

2024 Surge Annual Report

Investing in preparedness, ensuring a rapid
response

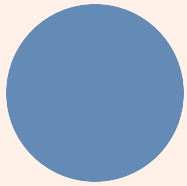


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Introduction



Dear Partners,

It's been a year of significant progress in our surge efforts, made possible by our collective dedication and strategic partnerships. Our Standby Partners invaluable support, amounting to **nearly 2.5 million USD** has been instrumental in enabling us to expand our reach and impact.

This 2024 Surge Annual Report reflects the combined efforts of our team, partners, and stakeholders who work tirelessly to ensure sexual and reproductive health and rights for all, even in the most challenging humanitarian settings. Alongside these critical efforts, we have prioritized the provision of gender-based violence services, delivering life-saving support to survivors and working to prevent violence in communities through targeted programs and advocacy.

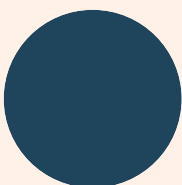
The global landscape remains challenging, but together we continue to adapt and innovate. The HRD Surge Team has prioritized rapid response, managing **217** surge requests this year. We successfully filled **190** critical roles, with **59%** of those positions filled by women.

Recognizing the evolving needs, we've focused on strengthening our Surge Response Roster, expanding it in size and including new profiles like access, procurement or supply chain that are needed for a successful present day humanitarian response. We're proud that the roster reflects our commitment to diversity, with new experts representing **31** nations and many linguistic and cultural profiles.

This report highlights how we are working together to make a tangible difference in the lives of women, girls, and young people affected by crises.

We are deeply grateful for your continued partnership in this vital work. With your support, we are confident in our ability to navigate the challenges ahead and continue striving towards a world where everyone can exercise their sexual and reproductive rights and gender-based violence services, no matter the circumstances.

Shoko Arakaki
Director
Humanitarian Response Division



Surge Overview



UNFPA's Surge mechanism plays a vital role in safeguarding the sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) of women and girls in humanitarian settings. Through the rapid deployment of skilled professionals, we ensure access to essential **SRH** and **GBV** services, including maternal health care, family planning, and psychosocial support, even in the most challenging environments.

Key achievements in 2024



Enhanced Roster

Expanded the roster by **25%** to **552 experts** with new skillsets to better meet the evolving needs of humanitarian emergencies



Increased Quality

Developed and launched **Humanitarian 101** learning modules to strengthen the capacity of all surge experts.



Rapid Response

Successfully deployed **190 surge personnel (59% women)** to **39** countries, with a focus on critical needs in **Sudan, Palestine/Lebanon, Syria, and Afghanistan**.



Leveraging Partnerships for Surge Capacity

Secured **external funding for 53** surge positions through standby partnerships, increasing UNFPA's overall response capacity.

Stories from the Field

Victoria Clancy, GBV Sub-Sector Coordinator, Papua New Guinea



Papua New Guinea is a country prone to various natural disasters. In 2024, a devastating landslide in Enga Province, coupled with an earthquake and flooding in other regions, highlighted the urgent need for coordinated humanitarian preparedness and response planning.

As an Australian humanitarian worker with experience in emergency responses across Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, I was honored to be deployed as the **GBV Sub-Sector Coordinator** with **UNFPA Papua New Guinea**. With UNFPA leading the GBV Sub-Sector under the Protection Sector of the PNG Disaster Management Team, my role was to ensure a standardized GBV response across all levels.



This involves collaborating with GBV stakeholders at national and sub-national levels, working with other sectors to integrate GBV-related actions in their plans, and building the capacity of GBV actors to respond effectively to current and future humanitarian crises.

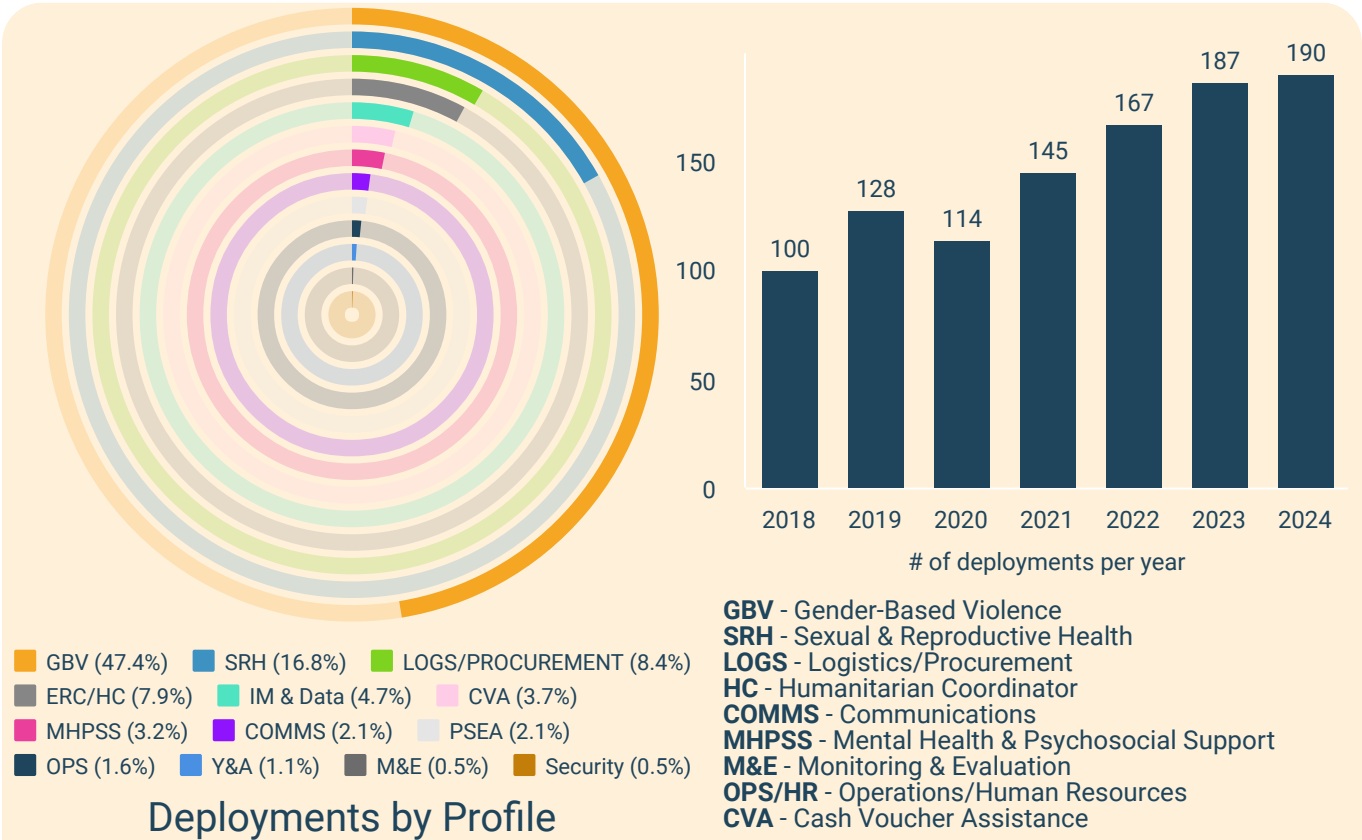
In the affected communities, UNFPA conducted rapid assessments of needs related to sexual and reproductive health, GBV, and mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS).

We provided essential training on GBV case management, psychological first aid, and self-care for community and frontline health workers.

Furthermore, we distributed inter-agency reproductive health kits, dignity kits, tents for safe spaces, and a fully-equipped medical ambulance to Enga Province. UNFPA also spearheaded the inter-agency work in formulating and disseminating UN messages on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA).

My experience in Papua New Guinea underscored the importance of UNFPA's work in providing life-saving GBV and SRH interventions in emergency settings. I am grateful for the opportunity to have contributed to these efforts and to have supported the resilience of women and girls affected by emergencies in Papua New Guinea.

2024 Deployment Overview



Highlights

3

Scale up emergencies response - **Lebanon, Syria & Sudan**

39

Country Offices received surge support in 2024

88%

requests successfully staffed.

38

deployments to Sudan (highest supported emergency)

Live data on the current surge activities are available for UNFPA staff @ [Surge Dashboard](#).





Story from the Field

Massimo Marghinotti, Supply Chain Specialist, Sudan

The support and collaboration I received from UNFPA colleagues in Sudan, the Supply Chain Management Unit (SCMU), Humanitarian Response Division (HRD), and the Regional Office (RO) were invaluable. Their assistance and camaraderie were crucial to the success of my assignment.



The escalating violence and atrocities in Sudan have created a humanitarian crisis of immense proportions. Millions have been displaced, with women and children bearing the brunt of the suffering. The nation faces unprecedented levels of food insecurity, compounded by a cholera outbreak.

In the face of this immense challenge, UNFPA is working tirelessly to provide life-saving reproductive health and protection services to those most in need. However, maintaining an operational and efficient supply chain in a civil war-torn country is a herculean task.



During my three-month deployment, I provided logistical and technical support to UNFPA's sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and gender-based violence (GBV) programs. This involved facilitating the custom clearance of several containers, warehousing, and dispatching essential supplies. Road transport in a volatile environment like Sudan is fraught with difficulties, especially given the long distances required to reach beneficiaries.

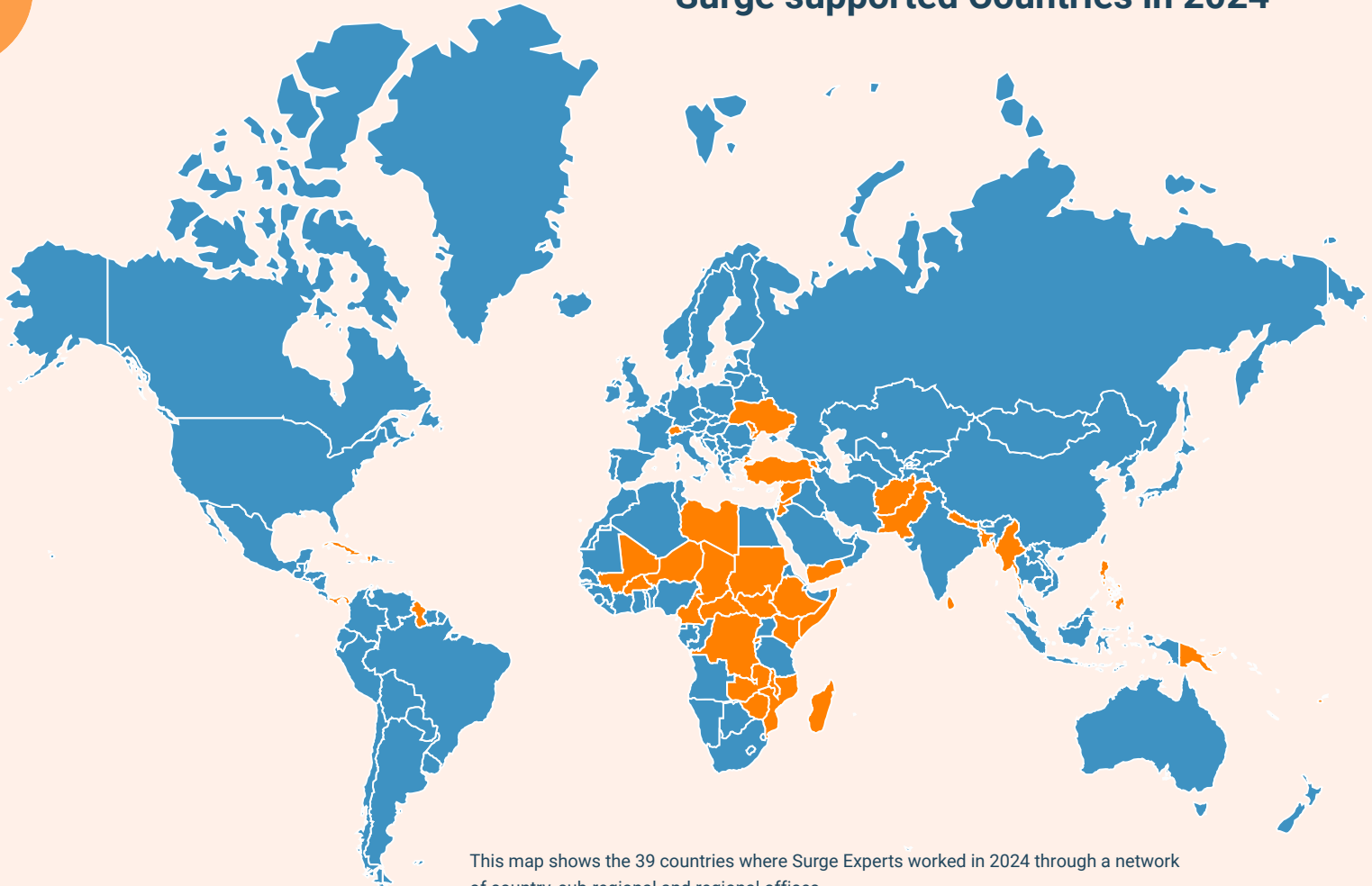
Despite these challenges, we successfully distributed thousands of SRH kits and medical items, thanks in part to our implementing partners who handled the last-mile delivery. UNFPA played a crucial role in delivering several tons of humanitarian aid, reaching the women and girls most affected by the war.

I am proud to have contributed my expertise in supply chain and logistics support to this critical mission. I eagerly anticipate my return to Sudan to continue providing relief aid to those affected by the ongoing conflict.

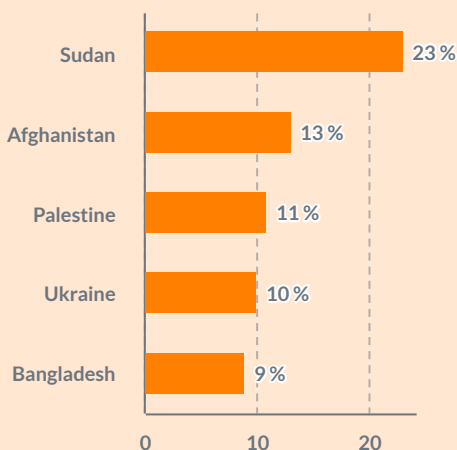
Where we work



Surge supported Countries in 2024

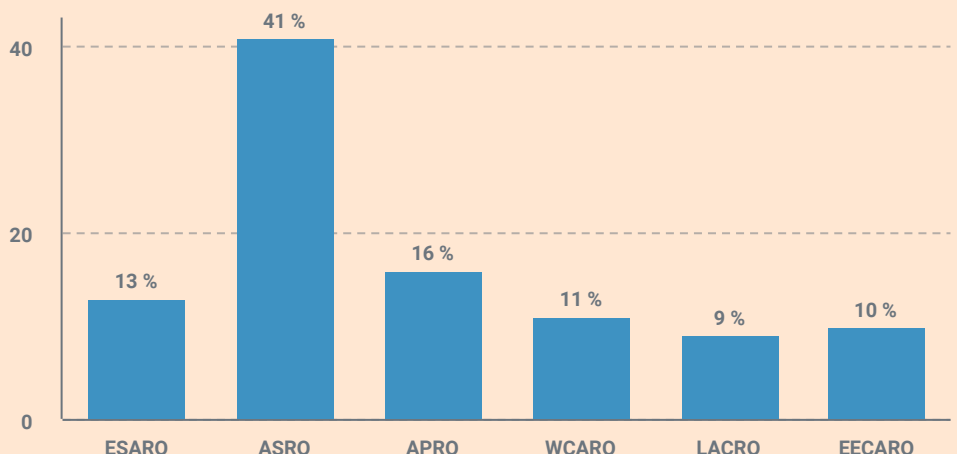


Top 5 deployment locations in percentage of total



Surge Team contracted **38 experts** to **Sudan** country office working on the issues caused by the armed conflict.

Percentage of deployments by UNFPA regional offices



UNFPA regional offices

ASRO - Arab States

APRO - Asia & the Pacific

ESARO - East & Southern Africa

EECARO - Eastern Europe & Central Asia

LACRO - Latin America & the Caribbean

WCARO - West & Central Africa



Stories from the Field

Carly Learson, Communications Specialist, Zambia

UNFPA Zambia has a long history of collaboration with the government on long-term projects, and their swift pivot to emergency response when the drought was declared was commendable.

The team's ability to adapt and utilize their strong local connections to deploy mobile health clinics to the worst-affected areas was remarkable. As a communications specialist, I had the opportunity to witness first-hand the impact of the drought.

Unlike other emergencies I've worked in, the people I met were not displaced, and their needs were not as immediately desperate as those in conflict zones or refugee camps. However, they were grappling with the devastating effects of climate change. The impact was gradual but relentless, with each season becoming progressively worse.

The people I spoke to were farmers who had witnessed the changes over the past decade and were fearful of the future. Many had lost their life savings, selling livestock and land just to survive. Telling this story was challenging as it didn't fit the conventional frameworks of UN emergency communications.

Instead, I focused on letting people share their experiences, highlighting that while the crisis was primarily a food crisis, the impacts of climate change were multifaceted and affected different people in different ways. I also assisted the **UNFPA** team in navigating the emergency structures, ensuring their representation at cluster meetings and in joint reports.



Though the drought persists, I am confident in the **UNFPA Zambia** team's dedication and energy to continue assisting those affected. Their commitment to serving the community is an inspiration.



Surge Response Roster recruitment

The Roster is key to fulfilling UNFPA's humanitarian mandate, and ensuring we use scarce humanitarian resources effectively and efficiently. Qualified experts are considered one of UNFPA's greatest assets. To ensure our corporate response to emergencies is rapid, predictable, and meets the highest standard of quality expected from UNFPA, we expanded the Surge Response Roster in 2024 by **25%**, growing it from **439** to **552 experts**. **These efforts reflect a commitment to strategic recruitment initiatives, including:**



WCARO Surge Workshop held in Accra, Ghana, focused on increasing the number of French-speaking humanitarian experts on the roster. By providing training and conducting a comprehensive assessment, the workshop successfully added **21 qualified French-speaking experts** to the roster, enhancing UNFPA's responsiveness in West and Central Africa.

Targeted Recruitment: Surge Teams organize periodic recruitment drives with help from the colleagues in Regional & Country Offices to increase the pool of specialists in key areas. In 2024, we added experts in areas of **GBV, SRH, Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA), logistics, supply chain management, procurement, and humanitarian/emergency response coordination**. Ongoing efforts are progressing to recruit experts in **communications** and **access/civ-mil**.



Roster Diversity and Expertise



Our recruitment efforts reflect a commitment to diversity and expertise:

- **Gender Balance:** 42% of new roster members are women.
- **Geographic Representation:** New experts come from **31** nations ensuring diverse perspectives and regional knowledge.
- **Language Skills:** Fluency in key languages like **French, Arabic, and Spanish** facilitates effective communication and coordination in diverse humanitarian settings.



Story from the Field

Dr. Jean Marie Rukanigitero, SRH Specialist,
Cameroon

My experience as a UNFPA surge deployee in Kousseri, Far North **Cameroon**, highlighted the vital role of humanitarian workers in complex crises. Deployed to a region ravaged by floods, I focused on providing essential **SRH and GBV services** to vulnerable populations, particularly women and girls, amidst over 1.2 million people affected and 453,661 internally displaced. Surge assignments with UNFPA offer a unique opportunity to apply my expertise in critical humanitarian work, directly contributing to addressing complex development challenges. These deployments play a vital role in saving lives by improving reproductive health services and combating gender-based violence in emergency settings.

While these assignments provide invaluable experience, they also present challenges. Working in conflict zones, experiencing stress or burnout due to the intensity of the work, and disrupting family life are all part of the sacrifice made in service to others. Despite these challenges, the rewards are immense. Engaging with beneficiaries has taught me the importance of active coordination and planning with local communities and other sectors. Cultural sensitivity and adaptability are essential for providing appropriate care, and continuous learning and flexibility are crucial for success.

As a surge deployee, I made substantial contributions to UNFPA's response to the flooding crisis. Implementing the Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) for SRH proved crucial in addressing the urgent needs of those affected. My role ensured access to life-saving SRH services, preventing and managing the consequences of sexual violence, reducing sexually transmitted infections (STIs)/HIV transmission, and preventing maternal and newborn mortality.

I am proud of the impact we made in mitigating the health risks faced by vulnerable populations in the aftermath of this devastating natural disaster. UNFPA's work in providing improved reproductive health services and strengthening humanitarian response efforts is critical, ensuring that the needs of women and girls are met even in the most challenging circumstances.



Stories from the Field

Alma Pezerović, Deputy GBV AoR Coordinator and Ioanna Kotaki Tzagnoun, GBV Specialist, Ukraine

Being based in Dnipro, in the heart of Eastern Ukraine—where the war has wrought devastation—while working with the **GBV AoR** has been profoundly rewarding and impactful. Operating in a region deeply affected by conflict, we had the opportunity to collaborate closely with local authorities, stakeholders, and humanitarian partners to strengthen coordination mechanisms and urgently address the needs of the most vulnerable, particularly women and girls. Establishing robust coordination with local authorities was crucial, as their resilience and commitment to serving their communities provided a foundation for effective service delivery. Through capacity-building efforts, fostering partnerships, and inter-sector synergies we work to ensure access to life-saving information and critical services.

I helped with these efforts not just as a job, but as a calling. We changed lives facing unimaginable adversity. Helping evacuate people from the front lines showed me how urgent our mission was. We had to reach the most vulnerable, those in hard-to-reach areas. Every moment spent coordinating these efforts reminded me that our quick, strategic responses could save people from further suffering.

The harrowing realities of conflict-related sexual violence, particularly in isolated regions, underscore the immense challenges of our mission. Establishing an effective support system today is pivotal; it fortifies the very foundation we need to assist GBV survivors when the storm of war finally subsides, ushering in a demanding era of comprehensive healing and support.



UNFPA's leadership in Eastern Ukraine has been vital in providing survivor-centered interventions, coordinating aid efforts, and prioritizing support for women and girls affected by the crisis.

Standby Partnership

Standby partners play a crucial role in UNFPA's ability to respond to humanitarian crises. They help identify and mobilize qualified experts to support UNFPA country offices, particularly in areas like reproductive health, gender-based violence, and maternal health. Thanks to the dedication of standby partners, UNFPA can respond more quickly and effectively to crises, ensuring that essential and life-saving services reach those who need them most.



Beyond their financial contributions, standby partners provide crucial administrative, financial, and logistical support, which significantly enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of UNFPA's surge operations. In the past year alone, standby partners have enabled the deployment of **53** experts, representing an investment of close to **USD 2.5 million**.

We extend our sincere gratitude to all our standby partners. Their unwavering commitment to advancing the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls in crisis settings is invaluable.

UNFPA is also grateful for the support provided by the Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance of USAID in facilitating deployments.



Stories from the Field

Lana Simpraga, Humanitarian Coordinator, Eastern Caribbean



Deployed as **Humanitarian Coordinator** to the Eastern Caribbean in response to Hurricane Beryl, I witnessed the devastation wrought by natural disasters.

The hurricane caused significant damage to infrastructure, including health systems, water, power, and agriculture.

Beyond the visible impacts, women and girls faced severe consequences, such as limited access to essential services, increased displacement, and heightened risks of GBV.

During my deployment, I collaborated with the **UNFPA** Country Office team, GBV specialists, and SRH surge specialists to address the crisis's aftermath.



Surge deployment allowed me to use my expertise to support coordination efforts and learn further about the intersection of gender inequality and climate change. Collaborating with UNFPA colleagues in the Eastern Caribbean, advocating for women and girls, and being welcomed by the communities we serve was deeply rewarding. Surge deployments like this demonstrate the profound impact of UNFPA's work in humanitarian emergencies.

We strengthened the capacity of key stakeholders (government and regional partners) to respond to the emergency and support recovery. We trained health and GBV workers on safe referral pathways, case management, and clinical care for survivors of sexual violence. We established a referral pathway to enhance access to SRH and GBV information and services, ensuring survivors received timely care. This laid the foundation for a more coordinated response to GBV and SRH needs, prioritizing women and girls.

As Humanitarian Coordinator, I advocated for the needs of women and girls, working closely with the humanitarian community. Through mutual efforts, we delivered a comprehensive response to the emergency and laid the foundation for early recovery.





Looking Ahead

UNFPA remains dedicated to strengthening its surge capacity to ensure a swift and effective response to humanitarian emergencies worldwide. By investing in our roster, training, and partnerships, we can continue to meet the evolving needs of affected populations and uphold the rights and dignity of women and girls in crises.

Humanitarian crises are increasing in scale and complexity, demanding a dynamic and robust response. To meet these challenges, **UNFPA** is dedicated to:

- **Expanding Surge Response Roster:** We will continue to actively recruit a diverse pool of surge personnel, ensuring broad geographic and linguistic representation.
- **Forging New Partnerships:** We will strengthen our network of standby partners by enhancing existing and developing new partnerships.
- **Enhancing Training Resources:** We will maintain and expand **Humanitarian 101** training modules to encompass a wider range of essential topics. This resource will be accessible to all staff and experts interested in surge deployments.

A comprehensive approach is crucial for **UNFPA** to effectively protect the reproductive health and rights of women and girls. It will ensure we remain adaptable and responsive in the face of humanitarian crises.



Surge Team

If you have any questions on surge or need support, please reach out to our Surge Team.



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