



مركز شؤون المرأة - غزة
Women's Affairs Center - Gaza



**Research Paper on:
The Psychological Impacts of the October 2023 War
on Palestinian Displaced Women in Displacement
Camps and Shelters**



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2024

Contents:

Summary	3
Introduction	4
Paper Objectives	5
Paper Scope	5
Paper Terminology	5
Background	5
Paper Methodology	6
Findings	7
Gender-Based Violence (GBV):	8
1- Anxiety and Stress	9
2- Depression	10
3- Somatic Symptoms:	11
4- Family Relationships	12
5- Multi-Sectoral Interventions	14
Recommendations	15
References List	16
Appendixes	18

The Psychological Impacts of the October 2023 War on Palestinian Displaced Women in Displacement Camps and Shelters

Summary:

This paper aimed to examine the psychological ramifications of the October 2023 war on displaced women residing in displacement camps and shelters and to identify the barriers they encounter in accessing psychosocial support services. A descriptive-analytical approach was employed, utilizing various data collection tools, including the administration of (278) questionnaires to displaced women in central and southern areas of the Gaza Strip, as well as carrying out (2) focus group discussions (FGDs) involving (21) displaced women. Also, (10) in-depth interviews with displaced women and survivors of violence and (12) semi-structured interviews with service providers working directly with displaced women were conducted. In addition, the researcher conducted a comprehensive review of previous relevant literature.

The paper concluded several key findings, the most significant of which are:

Nearly half of the respondents, 47.1%, were displaced from the Middle Governorate, Dier Al-Balah, while 43.9% were displaced from Khan Younis Governorate. The vast majority, 90.6%, reported that their homes had been either partially or completely destroyed during the ongoing war. Approximately half of the participants, around 46.8%, experienced the loss of a family member, while over three-quarters, about 79.4%, confirmed being subjected to various forms of violence, be it physical, psychological, economic, social, or sexual violence.

These women exhibited symptoms of psychological disorders, such as anxiety, stress, and depression, as well as somatic and psychosomatic disorders. Notably, 92.4% experienced an overwhelming sense of fear at the possibility of losing a family member. Additionally, the majority of respondents, 85.1%, reported a significant deterioration in familial relationships, which adversely impacted their psychological well-being.

Based on these findings, the study recommends implementing multi-sectoral interventions aiming at enhancing the health and psychological well-being of displaced women. Suggested interventions include: delivering targeted psychological support services tailored to the specific needs of displaced women, providing vocational training for these women to enhance their economic resilience, raising community awareness about their rights, fostering and strengthening social and community networks that provide mutual support and assistance during crises, and developing digital platforms that enable displaced women to connect with counselors, thereby ensuring their access to comprehensive, confidential, and dignified psychological support services.

Introduction:

In the context of the ongoing genocide in the Gaza Strip, psychosocial experts have reported a concerning rise in post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among women and children. This psychological distress is primarily triggered by direct exposure to the Israeli occupation's war crimes or by witnessing the graphic, traumatic content of these crimes widely circulated on social media, including images of dismembered bodies of martyrs.

These traumatic experiences manifest in behavioral changes and the deterioration of mental health, leading to increased cases of depression.¹ The overall psychological well-being of civilians is severely compromised, with the widespread massacres, killings, loss of family members, destruction of homes, displacement, and deprivation of basic needs such as food, water, medical care, and safety, exacerbating their suffering. Furthermore, the destruction of mental health facilities and the consequent lack of access to psychological care, coupled with the scarcity of psychotropic medications for patients,² further aggravate these challenges.

During the ongoing genocide, women have been facing a severe lack of essential resources critical for maintaining a dignified standard of living, particularly the insufficiency or poor quality of water, sanitation, sewage, and electricity services. The situation for displaced persons deteriorates further during winter, as rainwater leaks into their tents, which lack effective heating solutions.

These adverse circumstances exacerbate health risks and promote the spread of diseases, disproportionately affecting women who require specialized care, including cancer patients, women with chronic illnesses, pregnant women, and women with disabilities (WWDs).

For example, Noorhan Abu Nahl, a woman seven months into her pregnancy, reported experiencing dehydration and intestinal infections, which nearly resulted in fetal loss had it not been for the timely intervention of doctors.

In addition, the severe humanitarian crisis, compounded by the scarcity of fuel and gasoline, forced Lina Abu Awda to resort to using an animal-pulled cart as a means of transportation to the hospital while in labor. She recounted, "I lost my privacy in what could be the most vulnerable moments for a woman. I was screaming in the street from the pain, with everyone watching me; I could not bear the pain of the contractions, not to mention that the movement of the cart exacerbated the pain due to the destroyed streets."³

Women in the Gaza Strip have also been suffering due to a lack of privacy in displacement camps and shelters, where they are subjected to unembellished conditions while striving to meet their most basic survival needs. Moreover, throughout this war, many women have been compelled to undertake physically strenuous tasks traditionally considered unsuitable for their physical nature, such as chopping wood for cooking and enduring prolonged exposure to smoke from burning wood and paper.

1. Bisharat, Hanan (2023). The Psychological Effects of War on Gaza's Children Leave Scars on Their Behavior, Lives, and Future - Al-Ghad Newspaper. <https://2u.pw/OFvqoPfs>

2. Independent Commission for Human Rights (2024). Fact Sheet on the Impact of Israeli Aggression on Mental Health in the Gaza Strip. <https://www.ichr.ps/reports/8981.html>

3. Matar, Mirna Mohammed (2024). The Psychological Impact on Women During War.

According to estimates from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), more than (690,000) menstruating women and girls have very limited access to menstrual hygiene products.⁴

Paper Objectives:

- 1- To identify the mental health challenges experienced by displaced women as a result of the genocide in the Gaza Strip.
- 2- To assess the availability and effectiveness of psychosocial support services provided to displaced women.
- 3- To develop a set of recommendations that aim at mitigating the severity of the psychological impacts displaced women are experiencing as a consequence of the war.

Paper Scope:

Time Frame: The paper was conducted in July 2024.

Geographical Scope: Displacement camps and shelters across the Middle and Southern Governorates of the Gaza Strip (Deir al-Balah, Khan Younis, Rafah).

Paper Terminology:

Psychological Effects: These refer to the psychological responses individuals exhibit as a consequence of encountering traumatic events during crises.⁵

It is the sense of fragmentation arising from a traumatic incident that abruptly disrupts the external representation of an individual's identity.⁶

In this paper, the researcher operationally defines psychological effects as the emotional and affective responses of an individual triggered by adverse conditions. These effects are assessed through participants' scores on the psychological effects scale employed in this research.

Background:

Mental health becomes critically imperative during times of war and crises, particularly for women who face substantial psychological strains, arising from the loss of security, instability caused by displacement, repeated evacuations, destruction of property, and the death of family members. Research indicates that displaced women exhibit higher levels of anxiety and depression compared to their non-displaced counterparts.⁷

Displacement during armed conflicts has profound psychological implications that affect all segments of society; wars have devastating consequences on communities, not only through the destruction of infrastructure and economies but also by disrupting the fundamental sense of security within these societies. Displaced persons commonly experience intense emotional distress, including, sadness, grief, and denial, as they struggle to process the trauma they have endured. They also share a collective aspiration to recover what has been lost, including their homeland, sense of belonging, and personal security.⁸

4. Anadoul News Agency (2023). Gazan Women Live in Unbearable Conditions and Suffer from Loss of Privacy.

5. Abu Tarboush, Ruba (2014). The Social and Psychological Effects of the Syrian Crisis on Syrian Refugee Children in Jordan.

6. Esther L. Merwi & Sandra J. Weiss (2011). Toward a Unified Definition of Psychological Pain

7. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2024). Global Statistical Trends on Forcible Displacement.

8. Radif, Saif Mohammed, et al. (2022). Psychological Pain of Women During Conflict and Displacement.

The occupation forces have forcibly displaced thousands of women and girls from northern Gaza, compelling them to flee on foot for approximately (22) kilometers under heavy fire, toward the southern area of the Gaza Strip, an area the Israeli occupation claimed to be safe.

This mass displacement imposed new significant challenges on women, who were thrust into an environment that lacked basic living conditions and any form of the traditional protection mechanisms.⁹ According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the global number of forcibly displaced persons has amounted to (117.3) million by the end of 2023. Of these, approximately (1.7) million Palestinians have been internally displaced due to the Israeli genocide in the Gaza Strip between October and December 2023, constituting over 75% of Gaza's population.¹⁰ The war has led to profound gendered impacts on women and girls, including heightened rates of gender-based violence (GBV), the loss of educational opportunities, and a decline in both physical and mental health conditions.¹¹

Data from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), the Government Media Office, and statements by the Minister of Women's Affairs indicate that during the 2023 war, (4) out of (5) women in the Gaza Strip are consuming only half of their regular food intake before the war. Furthermore, (8) out of (10) women rely on food aid, whereas 83.5% of this aid has failed to meet their families' needs.

The Israeli war machinery has displaced approximately one million women and resulted in the deaths of (10,800) women. Moreover, women constitute 75% of the injured persons and 70% of the martyrs and missing persons. The ongoing war has led to a 300% surge in miscarriages among pregnant women, as well as a rise in premature births, both attributed to stress and psychological trauma. On top of all this, approximately 89% of the offices of organizations that provide services to women have sustained partial or complete damage.

Paper Methodology:

The paper aimed to assess the psychological impacts of the October 2023 war on displaced women aged 18 and above, residing and displaced in the central and southern areas of the Gaza Strip, specifically Deir Al-Balah, Khan Younis, and Rafah. A descriptive-analytical methodology was employed to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. The study relied on a diverse range of information sources, including relevant literature and previously published studies on the topic. Four field data collection tools were developed following consultations with a pilot test of displaced women. These tools included (278) questionnaires administered to displaced women in the central and southern areas of the Gaza Strip, (2) FGDs involving (21) displaced women, (10) in-depth interviews with displaced women and survivors of violence, and (12) semi-structured interviews with service providers working directly with displaced women, including psychologists, decision-makers, and specialists.

9. Al-Halabi, Madelin (2024). Gazan Women During Genocide: Women, War, and Resistance.

10. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2024). Global Statistical Trends on Forcible Displacement.

11. UN Women Gender Alert (April 9, 2024) on The Impact of the War in Gaza on Women and Girls.

Furthermore, a comprehensive review of relevant literature was also conducted as a secondary source of information.

Findings:

This section presents the findings of the paper by addressing the research questions and objectives, and by reviewing the key conclusions drawn from the research tools. The findings were obtained through both quantitative and qualitative tools, aimed at identifying the psychological effects of the October 2023 war on women in the central and southern governorates of the Gaza Strip.

Violence and Psychological Disorders:

Women in the Gaza Strip have been subjected to various forms of violence directly perpetrated by the occupation forces, including killing, injuries, displacement, arrests, and loss, not to mention the destruction of their homes.¹² The absence of economic, health, and social security has undeniably strained family dynamics, often leading to elevated rates of domestic violence against women.¹³ According to psychologist Ola Helles, who works with displaced women in displacement camps and shelters, women exposed to direct violence exhibit more severe symptoms of PTSD.

Displaced women, in particular, have experienced a rise in domestic violence incidence owing to the growing psychological and social pressures.¹⁴

Wars inflict catastrophic consequences on the health and well-being of populations, often leading to the destruction of communities and families and the disruption of the social and economic fabric of societies. The implications of war encompass long-term physical and psychological bearings on both adults and children. Thus, the World Health Organization (WHO) has raised concerns regarding the worsening mental health conditions of the survivors and their families in the Gaza Strip owing to the ongoing war. Dr. Ahmed Al-Munthari, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean, stated that (120,000) residents of the Gaza Strip are suffering from mental illnesses as a result of the current war.¹⁵

Demographic Characteristics:

Age Group: The largest percentage of respondents (40.6%) fell within the 18–29 age group, followed by more than one-third (35.3%) aged between 30 and 45 years. Additionally, 16.9% of respondents were between 46 and 59 years old, while 7.2% were women aged 60 years or older.

Table No. (1) Distribution of the sample across age groups.

Age	29-18	45-30	59-46	60+	Total
No.	113	98	47	20	278
Percentage	%40.6	%35.3	%16.9	%7.2	%100

12. Haboush, Mohammad Majid (2024). Gaza Women on Women's Day: Catastrophic Numbers Reflecting the Horrors of the War

13. Emily Jacob (2020). How Can Gender-Based Violence Be Reduced During the COVID-19 Crisis. CARE Organization.

14. In-depth interview with Ola Helles, Psychologist – 22.07.2024

15. Article on the Seventh Day Platform (20.10.2023). WHO: 120 Thousand Persons Suffer from Mental Illnesses Owing to the War. Available at: <https://2u.pw/bss3qsOb>

Gender-Based Violence (GBV):¹⁶

The incidence rates and severity of GBV against women and girls did not diminish during the genocidal war; on the contrary, its prevalence significantly increased.

The majority of respondents (87.4%) reported experiencing violence at varying frequencies, with 25.2%, 37.4%, and 24.8% reported experiencing it consistently, intermittently, and infrequently, respectively. Only 12.6% of respondents indicated that they had not encountered any form of violence.

Table No. (13) Distribution of the sample in relation to exposure to GBV

Exposure to Violence	Consistently	Intermittently	Infrequently	Never	Total
No.	70	104	69	35	278
Percentage	%25.2	%37.4	%24.8	%12.6	%100

Regarding the specific forms of violence experienced by women during the war, psychological violence emerged as the most prevalent, impacting 79.4% of respondents. This high prevalence is attributed to the fact that psychological violence is not only a primary form of violence but also a consequence of other forms of violence. Furthermore, 37.4% of respondents reported experiencing economic violence, including deprivation of resources; 23.9% were subjected to social violence; and 23% reported experiencing physical violence. Nearly one-fifth, 18.1%, of the women who faced violence indicated they had been subjected to sexual violence or harassment, while 3.3% reported being exposed to cyber violence. However, it is worth highlighting that access to electronic communication and social media was limited during the war.

* "I experienced immense pain and suffering. Physical violence was not the sole reason for my trauma; I also endured unbearable accusations of adultery. These allegations intensified my suffering and hindered my recovery. It felt as though I was judged twice: first, through the violence I experienced, and second, through the unjust accusations that compounded my pain," mentioned Hanan, a 26-year-old married woman.

16. Gender-based violence refers to harmful acts directed at an individual based on their gender. It violates fundamental human rights, including the right to life, liberty, security, dignity, equality, non-discrimination, and physical and mental well-being. This form of violence reinforces gender inequalities.

Table No. (14): Forms of Violence Experienced by Displaced Women

Forms of Violence	No.	Percentage
Psychological / Verbal	193	79.4%
Physical	56	23.0%
Sexual / Harassment	44	18.1%
Economic and Deprivation of Resources	91	37.4%
Social	58	23.9%
Cyber Violence	8	3.3%
Total	243	100%

1. Anxiety and Stress:

Displaced women have exhibited heightened levels of anxiety as a natural response to the persistent stress induced by the ongoing challenges of displacement and exposure to daily traumatic events during the genocide. Consequently, the war, compounded by the associated hardships, such as the loss of loved ones, has led to elevated levels of anxiety and stress-related disorders, including panic and acute fear, which are often triggered by recurrent military attacks. In this context, the findings indicated that women have experienced momentous levels of anxiety and stress, with a relative weight of 83.4%. These women reported increased irritability, characterized by heightened sensitivity to stimuli, reflected in a relative weight of 88.8%. They also exhibited substantial mental preoccupation and distraction as well as heightened sensitivity to sudden loud noises, with relative weights of 88.7% and 88.4%, respectively. Furthermore, 76% of respondents reported difficulties in self-expression while 75.2% expressed a persistent fear of harassment.

* "The war has resulted in a marked increase in anxiety and stress levels among the general population, but particularly among women, who are the most vulnerable group facing various daily threats to their lives and personal safety. These challenges, coupled with the difficulties in accessing basic services, exacerbate the feelings of anxiety arising from the fear of losing loved ones and destruction of property. Such adverse conditions contribute to the development of psychological disorders, including chronic anxiety, sleep disorders, and difficulties with concentration. This situation requires a comprehensive response that aims to deliver psychological support and effective coping strategies to mitigate these negative psychological impacts," clarified Dr. Naeem Al-Abadla

* "Fatima, 38 years old, said, "I am in a constant state of fear of being harassed, especially after experiencing verbal and sexual abuse while seeking assistance. This trauma significantly hinders my ability to voice my feelings to others due to overwhelming fear, further intensifying my daily stress."

Table No. (16): Relative Averages of Items of Anxiety and Stress Axis

Item	Major	Medium	Minimum	Relative Weight
I am experiencing anxiety, stress, and increased irritability and my anger is easily triggered	٪73.0	٪20.5	٪6.5	٪88.8
I am constantly preoccupied and distracted	٪72.3	٪21.6	٪6.1	٪88.7
I am constantly fearful of being subjected to harassment	٪53.2	٪19.1	٪27.7	٪75.2
I am easily startled by sudden loud noises	٪71.6	٪21.9	٪6.5	٪88.4
I find it challenging to articulate my emotions	٪52.5	٪23.0	٪24.5	٪76.0
The relative weight of anxiety and stress axis	٪83.4			

2. Depression

Findings indicated that displaced women have exhibited elevated levels of depression and mood disturbances, characterized by persistent sadness and diminished interest in caring for their personal appearance. According to the findings, surveyed displaced women have suffered from depression to a significant extent, with a relative weight of 87.3%. The pervasive presence of death has compounded their emotional distress, as 91.1% of respondents expressed a belief that death was imminent. Additionally, they reported experiencing a persistent fear over relatively minor or insignificant matters, with a relative weight of 89.3%. As a consequence of the trauma inflicted by the horrors of war and the pervasive dread of death, a substantial number of women, 88.8%, expressed a desire for death for themselves and their families, wishing that they had not lived through these days of the war.

* "I always have a feeling that death could occur at any moment. I have developed an intense fear of everything, even trivial matters, and I often wish that my family and I had died instead of living through these cruel days," declared Maryam, 45 years old.

This pervasive despair has led women to markedly neglect their physical appearance and personal hygiene, which has contributed to their feelings of premature aging, as indicated by a relative weight of 87.5%. Despite the proximity of people and tents in the displacement camps, 79.9% of these women reported experiencing a profound sense of loneliness.

"Even though I live in a crowded camp with many people, I have a terrifying feeling of loneliness. I have lost interest in taking care of myself; the exhaustion and stress have made me feel as though I have aged twenty additional years. Even my husband has started to mock me for my dark skin, which has been burned by the sun," shared Ibtisam, a 38-year-old displaced woman.

Table No. (17) Relative Averages of Items of the Depression Axis

Item	Major	Medium	Minimum	Relative Weight
I feel that death is imminent	٪77.7	٪18.0	٪4.3	٪91.1
I constantly feel a persistent fear over relatively minor or insignificant matters	٪73.7	٪20.5	٪5.8	٪89.3
I wish that my family and I had died rather than lived through this war	٪75.9	٪14.7	٪9.4	٪88.8
I am indifferent to my appearance and feel that I am aging prematurely	٪70.1	٪22.3	٪7.6	٪87.5
I feel lonely despite being surrounded by others	٪60.8	٪18.0	٪21.2	٪79.9
Relative weight of the depression axis	٪87.3			

3. Somatic Symptoms:

The psychological repercussions of the war on participating women have extended beyond increased levels of anxiety, tension, depression, and fear; they also manifested in various physical symptoms. In this regard, Maysa Al-Sanea has documented several psychosomatic symptoms observed among women in displacement camps and shelters¹⁷, the most important of which include: muscle and back pain, indigestion, gastrointestinal disorders, sleep disorders, appetite changes, chronic fatigue, dermatological issues, high blood pressure, and dyspnea, as well as migraines. The majority of respondents reported experiencing bodily symptoms, with a relative weight of 83.7%. Furthermore, 89.8% of respondents consistently experienced panic attacks, dyspnea, and chest tightness, and 87.5% of them reported significant physical pain in various body parts without any identifiable medical cause. Many women also described a persistent sense of lethargy and fatigue, even in the absence of substantial physical effort, with a relative weight of 85.5%, while 77.3% of respondents reported a loss of appetite, with many experiencing weight loss.

* "When I connect to the internet and see images of martyrs and massacres, I lose I lose my appetite entirely. I start experiencing severe abdominal cramps and become irritable, often venting my anger on my children by hitting them. My weight has dropped significantly, and my husband has started to express his dissatisfaction with my appearance, threatening to divorce me," reported Alia, 34 years old.

17. Interview with Maysa Al-Sanea, Case Manager at Tamer Institute – 18-07-2024

Table No. (18) Relative Averages of Items of the Psychosomatic Symptoms Axis

Item	Major	Medium	Minimum	Relative Weight
I frequently experience a persistent sense of lethargy and fatigue	٪64.7	٪27.3	٪7.9	٪85.5
I am experiencing appetite and weight loss	٪48.9	٪34.2	٪16.9	٪77.3
I am experiencing physical pain without an identifiable medical cause	٪68.7	٪25.2	٪6.1	٪87.5
I frequently experience shortness of breath and chest tightness during episodes of extreme fear	٪74.5	٪20.5	٪5.0	٪89.8
I frequently experience stomach pain whenever I listen to the local news	٪49.3	٪36.3	٪14.4	٪78.3
Relative weight of the psychosomatic symptoms axis	٪83.7			

4. Family Relationships:

The deterioration of women's psychological well-being is significantly correlated with poor familial relationships with their husbands, and thus, 85.1% of respondents confirmed that the loss of privacy and the pervasive feelings of fear, tension, and daily pressures related to securing food and water have led to substantial disturbances in familial relationships. The vast majority of respondents also expressed a profound fear of losing a family member during the war, indicated by a relative weight of 92.4%. Furthermore, 87.9% of these women reported experiencing elevated levels of anxiety regarding their children's futures, stemming from the uncertainty surrounding their prospects.

The overcrowded arrangement of tents has exacerbated this lack of privacy, with 84.9% of respondents reporting that their relationships with their husbands have been adversely affected. In addition, 84.3% of respondents indicated a collapse and disintegration of familial structures within their households.

* "During the war, my husband divorced me and kidnapped my daughter. I became homeless and separated from my family, who remained in Gaza City, while I fled south with my husband. I later ran into my husband at the clinic, where, with the assistance of bystanders and security personnel, I was able to reclaim my daughter. Currently, I am taking shelter in a school without any form of support. It is just my daughter and me," recounted Khadija, a 25-year-old displaced mother.

Frequent displacements, occurring up to 10 times in some cases, have intensified feelings of fear, anxiety, and tension among women, which in turn have adversely impacted their relationships with their husbands. Throughout these displacements, 81.8% of women reported experiencing mistreatment by their husbands, and 79.3% expressed a profound sense of helplessness in addressing their children's behavioral issues, which have arisen from exposure to new environments and interactions with children from diverse backgrounds. As a result, some mothers have resorted to using violence against their children as disciplinary measures.

* "I find myself in an extremely challenging situation, and the overwhelming pressure I am undergoing has made me increasingly short-tempered with my children. Every time we are forced to relocate, my children exhibit unusual behaviors, which leads me to respond harshly. I feel like my relationship with them has deteriorated beyond repair," declared Hala, 40 years old.

Table No. (19): Relative Averages of Items of the Familial Relationships Axis

Item	Major	Medium	Minimum	Relative Weight
The lack of privacy has negatively impacted my relationship with my husband	٪65.0	٪24.6	٪10.4	٪84.9
I constantly experience profound fear of the potential loss of a family member during the war	٪82.7	٪11.9	٪5.4	٪92.4
I feel that familial structures within my household have collapsed and disintegrated	٪66.5	٪19.8	٪13.7	٪84.3
I perceive my children's future as uncertain and unclear	٪74.6	٪14.5	٪10.9	٪87.9
My husband has been mistreating me during displacement	٪63.8	٪17.9	٪18.3	٪81.8
I constantly feel a profound sense of helplessness with my children and, as a result, I often resort to violent disciplinary measures with them due to their inappropriate behavior and language acquired during displacement	٪58.5	٪20.7	٪20.7	٪79.3
Relative weight of the familial relations axis				٪85.1

5. Multi-Sectoral Interventions:

Multi-sectoral interventions aim to integrate efforts of civil society organizations across various sectors, such as health and education, to deliver comprehensive and sustainable solutions to complex challenges, thereby enhancing the well-being of both individuals and communities. In the context of the ongoing genocide, women are recognized as one of the most vulnerable populations in need of targeted mental health and social support strategies to address their specific needs effectively.

The findings related to multi-sectoral interventions designed to support women's mental health during the war revealed that access to these services has been insufficient, as confirmed by 59.7% of respondents. This underscores the government's failure to implement effective health interventions and provide the necessary initial psychological support for women and their families. Displaced women confirmed receiving such services during the war, with a relative weight of 60.6%. Meanwhile, 60.3% of respondents perceived that they had benefited from the psychological programs provided by various organizations and sectors. Moreover, with relative weights of 59.6% and 59.4%, respectively, women reported receiving adequate psychological support from NGOs and CSOs following displacement and found the psychological interventions provided in shelters and displacement camps to be sufficient in addressing their emotional and psychological needs. Regarding the continuity of service provision, women indicated, at a relative weight of 58.5%, that the psychological support from relevant organizations has extended beyond initial interventions and was sustained over time.

* "Psychologists have encountered major challenges in displacement camps and shelters when providing effective psychological support, primarily due to the absence of structured management within these facilities, which impeded the coordination of mental health programs and interventions. The lack of safe, designated spaces necessary for conducting these activities has further exacerbated the strains of providing support in such unstable settings. These factors have collectively heightened the burdens on psychologists, significantly complicating their efforts to deliver comprehensive psychological care."¹⁸

* "My husband and I attended a psychological support session, and for the first time in my life, I truly understood the concept of psychological support. We enjoyed the session and felt relieved! I felt an overwhelming sense of happiness, and I believe now I love my husband even more. I even requested additional sessions with the psychologist," stated Aisha, a 41-year-old displaced married woman.

18. Interview with Mona Abu Jari, Psychologist at Aisha Association for Women and Child Protection – 19-07-2024

Table No. (20): Relative Averages of Items of the Multi-Sectoral Interventions Axis

Item	Major	Medium	Minimum	Relative Weight
I received adequate psychological support from NGOs and CSOs following displacement	٪30.6	٪17.6	٪51.8	٪59.6
I perceive that I have significantly benefited from the psychological support programs offered by various sectors	٪32.0	٪16.9	٪51.1	٪60.3
The psychological interventions implemented in shelters and displacement camps were sufficient in addressing their emotional and psychological needs	٪29.1	٪20.1	٪50.7	٪59.4
The interventions provided by the governmental health sector were effective in delivering essential psychological first-aid support to me and my family	٪30.6	٪20.5	٪48.9	٪60.6
The psychological first aid services offered were continuous and sustained, extending beyond initial support	٪29.5	٪16.5	٪54.0	٪58.5
The relative weight of the multi-sectoral interventions with the purpose of maintaining mental health	٪59.7			

Recommendations:

- Promote the provision of comprehensive psychological support services.
- Implement targeted vocational training programs.
- Strengthen collaboration among various sectors.
- Increase community awareness.
- Develop and implement awareness campaigns.
- Formulate supportive government policies.
- Foster continuous research initiatives.
- Strengthen social and community networks.
- Create user-friendly digital platforms and applications for psychological counseling that facilitate confidential communication between women and counselors
- Develop media programs that showcase the success stories of women who have overcome the adversities of the war, thereby inspiring others and enhancing self-confidence.
- Empower women through initiatives that enhance their roles in community leadership, promoting their active participation in decision-making processes.

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Appendixes:

Appendix No. (1) Names of Experts for Semi-Structured Interviews

Abdullah Al-Khatib	Associate Professor of Psychology and Head of the Psychological Counseling Department at Al-Aqsa University
Naeem Al-Abadleh	Associate Professor of Psychology at Al-Aqsa University
Iman Kalloub	Educational Supervisor and Psychologist at the Ministry of Education
Samah Abu Ghayyad	Administrative Director of Women's Programs Center – Al-Nuseirat
Maysa Al-Sanea	Case Manager at Tamer Institute
Noor Al-Iman Ismail	Psychologist at NGOs
Darin Abu Lubda	Psychologist at NGOs
Ola Hilles	Psychologist at NGOs
Mona Abu Jay	Psychologist at NGOs
Amal Eid	Psychologist at Women's Affairs Center