AGENDA

- Background
- Research
- Findings
- Implications for practice
- Discussion / Q&A

BACKGROUND

- An unprecedented 65.6 million people around the world have been forced from their homes.
- Among them are nearly 22.5 million refugees.
- Under international law, refugees are persons residing outside their country and unable/unwilling to return because of a well-founded fear of persecution or statelessness (1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees).
- In recent years, children below 18 years of age constituted about half of the refugee population.
- 55 percent of all refugees worldwide originated from Syria, Afghanistan, and South Sudan.

(UNHCR, 2016)
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

- Women and girls make up around 50 percent of any refugee, internally displaced or stateless population.
- War, displacement, and encampment increases vulnerability to violence against women.
- Violence against women has been both a cause of forced displacement and a consequence of displacement. It has also been perpetrated by some of the very people who have been entrusted with the task of protecting refugees and displaced persons.
- Women and girls who are separated from trusted family members, disabled or elderly are especially vulnerable to violence.

(UNHCR, 2016)

IMPETUS FOR THE RESEARCH

The international humanitarian community has historically focused on sexual violence perpetrated by armed actors vs. the less visible violence women experience in their homes.

The International Rescue Committee

The IRC responds to some of the world's worst crises, delivering aid that saves lives while paving the way for long-term recovery.

https://www.rescue.org/
PRIVATE VIOLENCE, PUBLIC CONCERN

From Harm to Home

What are the drivers of intimate partner violence (IPV) among displaced women?

Drivers = Underlying factors and proximal triggers
CONTEXT FOR THE RESEARCH

Key players
• The International Rescue Committee (IRC)
• Dr. Rebecca Horn, independent researcher
• Dr. Eve Puffer, Duke University
• The U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration

Key dates
• Research was conducted in 2014
• Report and practice brief were issued in 2015
• Journal article was officially published in 2017

WHERE THE RESEARCH TOOK PLACE

The research was conducted in three refugee camps:

1. Ajuong Thok camp in South Sudan
2. Dadaab camp in Kenya
3. Domiz camp in Iraq

SITE 1 – AJUONG THOK CAMP

• Located in South Sudan
• Approximately 10,466 refugees registered in 2014
• Since 2011, systematic bombing of South Kordofan and neighboring states has produced more than 200,000 refugees.
The Dadaab camps were established in Kenya in 1992. At the time of data collection, 104,865 refugees were registered in Hagadera Dadaab camp. The majority of inhabitants fled civil war in Somalia, and a small number of participants came from Ethiopia.

Domiz camp in Iraq was established in April 2012 in response to ethnic Kurds fleeing violent conflict in Syria. Approximately 65,041 Syrian Kurds were registered in 2014, double the size of the camp’s original design.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Qualitative methods
- Individual interviews
- Focus group discussions

Use of language interpreters

Community advisory committees were established in each location.
RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Total of 284 participants
- Adult women who experienced IPV = 39
- Community members = 169
- Community leaders = 43
- Service providers = 33

SAFETY & ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Researching IPV in many contexts can be dangerous for the participants as well as the researchers.
- Safety guidelines were developed that addressed the key issues of informed consent, confidentiality, referral systems and reporting procedures.
- All women survivors of IPV had trained case managers and counselors available to them and were provided with information about local services.
- Participation was completely voluntary.

WHAT DID WE LEARN?

Contextual considerations
- Newly displaced vs. longer time spent in the camp
- Communities and families ruptured
- Difficulties meeting basic needs

Experience of IPV
- IPV was acknowledged as an issue pre-displacement
- Women across the three camps reported experiencing a range of IPV, including physical, emotional and sexual violence, men controlling their behavior and movements.
- Financial or material neglect as a form of abuse

Inter-related drivers of IPV (5)
- Exacerbating risk in displacement
INTER-RELATED DRIVERS OF IPV

1. Gendered social roles and norms
2. Destabilization of gender norms and roles, including partners’ unmet expectations of one another
3. Men’s substance use
4. Women’s separation from family
5. Quick re-marriages

DRIVERS OF IPV (1)

1. Gendered social roles and norms
Values, beliefs and traditional practices were described as contributing to conflict in marital relationships and IPV in all three camps.

DRIVERS OF IPV (2)

2. Destabilization of gender norms and roles
Women described new opportunities in the camp such as skills training and schools for girls that were not available to them pre-displacement.

Men reported feeling disempowered, frustrated and threatened because they felt their traditional role to protect and provide were usurped by international humanitarian agencies.
Partners' unmet expectations of one another

It is now like women have taken the responsibility of men, becoming the breadwinners, getting out of the hut, looking for some other means...doing any other domestic activity that can help them get their ends meet. I have even seen a case whereby the woman is a porter, she uses wheelbarrow and fetches water around the blocks...when she comes back home the husband will snatch what she earned.

(Woman, group discussion in Dadaab)

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3. Men's substance abuse

So when the husband goes back at home and the woman notices that this is not the ration that she is entitled to get, and plus where did you get the money to buy miraa? So it becomes a fight, so the next time the wife wants to go take ration, they start fighting.

(Key informant, Dadaab)

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4. Women's separation from family

I think that is the reason that is why he is quarrelling me because if the relatives could be there, he could not do [treat me like this, because in Nuba Mountains he wasn't doing this because of the relatives.

(Woman, Ajuong Thok)
5. Quick re-marriages

A woman experiencing IPV in Ajuong Thok described the following:

The husband who has come to take you again after the other has left will not treat all the children the same. He will not love the child who belongs to another father. When he comes with something that he has brought from the market, he will give to his own children... And this is what brings quarrelling. And when you tell the husband, why are you doing this, why are you separating these children? He says, this child belongs to another man. And if you talk to him he will fight you.
## Discussion & Implications (2)

**Analysis**
- Men’s substance abuse intersected with men’s lack of contribution to the family associated with IPV
- Negative coping mechanism that becomes socially acceptable as new social norms emerge

**Implications**
- Absence of substance abuse programming in any (known) humanitarian effort
- Initiatives would need to proceed carefully and link to other IPV prevention efforts

## Discussion & Implications (3)

**Analysis**
- War and displacement breaks down critical social support networks and relationships
- Women’s isolation and separation from trusted familial and social support networks are linked to their vulnerability of IPV in displacement

**Implications**
- Need for safe spaces for women and opportunities for women to build trusted social support networks

## Conclusions

- Pre-existing gender inequalities, rapidly changing gender roles and other factors, emerged as drivers of IPV against women in displacement.
- The findings serve as an important reminder of the extent to which displacement affects all aspects of life, and exacerbates violence against women.
- How exactly the drivers of IPV identified in this study interact to increase women’s risk of IPV requires further study.
RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO YOU

Women resettling to the U.S. face surprisingly similar issues as they did the camps, despite change in context

- Tension created by gender norms and roles
  - ‘Women have all of the rights’
  - Economic stressors
  - Need for dual income households
- Lack of family and social support
  - Creating opportunities for connection
- Substance abuse
  - Culturally relevant approaches to treating substance abuse disorders
- Need for regular, meaningful collaboration

APPLICATIONS TO PRACTICE IN THE U.S.

- Women resettling to the U.S. face surprisingly similar issues as they did the camps, despite change in context
- Tension created by gender norms and roles
  - ‘Women have all of the rights’
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LET’S HEAR FROM YOU!

How do these findings resonate with you and the work that you do?

How might these findings inform your practice and understanding of clients’ backgrounds and dynamics shaping their experiences and service needs?

What questions, comments and insights would you like to share?

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for the journal article

The full research report and research briefs are available at:
http://gbvresponders.org/research-learning/completed-research/