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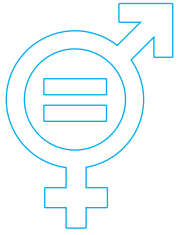
**A PROFILE
OF VIOLENCE
AGAINST
CHILDREN AND
ADOLESCENTS
IN THE MIDDLE
EAST AND
NORTH AFRICA**

Leaving no one behind



This brochure offers a snapshot of three forms of violence that many children and adolescents experience in the Middle East and North Africa region: physical force or verbal intimidation used as disciplinary methods at home; bullying, corporal punishment and (in times of conflict) attacks while at school; and violent deaths in adolescence. It concludes with specific national actions and strategies that UNICEF and partners in the Middle East and North Africa have embraced to prevent and respond to violence against children.

Many countries in the Middle East and North Africa continue to lack comparable data on some forms of violence, which hinders their ability to monitor the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Notably, these data gaps include violence against adolescent girls and women, as covered by SDG 5, and sexual violence in childhood, under SDG 16.



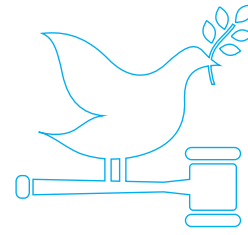
GOAL 5

Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation

5.2.1 Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to **physical, sexual or psychological violence** by a current or former **intimate partner** in the previous 12 months, by form of violence and by age

5.2.2 Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to **sexual violence** by persons other than an intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by age and place of occurrence



GOAL 16

Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

16.1 Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere

16.1.1 Number of victims of **intentional homicide** per 100,000 population, by sex and age

16.1.2 **Conflict-related deaths** per 100,000 population, by sex, age and cause

16.2 End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children

16.2.1 Proportion of children aged 1 to 17 years who experienced any **physical punishment** and/or **psychological aggression by caregivers** in the past month

16.2.3 Proportion of young women and men aged 18 to 29 years who experienced **sexual violence** by age 18



KEY FACTS

In the Middle East and North Africa, around **106 MILLION** (more than 8 in 10) children aged 2 to 14 are regularly subjected to violent discipline at home; **87 MILLION** (around 7 in 10) are punished by physical means.

Just **7%** of the world's adolescents live in the Middle East and North Africa, but more than **70%** of adolescents who died in 2015 due to collective violence were living in the region.


IRAQ and the **SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC** are among the top five most deadly places in the world for adolescent boys and girls.

AROUND 127 MILLION children and adolescents live in countries that have not fully prohibited corporal punishment at home, and **18 MILLION** school-age children and adolescents do not have full legal protection from this form of violence while at school.

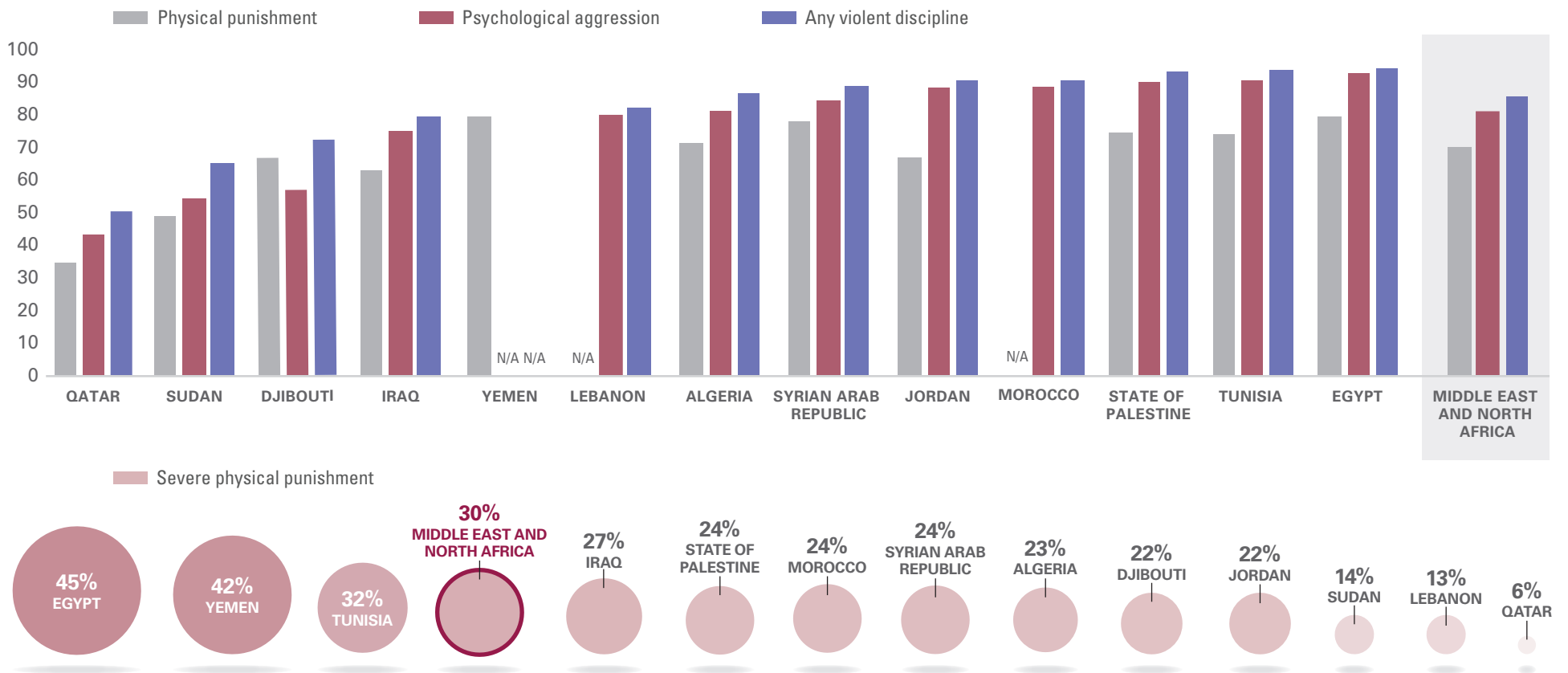
Among students aged 13 to 15, around **12 MILLION** (close to half) experience bullying while at school.

VIOLENT DISCIPLINE AT HOME

Violent discipline at home is the most common form of violence experienced by children in the Middle East and North Africa. Some of the countries in this region such as Egypt and Tunisia have levels of violent discipline that are among the highest in the world. Although 7 in 10 children experience physical punishment in the home in the Middle East and North Africa, only 1 in 4 caregivers think it is a necessary form of discipline.

 In the Middle East and North Africa, 85% of children aged 2 to 14 years experience violent discipline at home

Percentage of children aged 2 to 14 years who experienced any violent discipline in the past month, by type

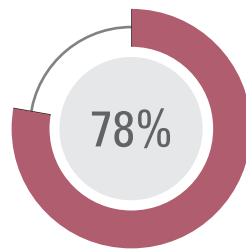


NOTES: Physical punishment refers to: shaking, hitting or slapping on the hand/arm/leg, hitting on the bottom or elsewhere on the body with a hard object, spanking or hitting on the bottom with a bare hand, hitting or slapping the face, head or ears, and hitting hard and repeatedly. Psychological aggression refers to: shouting, yelling or screaming at a child, and calling a child offensive names such as “dumb” or “lazy”. Violent discipline includes both physical punishment and/or psychological aggression. Data for Qatar and Yemen on violent discipline differ from the standard definition. Regional estimates on physical punishment, psychological aggression and any violent discipline are based on a slightly different number of countries across indicators due to lack of information on certain forms of violent discipline in some countries, but all estimates cover more than 60 per cent of the regional population of children aged 2 to 14 years. Severe physical punishment includes being hit on the head, ears or face or being hit hard and repeatedly. Data for Yemen on severe physical punishment differ from the standard definition. The regional estimate on severe physical punishment is based on a subset of 13 countries covering 76 per cent of the regional population of children aged 2 to 14 years.

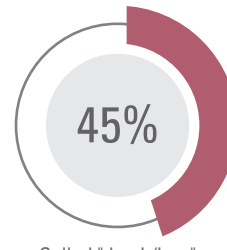
▶ Three quarters of children in the region experience shouting, yelling or screaming as a form of discipline

Percentage of children aged 2 to 14 years who experienced violent discipline in the past month, by type

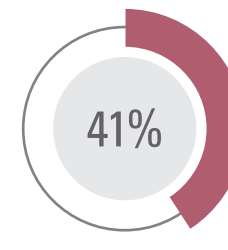
NOTE: These estimates are based on a subset of nine countries covering 62 per cent of the regional population of children aged 2 to 14 years.



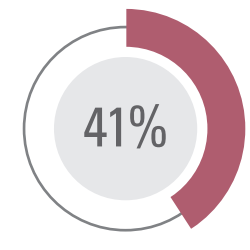
Shouted, yelled or screamed at



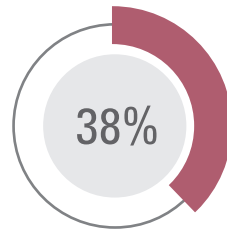
Called "dumb/lazy"



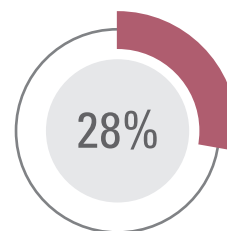
Shook



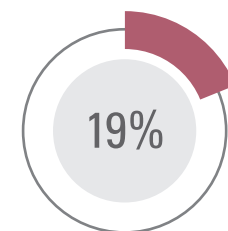
Hit/slapped on hand, arm or leg



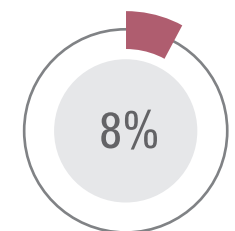
Spanked, hit or slapped on bottom with bare hand



Hit/slapped on face, head or ears



Hit on the bottom or elsewhere with object



Beat up with an object/beat up as hard as one could

Countries where corporal punishment at home is...

Not prohibited

Algeria; Bahrain; Djibouti; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Iraq; Jordan; Kuwait; Lebanon; Libya; Morocco; Oman; Qatar; Saudi Arabia; Sudan; Syrian Arab Republic; United Arab Emirates; Yemen

Fully prohibited

Egypt; Israel; State of Palestine; Tunisia

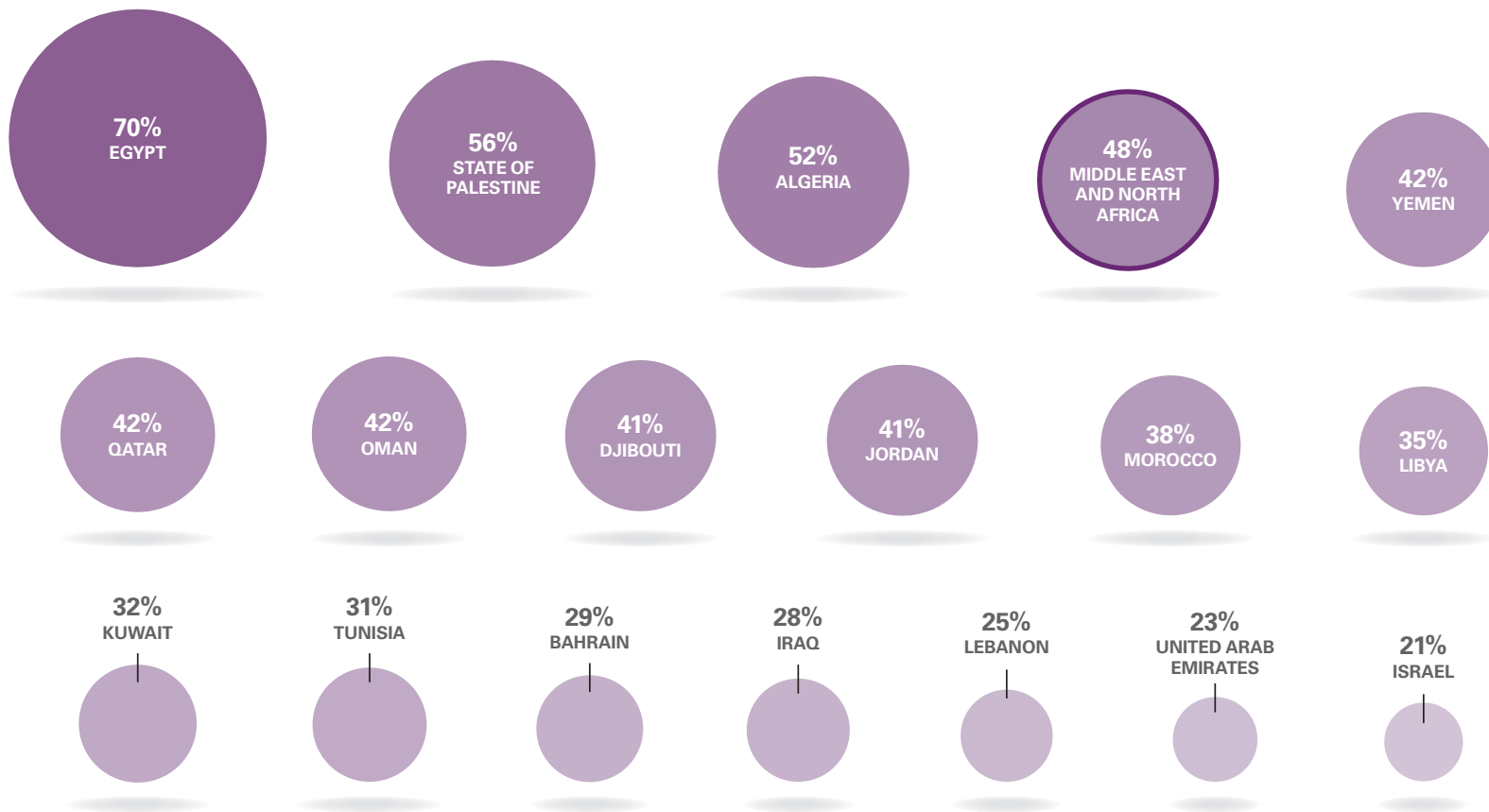
◀ Only four countries in the region (Egypt, Israel, State of Palestine and Tunisia) have adopted legislation that fully prohibits the use of corporal punishment against children at home, meaning that of the 172 million children and adolescents under age 18 in the region, there are around 127 million without full legal protection

VIOLENCE AT SCHOOL

Children and adolescents need a safe, nurturing and inclusive learning environment in which to grow, thrive and fulfil their potential. However, for many students the presence, or threat, of violence at school compromises their ability to fully benefit from educational opportunities. Available data suggest that bullying by schoolmates is by far the most common form of violence in schools; in 14 of the 17 countries with available data on bullying, more than 1 in 4 adolescents aged 13 to 15 reported being bullied at school at least once in the past couple of months. School violence comes in other forms too. In four countries in the region, corporal punishment at school is not yet fully prohibited, and in times of conflict, civil unrest or emergencies, schools can also become vulnerable to attacks.

✔ Close to half of adolescents aged 13 to 15 in the region are bullied, with levels above 50 per cent in Egypt, the State of Palestine and Algeria

Percentage of adolescents aged 13 to 15 years who reported being bullied at school at least once in the past couple of months



NOTES: Bullying occurs when a student or group of students say or do bad, nasty or unpleasant things to another student; when a student is teased repeatedly in an unpleasant way; or when he or she is deliberately left out of things. It is not bullying when two students of about the same strength or power argue or fight or when teasing is done in a friendly and playful or fun way. Data for the State of Palestine are not nationally representative. The regional estimate is based on a subset of 17 countries covering 65 per cent of the regional population of adolescents aged 13 to 15 years.

ATTACKS ON SCHOOLS DURING CONFLICT

In situations of conflict and insecurity, schools can be vulnerable to both targeted and indiscriminate attacks and are sometimes used for military purposes or are affected by other disruptions of education. Such volatile situations interfere with normal school functions – they can hinder staff from performing their duties, curtail students’ attendance, force schools to shut down, and even result in the killing and maiming of schoolchildren.

The United Nations Security Council has explicitly condemned attacks on schools as a grave child rights violation. Since 2012, the Secretary-General’s

Report on Children and Armed Conflict identifies and lists the armed forces and groups that have attacked schools or school personnel. According to the 2017 Report on Children and Armed Conflict, there were around 150 verified attacks or threats of attacks on schools during 2016 within the region, with an additional 77 documented attacks or threats of attacks on schools that remained unverified. These incidents were documented in six of the seven situations in the Middle East and North Africa on the Security Council’s children and armed conflict agenda – Iraq, Israel/the State of Palestine, Lebanon, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen.

Countries where corporal punishment at school is...	
Not prohibited	Fully prohibited
Iraq; Lebanon; Morocco; Qatar	Algeria; Bahrain; Djibouti; Egypt; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Israel; Jordan; Kuwait; Libya; Oman; Saudi Arabia; State of Palestine; Sudan; Syrian Arab Republic; Tunisia; United Arab Emirates; Yemen

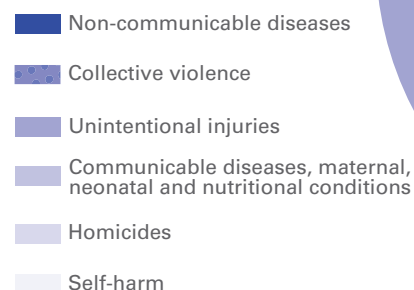
◀ Corporal punishment at school is not prohibited in four countries, leaving 18 million of the region’s 99 million schoolchildren aged 6 to 17 years without full legal protection

VIOLENT DEATHS IN ADOLESCENCE

In 2015, an estimated 83,000 adolescents aged 10 to 19 died in the Middle East and North Africa. Collective violence (injuries due to police or military intervention and those resulting from war or civil conflict) was the second most common cause of death. Although counting the number of conflict-related deaths accurately remains a challenge, available estimates suggest that collective violence kills more adolescents in the Middle East and North Africa than in all other regions combined. Prior to 2011, global mortality rates from collective violence among adolescents remained relatively stable but have since increased, driven largely by crises concentrated in the region.

➔ Slightly more than 1 in 4 adolescent deaths in 2015 in the region were the result of collective violence

Percentage distribution of deaths among adolescents aged 10 to 19 years, by cause, in 2015

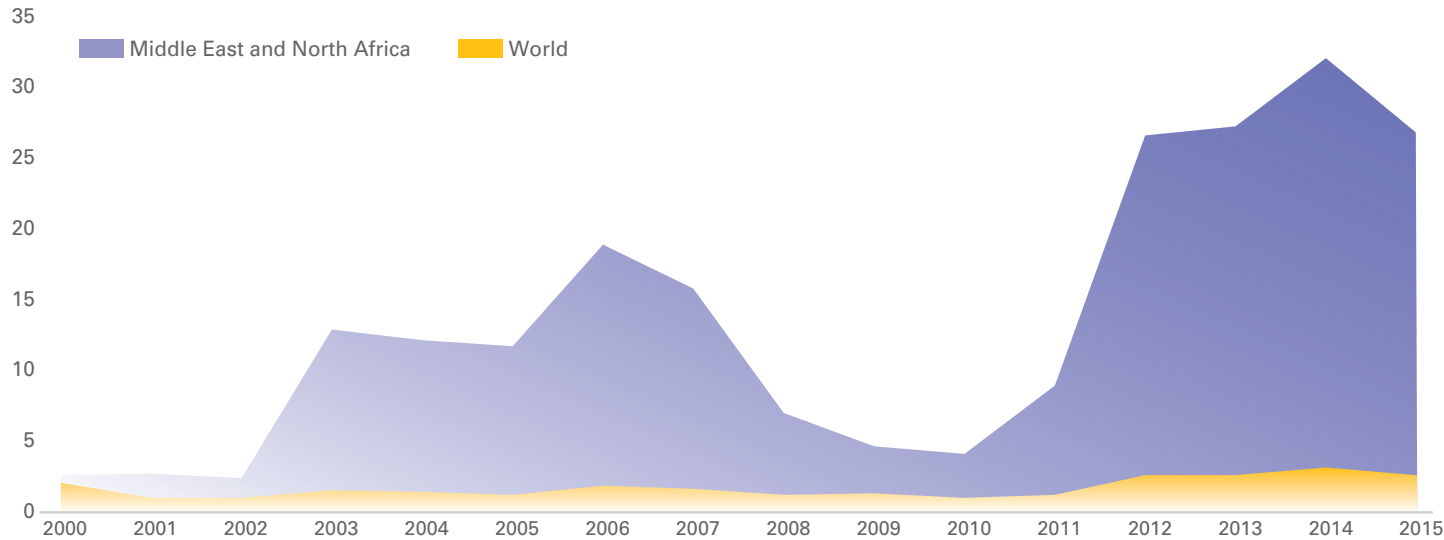


➔ The mortality rate from collective violence in the Middle East and North Africa in 2015 was 10 times higher than the global average

Number of deaths and mortality rate (deaths per 100,000) due to collective violence among adolescents aged 10 to 19 years, global and in the Middle East and North Africa, by sex, in 2015

Region	Number of deaths	Rate per 100,000		
		Total	Boys	Girls
Middle East and North Africa	22,000	26.9	32.1	21.4
World	31,000	2.6	3.1	2.0

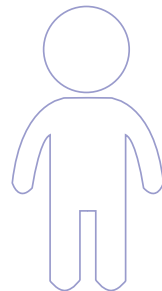
NOTES: Collective violence refers to injuries to civilians and military personnel caused by war and civil insurrection, or injuries inflicted by the police, other law-enforcement agents and on-duty military personnel in the course of arresting or attempting to arrest lawbreakers, suppressing disturbances, maintaining order and other legal action. Some figures in this table have been rounded.



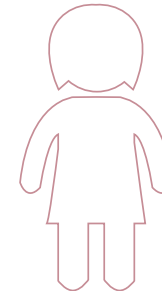
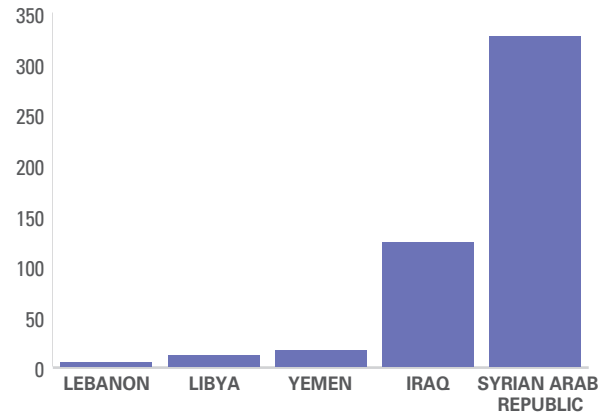
◀ The regional mortality rate from collective violence has increased dramatically since 2011

Mortality rate (deaths per 100,000) due to collective violence among adolescents aged 10 to 19 years, global and in the Middle East and North Africa, 2000 to 2015

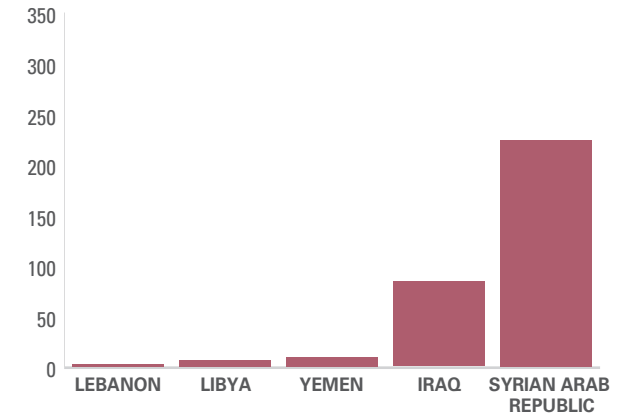
➔ The Syrian Arab Republic has by far the highest mortality rate from collective violence in the region among adolescents of both sexes



Mortality rate (deaths per 100,000) due to collective violence among boys aged 10 to 19 years, in 2015



Mortality rate (deaths per 100,000) due to collective violence among girls aged 10 to 19 years, in 2015



NOTES: National death registration data were unavailable or unusable due to quality issues for Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen; therefore, the estimates are uncertain and should be interpreted with caution.

PROTECTING EVERY CHILD AND ADOLESCENT FROM VIOLENCE AND EXPLOITATION

Every child and adolescent in the Middle East and North Africa has the right to be protected from violence, whether inflicted on them by parents, teachers, friends, intimate partners or strangers and whether occurring in times of peace or crisis. All forms of violence, regardless of the nature or severity of the act, are harmful and intolerable. Beyond the immediate hurt and pain it causes, violence undermines children's and adolescents' sense of self-worth and hinders their future development. Witnessing violence can also cause distress and harm. Children and adolescents who grow up in a violent household or community tend to internalize that behaviour as a way to resolve disputes, sometimes repeating the pattern of violence and abuse against their own partners and children.

Social norms and cultural practices that ignore or condone harmful actions undermine the safety and well-being of children and adolescents in every country in the region. Violence is often rationalized as necessary or inevitable. Humanitarian crises and conflicts in the region impact children and adolescents and can heighten their vulnerability to violence. In addition to conflict-specific victimization, certain forms of violence – such as intimate partner violence and violent discipline – can become more pronounced during times of conflict and crisis. This is most likely the result of heightened stress, the breakdown of social structures, and weakened judicial and law enforcement systems.

UNICEF prioritizes efforts to end violence against children across all its work in the Middle East and North Africa. It supports governments' efforts to improve prevention and response services for children at risk and those affected by violence, and

in developing policies and legislation that protect children. UNICEF helps communities, parents and children to prevent violence in all settings through awareness-raising activities, communication for development interventions to generate changes in social norms, and practical programmes such as parenting courses on positive discipline.

It is possible to prevent and end violence against children and adolescents with sustained political and financial commitment across all relevant sectors (social services, education, health, justice and finance) and by working in partnership with civil society, the private sector and the international community.

UNICEF calls on governments in the region to take urgent action in support of this agenda to end violence against children through the development of comprehensive, multisectoral and multi-year national plans of action with clear milestones and targets.

The INSPIRE package, a comprehensive tool developed and promoted under the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, provides governments with concrete guidance to accelerate action to end violence against children and reach results at scale. In line with the INSPIRE strategies, UNICEF is committed to accelerating work in the region with governments and other partners, focusing on the following priorities for action:

- **Implement and enforce laws and policies.** Harness and leverage political will and partnerships to ensure well-coordinated national action plans to end violence against children and adolescents – incorporating education, social welfare, justice and health

systems, and engaging children, adolescents and the communities they live in.

- **Address social norms and practices.** Change behaviours of adults, including parents and other caregivers, and address factors that contribute to violence against children, such as economic and social inequities, social and cultural norms that condone violence, inadequate policies and legislation, insufficient services for victims, and limited investments in effective systems to prevent and respond to violence.
- **Strengthen the capabilities of the social services workforce.** Reinforce or build the capacities of social service systems to ensure that social workers have training on the provision of counselling, therapeutic services and referrals for children who have experienced violence.
- **Invest in education and life skills.** Provide opportunities to participate in Life Skills and Citizenship Education, an initiative to reduce violence and promote psychosocial well-being in and out of schools so that children, parents, teachers, and community members can recognize violence in all its forms and feel confident to speak out and report violence safely.
- **Collect and strengthen the use of disaggregated data.** Increase knowledge of, and access to, mechanisms that generate reliable and robust evidence on violence against children and adolescents to inform advocacy, policy and programming. Generate more high-quality research and derivative knowledge products, with a specific focus on the most disadvantaged children in the region.

UNICEF'S PLANS FOR KEY RESULTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA BY 2021

ACCELERATE ACTION TO BRING PROGRAMME RESULTS TO SCALE:

AT LEAST 9 COUNTRIES

will have national gender-responsive plans and programmes to strengthen the social service workforce so it is better trained and equipped to respond to children and adolescents at risk or survivors of violence.

AT LEAST 8 COUNTRIES

will have evidence-based positive parenting programmes in place at the national level, aimed at preventing and reducing violence in the home.

5 COUNTRIES will have a mainstreamed national programme for preventing violence and promoting psychosocial well-being in line with the UNICEF Life Skills and Citizenship Education Framework.

AT LEAST 4 COUNTRIES

will implement national evidence-based programmes that address and measure changes in practices and social norms related to violence against children and adolescents.

IN COUNTRIES AFFECTED BY CONFLICT AND CIVIL UNREST

the military, police and other law-enforcement agents will be trained to address the specific needs of boys and girls in accordance with national and international laws and standards concerning the protection of children and adolescents.

HARNESS RESOURCES AND PARTNERSHIPS FOR CHILDREN:

AT LEAST 4 COUNTRIES

have joined the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children or are championing the end violence agenda in the region through other platforms at national level.

AT LEAST 4 COUNTRIES

will have in place costed and budgeted multisectoral gender-responsive national plans to address violence against children and adolescents in line with the global INSPIRE package.

REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS, NETWORKS AND PLATFORMS

will be mobilized and leveraged to increase support to the countries most affected by violence in the region.

CONDUCT RESEARCH, GENERATE STRATEGIC INFORMATION AND PROMOTE KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT:

AT LEAST 10 COUNTRIES

will have increased knowledge, capacities and/or access to mechanisms that can generate reliable evidence on violence against children and adolescents to inform advocacy, policy and programming at the national level.

INCREASED EVIDENCE ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

will be generated to inform national advocacy and programming.



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مَوْجُودٌ / نَعْبُدُ
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عَنِ حُرْمَةِ الْجَنَّةِ
بِالْمَدِينَةِ

This data brief was prepared by the Data and Analytics Section of UNICEF with inputs from the Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa.

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TECHNICAL NOTES:

The data presented in this brochure are from the most recently available sources identified for each country and reflect the set of countries outlined by the mandate of the UNICEF Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa. For this reason, regional estimates presented here may differ from those included in other UNICEF publications that apply a slightly different classification.

Collecting reliable data on violence against children is a complex undertaking that raises considerable methodological challenges and ethical issues. When interpreting these data, the recommended approach is to exercise caution and assume that figures underestimate the actual number of children and adolescents affected.

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DATA SOURCES:

UNICEF global databases, 2017, based on Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS), Global School-based Student Health Surveys (GSHS) and other nationally representative surveys, 2006–2016. For detailed source information by country, see <data.unicef.org>. Mortality estimates are from: World Health Organization, *Global Health Estimates 2015: Deaths by cause, age and sex, by country and by region, 2000–2015*, WHO, Geneva, 2016, recalculated by UNICEF. Information on attacks on schools are derived from: United Nations Secretary-General, *Children and Armed Conflict: Report of the Secretary-General, A/72/361-S/2017/821*, United Nations General Assembly Security Council, 24 August 2017, open PDF from <www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/72/361&Lang=E&Area=UNDOC>. Population data are from: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *World Population Prospects: The 2017 Revision*, 2017, DVD Edition.

Information on the status of corporal punishment legislation in countries was obtained from UNICEF country offices.



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