institution that commits this crime, as well as deeming FGM a felony instead of an offence to impose heavier penalties. Nonetheless, the child law has received criticism for failure to impose penalties heavy enough on physicians committing the crime and allowing medicalization of FGM in cases of "medical need".

Law amendments criminalizing child marriage. Among the law bills and legislative reforms, the NCW has adopted new articles to be added to the penal code. However, the amendment has not been passed thus far. On the other hand, in collaboration with the NCW, several NGOs have adopted "Not Before 18" campaign that calls against child marriage. It is also worth mentioning that elimination of child marriage is one of 2030 strategy indicators concerned with women empowerment, which was signed off by the president in 2017. The state considers the efforts towards eliminating child marriage and reducing fertility and reproduction spans to be part of its work to achieve Population development SDGs.

F. REGIONAL LEVEL STRATEGIES AND LEGISLATIONS ON EVAW

In 2011, Arab Women Organization issued an Arab strategy against VAW 2011 – 2020. The strategy was produced as a result of the Arab state's obligation towards CEDAW. The strategy aims to raise awareness of gender issues at the level of the policies, eliminate all forms of VAW, establish a protection program for women and girls against VAW, following a comprehensive approach towards eliminating VAW, coordinate between the relevant parties, exchange expertise and lessons learnt as well as sound practice in the field of VAW elimination. The strategy's action plan includes awareness-raising activities, research and studies, capacity building, and lawmaking.

Despite having a lifespan of 10 years, the strategy is unrenowned at the level of Arab feminist NGOs and activists, and at the level of policies in the Arab states and their enactment to reflect their concern, apart from a small number of Arab state who were able to issue national strategies against VAW such as Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt, Iraq, Palestine, and Algeria. The national strategy came as a



result of Arab feminist groups' accumulated efforts and struggles. Promulgation of laws against VAW is attributed to the accumulated efforts of the feminist NGOs and groups, who often went through many long-term battles and struggles to create political and social acceptance of a uniform law against VAW, or drafting further comprehensive definitions of violence and criminalizing all its forms. Feminist NGOs were able to achieve this in many countries including Lebanon, Tunisia, Morocco, Al Bahrain, Kurdistan, and Iraq.

On the regional level, Arab states have filed the regional report on the progress achieved since Beijing Conference³¹ issued in 2020 which was set to be presented by ESCWA during 65th CEDAW in 2020 had it not been for its deferring due to COVID-19. The report reviews the efforts of the Arab governments against VAW, including the efforts of the Arab League in adopting Cairo Declaration 2030, a comprehensive Arab development plan, in addition to the attempts to pass an Arab convention against VAW. This is in addition to Kaffa Arab Network's efforts to pass an Arab law bill against VAW.

4. SGBV AVAILABLE SERVICES, INITIATIVES AND PROGRAMMES – MAPPING OF STAKEHOLDERS

This section is summarizing the results of a mapping of 34 stakeholders who provide assistance on issues of gender, SGBV, and migrants and refugees. The stakeholders are from government, UN agencies, donors, international and local NGOs. Conversations in a form of "Semi-structured interviews" were conducted with stakeholders to gain knowledge about the work they do in the fields of gender, SGBV, and supporting migrants and refugees depending on their scope and specialization. The stakeholders were also asked to identify the gaps in the support to women victims/survivors of violence, and recommendations for interventions that could be taken forward by the embassy of Switzerland, domain protection and migration.

While all the stakeholders have provided important and useful information, there are some organizations that are considered to be key, as they are either first responders or they are organizations that combine both the work with migrant and refugee women and support to SGBV survivors. Examples of these stakeholders are UNHCR, St. Andrew's Refugee Services (StARS), IOM, Terre des Hommes, UNFPA, National Council for Childhood and motherhood, National Coordinating Committee for Preventing and Combating Illegal migration and human trafficking (NCCPIMTIP), and Ministry of Health and Population (MOHP). Mentioning some of the key stakeholders aims to support the team of domain protection and migration, in making decisions on partnerships once the priority areas of interventions are set.

In efforts to have a structured overview of the mapping, stakeholders are divided by the type of assistance they provide. The broad themes that were identified are (health, psychological support, economic support, legal support, knowledge production, policy level support).

Key words: hotline, psychosocial support, health clinics, safe housing, shelters, cash-based support.

4. SGBV AVAILABLE SERVICES, INITIATIVES AND PROGRAMMES – MAPPING OF STAKEHOLDERS

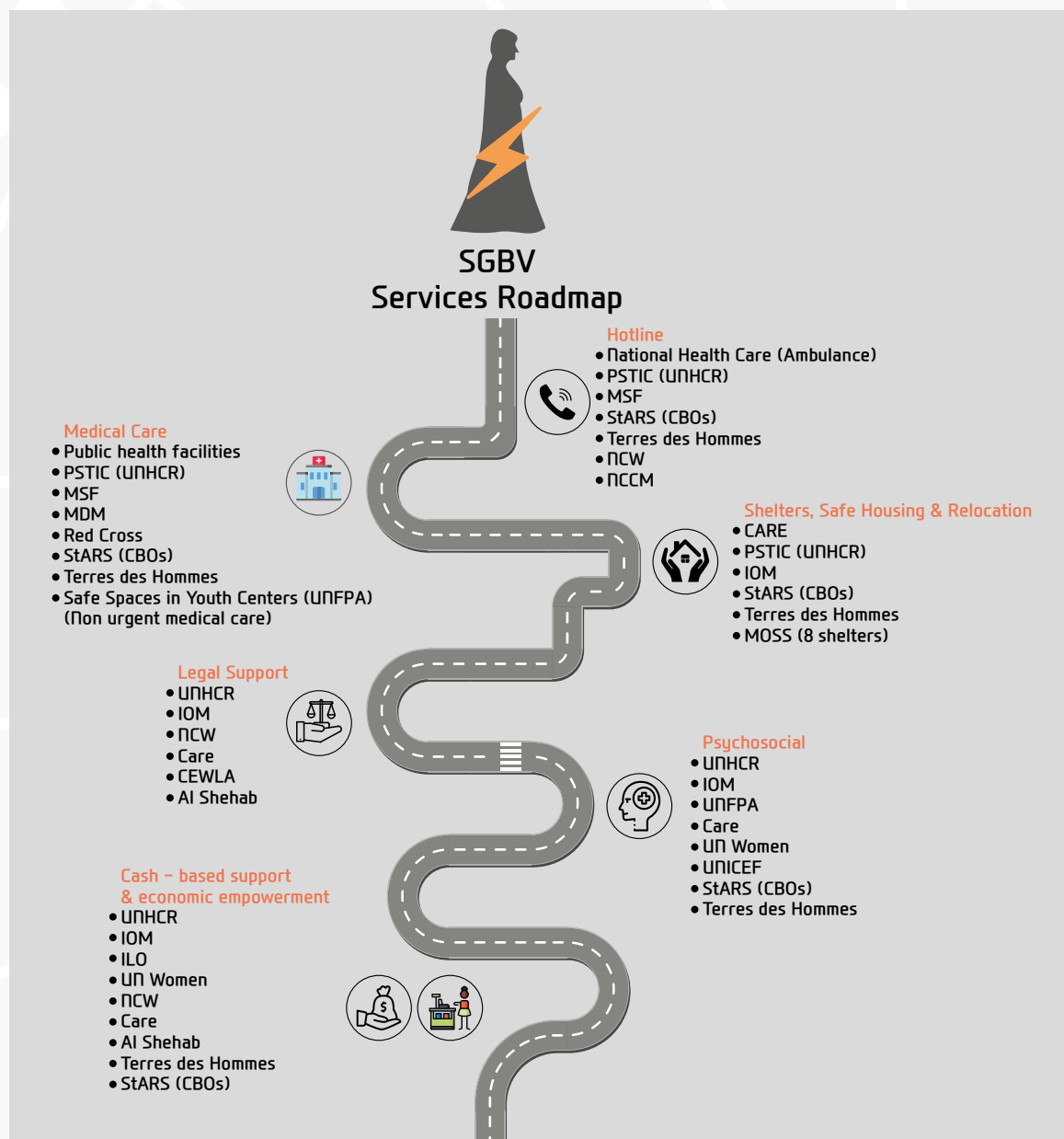


Figure (2) - SGBV Services Roadmap for refugee & migrant women in Egypt.

A. REFERRAL PATHWAYS

Referral pathways are currently confusing and fragmented for women and any victim of gender based, as most women do not have or are not aware about where to seek help if they are exposed to violence. The fact that there is no one-stop-shop type of support in Egypt makes the journey of getting support extremely difficult. Many efforts are currently being exerted to mitigate this issue through local NGOs. Saint Andrew's Refugee Services (StARS) have their own self-sufficient and comprehensive support system within the organization. Women refugees and migrants will be welcomed at StARS and get health and psychosocial support and if needed housing and relocation help. StARS support services are limited only to Cairo, despite their effectiveness and well-structured system.

Localization approach to referral pathways has been mentioned by UNFPA to be an idea for an effective mechanism to support survivors of violence Egypt. While there has not been any further elaboration that UNFPA is actually working progressively towards this approach, but the idea is there.

A prominent structure which is the SGBV Inter-agency Sub-working Group, was mentioned to be important. This is because UN and NGO partners working

4. SGBV AVAILABLE SERVICES, INITIATIVES AND PROGRAMMES – MAPPING OF STAKEHOLDERS

on SGBV are able to come together to coordinate efforts and discuss ways to enhance the response and support system for survivors. A referral pathway map has been developed by the working group. UNHCR and UNFPA co-chair the SGBV Sub-Working Group and most SGBV response services for refugees and asylum-seekers are provided through humanitarian partners. Engagement with national counterparts is ongoing. Please see Annex 5 for more information about the Sub-working group agencies and their services.

There are two important flagship programmes that seek to establish comprehensive frameworks of action to address SGBV, United Nations Joint Global Programme on Essential Services for Women and Girls Subject to Violence and the Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces for Women and Girls (Safe cities) by UN Women. These flagship programmes are global which allows for space of exchange of expertise and information across countries, sectors and organizations. In Egypt, The Essential Services programme is coordinated by UNFPA, and the Safe Cities programme is led by UN Women.

- The United Nations Joint Global Programme on Essential Services for Women and Girls Subject to Violence, a partnership by UN Women, UNFPA, WHO, UNDP and UNODC, aims to provide greater access to a coordinated set of essential and quality multi-sectoral services for all women and girls who have experienced gender-based violence. The Programme identifies the essential services to be provided by the health, social services, police and justice sectors as well as guidelines for the coordination of essential services and the governance of coordination processes and mechanisms. Service delivery guidelines for the core elements of each essential service have been identified to ensure the delivery of high-quality services, particularly for low- and middle-income countries, for women and girls experiencing violence. Taken together, these elements comprise the “Essential services package”³².
- “For 10 years, UN Women’s global initiative, Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces for Women and Girls, has worked with leading women’s organizations, local and national governments, UN agencies, and other partners to develop, implement, and evaluate comprehensive approaches to prevent and respond to sexual harassment against women and girls in public spaces in different settings”³³.

B. HEALTH AND MEDICAL SUPPORT

Health support is, in many instances, lifesaving for women and girls’ victims/survivors of SGBV. Interviews with key stakeholders who provide services have confirmed that in extreme cases of SGBV such as rape, health and psychological support are the first response needed post incident. For example, one of the key tools mentioned is the hotline/number that women in communities are aware of and can resort to in case they experience SGBV and need immediate support. While there is a national hotline that is under the PCW, it is not really utilized by migrant and refugee women. This is why CBOs and NGOs often have mobile numbers or hotlines that are disseminated in their communities and that women use to get help when needed. For example, Terre des Hommes has a 24/7 functional hotline, with social workers available to provide immediate support to refugees and migrants if they are exposed to any kind of violence. Doctors Without Borders, and Médecins du Monde are also among the INGOs providing clinical health services and interventions to refugees and migrant survivors of sexual assault. However, they lack emergency response services.

The Ministry of Health and Population (MOHP) mentioned that it provides services

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to all visitors without discrimination between nationals and refugees or migrants, to women and men equally. The ministry provides free reproductive health services in general health units without discrimination or requiring identification papers. The ministry also mentioned that it provides advanced training to healthcare professionals on medical protocols and guidelines for GBV survivors such as forensic doctors, gynecologists, Mental Health Secretariat (a government unit specialized in mental health) doctors and nurses. The ministry works with physicians and nurses as well as midwives and health unit personnel on the elimination of FGM and child marriage. The ministry extended its training to include female villages' leaders on behavioral change for harmful practices and traditions such as FGM and child marriage. The ministry's programmes have various partnerships with organizations including UNDP and Caritas that works on providing STD awareness and prevention services. There is a regional political network including ministries of health and youth, both of which are represented in the Arab coordination that is often managed by the Arab League, through regional conferences for Arab ministries of health, or regional conferences for Arab ministries of youth. However, this coordination and network work are not reflected in field work or in any way responsible for improving regional VAW services.

UNFPA is currently supporting Medical Response clinics in university hospitals on GBV and implementing a national GBV medical protocol with the MOHP, three clinics have already been opened. Furthermore, they are also working with the MOHP to deploy the mobile clinic mechanism to areas where there are asylum seekers, refugees or migrants, and also deploying professionals from the MOHP to provide counseling to refugees and asylum seekers in UNFPA's "Safe Spaces" around the country. Despite these efforts to integrate non-nationals in the national health services, the services would mostly be used by Egyptian women and this is why many of the NGOs have resorted to having their own health support services to refugee and migrant women. It was mentioned that organizations which provide alternative medical services are overwhelmed and sometimes not effective to the needs of the women. Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders (MSF) is one of the known organizations to provide medical services, however, they had to shut down during the pandemic crisis, and this had a negative effect the cases needing help and support. Stakeholders like StARS and Terre Des Hommes mentioned that they have their in-house medical support programmes that have been open even during the pandemic. During the COVID-19 crisis, UNHCR and UNFPA are working with partners to ensure that essential services, in particular related to medical response, safety/relocation, and remote case management remain available. In particular, UNHCR and CARE continue to provide remote case management to SGBV survivors, with in-person services for emergency cases.

C. SAFETY AND SECURITY – SAFE HOUSES AND WOMEN'S SHELTERS:

A main challenge for survivors of SGBV especially those who are subjected to domestic violence is where to go if they decided to abandon their perpetrators whether their intimate partners or family members. In Egypt, there are 8 shelters under the administration and supervision of Ministry of Social Solidarity (MOSS). The 8 shelters are in Alexandria, Cairo, Damietta, Minya, Assuit, Banisuiif. The interviews demonstrated that further efforts to increase the number of shelters especially in Upper Egypt are in progress. On the other hand, positive prospects were mentioned regarding the capacity of shelters and the amendments to the bylaws.

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MOSS is currently receiving support from UN Women to upgrade the physical and technical capacity of the 8 shelters across Egypt and has successfully supported the amendments of the bylaws. In December 2019, the following amendments of the bylaws, MOSS gave the following statement: Dr. Nevin Al-Kabbaj announced the new by-laws for women's shelters, "whereby women with disabilities and survivors of human trafficking will be among the groups that can be hosted by the shelters. She added that the hosting period has been extended from three to six months and is renewable only for critical cases. Other by-laws indicate that shelters will now allow boys up to the age of 12 to stay in the shelters with their mothers, whereas beforehand only boys up to the age of 10 were allowed. This will ensure that boys receive the care and comfort they need from their mothers. Dr. Kabbaj also emphasized that the new by-laws incorporated a community-based monitoring perspective, where volunteers will be appointed to monitor and evaluate the quality of service in all institutions"³⁴.

Capacity building is currently being done with shelters' staff with the support of UN Women to ensure that the delivery of services is sensitive to survivors' needs. Psychosocial support is provided to the survivors in the shelters. Mental health secretariat, which is a governmental body and an affiliate of the MOHP, works to provide psychological and medical support to the rather complicated cases. The shelters also support women to engage survivors in economic opportunities to ensure self-reliance and resilience. It was mentioned by UN Women that currently the Alexandria shelter has more Libyan and Syrian women refugees residing. During COVID-19 crisis,, UN Women mentioned that the shelters remained open, and precautions measures were taken. For example, women newcomers had their own room with private bathroom and were mandated to isolate for 14 days. These efforts are funded mainly by USAID.

In November 2020, the first government run shelter for victims of trafficking was opened with the contribution of IOM. This comes within the framework of partnership between MOSS, the National Coordinating Committee for Combatting and Preventing Illegal Migration and Trafficking in Persons (NCCPIM&TIP), NCCM, the Embassy of Denmark, and the Egyptian Red Crescent (ERC). The shelter is part of the of the SPHERE project, and is expected to start initially with accommodating up to 30 female and children VoTs³⁵.

D. LEGAL PROTECTION AND CASE MANAGEMENT

UNHCR and IOM are among the key international organizations specializing in supporting migrants and refugees including supporting victims of SGBV. They provide a package of various services that include issuing ID papers and providing timed financial aid. The case management method is dependent on provision of emergency medical aid, as well as psychological and legal support. Globally, UNHCR and IOM work with multiple partners at various levels including partnerships with governmental authorities for the purpose of providing safe reception services at border checkpoints, and in temporary and emergency reception points. In Egypt, UNHCR works to register and document refugee cases and issue temporary residency papers that guarantee inclusion over the time. Furthermore, the UNHCR and IOM establish connections with NGOs, they both work on referring cases of sexual violence survivors from refugees to organizations specialized in medical and clinical services or organizations providing temporary shelter services and financial support.

There is a dire need for refugee reception offices that provide more protection

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during COVID-19, while the need for providing emergency financial aids to women increases during the breakouts of the pandemic. Moreover, there is a need for urgently enacting legislations that result in developing emergency protection for refugee women and children in the labour market, especially during the pandemic. Another need that persists is the need for building the national organizations capacities, as they receive cases referred to them by the UNHCR and the IOM. This should further enable them to provide urgent support and protection to refugee and migrant survivors, since the referral management system lacks monitoring and evaluation interventions.

UNHCR implements SGBV prevention and response activities directly and through its partner CARE International. CARE's response services include case management, safety/relocation support, psychosocial counselling, and legal referrals. On the prevention side, CARE provides sexual and reproductive health awareness, legal information, basic psychosocial sessions, self-defense workshops, gender trainings for refugee children as well as early marriage prevention.

The focus group discussions with CBOs (included migrants and refugees from Ethiopia, Syria, Yemen, Sudan and Somalia) revealed that refugee and migrant women reporting cases of SGBV including extreme cases like rape is almost impossible and often backfires against the victim. It was mentioned by one of the CBOs' representatives that refugee and migrant women face discrimination while reporting SGBV cases in police stations. It was also mentioned that women avoid going through the national system all together and this is why NGOs and CBOs focus their resources on supporting the women with response and protection rather than supporting them with legal cases against perpetrators.

Key to mention that the Ministry of Interior, has in theory some VAW units to receive survivors/victims of gender based violence, in reality these units are not functional and the reporting and procedures steps are confusing, full of stigma from male police officers and rarely support the victim. While with every legislative change the police get a little better in response to VAW cases, a lot still needs to be done to ensure safe and clear reporting channels and protection for survivors/victims. The situation is already very hard for Egyptian women. Migrant and refugee women rarely if not never report VAW to the police in fear of further complications with their documentation or status in the country.

E. PREVENTION AND AWARENESS

The Ministry of Youth and Sports (MOYS) has a unique experience in developing an anti-harassment policy, which would have been considered a first if the policy was endorsed. The ministry delivers regular trainings on eliminating sexual harassment its youth centers across governorates such as self-defense trainings to women and girls. Additionally, it holds sports and arts events such as sports leagues for girls and theater performances to raise awareness against sexual harassment in local communities. UNFPA and GIZ support these efforts. UNFPA and UN Women are two stakeholders implementing awareness-raising campaigns related to SGBV targeting women as well as service providers. UNFPA works on disseminating more information about the services available for women and girls, for example, awareness videos for SGBV and rape survivors. Other videos are also produced for service providers on the referral pathways. UNFPA also produced PSAs on social media explaining for the victims what to do and how to protect their rights and where to seek social protection (health awareness, and how to preserve evidence).

F. CASH-BASED SUPPORT AND ECONOMIC ACCESS

Relocation costs for refugee and migrant women survivors of violence are EGP 45,000, and at least EGP 2,000 /month as bare minimum to survive, according to the interview with StARS staff. These amounts include rent, food and other needed expenses that could include medical costs for women and their children. This estimate is based on the experience of StARS cash support programmes to women survivors of violence. The women receive cash-based support from UNHCR and other organizations, but they are still not enough. StARS confirmed that this assistance does not bring people out of poverty and they stressed on the need

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The ILO mostly works towards ensuring decent work conditions and protecting rights and duties at work. It also works to introduce a gender-sensitive perspective to its legal and union initiatives when dealing with violence. In 2019, a convention against violence in the world of work was announced during the ILO's international conference. The UN, in turn, adopted lobbying campaigns to mobilize for signing the convention and taking adequate precautions to protect women from sexual harassment and violence in the workplace, which is deemed among decent work conditions. The convention calls for taking measures at the level of binding general policies and legislations for the governments, the private sectors, and the unions in order to eliminate workplace sexual harassment and avoid impunity. This should be done by adopting anti-harassment policies in the workplace.

The ILO works with partner unions and private sectors on enacting corporate social responsibility, a key intervention to distribute social responsibility towards eliminating VAW and empowering women in an appropriate and encouraging environment among a larger number of parties.

ILO MENA Regional Office has also issued several regional bulletins and reports on the work status and issues of MENA migrants. These reports primarily focus on Syrian and Sudanese migrants and refugees' work status in host countries including Egypt and Lebanon. There is a rise in legislative demands regarding the legal protection of informal employment, namely domestic workers, a sector that women and girls constitute the majority of, especially during the pandemic.

G. CHILD PROTECTION

Child on the Move programme is among UNICEF's important interventions aiming at the safe inclusion of refugee children. The programme is based on a case management system that works to provide comprehensive support services to migrant and refugee children including providing identification papers, enrolling in educational institutions, and applying for health insurance networks. It also supports their integration within communities and raises awareness against harmful

practices and discrimination against refugee children. It takes place in partnership with NCCM and NCCPIMTIP. The programme also works to raise awareness of the different forms of violence against refugee children of both sexes. It also adopts awareness-raising interventions, and social and legal protection interventions, such as working with the ministry of justice and prosecutors on enacting the child law especially in relation to harmful practices (FGM, child marriage, bargain marriage...etc). Additionally, the programme works with the ministry of education to train social and psychosocial workers in elementary education for the purpose of increasing their sensitivity to harmful practices, bullying, and violence against refugees of different colours, sexes, or nationality.

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H. THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR CHILDHOOD AND MOTHERHOOD (NCCM) AND THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR WOMEN (NCW)

The roles of both councils are critical in the work related to addressing SGBV in Egypt. NCCM's work is focused on the protection of the rights of all Egyptian children ensuring they are living in a safe and caring environment. NCW is the national machinery concerned with advancing the women's rights agenda in Egypt. NCCM's development and awareness programmes include FGM, adolescent health, child helpline, combating violence against children and others. NCW is mandated to lead national level policy and programmatic actions to advance gender equality and end gender-based violence in Egypt.

A specialized unit on EAW was established in the NCW with the support of UNFPA in 2018, with the aim of coordinating between national authorities and supporting the institutional framework for the implementation and follow-up of the protection axis, in the 2030 Strategy for the Advancement of Women and the National Strategy on Ending Violence Against Women.

At the legislative level, based on the Prime Minister's request in February 2013, the Legislative Committee of the NCW, in cooperation with representatives of the Ministry of Justice, civil society, specialists and experts in the field of violence, drafted and prepared an integrated draft law to combat all forms of violence against women. The articles of which are based on the principles of Islamic law and other divine religions, agreements and charters International Human Rights Organization, in a manner that does not contradict the provisions of the Egyptian Constitution and the principles of Islamic Sharia. It was submitted in its final form to the Council of Ministers in 2018.

NCW fosters and implements policy and programmatic interventions on ending violence against women. This includes cooperation with the EU on supporting the Ombudsperson office and the hotline (15115), through which legal support services are provided to women, but not emergency services. Another example is their cooperation with UNFPA on the to support Medical Response clinics in university hospitals on GBV and implementing a national GBV medical protocol with the MOHP, three clinics have already been opened. NCW is a leading partner in the Safe Cities programme along with UN Women, including establishing three branches of their Ombudsman Office in three disadvantaged areas in Greater Cairo, supporting gender responsive urban upgrading projects, and conducting awareness-raising activities with local communities. Future plans are to scale-up the Safe Cities programme in Alexandria and Damietta governorates.³⁶

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The NCW and the NCCM alongside Baseera – The Egyptian Center for Public Opinion Research are currently preparing a national strategy against FGM. The strategy comprises three axes: legal, cultural, and the axis of service access. There are several proposed ideas for increased efficiency including restoring the demographic health survey, amending the child law namely article 61, working with young prosecutors to elevate gender sensitivity, creating sex education curricula for medical schools, and establishing medical work ethics.

I. DONOR FUNDING FOCUS AREAS

The embassies of Netherlands and United Kingdom, USAID and the EU support ministries, national councils and national committees working on violence against women and children. This includes support to the NCW, NCCM, The National Committee to Eradicate FGM and the NCCPIMTIP. There are budget allocations to supporting and funding issues of reproductive health and family planning, as well as limited political participation projects, economic empowerment and safe cities projects. Funding from Netherlands include refugee protection, providing legal and psychosocial support and services of case management. UK is considered to be the biggest sponsor of the MOSS's programmes and to the national committees, most notably The National Committee to Eradicate FGM.

The embassies of Netherlands and UK, as well as the USAID support major developmental organizations, such as Care International and Plan International in some projects against FGM and child marriage, with the NCW a partner.

The EU is currently supporting the Ombudsperson's office of the NCW. The support includes technical support (training on case management) and expanding the capacities of the office, such as upgrading the local branches with ICT equipment. The EU supporting local NGO partners in providing direct support to women through grant schemes to provide economic empowerment assistance, VAW services and awareness-raising activities.

The Government of Japan is currently funding UN Women-led regional project Women's Leadership, Empowerment, Access & Protection in Crisis Response (LEAP) project. The project supports refugee women as well as Egyptian women through community centers in host communities to provide vulnerable women with capacity building programmes, vocational training and access to financial services. It also works on strengthening their protection through engaging different key players including women and youth CSOs, national service providers and local authorities to address issues related to all kinds of violence³⁷.

On the other hand, the JICA, in collaboration with the ministry of education, supports the Japanese school's project. It also contributes to raising capacities of corporates and governmental manufacturers, especially in increasing the capacities of production lines and reinforcing the structure of the national industrial scene. The JICA is one of the international donor agencies that is not concerned with empowering women or eliminating VAW, however, this does not discourage us from working to persuade JICA to include a gender aspect to its programs and interventions.

The Government of Italy supports economic empowerment programmes – targeting Egyptian youth – across Egypt in efforts to prevent illegal migration from Egypt to Italy. Also, there are economic support programs that directly target refugees and migrants. There are multiple economic empowerment programs that provide many services such as financial support, crafts skill building and training, and marketing and market access services. Furthermore, there are refugee and migrant support programs against VAW that are provided by parties specialized in issues of asylum and migration. These parties include national and international organizations that exclusively work on refugees and migrants.

J. ROLE OF NGOS IN EGYPT AND THE REGION

NGOs have a strong role in supporting women migrants and refugees mainly because of the services they offer including legal, psychological, referrals, and supporting their access to economic opportunities. NGOs have a proven track of accumulated field work experience that allows for increasing the efficiency of their interventions in the areas of protection and provision of quality support services. Some NGOs are concerned with the legal aspect of SGBV; they contributed to the unified law on EAW drafting, the personal status law, the penal code, and other relevant legislations. Several relevant NGOs are members of national committees on EAW. Some of them contributed to developing the national strategy on EAW, and others in the national committee on the elimination of FGM, as well as the national committee combating trafficking in persons.

Among the most impactful NGOs that provide SGBV support services to migrant and refugee women are: CARE International, Saint Andrew's Refugee Services (StARS), Red Cross, Terres des Hommes, Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders (MSF), Al Shehab Foundation, Center for Egyptian Women's Legal Assistance (CEWLA foundation), CARITAS and The Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services (CEOSS). Some of the mentioned NGOs serve nationals and non-nationals as well.

NGOs face further challenges with regards to the laws governing their work, it was mentioned that the recent amendments to the law governing the work of civil society have not been finalized with worries that it could limit their scope of work³⁸. NGOs face delays in getting approvals on their projects, which affects their ability to implement their activities within the timeframe set out by donors and international organizations.

NGOs are keen on working within networks, as well as taskforces. Some of them are members of the uniform law task force, and Roa'a Regional PSL Network, and Lotus Regional Network for Reproductive and Sexual Health Rights. NGOs are also working within regional networks and coalitions, as well as broadening the vision of the regional EAW interventions. One of the regional networks that includes prominent NGOs is Roa'a Network, Musawah Network for Islamic Feminism and Personal Status and Violence Issues. This is in addition to regional networks concerned with international follow-ups including that of CEDAW and Beijing 25th.

K. EFFORTS DURING COVID-19

The MOHP paid very close attention to family planning programmes during the pandemic, especially with the fears of elevated pregnancy rates during the lockdown. The ministry also was very keen on the continuous provision of childbirth services in university hospitals and health institutions operating under it.

The MOYS has sterilized training and meeting rooms during the partial lockdown. It also provided sterilized rooms for psychological support sessions for VAW survivors as well as sterilizing equipment including alcohol and face masks to young person's visiting the youth centers during the partial lockdown.

UNICEF's Child on the Move programme is providing sanitation and facemasks, raising awareness of the importance of social distancing in governmental and private schools and day-cares during partial lockdown, and raise the awareness of employees concerned with childhood of protection precautions during pandemic waves. The programme is also concerned with providing legal and psychological

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support to cases in potential danger during partial and full lockdown. With the beginning of the new academic year, the programme works to consolidate its partnerships with the ministries of health and education for the purpose of implementing adequate protection interventions against COVID-19 and preparing elementary schools in rural villages to receive students. This is done by preparing school psychologists to provide psychological support to children in schools during partial lockdown.

The ILO was keen on producing brochures and manuals regarding the importance of working on providing protection to informal employment through the pandemic, especially in developing countries. It should be noted the migrants and refugees make up a significant proportion of the sector. In the framework of the ILO's concern with reinforcing its interventions regarding the provision of decent work environment during the pandemic, it has issued a number of policy papers and reports on the status of informal employment in Arab labour markets, as well as launching a regional initiative to apply the protection measures needed to improve the status of informal employees as well as measures of social protection.

Both the UNHCR and the IOM are keen on equipping refugee reception centers at border checkpoints with sanitation equipment during partial and full lockdown. Services of receiving cases and requesting interventions through the hotline have been made available. Despite the UNHCR office having been shut down, the IOM continued to provide case management and referring some cases to legal and psychological support provided by national NGOs. It has also been providing sanitation services and social distancing institutions. However, according to the qualitative interviews, the number of beneficiaries is only 31 cases of survivors during the first wave of the pandemic.

NGOs were also keen to provide hotline services and legal and psychological support. However, provision of support over the phone was not sufficiently effective during full lockdowns with victims locked up with their abusers, as well as the lack of opportunities for hosting and sheltering them. This is in addition to, the difficulty of seeking legal or psychological support with the lack of privacy and secrecy, not to mention courts closing their doors during the pandemic. This gives rise to a need for producing more effective alternatives that provide emergency services to VAW victims.

5. CHALLENGES AND GAPS

In general, the elevated level of conflict and political unrest as well as climate change challenges in the MENA region and other neighboring African countries, are expected to increase the number of refugee flow in Egypt. The mentioned challenges are related to the work on SGBV in Egypt in general which affects both nationals and non-nationals. Specific challenges related to refugees and migrants are further clarified.

Below are some of the main challenges that Domain Protection and migration will need to take into consideration:

1. National partnerships' structures and access to public services:

- Based on the interviews, it was clear that there is a need for deeper coordination and partnership mechanisms between almost all stakeholders working in the field of SGBV. For example, it was found that there is a need for stronger comprehensive visions for national projects; the roles of the different partners in these projects are not fully activated. This calls for a need to explore, in collaboration with stakeholders, what kind of process and structural challenges are facing them in achieving their full potential, what kind of practical partnership formats would be suitable and would instigate social change on issues of gender and SGBV. Furthermore, despite their importance in driving social change, ministries like the Ministry of Education (MOE) and Ministry of Culture (MOC) are not heavily involved in these issues, their capacities are not fully activated.
- While government services are offered to all persons living on Egyptian land, focus group discussions with CBOs revealed that refugees and migrants face challenges in accessing public services.
- Lack of sustainable funding policies dedicated to support decentralized reproductive health programmes of the MOHP, which leads to the ending of these programmes.
- Low number of shelters and lack of physical and technical capacity of existing shelters to receive survivors. Additionally, stigma around shelters which discourages women from reaching out to the shelters.
- National hotline services are limited to the capacity of employees and funding for maintaining the running cost of the service. National hotlines are for daytime only and not prepared to receive emergency. Hotline employees require specialized training in receiving and documenting complaints and providing the suitable support. Also, there is a constant need for more studies based on the nature of the complaints received by the hotlines, as well as the constant need for a package of hotline-adjacent services including highly prepared emergency ambulance services, and fast police intervention and fast clinical intervention.
- While there is much evidence on challenges of refugee and migrant women in Egypt, there is no official data that could support policy change and advocacy.

2. Limited availability of SGBV services offered by NGOs to migrants and refugees:

- Lack of funding and capacity for “Frontliners”. Frontliners are NGOs that provide essential services to SGBV survivors, their services are vital and, in many instances, are lifesaving. They lack the necessary resources to maintain their services and the fact that most of them are not engaged with national

services poses a challenge to their work and for survivors.

- The interviews revealed that NGOs believe that referral and case management mechanisms between NGOs that provide the services still need strengthening, additional to the lack of a solid tracking and monitoring system for cases of SGBV.
- Delayed project approvals which affects NGOs' ability to deliver their activities.
- Most active organizations working on eliminating violence are based in the capital. This creates a geographical gap in service provision, which are mostly centralized, and are scarce or non-existent around the borders.
- Limited availability of psycho-social services, an essential component of women survivors of violence recovery and re-integration in society.
- Weak mechanisms for safe housing and relocation of survivors.

3. Other social challenges and COVID-19 impact:

- Pandemic-related consequences like elevated pregnancy rates, inability of women to access health services and the general overburdened health system.
- Cultural and social barriers preventing women from accessing health services when they are available. For example, MOHP mentioned that majority of the beneficiaries attending health awareness and training programmes in youth centers continue to be men.
- Lack of working opportunities and safe working environments for migrant and refugee women and girls which adds to their vulnerability to abuse and harassment.

4. Regional challenges:

- There is limited attention given to supporting regional networks. This is due to the scarce opportunities for networking among NGOs at the regional level that is burdened with conflicts and political settings that affect the establishment of an adequate vision or strategy in dealing with issues of migration and asylum, namely, VAW among refugees.
- Official efforts at the regional level made by the civil society are based on non-binding regional and international agreements. This impedes monitoring and evaluation of state obligations to implementing SGBV interventions.
- Limited financial allocations to fund regional SGBV interventions, especially those targeting refugees and migrants, despite the escalating armed conflicts and crises in the region.

6. MAJOUR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Embassy of Switzerland through Domain Protection and Migration has a strategic role in creating space for dialogue, development, exchange and networking and in supporting civil society. One of the recommendations for strategic interventions is positioning the issue of refugee and migrant protection in a broader socio-economic framework. Refugees and migrants contribute to the economy of Egypt, even though their contribution is mainly in the informal sector. Stressing on the importance of refugee and migrants' contribution to the economy of Egypt was mentioned to be a possible entry point to present them as contributors rather than burdens for the country. Having said that, women need protection at the home, the workplace and streets. Below are the major findings and recommendations based on reflections from the interviews with stakeholders and gap analysis.

1. Refugees and migrant women are economic contributors and not a burden. Refugee and migrant women work in the informal sector in several professions, many as care takers. In this light positive advocacy messages should focus on the importance of their contribution to the economy rather than portraying them as economic burdens.

2. Advocacy for the inclusion of migrant and refugee women's issues in national policies and legislations and/or development of new policies to secure the rights of migrant and refugee women. The need to stress on Egypt's international commitment to the protection and support to refugees, migrants and asylum seekers. This would be done through engaging with government bodies, policy makers, national councils and civil society organizations with the aim of lobbying and advocating to include the issues and needs of migrant and refugee women in current or new relevant policies and legislations. Additionally, ensuring the consultation of experts and researchers of accumulated experience in strategy development and implementation.

3. The need for solid mechanisms of coordination between stakeholders working on SGBV. The interviews showed that most stakeholders know about the available projects and programmes but there is a lack of solid coordination or referral among them. Each stakeholder has its own specialization, and in that sense cooperation and coordination would be complementary. It is important to mention that due to the complex nature of SGBV especially for refugee and migrant women, coordination could sometimes be difficult as the focus is on protecting the victim.

4. Institutional capacity strengthening, this includes mainly training for service providers including government and NGOs. Capacity building would need to include skills on case management and how to deal with women victims of violence, in addition to awareness about existing laws to protect victims and witnesses. Almost all stakeholders mentioned that there is a big gap in the training for service providers whether government or NGOs.

5. Tracking and monitoring database system, a confidential database system will document and support the efforts done by stakeholders. The system will enable tracking of SGBV cases, generating statistics, trends and geographical information. This will enable an evidence-based response system that meets the needs of survivors and allows follow-up and continuous support.

6. Emergency services (medical and housing/shelters), most stakeholders work to provide psychosocial and legal support with little focus on emergency housing. This is mainly due to the cost and complexity related to the provision of safe housing, especially that many SGBV cases need to be relocated more than once. In addition, there is lack of providing emergency clinical services that provide medical interventions related to safe abortion, pre-natal and post-natal services

6. MAJOR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

and other services concerned with contagious and chronic diseases.

7. Supporting specialized units at border checkpoints. Organizations working in protection of refugees and migrants should be supported in adopting sustainable interventions at border checkpoints. These points provide emergency medical services to victims of assault and rape including emergency contraception, safe abortion, as well as prenatal and childbirth services. These units can be established in the framework of enacting security and peace conventions, and international peacekeeping protocols in conflict zones borders. Noting that limited number of organizations are allowed in border governorates.

8. Cash-based support high costs of living and the peculiar situation of women refugees and migrants often put them in financial distress. This is why cash-based support is essential, it provides women with a “breathing period” until their situation changes or until they are able to find employment. In some cases, women cannot afford to work, and cash-based support services would be their only way of surviving.

9. Awareness-raising to reduce stigma against refugees was found to be important. Refugees and migrants face racism within their host communities and while accessing services. Awareness-raising needs to take place at national, institutional and community levels.

10. Supporting stakeholders working on SGBV with Safeguarding institutional and training. This will ensure that service providers are well trained to abide by protection policies for their clients to ensure the safety and security of the women getting the services.

7. PARTNERSHIPS:

Based on the stakeholders mapping, it was found that there are players considered to be central to the work on SGBV and issues of migrants and refugees. Below is a map to summarize areas of potential partnership with the domain and entry points to issues of gender, SGBV and migrant and refugee support.

There are certain issues that need to be taken into consideration while looking at the map of potential partnerships. Despite the limitations that currently exist especially in the work with NGOs – as mentioned in previous sections – there are opportunities for domain protection and migration to work on and push for inclusive partnerships between entities working on relevant issues especially between government and civil society. The domain could have a role in strengthening collaboration between different stakeholders through convening spaces for dialogue on issues related to SGBV and migrants and refugees. The embassy through the domain would use its comparative advantage as a leading donor on issues of migrants and refugees' support to bring these stakeholders together to push for priority areas. In this light, there are four partnership areas and spaces for establishing linkages as shown below.



Figure 4: Map of potential partnerships.

1. Direct support to Frontliners:

- As mentioned in previous sections, Frontliners are the NGOs providing SGBV essential services for migrants and refugees. It is recommended that the domain would provide direct financial and capacity building support to selected NGOs. These NGOs are such as: CARE International, Saint Andrew's Refugee Services (StARS), Red Cross, Terres des Hommes, Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders (MSF), Al Shehab Foundation, Center for Egyptian Women's Legal Assistance (CEWLA foundation), CARITAS and The Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services (CEOSS). Some of the mentioned NGOs serve nationals and non-nationals as well.
- One of the priority areas is to help in expanding the geographical outreach of these NGOs for establishing localized referral mechanisms. Additionally, exploring practical structures and spaces where NGOs could engage with public sector services is crucial for providing the best support possible to women.

2. Public policy (central level support to national councils and ministries):

- Engagement to support the services of the Ministry of Social Solidarity (MOSS), Ministry of Health and Population (MOHP) and Ministry of Youth and Sports (MOYS). The importance of these three ministries lies in the services they provide which need strengthening. In the case of the MOSS, supporting the expansion of shelters is one area of high relevance. The MOHP is a first responder in cases of SGBV, the domain could have a role in building the institutional capacity of the ministry, training to doctors and building on already existing health programmes the ministry is offering to women. Lastly, the MOYS has wide outreach throughout Egypt, they could have a role in spreading awareness on gender and SGBV issues, and they already have on going cooperation with international and donor agencies like GIZ and UNFPA³⁸.
- Pushing for public policy frameworks on SGBV through technical engagement with NCW, NCCM, and the National Coordinating Committee for Preventing and Combating Illegal migration and human trafficking (NCCPIMTIP). The type of technical engagement could be through producing knowledge products like observatory reports, fact sheets, and holding roundtable discussions on priority areas. Also, supporting national committees hosted by the national councils against VAW is a great opportunity for implementing centralized influential interventions. If these committees are able to adopt effective strategies against VAW, it would create opportunities for stakeholders concerned with eliminating VAW to encourage the government and lobby for adoption of centralized effective intervention to enhance VAW services.

3. Engaging with new actors:

- The domain could initiate engagement with important ministries like such as the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT). The MCIT launched the ICT for Women Initiative⁴⁰ to expand educational opportunities for women in information technology, in partnership with international and UN organizations. Engaging with MCIT would be an added value to the work done on gender and SGBV, especially when it comes to awareness and outreach.

4. Comprehensive Programming (cooperation with UN agencies)

- Working with UN agencies is one of the recommended entry points. UN organizations already have running programmes on SGBV and refugees and migrants' support, many of them are detailed in Section 4 of this report. SDC would be able to build on these exiting efforts to expand and take the work further. UN Agencies have the ability to mediate between the work of the government and the work done by civil society organizations, giving them a good advantage – they have the capacity to handle operational and project management processes.
- Areas of cooperation could be community-based projects, awareness raising, as well as supporting policy level actions done in cooperation with national counterparts.
- Regarding SGBV, leading agencies are UNFPA and UN Women. For migrants and refugees, leading agencies are IOM and UNHCR.

5. Donors (coordination of SGBV activities):

- Leading donors for the work on gender and SGBV are UK, Netherlands, USAID, EU. Netherlands is more focused on the work with refugees and this is why it is recommended to have closer cooperation with this donor. GIZ is leading work on
- On the other hand, donors like JAICA are not working on issues of gender or SGBV and this could be a good opportunity for to establish connection with this donor considering they have access to the MOETE.

6. Regionally and international advocacy (supporting existing networks and platforms):

- Regionally, organizations like the Arab Women Organization (AWO) is leading work on ending violence against women as well as women peace and security and it would be important to engage with the organization even on a technical level. Another important network is Salma Network working on SGBV issues in the Arab region, it is recommended to engage with this network and support their activities.
- At the international level, the domain could have an interesting role in supporting advocacy in international platforms and frameworks like Beijing 25, Generation Equality and the work done on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. UN Women Regional Office for Arab States works extensively on these platforms and it will be important to engage with the office.

8. THEORY OF CHANGE AND SUGGESTED OUTCOMES

Theory of Change (TOC):

When the policy and legislative environments offer better protection against SGBV, when quality SGBV services are strengthened and coordinated, and when attitudes are changed towards refugees and migrants, then migrant and refugee women have improved access to essential services and livelihood opportunities in host communities;

Broad objectives:

- Objective 1: Migrant and refugee women's issues are integrated into SGBV national policies and legislations in Egypt;
- Objective 2: Essential services are more accessible to migrant and refugee women through strengthened multi-sectoral engagement and coordination between stakeholders and an efficient and secure referral pathway;
- Objective 3: Negative attitudes towards migrants and refugees are addressed through awareness-raising and advocacy at national and regional levels.

Indicators:

- Number of policy discussions held, and policy papers produced that integrate migrant and refugee women's issues;
- Number of protocol mechanisms on integrating migrant and refugee women's issues adopted by national and regional stakeholders;
- Number of women who have received essential services;
- Number of first responders/key stakeholders supported to provide better services to migrant and refugee women;
- Number of capacity building training on management of SGBV cases provided to the supported first responders/key stakeholders;
- Number of awareness-raising campaigns on migrant and refugee women's issues that were launched;
- Number of advocacy meetings and activities held to influence the integration of migrant and refugee women's issues on programmatic and state levels.

Annexes:

1. Annex 1 – SGBV Inter-agency Sub-working Group
2. Annex 2– List of interviewed stakeholders
3. Annex 3 – Interview guided questions
4. Annex 4 – Report on stakeholders' interviews batch 1
5. Annex 5 – Report on stakeholders' interviews batch 2

1. United Nations, Declaration on the elimination of violence against women. General Assembly, New York: UN, 1993.
2. For more information, visit [WHO Violence Against Women](#)
3. “The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was the culmination of more than thirty years of work by the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, a body established in 1946 to monitor the situation of women and to promote women’s rights. The Commission’s work has been instrumental in bringing to light all the areas in which women are denied equality with men. These efforts for the advancement of women have resulted in several declarations and conventions, of which the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women is the central and most comprehensive document” (OHCHR, 1979), see more: [CEDAW](#).
4. As a defining framework for change, the Beijing Platform for Action made comprehensive commitments under 12 critical areas of concern. Even 20 years later, it remains a powerful source of guidance and inspiration (UN Women), see more: [Beijing 20](#).
5. For more information, visit [Migration Assistance and Protection IOM](#)
6. UNHCR, see more [SGBV](#).
7. UNHCR, [Figures at a Glance](#)
8. IOM, GLOBAL MIGRATION INDICATORS: Insights from the Global Migration Data Portal, 2018.
9. UNFPA (2015) The Egypt Economic Cost of Gender-Based Violence Survey (ECGBVS): [Link](#).
10. UNESCWA (2019) Situation Report on International Migration 2019: The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in the Context of the Arab Region, [report](#).
11. Ministry of Foreign Affairs Statement (April 2020): Egypt works to assure safety of migrants, refugees against COVID-19, [article](#).
12. UNHCR Refugees in Egypt Fact Sheet Egypt, June 2020. [Link](#).
13. UNHCR Global Appeal Update (2011), [Link](#)
14. See more on [3RP](#).
15. Ahram Online (2020) Egypt is committed to providing security, services to refugees, asylum seekers: [Link](#).
16. UNHCR 2018 report on sexual violence in 6 conflict-ridden Arab countries
17. UN resolution number 2467 issued early 2019 concerned with protecting female refugees from sexual violence in armed conflict zones
18. UNHCR Refugees in Egypt Fact Sheet Egypt, June 2020. [Link](#).
19. [WHO sept 2019 Call](#) for solidarity among different organizations and institutions to provide access to information that would help stop the spread of COVID19 in its second wave, especially in the MENA region
20. See more information, Nazra Organization, [Mob-sexual Assaults and Gang Rapes in Tahrir Square](#).
21. [Follow-up reports on VAW issued by NCW](#)
22. [NCCPIMTIP official website](#)
23. [NCCPIMTIP official website](#)
24. [A critical analysis of the National Strategy for Reproductive Rights](#) by The Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights – Sept. 2020
25. [NCCPIMTIP official website](#)
26. [The fourth and latest report on women protection during COVID-19 pandemic](#) – NCW – July 2020
27. [Law On Combating Illegal Migration & Smuggling of Migrants – Law No. 82 for 2016](#)
28. [The fourth and latest report on women protection during COVID-19 pandemic](#) – NCW – July 2020
29. NGOs in the task force were: New Woman Foundation, Nadeem Center, CEWLA, Tadween, independent lawyers and experts, Cairo Center for Development and Law, ACT and others.
30. See more on the incident: Egyptian court adjourns trial of alleged sexual harasser Ahmed Bassam Zaki to 7 November, [ahramonline](#).
31. The regional report on the progress achieved since Beijing Conference – ESCWA 2020
32. See more on the [United Nations Joint Global Programme on Essential Services](#).
33. See more on the [UN Women’s Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces for Women and Girls](#).
34. Women’s shelter in 6th of October opens after survivor-centered renovation, UN Women, December 2019, for more information please see [link](#).
35. For more information please see, [IOM Shelter for VoT](#).
36. For more information, please see [Safe Cities NCW](#).
37. For more information about the LEAP programme, see [link](#).
38. For more information about Law No. 149 of 2019 (NGO Law), see [Ahramonline](#), [TIME Brief](#).
39. See more on their programmes with [GIZ](#) and [UNFPA](#):
40. More on the initiative could be found here: [MCIT](#)