

UN Warns Middle East Crisis Threatens Women Jobs



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UN agencies warn the ongoing Middle East crisis could cost Arab States up to 194 billion U.S. dollars in economic output and disrupt labour markets, with women facing disproportionate risks.

A policy brief by UN Women and the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

(ESCWA) estimates 3.6 million jobs could be at risk across the region, while around 4 million more people may be pushed into poverty.

Women are expected to be most affected due to structural inequalities, high levels of informal employment, and concentration in vulnerable sectors such as education, health, and public administration.

The report estimates between 34,000 and 56,000 women's jobs could be lost in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, and Syria in the short term, rising to nearly 80,000 under a high-impact scenario. It warns fiscal tightening, hiring freezes, wage cuts, and delayed salaries could further worsen conditions for women workers.

Moez Doraid, UN Women Regional Director for the Arab States, said the crisis is not experienced equally and warned that failure to protect women's livelihoods could deepen inequality and reverse progress in women's economic empowerment.

The brief urges expanded income protection, safeguarding social spending, support for women-led businesses, and improved gender-disaggregated labour data monitoring across the region.