



Making our First Response our Strongest

MENTORING HUMANITARIAN RESPONDERS PROGRAM

The violence in Syria and Iraq has caused the displacement of millions and has resulted in the worst refugee crisis since World War II. Staggering numbers of men, women and children urgently require food, shelter, and safe passage from war. Though refugees and displaced people have been forced to leave their lives behind, their experiences of war and violence follow them: millions of people still bear physical and emotional trauma from torture, rape, and other forms of conflict-related sexual violence.

First responders - Humanitarian workers like medical providers, psycho-social professionals and more, are among the first to interact with survivors during and in the aftermath of conflict. The information they encounter is often valuable in eventually holding perpetrators accountable. Yet humanitarian workers are not, and not supposed to be international investigators.

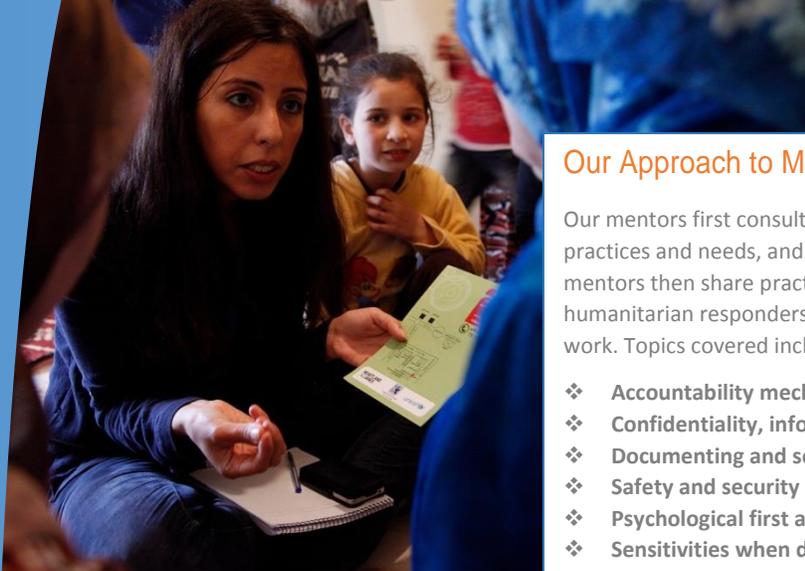
This is where Justice Rapid Response (JRR) comes in with our **Mentoring Humanitarian Responders Program**. Our expert mentors specialize in sexual and gender-based violence, psychosocial support, forensic sciences, and child protection. They provide practice-based mentorship to recipient organizations working with populations displaced by conflict on how their work intersects with accountability processes.

This is a new program for JRR. Since the program's inception in 2015, we have successfully launched **9 missions, deploying 21 experts**. This pilot program focuses on the survivors of the conflicts in Syria and Iraq. Our mentoring is tailored to meet urgent needs on the ground, and is developed in full consultation with partner organizations. As a result of our work, first responders are better equipped to recognize and safeguard potential evidence, and minimize the danger to survivors who confided in them.



Our expert mentors can be made available rapidly:

Upon inquiry, the needed expertise is identified quickly, and provided to the partner organization for its selection. We then arrange for the release of the chosen expert(s) and facilitate the deployment process.



Our Approach to Mentoring

Our mentors first consult with the partner organization on current practices and needs, and tailor the mentoring on this basis. The mentors then share practical skills and techniques, and work with humanitarian responders to integrate these techniques into their daily work. Topics covered include:

- ❖ **Accountability mechanisms and referral options**
- ❖ **Confidentiality, informed consent and respect**
- ❖ **Documenting and securing information**
- ❖ **Safety and security**
- ❖ **Psychological first aid**
- ❖ **Sensitivities when dealing with victims of SGBV**
- ❖ **Interviewing techniques**

Examples of Our Work

SYRIA

Collecting Medical and Forensic Evidence

Five years of conflict in Syria have left over 100,000 people dead and millions displaced. Doctors and other medical professionals operating inside Syria and in surrounding countries are often the first to examine injuries of survivors, thus making them best-placed to collect and preserve safely credible evidence of serious human rights abuses.

JRR provided a forensic pathologist and a clinical forensic medicine expert to mentor Syrian doctors and lawyers on documenting sexual violence and torture committed in the context of the Syrian conflict. Mentoring included awareness of the role of first responders and their impact on current and future accountability mechanisms, psycho-social and trauma counselling, witness safety and support, and sensitivities in dealing with sexual and gender-based violence in the region.

JORDAN

Seeking Justice for Victims of Sexual Violence

As millions of Syrian refugees flood into surrounding countries, Jordan is now hosting 1.4 million refugees. Approximately 23.5 per cent of all Syrian refugees are women, who continue to be at risk for rape and other sexual and gender-based crimes. Children comprise 30.8 per cent of Syrian refugees in Jordan.

JRR deployed a psychosocial expert, forensic doctor and an interpreter to a civil society organization providing medical, psychosocial, child protection, and rehabilitation services for displaced Iraqis and Syrians in Jordan. Mentoring included sensitivities in addressing sexual and gender-based violence in conflict in the regional context including witness safety and support, psycho-social and trauma counseling, interviewing techniques, confidentiality, informed consent and respect, international criminal justice and human rights frameworks, accountability and referral options, documenting and securing information, and safety and security.

IRAQ

Supporting Child Survivors of Conflict Related Violence

The conflict in Iraq has had profound consequences on civilians. Nearly one-third of Iraq's population needs humanitarian assistance, of which 4.7 million are children. Women and children have been disproportionately and differentially affected by the crisis.

To support first responders working with children, JRR's mentoring program prioritized a survivor-centered approach so as to protect children from further harm; provide safe spaces to share their experiences and voice concerns, assist survivors and guardians in making choices and seeking help, cope with fear, and provide basic psycho-social support. Mentees developed new skills to put into practice when dealing with child survivors of conflict-related violence, including child-friendly interviewing techniques, confidentiality, informed consent with children, respect, safety, and security of the child.

About JRR

Justice Rapid Response (JRR) is a multi-stakeholder mechanism that manages the rapid deployment of human rights and criminal justice professionals from a stand-by roster. We deploy our experts upon the request of the international community to investigate, analyze and report on situations where serious human rights violations and international crimes have been reported.

Since we began operations in 2009, JRR has built a growing roster from all corners of the globe, currently numbering over 550 strong. These experts have been specifically trained to carry out investigations under international conditions in courses held all over the world. Today over 100 countries, institutions and organizations participate in JRR's work. This has already enabled us to provide experts for more than 80 missions. JRR's goal is to ensure that through timely, professional, and impartial investigations of mass atrocities, victims receive justice and would be perpetrators are deterred. It is with these tools that post-conflict societies can



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