

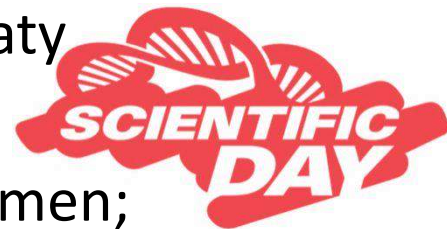
Implementing mental health into primary care for war wounded and displaced population: The experience of Hajjah-Yemen

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YEMEN

Context

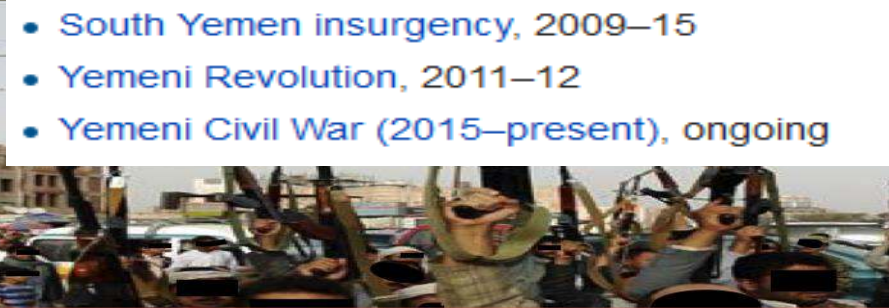
&

Background



Yemeni Civil War may refer to:

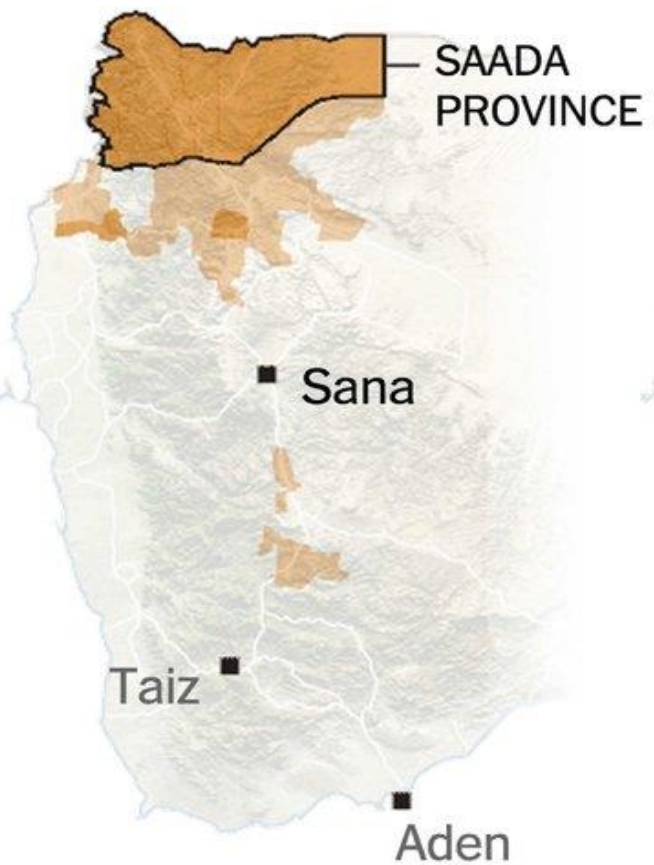
- Alwaziri coup, February – March, 1948
- North Yemen Civil War, 1962–70
- Aden Emergency, 1963–67
- Yemenite War of 1972
- NDF Rebellion, 1978–82
- Yemenite War of 1979
- South Yemen Civil War, 13–25 January 1986
- Yemeni Civil War (1994)
- Al-Qaeda insurgency in Yemen, 1998–2015
- Houthi insurgency in Yemen, 2004–15
- South Yemen insurgency, 2009–15
- Yemeni Revolution, 2011–12
- Yemeni Civil War (2015–present), ongoing



HIGH RISK OF CONFLICT RELAPSE!

Spread of the Conflict

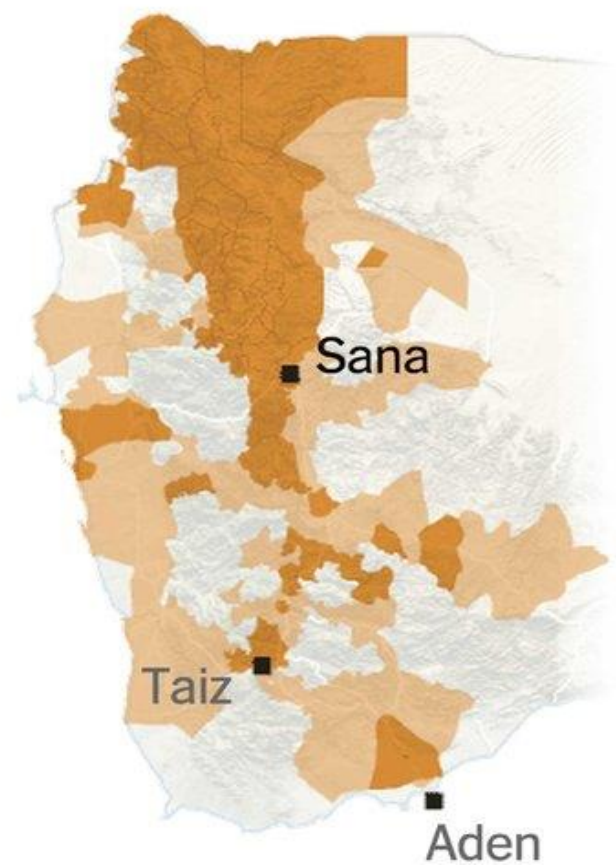
JAN. 2014



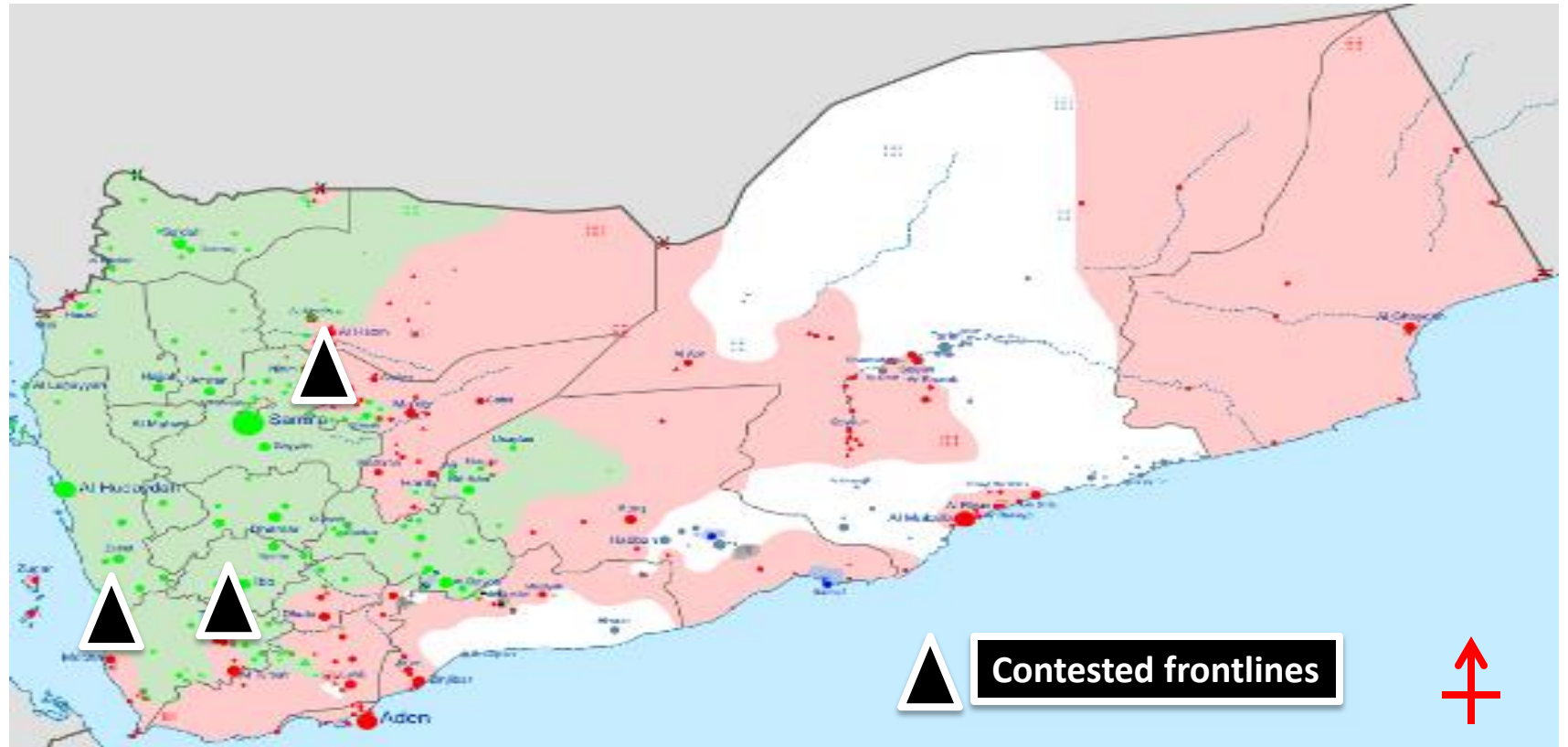
JULY 2014



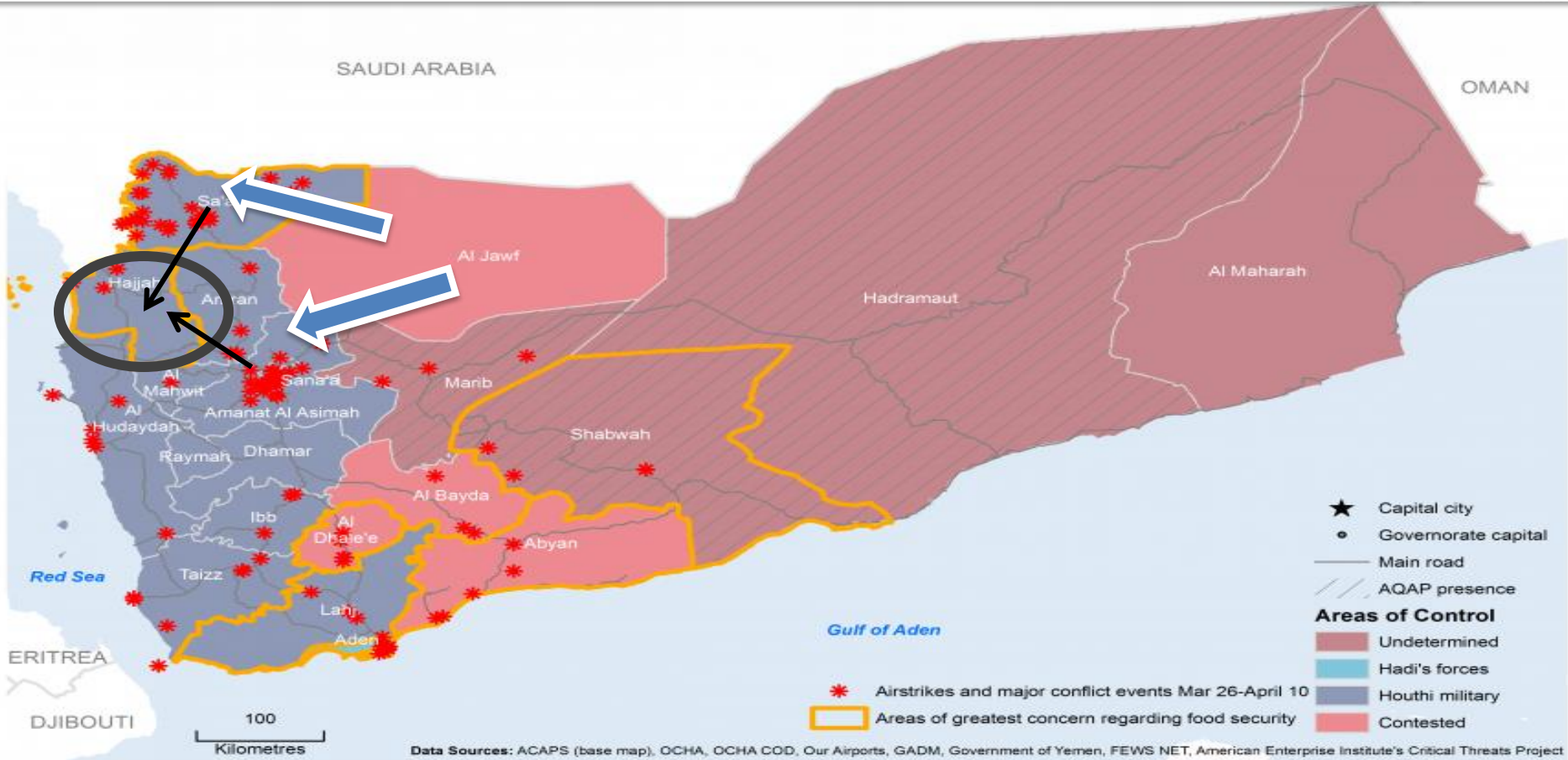
MARCH 2015



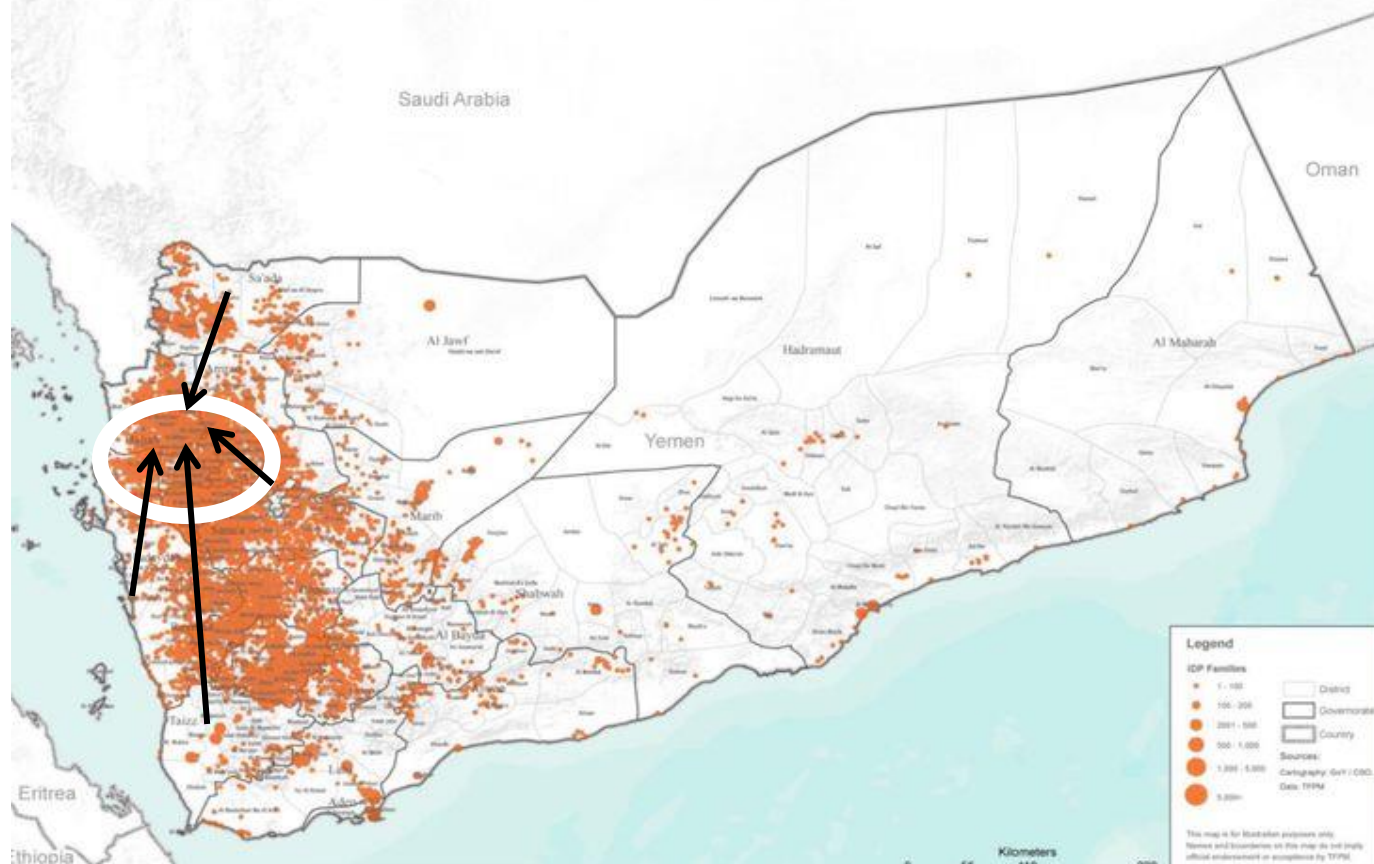
Right now....



Airstrikes & IDP Movements to Hajjah



MAP 1: DISTRIBUTION OF IDP HOUSEHOLDS BY LOCATION OF DISPLACEMENT



Hajjah is host to **nearly half of the country's** estimated **2.76 million** internally displaced persons (IDPs)

MSF Projects in Yemen, April 2016



MSF in Hajjah

- Present since August 2015
- Supporting Al Jamhoury Hospital, Hajjah
- ER, ICU, Surgery, IPD, Maternity, & Referrals
- In 2016 – supported 3438 war-wounded and survivors
- Lack of healthcare access, water & sanitation, malnutrition, and airstrikes

Mental Health in Yemen

Before & After the War



Image courtesy, Sputnik News

Mental health resources in Yemen before the war..... (in 2011)

- 0.21 psychiatrists / 100,000
- 18.5 psychiatric beds / 100,000
- 0.13 psychiatric nurses / 100,000
- 0.17 psychologists / 100,000
- 0.09 social workers / 100,000

- Total: approx 40 psychiatrists / 197 psychiatry nurses

Mental health resources in Yemen before the war..... (in 2011)

- 4 Mental Hospitals / 850 beds
- 12 psychiatric clinics in General Hospitals
- 3 Psychiatric clinics in Prisons
- 5 Private Nursing Homes / 45 Private clinics
- 4 Departments of Psychiatry in Faculty of Medicine/ 11 Departments of Psychology in Faculty of Arts

Mental Health Beliefs/Practices

- Attitude closely links mental health symptoms with traditional beliefs such (evil eye/sorcery)
- Social stigma towards MH illnesses
- Traditional faith-healers play a big role

Epidemiology (1/2)

- WHO (2001) estimated that 20% of the population suffers from behavioral/emotional disturbances
- Potentially 4M (2001) in need of support
- Approximately 29,519 patients frequented MH centers in 2006.

Epidemiology (2/2)

- Ranking: (1)Paranoia & Schizophrenia/ (2) Depression & Anxiety/(3) Epilepsy
- Suicide:
 - Worldwide :16 individuals / 100,000
 - Arab world: 6 individuals / 100,000
 - Yemen: data scarce; 243 in 2006 (from Yemen Interpol), 75% of these cases used self-firing of the weapon.

MoH & Mental Health in Yemen

- Till date,
 - Officially approved mental health policy doesn't exist
 - Lack of mental health legislation
 - Mental health expenditure data not available from the MoH

Mental Health in Hajjah

- No psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, or MH specialists in Hajjah
- Hosts approximately **half of the 2.7M IDPs**
- No other NGOs involved / closed down due to budget problems
- MSF included MH intervention in **Nov 2016**

MH Care in Hajjah

- IDP suffer more from **generalized body ache, anxiety, and depression.**
- **Women** more **vulnerable** to the above
- Girls from marginalized communities vulnerable to harassment at checkpoints
- Women & girls are usually denied access to basic services, resources, and opportunities
- Survivors of GBV have no access to basic services

Psychological Stressors

- **Men:** loss of **livelihood**, restricted **mobility**, forced to perform **women specific roles** (leads to domestic violence)
- **Women:** fear of violence, fear for their **children** and **family** members, **arrest or detention** by armed groups
- **Girl children:** being **denied** access to **school**, forced into **early marriage**, harassment in public places

Methods - Objectives

- We collected and analysed data on all patients who received individual psychological support from MSF **between November, 2016 and February, 2017**.
- Further to this, we summarise the lessons learned regarding the **challenges and impact** of MSFs mental health work in this context

SAUDI ARABIA

OM

A* = Al-Mahwit



YEMEN

Arabian Sea

Socotra archipelago

(Yemen, gov. Hadhramout)

Gulf of Aden

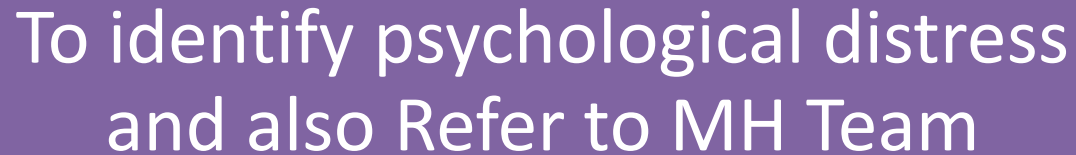
First Steps of Implementation



Training of MoH Counselors



Training of Medical Staff : MSF and
MoH



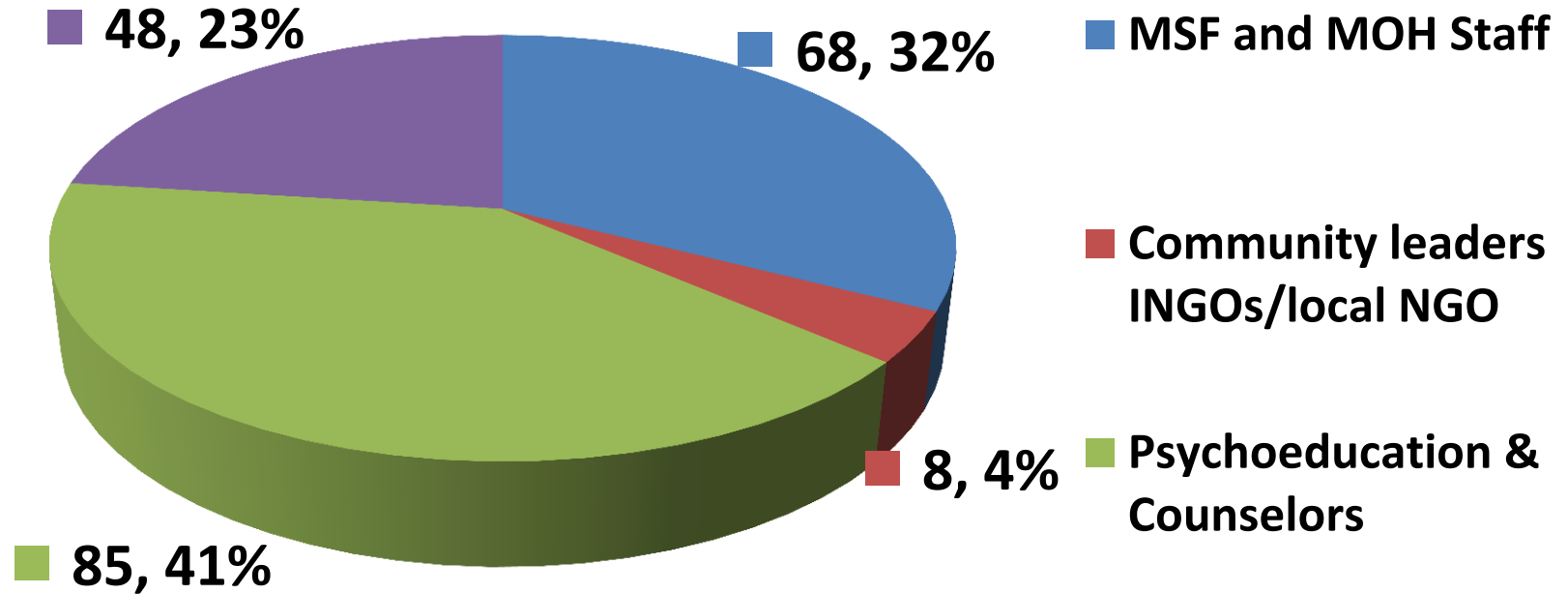
To identify psychological distress
and also Refer to MH Team

MSF Psychologist training medical staff



Credits: Ryan Fattouch

Source of Referral



With the Counselors

Group Intervention → **2224** Beneficiaries



With the Psychologist

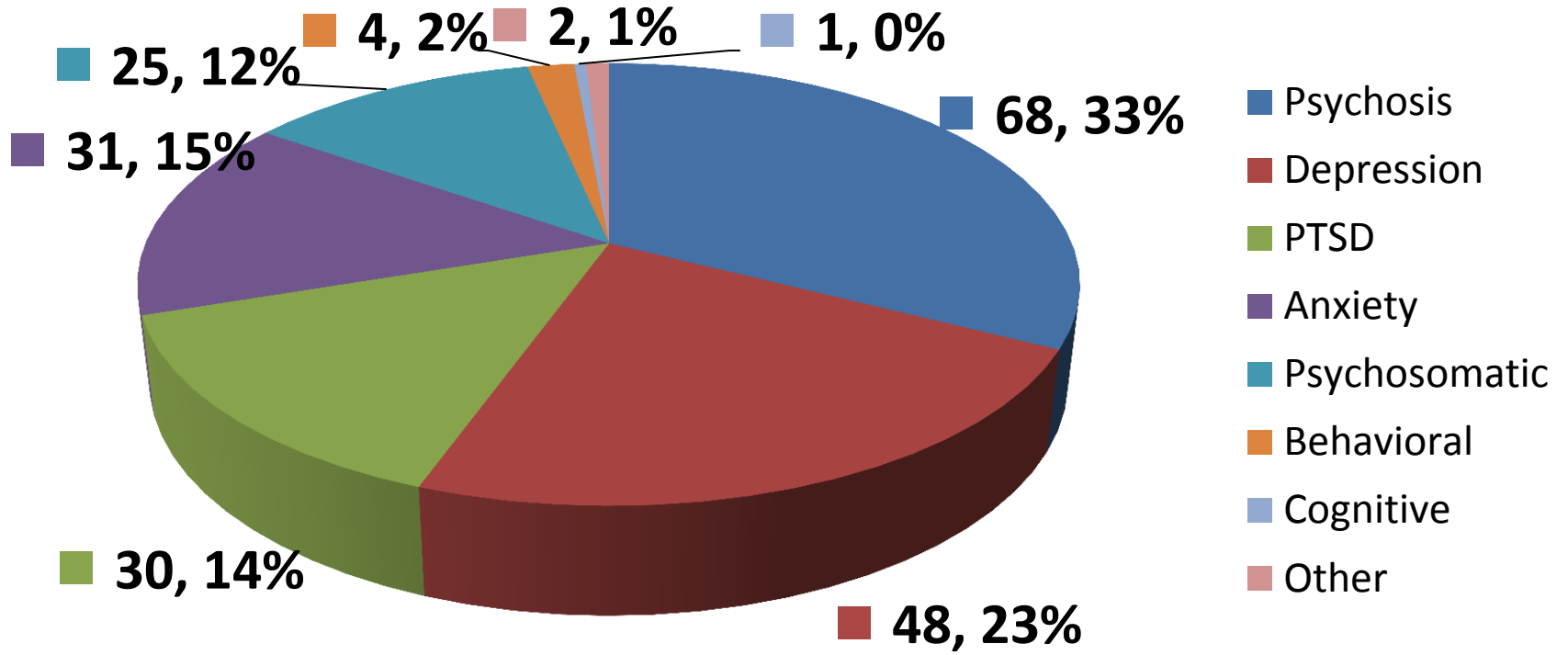
Individual Psychological Support → **209** Beneficiaries



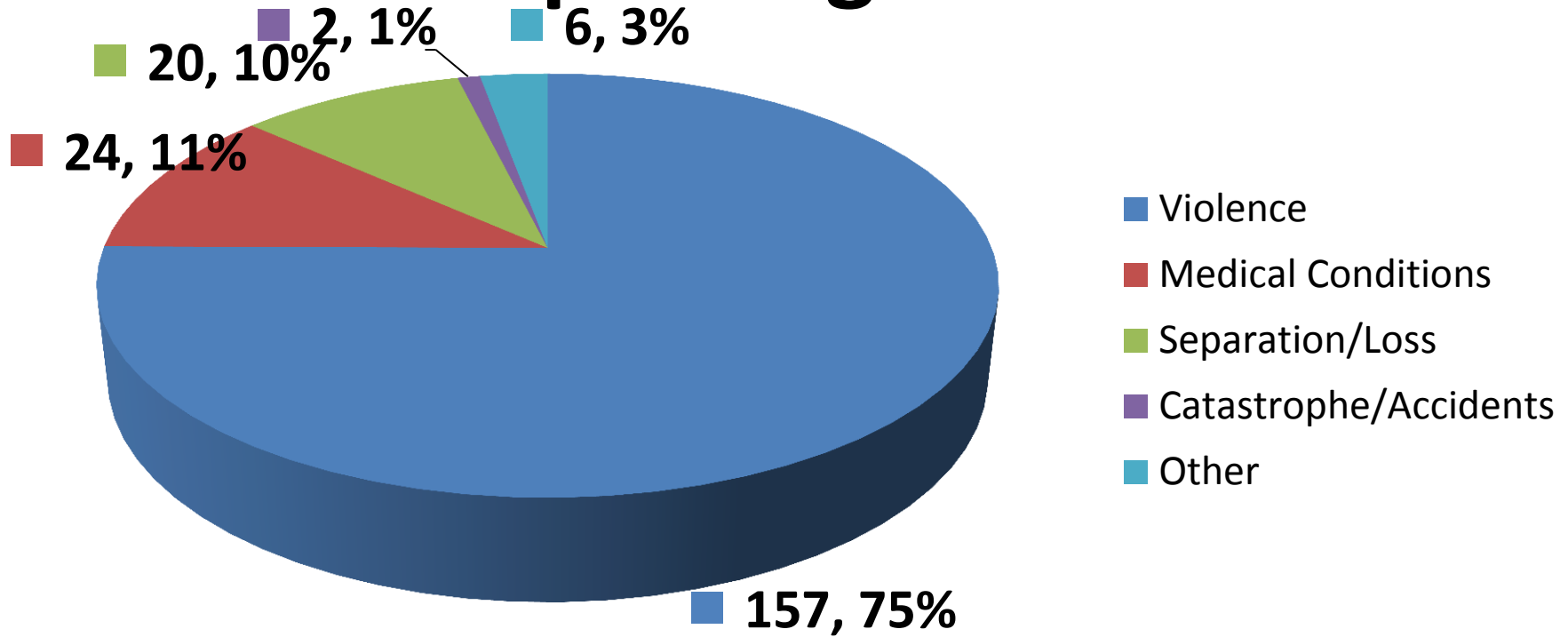
With the Psychologist

Psychotherapeutic & Group Counselling → **11** Beneficiaries

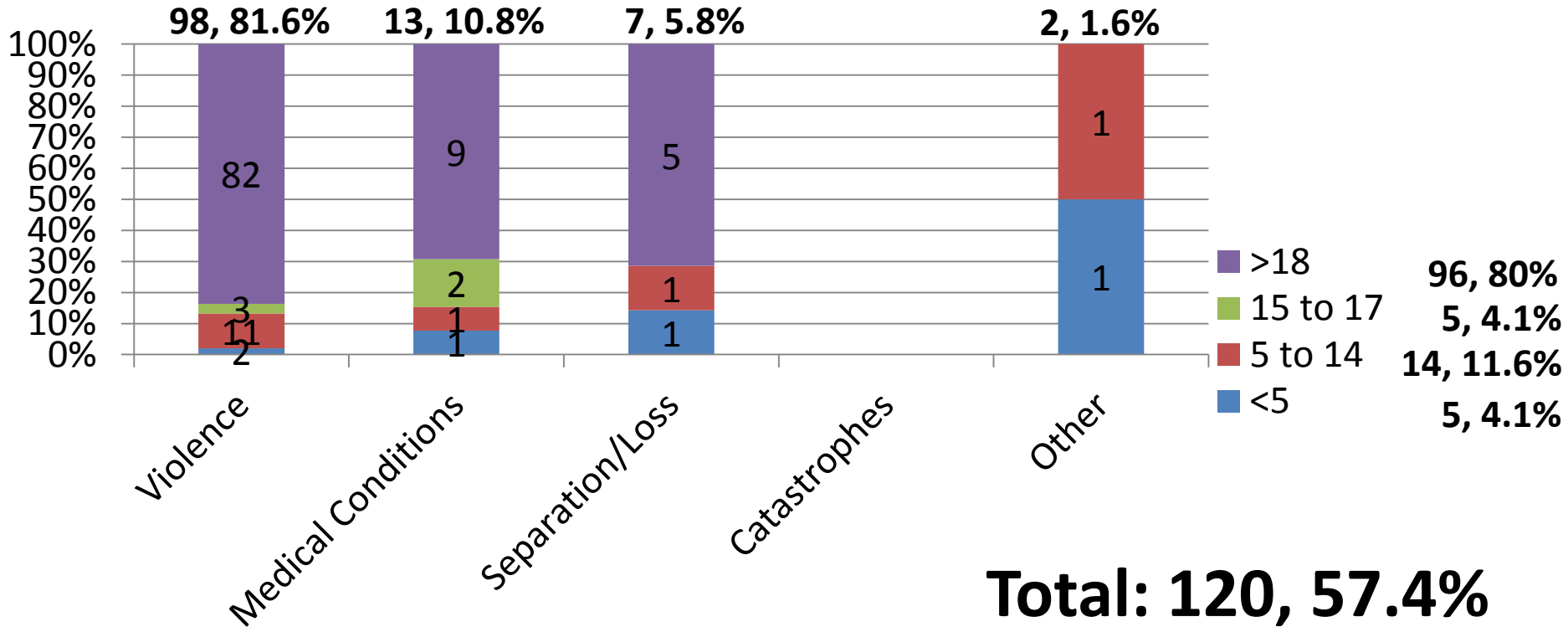
Diagnostic Breakdown



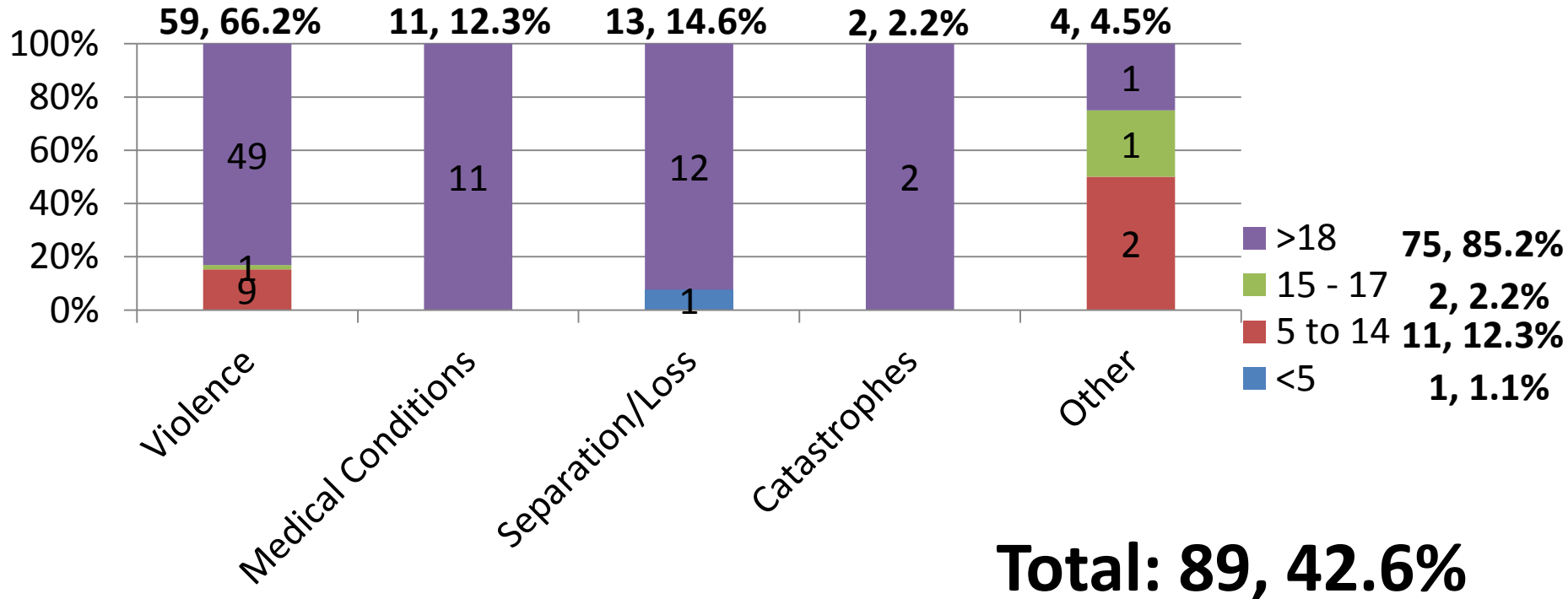
Precipitating Events



Precipitating Factors in Different Age Groups - Males



Precipitating Factors in Different Age Groups - Females



Challenges

- Recruitment of staff
- Stigma (Sexual Violence – HIV)
- Cultural attitudes that hinder MH interventions
- External pressure on the selection of candidates
- Pressure on topics mentioned in interventions
- Doctors (rare in the area) refusing to respect guidelines for prescription of psychotropics
- Access to drugs prescribed
- Referrals to psychiatric hospital in another area (admission- follow up)

Conclusion/Lessons learned

- Good acceptance → Pre-existing medical services
- Better planning of intervention:
 - Rapid, baseline anthropological studies & Focus Group Discussions
 - Considerations for strategies to engage communities on sensitive topics as GBV

War, Children, & Mental Health

- Potential area for intervention
- Effects of war on children are long-lasting
- Early identification of distress, and psychosocial support is required



Image Credits: Thana Farooq

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- Mental Health Services for war-affected children
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