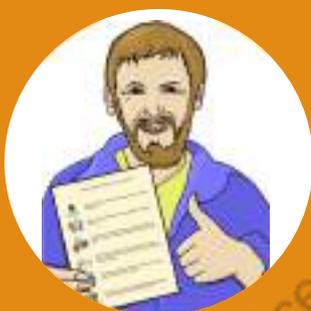




Voices from Syria 2021



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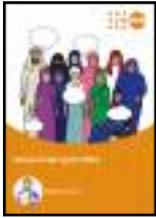
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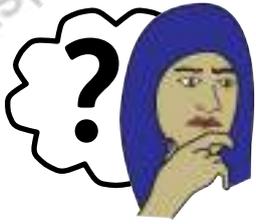
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Some words are in **bold**.

There is a list of what they mean
at the end of this report.



About this paper



This is an Easy Read paper on the report called 'Voices from Syria 2021'.



'Voices from Syria 2021' was written to help organisations that deal with **violence** against women and girls in Syria.



The report was also written to help other organisations that may come across **violence** against women and girls in their work.



'Voices from Syria 2021' was written from information directly collected from women and girls (as well as men and boys).



As the name of the report says, this report wants to give voice to the women and girls living in Syria.



It should help people understand more about the difficulties women and girls experience because of the situation in Syria.



What has happened in Syria

2010

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
May	Jun	Jul	Aug
Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec



In 2010 the war began in Syria.

2020

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
May	Jun	Jul	Aug
Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec



10 years later, in 2020, the war in Syria was still going on.

2011

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
May	Jun	Jul	Aug
Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec

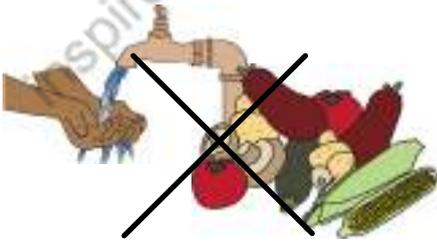


Since 2011, over 5 million people left Syria to find safety.

Over 6 million people were forced to leave their home to live somewhere else in Syria.



In Syria, men are the ones who traditionally make sure that their families have food and money.



The war made it difficult for men to earn money and get food and water for their family.



These men often dealt with their stress by being violent to other people in their family.

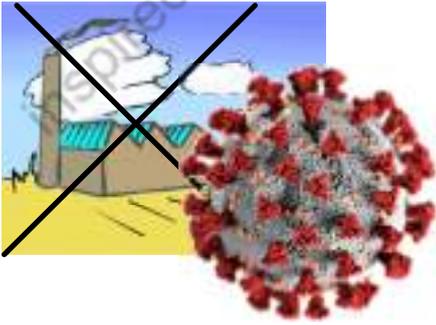
March 2020						
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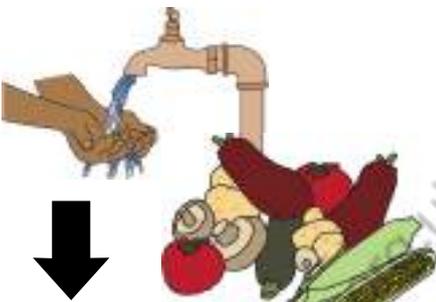
By March 2020, nearly 1 million people were forced to leave their homes and move to other areas of Syria because of the war.



Most of these people were women and children.



Businesses and industries in Syria found it hard to keep going when the coronavirus happened.



Food became much more expensive and there was not enough food and water for everyone.

All these things had a big effect on the people. It mostly affected women and girls.

2020			
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
May	Jun	Jul	Aug
Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec



In 2020, more than 11 million people in Syria needed special help from organisations to survive and stay alive.



This situation in Syria was called one of biggest dangers to people's health, safety and **wellbeing** in the world.



Violence against women and girls became a normal thing in the life of women and girls



In 2020 women and girls in Syria were still not treated fairly and **equally** to men and boys.



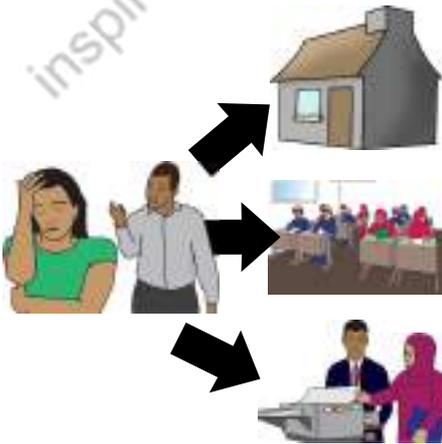
Women and girls were not included in things like jobs, school, politics and community life like men and boys were.



Job opportunities got worse and many women found it hard to get a good job that would last.

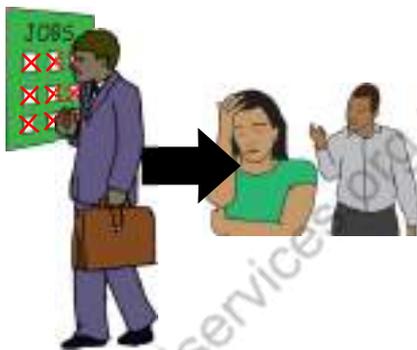


Many different women and girls experienced **violence**.

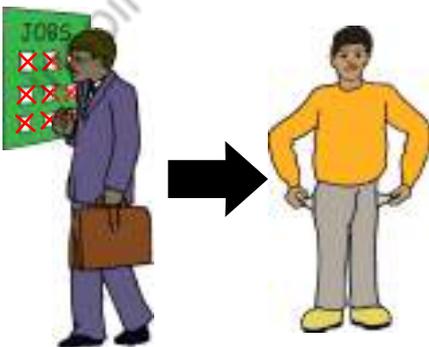


Violence happened everywhere – in the home, in schools, at work, and in spaces that everyone used.

It became very normal for this **violence** to happen.



Lots of people lost their jobs because of the war and this led to more **violence** against women and girls.



More people were poor and it was hard to find a job that paid enough money to take care of a family.



This affected girls and women in lots of ways. It affected how they felt, their opportunities in life and their safety.



As many women could not work, they did not have enough money to stay in their homes. Many had to live in **camp**s or became homeless.

2020		
Jan	Feb	Mar
May	Jun	Jul
Sep	Oct	Nov

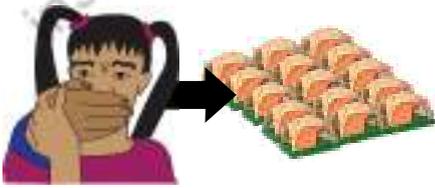


In 2020, women and girls still experienced **violence** from partners or husbands. They also experienced **violence** from family like brothers and fathers and strangers each day.



They spoke of many different types of **violence** where:

- their bodies were hurt
- their emotions and feelings were hurt
- they were forced to do sexual things they didn't want to do.



In certain places like **camp**s, women and girls were more likely to experience **violence**.



Women and girls also experienced being treated with **sexual violence** by workers who were supposed to be helping people in war areas.



As men have had and still have more power and control in society, women and girls have experienced a lot of violence



There were some women who experienced more **violence** than other women.

These were women and girls who:

- had a disability
- were divorced
- whose husbands had died
- were pushed out or treated badly by their family
- teenage girls



Girls were forced to give up their education so that they could work to get money for their families.

A teenager from Aleppo said:

“I’d like to carry on with my studies, but everything is against this – my family, the war, where I live.”



Teenage young women did not have much freedom to go out because they were more likely to be hurt if they went out.



Divorced women and women whose husbands had died were also not able to go out when they wanted to.



One teenager from Deir-ez-Zoir said that divorced women could not go out without their father or brother.

This became very normal situation for women and girls.



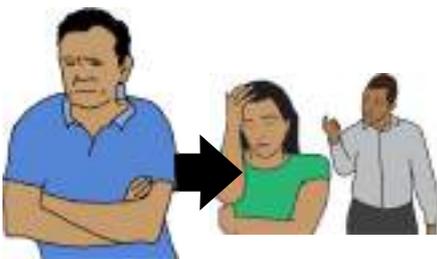
Boys and men did not experience these things.



It became very normal even though more women and girls had to work outside the home.



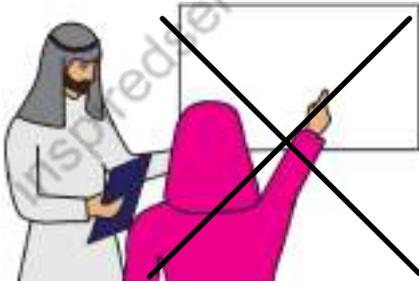
A woman from Aleppo said that more men stayed at home while the women went out to work.



She explained that as the men did not have so much work, they did not feel good about themselves. The men were then violent with women.



Violence was often used by men and boys to make sure that they were more in control of women and girls' lives.



Women and girls were stopped from making choices about:

- their education like schools, colleges or university
- their partners
- their freedom to move around
- where they could go and who they could meet
- what they wear
- their job



Their **rights** were stopped.



It was often men and boys who took those **rights** away. For example, if a woman had the right to take care of her child, this was not allowed by the men in the family.



How the women and girls reacted to the violence



When **violence** against women and girls became such a normal part of life each day, women and girls felt like they had no power at all.



They stayed quiet about their experiences of **violence**. This is the way that most women and girls dealt with the experience of **violence**.

This led to them feeling:



- alone
- guilty and embarrassed about what happened
- upset and stressed



One teenage woman from Al-Hasakeh in Syria said that when women were beaten, harassed or **raped**, they did not stop the attack as they did not feel they had any power.



She said that women did not know what their **rights** were.



If a woman talked about the **violence** they experienced, they put themselves in danger of more **abuse** and **violence**.



For example, they experienced more family **violence**, threats of divorce and being beaten.



Women were worried that if they talked about the **violence** they experienced, men might punish them by taking their children away.



Women and girls also found other ways to cope with the **violence** forced on them.



Some women and girls changed the way they behaved such as the way they dressed.

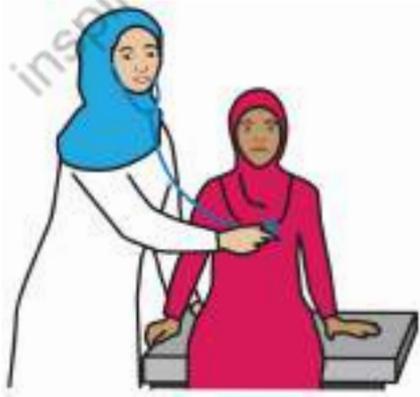
Some women did not go out as much as they used to.



Women and girls also chose very carefully when they did not agree with a man or boy.



The women and girls knew that if they did not agree with a man or a boy, they might be violent with them.



This **violence** on women and girls caused them health problems.

The **violence** also caused **mental health problems**.



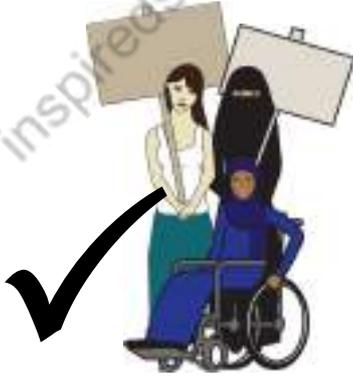
The women and girls become alone and separate to the rest of their community.



At the same time as this, new services were set up in Syria to support women and girls who experienced **violence**.



There were special safe spaces for women and girls to go to where they could get support and talk about what had happened to them.



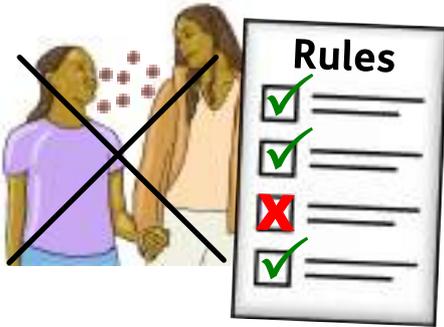
Women and girls said that these services helped them to speak out against the **violence** and stand up for their **rights**.



Women and girls showed how they were able to cope and carry on with life after **violence**.



How coronavirus affected what was happening to women and girls in Syria



Just like the rest of the world, Syria had to have lockdowns and rules to stop coronavirus spreading.



This affected Syria so that:

- there were not as many jobs
- food became more expensive
- education stopped or changed
- some services were not open or easy to use
- there was not as much freedom for people to go out



It is very clear that because people lost their jobs, there was even more **violence** on women and girls especially in their homes.



It was not clear if **violence** outside the home changed.



Some women thought that there was less **violence** outside the home as people had to have a big space between them and other people.



Other women thought that there was more **kidnapping** and **harassment**.



More girls were forced to get married at a younger age.



Some of the organisations that helped women and girls had to stop their work because of coronavirus.



Some of these organisations tried to keep offering help through phone calls or contact through **social media**.

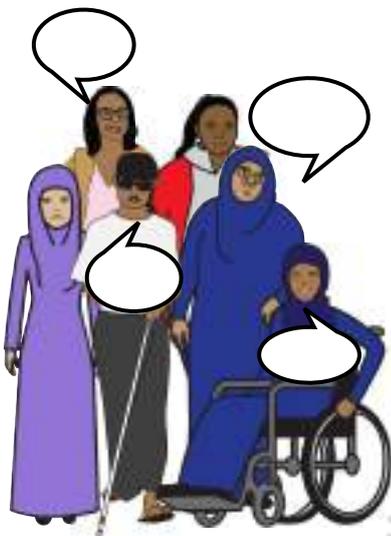


They also took food and other things to people's homes.

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By September 2020, most of the organisations and projects were working again to support women and girls who experienced **violence**.



It is important to end this report with the voices of women and girls.

Their dreams and hopes for the future are to:



1. Increase the number of women who are able to go to and get help from the special support services.



2. Deal with the main causes of all this **violence** – what has become normal behaviour and should not be: is the bad and unfair treatment of women.



3. Stop girls being forced to get married when they are young.



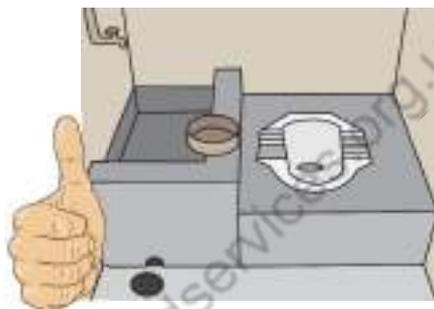
4. Make sure that girls and young women can go to school, college and university.



5. Make sure that women and girls can learn new skills, have training and more chances to work.



6. Check that the support services are safe and in the right places to support women and girls who need it. Women should be part of the training and the staff team. Women need to feel safe if they complain about something that has happened. They need to feel that they will be listened to and their complaints dealt with.



7. Deal with the things that put women and girls at risk of **violence**. For example, lighting in washing and toilet places and in the streets and **camps** not being so crowded.



If this **violence** is to end, these women and girls must be listened to. Their suggestions must be put into action.

As one married teenage girl from **Idlib** said:

“I know the world that I want to live in. Help me build it, and I will never stop working”.



What the words mean

Abuse - Abuse is when someone hurts or treats you badly.

Camps - These are places where there are tents and shelters for people to stay in.

Equally - Is when everyone is treated the same.

Harassment - Harassment is any unwanted behaviour, actions or words that make you feel uncomfortable.

Idlib - This is a city in North West Syria.

Kidnapping - This is when a person is taken away when they don't want to be taken away. The person is taken away using force and usually without the family knowing.

Mental health problems - Mental health is about the health of our brain. If we have mental health problems, this affects how our brain works. It affects the way we think, feel and behave.

Raped - This is when someone is forced to have sex.

Rights - Rights are things you are allowed to do like getting married or the right to vote.

Rights tell us how we should be treated. For example, you have the right to be treated with respect.

Sexual violence - This is when someone tries to do something sexual with you by forcing you or being violent.

Social media - Social media are things like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Society - A large group of people living in a certain area.

WGSS - The letters WGSS are a short way of saying 'Women and Girls Safe Spaces'.

They are places where women and girls can feel physically and emotionally safe.

Women and girls can talk about problems and worries with other women and with staff. They also engage in fun activities or in learning a new skill.

Violence - Violence includes things like:

- hitting
- slapping
- choking
- cutting
- pushing
- burning
- shooting
- using any weapons
- acid attacks
- being touched in private parts when you don't want to
- being forced to do something sexual that you don't like
- any other act that results in pain or being hurt.

Wellbeing - This is how healthy, comfortable and happy people feel.

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