Violence Against Syrian Refugee Women Of Diverse Sexual Orientations, Gender Identities And Expressions

LEBANON & TURKEY

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CONTEXT:

Lebanon and Turkey currently host some of the largest populations of Syrian refugees and migrants. In recent years, research on LGBTIQ refugees in Lebanon and Turkey has increased. Several reports have focused on sexual violence perpetrated against Syrian men, boys, and Trans women, including those of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC). Violence against women of diverse SOGIESC is either under-reported or completely absent in these reports, as are experiences of barriers to access and the existence of alternative support networks.

Different forms of violence experienced by persons of diverse SOGIESC, include intimate partner violence, sexual assault, sexual extortion and blackmail, homophobic abuse and violence, verbal and physical harassment and various forms of discrimination. This research will draw and expand on, previous and on-going research conducted by the research team on the impacts of the Syrian Civil War on LGBTIQ refugees from Syria in Lebanon and Turkey, as well as the host communities of diverse SOGIESC in both countries.

PROJECT AIM:

The aim of the project is to better understand the needs and vulnerabilities of women of diverse SOGIESC in Lebanon and Turkey, with respect to different forms of VAW and also their experiences of accessing support services, in order to fill the gaps in existing research. Focusing on two countries rather than one location, will allow a comparative approach to filter out specific contextual dynamics at the national or local level as well as identify more generalisable trends affecting women of diverse SOGIESC.

The study will conduct anonymized in-depth interviews (IDIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with diverse SOGIESC women in Lebanon and Turkey, as well as their family members, where this is safe. Furthermore, interviews with key service providers and VAWG/SOGIESC rights activists in both countries will be conducted. Based on the results of the IDIs and FGDs, the study aims to conduct an anonymized online survey for diverse SOGIESC women in both countries.

STUDY CONTRIBUTION:

The study will create awareness among state, civil society and humanitarian service providers as well as policy makers in Lebanon and Turkey of (i) particular risks and vulnerabilities of women of diverse SOGIESC to different forms of VAW and (ii) their experiences of accessing support services in Lebanon and Turkey; highlight gaps and challenges, as well as emerging good practices of formal and informal support systems and services; present evidence-based data related to VAW who are of diverse SOGIESC, which can be used by local NGOs for their advocacy in Turkey and Lebanon; reduce the vulnerabilities of women of diverse SOGIESC to different forms of VAW.

1. All Survivors Project, “Destroyed from Within” Sexual violence against men and boys in Syria and Turkey, 2018; Human Rights Watch, “They Treated Us in Monstrous Ways” - Sexual Violence Against Men, Boys, and Transgender Women in the Syrian Conflict, 2020; UNHCR, “We Keep It in Our Heart” - Sexual Violence Against Men and Boys in the Syria Crisis, 2017