

**Gender-Based Violence Sub-Working Group (GBV SWG)**  
**In Response to Syrian Crisis, Humanitarian Setting**  
**Gaziantep- Turkey**

**I. Background/Justification**

During conflicts and natural disasters, civilians are at significant risk of harm through violence, abuse or deliberate deprivation. Much of violence is hidden and goes underreported, particularly domestic violence or intimate partner violence, and GBV survivors may fear the repercussions of reporting incidents, such as forms of stigmatization that could jeopardize their future. Under-reporting of GBV makes it difficult, if not impossible, to obtain an accurate measurement of the magnitude of the problem. In emergency situations, often characterized by instability, insecurity, fear, dependence, loss of autonomy, the breakdown of law and order, and widespread disruption of community and family support systems, women may be even less likely to disclose incidents of GBV. Until there are services in place that GBV survivors can safely access there is little reason for them to put themselves at risk by disclosing their experience of GBV.

As of 18 May 2015, 259.788 Syrians reside in 25 camps in 10 cities and as of 4 May 2015, there are 1.759.846 registered Syrians in total in Turkey. Although Turkey has a system to respond gender-based violence (GBV) cases, it's overloaded with the high number of Syrian population in the country. There is an increasing need for a sensitive, highly coordinated and systematic approach to handle GBV cases within the Turkey context. Therefore strong interagency coordination is needed to achieve the required multi-sectoral approach for an effective humanitarian response to GBV. UN agencies have been supportive with the government institutions on combating GBV and this support is planned to continue with the activities of GBV Sub-Group.

Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, also known as the Istanbul Convention that is one of the legally binding instrument for Turkey as one of the signatory countries, provides specific guidance for migration and asylum, integrating policies against multiple sectors and promoting international cooperation as written below:

**Article 60.** “1. Parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure that gender based violence against women may be recognized as a form of persecution within the meaning of Article 1, A (2), of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and as a form of serious harm giving rise to complementary/subsidiary protection.

2. Parties shall ensure that a gender-sensitive interpretation is given to each of the Convention grounds and that where it is established that the persecution feared is for one or more of these grounds, applicants shall be granted refugee status according to the applicable relevant instruments.

3. Parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to develop gender sensitive reception procedures and support services for asylum-seekers as well as gender guidelines and gender-sensitive asylum procedures, including refugee status determination and application for international protection.”

In order to respond the need in this area, as one of the standards mentioned in many international guidelines such as IASC, IAWG, and MISIP, planning and coordination is aimed with the establishment of the GBV Sub-Group.

## II. Definition of Gender-Based Violence

*Gender-based violence* as defined in the IASC Guidelines for Addressing Gender-Based Violence in Humanitarian Settings “is an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person’s will, and that is based on socially ascribed (gender) differences between male and females”. It includes acts that inflict physical, mental, sexual harm or suffering, as well as threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty.

GBV shall be understood to comprise, but not be limited to:

1. Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring **in the family**, including battering, sexual exploitation, sexual abuse of children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation.

2. Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring **within the general community**, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, as well as trafficking in women, girls, boys and men, and forced prostitution.

3. Physical, sexual and psychological violence **perpetrated or condoned by the State and institutions**, wherever it occurs.

## **1. Objectives of the GBV Sub-Working Group**

1. To establish a multi-sectoral sub-group which focus on all GBV related issues in and out of camp population at humanitarian settings
2. To consolidate, coordinate, improve and support the activities of all relevant stakeholders in the prevention of and response to GBV within the context of humanitarian action in Turkey.
3. To improve access to relevant information to support operations, advocacy and awareness raising needs through different trainings and workshops.
4. To promote best practice in the emergence of a shared vision and strategic framework, integrated strategies, coordinated activities, and common protocols used nationally and globally in humanitarian crises in GBV.
5. To support/assist the establishment of referral mechanisms and Standard Operational Procedures (SOPs) for GBV cases in collaboration with all actors including the NGOs and government institutions and to make sure that these procedures are in place.
6. To build/enhance the capacity of GBV partners by ensuring processes and procedures are clearly explained and understood, providing standard GBV resources, translating key guidelines if not available, conducting mapping of partners' capacity to identify skills.

## **III. The structure and membership of the GBV Sub-Working Group**

### **1. Leadership**

The GBV Sub-Working Group will be chaired by UNHCR, co-chaired by UNFPA. General Directorate of Women's Status of the Ministry of Family and Social Policies as the key government institution to combat GBV in Turkey will support both UNHCR and UNFPA through their national and regional capacity.

### **2. Membership**

- a. In order to ensure a holistic and multi-sectoral approach in the prevention of and response to GBV, membership of the GBV Working Group will be extended to national and local government representatives, international and national NGOs, international organizations, and other entities providing services in the health, psychosocial, legal and security sectors.
- b. Membership of national NGOs and entities shall be encouraged, in order to ensure sustainability of the sub-Working Group. Membership of national NGOs

providing services in provinces, districts and/or at community level will be particularly encouraged.

### **3. Meetings**

- a. The GBV Sub-Working Group meetings will be held on Wednesdays of the second week of every month, after the Protection/Community Services Working Group meeting held in Gaziantep.
- b. A draft agenda will be circulated to members of the Sub-Working Group at least five days before the regular monthly meeting, giving the members the opportunity to suggest additional items for discussion.
- c. Draft minutes will be circulated within one week of the meeting.

### **4. Reporting**

- a. Members of the Sub-Working Group will submit a monthly brief report to the Chair, at the latest one week before the regular meeting.
- b. The reports will highlight the GBV issues the members and their field counterparts are addressing, the challenges they are facing and highlight any issues that require action by the GBV Sub-Working Group. These issues will be discussed at the monthly meeting of the Sub-Working Group.
- c. The reports will be shared with the relevant national and regional government institutions and NGOs for their future interventions.

## **IV. (ToRs)/functions of the GBV Sub-Working Group**

1. In line with the TORs of the identified responsibilities, the Sub-Working Group will consolidate, coordinate, improve and support the efforts and activities of all relevant stakeholders in the prevention of and response to GBV, within the context of humanitarian action in Turkey through:

- a. Mapping and updating relevant GBV prevention and response actors in focus areas (who, what, where);
- b. Liaising with national actors working in the sector to strengthen the coordination, information sharing, management/analysis of cases, data and referrals within the context of relevant national framework.
- c. Ensuring that analyses are carried out on the GBV situations in focus areas and documented for all actors to use;

- d. Monitoring the established reporting and monitoring mechanisms to ensure coordination of efforts and activities of members and relevant stakeholders;
- e. Providing a forum for sharing information on activities, identifying needs and gaps in prevention and response, as well as for planning GBV inter-agency activities;
- f. Engaging in inter-agency, multi-sectoral field missions to assess programming successes and challenges and identify gaps in GBV programming;
- g. Facilitating and supporting awareness-raising initiatives, targeting government bodies and community structures for the prevention of GBV;
- h. Strengthening the capacity of governmental institutions, NGOs and humanitarian staff to prevent and respond to GBV by organizing trainings, providing technical support and tapping into existing training/capacity development opportunities;
- i. Active liaising with relevant cluster working groups (health, mental health etc.) to ensure that GBV issues are integrated into all humanitarian response efforts.
- j. Liaising with the national level GBV group which is co-lead by MoFSP and AFAD in Ankara.
- k. Developing national and international advocacy strategy on the issues of GBV to put the issue on the agenda of the local, regional and int'l institutions and donors.

2. The work of the GBV Sub-Working Group will be guided by the following principles:

**Confidentiality:** ensuring that survivors, witnesses and information sources are protected. No identifying information will be revealed in data resources, nor during coordination or other public meetings, when reference is made to (specific) GBV cases;

**Neutrality:** a non-partisan approach in providing services to survivors - not taking sides;

**Impartiality:** non-discrimination on the basis of nationality, race, religious belief, political views, sexual orientation, social or other status;

**Safety and security:** all actors will prioritize the safety of the survivor, family, witnesses and service providers at all times;

**Participatory approach:** ensuring, to the extent possible, consultation with all members of the community (women, girls and boys and men) throughout the GBV programming cycle;

**Independence:** working without influence of States, government bodies, parties to a conflict or other political entities;

**Respect:** actions and responses of all actors will be guided by respect for the choices, wishes, rights and the dignity of the survivor.

**Further Contact**

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