LBT Refugee Women’s experiences of violence and GBV services in Lebanon and Turkey

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Background and Rationale

• LBT women’s experiences have often fallen between cracks
• Previous research by MOSAIC and others shown high levels of violence
• Continuums and layers of violence and discrimination
• Issues of accessing GBV services
  • Lack of access/knowledge of services
  • Residency status
  • Past poor experiences
  • Fear of being ‘outed’
• Impacts of multiple simultaneous crises
Methodology

• Caveat: research still on-going
• Lebanon (Beirut, Mount Lebanon) and Turkey (Ankara, Istanbul, Mersin) – to be expanded
• Service provider interviews
• Focus group discussions
• Key informant interviews
• Online survey
• Focus mostly on Syrian women, but also Palestinian, Iranian, Egyptian, Algerian, Jordanian
Types of violence

• Early life violence
  • Family violence (physical, sexual, verbal, psychological abuse)
  • Peer bullying

• Violence in adolescence/adulthood (In home countries)
  • Forced marriage (incl child marriage)
  • DV/IPV/marital rape
  • Pressure to have children
  • Sexual exploitation and blackmail
  • Death threats (immediate and extended family, community members)
  • Violence in Syrian Army (Syrian trans women)

• Violence in adulthood (In Lebanon/Turkey)
  • Exploitation and blackmail
  • Sexual violence, phsyical violence, verbal and emotional abuse, harassment
  • Death threats
  • Economic violence
Perpetrators

- Formal security actors and armed groups
  - Syrian security forces and armed opposition militias
  - Lebanese and Turkish security forces (police, immigration, public order private security)
  - Party-political militias (Lebanon)

- Family
  - Partners
  - Family (esp male family members physically, female family members emotionally)

- Community members
  - Other refugees (incl LGBTIQ+ community)
  - Host community (incl LGBTIQ+ community)

- Employers and colleagues
- Service providers
- Landlords
- Taxi drivers
Experiences of services

• Often very poor experiences of the police => lack of reporting
• Law enforcement and service providers lack understanding of diverse SOGIESC
• Experiences of xenophobia
• Importance of informal safety networks (peers, friends, safe spaces)
• Challenges ensuring lesbian and bisexual women can access services
• Lack of specialised MHPSS
• Turkey: financial support for trans refugees eaten up by inflation
Initial conclusions

• Experiences echo heterosexual/cisgender women’s experiences – but exacerbated by diverse SOGIESC

• Visibility as a risk factor – self-isolation

• Refugees ‘in limbo’ – not continuing education, not starting transition therapy

• Wide range of violence, but also cumulative impact of ‘micro-aggressions’

• Syrian lesbian and bisexual women harder to reach

• Extend research to non-LGBTIQ-focused service providers?
THANK YOU!

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