

UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND

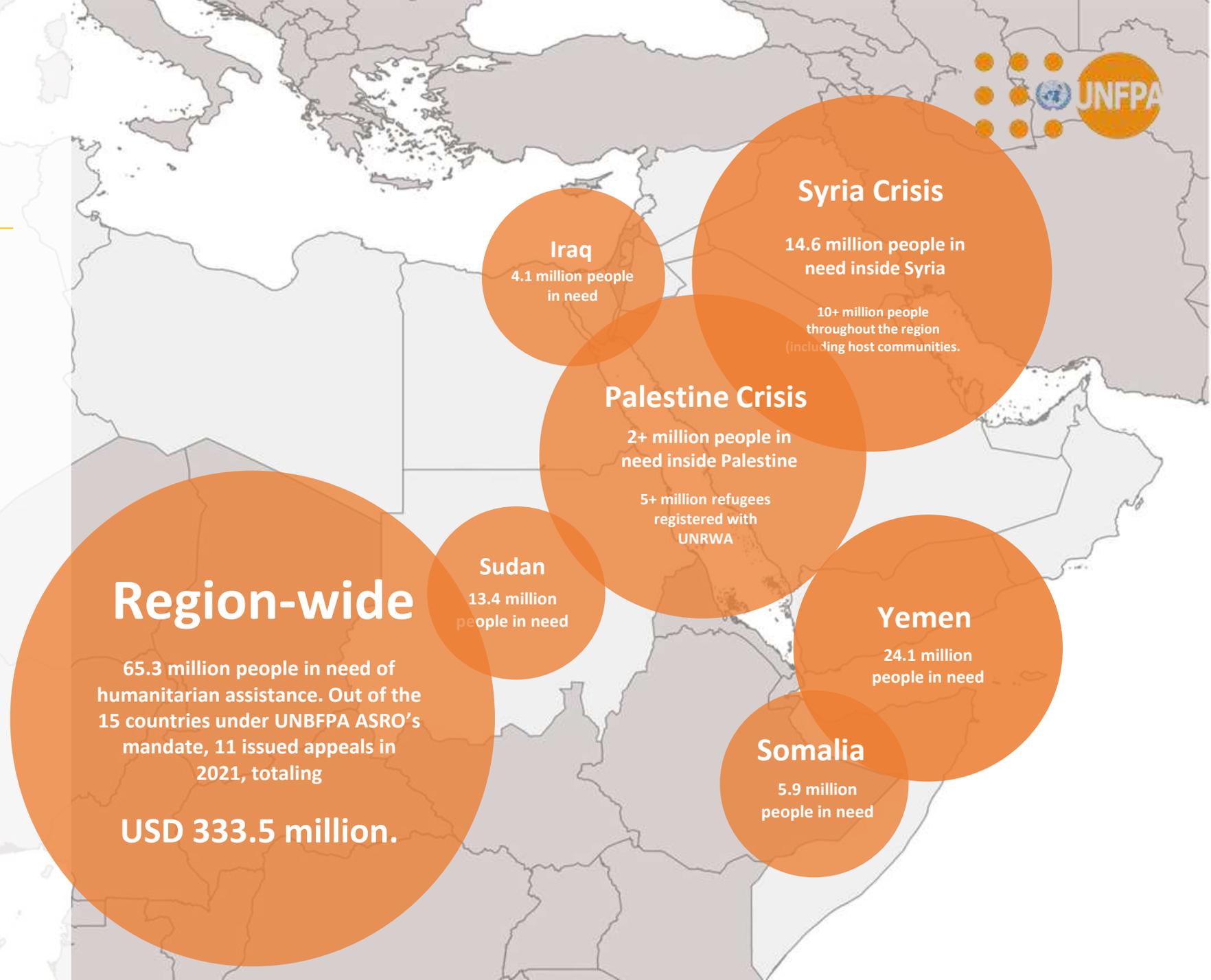


Gender Equality in the Face of All Odds

Ending GBV Amidst Complex Challenges

Complex Political and Socio-Economic Context

- Emerging and protracted humanitarian crises (compounded by COVID-19)
- Conservative social norms and strong role of religion and culture
- Regression in the position of women and overall gender equality since 2011 (Arab Spring)



Drivers of Inequality in the Region

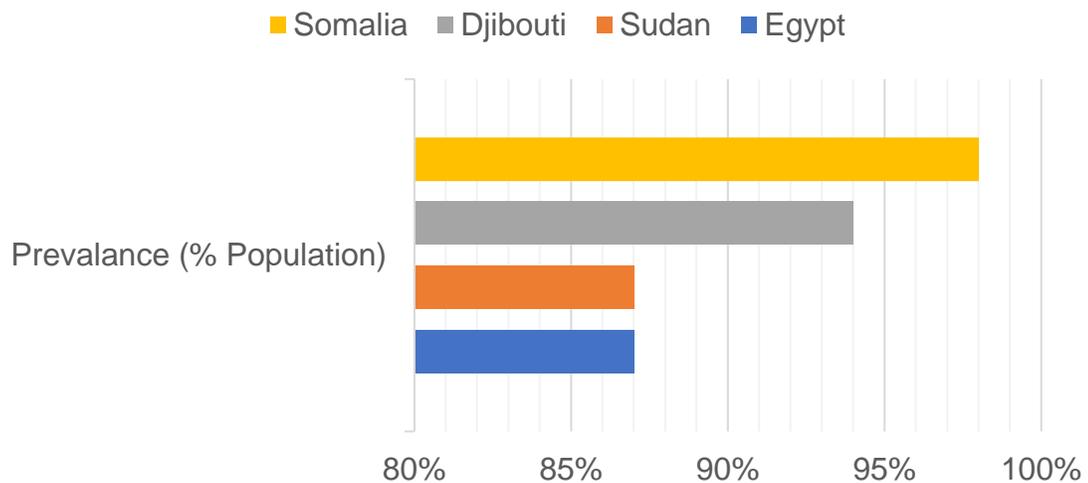
- Deeply rooted patriarchal systems and state tolerance for pervasive gender inequality
- Rigid/extreme interpretations of religion that are passed through generations
- Entrenched conservative social norms that override religion and legislation
- Absence of strong legal frameworks to provide protection for women and guarantee equality
- Armed conflicts, political instability, socio-economic pressure and — increasingly — climate change exacerbate various forms of gender inequality and GBV



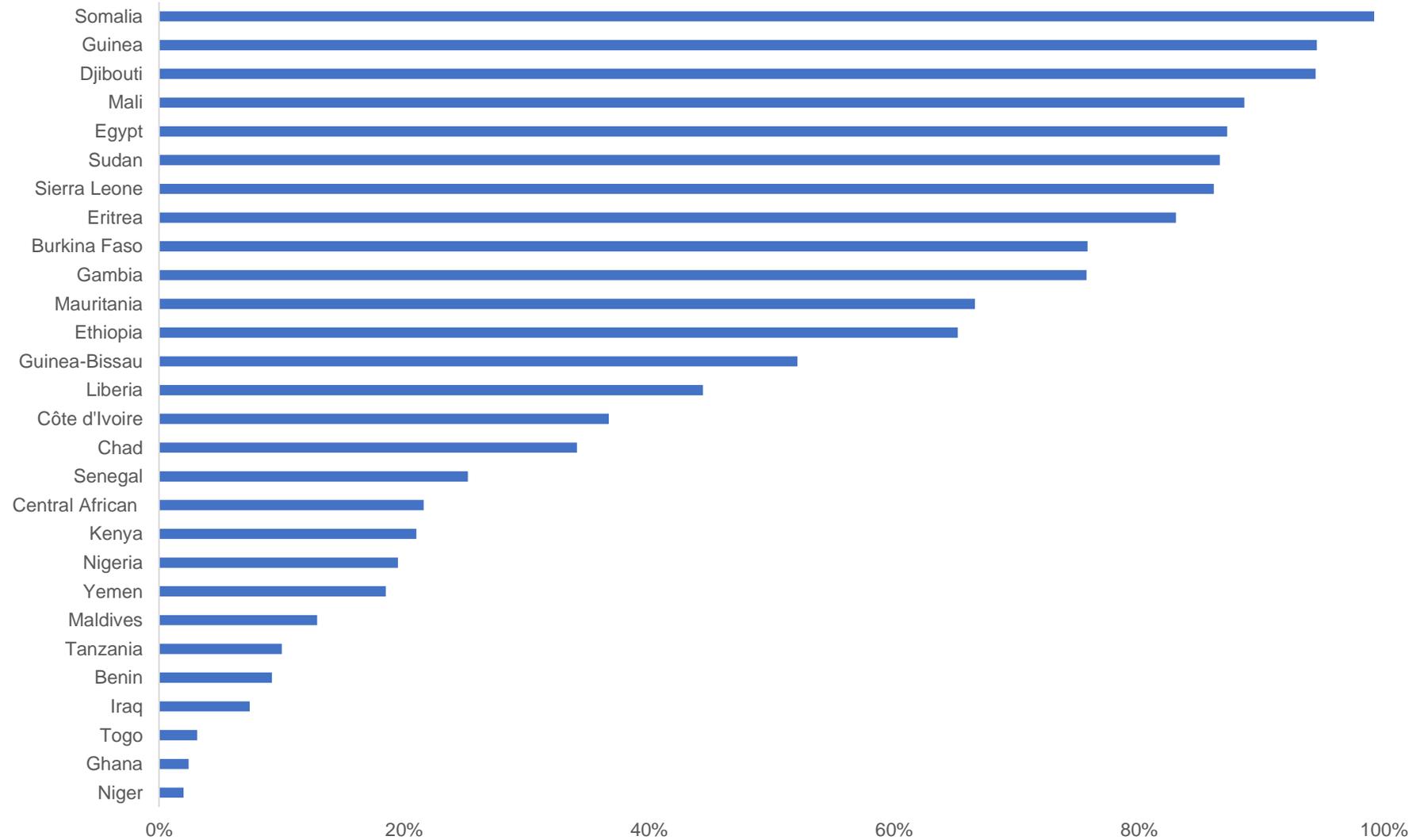
Plethora of forms / manifestations of gender-based violence in the region, including harmful practices

Harassment, sexual assault, sexual exploitation and abuse, intimate partner violence, so-called "honor killings", harmful practices such as **child and forced marriage** and **female genital mutilation**.

Prevalence of Female Genital Mutilation



FGM Prevalance Rate, UNICEF database 2020



Today, more than 200 million girls and women alive today living in 30 countries have undergone FGM

Figure 1: Average Prevalence Rate for Child Marriage in Selected Countries 1985-2019

Senegal Mali Egypt Malawi Indonesia Sudan Yemen

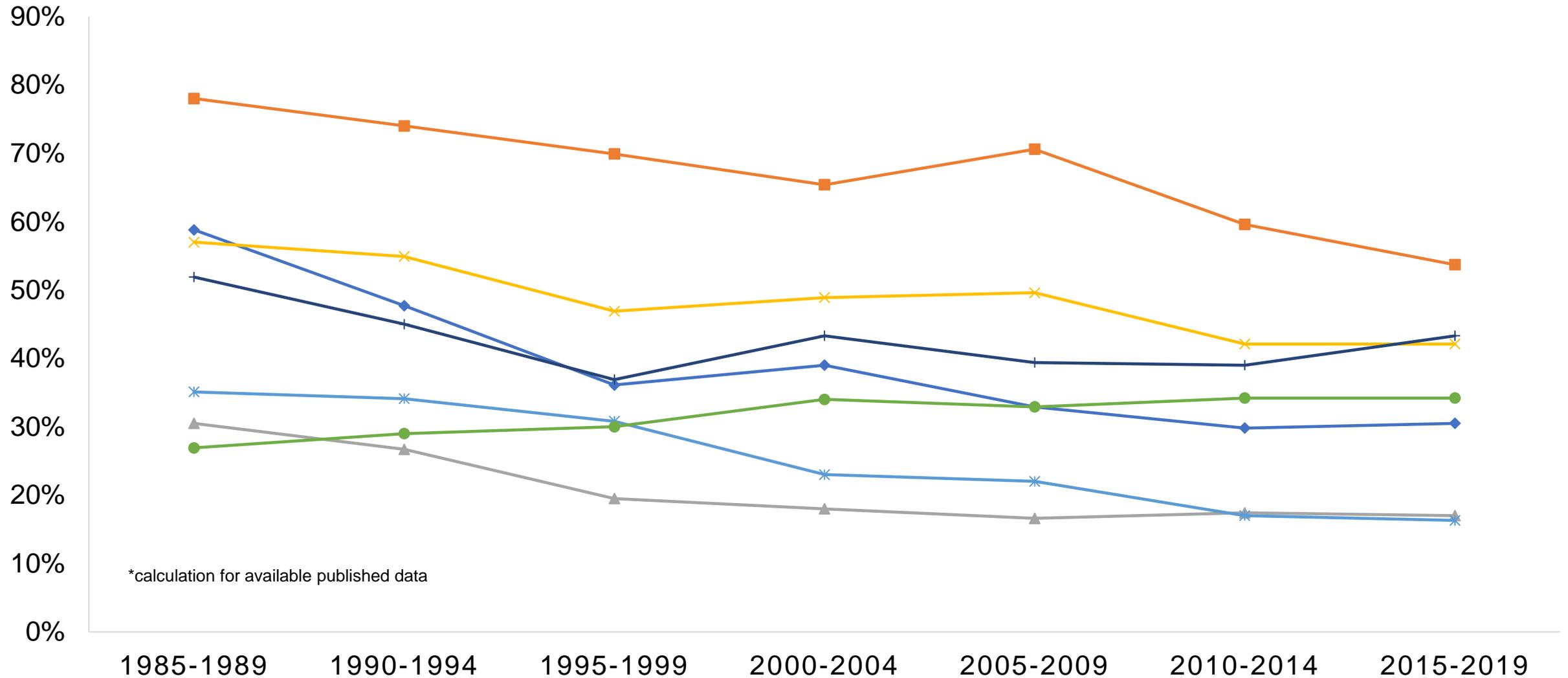


Table 1: Estimated Number of Years to Achieve Zero Prevalence of harmful Practices in Selected Countries

Country	Proportion of girls and women aged 15-49 years who have undergone female genital mutilation/cutting (%)		Proportion of women aged 20-24 years who were married or in a union before age 18 (%)	
	Expected Year	Remaining Years*	Expected Year	Remaining Years
Djibouti	2252	233	Stable	∞
Egypt	2134	113	2130	109
Iraq	2092	71	increasing	∞
Sudan	increasing	∞	increasing	∞
Mauritania	2135	114	increasing	∞
Somalia	stable	∞	2063	42
Yemen	2074	53	2076	55
Gambia	Stable	∞	2037	16
Mali	stable	∞	2107	86
Sierra Leone	2147	126	2030	9

Impact of Covid 19 on Gender Equality

- **COVID-19** resulted in an alarming increase in gender-based violence including FGM and CM across the region (**the shadow pandemic**).
- Provision of services slowed down and access to services including health care and SRH was hampered, and various forms of inequality were compounded.
- Marginalized communities and vulnerable women were hardest hit by the crisis (migrants, refugees, IDPs, persons with disabilities, elderly and adolescent girls).



Current Engagement: Focus and Stakeholders

Advocacy

Awareness raising

Knowledge production

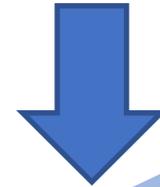
Legal transformation

Social norms transformation

Engagement of males



- Faith based organizations
- Civil society networks including women machineries
- Human rights networks
- Governments (ministries of women affairs)
- Intergovernmental organizations



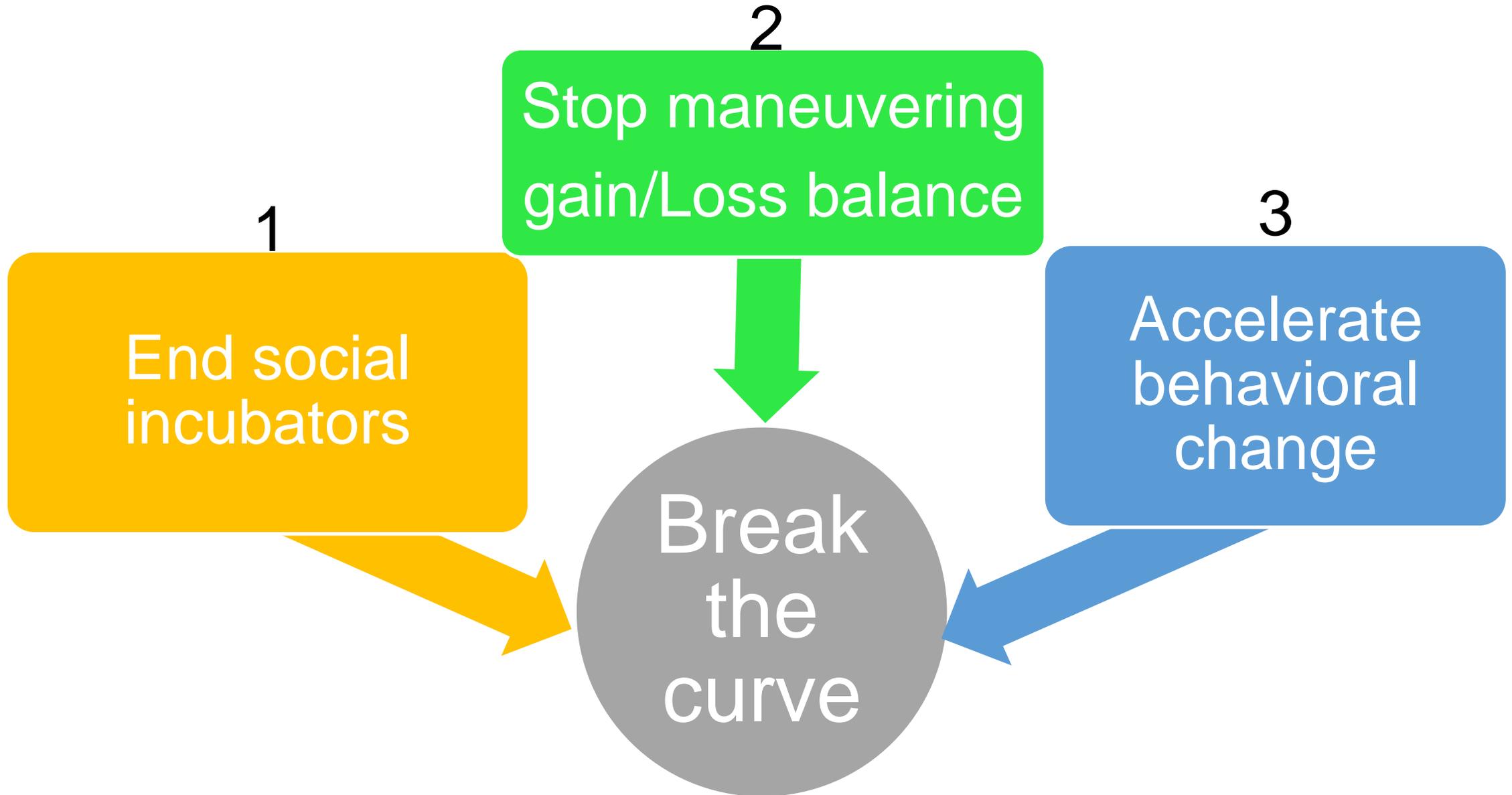
Forward
d
looking



Progress is modest
Curve is asymptotically
decreasing



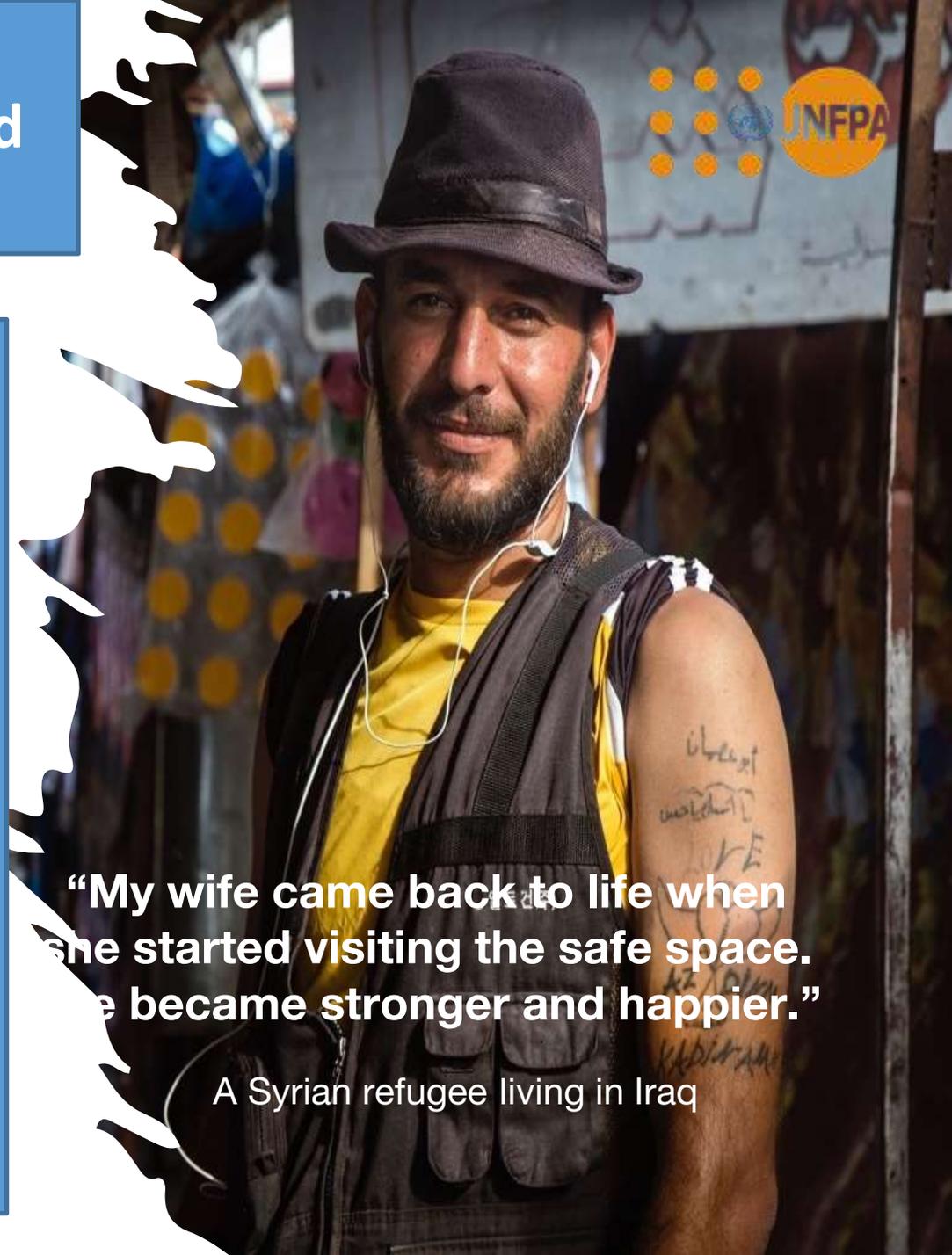
A new approach/booster is needed to break the curve



Addressing GBV in the face of conservative social norms and the strong role of religion and other cultural institutions

Good Practices and Initiatives Focus on Social Norms Change by engagement of:

- *Political leaders- Dubai an example*
- *Men and Boys (“Men Engage”)*
- *Religious Leaders/ FBOs; “Shamekhat”
(Women with Pride)*
- *Youth Network (“Y-Peers”)*



“My wife came back to life when she started visiting the safe space. She became stronger and happier.”

A Syrian refugee living in Iraq

Addressing GBV in the face of harmful social norms and the strong role of religion and other cultural institutions

Promising Practices/ Innovative Approaches - Country Level

- **SUDAN:** Community-based referral mechanisms: Women Support Groups managing the *Sunduk* and TukTuk ambulances
- **MOROCCO:** Chat Bot directing GBV survivors to essential services





Addressing GBV in Humanitarian Settings

UNFPA in the Arab Region serves as a **thought leader through knowledge management**

Knowledge Series produced by UNFPA Regional Humanitarian Hub for Syria and the Arab States (Beyond Numbers: collecting qualitative GBV data in humanitarian settings)

Study on Child Marriage in Humanitarian Settings (UNFPA/UNICEF/WRC)

Study on FGM in Humanitarian Settings (UNFPA/WRC)

Covid-19: UNFPA Best Practices and Lessons Learned in Humanitarian Operations in the Arab Region

UNFPA Menstrual Hygiene Management in Emergencies. Perspectives and Practices from the Arab region



BEYOND NUMBERS

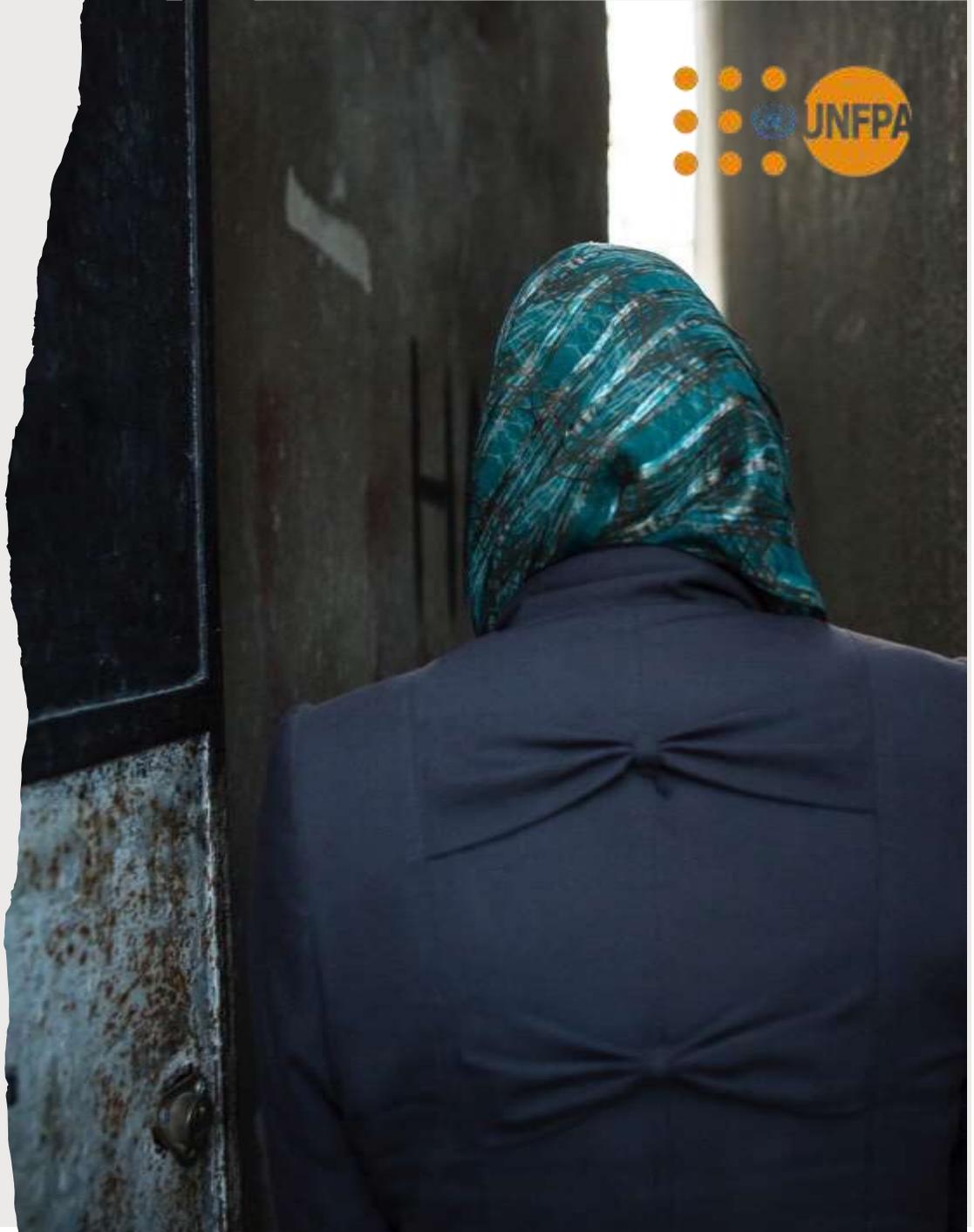
IMPROVING THE GATHERING OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE DATA TO INFORM HUMANITARIAN RESPONSES

Development-Humanitarian-Peace Nexus in Addressing GBV

- *From strengthening the Essential Service Package (ESP) to providing the minimum standards for GBV in Emergencies*
- UNFPA coordinates the GBV sub-cluster in 8 countries and co-chairs GBV SWGs in 3

Promising Practices/ Innovative Approaches

- Increasing investment in cash and voucher assistance for GBV intervention / social protection
- Supporting humanitarian operations to strengthen inter-sectoral Menstrual Hygiene Management programmes with stronger focus on adolescent girls
- Continuity of essential GBV services throughout the COVID-19 pandemic through remote service modalities



Lessons learned

- Working in a complex setting requires **creative** and **out of the box approaches**
- Political and security landscape threatens to stall progress made in the area of GBV and gender equality; so, we need to override the regression
- **Adopting a development/humanitarian/peace nexus** - from life-saving toward systems building is critical.
- Mainstreaming a **human rights-based approach** in our programmes to address **vulnerability** and ensure leaving no one behind is vital
- **Solid Coordination** among all stakeholders is key to the success of any interventions.



Recommendations

- Adopt a **holistic multi-sectoral approach** in targeting communities
- Establish **community-led**, long-term and structured GBV prevention programs
- Build **strategic partnerships** with civil society, academia, media, and the private sector
- **Be bold** in diving into the root causes rather than addressing the symptoms and try new mechanisms such as Transitional Justice to address the issue
- More attention is needed to address **SRH needs and knowledge** for women in both development and humanitarian settings
- Mobilize governments to adopt policies and laws for gender equality and protection from Violence
- Availability of **funding** is crucial, to prevent further erosion of achievements





UNFPA in Action

This short video, linked [here](#), provides an overview of the challenges levelled against communities throughout the Arab Region in 2022, in addition to the commitments UNFPA is making to help those in need.

