



Women and Girls Needs Assessment Sessions Ninewa

**Better World Organization with local partners
(Hope, Notredam, Shabak, Shafaq, Nama, Osa, Jud, Nineveh Women, Ghusin Al-Zaiton)
in partnership with CARE International in Iraq with the support of the German Federal
Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
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Introduction

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, adopted in 2000, is considered one of the most important and pivotal resolutions in the field of women's rights and equality of equality between men and women in national and international contexts. It emphasizes the urgent need for the effective participation of women in all aspects of peace and security. Strengthening their role in peaceful mediation and negotiations, and the protection of their rights in periods of armed conflicts. Including the prevention of sexual violence and sexual abuse.

In fragile contexts such as Ninewa Governorate, women's rights movements operate in restricted and difficult civil society spaces. Often lacking strong governance, reliable funding, and coordinated forums for effective organizing. In light of the importance of this resolution and in light of the circumstances that Ninewa governorate was exposed to after the ISIS armed conflict, CARE International in partnership with Better World Organization for Community Development (BWOCD) and the support from German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), implemented a project that works on developing the institutional capacity of women-led organizations. Providing accessible and consistent grant funding, and increasing the effectiveness of platforms, networks and coalitions. So that women's rights advocates can lead in peace building, social inclusion, promote women's rights and strengthening their voice and participation in decision-making. CARE International coordinates the exchange of experiences, knowledge and ideas between global and local women's rights organizations to build solidarity, deepen learning and strengthening global networks on women, peace and security. In collaboration with BWOCD the project includes building the capacity of nine local women rights organizations (WROs) as follows:

Introduction

1. Strengthen the institutional capacity of women's rights organizations, increase resource mobilization, and improve strategic plans that are representative of and accountable to excluded groups of women and girls.
2. Engage women's rights organizations and excluded groups of women and girls with decision-makers on women, peace and security priorities.
3. Strengthen women's rights organizations and excluded groups of women and girls and form exchange networks and amplify learning on the WPS agenda at local, national and multi-country levels.

Therefore, as part of this project and in order to reach the second outcome, BWOCD collaborated with its nine local partners of women's organizations from Ninewa governorate (**Hope, Notredam, Shabak, Shafaq, Nama, Osa, Jud, Nineveh Women, Ghusin Al-Zaiton**) to assess the general situation of women and girls in Ninewa governorate during the period of Feb to Jun 2024 under the umbrella of Resolution 1325, and accordingly, this report was prepared to clarify the results reached.

Methodology

The approach followed was a qualitative questionnaire using focus group discussions and another quantitative questionnaire through phone calls. We carried out this work through our nine local partners (Hope organization, Jud, Shafaq, Nama, NWOVA, Shabak Women Association, Osa, Ghusin AlZaiton , and Noterdam). Girls and women were targeted in Ninewa Governorate in each of the areas, Mosul, Tal Afar, Bashiqa and Bartella. 18 sessions were held between February and June of 2024. Each session consisted of 10 women and girls from different ages, social, ethnic, religious, and educational backgrounds. Also, those affected by displacement and the host community. The total number was 182 women and girls. The discussion in the groups focused on Resolution 1325 and its sections, where specific questions were asked to assess their current situation in relation to the challenges of women and girls in Ninewa Governorate in general. Their rights and their participation in decision-making as well. In addition to that, the extent of understanding of Resolution 1325 and whether they have noticed any changes as a result of this resolution. Questions were also asked about their experiences before and after the conflict and their situation with protection, security and access to resources and services. Finally, the questions focused on the nature of the strategies for change and improvement in terms of rights and the role of local and international organizations. Please see Appendix 1 for the questions in detail. The tables below summarize the data of women and girls who participated in the focus group discussions.

Affected Population	No.
Host community	32
Returnee	96
IDP	40

Affected Population	No.
Social Status	No.
Single	82
Married	79
Widow	8

Components & religion	Arab	Education	No.
	Turkman	Diploma	11
	Shabak	Student	14
	Kurd	BSc.	31
	Ezidi	Secondary & High School	43
	Muslim	Elementary	36
	Christian	Illiterate	5
	Institute	42	

Age	No.
Less than 25	32
25 to 35	96
36 to 50	40
More than 50	14

Main Results

From what has been presented, the challenges facing women and girls are many and, in several areas, and the main reason is that the society in Ninewa is still a male dominant society and the general status of women is restricted by cultural and religious customs and traditions. The society in general is accustomed to suppressing women's voices. As for their rights, they are still in a primitive stage of development where they are not allowed to take their full rights and their mouths are usually shut with the phrase "You are a woman, do not speak." The results appeared according to the questions posed as follows:

Quantitative Results from the Telephone Survey

About 81% of women have not heard of Resolution 1325 and do not know what it is. The data also showed that about 56% of them did not participate in any type of peacebuilding or conflict resolution activities. The remaining 44% participated in activities of awareness only regarding peacebuilding and conflict resolution. More than 49% of them are unaware of whether there are any women's organizations in their areas working in the field of women's rights and peacebuilding. This indicates that the role of the government is very weak and the role of organizations is limited and has not touched the tip of the iceberg so far. Only 62 out of 182 women work, although only 5 of them are uneducated, while the rest are either students or graduates.

Qualitative Results from the Questionnaire in Focus Groups

1- Introduction

a. What are the main challenges facing women and girls in Ninewa ?

b. How do you see the status of women's rights and their participation in decision-making?

One of the biggest challenges facing women and girls in general is the scarcity of job opportunities and the difficult economic situation in general. Women and girls expressed that most of them depend on their parents (father, husband, brother, or son) for their living expenses. This makes the control over them greater and their financial situation completely restricted, because the majority of them do not have the freedom to decide expenses. Even if they are the ones who work and bring in the income, they still cannot decide how to spend it without the approval of the man in the family



They also expressed that society is male-dominated and is still under the burden of heavy customs, traditions, and tribal and religious norms. Those customs restrict women and make them subordinate, have no freedom. On the other hand, not entitled to express an opinion or participate in any kind of decision-making regarding their lives and their rights. This applies to their own family, whether the family of the parents or the husband and children.

Women and girls suffer from the difficulty of knowing their rights in the society in which they live, although they mentioned that after the events of the armed conflict of ISIS, women situation became relatively and slightly better in terms of leaving the house, working and completing their education due to the large presence of organizations and their role in creating job opportunities and raising awareness on one hand. On the other hand, due to displacement, as most of the families moved to larger and more open cities, a kind of cultural mixing occurred, acceptance, understanding and relative flexibility on the part of men to allow women to go out to study and work, but it is worth noting that all of this is done with great restrictions.

Some of the examples they pointed out , especially those from sub-districts and rural areas , is that the restriction to leave the house to any place without a male companion (brother, husband, father, son) to the degree of not allowing them to complete education. Parents often dictate to the girl or woman the what to chose for their education. Usually forced to study in health or education sector because it is more socially acceptable or because it is less economically expensive and due to the proximity or distance of the universities from their areas. Due to the economic aspect they are not given the opportunity to enter any private universities they like as well. They are prevented from going to far education facilities or work due to the large amount of harassment that they are expected to be exposed to. Especially the private sector of work is highly stigmatized. It is considered suspicious and women are more exposed to exploitation, and exposure to domestic violence, whether verbal or physical because of it.

In terms of decision-making, the majority of women and girls expressed that it is true that after the events there has been greater representation of women in the government, politically and socially, but this representation is formal and superficial because most of the women in these positions are there as mere representatives and the decisions are taken by men for the party or political entity to which they belong and they are only transmitters of those decisions.

Women and girls expressed that the main factors that contribute to this situation in general are the general culture, customs, traditions, social, tribal and religious norms. In addition to the control of some parties over some aspects of governance and administration in the state and the management of all resources to self interest. Some of them also indicated that even when there is an opportunity for them, the woman or girl finds herself unable due to the lack of skill or personal capabilities and the loss of self-confidence to express herself, move/travel, work or participate in decision-making.

2. Understanding UN Security Council Resolution 1325:

a. Have you heard of Resolution 1325? What does it mean to you?

b. Have you noticed any changes for women and girls in relation to Resolution 1325?

The majority of women and girls expressed that they have not heard of this resolution before and did not know what it was. As for those who said that they had heard about it, it was through very simple awareness sessions by some local and international organizations. They expressed that they had not noticed any tangible changes at the local level for them. A few of them indicated that there has become relatively greater freedom and participation in positions in governmental departments such as community police and as party representatives in the state, but their roles are very limited and superficial.

3. Conflict and Women's Experiences:

a. How has the conflict affected women and girls?

b. What specific challenges do women and girls face during and after the conflict?

Whether they were displaced or remained, the conflict had a negative impact on their lives, leaving behind many widows and orphans, which forced women to enter the labor market, where roles changed as they became the sole breadwinners against their will and faced the challenges of working alone. Challenges such as lower wages, very long working hours, harassment, bargaining, and loss of reputation among family and relatives. Many of them also suffered from displacement and all its consequences, such as the loss of livelihoods and opportunities to complete their studies, as many of them were unable to complete their studies even after returning because the time that passed was too long.

On the other hand, their psychological conditions were significantly negatively affected due to the loss during the conflict and the difficult situations after returning and trying to adapt again.

There was also a clear rift in trust and acceptance between those who were displaced and those who remained, as those who remained were considered members of the armed groups of ISIS, even if they had no real role in it.

As for the group that was close in one way or another to the men belonging to the extremist groups of ISIS or even those accused of affiliation, they were the most suffering group. They were largely rejected by society, although they suffer more than everyone else because they lost their men either due to loss in the conflict, disappearance, or imprisonment after it.

They suffer from the inability to obtain legal and identification papers and the lack of any support from the state for them. Many of them have no breadwinner and their children are unable to enroll them in schools. They also are exploited in work for very low wages and very long hours (300,000 Iraqi dinars per month, six days a week and for 10 to 12 hours a day without a break or transportation fees to and from the workplace). They face abusive attitude indicating that they are from the armed extremist group of ISIS and society in general views them as offenders. Most of them suffer severe psychological issues from the loss of someone in the family and the current situation. Some of them said that they lost their property. For example, some of them were homeowners, but during the conflict the house was either destroyed or stolen by others and they cannot claim their rights in this regard because they are from families who had an affiliation or relationship with the extremist group and the state does not do them justice in any way. That is why they currently live in suburbs and areas that are considered remote and with old and unfinished houses. Their safety is compromised because there are no doors or locks or windows and generally fragile and poor infrastructure. This category of women (the affiliated with ISIS) and girls in comparison to others expressed that for them, harassment existed before the events, but it increased significantly after the events.

As for the category of survivors, there are many of them who have not yet obtained any rights despite the law declaring this. Although the law is nominal (i.e. it has not been implemented as it should have been until now), it has done some justice to the Yazidis in one way or another, but it has not done justice to non-Ezidis whatsoever not even recognition. There are many other groups of non Ezidis who have not spoken out because of fear of scandal and the weight of tribal customs and issues of shame and honor killing.

Interestingly, women and girls indicated that yes, the impact of the conflict and its aftermath was very negative, but there were some positive aspects, as displacement allowed some to mix in other, more open societies. Men became somewhat more open to allowing women to go out, work and complete their studies, but with significant restrictions, as most of them said that men accompany them to these places and it is usually very difficult for them to move alone, either for fear of gossip or being harassed. They also indicated that the presence of organizations, whether international or local, played a positive role in raising awareness and providing more job opportunities for them, although they were limited, but they created a safer space for women to go out and change their role from being only in the home to outside the home, whether for work or education.

They also pointed out that although the openness was positive, the recent openness of teenage girls especially on social media has created another door for exploitation due to lack of awareness, quick influence and deception. On the other hand, comparing their poor or simple lives with the lives of celebrities have had a negative impact on their psychology. The phenomenon of electronic blackmail and suicide has spread. The issue of underage marriage is still widespread, especially in the sub-districts, rural area and villages far from the governorate center..

4. Participation and Decision-Making:

a. What prevents women from participating in decision-making?

b. How can women be better involved in decision-making and peace-building?

In general, women and girls indicated that regarding participation in decision-making, for example at the family level, they still do not have the freedom they are supposed to have as a life partner. The first and final decision is for the man in the family and the head of the family or clan at a higher level. If a woman tries, she is met with rejection. Some of them also indicated that even if she sometimes wanted to, she does not have the life experience, ability, or self-confidence to express an opinion, since her experiences are very limited and she does not have them because of the definition of her role at home or even in the workplace. As for the higher level, which is society and the state as departments, institutions, and politicians, they expressed that most of the women have a very limited presence and are mostly formal/superficial, since they only follow the men in the departments to which they belong.

When asked how women can be better involved in decision-making, most of them found it difficult to express themselves, but some of them said that it is by raising awareness among women and men alike about rights and building women's capacities more through courses and providing job opportunities by organizations and the state so that they become more financially and in terms of capabilities so that they can demand their rights more and be able to face challenges and choose their lives for themselves.

5. Protection and Security:

a. Do women and girls feel safe in their communities?

b. What are the main concerns regarding the safety of women and girls?

In general, they feel safe because there is no war or any armed groups, but the majority expressed that the phenomenon of harassment is a very widespread phenomenon in the society in Ninewa Governorate, and it seems that the governorate center, Mosul, is more than others in the districts and sub-districts, because women go out more, whether to daily life places such as the market, school, or work. While in the districts and sub-districts, women almost never leave the house without a man (husband, brother, father, son) accompanying them to any place, due to the prevailing culture that a woman going out is “shameful,” and also because of harassment on the other hand. They pointed out that those who talk badly about women going out as a culture are older women and men alike. The type of harassment they are exposed to is talking and following them to the places they go to, which makes them feel very afraid on their safety. They also said that they usually do not dare to respond to the harasser and stop him because of fear of escalating the situation and people’s gathering. Especially if someone from their acquaintances or family sees them then intervene then situation escalates to a clash and then at home to severe blame for the woman and even beatings because she went out. Then more strictness of not going out. When the women and girls were asked if any of them had confronted the harasser, few of them (about 20 out of 120) said that they had confronted by responding and expressing their disapproval of the harassment verbally or even by throwing stones from the street. They said the harasser’s reaction usually is to withdraw, but the rest said that they were too fearful and could not dare to do so, especially since most of them do not go out without a companion.

They also pointed out that harassment is not only in the street, but also in educational facilities such as universities for example. Where harassment is possible by everyone on campus and sometimes even by the teaching staff and employees such as guards. Also in the health sector by the medical staff and all the other governmental departments as well. Especially the security ones, where some of them expressed stories of how officers in security agencies exploit and blackmail women due to the private information they possess when abused women resort to them as security agencies. Some shared that many female workers in government departments, when any woman tries to reach leadership positions, she is often blackmailed in devious ways because she is a woman to push her to step down by threatening her reputation.

Some of them said that in the last two years women have been appointed to the community police and this was a good thing. Women have become relatively more inclined to report cases of violence, domestic abuse and blackmail in general and electronic blackmail in particular. However, they also said that women are still afraid to report because it is a scandal and in their opinion to report it is still worse than the situation they are suffering from anyway.

Women also talked about the phenomenon of the spread of drugs among young people in particular and how this led to an increase in domestic violence to the point where the brother, father, husband, husband's children or brother would go beyond physical assault, whether by beating or even sexual assault, as they mentioned that they had begun to hear many such stories that did not exist to this extent before.

6. Access to Services and Resources:

a. What challenges do women and girls face in accessing health care and education?

b. How can things be improved for women and girls to get what they need?

Regarding health care, everyone indicated that, in general, government health care is not good and that most health centers lack medical equipment and medicines to a great extent. This forces all of them to resort to medical centers in the private sector, which are very expensive and many do not have the means. As for education, in the rural area and sub-districts, the issue is that the number of schools is small and they are remote for the majority and not have the transportation expenses. So the families are forced to not allow girls and women to complete their education. In remote villages education for women and girls usually does not exceed primary school. While in the cities and districts closest to the center, education is available up to institutes and universities with specific specializations, and there is no diversity (usually only the fields of health and education). Many expressed that they wanted another specialization, but because it was not available, for example, only in the center of the governorate or other governorates, they were prevented from completing it or forced to choose what is closer. All due to; not only the lack of economic ability, but also because it is better for her to be married and because it is shameful for a girl or a woman to leave the house.

They indicated that the state should provide health centers with health supplies, medicines, and a medical staff with various specializations, on the one hand, and on the other hand, organizations, whether international or local, should provide job opportunities and spread awareness among men to allow their women to go out and learn.

7. Strategies for Change:

a. What can be done to improve the rights and status of women and girls in Nineveh?

b. How can NGOs and community groups help women and girls in the area?

The majority indicated that men should be educated first, then elderly women, as they still have a rigid mentality similar to men regarding the role of women as confined only to the home, caring for children, and serving the husband. They indicated that awareness had a noticeable impact, and they also explained that the role of displacement and mixing with other cultures had also had a relatively positive impact, but the need was still great. They also indicated that the elders in the tribes and the influential figures in each region have the greatest role in influencing the rest of the men, so they suggested that awareness be increased for them, and they will consequently influence the rest of the men in society. According to the participants, the existence of the organizations in itself, their awareness-raising activities, and training courses to build skills and create job opportunities were the greatest influence on women going out, working, and completing their education, as their presence had a noticeable impact on society, especially in the center more than in other sub-districts and rural areas. Where they began to hear about women opening projects not only at home but also outside the home and they in turn open up job opportunities for others with them.

When asked how NGOs and community groups can help them, almost everyone agreed that creating job opportunities is what they need the most, and more awareness for men first and then for women about their rights and building their capacities to build their self-confidence and enable them to go out and work and depend on themselves economically. In addition to psychological support, since they have been through a lot and are still going through a lot, especially their feeling of severe restriction and inability to go out and express and live what is inside them of a desire to experience life more, which makes many of them feel depressed, as they expressed through the evaluation.

Analysis

- ▶ As a preliminary analysis of these sessions, it was noted that most women and girls do not know about resolution 1325 and all that it includes. It was found that they have not heard of it, which indicates the fragility of context of the resolution and its importance to them. In addition, this can be said to be an indicator that the resolution has no impact on the ground for women and girls of all spectra.
- ▶ Society is still patriarchal, and social and religious customs, traditions, and culture restrict women to their role only in the home, caring for children, and serving the husband. Economic dependence is primarily on men, who decide how, when, and for what to be used.
- ▶ Women and girls in general in the districts, sub-districts and villages (such as Tal Afar, Bartella, Baaj, etc.) are much more difficult than in cities (such as Mosul) where customs and traditions, cultural and religious, are much more restricting by religious tribalism and absolute male dominance.
- ▶ Movement is restricted by the accompaniment of a man for the majority, and the small minority that does move is usually exposed to harassment and defamation because of going out, whether to study, work or even to meet needs.
- ▶ Widows and divorcees, whether displaced or returnees or even from ISIS families, are the most vulnerable group among women and girls and the most oppressed and exploited. No attention to their rights, neither by the state nor society as a whole, because their situation is complex and the responsible authorities have not played their role as they should in resolving their challenges.

Analysis

- ▶ There is still exploitation in the field of work, whether in the public or private sector, in addition to the lack of a reliable authority that they can resort to when they are exposed to cases of extortion at work or in life in general. It was also noted that there is no consideration or equality for women in the job opportunities available at the present time. It was noted through the discussion that women have not yet taken their role or rights effectively in society and do not go beyond being demands and appeals through social media. Mosul, as a conservative society, the girl finds it shameful to tell her family or relatives about any case of harassment she is exposed to, as the society is judgmental and does not do justice to women.
- ▶ The health and educational field is at an unacceptable level and needs to be developed in terms of quantity and quality and human resources by the state first and humanitarian organizations second.
- ▶ The phenomena of harassment, drugs and electronic blackmail are noticeably widespread and their effects have begun to affect women and girls, and the main reason is the poor and corrupt security agencies, whose cadres are dominated by men on one hand, and the weakness of awareness and poor economic and psychological condition of men on the other hand, not to mention the weakness and fragility of women situation.

Recommendations

Recommendations Based on the Results of the Sessions with Girls and Women in Ninewa Governorate

1. Raise Awareness of Women's Rights:

- ▶ **Organize awareness and education campaigns:** Comprehensive campaigns should be organized to educate women about their legal and social rights, including their rights to education, work and marriage.
- ▶ **Training courses for women and men:** Provide training courses for women to enhance their knowledge of their rights and how to claim them and also for men to change traditional perceptions about the role of women in society.

2. Combating Negative Customs and Traditions:

- ▶ **Participation of community and religious leaders:** Involve influential figures in the community, such as tribal elders and religious men, in awareness campaigns to change customs and traditions that restrict women.
- ▶ **Organize community workshops and forums:** Hold workshops and forums to discuss the impact of negative customs and traditions on women and girls and how to overcome them.

3. Support Education for Women and Girls:

- ▶ **Expanding educational infrastructure:** Establishing more schools and educational institutions in villages and remote areas to ensure girls' access to education..
- ▶ **Scholarships and support programs:** Providing scholarships and support programs for girls to continue their education, especially in areas that suffer from a lack of educational institutions.

4. Economic Empowerment of Women:

- ▶ **Supporting small projects:** Financing small projects run by women, such as hairdressing salons, making pastries, various handicrafts, agricultural and other projects according to the capabilities of women and girls, skills to ensure financial independence.
- ▶ **Providing vocational training programs:** Providing vocational training programs for women in various fields, including agriculture, technology and handicrafts.

Recommendations

5. Promote Women's Participation in Decision-Making

- **Establish women's councils:** Establish women's councils in local communities to participate in decision-making and provide advice to local governments.
- **Support women in leadership positions:** Provide support and training to women in leadership positions in the community and government to ensure their effective participation.

6. Improving Protection and Security

- **Activating a special unit for women in the community police:** Establishing specialized units in the community police to deal with women's issues, especially in cases of harassment and violence.
- **Training police on women's issues:** Training police officers on how to deal with cases of harassment and violence against women with sensitivity and professionalism.
- **Enhancing the role of community police:** Strengthening the role of community police in protecting women from violence and harassment, including combating electronic blackmail by providing training courses and awareness-raising for them.
- **Installing surveillance cameras:** Installing surveillance cameras in streets and public places to enhance security and monitor any violations.
- **Strict legal measures** by imposing harsher penalties on harassers and abusers, facilitating complaint procedures, and providing hotlines operating around the clock to receive reports of harassment and violence against women.
- **Awareness campaigns against harassment and educational programs in schools.**

7. Providing Psychological Support:

- **Psychological support services:** Establishing reception and support centers to receive and provide psychological support to women suffering from the effects of harassment, conflict or violence
- **Therapeutic and counseling programs:** Providing therapeutic and counseling programs for women to improve their psychological state and enhance their ability to adapt to challenges. In addition to providing counseling services to women and girls on how to deal with harassers and violence and where they can get help.

Recommendations

8. Strengthening Cooperation with NGOs:

- **Establishing joint committees:** Forming joint committees that include representatives from the government and NGOs to follow up on the implementation of programs and projects targeting women's empowerment.
- **Unifying efforts and coordination:** Improving coordination between government agencies and NGOs to ensure that efforts are not duplicated and that integrated services are provided to women and girls.
- **Launching intensive awareness campaigns:** Organizing media and awareness campaigns at the community level to raise awareness of women's rights and combating violence and harassment.
- **Media cooperation:** Cooperating with the media to disseminate women's success stories and raise community awareness of the importance of women's role in development and decision-making. Training women on leadership and participation by organizing workshops and training courses to develop women's leadership and participation skills, and supporting them to assume leadership positions.
- **Building the capacity of women's organizations:** Providing training programs to build the capacity of local women's organizations, enabling them to provide better services to women and girls.
- **Providing psychological support services:** Establishing centers to provide psychological and social support to women who have been subjected to violence or harassment, and providing free consultations.
- **Rehabilitation programs:** Organizing psychological and social rehabilitation programs for women affected by conflicts and violence, to help them integrate into society.
- **Establishing protection centers:** Establishing protection centers for women and girls exposed to violence, and providing legal and psychological support to them.
- **Developing mechanisms** for reporting cases of violence and harassment, and providing hotlines that operate around the clock to receive complaints.

Recommendations

- ▶ **Developing legislation and policies** by supporting security personnel with skills to review and enhance laws and update laws and policies related to the protection of women's rights, and increasing penalties for perpetrators of violence. In addition, tightening penalties on harassers, reviewing laws to enhance the protection of women, implementing laws effectively, ensuring the effective and fair implementation of laws related to the protection of women and following up on their implementation by the competent authorities.

9. Strengthening the Health Sector:

- ▶ **Providing comprehensive health services:** Improving and expanding health care services available to women, including mental and reproductive health.
- ▶ **Health awareness programs:** Organizing health awareness programs for women and girls on important health issues and how to access health care.

CONCLUSION

Women and girls in Ninewa Governorate face many economic and social challenges that hinder their progress and enjoyment of their basic rights. Society suffers from restricting the role of women due to social and religious customs and traditions, which leads to a severe shortage of job and educational opportunities and pushes many of them to be completely economically dependent on the men in their families.

The study showed that about 81% of women have not heard of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, indicating a lack of awareness and education about their rights. Although there is some representation of women in government positions, this representation is often formal and ineffective. Women have been negatively affected by the armed conflict, as many of them have lost their breadwinners and have been forced to enter the labor market under difficult circumstances, which has led to an increase in cases of harassment and domestic violence. Women also suffer from a lack of health and education services, as health centers lack the necessary equipment and medicines, and girls in remote areas suffer from the inability to complete their education due to the lack of schools and the costs associated with transportation. To promote women's rights and empowerment in Nineveh, it is recommended to organize comprehensive awareness campaigns on women's rights and Resolution 1325, and provide training courses for women and men to enhance knowledge and change traditional perceptions. The educational infrastructure should also be expanded, scholarships should be provided for girls, small projects should be supported, and vocational training programs should be provided to enhance women's financial independence. To enhance protection and security, special units for women should be activated in the community police, security personnel should be trained on how to deal with cases of violence against women, surveillance cameras should be installed in public places, and penalties should be increased for perpetrators of violence and harassment. Health and education services available to women, including mental and reproductive health, should be improved and expanded, and joint committees between the government and NGOs should be established to improve coordination and implementation of programs and projects targeting women's empowerment. By implementing these recommendations, tangible improvements can be achieved in the status of women and girls in Nineveh Governorate, enhancing their rights and effective participation in social, economic and political life.

Annex 1

Questions Asked in Focus Groups Questions for Women and Girls

1. Introduction:

- a. What are the main challenges women and girls face in Ninewa?
- b. How do you see the situation for women's rights and participation in decision-making?

2. Understanding of UN Security Council Resolution 1325:

- a. Have you heard of Resolution 1325? What does it mean to you?
- b. Have you noticed any changes for women and girls related to Resolution 1325?

3. Conflict and Women's Experiences:

- a. How has the conflict affected women and girls?
- b. What are the specific challenges women and girls face during and after conflict?

4. Participation and Decision Making:

- a. What stops women from joining decision-making?
- b. How can women be better included in decision-making and peacebuilding?

5. Protection and Security:

- a. Do women and girls feel safe in their communities?
- b. What are the main safety concerns for women and girls?

6. Access to Services and Resources:

- a. What difficulties do women and girls face in getting healthcare and education?
- b. How can things be improved for women and girls to get what they need?

7. Strategies for Change:

- a. What can be done to improve the rights and status of women and girls in Ninewa?
- b. How can NGOs and community groups help women and girls in the region?

Facilitator support questions

- Are there successful examples from other areas or communities that can be adapted to meet the specific needs of women and girls in Ninewa?
- How can the voices and perspectives of women and girls be amplified to advocate for their rights and well-being?
- In your opinion, what specific roles and responsibilities should NGOs and CBOs assume to empower women and girls in Ninewa?
- How can NGOs, CBOs, and local stakeholders be leveraged to create meaningful change for women and girls?



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