

To the Minister of Interior

MODEL LETTER

His Excellency Hussein al-Majali
Minister of Interior
Ministry of Interior
PO Box 100
Amman
The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

Your Excellency,

I am writing to express my deep concern that many of the refugee women and girls who fled the war in Syria partly out of fear of rape and sexual assault, are still at risk of sexual and gender-based violence in the Za'atri refugee camp in Jordan, where they are now living. Amnesty International has received information from women rights activists, aid workers and some refugee women that refugee women and girls from Syria are sometimes targeted for a range of sexual and gender-based violations including sexual assault and harassment and early and forced marriages. Activists and aid workers have also confirmed some reports of rape and that domestic violence in the camp is quite high.

Insecurity in the camp is of great concern. Many people in the camp told Amnesty International that criminals operate with impunity. These reports have also been confirmed by UNHCR in its document *Zaatari Governance Plan*, issued in June 2013.

For women and girls, the general insecurity in Za'atri is exacerbated by other difficulties that have a particular impact on them. Many women told Amnesty International that the communal toilets are unlit – the lights are often stolen by individuals from within the camp, it seems. As a result they feel unsafe using the toilets, especially after dark. In particular, they fear they will be subjected to sexual violence or harassment or otherwise attacked. Furthermore, in some areas of the camp, men have made public announcements that the toilets are unsafe and that women should not go there after 10pm. As a result, many women avoid the toilets, especially at night, which has had serious health consequences for women and girls such as urinary tract infections. Amnesty International spoke to three doctors working in the camp, who confirmed that the urinary tract infections were the result of women restraining themselves from urinating.

I urge you to:

- Enhance women and girls' safe and secure access to all public spaces in the Za'atri camp, including the toilets, by preventing vandalism of the lighting, and taking other security-enhancing measures designed and implemented in coordination with UNHCR and in consultation with the residents of the camp, especially women and girls.

Yours Sincerely,