



BSAFE

Preventing harassment, Sexual Gender-based Violence (SGBV) and Abuse against women refugees

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Guidelines for Sexual Gender-based Violence (SGBV) and Abuse against women refugees

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Report collecting guidelines for SGBV prevention

Introduction

Two years into the war that shocked the world, the number of Ukrainian refugees recorded across Europe has reached 5,982,900, ranking as the third largest refugee crisis globally, just behind Afghanistan. In such refugee crisis environment, human rights violations emerge as a critical international issue that cuts across social, economic and national boundaries. The ongoing conflict in Ukraine is no exception to the rule and continues to severely impact millions of women and girls, intensifying the dangers of gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, while also destroying livelihoods and heightening poverty levels¹. The threat of GBV extends beyond women and girls in transit situations to include intimate partner violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence (including conflict-related sexual violence), and economic abuse. The chaotic conditions of this conflict and lack of stringent border controls further underline the significant risk of human trafficking and sexual exploitation.

Reviewing the statistics reveals that before the February 2022 invasion, the occurrence of gender-based violence (GBV)¹ in Ukraine included 20% economic violence, 55% controlling behavior, 53% abusive behavior and 12% involving blackmail or abuse of children (GBV AoR, 2022)². Additionally, Ukraine exhibits an atypical demographic distribution, with women comprising 54% and men 46% of the population. This gender imbalance plays a significant role in shaping the demographics of those fleeing the conflict.

Amidst ongoing military operations, many groups have become particularly vulnerable, including women, adolescent girls and boys who remain in conflict zones, survivors of sexual violence who lack access to essential services, and older women who have stayed in Ukraine due to immobility. Dagmar Schumacher, Director of the UN Women Brussels Office, stated on International Women's Day, 'The current situation jeopardizes the safety of all people in Ukraine, but it also puts women and girls at increased risk of sexual violence, especially those who are refugees or otherwise displaced from their homes.'

¹ United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). "GBV Response and Prevention Programme- Ukraine." UNFPA Ukraine. <https://ukraine.unfpa.org/en/topics/gbv-response-and-prevention-programme>.

² GBV AoR Helpdesk. "Gender-Based Violence in Ukraine (2022)." GBV AoR. <https://gbvaor.net/sites/default/files/2022-05/Ukraine%20GBV%20SDR%20%2025%20%2022%20Final%20format%20amended.pdf>.

Preventing GBV involves steps related to empowering women and girls throughout their lives, such as keeping girls in school, economically empowering women, adopting gender equality approaches, providing safe spaces for women and girls, engaging male allies, and including women in decision-making at the leadership level, among many others (IRC)³.

The UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)⁴ highlights that increasing options and pathways for regular migration can help reduce the incidence of violence against migrant women and girls. Ensuring their safety, improving the protection of their human rights, enabling access to decent work, and providing social protection and services are crucial steps. When developing and strengthening GBV policies, it is important to adopt a gender-responsive and evidence-based approach that considers methodological and ethical issues, and ensures the safety of both the survivor and the trained interviewer. Additionally, it is necessary to be mindful of the social stigma associated with GBV while collecting data. Migrant women and girls who are survivors of gender-based violence should receive information in relevant languages about essential services and referral pathways. Moreover, officials, including border and law enforcement personnel, need training to identify and assist women in a survivor-centered manner.

The completed project "PROTECT - Preventing sexual and gender-based violence against migrants and strengthening support to victims"⁴ implemented by IOM⁵ in 12 countries. The aim of this initiative was to strengthen and adapt existing national support services for victims of SGBV to coordinate better and include refugees, asylum seekers and migrants. It further focused on building the capacity for professionals who work with and for refugees, asylum seekers and migrants to identify and address the needs of victims and potential victims of SGBV more effectively. Moreover, it focused on empowering and informing refugees, asylum seekers and migrant communities about SGBV and how to protect themselves from the risk of becoming a victim. In collaboration with national authorities, first responders, and service providers, IOM aimed to tailor these interventions to fit specific national contexts, ensuring more effective coordination and support for those affected by such violence.

³ International Rescue Committee (IRC). "What is Gender-Based Violence and How Do We Prevent It?" IRC. <https://www.rescue.org/article/what-gender-based-violence-and-how-do-we-prevent-it>.

⁴ United Nations Women. "Policy Brief: From evidence to action: Tackling GBV against migrant women and girls." UN Women. <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2021/Policy-brief-From-evidence-to-action-Tackling-GBV-against-migrant-women-and-girls-en.pdf>

⁵ International Organization for Migration (IOM). "PROTECT: Preventing Sexual and Gender-Based Violence against Migrants and Strengthening Support to Victims." IOM Eastern Europe and Central Asia. <https://eea.iom.int/protect-preventing-sexual-and-gender-based-violence-against-migrants-and-strengthening-support-victims>.

Review of Existing Guidelines and Frameworks

In the following sections, we will delve into existing guidelines and frameworks that will aid us in developing our own guidelines for addressing sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in the context of the ongoing war in Ukraine and among displaced refugees. These existing resources offer valuable insights, best practices, and recommendations that can inform our approach to effectively respond to SGBV.

A total of seven guidelines from various organizations and agencies have been examined, including international bodies such as the United Nations, as well as regional and local initiatives. By reviewing these guidelines, the aim is to identify key principles, strategies and interventions that have proven successful in similar contexts. This analysis will enable us to tailor our guidelines to meet the specific needs and challenges faced by survivors of SGBV in Ukraine during times of conflict. Additionally, we will explore case studies and examples of successful GBV prevention and response programs implemented in conflict-affected areas. These real-world examples will provide practical insights into the implementation of GBV interventions and offer valuable lessons learned that can inform our own efforts.

By drawing on existing guidelines and evidence-based practices, we aim to develop comprehensive and effective guidelines that prioritize the safety, dignity, and well-being of Ukrainian refugees in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Poland. Our goal is to contribute to the prevention and mitigation of SGBV in conflict settings and to guide survivors so that they might access the support and services they need to rebuild their lives.

I. Sexual and Gender-Based Violence against Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons Guidelines for Prevention and Response - May 2003 (UNHCR)⁶

Sexual and gender-based violence poses a significant challenge, impacting individuals, communities, and institutions alike. Given its intricate nature, addressing this issue effectively necessitates collaboration across various sectors, organizations, and fields. It requires the identification and development of collective strategies aimed at combating this violation of human rights. All stakeholders involved in crafting these strategies must commit to upholding a set of Guiding Principles and recognize sexual and gender-based violence as a

⁶ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees "Sexual and Gender-Based Violence against Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons Guidelines for Prevention and Response - May 2003." UNHCR. <https://www.unhcr.org/media/sexual-and-gender-based-violence-against-refugees-returnees-and-internally-displaced-persons>.

fundamental breach of human rights.

These Guiding Principles should serve as the foundation for all program endeavors, emphasizing the full engagement of the refugee community, ensuring gender-balanced participation at all stages of program development and implementation, promoting coordinated efforts across multiple sectors, striving for the integration and mainstreaming of actions, and fostering accountability at all levels.

Guidelines in prevention to GBV suggested in the document

Preventing sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) requires a comprehensive approach that addresses its underlying causes and contributing factors. Effective prevention strategies target potential perpetrators and survivors, as well as those who may assist them, including the refugee population, humanitarian aid staff, host country nationals, and government authorities.

To develop appropriate prevention strategies, it is essential to identify factors and issues specific to the setting through a needs assessment or situation analysis. This process enables stakeholders to become informed about the culture, protection traditions, customs, and gender/power relations of both the refugee and host communities. It also helps identify areas where refugees are likely to be exposed to SGBV, such as distribution points, detention centers, border points, and establishments serving alcohol.

Prevention efforts should be coordinated with organizations that focus on health, psychosocial support, security, and legal services, including NGOs and UN agencies. Such collaboration facilitates the joint development of prevention measures and ensures a holistic approach to addressing SGBV.

Key factors to consider when identifying causes and contributing factors of SGBV include:

- Demographic composition of the population, including age and gender breakdown.
- Social and cultural norms within the refugee community.
- Structure of family and community support systems before and after displacement.
- Knowledge, attitudes, and behavior of individuals in leadership and decision-making positions.

- Availability and accessibility of services and facilities, including the physical environment and access to essential services.
- Legal framework, judicial practices, and traditions, both formal and informal.

Prevention strategies should focus on five key objectives:

1. Transforming socio-cultural norms, with a focus on empowering women and girls.
2. Rebuilding family and community structures and support systems.
3. Designing effective services and facilities to meet the needs of survivors.
4. Collaborating with formal and traditional legal systems to ensure compliance with international human rights standards.
5. Monitoring and documenting incidents of SGBV to inform prevention efforts and track progress.

Continuous monitoring and evaluation of prevention programs, as well as compiling and analyzing data from SGBV incident reports, are essential components of effective prevention strategies monitoring and evaluation of prevention programs, as well as compiling

Guidelines in response to GBV suggested in the document

Developing community education and awareness activities - implement culturally sensitive public information campaigns addressing sexual and gender-based violence tailored to the specific context. These campaigns should cover topics such as seeking assistance after an attack, the significance of reporting incidents promptly, relevant laws, and associated penalties.

Training actors in how to respond to victims'/survivors' needs - during community discussions on sexual and gender-based violence, it's crucial for responders to prepare to offer support services promptly. All personnel involved should receive gender-sensitive training, with particular focus on key areas such as healthcare providers conducting medical examinations and treatment, psycho-social counselors offering support and referrals, security personnel providing a safe environment, and legal experts aiding in pursuing legal action if desired by the survivor.

Establishing referral, reporting, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms - establish a clear referral system, jointly developed by humanitarian workers and community members, to ensure timely assistance for victims/survivors. This system should be widely known and understood by all community members and service providers, with written procedures translated into local languages for effective communication and coordination

Empowering refugee communities to respond - engaging the community is crucial for sustainable programme development, with joint efforts between humanitarian actors and refugee communities proving most effective. To engage the community, raise awareness through campaigns targeting all members, strengthen social support networks, empower women as leaders, provide safe shelter and emergency assistance, coordinate activities, advocate for refugee rights, and ensure culturally sensitive services. Additionally, establish links with local NGOs for advocacy while respecting country laws.

Developing a response to the health/medical needs of victims/survivors - prompt access to comprehensive healthcare is crucial for survivors, with services ideally provided by trained staff of the same sex. Medical examinations should encompass disease prevention, injury treatment, forensic evidence collection, and psychological support, alongside facilitating referrals and legal support if necessary. Monitoring and advocacy efforts must ensure equitable access to quality care for all individuals, fostering collaboration among healthcare providers, traditional healers, and the community for effective training and sensitization initiatives.

Planning to meet the psycho-social needs of victims/survivors - following SGBV, survivors may undergo various emotional and psychological reactions, including fear, shame, guilt, and depression, necessitating empathetic and supportive treatment. Community-based activities, such as training local support workers, establishing support groups, and creating drop-in centers, prove most effective in alleviating trauma. Psycho-social workers play a crucial role in offering crisis counseling, advocating for survivors, and facilitating group activities focused on building support networks, community reintegration, skill-building, and economic empowerment to promote self-sufficiency.

Ensuring a security and safety response - communities should lead in providing safe spaces for survivors, considering options like relocation and safe zones. Involving refugee elders, maintaining law enforcement presence, and training officers on gender-based violence are vital for ensuring safety. Additionally, ensuring female officers are part of security teams is crucial for effective response.

Establishing a legal/justice response - establish a system with local authorities to enable victims/survivors seeking legal redress to do so promptly, maintaining strong relationships with law enforcement and traditional courts. Understand the relevant legal framework and sensitively handle complaints, providing comprehensive information on legal processes and rights. Collaborate with local legal service providers, ensuring access to legal aid and accompanying survivors throughout the legal proceedings. Respect the rights of the accused and ensure appropriate sentences, punishment, and compensation, while also being aware of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms and their conformity with human rights standards. Training and awareness sessions may be necessary to align community practices with international standards over time.

Identifying the roles of other potential actors - various individuals play crucial roles in responding to sexual and gender-based violence among refugees. Field staff receive incident reports, ensure safety, and coordinate with sectors. Program staff allocate resources and support prevention plans, while heads of office oversee program design and advocacy. Police conduct investigations and participate in awareness campaigns, while courts administer legal proceedings. All personnel should be sensitive to survivor needs and engage in education initiatives.

Developing a plan to work with perpetrators - working with perpetrators of violence is challenging yet essential, with their human rights, including safety, requiring respect. If the perpetrator is a refugee, they deserve international protection. The multi-sectoral team should collaborate on plans for addressing perpetrators, including consulting with national authorities, involving security personnel and police, and considering separation from the community when feasible.

II. The Istanbul Convention

The Istanbul Convention, formally known as the Council of Europe⁷ Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence, aims to prevent and stop gender-based violence through a comprehensive approach. It establishes legally binding standards to prevent violence, protect victims and prosecute perpetrators. The convention addresses various forms of violence against women, including domestic violence, sexual violence and female genital mutilation, emphasizing prevention, protection, prosecution and integrated policies.

The Istanbul Convention, officially signed in 2011 by the Council of Europe member states, serves multiple critical purposes in the fight against gender-based violence. Its main objectives are to protect women from all forms of violence and to prevent, prosecute, and eliminate both violence against women and domestic violence. The Convention aims to eradicate discrimination against women, promote true equality between genders through empowerment, and establish a comprehensive framework for the protection and assistance of all victims of domestic and gender-based violence. Additionally, it fosters international cooperation to address these issues and supports organizations and law enforcement agencies in adopting an integrated approach to eliminate such violence. This comprehensive treaty sets a precedent for legal and social reforms necessary to safeguard women's rights and safety on a global scale.

Articles in the Istanbul Convention providing guidelines to prevent SGBV

Article 12 – General obligations to prevent violence - States must work to eliminate prejudices and practices based on gender stereotypes and the idea of women's inferiority, which is essential for cultural integration of migrants and refugees.

Article 14 – Education - Education programmes must include material on gender equality and non-violent conflict resolution, adapted to be accessible and relevant for children from diverse backgrounds, including migrants and refugees.

Article 18 – General obligations - This article emphasizes protecting and assisting all victims without exacerbating their conditions, engaging professionals in implementing inclusive and accessible coordinated policies.

⁷ Council of Europe. "The Istanbul Convention." Council of Europe. <https://rm.coe.int/168008482e>

Articles in the Convention providing guidelines to respond to SGBV

Article 20 – General obligations - States need to provide comprehensive support including legal, psychological, financial and housing assistance, tailored to the specific needs of vulnerable populations like migrants and refugees.

Article 22 – Specialist support services - Calls for the establishment of services such as shelters and counseling, which must be accessible to all, regardless of legal status.

Article 25 – Support for victims of sexual violence - States are required to establish rape crisis or sexual violence referral centers offering medical, forensic and counseling support in accessible locations.

Article 59 – Residence status - Offers victims the possibility of obtaining an independent residence permit crucial in cases where separation from the perpetrator is necessary for the victim's safety.

Article 60 – Gender-based asylum claims - Ensures that gender-based violence is recognized as persecution with respect to asylum claims, with states upholding non-refoulement and providing gender-sensitive asylum processes.

III. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)⁸ Guidelines for Integrating Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action

These guidelines are designed to help humanitarian actors effectively address and respond to gender-based violence, including within refugee populations. They provide a framework for coordinated action across different sectors in humanitarian settings.

Guidelines in enforcing GBV preventive strategies

Element 1 – Assessment, Analysis, Planning is essential in addressing GBV in humanitarian settings. It provides recommended GBV-related questions to guide assessments and routine monitoring activities, informing programming, policies and communication strategies. While assessments are critical, some essential GBV prevention measures can be implemented immediately, such as ensuring functional locks on private facilities and implementing the Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) for reproductive health. This proactive approach

⁸ Inter-Agency Standing Committee. "IASC Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action, 2015." Inter-Agency Standing Committee. <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/sites/default/files/migrated/2021-03/IASC%20Guidelines%20for%20Integrating%20Gender-Based%20Violence%20Interventions%20in%20Humanitarian%20Action%2C%202015.pdf>.

ensures prompt interventions to address GBV risks and needs.

Element 2 – Resource Mobilization focuses on securing funding for GBV prevention and response activities, primarily through accessing financial support from donors or coordinated humanitarian mechanisms. These guidelines aim to facilitate access to GBV-related funds by outlining key considerations for drafting proposals. Despite GBV being recognized as life-saving and meeting humanitarian donor criteria, it is often not prioritized at the onset of emergencies, leading to limited resources. It is therefore crucial to advocate for GBV interventions to be recognized as life-saving and to support the capacity-building of sector actors to address GBV effectively. In addition to funding, resource mobilization involves:

- Mobilizing human resources by ensuring partners are trained in gender, GBV, and human rights issues and empowered to integrate GBV risk-reduction strategies.
- Employing and retaining women and other at-risk groups as staff and ensuring their active participation and leadership in community activities.
- Pre-positioning age, gender and culturally sensitive supplies and GBV-related outreach materials.
- Advocating with donors to recognize GBV interventions as life-saving and support capacity-building efforts.
- Ensuring government and humanitarian policies integrate GBV concerns and include strategies for ongoing budgeting of activities.

Element 3 – Implementation - This subsection provides practical guidance for implementing gender-based violence related risk reduction responsibilities in humanitarian settings. It aims to establish shared standards and improve the quality of GBV prevention and mitigation strategies, prioritizing the immediate protection of survivors and individuals at risk. These responsibilities are categorized into three main types: programming, policies, and communications and information sharing.

Programming

- Encourages NGOs, community-based organizations, INGOs, UN agencies, and governments to involve women, girls, and at-risk groups as staff and leaders in decision-making structures.

- Emphasizes implementing programs that are aware of specific GBV risks and address the safety and security needs of affected individuals.
- Advocates for integrating GBV prevention and mitigation into various activities.

Policies

- Calls on program planners, advocates, and policymakers to incorporate GBV prevention and mitigation strategies into program policies, standards, and guidelines from the earliest stages of emergencies.
- Supports integrating GBV risk reduction into national and local development policies and plans and allocating funding for sustainability.
- Promotes the revision and adoption of laws and policies that protect the rights of women, girls, and at-risk groups.

Communications and Information Sharing

- Encourages working with GBV specialists to establish safe and confidential systems of care for survivors and incorporating GBV messages into community outreach activities.
- Advocates for developing information-sharing standards that ensure confidentiality and anonymity for survivors, especially in the early stages of emergencies.
- Promotes longer-term interventions aimed at eliminating GBV.

Element 4 – Coordination underlines the necessity of collaborative efforts in addressing GBV in humanitarian settings. This process requires the integration of multiple sectors, organizations and disciplines to formulate and implement comprehensive prevention and mitigation strategies. Important contributors in this collaborative framework include humanitarian leadership, NGOs, community-based organizations and governmental bodies at both national and local levels, each playing a pivotal role in the unified response. To ensure effective coordination the following should be taken into consideration:

- Regularly address GBV issues at sector coordination meetings by including them as a regular agenda item and involving GBV specialists.
- Coordinate with gender specialists and diversity networks to ensure specific vulnerabilities are adequately represented and addressed.
- Develop monitoring systems within sectors to track GBV-related activities.
- Submit joint funding proposals to ensure GBV is adequately addressed in sector

programming responses.

- Develop sector work plans with clear milestones that include GBV-related inter-agency actions.
- Support the development and implementation of sector-wide policies, protocols, and tools that integrate GBV prevention and mitigation.
- Form strategic partnerships and networks to advocate for improved programming and meet the responsibilities outlined in the guidelines.

In addition to coordinating with gender specialists, the guidelines emphasize the importance of collaborating with diversity networks, including those representing LGBTI individuals. These networks play a crucial role in ensuring that the specific vulnerabilities and needs of LGBTI individuals are addressed in GBV prevention and mitigation strategies. By involving diverse perspectives and experiences, humanitarian actors can better tailor their interventions to meet the needs of all individuals at risk of gender-based violence.

Element 5 – Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) are crucial for assessing humanitarian efforts, allocating resources effectively, and ensuring accountability. These guidelines provide indicators for tracking program effectiveness and outcomes, emphasizing both quantitative and qualitative data collection. Ethical considerations are paramount, particularly regarding gender-based violence (GBV) cases, and data should be analyzed through a "GBV lens." Disaggregating indicators by sex, age, and other factors enhances program quality and ensures interventions address the diverse needs of at-risk groups.

IV. About the situation of women and gender diverse people who use drugs surviving multiple situations of violence and vulnerability in Spain - Shadow Report – Metzineres and IDPC⁹

This report, conducted by the Barcelona-based non-profit cooperative Metzineres in collaboration with the International Drug Policy Consortium (IDPC), sheds light on the plight of women and gender-diverse individuals who use drugs and face multiple situations of violence and vulnerability in Spain. Drawing from research conducted by civil society organizations and official sources, as well as testimonies from 435 participants of Metzineres,

⁹ Metzineres and International Drug Policy Consortium. "About the situation of women and gender diverse people who use drugs surviving multiple situations of violence and vulnerability in Spain Shadow Report." Metzineres and IDPC. <https://idpc.net/es/publications/2023/05/sobre-la-situacion-de-las-mujeres-y-personas-de-genero-diverso-que-usan-drogas-sobreviviendo>

the report highlights the interconnected challenges these individuals endure, including drug-related issues, homelessness, sex work, migration experiences, mental health problems, violence, and criminalization¹⁰.

This text proposes a series of measures to address problematic drug use and gender-based violence against women and gender-diverse individuals, as well as discrimination in access to health care and the criminalization associated with drug consumption. These measures include:

Incorporating a gender and diversity perspective in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and practices related to drug use.

- Prioritizing the reduction of social and economic inequalities that contribute to problematic drug involvement.
- Collecting data and highlighting, from an intersectional perspective, the realities faced by women and gender-diverse individuals who use drugs, including the structural causes of exclusion and social injustice.
- Sensitizing political and technical personnel involved in the care of women and gender-diverse individuals who use drugs to the stigma they face and appropriate responses to their complex and changing realities.
- Recognizing drug phobia or stigma against people who use drugs as a form of discrimination.
- Expanding knowledge about the relationship between gender-based violence, LGBTQIA+ phobia, and trauma associated with drug-related issues faced by women and gender-diverse individuals.
- Eliminating drug use as a barrier to accessing protection resources in cases of gender-based violence.
- Incorporating harm reduction perspectives into all resources and support services for women and gender-diverse individuals surviving gender-based violence.
- Ensuring protection and reporting systems for women and gender-diverse individuals who use drugs and are surviving gender-based violence.

¹⁰ Understanding Experiences of Gender-Based Violence Among Women Who Use Drugs (WWUD) And Developing Prevention And Response Framework In Coast, Kenya

- Incorporating a gender perspective and harm reduction approach across all health care services.
- Ensuring non-discriminatory treatment of women and gender-diverse individuals who use drugs, surviving multiple situations of violence and vulnerability.
- Implementing on-site testing and treatment programs at harm reduction and treatment centers linked to women and gender-diverse individuals who use drugs.
- Expanding the knowledge of medical and healthcare personnel, free from biases, about the effects of different psychoactive substances.
- Ensuring holistic and comprehensive care, free from threats, for pregnant women and mothers who use drugs.
- Guaranteeing access to adequate housing for women and gender-diverse individuals who use drugs, surviving multiple situations of vulnerability.
- Eliminating the use of administrative sanctions for offenses related to drug possession.
- Eliminating the imprisonment of women involved in non-violent drug offenses or minor economic offenses..
- Strengthening coordination between professionals in prison facilities and specialized resources (residential, educational, etc.) to prevent situations of exclusion after release from prison.

V. Gender-Based Violence in the Context of the Ukraine Crisis – Romania Assessment Bucharest, 2023¹¹

This is the second assessment conducted by VOICE and HIAS¹² to examine the safety, protection, and well-being needs of Ukrainian women refugees in Romania. The initial assessment in 2022 focused on the GBV situation during displacement, temporary accommodation centers and funding needs of women's civil society organizations. The current assessment¹³ aims to deepen the understanding of the situation and needs of displaced Ukrainian women and other women in Romania, particularly regarding GBV-related safety. It explores the intersection of GBV with economic and psychosocial needs to inform multi-

¹¹ UN Women Europe and Central Asia. "Rapid Assessment: Impact of the War in Ukraine on Women's Civil Society Organizations." UN Women. <https://eca.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/03/rapid-assessment-impact-of-the-war-in-ukraine-on-womens-civil-society-organizations>

¹² <https://hias.org/where/romania/>

¹³ <https://reliefweb.int/report/romania/gender-based-violence-context-ukraine-crisis-romania-assessment-enro>

sectoral programming and support Romanian partners in promoting women's safety and well-being. Carried out in March and April 2023 in six localities, including urban and rural areas, the assessment involved 145 women refugees and vulnerable host community women, as well as representatives from civil society and government agencies. The main actions outlined in the assessment are:

- 1) Develop and disseminate information and education materials about GBV, women's rights, sexual and reproductive health, and available services in relevant languages to refugees and vulnerable women. Utilize existing programs such as mental health and psychosocial support services as an entry point for information-sharing and awareness-raising on GBV among women.
- 2) Strengthen local coordination and referral pathways between women's organizations and other service providers that respond to GBV. Ensure relevant stakeholders, including those providing humanitarian assistance, know how to make referrals to specialist GBV services for survivors.
- 3) Provide culturally appropriate and safe mental health and psychosocial support services for women experiencing mental health issues. Implement community-based approaches to support psychosocial well-being and deliver activities that build relationships, foster resiliency, and increase access to information and strategies for emotional well-being.
- 4) Create safe spaces for displaced women and girls, to deliver activities, programs, and services to improve their safety, protection, and well-being. Offer confidential opportunities for women to disclose and receive support, promote social connection and integration, deliver education programs, and provide language courses.
- 5) Increase refugee women's safe access to technology and digital tools to enhance their access to information, services, and resources supporting economic inclusion and psychosocial well-being.
- 6) Implement activities to help refugee women better integrate into the host community, facilitate social activities between refugee and Romanian women, and provide skill-building and income-generating activities for women and girls to address barriers to the labor market.
- 7) Support the institutional capacity of women's rights and civil society organizations working with Ukrainian refugee women, to provide GBV case management, legal services, individual and group counseling, access to sexual and reproductive health services, and

mental health support for social workers and frontline workers.

- 8) Provide specific training on GBV core concepts, reproductive health, and legal instruments to humanitarian aid providers working with refugee and migrant women, and build the capacity of organizations providing services to refugees to mainstream GBV risk mitigation in their programs and services.
- 9) Undertake advocacy for funding for GBV prevention and response, including comprehensive specialist GBV services, reproductive health care, GBV prevention campaigns, and making available digital tools for GBV survivors to access specialist support and legal advice.

VI. Addressing Sexual Violence against Men, Boys, and LGBTIQ+ Persons in Humanitarian Settings: A Field-Friendly Guidance Note by Sector - Women's Refugee Commission¹⁴

The Women's Refugee Commission (WRC) conducted exploratory research from 2018 to 2019 in three refugee settings, revealing high unmet needs among men, boys, and LGBTIQ+ individuals who are survivors of sexual violence in conflict and displacement. In response to these findings, WRC developed this Guidance Note to outline key actions and considerations for service provision across sectors. The aim is to support frontline workers in better addressing sexual violence against men, boys, and LGBTIQ+ persons.

It is crucial to recognize the diverse needs and vulnerabilities within the LGBTIQ+ community and avoid lumping individuals together homogeneously. Efforts should be disaggregated and developed in collaboration with LGBTIQ+ persons and organizations to address the specific needs of lesbians, gay men, trans men, trans women, intersex persons, nonbinary persons, and others.

The core guiding principles and approaches for addressing sexual violence in humanitarian settings emphasize the following:

1. **Safety:** Ensuring the safety and security of survivors and their children is paramount.
2. **Confidentiality:** Respecting survivors' rights to choose when, how and with whom to share their story, and ensuring that information is only disclosed with their informed

¹⁴ Women's Refugee Commission. "Addressing Sexual Violence against Men, Boys, and LGBTIQ+ Persons in Humanitarian Settings: A Field-Friendly Guidance Note by Sector." Women's Refugee Commission. <https://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/research-resources/addressing-sexual-violence-against-men-boys-lgbtqi-persons-in-humanitarian-settings-guidance-note/>.

consent.

3. **Respect:** Guiding all decisions and actions by respecting the survivor's choices, interests, rights, and dignity.
4. **Non-discrimination:** Providing fair and equal treatment to survivors regardless of age, gender, race, religion, nationality, ethnicity, marital status, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic.
5. **Child Survivor Consideration:** Assessing and considering the best interests of child survivors of all genders and sexualities, ensuring their safety, well-being, and development, and involving them in decisions about their lives.
6. **Do No Harm Approach:** Implementing measures to prevent and mitigate any further harm to affected individuals by humanitarian actors. A complex concept safeguarding project beneficiaries. **Community-based Approach:** Engaging affected populations as partners in all stages of humanitarian preparedness, response, and recovery.
8. **Rights-based Approach:** Identifying and addressing the underlying causes of discrimination and inequality to ensure that all individuals realize their right to freedom, dignity, and safety from violence and abuse.
9. **Humanitarian Principles:** Upholding the principles of humanity, impartiality, independence, and neutrality as the foundation of effective humanitarian action.

This guidance note provides valuable insights and recommendations for GBV actors working with male survivors of sexual violence in Ukraine. It emphasizes the importance of a survivor-centered approach and highlights the need to address the specific barriers and challenges faced by male survivors, especially in a homophobic context. Some key points from the guidance note include:

1. **Accountability to Women and Girls:** While supporting male survivors, GBV programming should remain accountable to women and girls, who are disproportionately affected by GBV. It is crucial not to undermine GBV services for women and girls while assisting male survivors.

2. **Definition of Sexual Violence:** Sexual violence against men and boys is defined as any sexual act or other act directed against a person's sexuality using coercion. This definition encompasses various forms of sexual violence, including rape, unwanted touching, and sexual exploitation.
3. **Impact of Sexual Violence:** Male survivors may experience unique consequences, including challenges with masculinity, gender identity, and sexual orientation. It is essential to address these impacts and provide appropriate support.
4. **Barriers to Accessing Services:** Male survivors face multiple barriers to accessing services, including stigma, fear of confidentiality breaches, and lack of knowledge about available services. GBV actors should address these barriers and provide male- friendly services.
5. **Safety Planning and Disclosure:** Safety planning is crucial for male survivors, especially if they are still in contact with the perpetrator. Responding to disclosures requires sensitivity and empathy, and survivors should never be pressured to disclose more than they feel comfortable sharing.
6. **Staffing Considerations:** Service providers should respect the preferences of male survivors regarding the gender of staff members. Sensitivity training and ongoing support for staff are essential to provide effective assistance.
7. **Awareness Raising and Information:** Including male survivors in GBV awareness- raising activities and providing clear information about available services can encourage help-seeking behaviors.
8. **Engaging with Diverse Identities:** GBV actors should consider the intersecting identities of male survivors, including diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, and ethnic backgrounds, to ensure inclusive and non-discriminatory services.

The guidance note also includes practical recommendations, such as establishing alternative entry points for male survivors, providing phone-based or online services, and engaging with local LGBTIQ+ organizations. Additionally, it offers resources and references for further support and training. Overall, the guidance note emphasizes the importance of addressing the specific needs of male survivors while upholding the principles of confidentiality, safety, and non- discrimination.

Assignment Overview

The task at hand involves reviewing existing guidelines on the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and further developing them to suit the specific context of participating countries and the crisis they are facing. The focus is on outlining procedures for identifying risks and providing support to refugees who are in danger of becoming victims of SGBV at the point of entry. This initiative is part of Work Package 2 (WP2) of the IMPROVE project, aimed at enhancing the knowledge and capacity of professionals, social workers, case workers, and frontline staff in detecting and preventing GBV and SGBV.

Conclusion

Following the comprehensive review of existing guidelines conducted and the detailed instructions set out in the three sections of the document, it becomes clear that tackling sexual and gender-based violence among refugees demands a diverse set of strategies. The guidelines stress the importance of cooperation among various sectors, organizations and disciplines to effectively address gender-based violence (GBV). They highlight the necessity for joint strategies and thorough involvement of refugee communities in both preventing and responding such violence.

The guidelines offer practical recommendations for prevention, response and support, covering aspects such as community education, training responders, establishing referral mechanisms, providing healthcare and psychosocial support, ensuring security and safety and engaging with legal and justice systems. Additionally, they highlight the significance of incorporating gender-sensitive and culturally appropriate approaches in all interventions.

Moving forward, the developed guidelines will serve as invaluable resources for professionals and stakeholders involved in supporting refugees and addressing GBV in a crisis setting. They will inform the implementation of capacity-building activities, including workshops, seminars and peer consultations. By promoting cooperation, good practice and knowledge exchange among partners, these guidelines will contribute to creating safer and more supportive environments for refugees, ultimately advancing the goal of preventing and responding to sexual and gender-based violence effectively.

Abbreviations

GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GBV AoR	Gender-Based Violence Area of Responsibility
HIAS	Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IDPC	International Drug Policy Consortium
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRC	International Rescue Committee
LGBTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MISP	Minimum Initial Service Package
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
UN	United Nations
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WRC	Women's Refugee Committee



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