Sexual violence against men and boys in five conflict-affected settings: Intersections with violence against women and girls

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Presented by: Sarah Martin, GBV Consultant and Sexual Violence Project Advisory Group Member
Background

• Sexual Violence Project – launched in 2018

• Focus on sexual violence against persons who identify as men or boys or were designated as male at birth

• Includes research, pilot projects to improve access to service, coordination, development of tools
Feminist Approach

WRC’s work is feminist in its approach and prioritizes accountability to women and girls by:

- Exploring the ways in which sexual violence against men and boys impacts the lives of women and girls;
- Exploring the ways in which sexual violence against men and boys intersects with violence against women and girls;
- Advocating for services for and attention to male and female survivors;
- Working to dispel the myth that post-sexual violence services are widely available for women and girls but not for men and boys: across humanitarian settings, they need strengthening for all survivors; and
- Including experts on violence against women and girls and persons with diverse SOGIESC on our Global Advisory Committee.
Research

• Explore the nature and characteristics of sexual violence against men, boys, and trans women and the availability and accessibility of services.

• Also examine:
  – if/how SV against men/boys intersects with SV against women/girls
  – If/how SV against men/boys impacts the lives of women/girls
Study Sites

• Bangladesh: Cox’s Bazar
  – Northern Rakhine State, Myanmar (Rohingya)
• Italy: Rome, Catania, Palermo, Syracuse
  – Libya (Central Mediterranean Migration Route)
• Kenya: Nairobi and Mombasa
  – DRC, Somalia, South Sudan
Methodology & Methods

• Exploratory, qualitative

• Methods
  – Document review
  – 55 focus groups with 310 refugees
  – Semi-structured interviews with 158 aid workers & human rights experts
  – Observation

• Ethics approvals: University of New South Wales, Kenya Medical Research Institute
Limitations

• Non-representative sampling
• Possible translation error
• Lack of participation of certain groups:
  – Trans men
  – Refugees with intellectual disabilities
Findings

• Men, boys, and trans women are targeted for conflict-related SV in eastern DRC, South Sudan, Myanmar (Northern Rakhine State), Libya

• GBT+ persons appear to be largely targeted by their families and communities

• Findings from Somalia unclear
Findings: Perpetration

• Intersections with sexual violence against women/girls
  – Forced witnessing of men/boys (especially common)
  – Some forced witnessing of women/girls
  – Enforced rape and other SV of men/boys against women/girls
  – Libya: enforced SV of women/girls against men/boys
Findings: Gendered Impacts

• Damaged relationships
• Divorce/separation
• Family stigma, ostracism
• Daughters may be unmarriageable
• Poverty
• Misogyny (related to female perps)
• Possible intimate partner violence* (more research needed)
Conclusion

• Conflict-related SV against men, boys, and trans women appears widespread in study sites; Somalia unclear
• SV perpetrated in ways that intersects with SV against opposite/other gender
• SV against men/boys may adversely impact female family and community members
• Initial findings - more research is necessary
Further information:
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