



Invitation – SVRI Online Discussion: **Developing effective therapeutic and programming strategies for the care and support of male survivors of conflict-related sexual violence**, 1-28 February 2010

The Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI) would like to invite you to participate in our new moderated online discussion: **Developing effective therapeutic and programming strategies for the care and support of male survivors of conflict-related sexual violence**.

In the last decade alone, sexual violence—including rape, sexual torture and mutilation, reproductive violence, sexual humiliation, forced incest and forced rape, and sexual enslavement—against male civilians and combatants, both adults and children, has been reported in 25 conflicts across the world. If we expand this tally to include instances of sexual exploitation of boys displaced by violent conflicts, the list encompasses the majority of the globe's armed conflicts. The increased awareness of sexual violence against men and boys has not always translated into policies and practices to address male victims. The reluctance of many male survivors, both adults and boys, to discuss their experiences also complicates the task of counsellors and programme managers seeking to extend assistance to male survivors as well as their families and communities.

Through this new Discussion Forum thread, the SVRI hopes to bring together physical and mental health practitioners, program managers, and researchers to engage in a wide-ranging, cross-cultural discussion of effective therapeutic and programming tactics for assisting male survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, their families and communities. In addition to specialists in sexual violence issues, we would like to invite individuals and institutions helping torture survivors, child soldiers, prisoners, and survivors of childhood sexual abuse. This will be the first time that so many voices, from so many disciplines, from so many parts of the world, will have the opportunity to come together to discuss this badly under-researched problem. Please share this invitation with any individuals or organizations who might be interested in participating.

The discussion will be moderated by Alastair Hilton, a social work consultant based in Cambodia and Michael Peel, formerly of the Medical Foundation for the Care of Torture Victims, assisted by Wynne Russell, an independent researcher into this topic. Responses to the discussion will form the basis for a briefing paper which will be translated into French, Spanish, Russian and Arabic and distributed to all invitees as well as through UN networks.

The discussion will run for a month from 1-28 February 2010. To take part in the Discussion Forum, please visit the SVRI at <http://www.svri.org> or go directly to the registration process at <http://www.svri.org/forums/>. Due to technical issues, we ask that responses be submitted in English, French or Spanish. If you would prefer that your postings not be used for the briefing paper, please notify us at svri@mrc.ac.za. We look forward to meeting you online!