

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

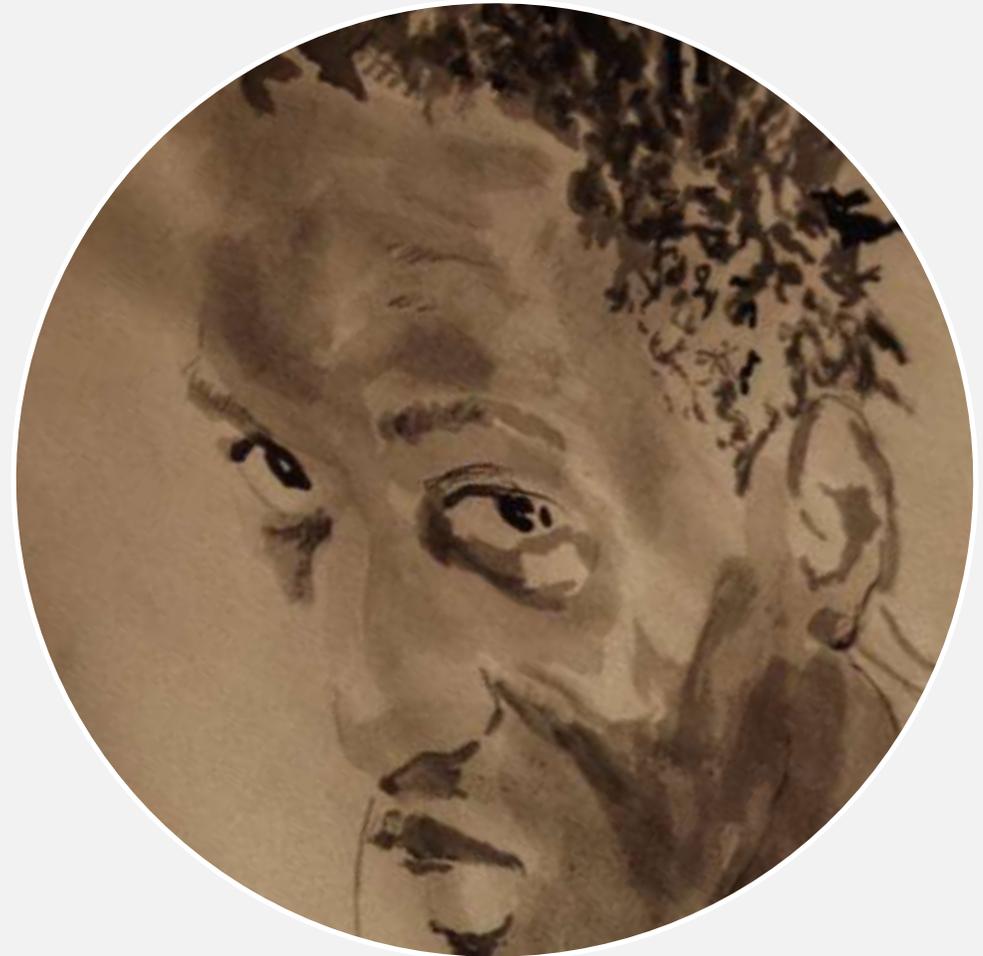
Sarah Chynoweth, Dale Buscher, Sarah Martin  
Sexual Violence Project, Women's Refugee Commission

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:

[www.womensrefugeecommission.org/svproject](http://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/svproject)

Contact: Sarah Chynoweth, SV Project Director @  
[svproject@wrcommission.org](mailto:svproject@wrcommission.org)