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UNFPA Global COVID-19 Situation Report No. 7



Reporting Period: 4th Quarter 2020
1 October - 31 December

Global Highlights

- At the onset of the COVID-19 outbreak, UNFPA recognized the potentially devastating effects of the pandemic and mobilized rapidly. By the close of 2020, the organization continued to strengthen its efforts, as the pandemic raged around the world.
- The pandemic has sharpened focus on UNFPA's lifesaving work. Women and girls are disproportionately affected by humanitarian crises; sexual and reproductive health services are interrupted; gender-based violence has skyrocketed; and the need for mental health and psychosocial support is on the rise.
- Women and young people are also the frontline responders and change makers. UNFPA will continue investing in their efforts, locally and nationally.
- To meet the rising humanitarian needs, UNFPA launched an appeal of \$818 million in December, its largest ever, to meet the needs of approximately 54 million women, girls and young people, in 2021.
- In 2020, UNFPA assisted over 10 million women, girls and young people with lifesaving sexual and reproductive health care and services to address gender-based violence. This includes over 7 million women reached in 53 countries with sexual and reproductive health services, 4.4 million people in 49 countries with family planning supplies and services, and 2.8 million people with services to address gender-based violence.
- During this pandemic, UNFPA has adapted to alternative modes of working and innovated its financial, programme and technical support, in coordination with governments, the UN system and national and local partners. These efforts are guided by a body of technical guidance that was developed to support UNFPA and partners' work globally, and adapted to local needs in some instances. To assure broad access to population data for the pandemic and relevant vulnerability factors, UNFPA created the COVID-19 Population Vulnerability Dashboard.

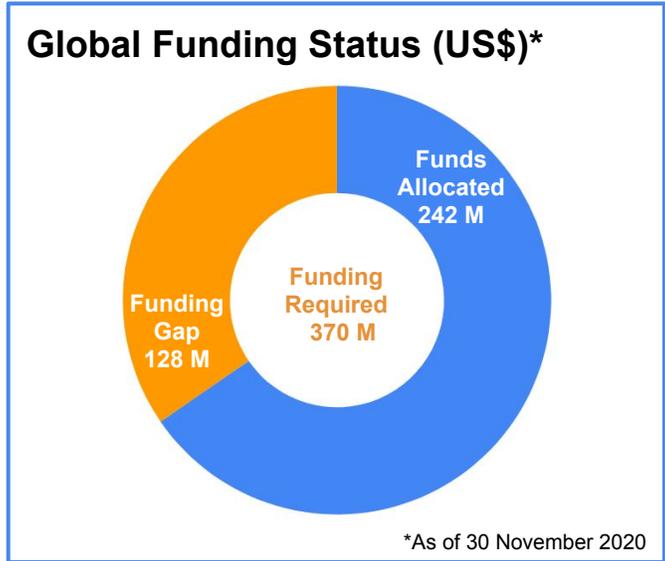
Situation in Numbers

- 
93,805,612 Confirmed COVID-19 Cases
- 
2,026,093 COVID-19 Deaths

Source: WHO, 18 January 2021

Key Population Groups

- 
97 M Pregnant Women
- 
1.6 B Women of Reproductive Age
- 
1.6 B Young People (age 10-24)
- 
483 M Older Persons (age 65+)



Leadership, Coordination and Partnership

At country, regional and global levels, UNFPA is coordinating efforts to reduce the spread and negative impacts of COVID-19, working with governments, other UN agencies, and NGO and private sector partners. Using an integrated “whole of organisation” coordination approach, UNFPA is responding to COVID-19 as a protracted situation, focusing on resiliency, flexibility and agility of its operational, programmes and policies. This includes strengthening preparedness capacities for future outbreaks. UNFPA is leading these efforts through 150 country offices, six regional offices, liaison offices and New York headquarters.

- **At the global level**, the UNFPA Executive Director participates in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Principals meetings that are coordinating the IASC collective COVID-19 response. The UNFPA Executive Director also participates in meetings of the Secretary-General’s Executive Committee for high-level decision making in the overall COVID-19 response. UNFPA participates at the Deputy Executive Director level in the **UNSDG Task Team on the implementation of the UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19**. The Director of the Humanitarian Office participates in the IASC Emergency Directors Group. Furthermore, UNFPA’s Humanitarian Office is fully engaged, participating in the IASC Operational Policy and Advocacy Group (OPAG) and related Reference Groups meetings, and the OCHA-led Global Humanitarian Response Plan (GHRP) process. As the lead agency of the **GBV Area of Responsibility** under the UNHCR-led Protection Cluster, UNFPA coordinates GBV coordination groups in 43 of 63 countries covered by the GHRP. UNFPA leads **SRH working groups** under the WHO-led health cluster to prioritise and coordinate SRH services and supplies.
- **UNFPA collaborates with the Executive Office of the UN Secretary-General** on an ongoing basis to ensure COVID-19 coordination and collaboration and to develop Secretary-General reports and briefs on COVID-19 in areas such as gender, human rights, people on the move, children, older persons, and mental health, with participation of field staff. UNFPA co-authored the health pillar of the UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19, and provided contributions to the other pillars of social protection and basic services, economic recovery, and multilateral collaboration.
- **UNFPA is a member of the WHO-led UN Crisis Management Team** that provides strategic leadership on the health response, and is a member of the COVID-19 Supply Chain Task Force (WHO, WFP, UNICEF, UNOPS, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR). The Task Force provides strategic direction to ensure that the most critical gaps in supplies are identified and met in a timely fashion. UNFPA is one of 13 UN agencies and NGOs for which UNICEF leads the global tender for procurement of personal protective equipment – masks, gloves, gowns and others – to cover forecasted PPE needs for the COVID-19 response. UNFPA supports the UN global initiative, Verified, to combat misinformation amid the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **UNFPA works within international humanitarian and development coordination systems** to ensure that the needs of women, girls and young people are included in COVID-19 guidance, response plans and country-level implementation. UNFPA contributes to prevention and control of the pandemic to ensure the continuity of essential services for women, young people and vulnerable populations such as older persons, persons with disabilities, LGBTQI, ethnic minorities including Afro-descendants and indigenous people. UNFPA also works to protect frontline health and social workers, 70 per cent of whom are women that need PPE.
- **At the regional and country levels**, UNFPA participates in the WHO Regional Crisis Management Group and various coordination mechanisms, including the UN Country Team and Humanitarian Coordination Team, and supports the respective national COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plans ensuring integration of SRH and GBV concerns, and mitigation of social and economic impacts, including protection from GBV and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. UNFPA country offices have been spearheading various COVID-19 impact assessments on SRH and increased risk of GBV among women and girls, including those most vulnerable such as persons with disabilities, older persons, refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants.
- UNFPA offices are coordinating the procurement and logistics of humanitarian relief supplies as they relate to UNFPA’s mandate and COVID-19 response. UNFPA supports COVID-19 Humanitarian Operation Cells, or similar mechanisms, to address service delivery constraints and advocate for physical access.

GBV coordination

Inclusion of persons with disabilities and their caregivers is referenced in core GBV documents like the IASC Guidelines for Integrating GBV Interventions in Humanitarian Action, the Minimum Standards on Prevention and Response to GBV in Emergencies, and the GBV Area of Responsibility (AoR) Handbook for Coordinating GBV Interventions in Emergencies.

To improve GBV actors' abilities to use the IASC Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action, the GBV AOR Community of Practice, alongside Women's Refugee Commission organized a webinar series with Emma Pearce, Gender and Inclusion specialist. Recordings of all the sessions are available [here](#). Plan International, Care International, UNFPA and the GBV AoR organized a virtual event on 16 October 2020 prior to the Ministerial Round Table on Central Sahel.

The event aimed to (i) amplify the voices and priorities of girls from Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger offering a unique opportunity to learn from first-hand-experience and receive recommendations from the affected girls, (ii) draw attention to the critical challenges to preventing and responding to GBV from women local groups and advocate for global solidarity around GBV, (iii) motivate governmental actors and donors to commit to strengthen the prevention, risk mitigation and response to GBV, raising the profile of the Call to Action on the protection of GBV in emergencies and ensuring the rights of women and girls are central to humanitarian action and across the triple nexus. Event report, in English and French can be found [here](#).

In November, the GBV AoR launched a campaign to promote the Inter-Agency Minimum Standards for GBV in Emergencies Programming over the 16 Days of Activism against GBV, which showed how they can be contextualized, including in a COVID-19 response. The campaign aimed to boost awareness of the standards in the field and promote the standards through numerous channels and initiatives, including a promotional video, endorsement videos from GBV AoR members, resources on self-care, podcasts and webinars covering different standards at the global and regional level. The promotional video (which was translated into six languages), the podcasts and recordings of the webinars can be accessed [here](#).



UNFPA SRH and GBV technical briefs to guide staff and partners in addressing COVID-19

- [COVID-19 Technical Brief for Maternity Services](#)
- [Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Family Planning and Ending Gender-based Violence. Female Genital Mutilation and Child Marriage](#)
- [Implications of COVID-19 for Older Persons: Responding to the Pandemic](#)
- [Technical Brief on the Implications of COVID-19 on Census](#)
- [Adolescents and Young People & Coronavirus Disease \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Gender Equality and Addressing Gender-based Violence \(GBV\) and Coronavirus Disease \(COVID-19\) Prevention, Protection and Response](#)
- [Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights: Modern Contraceptives and Other Medical Supply Needs, including for COVID-19 Prevention, Protection and Response.](#)
- [Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, Maternal and Newborn Health & COVID-19](#)
- [COVID-19: A Gender Lens](#)
- [Global Call to Action: Protecting Midwives to Sustain Care for Women, Newborns and their Families in the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
- [COVID-19: Working with and for Young People My Body, My Life, My World: Through a COVID-19 Lens](#)
- [Q&A: Adolescents, Youth and COVID-19](#)
- [Not on Pause: Responding to the sexual and reproductive health needs of adolescents in the context of the COVID-19 crisis](#)
- [Invisible but not Forgotten: Risk communication and community engagement with young people left behind during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- [Learning Beyond the Classroom: Adapting CSE education programming during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- [Equality for Girls in Crisis: Adapting child marriage and adolescent girls programming during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- [#youthagainstcovid-19 Campaign: All that you need to know](#)
- [Surveys and assessments on young people and COVID-19: Domains, questions and resources](#)



Mobile clinic providing service in the Blue Nile region © UNFPA Sudan

UNFPA Global Response Plan to COVID-19

UNFPA's COVID-19 Global Response Plan has appealed for \$370 million through the end of 2020. As of 1 November, UNFPA had received \$77 million for COVID-19 response activities. UNFPA's top donors to the COVID-19 response include Australia, Canada, Denmark, the European Commission, Finland, Iceland, Norway and the United Kingdom, the UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund, and the UN Central Emergency Response Fund. This support has enabled UNFPA to respond quickly to COVID-19 around the world. UNFPA has received \$25.4 million in flexible funding, \$22.2 million of which was provided through the Humanitarian Thematic Fund, UNFPA's most flexible humanitarian funding instrument.

Strategic Partnerships with the Private Sector

UNFPA is engaging with private partners globally and at regional and country level in support of the COVID-19 response through partnerships for resource mobilization, reach and the development of new technologies and innovative tools and solutions to meet immediate, medium- and long-term needs. The highlights include:

Individual Giving

- The Individual Giving Programme continued its COVID-19 digital fundraising effort, with the focus on fundraising for UNFPA's COVID-19 response and the response in Yemen. By the end of 2020, the programme raised over US\$ 350K for the COVID-19 response and over US\$800,000 for the agency's humanitarian response in Yemen.
- IGP continued its end-of-year campaign to support maternal health services in Yemen, including UNFPA-supported clinics in the governorate of Taizz. The campaign raised over US\$400,000 from 8,000 from across the globe.

Resource Mobilization

- Over US\$ 8 million in contributions from the private sector were mobilized towards UNFPA's COVID-19 response including in-kind donations, aimed at ensuring the continuity of SRHR and GBV services during the pandemic.



Global Response Summary

The UNFPA overall response to COVID-19 aligns with the [2030 Agenda](#), the [WHO global Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan](#), the [UN-coordinated Global Humanitarian Response Plan \(GHRP\)](#), the [UN framework for socio-economic response to COVID-19](#), and [UNFPA's COVID-19 global response plan](#).

The UNFPA COVID-19 regional situation reports continue to document the work of regional and country offices supporting SRH and GBV work, championing risk communications, engaging communities, particularly young people, and providing life-saving commodities and supplies. (See links below for the latest editions)

Latest UNFPA COVID-19 Regional Situation Reports

Arab States

[October 2020](#)

Asia and Pacific

[October 2020](#)

[November 2020](#)

[December 2020](#)

Eastern Europe and Central Asia

[October 2020](#)

[November 2020](#)

[December 2020](#)

East and Southern Africa

[October 2020](#)

[November 2020](#)

Latin America and the Caribbean

[October and November 2020](#)

West and Central Africa

[October 2020](#)

[November 2020](#)

Adolescents and youth and COVID-19

To safeguard young people's rights to health, safety, choice and voice, UNFPA has adapted and reimagined its organizational strategy, My Body My Life, My World, to the pandemic. In this series of technical briefs, My Body, My Life, My World: Through a COVID-19 Lens, UNFPA supports countries and regions in adapting and reimagining a range of interventions across contexts and through several phases of the pandemic. The package of technical briefs provide guidance in modular form, to be read and applied as a whole set or individually, depending on context.

1. Q&A: Adolescents, Youth and COVID-19 (WHO, UNFPA) - This Q&A is for adolescents to answer their questions about COVID-19 and the impacts it may have on their health and well-being.
2. Not on Pause: Responding to the sexual and reproductive health needs of adolescents in the context of the COVID-19 crisis (WHO, UNFPA) - This brief sets out actions for health systems and health service providers to respond to the SRH needs of adolescents in context of the pandemic.
3. Invisible but not Forgotten: Risk communication and community engagement with young people left behind during the COVID-19 pandemic - As critical activities and institutions move online in response to the pandemic, young people living in poverty, or in isolated, hard-to-reach communities, face major access and connectivity challenges. This brief responds to these challenges by offering guidance and resources on engaging young people in risk communication and community engagement (RCCE) related to COVID-19.
4. Learning Beyond the Classroom: Adapting CSE education programming during the COVID-19 pandemic - This brief offers guidance on adapting CSE as schools remain closed, with a focus on out-of-school CSE.
5. Equality for Girls in Crisis: Adapting child marriage and adolescent girls programming during the COVID-19 pandemic - Structured around the UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage, this brief guides UNFPA country offices and partners to adapt their interventions during COVID-19. Recommendations focus on marginalized girls, the family and community environment, strengthening systems, addressing drivers of poverty, (e) laws and policies, and data and evidence.
6. #youthagainstcovid-19 Campaign: All that you need to know - This brief guides UNFPA country offices on engaging in the #youthagainstCOVID19 campaign. Structured in a Q&A format, it presents an overview of the content and partners of the campaign, the campaign in UNFPA's broader pandemic response and information on how to participate in the campaign, including on how to adapt it to local contexts.
7. Surveys and assessments on young people and COVID-19 - Developed in response to the rush of surveys and rapid assessments released at the start of the pandemic, this brief offers domains, questions and resources for UNFPA country offices to structure future assessments on young people and COVID-19.

Concrete implementation examples of these briefs were provided through webinars by the following countries: Albania, Bolivia, Guatemala, Peru, the Caribbean Sub-regional Office, Indonesia, Thailand, Jordan, Nigeria, Uganda and Zimbabwe to support learning, innovation and programme and policy improvement.

Joint Programme on the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation

The UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), in partnership with the Population and Media Center, launched a series of training workshops to address the implications of COVID-19 on the practice of FGM through compelling mass media activities and campaigns, using the proven social and behaviour change communication (SBCC) approach.

- These virtual workshops, which will be held in 13 countries (Djibouti, Egypt, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Eritrea, Mali, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda), target UNFPA regional and country offices supported by the Joint Programme and their implementing partners.
- The topics covered include addressing FGM during COVID-19, research to program design through the use of a value grid, and storytelling through positive, negative and transitional characters. Upon completing the workshops, participants pitch their own ideas on how to incorporate the SBCC approach into their existing or planned campaigns and activities.
- Population and Media Center will support the rebroadcast of a drama series in Burkina Faso and develop two new radio serial dramas in Kenya, to reach out to the wider public virtually during COVID-19.

Global Programme to End Child Marriage

The UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage is providing technical assistance to countries in adapting programmes to guarantee adolescent girls' rights and empowerment, and supporting communities, systems and policy frameworks to be responsive to their needs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

New Publication: [Adapting to COVID-19: Pivoting the UNFPA–UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage to Respond to the Pandemic](#) UNICEF, UNFPA (September 2020). The health, social, political and economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are disproportionately affecting girls and women by exacerbating systemic gender inequalities at all levels, with potential implications for the incidence of child marriage. This brief describes how the UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage has adapted its interventions to ensure the continued reach to protect girls at risk of child marriage and already married girls during the pandemic, providing a public good and insights for practitioners around the world.



Safe spaces for women and girls, © UNFPA Chad/Olivier Girard

UNFPA Surge Deployment Overview

Throughout 2020, UNFPA responded to humanitarian emergencies in 26 countries, sending a total of 113 surge personnel. Out of the total deployments, 56% were female primarily working in GBV response, coordination and programming efforts. Although the Surge Team supported all 6 regions last year, the most deployments include countries in the Arab States (26% of deployments), Asia and the Pacific (23%) as well as East and Southern Africa (21%).

At the end of 2020, the Surge Team had 25 surge personnel on the ground or working remotely. During this period, the team was preparing to send multiple subject matter experts in GBV, SRH, Communications, Logistics, and Humanitarian Coordination in response to the Tigray crisis affecting Ethiopia and Sudan. While the overall amount of deployments slightly decreased in 2020 - mostly due to restrictions due the global pandemic, the average turn around times remained low. The Surge Team was able to identify qualified candidates within an average of 2 days last year. There was an average of 9 days between the time a surge mission was requested and the time personnel made it to the field. This has allowed UNFPA to continue responding in urgent times of need and to fulfill its mandate. The Surge Team continues to work with country offices as needs arise - particularly in response to natural disasters as can be seen in Latin America (Honduras and Nicaragua) and Mauritania.

113
ANNUAL DEPLOYMENTS

26
COUNTRIES SUPPORTED

DEPLOYMENTS BY FUNCTIONAL AREA

72
Gender Based Violence

15
Humanitarian Coordination

10
Logistics/M&E

9
Sexual and Reproductive Health

4
Operations

3
Communications



Response to hurricane eta and Iota,
©UNFPA Honduras

External Media and Human Interest Stories

UNFPA raises awareness and support for prioritizing the needs and rights of women and girls and marginalized groups, and continuing sexual and reproductive health and rights and prevention and response to gender-based violence during COVID-19. Here is the [UNFPA COVID-19 page](#) and below are statements of the Executive Director, human interest stories featured on the UNFPA global website, and highlights of media outreach.

STATEMENTS

- [International Day of the Girl: Let's listen to girls and uphold their rights](#)
- [World Statistics Day: Trusting statistics to tell the story](#)
- [International Day to End Violence against Women: Stand up and say 'enough' to violence](#)
- [World AIDS Day: COVID-19 threatens to exacerbate inequalities faced by many living with HIV](#)
- [International Day of Persons with Disabilities: The health system we build back after COVID-19 must reach everyone](#)
- [Human Rights Day: Standing up for human rights more important than ever](#)
- [International Universal Health Coverage Day: Let's stop treating sexual and reproductive health care as anything less than essential](#)

WEB STORIES

- [Progress towards gender equality at risk, say leaders at 25th anniversary of Beijing women's conference](#)
- [Reproductive health facilities resume life-saving work, but funding remains scarce](#)
- [A former child bride in Afghanistan finds hope and new life during COVID-19](#)
- [Flooding in Sudan leaves pregnant women, violence survivors stranded](#)
- [Pandemic and rising tide of violence increase demand for mental health, psychosocial care](#)
- [What we learn by listening to girls](#)
- [Midwives on the front lines working to reverse Afghanistan's high maternal death rate](#)
- [The future we want for women and girls](#)
- [Mobile clinics treat reproductive cancers in along Ukraine's contact line](#)

OPINION EDITORIALS

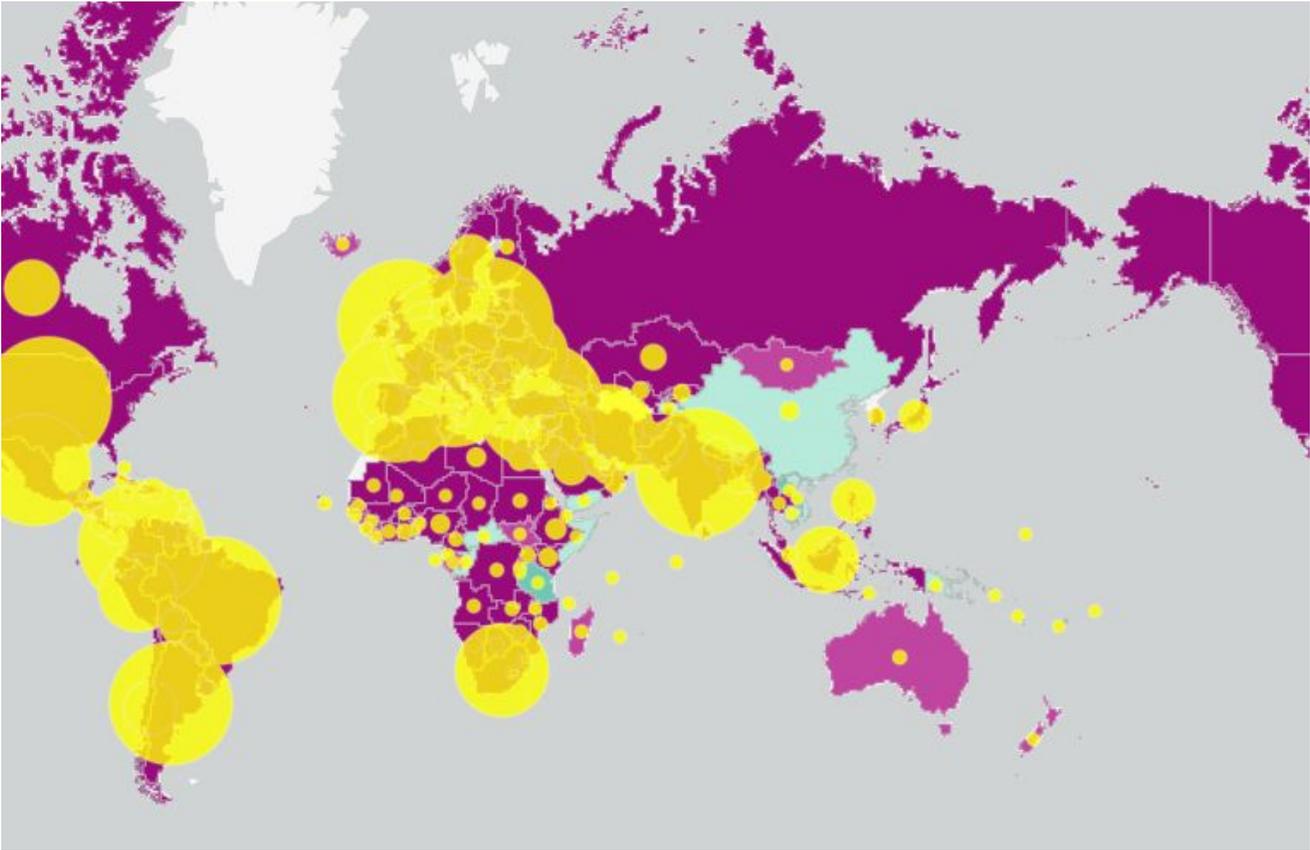
- [World Economic Forum, The Hindu, China Daily, Bangladesh Post: Why improving women's lives is the key to healthy ageing](#)
- [Inter Press Service: Why we're uniting in support of African girl leaders to beat AIDS & shift power](#)
- [AllAfrica: Africa: Embracing the hopes and dreams of millions of girls for a gender-equal world](#)
- [The Daily Star, The Himalayan Times: As humanitarian crises escalate, so does child marriage](#)
- [Eyewitness News: Julitta Onabanjo: COVID-19 threatens the gains made for girls](#)
- [OmVarlden: Midwives' work is more important than ever](#)
- [Ahran Online: Statistics connecting the world with the data we trust](#)
- [Project Syndicate: Crises and contraception](#)
- [The Telegraph: Investing in women and girls is a smart investment](#)
- [ReliefWeb: From Yemen, a cry for help](#)
- [Al Arabiya: Gender-based violence is an epidemic just as dangerous as COVID-19](#)
- [The New Arab: It's not just Covid we're up against, but a pandemic of violence against women](#)

UNFPA IN THE NEWS*

- October 1 - [The Times](#): **Baby boom warning as lockdowns restrict access to contraception**
- October 1 - [Reuters](#), [Daily Mail](#), [National Post](#), [SwissInfo](#), [Haaretz](#), [ABS-CBN](#), [China Daily](#): **U.N. to tackle gender equality, chief calls it 'greatest' rights challenge**
- October 1 - [El Diario](#): **EFE: The UN shows its concern about the pregnancies of minors in Bolivia**
- October 1 - [Xinhua](#) & [Xinhua Arabic](#): **COVID-19 demonstrates urgent need to meet unfulfilled promise of World Conference on Women**
- October 2 - [Devex](#): **How to move the needle on health worker safety**
- October 2 - [Sapo 24](#): **Norway supports UN in responding to 500,000 Mozambicans affected by cyclones and Covid-19**
- October 2 - [VOA Indonesia](#): **2.5 million girls at risk of becoming child brides due to the COVID-19 pandemic**
- October 2 - [Slate](#) France: **Half a million more girls could be forcibly married this year**
- October 5 - [Bloomberg](#), [South China Morning Post](#), [Gulf News](#): **Singapore to pay would-be parents for babies as virus drags on**
- October 6 - [BBC](#), [BBC Afrique](#): **Singapore offers 'pandemic baby bonus' to boost births**
- October 6 - [Telegraph](#): **Singapore offers pandemic baby bonus**
- October 6 - [Devex](#): **Maternity Matters: Lessons on supporting local private sector providers**
- October 6 - [Fox News](#): **Singapore offers 'pandemic baby bonus,' pushing for more children despite economic downturn**
- 28 October - [The Times of India](#): **Odisha: Tribal women in Malkangiri come together to debunk menstrual taboo**
- 5 November - [NPR](#): **Child marriages are up in the pandemic. Here's how India tries to stop them**
- 7 November - [Le Monde](#): **Coronavirus: In Niger, midwives thwart the most pessimistic forecasts**
- 11 November - [El Diario](#): **Adolescent pregnancy costs 0.35% of Latin America's GDP, UN says**
- 11 November - [Reuters](#): **Teen pregnancy costs Latin America billions of dollars a year: U.N.**
- 16 November - [Reuters](#): **Teenage pregnancies rise in parts of Kenya as lockdown shuts schools**
- 20 November - [The Guardian](#): **Student pregnancies rise in Kenya's lockdown - in pictures**
- 25 November - [The Guardian](#): **'Shadow pandemic' of violence against women to be tackled with \$25m UN fund**
- 25 November - [Reuters](#): **In new UN role, ex-CNN journalist seeks to end abuse of women and girls**
- 1 December - [The Associated Press](#): **Nobel laureate says pandemic raising violence, trafficking**
- 23 December - [BBC](#): **Covid-19: The Philippines and its lockdown baby boom**
- 24 December - [The Guardian](#): **'Sex for sanitary pads': how Kenya's lockdown led to a rise in teenage pregnancy**
- 24 December - [CNN](#): **Forced out of school during the pandemic, now she's pregnant. She's one of millions of girls who won't return to the classroom**
- 26 December - [El País](#): **The triple burden for adolescent mothers during the pandemic**

*The inclusion of articles does not imply endorsement by UNFPA. UNFPA cannot vouch for the accuracy of any of the reports.

Global COVID-19 cases and deaths



See UNFPA's [COVID-19 Population Vulnerability Dashboard](#) for real-time updates