

Asia-Pacific Response to Gender-based Violence (GBV) in Emergencies: Regional Overview Report



GBV in Emergencies Working Group

DECEMBER 2021

I. Humanitarian Context

The Asia-Pacific is the most disaster-prone and populous region in the world. It is susceptible to severe, frequent and protracted climate-related and natural disasters, which are compounded in some contexts by armed conflict and political crises, and now the COVID-19 pandemic. The complexity of these disasters leads to internal displacement and humanitarian needs affecting a significant proportion of the global population, involving more than 30 contexts.¹

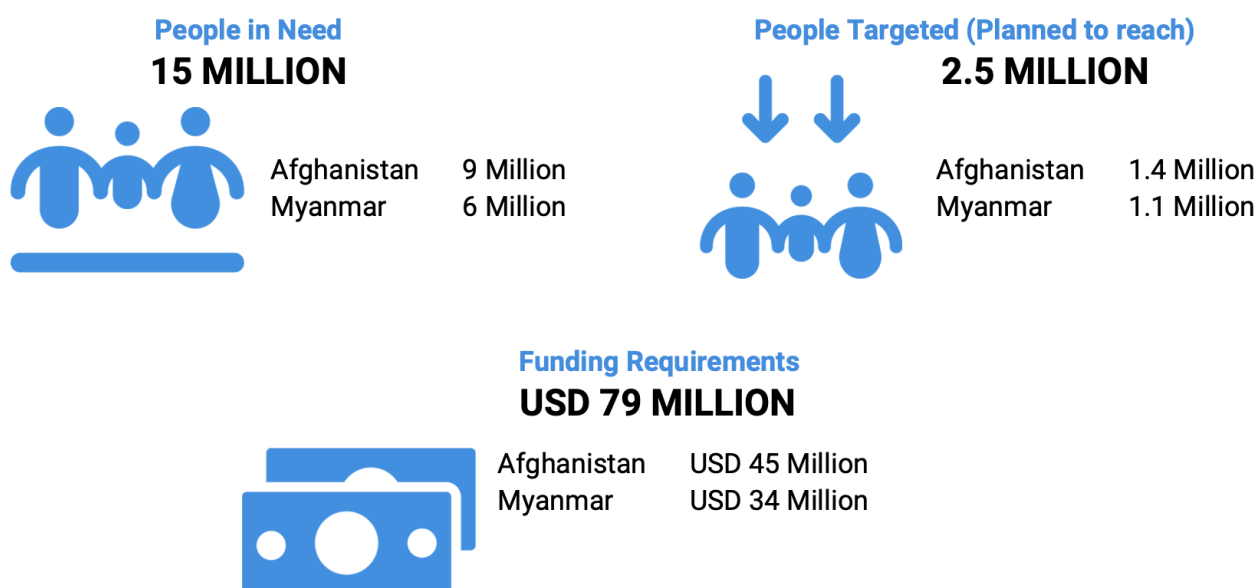
- More than half of the countries classified at highest risk of natural disasters lie within this one region (2021 World Risk Index).
- Afghanistan consistently falls within the 10 most acute humanitarian disasters globally, while the crisis in Myanmar continues to generate urgent needs.

Addressing gender-based violence (GBV) is critical in each context, and every disaster. Prevalence data on violence against women (kNowVAWdata) is collected by country throughout the region, demonstrating the extent of pre-existing GBV risks and gender inequality, which are exacerbated during times of emergency.

II. Humanitarian Needs and Response

For the 2022 Humanitarian Programming Cycle, in just two priority contexts with Humanitarian Response Plans in the region there are more than **15 million People in Need** of humanitarian interventions that address GBV.

Facts and Figures: HRP Countries - Afghanistan and Myanmar



Yet, these Humanitarian Response Plans represent only a fraction of the humanitarian needs and GBV response in the region. Throughout the region, humanitarian GBV interventions include life-saving, multi-sectoral specialized GBV services - health; mental health and psychosocial support (PSS); safety and security; legal aid and justice and case management. Outreach, prevention and risk mitigation activities to address GBV are also essential to provide protection to populations affected by disasters, including the provision of dignity kits for affected women and girls.

Key types of GBV to be addressed with emergency responses in the Asia-Pacific:

- Intimate partner violence
- Early, child and forced marriage
- Sexual violence, including rape, sexual assault and conflict-related sexual violence
- Sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA)²
- Female genital mutilation
- Sex trafficking



There is increasing need to monitor and respond to technology-facilitated GBV (TFGBV)³ as part of emergency planning and interventions. In COVID-19, there were documented increased risks and incidents of GBV and trafficking cases against women and children through internet and other online platforms in key contexts, including the Philippines and Indonesia.

QUICK FACTS

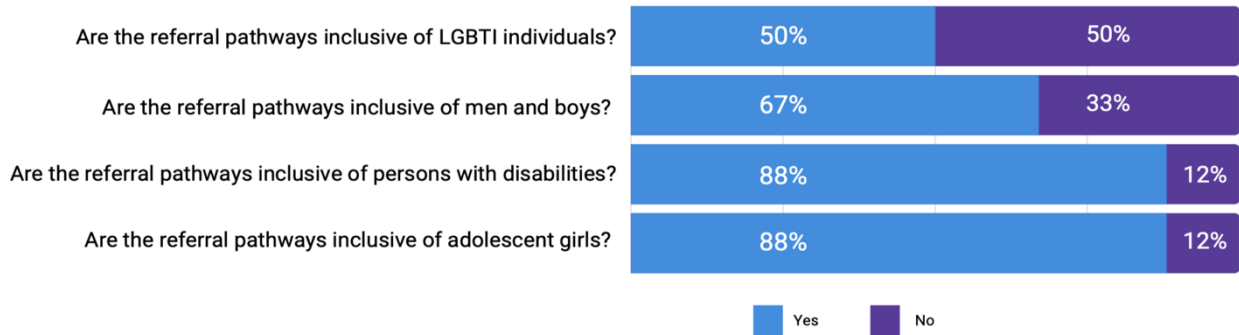
- In multiple contexts in the region, domestic violence and forced marriage are the most commonly reported forms of GBV in emergencies.⁴
- Victims-survivors in the East Asia - Pacific region are predominantly trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation.⁵
- With COVID-19, GBV escalated throughout the region, with documented increases in domestic violence in India, Bangladesh, and Malaysia, among others.⁶
- Four (4) contexts in the region were discussed in the 2021 UN Secretary General's report on Conflict-related Sexual Violence.⁷

SPOTLIGHT: GBV IN EMERGENCIES REFERRAL SYSTEMS⁸

- 22 countries reported having operational referral systems at the national or sub-national level
- 20 countries reported including specialized hotlines/remote service delivery in their referral system

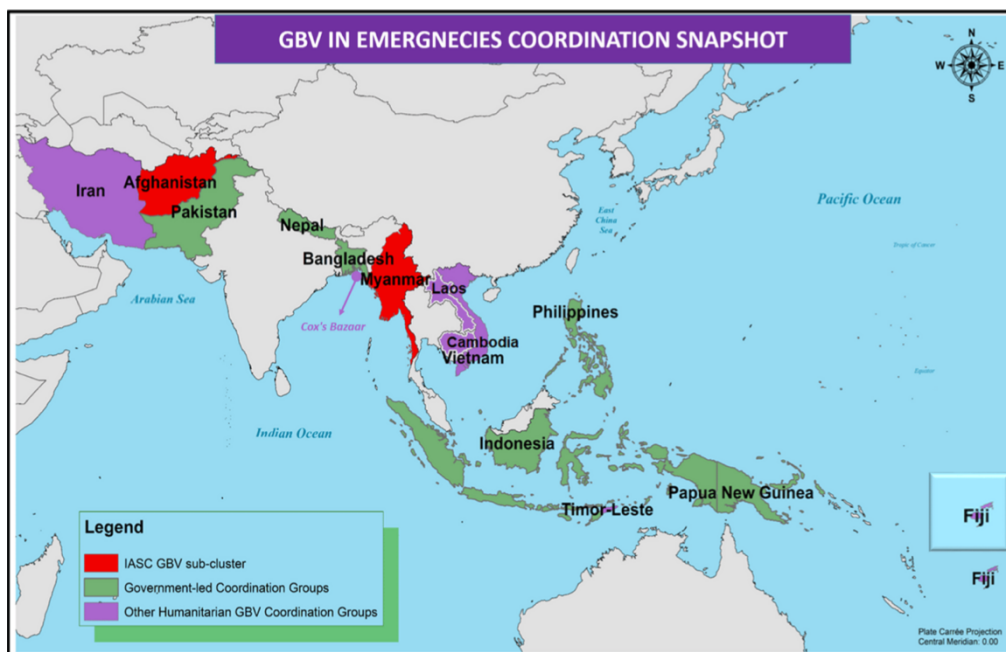
- 71% of contexts reported referral pathways are widely disseminated and available to the public

Types of beneficiaries inclusive in the referral pathways



III. Coordination

GBV in Emergencies coordination groups in internal displacement settings ensure an efficient humanitarian response to maximize the coverage of services without duplication and promote standards for quality of care. Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) UN-led clusters are present in Afghanistan and Myanmar led by the cluster lead agency, UNFPA, in collaboration with civil society organizations at the national and sub-national levels. A variety of other GBV in emergencies coordination mechanisms operate for preparedness and natural disaster response across the region.





13

humanitarian contexts with situations of internal displacement have active GBV in Emergencies coordination mechanisms

4

of these contexts have inter-agency GBV in Emergencies strategic response plans addressing GBV in place.*



25%

of inter-agency contingency plans in the region articulated GBV in its overall risk analysis

85+

international and national specialized GBV partners are part of inter-agency humanitarian response plans in the region



3000+

people were reached across agencies with training on GBV in Emergencies between 2020-2021

*Strategic response plans⁹

IV. Recommendations to Donors & Senior Management

- Advocate with governments to promote and ensure a survivor-centred approach for GBV response in emergencies across all ministries and departments.
- Insist on the use of safe and ethical protocols for all data collection in relation to GBV, including the prerogative to respond to GBV in emergencies regardless of the absence or presence of incidence or prevalence data. Invest in costs of data security, especially for local GBV service providers.
- Provide systems building, longer term funding to enhance emergency referral systems for a range of humanitarian settings in emergency and preparedness phases.
- Upscale funding to ensure continuity of life-saving GBV programming for IDPs, refugees, migrants and other high-risk populations affected by displacement due to emergencies throughout the region.
- Support pre-positioning and procurement for life-saving commodities (including dignity kits, shelter kits and tents, medical supplies) in preparedness, anticipatory action and acute emergency settings.

- Encourage and support all agencies and sectors to implement GBV risk mitigation as a standard component of emergency strategic planning and project implementation, including inter-agency contingency plans and anticipatory action.



- Prioritize training of frontline GBV service providers, particularly on case management, PSS, health (including intimate partner violence and clinical management of rape and intimate partner violence protocols), security/safety and legal response.
- Promote better integration of considerations for disability, child and adolescent survivors, male survivors, older persons, migrants and persons of diverse Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Expression, and Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC) into referral systems and frontline GBV service provision.
- Ensure the GBV components of the Humanitarian Response Plans for Myanmar and Afghanistan are fully funded.
- Direct more funding to local, frontline responders and women-rights organizations to support leadership and implementation of the GBV response.

Endnotes

¹ This note was prepared to inform the IASC Regional Directors group for the Asia-Pacific region among other key actors. It provides an overview focused on situations of internal displacement. However, it is important to note that GBV response is also a key component of refugee coordination mechanisms and response throughout the region.

² Sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA): Particular forms of gender-based violence that have been reported in humanitarian contexts, specifically alleged against humanitarian workers. IASC Global Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) on Inter-agency Cooperation on Community based Complaint Mechanisms. These acts are committed by humanitarian workers against the affected population.

³ Technology-Facilitated GBV (TFGBV), also called online violence, cyberviolence and digital violence, is “any act of gender-based violence against women that is committed, assisted or aggravated in part or fully by the use of information, communication technologies (ICT), such as mobile phones and smartphones, the Internet, social media platforms or email, against a woman because she is a woman, or affects women disproportionately.” A/HRC/38/47, Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences on online violence against women and girls from a human rights perspective.

⁴ See IFRC. (2018). The Responsibility to Prevent and Respond to Sexual and Gender-based violence in Disasters and Crises: Research Results of Sexual and Gender-based violence (SGBV) Prevention and Response Before, During and After Disasters in Laos, Philippines and Indonesia. The research in these countries is consistent with Violence Against Women and Children data collected in the region and trends globally. For further information, see UNFPA. (2021). Addressing Child Marriage in Humanitarian Settings: Technical Guide for Staff and Partners of the UNFPA-UNICEF Global Program to End Marriage.

⁵ UNODC. (2020). Global Report on Trafficking in Persons. p.35

⁶ UN Women, UNFPA and Quilt.ai. (2021). COVID-19 and violence against women: The evidence behind the talk - Insights from big data analysis in Asian countries, pp. 5-6.

⁷ United Nations Secretary-General. (2021, March). S/2021/312 Conflict-related Sexual Violence: Report of the United Nations Secretary General.

⁸ Data on referral mechanisms was collected in 2021 through a partnership between UNFPA and the GBV AoR from GBV coordination focal points from 24 contexts in the region including: Afghanistan, Cox's Bazaar, Cambodia, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Thailand, Vietnam, Bhutan, Bangladesh, China, Iran, PNG, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Lao PDR.

⁹ In 2021, active, annual inter-agency strategic response plans coordinated through OCHA-led HPC processes by GBV coordination mechanisms included Afghanistan, Myanmar, Pakistan and the Bangladesh HCTT Nexus Strategy 2021-2025: Humanitarian-Development Collaboration for Climate-Related Disasters in Bangladesh.

In 2022, Myanmar and Afghanistan have revised annual strategic response plans, and the Philippines has a Humanitarian Needs and Priorities Plan for Typhoon Rai/Odette. For preparedness, there is also the Anticipatory Action Framework Philippines, 2021-2022. In addition to the IDP-related strategic response plans, there is the annual Joint Response Plan for Cox's Bazaar and UNHCR Afghanistan Regional Refugee Preparedness and Response Plan (2021).