

Sexual Violence Project: Displaced Men and Boys

In addition to women and girls, some men and boys, including persons with diverse sexual orientation and gender identity/expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC), are targeted for sexual violence in many conflicts. They are vulnerable to sexual violence, abuse, and exploitation during flight and in displacement. Unaccompanied boys, boys and men with disabilities, boys and men in detention, transgender persons, adolescents with diverse SOGIESC, and sex workers, among others, are particularly at risk.

In humanitarian settings, sensitized services for all sexual violence survivors are frequently weak or ad hoc. Targeted protection mechanisms are also not systematically in place. Without appropriate, dignified care, survivors may suffer debilitating psychological, physical, and/or social consequences. Wives, daughters, mothers, and other female family and community members are also impacted by male sexual victimization.

In January 2018, the Women's Refugee Commission (WRC) launched a three-year project exploring sexual violence against persons who identify as male or were once designated as such, including cisgender heterosexual men and boys, gay and bisexual men, trans women, and others with diverse SOGIESC. The impact of male sexual victimization on cisgender women and girls was also examined. The project involves undertaking research in three refugee settings, piloting community-based projects designed to facilitate service uptake, facilitating inter-agency coordination, and developing field-friendly tools and guidance.

WRC's work with men and boys is feminist in its approach and prioritizes accountability to women and girls. We do this 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 female and male survivors, including people with diverse SOGIESC;
- 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 frequently require strengthening for all survivors; and
- including experts on violence against women and girls and persons with diverse SOGIESC on our Global Advisory Committee.

Research

The following qualitative, exploratory studies were undertaken to better understand the nature, characteristics, and impacts of sexual violence against displaced men and boys and to help humanitarian agencies improve protection mechanisms and strengthen services for survivors. Intersections with violence against women and girls were also explored.

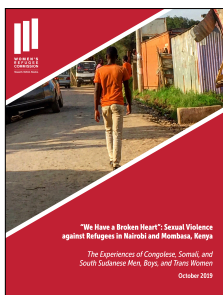


It's Happening to Our Men as Well: Sexual Violence against Rohingya Men and Boys¹: In July 2018, WRC traveled to Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, to explore sexual violence perpetrated against Rohingya men and boys in Myanmar and Bangladesh. We conducted 21 focus groups with 109 Rohingya men, women, and adolescents in four sections of Kutupalong Camp and interviewed 45 humanitarian aid workers and human rights experts.

1 The report can be found at <https://wrc.ms/svmb-rohingya>.



“More Than One Million Pains”: Sexual Violence against Men and Boys on the Central Mediterranean Route to Italy²: In October 2018, WRC undertook fieldwork in Rome and Sicily to explore sexual violence perpetrated against refugee and migrant men and boys traveling the central Mediterranean route to Italy. We conducted key informant interviews with 63 humanitarian personnel and service providers, 10 focus groups with 52 refugees and migrants, and two focus groups with 10 guardians and service providers.



“We Have a Broken Heart”: Sexual Violence against Refugees in Nairobi and Mombasa, Kenya. The Experiences of Congolese, Somali, and South Sudanese Men, Boys, and Trans Women³: In April and May 2019, WRC traveled to Kenya to explore sexual violence perpetrated against Congolese, Somali, and South Sudanese refugee men and boys (including those with diverse SOGIESC) and trans women in their home countries, during flight, and in Nairobi and Mombasa. We conducted 24 focus groups with 149 refugees and asylum seekers and held key informant interviews with 40 humanitarian responders and human rights experts.

Pilots

- WRC is collaborating with UNICEF to develop a training to support cultural mediators (interpreters) to better respond to disclosures of sexual violence and reduce vicarious traumatization.
- We are partnering with Legal Action Worldwide (LAW) to support the capacity development of Rohingya focal points to better link male and third-gender survivors with services.
- We are working with HIAS to promote post-sexual violence service uptake among refugees with diverse SOGIESC in Nairobi and facilitate bridge-building between the Kenyan and refugee LGBTI+ communities.

Inter-agency Coordination

- WRC is convening the first inter-agency working group on male survivors in humanitarian settings at the global level: the Inter-agency Working Group on Reproductive Health in Crises (IAWG) Task Team on Male Survivors.

For more information, contact Dr. Sarah Chynoweth, sexual violence project director/consultant, svproject@wrcommission.org, or Dale Buscher, vice president, programs, Women’s Refugee Commission, daleb@wrcommission.org.

² The report can be found at <https://wrc.ms/more-than-one-million-pains>.

³ The report can be found at <https://wrc.ms/kenya-sexual-violence>.