

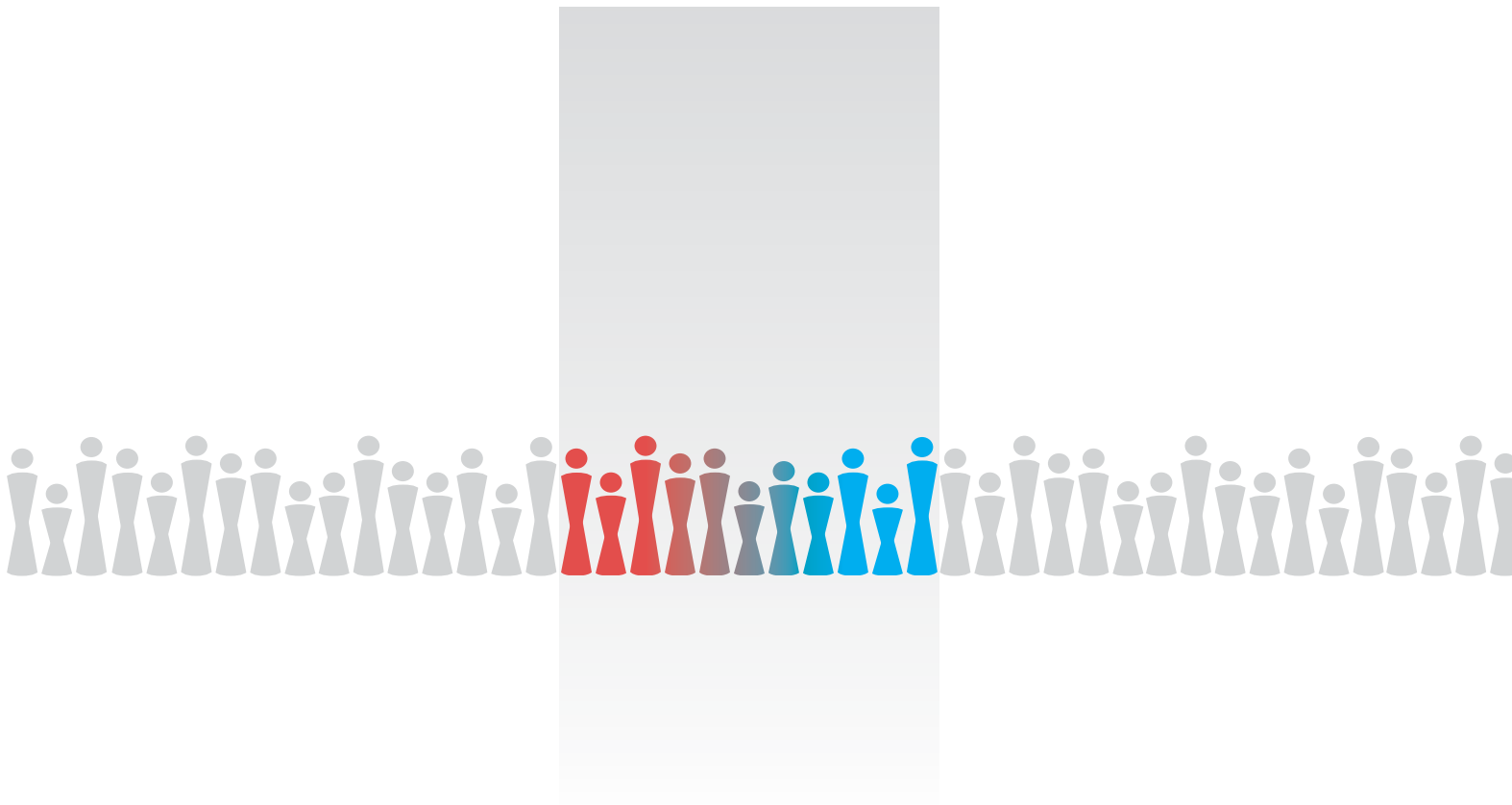
WOMEN, WATER and PEACE

CRISIS OF SURVIVAL IN THE MIDDLE EAST



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With support from

Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)



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PREFACE

I am pleased to present the third publication in the series on Crisis of Survival in the Middle East. Our first two publications brought out in 2014, established that there is a strong co-relation between water, violence, displacement, drought and women.

This publication illustrates with live examples how the unfortunate nexus between water, violence, displacement, drought and women functions. Eminent women journalists and researchers from Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey have contributed chapters to this publication. I am grateful to the authors who contributed to this publication. I am also grateful to the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) for supporting our work in the Middle East and particularly their encouragement to work on the linkages between women and water.

The stories presented here are from real life, building on the theoretical analysis that we have provided in our earlier reports. Thus, both data derived from comprehensive research and personal observations made by writers on the ground corroborate to give us the alarming picture that is fast expanding on the canvas of the Middle East.

The unfortunate nexus between water, violence, displacement, drought and women has created massive humanitarian crisis in the Middle East. Only five years ago, the Middle East was preparing for a collaborative development agenda. Now, the region needs a collaborative humanitarian response agenda. It needs strategic cooperation at all levels from the highest decision makers to the grass-root workers.

It is necessary to have an intervention strategy on each of the five fronts. While efforts on any one front will be inadequate, unless there is a remedial strategy deployed on all other fronts, it is necessary to initiate response strategy on every front as and when possible. For instance, it is essential to recognize the centrality of women in this unfortunate nexus. While policies are determined by men, the impact of the policies, or the absence of policies is most felt by women. It is therefore necessary to include women at all levels of decision making and consultations. It is also necessary to undertake programmes to build capacity and resilience of women. Thirdly, it is necessary to introduce measures to protect women in crisis situations.

The authors of this publication explain how water scarcity is both the cause and effect of displacement. Inadequate availability of water resources forces farmers to give up agriculture and move to urban areas; or forces urban dwellers to shift to more water abundant regions. Similarly, influx of displaced people accentuates scarcity of water. Thus, displacement is closely linked with the water scarcity problem in the home countries as well as the host countries. It is therefore obvious that any one country in the region at a time when massive displacement is taking place, cannot formulate policies on its own. It is necessary for all the countries in the Middle East to develop collaborative approaches to deal with causes and impact of displacement, including the problem of water scarcity.

As women suffer the most in the process of displacement, it is necessary that policies to deal with refugees and forced migrants give particular attention to the gender dimension.

The crises in the Middle East are of human survival. They are not about statistics. They are about real people. They are about a twelve year old girl or an educated woman professional or a young widow who are all equally forced to manage their sheer existence. They are about refugees who leave their homeland because of conflicts, but who get into new conflicts in their camp, because of shortage of water. They are also about spirited women who face calamity with innovation and determination and improve the situation for their families.

The extraordinary nature of crisis demands extraordinary response. It is not just a matter of routine government policies or aid strategies. It is a matter of urgent emergency responses at the highest level and in the most comprehensive manner. It is necessary for the Heads of Government of Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey, and when the situation permits, Syria, to come together to create a coordination response mechanism to this crisis. As already argued, it is important for them to consult and involve women in the formulation of strategies. It is also important to introduce several targeted projects for the benefit of women in farms, refugee camps and urban dwellings which suffer from hydro-insecurity.

I hope that the leaders of the Middle East will look at this issue with the urgency that it requires. I also hope that the international community will be supportive since we know from the example of massive migration to Europe, that the problems in one region of the world do have impact on other regions. It is essential for all of us in international organisations, governments, local bodies, and non-governmental organisations to act and act now.

October 2015
Executive Director
Strategic Foresight Group

Ilmas Futehally

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CHAPTER I

Its Existential Consequences

Ghada Alamily

Conflicts and war cause a growing numbers of residents to migrate from war-torn areas to shelters that lack the most basic human living needs, which include the scarcity of water for drinking and other purposes. A deficit is caused when these shelter areas are forced to receive greater numbers of refugees, because their capacity is far lower than the actual influx of people. Hence, basic necessities including water resources for drinking are not enough to meet even minimum requirements.

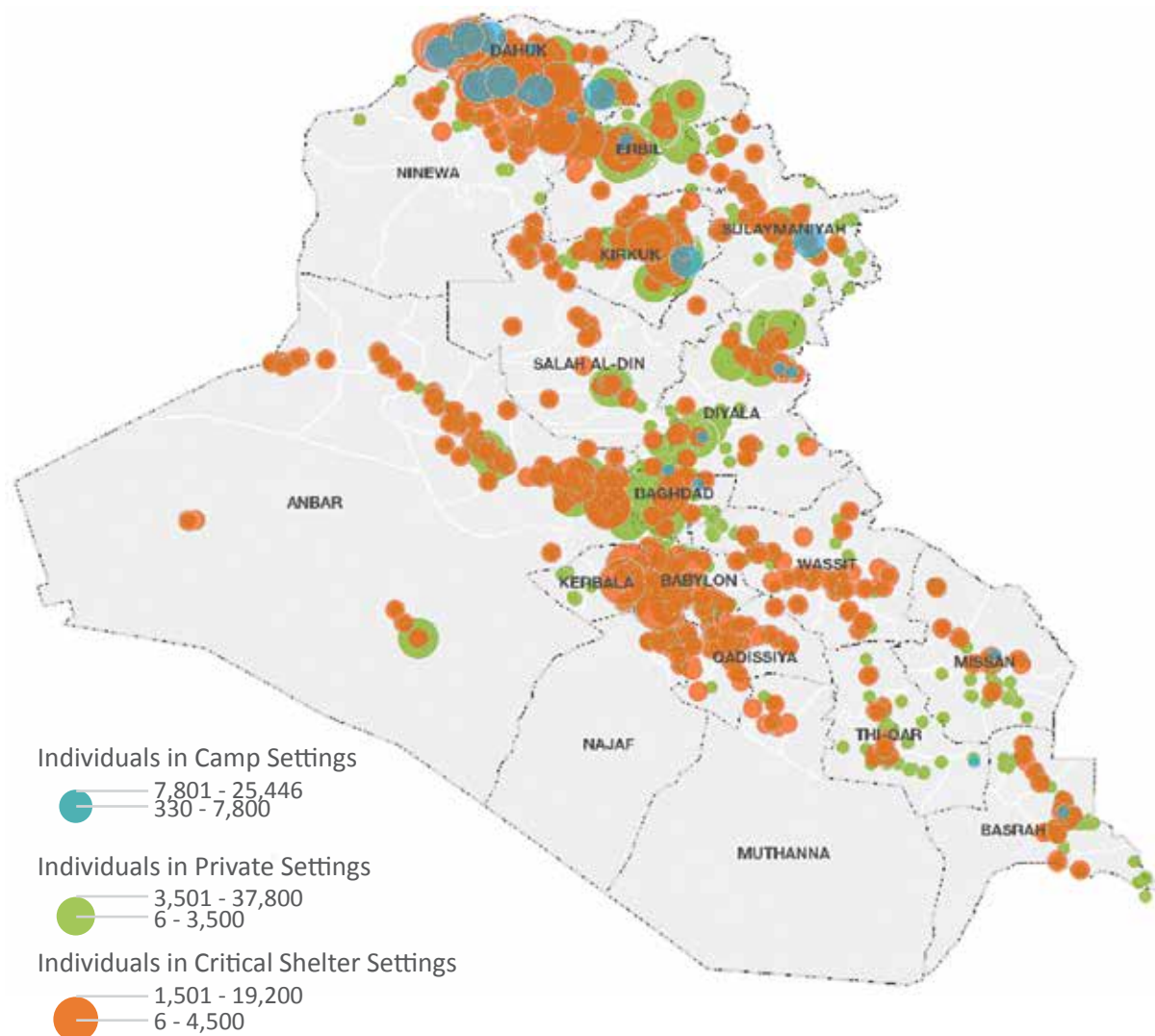
In Iraq, because of the expansion of the terrorist organization “*ISIS*”, millions of Iraqis find themselves without shelter; living under temporary roofs and amid extremely difficult and uninhabitable conditions. The bad organizational structure of the country coupled with poor governance increases the suffering of the displaced people and obstructs relief efforts, leaving them in a difficult humanitarian situation, and pushing them to live in unsafe conditions with acute water and food scarcity.

The lack of water constitutes in itself a denial of life, making it impossible to maintain human dignity. The absence of secure water resources prevents the creation of an environment suitable for living and development.

The gap between the demand for water sources and its actual availability is a grave and dangerous concern. In a moment of desperation water can become a reason for conflict, leading to disasters and wars between countries. Hence, one can understand the severity of the threat made by *ISIS* to destroy dams and reservoirs in the cities of Mosul, Therthar and other areas that are the main source of water for millions of Iraqis.



Places of Displacement



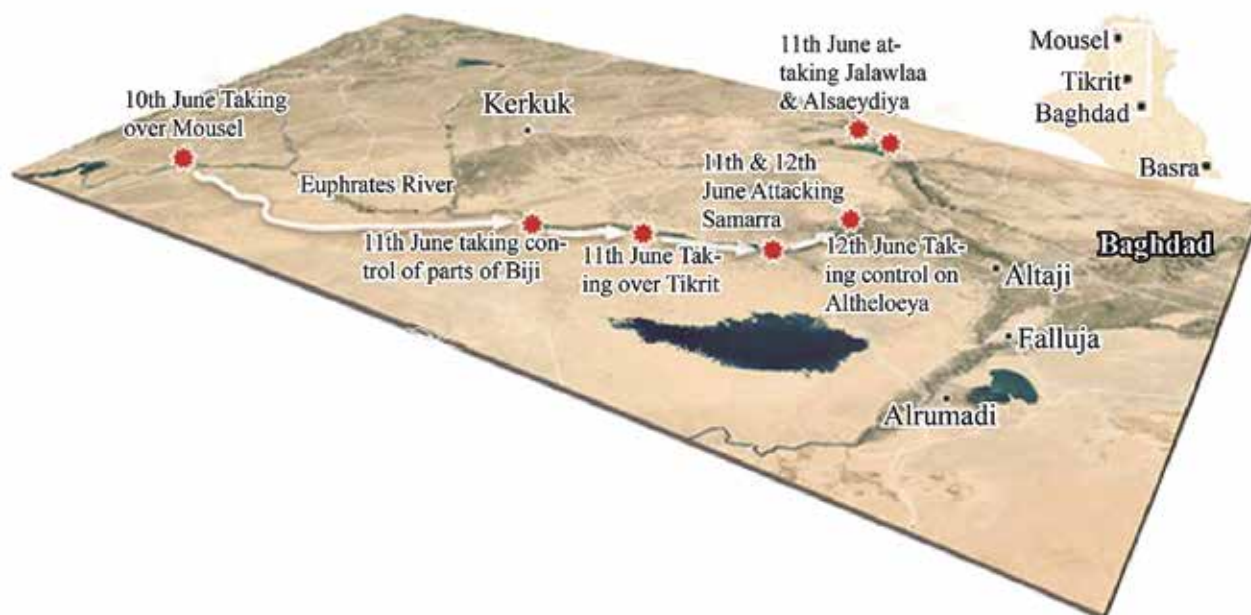
(Source: OCHA Report, *the Crisis in Iraq*, in March 2015)

Water and Terrorism

Terrorist acts and the dominance of *ISIS* have forced hundreds of thousands of women, men, children and the elderly to move away from their homelands and seek refuge in camps or live in temporary shelters. The forced immigration of thousands of women to different areas of Iraq because of terrorism has increased the need for urgent humanitarian attention in terms of shelter (tents), food, medicine, water and other basic needs. The creation of such an inhumane situation reflects the social reality of Iraq and shows in part,

the inability of the Iraqi state to secure the lives and dignity of these women and their children. Some commit suicide because of the sense of humiliation and despair or because of the helplessness they feel at being unable to provide food or milk for their children and at times, witnessing the death of their children from starvation or disease.

Among the displaced women, widows and divorced women suffer the most. A large number of them are without male support and forced to practice hard labor or degrading jobs that do not fit with their social background (as several belong to the middle class).



The Role of Women in Water Supply

Displaced women provide water and food in the camps in addition to their other tasks. The women have to fetch water across long distances, carrying pots on their head, which is time consuming and labour intensive. This also makes them vulnerable to violence and humiliation.

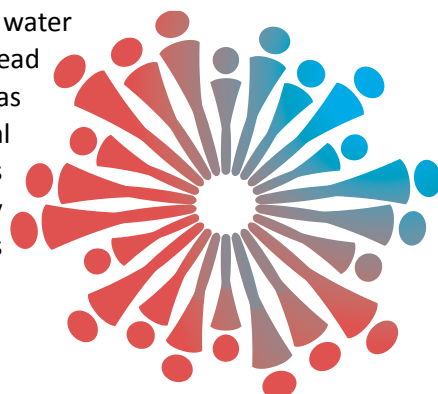
Despite women incurring hardships to fetch and store water, it is often not sufficient to even bathe their children, and in many cases, the water is salty, contaminated or untreated.

Death Pursues the Displaced Women

Many displaced women are exposed to verbal, physical and sometimes even sexual harassment because they share the same toilets as the displaced men. There have been accounts of women victims of such crimes committing suicide and sometimes

setting themselves ablaze for fear of scandal and shame. There have also been reports of mothers committing suicide because of their inability to provide water, medicine or milk for their babies. Reports showed that suicides are rampant in refugee camps. To add to their misery and vulnerability, these women use primitive means for cooking in flammable tents. Despite the heavy burden borne by the women, the displaced do not have any role in any decision-making process on water or food management, even though women are the main procurers of water and food in the camps. This means that even under tragic conditions, women are unable to take their own decisions and are at the mercy of other decision-makers who rely on archaic norms that deem the inclusion of women in mainstream life a violation of tradition and custom.

High temperatures in summer in Iraq coupled with water pollution cause the spread of many epidemics such as cholera, typhoid, intestinal inflammation, scabies and ulcers. Water delivery through “irregular” tankers



exacerbates epidemics and increases the mortality rate of mothers and children.

It is a known fact that for many years Iraq's rivers have become contaminated with harmful substances from sewage and factory waste, fertilizers used in agriculture, and pollution from chemical substances. The remnants of wars and the bodies of victims of terrorism are also thrown into the rivers. These remains enter the drinking water directly, which is not subject to treatment. The toxic elements enter vegetables and cultivated fruits in Iraq and neighboring countries, causing a dramatic increase in cases of cancer amongst women.

According to local and global medical reports (including the report of the Executive Director of the World Health Program), out of the over 140,000 Iraqis currently suffering from cancer and malignant diseases, 7,500 die each year. The reports also state that the fifth largest cause of death for women around the world is the contamination of water, which is more than the numbers that succumb to AIDS, diabetes or breast cancer.

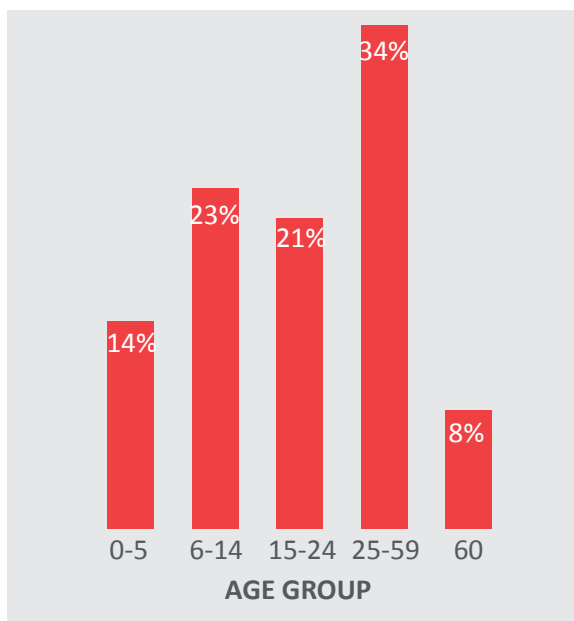
The people and animals in Iraq face a further threat from the spread of previously undiscovered diseases. These diseases affect displaced people the most through drinking water. The non-displaced population generally suffers less.

Studies indicate that the chemicals stored in the bodies of women are transmitted to their babies during pregnancy, or in the period of lactation, and can slow down the mental and physical development of the child. This is seen clearly in the children of displaced people that ingest toxins from their mother's milk. Cases of death have reached the alarming rate of one child out of every eight children between the ages of one and five years.

Hanging Roles: The Absence of a Significant Role for International Organizations in Iraq

Curiously, there is an absence of a significant role for international organizations although many of them are present in Iraq. The same is true for the Iraqi Ministry of Displacement and Migration and the Board of Human Rights. Adverse conditions experienced by women remain unacknowledged; the help presented to the families is scarce, and sometimes completely non-existent. Lack of coordination as well as the acceleration of the Middle-East crisis in unexpected ways has affected the demography of the cities and produced a number of irregular housing complexes on areas that have no infrastructure, which are inhabited by thousands of displaced families. In the city of Baghdad alone, there are more than 220 residential areas randomly formed by internally displaced persons. In the rest of the cities, the displaced people are still living on the margins of society, in isolated complexes. Today, more than two and a half million persons in Iraq are unsafe and 8.3 per cent of the population is living in inhuman conditions. According to the statistics of international organizations, more than 75 per cent of those affected are children and women. In recent waves of displacement, the number of displaced women constitutes more than half of the displaced population at a rate of 51 per cent (Bulletin of Facts and Reality of Women in Iraq - Displaced Women and Women in Conflict Areas in 2015).

Age Group of Displaced Females in Iraq



(Source: Evaluation sample of existing groups affiliated to the International Organization for Migration, 2015)

More than a year after the exodus of families from cities inside Iraq, several displaced families still hesitate to go back to their cities and homes for sectarian reasons, or out of fear of violence, killings and assassinations, in addition to devastation and demolition of the infrastructure and a decline in the economy. The primary factor that impedes the return of the displaced people is that their occupied and non-liberated towns are not under the control of the local authorities which would prioritize the purification and supply of water to homes.

Ghada Alamily is the Manager of Almada Group for Media, Culture & Arts in Iraq





CHAPTER 2

Syrian Refugees in North Jordan

Reem Al Rawashdeh

Being a resident of the northern governorates of Jordan means you face a shortage in water supplies. This is due to the sharp surge in population caused by the influx of Syrian refugees. Official domestic and international statistics show that 85 per cent of Syrian refugees, estimated at around 1.4 million, live outside the four camps built for them. Around 40 per cent of the 1.4 million Syrian refugees live in the northern part - Mafraq, Irbid, Ajloun and Jerash and the district of Ramtha, which borders trouble-hit Syria.

Women in these areas are the most adversely affected by the increasing demand for water. Women's organizations have resorted to digging wells to be filled from rainfall to overcome shortages in drinking water.

Hydro-Insecure: Crisis of Survival in the Middle East

According to report compiled by the India-based Strategic Foresight Group (SFG) and launched by HRH Prince Hassan at the *International Conference on Exploring the Water-Peace Nexus - Blue Peace in West Asia* last March, more than 40 million people in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Turkey are water vulnerable, 4.3 per cent or 1.7 million of these are in Jordan. The report says that roughly 27 per cent of Jordan's estimated 6.4 million population is hydro-insecure.



The report highlights that violence and water shortage are two principal drivers of displacement, and advocates the prioritisation of regional strategies to respond to the needs of the hydro-insecure. The report identifies 30 hydro-insecure governorates in the Middle East, four of which are in Jordan — Irbid, Jerash, Mafraq and Tafleeh. Thirteen of the 30 hydro-insecure governorates share international borders according to the report, which describes cooperation across boundaries as indispensable.

“Hydro-insecurity does not occur in isolation but is accompanied by one or more issues such as poverty, war and conflict, low women’s development and environmental degradation,” the report says.

It identifies Mafraq, 80km northeast of Amman, as the most hydro-insecure governorate in Jordan. “Along with hydro-insecurity, it faces low labour force participation levels of 36.4 per cent and a high poverty rate of 31.9 per cent. More than 60 per cent of its population is rural and it also hosts a large refugee population; roughly one out of every three people in Mafraq is a refugee.”

The report indicates that female labour participation stands at only 12.5 per cent in Mafraq, which also has the highest female illiteracy rate among Jordan’s hydro-insecure governorates, at 13.6 per cent.

The report identifies women as the most vulnerable group in hydro-insecure governorates, particularly female refugees and refugee households headed by women. Also vulnerable are women in agricultural populations located in hydro-insecure governorates; the report says, “Female farmers make up about 10 per cent of the total number of farmers, but they are responsible for 60 per cent of agricultural work. Lack of control on or access to financial resources creates significant hurdles in accessing and managing water for them.”

Suffering of Jordanians, a Persisting Crisis

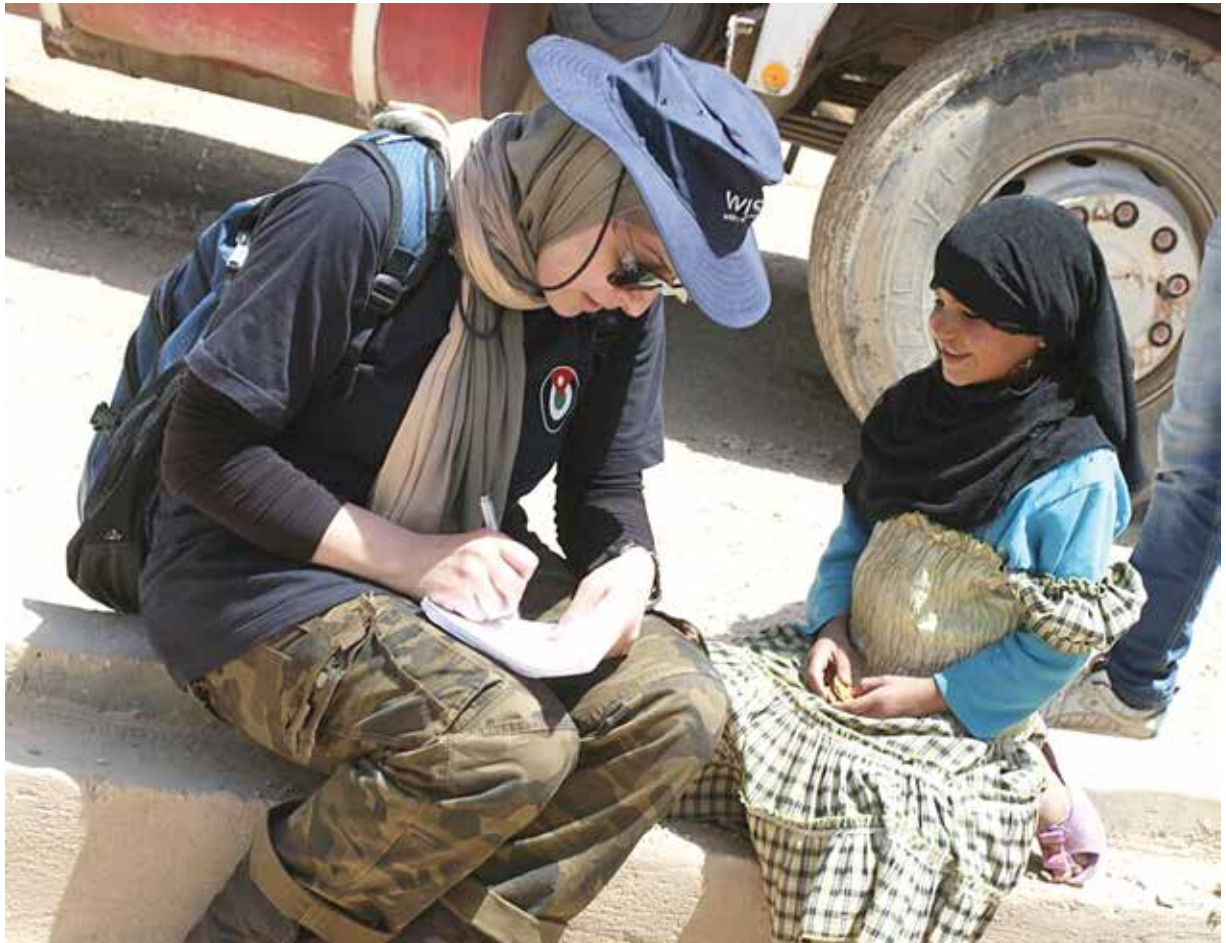
Wafa Fahmawi, head of *Dogara* women society in Irbid, says Syrians represent nearly a quarter of the village population, adding that the society is helping residents through drilling of wells that depend on rainfall.

“The village used to suffer from bad water supply even before the influx of Syrian refugees. Now it is much worse,” Fahmawi says, adding that women are the most affected by water shortages. She likens water to gold in terms of affordability and availability, indicating that residents buy drinking water from desalination plants in the area.

Fahmawi recalls that residents once staged a sit-in to protest the lack of water supplies during summer, which prompted authorities to renovate water networks. “After that we started to receive water once every two weeks, but we still buy water from tankers to compensate the shortage,” she says, adding that a household pays Jordanian Dinar (JD) 35 per 12 cubic metres of water bought from tankers.

Fahmawi says that they found a solution by drilling wells to store rainfall as part of the social responsibility to solve water scarcity in the area. “Through the aid we are receiving from Merci Care since 2008, we were able to establish 90 wells for members of the society that pay the cost through monthly installments of JD 35. As we grew, over 700 households have benefited from the programme”.

Umm Ahmad, a woman in her forties from the Northern Badia area near the Iraqi border also talks about the suffering and problems faced by residents due to water scarcity. She was attending a water project in the area and eagerly waiting to complain to an official that she still has to buy water from tankers even though she lives very close to a new well funded by the Red Cross. Umm Ahmad says, “The influx of thousands of Syrians to the area



Talking to a Syrian refugee girl at the Zaatari Refugee Camp in Jordan

put social and environmental pressures on us in addition to the rise of living costs.”

Umm Ahmad indicates that a household buys three cubic metres of water for JD 15, which is double of what it used to be before the influx of Syrians. This is sufficient for a week. She says, “Syrian refugees have better living conditions than us in terms of services. Our living conditions have become more difficult since they came here; jobs are fewer and rentals have gone up. Our schools are crowded now but more importantly we share with them our limited water resources.”

Suffering of Refugees

In Zaatari refugee camp, 120 kilometres north of Amman, refugees complain that the water

allocated to them in the beginning (35 litres a day) is not enough.

Zainab, age 12, says water is rare at the camp. She adds that her mother washes clothes on a daily basis but always grumbles about water shortage. Despite water scarcity, Zainab says that she prefers to remain in the camp rather than go back to her home village in Syria’s Daraa. “There is no killing here, while in Syria, people are slaughtered everywhere”. The 12-year-old, who lives with her parents and four brothers in a caravan, says her mother walks to nearby water tanks to secure more water when the family runs out.

Worood, an eight-year-old girl, standing outside a nearby caravan approaches us to say that she crossed the border into Jordan two years ago and that she hopes to go back to her country soon. The girl who lives with her nine-member

family says, “Water is usually available here but sometimes we face shortages”. Worood indicates that she used to take a bath every day when she was in Syria but now her mother prevents her from doing so just to save water.

In Zaatari camp, there are 2,800 toilets and 2,000 places allocated for bathing. There are 700 stations for water tanks and only one station for sewage treatment.

The Director of Water and Sewage department at UNICEF’s office in Amman, Ismail Ibrahim says that providing water and sewage services to the camp is costly as water is offered through tankers. Sewage is also taken away by tankers to a landfill 45 kilometres from the camp, which increases overall costs. The rise in costs related to water and sewage services through tankers pushed UNICEF to consider establishing networks for water and sewage. This would cut costs and preserve the environment. However, a delay in promised funding by donors keeps the project in the plan stage.

UNICEF has supported the establishment of three wells to secure water to camps and reduce the need to supply water by tankers. According to Ibrahim, two networks for water and sewage are expected to be ready by 2016.

Jordan Resilience Plan

The cost of each Syrian refugee on Jordan is estimated at USD600 a year, while the cost for hosting 600,000 Syrians is put at USD360 million annually. Per capita share of water for Jordanians has dropped to less than 123 cubic metres per year, which has caused a sharp increase, exceeding 22 per cent, in demand for water across the country. In the north, demand for water has surged by 40 per cent; some households receive water supply only once every two weeks.

In May 2014, the Water Ministry of Jordan revealed a three-year resilience plan aimed at finding new water resources, such as wells

to cover the increasing demand by providing water and sewage networks at a cost of USD750 million.

Aquifers in Jordan are threatened by over-use that is 200 per cent more than the rate at which they get replenished. According to environmentalists this could give rise to a real disaster.

Ali Abu Summaqa, Director of Water Department in Mafraq, says that the northern governorate had one of the highest per capita shares of water in Jordan. This number used to exceed 140 cubic metres a year when the population was only 65,000. Zaatari camp is in Mafraq, which before the outbreak of the Syrian crisis used to be a major source of water supply for several parts of the country.

Abu Summaqa describes the water situation in the governorate as very difficult and disastrous as the population of the city has increased by almost threefold to 200,000. The per capita share of water is currently 60 litres a day, which is almost similar to the share of a refugee in the Zaatari camp. The water level at a major aquifer has dropped significantly and is no longer sufficient. Recently a well that used to supply the city of Mafraq with water was closed due to low productivity that reached only five cubic meters per hour. The shortage in water supply is compensated by purchasing water from private wells at the cost of JD 0.55 per cubic meters, while the cost of pumping each cubic metre is double this number.

Reem Al Rawashdeh is a Senior Columnist with Al Rai Newspaper in Jordan





CHAPTER 3

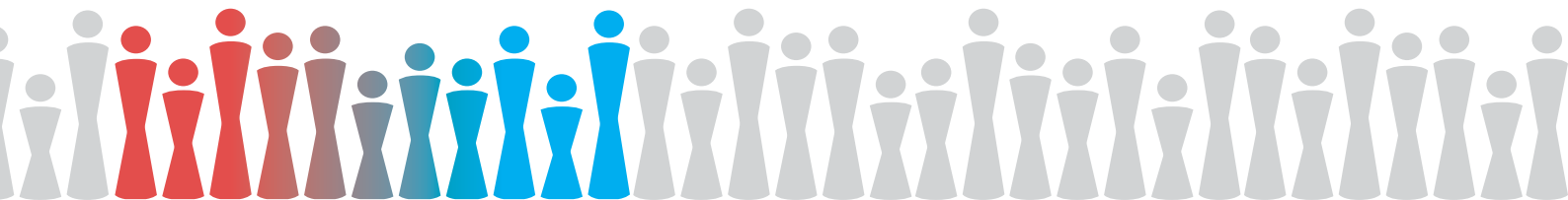
Water Scarcity in Refugee Camps in Iraq

Maria Saldarriaga

Introduction

Water insecurity affects millions of people around the world. People lack access to water to cover basic daily needs such as drinking, cooking and sanitation. War and conflict further exacerbate this insecurity. People are forced to abandon their homes and find refuge in places that are often under great resource pressure. Procuring water when survival is at stake and when resources are limited exposes people to significant social and physical burdens. Men, women and children are all vulnerable; nonetheless women and girls are especially exposed to some particular risks, such as harassment and intimidation. Resolution 1325, adopted by the UN Security Council in 2000, recognized for the first time the disproportionate impact of conflict on women and girls. This recognition is important, but its impact has been insufficient to release the burden. The experiences of millions of women and girls displaced by recent conflicts in the Middle East are testament of this.

For displaced women, living in a refugee or IDP camp may help relieve the burden of displacement, but it also brings new social and physical challenges. Water is often limited in quantity and quality, and water and sanitation points are often shared, non-segregated by gender, and might be difficult to reach. This is especially so in transition camps, where the infrastructure is temporary and limited. Even when water and sanitation conditions are adequate (according to UNHCR standards), temporary changes in these conditions open a window for the escalation of water related conflict. Mitigating the threats of water insecurity for displaced people is a challenge for host governments and national and international organizations.



This paper takes a look into the underlying sources of water related risks for refugee and IDP women living in a transit camp in Northern Iraq, Rabat camp. The paper is both anecdotal and analytical. We aim at sharing the voices of the women that so kindly and eagerly shared their stories with us, while at the same time providing an analysis of the underlying causes of women's vulnerabilities to water and sanitation related violence at the camp. The motive for this type of analysis is the assumption that women's safety can only be improved if we identify and mitigate the underlying drivers of conflict.

At Arbat camp, water insecurity is indeed an underlying cause for tension. However, water insecurity by itself is not the sole driving force of water-related conflict involving women. Risk scenarios always involve other physical and social factors. At Arbat camp in particular, risk is often driven by the competition for limited water resources by people from different groups: Yazidi, Arab, Turkman, and Kurd. Ethnic, religious and cultural differences among some of these groups can expose women to harassment, intimidation or physical aggression.

Living in Camps: The Underlying Context of Conflict

Recurring wars in the Middle East have forced millions of people into water insecurity and have left countries in the region unable to respond sustainably to the water demands of local and refugee populations. Ensuring water, food and housing security is a continuous challenge for people in refugee and IDP camps across the region. But procuring water and other basic needs in a context of resource scarcity is not the only challenge faced by displaced people. While camps help mitigate the strenuous effects of displacement, they also expose people to new living and cultural conditions that might be hard to cope with and might even threaten physical safety. This is the case in Arbat camp, and in many of the camps scattered across the region. Here, the interaction between water scarcity and the ethnic, religious and cultural structures of the different groups sheltered in the camp create risk scenarios for the escalation of water related conflict. Since women bear the primary responsibility of procuring water for their families, they are often exposed to higher risk.



Women and children sharing their stories with us



Women and girls at a water station

Since the beginning of the Syrian conflict in 2011, the exodus of Syrian refugees has reached across most of the Middle East. Around 2.7 million Syrians fleeing the country are currently registered in refugee camps across Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan and Iraq. Many more are living outside camps. While the conflict affects all, women and children represent a striking majority. Four of every five people fleeing Syria since 2011 are women and children.

Arbat camp was established in 2013 as a transition site for sheltering Syrians looking for refuge in Iraq. Located in the Kurdistan Region, in the Sulaymaniah governorate, the camp was sheltering around 3,400 Syrian refugees by June 2014. While the context was already challenging for both refugees and national and international organizations, the worst was still to come. By May 2015, more than a year after the initial attacks of ISIS, more than 16,000 people had found shelter at the camp after being forced to abandon their homes, not only in Syria, but also across Iraq—mostly in the governorates of Salh Al Din and Nineva. As a result, the camp population now includes 2,760 families from Arab and other ethnic and



Girl carrying water for her family in a 10 litre bucket. This is 10 kgs of water.



Girl drinking from a tap at a water station

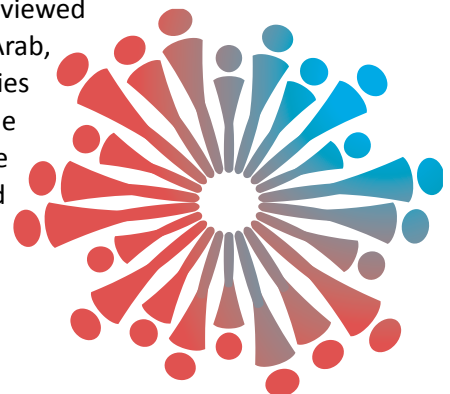
religious origins: Kurds, Turkman and Yazidi. Around 5,000 refugees at the camp are children and more than 10,000 are women.

By international standards, water and sanitation points at camps are designed to provide adequate, reliable and safe supply of water with minimum social burden (costs) and maximum physical safety for the users. On average, at Arbat camp these conditions do not deviate greatly from the UNHCR standards. In the daily life at the camp, however, changes in water and sanitation provisions can easily spark conflict. In general, when water becomes scarce in the camp, even temporarily, procuring water and satisfying sanitation needs comes with high social burden and exposure to violent attacks. Water scarcity, however, is not by itself sufficient to spark conflict. It is the interaction of water scarcity with underlying physical, ethnic, cultural and religious structures that women at the camp identify as the recipe for risk.

The Path from Water Scarcity to Physical Risks

In most families at Arbat camp, women and children are responsible for procuring water for the family. This includes fetching water for drinking, cooking, and washing; the water used for the latrines and showers is also carried manually. Refugee and internally displaced women are at risk of physical violence from armed groups, strangers, neighbors and family members. At Arbat camp, procuring water and satisfying sanitation needs may come with the specific risks of harassment by neighbors, physical aggression by other women, and intimidation mostly by men of other ethnic or religious groups. Women at the camp identify three main scenarios in which these risks may occur.

To explore these risk scenarios and their underlying causes, we interviewed women from Yazidi, Arab, Turkman and Kurdish families living at Arbat camp. In some cases, the names of the women have been removed at their request.



Risk Scenarios

1. Competition for water resources with other women at crowded water stations.

Confrontations over water can easily spark a fight at crowded water stations. There is a lot at stake; water needs are great and limited resources need to be allocated among many families. Competition for the limited resources can range from verbal arguments to physical violence between women. Women are usually isolated from the conflict; they are asked to remain away from the conflict scenario and men take on the task of solving the disagreements. Women are not allowed by their families to interfere in any further discussion or conflict resolution.



Women rushing to get water as soon as the tank has been refilled



Every woman at the camp bears great responsibility; the water and sanitation security of her family is at stake and the resources to cover everyone's needs are scarce. Women and children rush to get in line as soon as the tanks are refilled (which occurs once a day). Any other activity needs to be abandoned for the sake of collecting some water before it is

all gone. Grandmothers care for grandchildren so that young daughters and daughters in law can leave the tent to fetch water. The well is some 200 meters away from the tent and it is shared with some 60 families (366 individuals approximately). It gets crowded quickly around the well and the waiting time in line tests women's patience; this can extend from a few minutes to almost one hour (the time varies greatly and thus any average numbers can be misleading).

Researcher (R): How do you carry the water from the well?

Interviewee (I): Using 20 litre buckets. We carry them on our heads or shoulders all the way from the well to the tent. Sometimes it takes one hour to get those 20 litres of water.

R: How many children do you have?

I: Two children, but there are six kids in total in the family. My mother in law takes care of the children when I go to fetch water. Sometimes when the water comes, we cannot eat lunch; we just have to leave to get water.

Yazidi woman

Once the water is collected, it needs to be carried to the family's tent. Water is carried in 20 litre jerry cans. Depending on the size of the family, it can take from 5 to 10 trips to the well to collect all the water necessary for daily needs. Tanks outside the family tent ensure that the family can store up to 200 litres of water at a time. If the water is available and the hard work of water fetching is done, every person at the camp will get on average more than the 20 litres required per day by UNHCR standards. In large families, with more than ten members, a full family tank can barely cover the needs of the day. It may be necessary for women to collect more.

R: How many buckets per day can you get from the well?

I: Sometimes we have water but sometimes we don't, even for an entire day. We go 7, 8 10 times to get water. It is the summer



200 litre tank outside family tent

and it is getting hotter and hotter. We need the water for laundry, showering, and drinking. We have to get it very often. Sometimes fights happen. Everyone comes to get water; children come and even very old people. Also a pregnant lady gave birth while carrying water.

Arab woman

Water stations get crowded quickly partly because of the number of families sharing a single well, but mostly because water provision is limited to a few hours every day. In addition, when the water in a well runs out, water is fetched from unassigned wells—those assigned to other families. The need for ensuring water and sanitation security leads families to procure water wherever and whenever it is available. A well that runs out of water before all the assigned families can fulfill their needs means that other well(s) will get even more crowded than usual, increasing resource competition and increasing the likelihood of conflict.



R: Do you always have water?

I: No, sometimes we have, sometimes we don't. We have water only once a day (the tank is refilled once a day). But sometimes the tank doesn't get refilled at all.

Yazidi woman

I: We, women and girls, have it very difficult because we are responsible to get water for cooking, but we also have to cook ourselves. We either go to get water or stay cooking. Once a boy hit a girl at a water point and there was a big fight between the families. The girl's brother came and they fought.

Lara Khalf and Hayat Hussein – Arab women

2. Interacting with male neighbors around sanitation facilities.

Using sanitation facilities and satisfying hygiene needs inside the camp comes with a high social burden for women. Not only do they have to carry the water to be used in latrines and showers, but also these latrines and showers are shared and are not segregated between sexes. Around four families (24 individuals, approximately 6 per family) share one latrine and shower. But this number varies greatly, from one latrine and shower shared among 4.5 tents/families to one latrine and shower shared among 14 tents/families.

R: Do you experience any problems when using the latrine and shower?

I: It is not comfortable if we go to the bathroom or shower and there is a man there. We have to come back to the tent and wait. It would be good if we had a bathroom for men and one for women. It is embarrassing for us to share the same toilet. One day I went to the toilet and there was a man. That was embarrassing for me.

R: How about using the toilet and shower at night?

I: We don't go! We never go to the shower at night. If we go to the toilet we don't go alone.

Lara Khalf and Hayat Hussein – Arab women

R: How many families share the toilet and shower with yours?

I: We share them with seven families. It is very difficult.

R: How about the girls, what do they do to use the toilets, especially at night?

I: This is a problem. When a girl wants to go to the toilet at night, she has to go with her brother.

R: Has anything happened with the girls while visiting the toilet?

I: Nothing has happened, but once they go to the toilet if there is anybody from another family, they have to return and wait. The boys go and check until the toilet is empty for the girls to use it. The problem is that seven families is a lot of people for one toilet.

Arab woman

No events of physical aggression around latrines and showers have been reported so far at Arbat camp. Nonetheless, women report feeling intimidation and physical exposure when visiting the facilities alone or at night. During the day, women can more easily take the risk of visiting latrines and showers alone; however, meeting an unfamiliar man around the facilities brings a feeling of embarrassment for the woman and can compromise her reputation in front of others if found alone with the man. No women risks visiting the facilities alone at night. If necessary, women have to ask mothers, brothers, sisters or husbands to keep them company. In big families with several women at home, walking to latrines and showers occupies a significant part of their days. In the best case scenario (as reported by women), latrines and showers are shared with extended family. In these cases, women seem to feel more at ease to visit the facilities alone and at any necessary time. Well-managed sanitation facilities also help mitigate the burden on women. For instance, some families assign three hours per day of shower-use for the members of each family. Each family then knows the schedule for when the shower will



Latrine and showers

be available for their use. In these cases, it is less likely for women to meet unfamiliar men around the facilities.

R: Do you have any problems at night when the girls go to use the toilet?

I: No, in this family we are all relatives so we don't have any problems with the girls going at night. She just has to wait for her turn. Our problem is that we don't have enough water. We accommodate ourselves to sharing the showers and bathroom but the water is not enough.

Alya Mohammed Ali, Arab woman

Risks increase when latrines and showers are busy and women have to use facilities further away from their tents. In these cases, further precautions are necessary.

R: Have you experienced any difficulty at night when you want to use the toilet?

I: It's very difficult. We have to wait for each family to go. Especially for the shower, we have to have different times; each family gets 3 hours. We can use other families' toilets if ours is busy, but it is risky. We cannot go alone and the toilets are both for men and women. At night we go with our brothers.

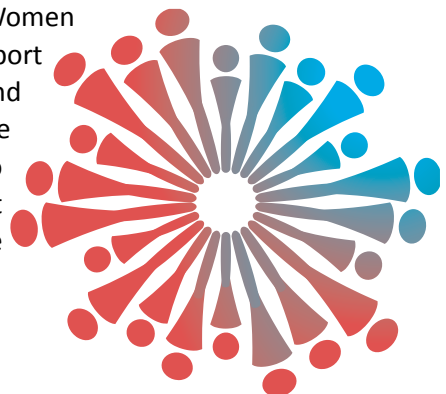
R: Has anything happened while visiting to the toilet?

I: Nothing has happened so far but we cannot go at night. We have to ask our brothers, mothers or husbands when we want to go.

Yazidi woman

3. Interacting with men from other ethnic or religious groups at water points.

One of the most common risk scenarios identified by women at the camp is the interaction with men at water stations, particularly with men from other ethnic and religious groups. It is very unlikely for men to take on the responsibility of procuring water; however, when water is scarce at a given water station, some families send their young men rather than their women to fetch water from unassigned stations. The men come unannounced and decide to get water for their families. Women at the water station report feeling embarrassed and intimidated by the presence of unfamiliar men, who often behave in ways that women do not approve





Water station after all the families have collected their water

of or do not understand. For instance, women report harassment, culturally inappropriate interactions, such as physical closeness, and unsanitary behavior, such as men washing and drinking directly from the water collection taps. Sometimes it is the men fetching water who report unsanitary behavior from women. In any case, the scenario is tense and easily sparks confrontation.

These encounters between women and men from different ethnic and religious groups very often lead to conflict over water resources. Attacks on women following this type of incident have been reported. As in the case of any other conflict at the camp, women are quickly isolated from the event and men try to solve any disagreement. Again, women are not allowed to interfere in any conflict resolution process.

At Arbat camp, this type of risk scenario occurs most often between Yazidi women and Arab men. Here the underlying historical, ethnic, religious and cultural differences between the two peoples are directly related to the likelihood for conflict. This highlights the

importance of understanding not only the risk scenarios for women, but also the underlying context in which conflict occurs.

R: What do you do when you don't have water at your station?

I: Yeah, yeah, we go to the Yazidi. Yazidi girls get their water and we send boys [husband].

R: Has any fight occurred when you send your boy to fetch water to another station?

I: Yes, because we send boys to get water and they flirt with the girls and here everyone is very conservative.

R: Has any fight occurred?

I: Many times.

Arab woman and husband

R: How many times can you go to collect water from the well without anybody stopping you?

I: We can go as much as we want as long as there are not Arabs there. It is a problem for us when they come to use our water.

R: What do you mean? How is they a problem for you?

I: Not all of them I have to say. They will

find a problem from small things. For example, they will say that water from our hands fell in their water bucket, or if you touch them slightly they will say that you did it in purpose.

R: Who is there when you go to the water point- women, men?

I: We, Yazidi send only women to collect water, but Arab people send their men.

R: Do you remember any fight that has happened so far because of these confrontations?

I: Yes, a big fight happened. Arabs had a rock and a knife, but nobody got injured because the police came and stopped the fight.

Yazidi woman



Girl helping her mother lift a 20 litre bucket. This is 20 kg of water.

The Path from Physical Risks to Water Insecurity

When procuring water and satisfying sanitation needs, refugee women are exposed to physical risks such as the ones described in the previous section. Here, the interaction of water insecurity with the underlying context of conflict at the camp is the cause of physical risk. However, the opposite is also possible: the threat of physical risk causes women to be water and sanitation insecure. Here, the fear of physical risk deters women from procuring water and satisfying sanitation needs. In the long term, this deprivation may lead to disease, which further threatens water and sanitation security.

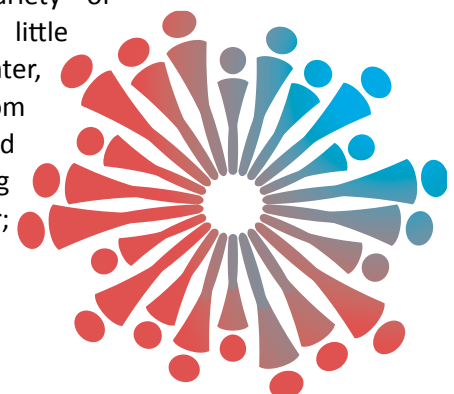
This is the case with Turkman women at Arbat camp. The fear of harassment, physical aggression or intimidation keeps these women from visiting water points, latrines and showers. The major fear is that young women may be harassed by young men at water points. Here, maintaining the good reputation of the young women seems to be the driving motive.

R: Do you have any problems when using the bathrooms and showers?

I: We improvised a bathroom and a shower for ourselves, and also a kitchen. We are the only Turkman family, thus we don't go to that toilet or shower. If necessary, we use our own toilet. My daughter is an adult; I cannot let her go to fetch water or use the toilet. Young men take photos and talk to the girls. I have five girls and one boy.

Turkman woman

To cope with this and maintain certain levels of water and sanitation security, Turkman women implement a variety of strategies: they use the little money they have to buy water, rather than fetching from the water points; they send children, rather than young women, to collect water;





Shared latrines and showers in the distance behind family tents

and they build their own temporary latrines and showers. These strategies however, are only marginally effective. Women report not being able to shower for more than a week, having to wear dirty clothing, and having problems with lice.

R: Do you experience any problems accessing water at the camp?

I: Yes we do, we really do. We drink from that bottle [commercial water]. I don't let my girls go to fetch water. It is really crowded. We send only the children (including the youngest girls) to get water for washing and showering from the tank.

R: How about that one [pointing to the older daughter]?

I: No I don't let her go.

R: Why?

I: It's crowded and there are boys there.

Turkman woman

R: Do you have any problems when using the bathrooms and showers?

I: We don't shower or wash. It's been more than a week since we took a shower. We are supposed to share the latrine and shower with four families. It gets crowded and dirty and there is no water inside. We also have problems with the families that



Women carrying water from the station to their tents

we share the bathrooms with. We go to the bathroom once a week. We have lice and have problems with insects. It has been one year since we got here and we have never received any detergents or soaps. We want to shower every day but we have no water. Earlier we would take four showers per week. Not anymore.

Ahlam Abdulkarim, Turkman woman and daughters

Conclusions: underlying drivers of risk and opportunities

From the conversations with the women at Arbat, we can identify four underlying drivers of risk related to procuring water and satisfying sanitation needs. Some correspond to permanent infrastructure and organization conditions at the camp; the others are circumstantial (although some may occur rather often) and work as igniters of sudden violent events. These drivers are:

1. Latrines and showers shared by women and men
2. Water points shared among many families
3. Limited and irregular water supply
4. Water scarcity in a water station
5. Men fetching water in non-designated water stations

Risk scenarios should become less frequent if these five drivers are mitigated. While the threat of physical risk is present, women's water and sanitation needs would be unsatisfied, with the potential consequences of disease. In addition, we believe that women should be allowed to take a more active role in resource management and conflict resolution at the camp. At Arbat, women have been encouraged by the camp administration to fill leadership positions inside the camp. According to the camp management, no women have been allowed by their families to get involved. Moreover, no women work as part of the main management team of the camp. This means

that refugee and IDP women at the camp do not have female workers with whom to discuss sensitive, gender specific issues.

Acknowledgements

We thank Snoor Kamal for her volunteer contribution to this project. She provided free translation services during and after conducting the interviews. We also thank Tariq Ahmad Hama, Arbat camp manager, and his team for his time and for the information he shared. Finally, we thank all the women that so eagerly talked to us to share their experiences. We hope that this short report will make a difference, even if small, for their future.

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CHAPTER 4

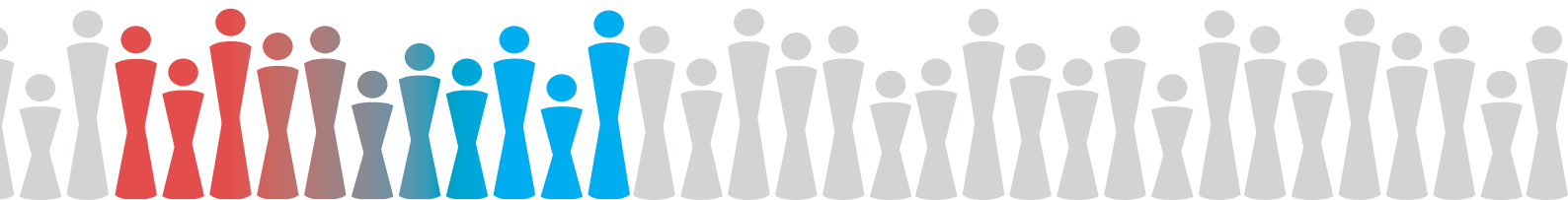
Um Omar: A Syrian Refugee in Lebanon Sara Mattar

Um Omar, a mother of seven children in search of a safe place for her family, away from the harsh conditions in Syria, away from the guns and missiles, was forced to take refuge in neighboring Lebanon. Before moving to Lebanon, Um Omar and her family tasted the bitterness of war: they were displaced from Homs to neighboring villages, where for over three years, they moved to a different village every 10 to 15 days.

It has been almost a year since Um Omar and her children fled from the danger, death and destruction of the war in Syria. Her suffering did not end after coming to Lebanon; she lost her husband to a fatal stroke just twenty days after her arrival. The crisis seems to only increase her pain and suffering without offering a single moment of solace.

Struggling to Stay Alive

Now a widow, mother and refugee, Um Omar suffers from a number of problems such as lack of security, food, water, hygiene, recurring diseases and most importantly a lack of dignity of life. “The water shortage affects us greatly, and if we get water it is contaminated, it does not have chlorine or disinfectant, which makes it unsuitable for drinking or washing dishes, clothes or for bathing,” says Um Omar. She sighs and laments that her kids suffer from skin diseases after bathing in the contaminated water. She adds, “Potable water comes for only an hour per day. While we store gallons, the quality and quantity does not fulfill our drinking and washing needs. So we put chlorine and wait until the next day to drink the water. At times we buy water, but buying water is very expensive and beyond our capacity.”



Um Omar works as a baker in a school in Bar Elias in the Bekaa region of Lebanon. As a single parent she tries to provide the basic needs of food and water for her children. She speaks of the anguish of living in the Bar Elias camp, "There is no proper hygiene, the water is contaminated, the food cards are limited and the assistance by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) does not tackle our hunger adequately, especially after the decline in aid. In addition, the sewage beside the well adjacent to the camp emits a bad and unpleasant smell, but refugees sometimes have to use this water to wash dishes and clothes. The water remains polluted even after sterilising with chlorine, but we have to make do because "there are too many problems to be solved"."

Scarcity and Suffering

Um Omar's seven children - five boys and two girls, gather around their mother, showing clear signs of malnourishment. They are orphaned from both, the father and the nation. Displaced from their home country at a very young age, life has not treated them kindly. They look at each other, with a lump in their throat, thinking of the loving father they lost, and contemplating an uncertain future and anonymous identity that lies ahead of them. They long for food, health and educational services that are no longer available, and will not be accessible to them in the foreseeable future.

Um Omar comments, "The camp situation is like any other Syrian refugee camp in Lebanon, where the conditions are miserable, and have gotten worse because of the snowstorm during the winter. The absence of any means of sufficient heating, and severe shortages of water and food, along with poor hygiene and lack of disease prevention are responsible for worsening the situation."

It is worth mentioning that most of the refugees are tenants. Because of the increasing

economic difficulties they are forced to live in buildings under construction, garages, deserted barns, work sites and tents in the random camps. Often the structural improvements to their living conditions are only temporary, because of the lack of access to government licenses or the approval of the property owners to make the required improvements.

The Situation in Lebanon

A bleak situation looms over Lebanon: The fast depletion of resources has exacerbated the crisis and put a strain on the host communities in Lebanon, placing them on the verge of collapse. There is also an extra burden on public services to meet the growing demand for health, education, electricity, water and sanitation needs. The clinics and hospitals are no longer able to withstand the pressure, which is only made worse by the depleting water supplies.

Since the beginning of the Syrian crisis in March 2011, Lebanon has recorded the highest concentration of refugees in the world. Today the number of refugees in Lebanon is almost equal to a quarter of its population. Every day, UNHCR staff in Lebanon record 2,500 new refugees. The country is struggling to cope with a crisis with no end in sight.

Um Omar and her family are part of nearly 412,000 Syrian refugees in the Bekaa Valley. There are about 140,000 Syrian refugees living in southern Lebanon, 285,000 in the north and 339,000 in Beirut and its suburbs.

Support for Lebanon is an Urgent Need

The High Commissioner of the United Nations for Refugees (UNHCR) Antonio Guterres stressed that "The influx of a million refugees would be massive in any country. For Lebanon, a small nation beset by internal difficulties, the

impact is staggering. Lebanon hosts the highest concentration of refugees in recent history. We cannot let it shoulder this burden alone.” He also said, “International support to government institutions and local communities is at a level that, although slowly increasing, is totally out of proportion with what is needed. Support to Lebanon is not only a moral imperative, but it is also badly needed to stop the further erosion of peace and security in this fragile society, and indeed the whole region.”

Sara Mattar is a Senior Columnist with Future Newspaper in Lebanon



CHAPTER 5

Syrian Refugees in Bekaa

Mey Alsayegh

Amal, a twelve year old girl lives at 003 Refugee Camp in El Marj, Bekaa valley, eastern Lebanon, since fleeing the violence in Syria in 2012. This camp in Bekaa is home to 1072 refugees that escaped from Aleppo, Idlib and Homs, to settle in 162 tents, which they set up on a land of a Lebanese farmer. In front of their tents, water tanks and latrines are installed.

Bekaa is considered among the 30 hydro-insecure governorates in the region, as revealed in *“The Hydro Insecure: Crisis of Survival in the Middle East”* report launched by Strategic Foresight Group, during the International Conference on *“Exploring the Water-Peace Nexus: Blue Peace in West Asia”* held in Jordan on 18-19 March, 2015.

Where do Syrian Refugees Get Water in the Camp?

Leila, a Syrian mother of four said, “World Vision gives us vouchers to buy water for drinking, and we extract water from ground for washing and showering”. She added, “Drinking water is available but during the last summer we suffered from water scarcity”.

In 2011 World Vision began an emergency response to the ongoing refugee crisis. World Vision is an international Christian relief and development agency whose mission is to work with the poor and oppressed to promote human transformation and seek justice. It has been active in Lebanon since 1975, when it provided shelter, food, and medicine for people affected by the civil and regional wars.



Lebanon faced a drought during 2013 - 2014, and Bekaa received only 1/5th of its mean annual rainfall. The influx of more than a million Syrian refugees has put severe pressure on the already stressed water resources; water consumption has increased by 20-25 per cent. The Shaweesh/ leader of 003 Refugee Camp said, "A group of five tents (with an average of five family members in each tent) digs a small well to extract water. We can extract around 1000 litres at a time". He added, "At the end of July we face water scarcity problems. The previous year was catastrophic. This year we may have sufficient amounts of water but we have already paid the price; the weather in winter was so cold, some refugees put their slippers in fire to get warm".

Hayat, another Syrian refugee said, "Last summer the quantity of water we extracted from wells was not enough due to shortage in rainfall".

The Shaweesh of the Camp Fareed Shlash said, "During winter water is available, but we suffer in summer".

World Vision has made improvements to water and sanitation systems in Syrian informal tented settlements in the Bekaa valley, as part of the Water, Sanitation and Health (WASH) project funded by the European Commission for Humanitarian Aid (ECHO). Hayat informed, "Drinking water reaches our tent through hoses now. Earlier, we used to fill water in buckets for bathing or clean our tents".

In Shlash Camp 019 the situation is the same, 900 people are housed in 127 tents. Most of them are from Homs, Rakka and Aleppo in Syria. Refugees receive vouchers to buy water from water tank distributors. One mother informed that latrines had recently been installed by World Vision. Earlier, children used to urinate outside the tent, in a hole in the ground, and get their bodies dirty.

John Stiefel, World Vision's WASH project specialist said in an interview with

Aljoumhouria, "Since the beginning of the influx of Syrian refugees, a large number who are living in informal settlements tend to be vulnerable. Most of the informal settlements are on farm lands. Refugees coordinated with farm landowners to rent their land, so it is normal that they will not have access to water network or sewage system and they will face challenges and our responsibility is to reduce risks".

World Vision's work covers four main areas starting from providing refugees cash assistance, by giving each family vouchers to buy water and install water tanks around the settlements, allowing Syrian refugees to access clean potable water to drink and prepare food (the 1,000 litre tanks are filled by World Vision every 10 days), and grey water (filled as needed) for toilets and showering.

Stiefel mentioned World Vision seeks to help Syrian refugees adapt to their new lives by raising awareness on health and proper hygiene habits inside camps, through information sessions given in settlements. While the refugees had good habits back home, living in a tented settlement is different, which is why they need help to adapt and avoid being exposed to diseases. The potable water used to fill the tanks is tested in specialized laboratories to make sure it is fit for consumption.

The organization has installed a 200 litre hidden septic tank by digging a big hole in the ground, and connected it to the latrines to contain the sewage water. These tanks are emptied by specialized trucks monthly. The refugees pay the truck drivers to empty the septic tanks with vouchers distributed by World Vision.

In 2014, Lebanon, which depends on ground water, faced a real problem due to shortage in rainfall. The presence of Syrian refugees magnified the water scarcity issue. It is hoped that in 2015 the rainfall will make up the gap. John Stiefel points out that he has been conducting research for World Vision to study the impact on a person's adaptability,

thereby assisting World Vision to move from a humanitarian response to a prolonged, sustainable response. Stiefel said, "We provide the urgent needs of water for the refugees but we need to invest strategically in infrastructure". He also asked, "What is the ability of Bekaa market to provide water? What are the challenges that Syrian refugees create to Lebanon?"

In addition to the humanitarian work, World Vision also focuses on rehabilitating the water network pipelines for Lebanese residents in Bekaa, with the support of the European Union and in cooperation with the two municipalities of Ablah and Taalabaya in central Bekaa. According to Stiefel, "Wastage of water is due to the broken pipelines; infrastructure needs to be developed to stop this loss. If the refugees leave tomorrow, there still will be needs to be managed, especially water sanitation".

Hydro-Insecurity is Not an Isolated Problem

Hydro-insecurity does not occur in isolation according to the Strategic Foresight Group report, but is accompanied by poverty, war and conflict and low women's development. As of February 2015, the total number of refugees, Internally Displaced Persons and registered returnees in Lebanon is almost 1.7 million. Bekaa hosts the largest number of Syrian refugees in the country; the size of the refugee population is as large as 80 per cent of the local population. Of the total Syrian refugee population in Bekaa, more than three quarters are women and children. The SFG report points out that women refugee are the most vulnerable section within the female population in Bekaa.

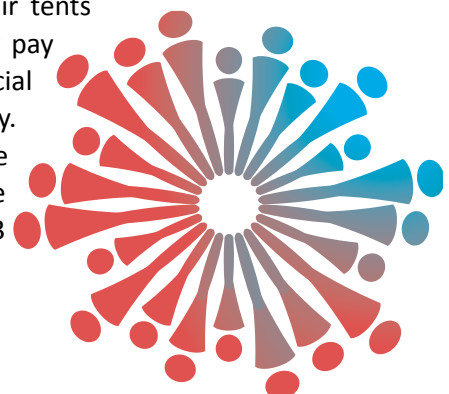
Amal, who lives at Reif Idlib for instance, has been waking up at dawn for the past year and half to go plant potatoes in the fields. She earns 10,000 Lebanese Liras a day (approximately USD 6.5) that help her family's livelihood. Amal said, "I would have loved to go to school,

I am tired at this work, but I have no choice". The young girl admitted to the *Aljournouria* newspaper that the Shaweesh does not share with her what she earns. Her colleague, a 23 year old married young lady accused the Shaweesh of abusing refugees. She said, "We are paid 10,000 Lebanese Lira a day, but 4000 of those go to the Shaweesh ". One of the Lebanese residents in the area said on condition of anonymity, "When a contactor comes in the morning to ask for workers he negotiates with the Shaweesh to reach a deal".

UNHCR Acting Deputy Representative Jean-Nicholas Beuze did not deny the ordeal that Syrian refugees, especially women suffer. He told *Aljournouria*, "We are monitoring the situation to get the information required, and trying to interfere with the Shaweesh to empower women and build their capacities in cooperation with their fathers and brothers".

Beuze added, "We are not living with the refugees. We try to find solutions - we have moved some refugees from the camps and are supporting them financially, but we faced 1700 cases. Each case has a special approach". In addition, UNHCR is also running programs to prevent the exploitation of women in prostitution but the main challenge according to Beuze is that the victims in general don't talk about their suffering because they are afraid of being beaten or tortured.

Despite the efforts of the world's leading humanitarian organizations to lessen the impact of displacement on Syrian refugees, the challenges they face are countless. Refugees, especially women are vulnerable in many ways. They have problems with their identification papers with UNHCR (USD 200 for stay renewal every six months), they do not have money to pay rent for their tents (USD 600 a year) and they pay higher prices than official tariff to receive electricity. Women and children are exploited, and even the school set up in the 003



camp was burned down so Syrian children no longer study there. The work of international organizations is like a medicine that just lessens pain while what is needed is a “political surgery” for the crisis of the civil war that has fragmented Syria and paralyzed Lebanon. That is the only way to stop the suffering of refugees and help them to not be vulnerable.

Mey Alsayegh is the International News Editor of Al-Joumhouria in Lebanon



CHAPTER 6

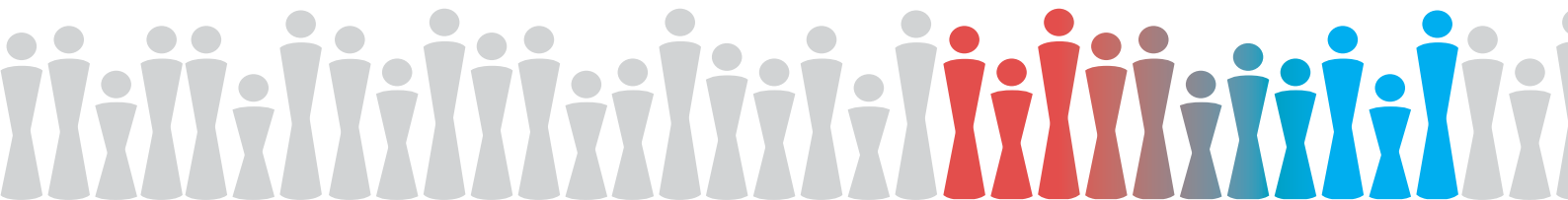
Breaking the Masculine Barriers

Iman Alfares

In Amman, Nadia Habash, a 25-year-old housewife, never expected to win the first place in the “Changing Pioneers” contest, an initiative aimed at reducing the amount of water used for household chores. By changing her water usage practices and installing water saving tools, she could save 52 per cent of the water bill compared to the previous billing cycles (each cycle consists of three months) from November 2014 - April 2015.

In spite of the fact that “household plumbing” is “traditionally” restricted to men especially in our Arab world, some Jordanian women could take on “the challenge” and brilliantly succeed in this field. Habash pointed out that her father deserves the credit for this achievement; as he helped, supported and encouraged her to take part in this project which was mainly aimed at encouraging women to use water rationally.

When Naifa Al-Shoura (a lady in her fifties who won second place) expressed a desire to develop her skills in installing the pipes and water saving tools, both technically and professionally, her husband was shocked. This did not prevent her from breaking the barriers and realizing her ambition in a field always considered restricted to men and a “shame” for women. Al-Shoura, an activist in various voluntary women’s associations and committees in the Ma’daba governorate, expressed her anger over some practices in the society regarding water wastage, which made her more determined to participate in this initiative. By fulfilling her ambition to repair the internal household water network she reduced water consumption and her water bill by about 50 per cent. She added: “I voluntarily worked with the German



Technical Development Agency (GIZ) for 8 years; because I liked the idea of water consumption rationalization, and they have been continuously conducting lectures through the Princess Basma Center.”

Hanan Daraghmah, a lady in her thirties who won third place, felt that the government should pay more attention to these kinds of initiatives, by holding training courses to equip more women to carry out the technical works of installing water saving tools and reduce water wastage practices.

Daraghmah, a social activist, pointed out that changing her practices in using water for various purposes became a “constant life style”. The reason behind her participation in the contest was to attend the events under this initiative that could help her save about half the cost of the water bill.

The contest, in which about 19 women participated, was aimed at identifying a group of women who know how to use water rationally, so they may become the link between other women and members of the society to raise awareness on ways and methods of rationalizing water consumption.

The Ministry of Water and Irrigation is carrying out these initiatives as a means to raise the awareness of water usage, in cooperation with The German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), through the water sector communication strategy project.

The Secretary General of the Ministry of Water and Irrigation, Basim Tilfah, said that Jordan needs to pay more attention to water consumption, and emphasized the importance of fostering the culture of rationalizing water consumption among Jordanians. The real cost of water delivery to the citizens’ houses is considered to be high in Jordan; the cost of delivering one cubic meter to the house is 1.87 Jordanian piaster.

Tilfah also noted that the rationalization of

water consumption leads to reducing the cost of water treatment, and stressed on the importance of adapting to the amount of water available. He added that all people and institutions in the local society are required to adapt to the amount of water available because the Ministry of Water is not the only entity in charge of water, it is the responsibility of all the institutions and sectors of the country.

Bion Zimbrich, the representative of GIZ, stressed the importance of women in Jordanian society and emphasized the full cooperation between the water sector and the agency. The GIZ initiative focused on teaching the participants how to be pioneers in water conservation and how to influence others to conserve water. The age group of the participants ranged between 20 and 50 years. The initiative targeted all women’s sectors; housewives, governmental and non-governmental employees, retirees and volunteers.

The women’s training courses focused on raising awareness among women and children on the religious deterrent in wasting water, water reuse (grey water), using the recycled water in cleaning outdoor yards, using dish washing water in watering the garden. Women also received training on installing water saving tools and repairing the internal water network. The initiative focused on creating a spirit of competition and encouragement, as well as finding an innovative way to stimulate others to reduce water usage and lower their water bills. The initiative was covered extensively by various Media outlets.

The initiative was launched through a contest between nongovernmental women’s associations, initiatives and organizations. Nominations for the contest were received and a meeting for the participants was held, along with workshops on household water network maintenance and installing water saving tools. The water bills of the participants were monitored. The winners were women who achieved the most amount of reduction

in water bills and were willing to continue following their changed practices. The project was aimed at saving money, reducing water consumption and achieving better management at the household level.

Jordan is classified as the third poorest country in the world in terms of water. A study by the Ministry of Water and Irrigation/Water Authority, involving all areas and governorates in Jordan reveals that one of the factors increasing the water burden is that 50.07 per cent of the citizens don't carry out any maintenance work for their house tanks, which leads to wastage of large amounts of water. The study showed that a large number of citizens deliberately damaged their tank floats or did not repair damaged floats, which led to wasting enormous amounts of water and doubling the water bill. Tank floats of 59.2 per cent of the population who complain about their high water bills were not working; 21 per cent of the tanks and internal water networks in the houses were not being periodically maintained by their owners. Consequently, water leaked into the building foundation which resulted in exposing the building to serious problems like internal wall cracks and damage, in addition to saline deposits and soil swelling under the foundation. The problems were especially pronounced in the rural and mountainous regions that contain varve soil or red soil, which caused direct damage to the building's foundations and reduced the chronological age of the building. These problems were in addition to the wear and tear due to humidity.

Jordan is experiencing extraordinary circumstances because of Syrian immigration. Government efforts are concentrated on dealing with water problems, as it is well aware of the key role water plays in fulfilling the essential needs of the citizens and the guests in Jordan. The water problem is exacerbated by global warming, fluctuations in the rainy season, lack of modern management, severe resources depletion and constant conflicts in the Arab region.

Dr. Hazim Al-Nasir, Minister of Water and Irrigation, pointed to the United Nations estimates, which show that universal human suffering will increase as a result of the severe shortage in drinking water. It is expected that more than 904 million people will suffer from a lack of water by 2025; most of them are in the Mediterranean Basin, West Asia and the volatile Middle East region. Continued conflicts in the Middle-East have led to wasting huge opportunities for constructive regional cooperation on carrying out water projects. Instead, attempts have been continuously made by extremist groups to take over the water resources so as to have control over basic needs such as drinking water.

Al-Nasir confirmed that if wrong practices and the non-systematic consumption of water, especially clean water, persist in the region, the area and the world, one day, these resources will no longer be able to meet the dramatically increasing demand for water. Without prudent management, considerable hardships in distributing water resources will be further exacerbated.

The minister discussed the heavy burdens that have been imposed on Jordan as a result of the conflicts in the region and the huge immigration waves to Jordan during the last decade. This has increased the demand on water resources by about 21 per cent in all areas of the country. The northern governorates are suffering as the demand for water has increased by 40 per cent because of the hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees who fled to these areas. International support is inadequate to help Jordan come up with viable solutions for the problems of drinking water and sanitation services. According to experts; the water sector alone costs Jordanian Dinar (JD) 360 million every year, and the "withstand plan" needs JD 750 million until the end of 2016.

Iman Alfares is the Editor of Al Ghad Newspaper in Jordan



CHAPTER 7

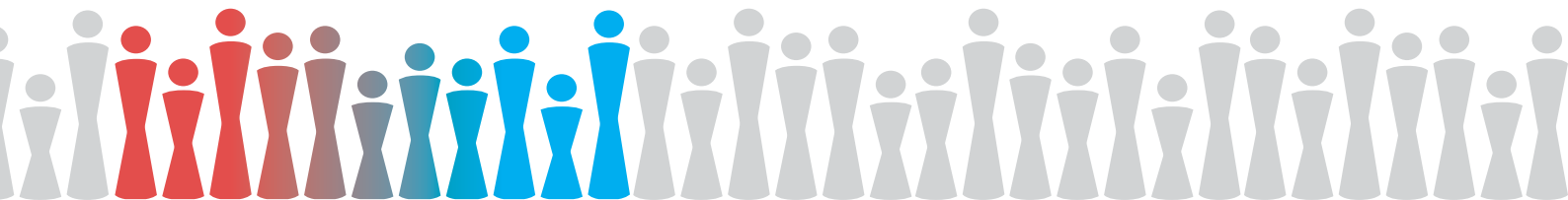
Bringing Water to Yüksekova

Gizem Acar

On the eastern edge of Turkey, life in the city of Yüksekova in Hakkari province is a struggle against nature. Yüksekova is a Kurdish district located on mountains above 3000 metres and borders with Iran. It has a population of around 100,000. Yüksekova itself, which means “high plain” in Turkish, is situated on a plain as high as 1950 meters. For Yüksekova connecting roads is a big challenge. The mountainous lands make agriculture very difficult, but the biggest challenge is that water is scarce.

The district is 93 per cent Kurdish and was notorious for terrorism in the 1990s. The Cudi Mountain located in Hakkari was the main base for the Kurdish Marxist-Leninist militant organization PKK, which is now branded as a terror organization by Turkey, the United States and the European Union. In national newspapers and TV channels, Yüksekova’s name was only mentioned with relation to incidents of terrorism or drug trafficking. Lives of ordinary people living in the far away land were never mentioned or regarded. For the people of Yüksekova, the mountains were filled with stories of their lost children, hundreds dead and villages forcefully cleared out by security forces.

Since the peace process started between PKK and the Turkish Government in 2013, south-eastern Turkey hoped for change. The focus slowly shifted from terror incidents to the people’s struggle. With the recently built Yüksekova airport, that ‘far away’ plain surrounded with mountains was not far anymore. In June, Yüksekova was on the agenda of Turkish national press again, but this time the topic was fairly different.



As winter covers Yüksekova with thick snow, the summers are equally rough. In the Orman neighbourhood of Yüksekova, lack of running water makes daily life even harder. Due to the elevation of the district and poor infrastructure, lack of running water is an old problem plaguing many neighbourhoods of Yüksekova. But this year people of Orman neighbourhood had had enough. Even though the local officials made a promise to bring water to the neighbourhood years ago, inhabitants complain that nothing has changed.

When the temperatures hit 30 degree Celsius in June, in a surprising development for a patriarchal society; the women of the neighbourhood took charge. Dozens of women with their empty plastic cans gathered in front of the municipal building of Yüksekova to protest against the officials. One of the women, Beyhan Bor, said that every day they have to carry water from different locations many kilometres away. "We all have children. They bathe. We wash their clothes. Will God accept this inability to provide water for our children? We thought that our mayor is a woman, so she is the one who can understand us best. The mayor said last year that they will bring water to the neighbourhood with drilling, but it didn't happen. As long as the problem is not fixed, we will come to the municipality every day", said Bor to the reporters.

That day, the first female mayor of the Yüksekova Ruken Yetiskin, went out of the building and sat with the women who were protesting. She listened to their problems and made a promise to find a solution to the water scarcity problem. The women of Yüksekova decided to believe her words and ended their protest.

Mayor Yetiskin stresses that the problem started many years before her term. "We are doing some work regarding the water problem. As a result of our work, we will bring the water of the Orse upland to the district. Most of the villagers in Orse are persuaded but some of the families are not accepting it. I am asking them

to come see the people of Yüksekova and help them. They must let us bring water to the dry plains of Yüksekova."

Fifty years ago, Yüksekova was a small village with only 35 houses. In most of the south eastern cities with high terror rates, the population moved to west Turkey. On the contrary, in Yüksekova, the district grew from a population of around 10,000 at the beginning of 1990, to a population of 100,000 people in a decade due to surprisingly high migration to Yüksekova. This rapid growth gave rise to infrastructure problems.

Less than 10 days after the protest, drilling started in accordance with the promises made by Mayor Yetiskin. According to the plans a new 3,000 meters long pipeline would connect the drill with the water storage of the Orman neighbourhood.

In a telephone conversation Yetişkin said that with the help of the drilling they will be able to bring water to the Orman neighbourhood within one month. She said they could also provide running water during winter for six or seven hours a day but in summers it gets difficult because people use drinking water to irrigate their gardens in which they plant vegetables. "The area is poor, the people are very poor. You can't tell them not to irrigate their gardens because those vegetables are vital for them to make a living", said Yetiskin.

Yetiskin thinks it is natural for women to protest the issue of water access. "Women are the ones who clean the house and take care of children. That's why I sat with them and told them 'I understand you'." But the mayor warns that drilling is only a temporary solution for the district. For the comprehensive solution more needed to be done. Yetiskin says she found the solution with the collaboration of the government. "Because the elevation of the area is very high, it is very hard to find water. However, in four or five years the water problem is going to be solved permanently" says Yetiskin.

According to municipality's plans the water will be brought from Dilimli Dam in Hakkari. The State Hydraulic Works, a state agency organized under the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, is going to conduct the water supply construction. Part of a river that goes to Iran will be diverted to the neighbourhoods of Yuksekova. According to Yetiskin's estimates, first the State Hydraulic Works will need one or two years to build new roads to connect the dam to the villages. After this process is complete, the dam will be able to provide water for 24 hours for the 600,000 people around the district.

Another positive outcome of the plan will be providing water for agriculture. Yetiskin says there are plains that can be used for the agriculture and that half of the water from the dam will be transferred to these plains.

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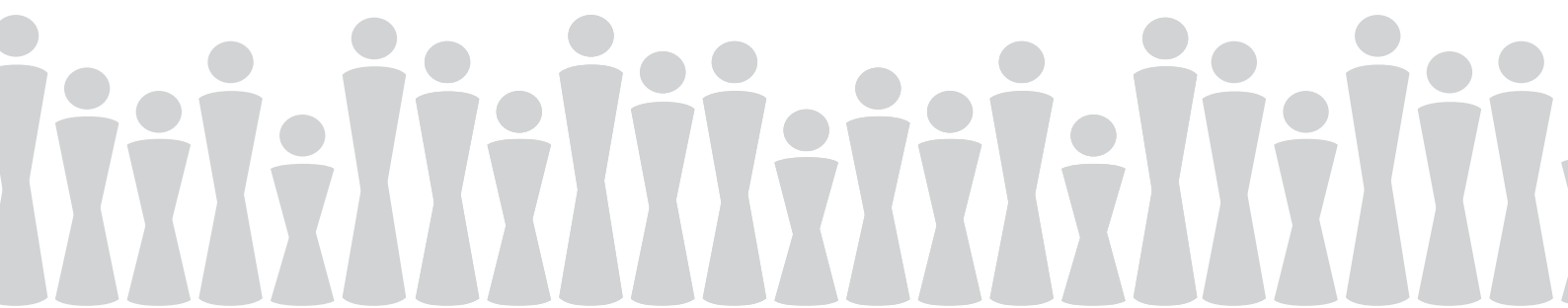
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