



Inter-Agency Perception Survey

Ban on Female Humanitarian Aid Workers

Conducted by: Awaaz Afghanistan - The Inter-Agency Communication and Accountability Center (ICAC)

Date: 8 - 18 January 2023

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Perception Survey Summary

[Awaaz Afghanistan](#) conducted a descriptive quantitative remote (phone) perception survey with support from UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), Accountability to Affected Population Working Group (AAP WG), and Gender in Humanitarian Actions Working Group (GiHA WG). The survey was conducted following the de-facto authorities' ban on female NGO staff on 24th December 2022, as a result of which the majority of I/NGOs suspended their activities.

The survey aimed to collect affected populations' perceptions of the result of the ban on female humanitarian aid workers. Overall, the survey is designed to seek people's perceptions of their access to humanitarian services after the decree. Nearly all NGO aid agencies operating in Afghanistan have fully or partially suspended their operations, while different initiatives continue to persuade the de-facto authorities to rescind or clarify their decision which has a negative impact on thousands of female humanitarian workers who are principal bread-winners for their households and needed to reach female vulnerable groups in affected communities. This remote perception survey gathered feedback from 728 (30% female; 70% male) field-based respondents from 33 provinces covering 174 districts from the affected populations who gave consent to respond to the survey.

The survey concludes that the majority of the respondents are disappointed with the banning of female humanitarian aid workers and have provided a negative perception of the de-facto authorities decree, which has a negative impact on the access of the affected population to humanitarian assistance, particularly women and girls.

About 54% of the respondents indicated that in addition to more women and men losing employment opportunities, the ban would profoundly affect the labour market and the private life of men as well. About 16% of the respondents indicated that more women would lose their jobs.

98% of the respondents indicated that the de-facto ban on female humanitarian workers would make it more difficult for women and girls in the community to access humanitarian services, and about 57% of respondents reported that the affected population would lose their access to the basic services, particularly women and children.

67% of the respondents acknowledged that the de-facto authority decree on banning female humanitarian aid workers had suspended planned humanitarian assessment and/or assistance delivery in their communities.

Survey Methodology

Based on the request from UNHCR Afghanistan, in collaboration with GiHA and AAP Working Groups, Awaaz Afghanistan humanitarian helpline was used for conducting the perception survey. The questionnaire was developed by UNHCR and consulted with a round of inputs from the GiHA and AAP, and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). Awaaz operators were trained on the set of questions to be asked from each caller and gathering data on google sheets. The survey round one was open from 8 to 11 January and round two from 15 to 18 January 2023.

The questionnaire was asked in the local languages (Dari and Pashto) and took an average of 8-10 minutes to complete. Similar to other surveys, the perception survey employed polar interrogative questions.

Detailed Findings

The survey collected perception of **728** respondents in response to questions below who provided consent to continue with the survey:

- **30%** of respondents were female, and **70%** were male, including **6%** children (below 18).
- Data collected from 33 provinces (174 districts). Kabul, Nangarhar, Herat, Ghor and Balkh accounted for the top five caller locations. Missing respondents from Nuristan.
- The mean and median ages of respondents are 18-40 (about **64%** of all respondents).
- **13%** of the respondents stated that they have a form of disability (People with Disabilities).



33 Provinces

- Kabul
- Nangarhar
- Herat
- Ghor
- Balkh

174 Districts

1. Have you heard of the humanitarian female worker ban?

To better understand the number of respondents who know about the de-facto authorities' decree on banning female humanitarian aid workers where the analysed data indicated that **92%** of the respondents are aware of the decree, while **8%** reported that they are not aware of this decree.

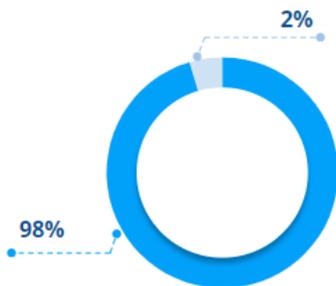
In addition, information was compiled by the survey about the most used mediums to know about the ban. **42%** of the respondents reported that they got aware of the ban through radio; **24%** TV; **21%** word of mouth and **13%** through social media.

2. Has the ban on female humanitarian workers made accessing humanitarian services more difficult for you and your community?

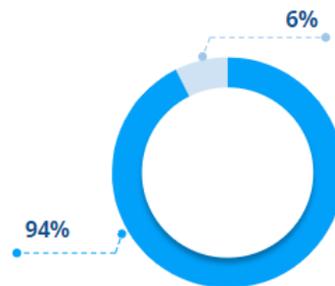
94% of the respondents indicated that the ban on female humanitarian aid workers affected their access to humanitarian services and challenged the communities. **6%** of the respondents reported that access to humanitarian services is the same as before.

2.2. The respondents who selected "NO" in question (1) - **52** out of **58** respondents indicated that the ban will impact communities' access to humanitarian services in the long term.

People are aware of ban on humanitarian workers (98%)

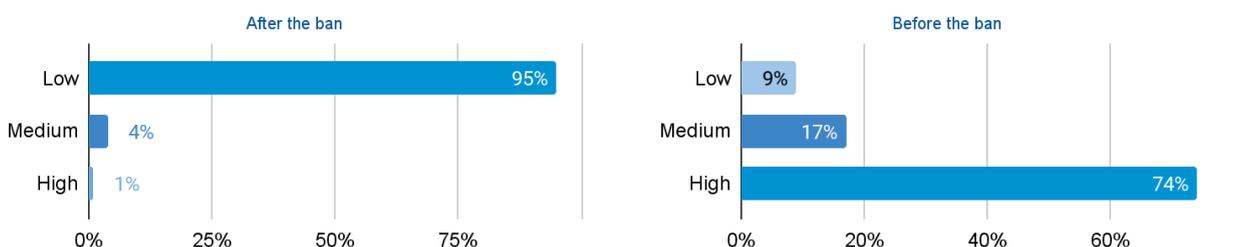


Affected population access to humanitarian services (94%)



3. How would you rate your access to humanitarian services before/after the ban?

Respondents at the ground level were asked to rate their access to humanitarian services after the de-facto authorities' decree on banning female humanitarian aid workers. The analysed data showed that **95%** of the respondents selected "low" and rated that the ban would have a negative impact on their access to humanitarian services. While **74%** of the respondents reported that their access to the humanitarian services were "high" before the ban.



4. Do you think the ban will make it more difficult for women and girls in your community to access humanitarian services?

98% of survey respondents declared that the ban will have a negative impact and influence on women and girls' access to humanitarian services across the country and will make it difficult to involve them in the humanitarian programme cycle, while a low portion 2% of the respondents were not sure and reported "No".

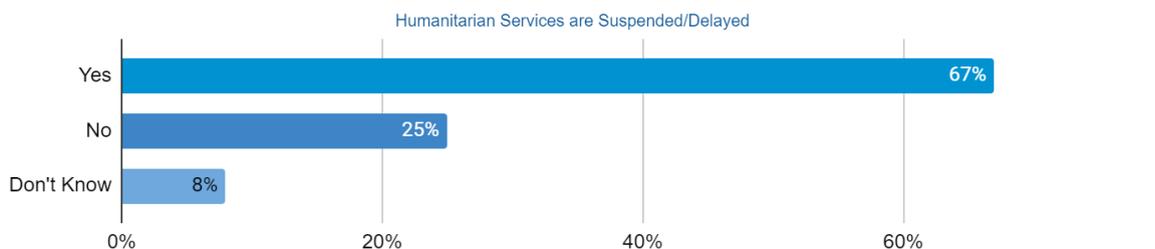
4.2 The respondents who selected "NO" in question (1) - 51 out of 58 respondents agreed that the ban will create ground-level challenges for women and girls to have access to humanitarian services.



5. Has any planned humanitarian assessment and/or assistance delivery in your community been suspended due to the ban?

This question examined the delay and suspension of the planned humanitarian assessment and/or assistance delivery in their communities after the ban on female humanitarian aid workers. Based on the findings from the survey, more than 67% of survey respondents have noted that the ban has suspended/delayed some of the planned humanitarian services in their communities, while the remaining 25% reported "No" and 8% said they don't know.

5.2 The respondents who selected "NO" in question (1) - 42 out of 58 respondents provided a negative perception of this question and said that the planned humanitarian services are suspended or delayed due to the de-facto authorities' decree on female humanitarian aid workers.



6. How do you think the ban would impact you and your community members' access to humanitarian aid and assistance in the future?

The survey respondents are asked to select the most appropriate options for this question. Although as reported in the survey, the following findings combined.

i. More people will lose employment opportunities.

- a. **16%** indicated - women will lose employment
- b. **54%** indicated - women and men will lose employment
- c. **1%** indicated - men will lose employment

ii. It will lead to reduced access to aid and assistance for the affected population

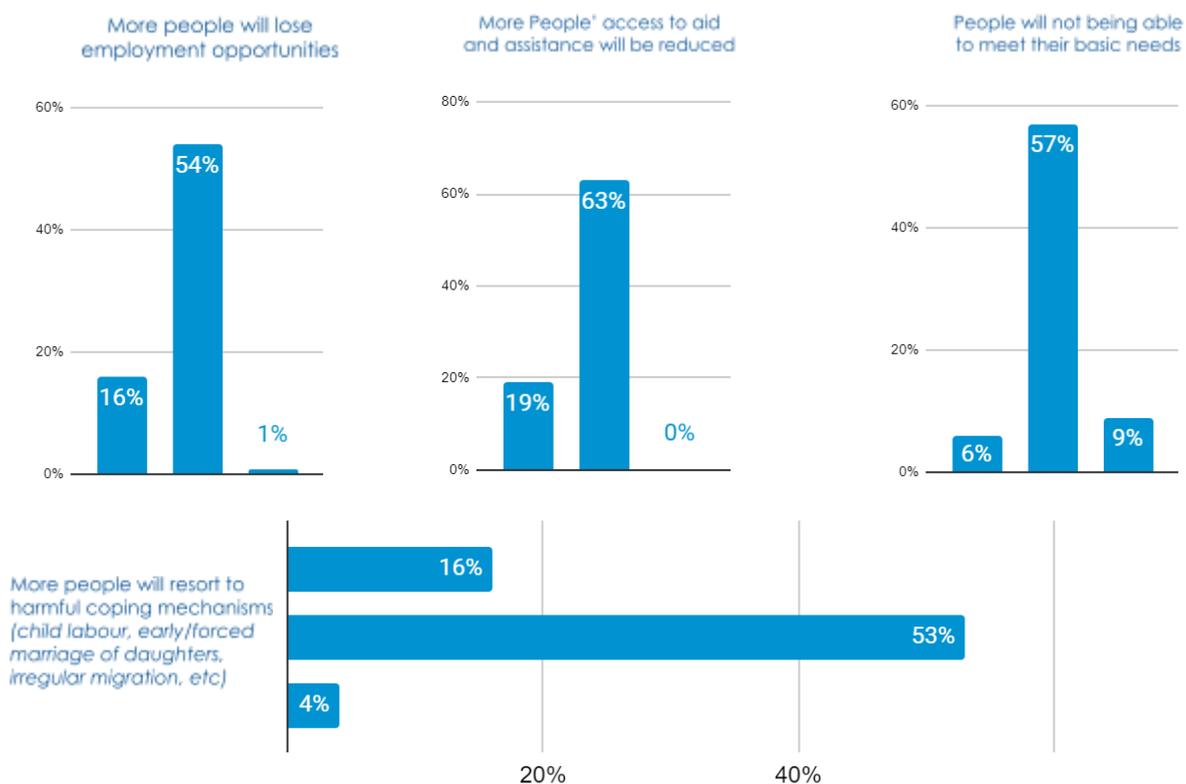
- d. **19%** reported - women's access to humanitarian aid will be reduced.
- e. **63%** reported - women's and men's access to humanitarian aid will be reduced.
- f. **0.2%** reported - men's access to humanitarian aid will be reduced.

iii. It will lead to more people being unable to meet their basic needs

- a. **6%** reported - Women won't be able to meet their basic needs.
- b. **57%** reported - Women and men won't be able to meet their basic needs.
- c. **9%** reported - Men won't be able to meet their basic needs.

iv. More people will resort to harmful coping mechanisms such as child labour, early/forced marriage of daughters, irregular migration, etc.

- a. **16%** reported - More women will resort to harmful coping mechanisms
- b. **53%** reported - More women and men will resort to harmful coping mechanisms
- c. **4%** reported - More men will resort to harmful coping mechanisms.



As noted in the survey results, the respondents also believe that the ban on female humanitarian aid workers will increase insecurity and also increase the mental health-related diagnosis and trends across the country which will require further attention and efforts to address.

"In my view, the de-facto authorities should give females the right to work so that they can support their families financially."

Male respondent from Herat

"I have no other option but to sell my daughter if I do not receive humanitarian assistance timely."

Male respondent from Balkh

Conclusion

Awaaz and relevant stakeholders carried out this survey to gauge the affected population's perception of the de-facto authorities' decree banning female staff from working, which resulted in the suspension of several humanitarian organisations' activities across Afghanistan. The preliminary perception survey concludes that the affected population believe that their access to humanitarian services would be limited, and this will create challenges for women and girls to obtain humanitarian services in their communities. Currently, the humanitarian community is supporting millions of affected populations in Afghanistan, providing them access to education, health, shelter, protection, livelihood, food and water. According to the respondents' perception, the ban will not only cause the suspension of humanitarian services, but also result in the loss of thousands of jobs (particularly for women), which could trigger an enormous economic crisis in the near future.