



A project of:



ALBOAN

ONG Jesuita Fundazioa



CONGRESS: Women en route:

Violence and displacement in five regions of Africa
October 2018

Women speak out

The main findings
from the assessment of the Mieza Programme
for the empowerment of African women and
girl survivors of SGBV in contexts of migration,
refuge and internal displacement.

Until the lion tells its story, the glory
will always be to the hunter.

Igbo Proverb, Nigeria

When the victims begin to speak, they
become a threat.

James Baldwin

1. Objectives and methodology of the assessment
2. Dynamics of mobility and violence through the testimonies of women and girls
3. The dreams, desires and requirements of women and girls
4. Final considerations.

I. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY OF THE ASSESSMENT

a) General context and framework

Overall objective

To contribute to the empowerment of African women and girls who have survived violence, particularly those who have been affected by contexts of war and who are living in contexts of forced displacement, refuge or migration.

Programme Stages



Length of the assessment phase: July 2017 - September 2018

Fieldwork (trips): September 2017 - June 2018

b) Assessment phase

Two aims

1. To conduct a **process of consultation** of the women and girls who have experienced sexual gender-based violence (henceforth: SGBV), **giving a voice and a role** to those who are generally silenced.
2. To gather **information** on the institutional capacities and empowerment practices carried out by local partner organisations of ALBOAN and other organisations in the field in order to identify possible good practices and/or improvement actions.

Field visits with three objectives = to identify:

1. The types and effects of SGBV that the women and girls experience.
2. The dreams, needs and requests of the women and girls affected by SGBV with an eye to their empowerment.
3. The capacities, needs and requirements of ALBOAN's local partner entities and other organisations active in the field.

c) Main selection criteria for fieldwork locations

Based on:

1. Type of environment: rural-urban.
2. Mobility situation: migration, refuge or internal displacement.
3. Duration of the crisis/conflict: recent-prolonged.
4. Spheres which manifest violence [public-private; humanitarian crisis-development context].
5. Religious profile of the population: Muslim majority - Christian majority - mixed.

d) Fieldwork: 5 trips, 8 countries and 17 locations

Trip 1: Northern
Morocco
Sept. 2017

Trip 2: Cameroon

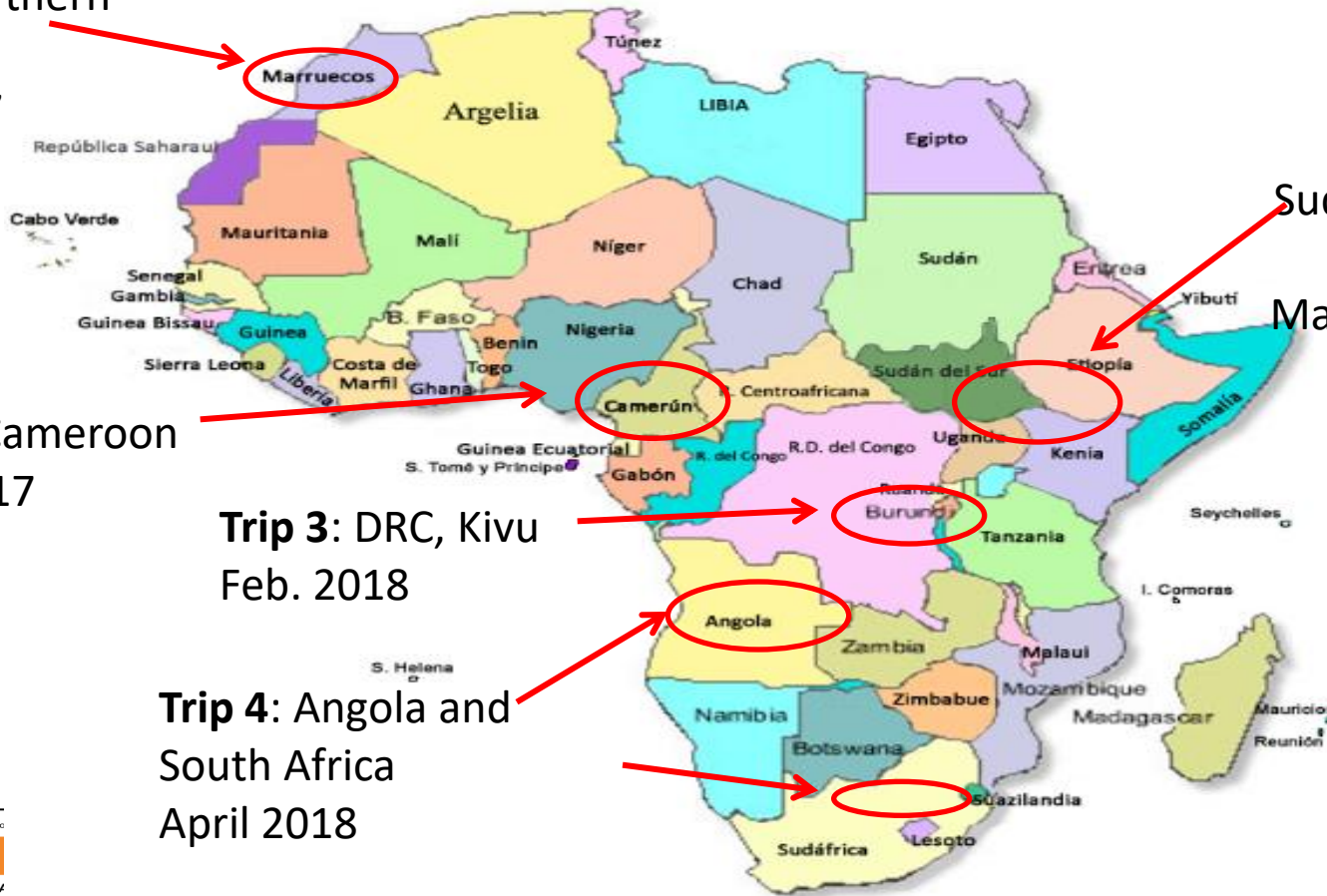
Nov. 2017

Trip 3: DRC, Kivu Feb. 2018

Trip 4: Angola and South Africa

April 2018

Trip 5: South Sudan, Ethiopia and Kenya
May–June 2018



e) Women and girls profiles (survivors of violence) selected (1/2)

1. **Tangier, Tetouan, Nador (Morocco):** migrant women and girls from Western and Central Africa, in transit to Europe and/or "stranded" in Morocco.
2. **Gado (Cameroon):** Central African women and girl refugees affected by a relatively recent and evolving conflict, belonging to a rural and traditional socio-cultural environment, and mostly of Muslim religion.
3. **Kivu (DRC):** women and girls displaced to the interior of the country due to a long-term conflict, which has become chronic, and/or to the circumstances of generalised instability, in a rural-urban environment and predominantly of Christian religion.
4. **Lóvua (Angola):** refugee women and girls due to a relatively recent conflict (the Kasai crisis of 2017) in a rural setting and predominantly of Christian religion.

e) Profiles of the women and girls (survivors of violence) selected (2/2)

5. **Luanda (Angola); J'burg and Pretoria (SA):** long-term urban refugee women and girls with different cultural-religious profiles.
6. **Mabán (South Sudan):** refugee women and girls of Sudanese nationality in rural or semi-rural contexts, of Muslim religion and who have been displaced in Maban since the conflict in Sudan in 2011 (medium-term humanitarian crisis).
7. **Melkadida (Ethiopia):** refugee women and girls of Somali nationality in rural or semi-rural contexts, of Muslim religion and who have been displaced to Melkadida since 2009 because of the droughts and famines in Somalia, in addition to the instability of that country (long-term humanitarian crisis).
8. **Kakuma (Kenya):** refugee women and girls of South Sudanese nationality in rural or semi-rural contexts, of Christian religion and who have been displaced to Kakuma for decades as a result of the various conflicts in South Sudan. In fact, some of the women interviewed were born in Kakuma (long-term humanitarian crisis).

f) Methodology

- Qualitative methodology aimed at giving a voice, encouraging individual expression and detecting fundamental and significant aspects of the experience of women survivors of sexual and gender-based violence in order to shed light on dynamics of violence and resilience common to other women in similar circumstances .
- Techniques: in-depth individual interviews (scripted questions, non-standardised questions), group interviews (semi-structured interviews), observation of interactions in the context, projects and local organisations visits

g) Ethical principles

1. Do no harm
2. Voluntary participation (therefore: the ability to stop participating at any time)
3. Informed consent
4. Confidentiality
5. Transparency
6. Respect.

h) Participants and techniques

1. Women and girl survivors of violence: number of interviewees and average age

Fieldwork location	No. interviewed		Average age
	Women	Girls	
Morocco	22	1	30
Cameroon	20		36.5
DRC	20	2	26
South Africa	16	2	35
Angola	11	3	28
South Sudan	30		28
Ethiopia	11	2	25
Kenya	11	1	25.5
<i>Sub-Total</i>	<i>141</i>	<i>11</i>	
Total	152		29 years old

2. Women and girl survivors of violence: 15 nationalities

	Nationality	No.
1	DRC	44
2	Sudan	30
3	Somalia	21
4	CAR	20
5	South Sudan	12
6	Ivory Coast	9
7	Cameroon	5
8	Burundi	3
9	Guinea Conakry	2
10	Ethiopia	1
11	Mali	1
12	Liberia	1
13	Nigeria	1
14	Rwanda	1
15	South Africa	1
	Total	152

3. Number of women and girl survivors of violence by interview type

Type of interview	
Individual	Group
23	
15	5
15	7
14	
18	
6	24
11	2
12	
114	38
152	

4. Representative groups and local migrant and refugee associations

Fieldwork location	No. Associations - Groups	No. People	
		Women	Men
Morocco	2	1	1
Cameroon	4	4	4
South Africa	-	-	-
Angola	1	-	1
South Sudan	-	-	-
Ethiopia	4	32	
Kenya	-	-	-
Total	11	37	6
		43	

5. Other actors: local & international NGOs, humanitarian agencies

Other actors	No. Institutions	No. People	
		Women	Men
Local NGOs	15	16	4
<i>Morocco</i>	1	1	-
<i>Cameroon</i>	-	-	-
<i>DRC</i>	10	7	3
<i>South Africa</i>	4	8	1
<i>Angola</i>	-	-	-
<i>South Sudan</i>	-	-	-
<i>Ethiopia</i>	-	-	-
<i>Kenya</i>	-	-	-
International NGOs	3	1	2
Humanitarian agencies	13	13	9
Consultant, indep. expert		1	
Health and Psychology. Pers.		5	6
Public Admin. Personnel	1	1	
Total	32	37	21

6. Staff consulted by the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) and the Diocesan Delegation for Migration (DDM) of Tangier

	Women	Men	Total
JRS	17	37	54
DDM	8	4	12

7. People consulted: general total

	5 trips					Total
	Morocco	Cameroon	DRC	Southern Africa	East Africa	
Women	33	30	38	47	102	250
Men	8	18	15	14	22	77
Total	41	48	53	61	124	327

i) Mieza Programme Assessment Team

- 1 operational coordinator
- 2 researchers (responsible for fieldwork, data analysis and writing reports)
- 1 support technician (in Spain)
- 20 cultural mediators and translators (in the field)
- 17 transcribers (in Spain).

The assessment team received generous support in the field from the Jesuit Refugee Service, the Diocesan Delegation for Migration in Tangier and numerous local organisations (SFVF and FEPSI in the DRC, to mention but a few).

2. DYNAMICS OF MOBILITY AND VIOLENCE

TESTIMONIES AND MAIN FINDINGS

a) Key notions (1/4)

- **Violence against women**

1993, UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, art. 1:

Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.

- **Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)**

Violence that occurs as a result of the normative role expectations associated with being a woman or a man, along with the unequal power relationships between them, within the context of a specific society (adapted from: Bloom, 2008: 14).

a) Key notions (2/4)

- **Multiple dimensions of violence against women**
 - Physical, sexual, psychological.
 - In the family, social and/or the State environment: social practices that cause harm, subordination, discrimination and/or exclusion at some or many levels (economic, educational, health, organisation of family life, social participation, access and enjoyment of justice, etc.).
 - Violent and destabilising macro-events (wars, famines ...) that increase women's vulnerability and their exposure to violence.
- **Overlapping violence:** stratification of the dimensions of violence (spiral of violence).

a) Key notions (3/4)

- **Human mobility**

A fundamental experience of human existence, categorised according to binary schemes whose validity is being increasingly questioned:

- Voluntary / forced?
- Legal / “illegal”?

- **Mobility ↔ Violence**

- Influence of legal status that categorises mobility concerning violence: certain types of mobility increase the vulnerability of women.
- Transformation of the violence before, during and after the mobility experience.
- Mobility not only as precariousness, but also as self-affirmation.

Key notions (4/4)

- **Resilience**

The capacity to sustain, endure and recover from difficulties.

- **Empowerment**

A multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives. This process fosters power in people for use in their own lives, their communities and in their society, acting on issues they define as important.

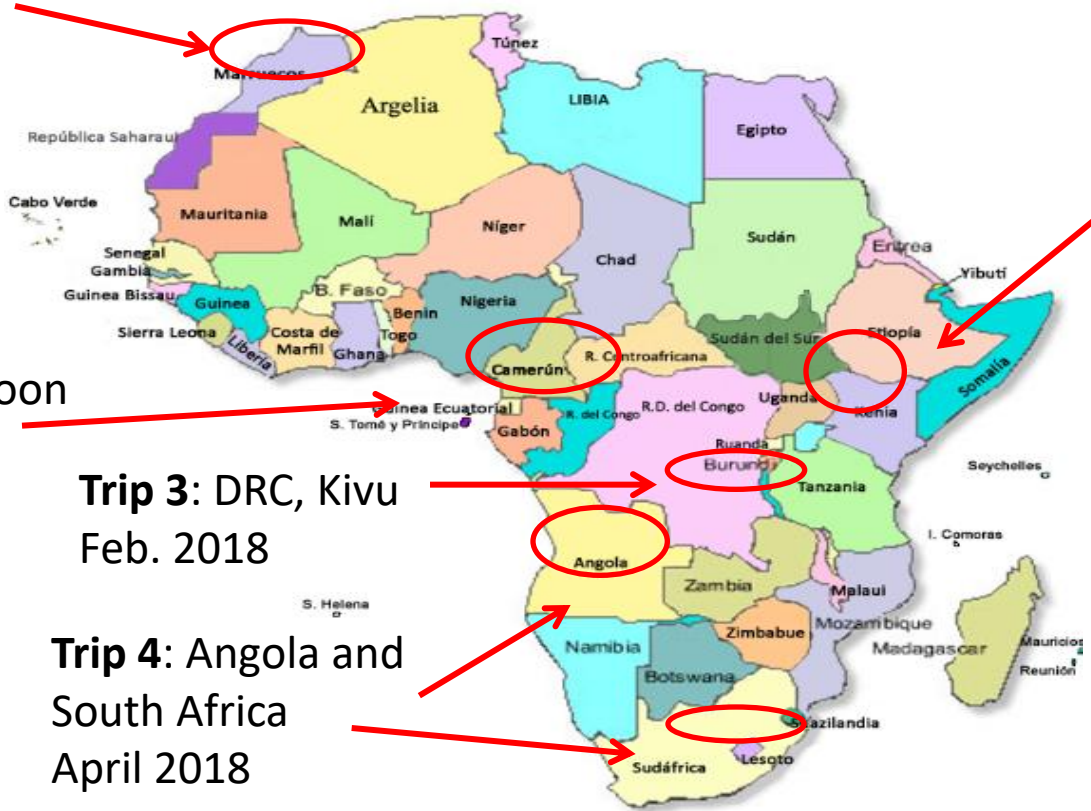
- Finding tools for change based on their own identity and culture.
- Problematic aspects: the “two faces” of the discourses of empowerment in the current humanitarian context (see section B. Refuge and the conclusions).

b) Being willing to listen, promote empowerment and cultural diversity: CHALLENGES

- A culture is not to be reduced to some problematic practices. → Avoid cultural or religious "essentialism": consider violence against women as something consubstantial and exclusive to certain cultures (for example, African ones) or to certain religions (for example: Islam).
- Avoid the dualism of progress – setback
→ Impose social changes from above and according to external criteria.
- There are many contextual factors that influence the extreme situations that have been identified: conflicts, lack of adequate legislation, impunity, poor access to the education system, among others. This makes it difficult to establish the causes of the violence in a direct and univocal way.

Fieldwork: 5 trips, 8 countries and 17 locations

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c) Global context: notable issues (1/2)

- The primacy of restrictive and punitive mobility policies defined as "economic".
- Externalisation of migration policies to control the European border to the states of North and West Africa.
- Conflicts that become deeply rooted and/or become chronic (DRC, CAR).
- Reduction of funds allocated for humanitarian intervention: scaling back humanitarian action gives the impression of a strategy of progressive withdrawal (significant: there are now very few "refugee camps", but rather: "refugee settlements").

c) Global context: notable issues (2/2)

- Design of and experimentation with new models of "durable solutions" for the refugee population, which are aimed at local development and which require regulatory changes at national level (access to residence permits, work permits, naturalisation...).
 - Example: Kalobeyei (near Kakuma, Kenya); the nine commitments undertaken by Ethiopia at the 2016 UN summit to promote the social and economic integration of the refugee population.
 - These transformations are not free from ambiguity and it is too early to be able to assess their results.
- As a consequence: the vulnerability of migrant, refugee or internally displaced women persists.

d) Summary of the findings according to the contexts of mobility:

- a. Migration
- b. Refuge (forced displacement) in camps
- c. Refuge (forced displacement) in urban environments
- d. Forced internal displacement.

A). MIGRATORY CONTEXT

(Morocco: Tangier, Tetouan and Nador)

Location map



- a. Violence and the decision to migrate
- b. Violence during transit
- c. Violence in Morocco: destination or transit?
- d. Trafficking.

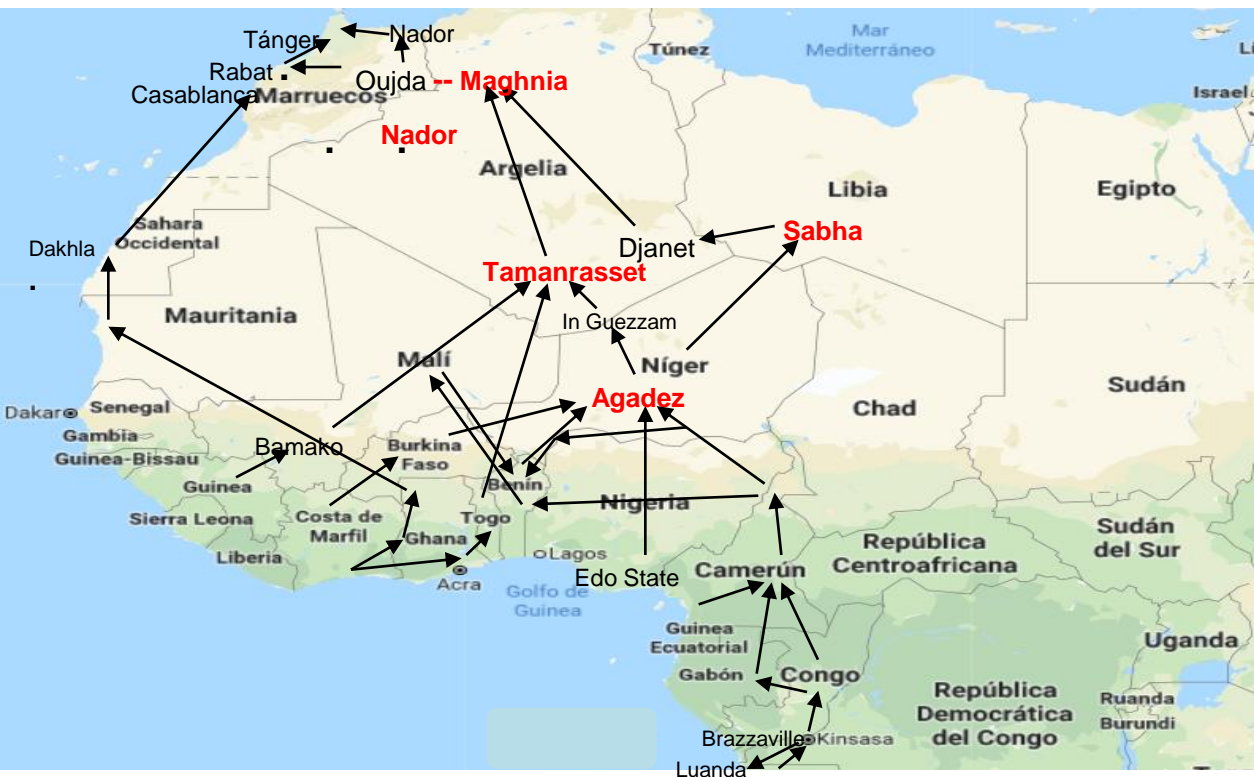
a). Violence and the decision to migrate

[1-7] *After my father's death, the situation was ... We couldn't take it anymore. My mother with all her children, she couldn't. (...) And Mum had no money for us, for school, and she was forced to try to offer the girls in forced marriage (...) My problem, which traumatises me every time I think about and talk about this, is circumcision [*], because I am circumcised. (...) I was forced to stay, to give myself to a planter who already had three women. But because of the situation we were in, it wasn't possible for her [my mother] to take care of us. Well, being women, she was forced to hand us over, after the circumcision. (...) Three sisters, yes, that's what she did. Then, after that, each one of us was handed over, against our will, but you are handed over, you are forced; I have a son with him and because of the bad treatment I suffered, I said to myself ... I was forced to flee ... (...) That's why I left my country: the mistreatment of the country, my mother who forced me to marry, my circumcision that has traumatised me ... That.*

Neige (Ivorian, in Morocco)

[* Literal translation. For women the correct technical term is ablation]

Routes of overlapping violence



Source: diagram based on women's stories
(map: Google Map)

Before –
In transit –
In Morocco
(transit or destination)

b). Violence during migratory transit (1/3)

[I- 20] *We came across patrols of the road, but they were disguised (...) as if they were from the army (...) Upon our arrival they asked our driver to park the car so that everyone could get out. Then our driver, who knew who these people were, realised that these people were not from the police, he asked them what they wanted, they said to him: "It's not your problem, all we want is their phone, their money, and even their shoes, nice shoes, jewellery, everything that can be of value, that's what interests us." The man said: "Okay, I'll stop, I'm going to park. Let me park properly". After saying this, he started the car, he left at full speed, the others started loading their rifles, they were about to shoot, he [the driver] told us: "Get down, get down!" Everyone hid in the car, we were very afraid, although we didn't know if those men ended up shooting their guns, we had the impression that they did. We were so afraid.*

Monique (Cameroonian, in Morocco)

b). Violence during migratory transit (2/3)

[I- 18-19] *When we arrived in Niger, in Agadez, it's where they sold me. I didn't know how to get across the region. I didn't know the way. I was sold in Libya. I swore, there in Libya, because I was asked for the money and my family couldn't get it ... [sigh] I was practically eight months in Libya, eight months during which they tortured me, you don't know, when they start asking for money it's like that, they beat us, they rape the women, they threaten them (...) There they search the women, when they find them, they undress them, they search them (...) In Libya, there, everything is lost (...) Everywhere it looks like it's closed, there are houses but they are prisons! Yes, they are prisons. And it's from Niger where they sell people (...) But, my mother fought, she found a small amount of money and she sent it. Yes. It was a Gambian who helped me flee. Because, since I didn't have the money, I would still be in Libya, I would still be there. And the man from Gambia helped me to flee, to leave the city. It was not easy, not easy at all. (...) So, I walked ... I walked ... You hide as soon as you hear the noise of the car, you hide. (...) I cried all the time, I was crying, crying ...*

Laurence (Cameroonian, in Morocco)

b). Violence during migratory transit

(3/3)

[I- 17] *That's where hell started, from Niger. You see everything. (...) And in this area, when the woman arrives... the boss looks at you, if he decides, you are for him, it doesn't matter if you're married, they don't consider that. (...) I met a woman, her name is X, who was in this city Arlit, and she got hit with a bottle in the head; she is there still, it's painful to see her, she never went to the hospital, nothing, nothing, nothing.*

Joy (Cameroonian, in Morocco)

[I- 29] *When we reached a particular stage we were in a hurry to go to the next country, because we said: "there, it will surely be better than here", we always hoped to find something better. And that's what motivated us to keep moving forward. And when you thought about how much it cost you to get to where you were, you could not, you could not, think about going back, to relive what you experienced.*

Monique (Cameroonian, in Morocco)

Resilience

[I- 57] *It was painful! It was very painful. But I had ... I had strength in me, in fact the strength to survive, which was my priority and the future of my daughter. (...) In fact, when you take this path you have, you know that you have the "euphoria" [raquette], you only think about your life, first about surviving and keeping going because you are running away from something. In your head, you have strength, you don't even think about the dangers that you face, you don't think about anything, you just think about moving forward, about going to find a refuge just to stay in.*

Neige (Ivorian, in Morocco)

[I- 2] *At that time, my little one, there, she was even younger, younger ... It was her who gave me the strength: "Mum, get up". I fall, I fall. She tells me: "courage, Mum, you have to have the strength". In fact, when I think about what happened in the country, when I think about this, I say: "truly, one needs to have the strength in order to be able to leave".*

Réjane (Ivorian, in Morocco)

c). Violence in Morocco: destination or transit? (1/2)

[I- 32] *If I see that the situation is stable here [in Morocco] with the children, I will stay! But we have had problems renting, to pay for the house. I go out to ask for charity; to receive charity to have something to eat with the children (...) So I'm forced to go out on the street.*

Réjane (Ivorian, in Morocco)

[I- 33] *I was here in Morocco in 2013. [I] worked in 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016. Now I've got some money (...) I've already worked a lot, I don't have much of a future, I don't even know, if I leave, what I must do. If that's the case, since people are leaving for Europe, I'm going to make a living in Europe.*

Lucile (DRC, in Morocco)

c). Violence in Morocco: destination or transit? (2/2)

[I- 39] *So I don't know. I'm afraid of X [a person who they paid in order to travel to Spain]. I don't have support. If there's no work, if they tell me to go back to Rabat to work, to get some money to survive. He said "No". I can't travel because he doesn't know what day people leave. If I return, they take the people behind me. What can I do? (...) I don't know when, what day, what date. For this reason, I'm here, (...) If I leave, they'll take the people. I can't fail, I've suffered a lot, I'm [not] going to miss this opportunity.*

Lucile (DRC, in Morocco)

- “*J’ai pris la route*” (*I hit the road*) - decision imposed, but also adopted
- “*Si Dieu fait grâce*” (*If God gives grace*) (I will reach the destination) – the spiritual dimension of the migratory experience

d). Trafficking of women

- See urban context (c).

Conclusions

- The testimonies show how the growing presence of women in sub-Saharan migratory flows, the so-called "feminisation of migration", cannot be viewed simply in terms of a quantitative increase; instead it gives rise to and triggers dynamics of vulnerability and violence specific to women.
- The causes and motives for migration, the displacement across borders and the stay/wait as irregular migrants are "gender sensitive" experiences: they vary for women and for men. Women suffer multiple forms of exploitation, blackmail and SGBV during transit.
- The restrictive approach of European migration policies, externalised to Morocco and in the regions of North and West Africa, increases the vulnerability of women as "irregular migrants" and limits the effectiveness (if not the possibility) of protection.

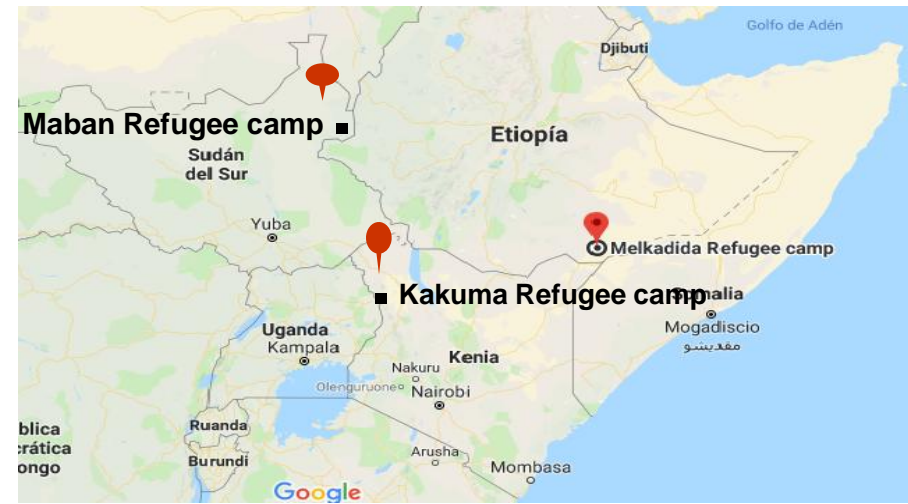
B. CONTEXT OF FORCED DISPLACEMENT (REFUGEE CAMPS)

Cameroon: Gado

Angola: Lóvua

South Sudan: Mabán

Ethiopia: Melkadida; Kenya: Kakuma



Location maps

- a. Violence caused by the conflict
- b. Violence related to precariousness and lack of safety in the camp
- c. Trans-national domestic and community violence
 - Early marriage
 - The community mediation of violence and clan control
 - Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

a). War and forced displacement

[V- 1 bis] *When the war started we were running just along the road and the airplane high [bombing] [did] not allow us to run. Stabbing us, wounding us, and if like you are having a child, carrying a child like this... If you saw the airplane coming you can ran very fast and wait [until] you are safe [...]. So from there you can hide yourself and this [bombing] spread, just like that, life was terrible until, if, the airplane finished [bombing] and [...] you can then go back, if you are alive. [...] When they [the airplanes] are coming at the road again, [the bombing] started, they even killed, my father was killed... [...] He was hit [by a bomb]. [...] [It took] three months [to get to Maban], because we [were] not just moving like this once. We go and stay and rest for a while because of the small children. [...] If the airplanes start, we also move to another place, just like this, until we reach... [...] There were forty or so people coming together with the relatives, the brothers or sisters and my husband and plus the [...] children.*

Salima (Sudanese, in South Sudan)

Considerations

- In general, in the camps visited, the women refrained from talking in depth about the conflict that forced them to leave their country and about the violence suffered during the displacement. The preceding testimony is one of the few that could be collected.
- It is possible to assume that in some cases the women did not want to remember so as not to relive traumatic events. If this is the case, it highlights the importance of offering psychological support so that they can talk about and overcome the wounds and bereavements they are carrying with them.
- Furthermore, unfortunately, daily life in the fields presents such a number of difficulties to overcome that it is understandable that the women prefer to share their concerns regarding their present situation.

b). Daily life in camps: Precariousness, lack of safety and violence (1/2)

- Slow administration procedures and bureaucratic barriers
- Lack of resources:
 - Difficult to access medicines, construction materials, tents, etc.
 - Limited rations due to the reduction of funds available to humanitarian agencies:
 - in some places a **scheduled reduction of the calories of the rations** is carried out;
 - in others, the practice of **cash transfer** using mobile phones donated to refugees is used. This innovative distribution method is presented as an empowerment strategy, but the refugees complain that the amounts of money are insufficient.
- Life marked by dependency on distributions, which leads to abuses related to them: cases of men that declare themselves to be partners of single mothers in order to obtain their ration; or cases of husbands who keep the entire family ration for themselves.
- This precariousness impacts on women in particular since they are often the only ones who take care of their children.

b). Daily life in camps: Precariousness, lack of safety and violence (2/2)

[II- 14] *So the women are exposed even at night. For example, I use myself as an example, I am alone in my house, with my little son, and my niece is at home, next door. So, every time that... During the night the men come, they open our door. Then, if we shout, we scream, the neighbours come. At school last year, with my niece there, she is also a victim of, uh, this violence there, she already has a baby ... I do not know the father. So, women are very, very exposed to violence.*

Aissatou (Central African, in Cameroon)

- Lack of safety: muggings, robberies and rapes (especially around the water points and on the outskirts of the camps)
- Prostitution and "survival sex": hidden practices.

c). Community management of SGBV

- In the camp, the refugee community tends to copy the social practices of the place of origin (early marriage, FGM) and to use community mediation for cases of rape, domestic violence, divorce, etc.
- Unfortunately, this has a detrimental effect for the women since they usually do not have a voice in those spaces:

[V- 4] For the wife to request their voice is not..., is not allowed. [...] Unless the man will request: “This wife is not a good one, I divorce her”. [...] I’ve never seen a wife requested that “This man is a bad man, I don’t want him”, unless they have parents [who can give compensation for divorce to the husband].

Salima (Sudanese, in South Sudan)

c.1). Early marriage and trans-national control of the extended family (clan)

[II- 8] In the camp we hear that a girl is like a mango that has not yet matured, if you wait others will take it and eat it like a green mango with salt.

Antoine (Cameroonian, in Cameroon)

Early marriage: traditional practice shared by both Muslim (CAR, Somalia, Sudan), and Christian (South Sudan) communities.

A security mechanism in contexts of scarce resources: it is understandable that in the camps single mothers with no resources end up repeating a practice which is unfavourable to women in order to lighten the economic burden of the family.

- Effects: school dropout, early pregnancy, damage to health ...

Lucy, South Sudanese, in Kenya

[V- 9] *I was married at 15 years old [...] and here in Kenya, there is not something like that. [...] I was being forced married by my uncle. [...] At that time my father died. We he heard that my father died, he started being forced to marry me. Yeah, marry for an old man who [has] five women. [...] He came here and tried to pick me when I was in class eight on that time. [...] And then I decided that, how can I live with an old man? Better to live with a young man so that he can be responsible for me. I refused to go to Sudan with [him].*

Lucy endured repeated attempts at kidnapping, violence against her mothers and sisters and brothers, dispersion of the family, death threats and threats of kidnapping the child she had with a young man she chose herself. In addition, she blames herself :

[V- 13] *My brother[s] are suffering because of me. Like now my mother is not around and my little sisters are suffering because of me. [...] You know, I don't like somebody to suffer, I like myself to suffer than others. [...] My younger brother is [...] telling me: "[...] Come and solve your problem alone".*

Lessons learned from this case

- Lucy's story encapsulates many SGBV traumas and experiences that were also found in the cases of the other South Sudanese women and girls interviewed in Kenya. The violence of early marriage is accompanied by extreme clan/extended family violence, which persists for many years and across different borders and countries, affecting everyone that makes up the woman's family, the partner that she had chosen (and with whom she had a child) and his family.
- This occurs in a context of communities affected by forced displacement and the violence of the long conflicts in Sudan and South Sudan (in the same way as it affected Lucy's mother, who is a widow and victim of SGBV in circumstances related to the conflict), and, therefore, in a vulnerable social structure, where people are faced with limitations regarding the full exercise of rights and access to justice.
- As a result, girls and young women find themselves with insufficient resources (educational, emotional, cultural, economic, etc.) to deal with a spiral of violence fuelled by traditional practices (early marriage), as well as the idea that the woman does not have the right to decide for herself.

c.2). Mobility, family separations and community mediation

(Zara, Somali in Ethiopia, 20 years old, married at 14.)

- Early marriage has triggered a series of negative consequences in her life: school dropout, early pregnancy and a married life in which the woman is subordinate to her husband's wishes.
- She did not want to return to Somalia with her husband. As a result, he divorced her and left her alone with a son.
- The divorce and her situation as a single woman with a son expose her to economic precariousness, to more forms of violence: robbery in her house and rape.
- The traditional authorities of the Somali community intervened and negotiated between the family of the aggressor and Zara's family. They accepted compensation in exchange for the release of the aggressor. This compensation did not even get to Zara, but rather it was exclusively for her father.
- She expresses her dissatisfaction with community mediation because it did not compensate her, nor did it seek her best interests, nor is it a sufficient deterrent in order to prevent more cases of aggression in the future.

c.3). Desires for change

Significantly, it is inside the community where the control over women is deeper and social practices are more invasive of their intimacy (FGM, early marriage); therefore, women like Zara and local associations of Somali women refugees have expressed most clearly the desire to change particular community practices.

[V- 5] *I would like to talk to the community about **female mutilation** and **forced marriage** in our community, everywhere. I would like to encourage the women not to have this practice. [...] The parents call practitioners. [The young girls] know [about it, and] they are crying while they do it.*

[V-8] *His parents forced us to release him, but he [the aggressor] said he will not do anything again. I am still scared for others, not for him. [...] I would like to talk to men, [to explain to them] not just to force [women]. They [men] are using their power. [I would like] to talk to them to give awareness on how to address to the ladies.*

[V- 6] *I would like to [be] married [again]. [...] I want to choose, not my parents to choose for me. [...]*

Zara (Somali woman, in Ethiopia)

C. THE CONTEXT OF REFUGE IN URBAN ENVIRONMENTS

Angola: Luanda

South Africa: J'burg and Pretoria



- a. Violence caused by the conflict
- b. Violence related to precariousness and lack of safety in an urban context:
 - Legal status and administrative barriers
 - Limited access to services
 - Insecurity and xenophobia
- c. FGM
- d. Trafficking.

a). Reasons for displacement and the persistence of trauma

Unlike the refugee women interviewed in the camps, the Congolese, Burundian, Rwandan and Somali women interviewed in urban contexts showed a willingness to share their stories (and sometimes even the need to do so), allowing us to learn about the pain and traumas that they continue to carry with them, even though the displacement had occurred years before.

[IV- 1] *My father, he was, he worked in the government. My father, he was Rwandan. There, in the Congo, Rwandans were expelled [...] My father [...] takes three days [and] he does not come to the house anymore. So my mother gathered us together: "We have to leave to take refuge abroad, maybe they will kill us". My father does not dare to come home, that's why we left Congo.*

Nathalie (Rwandan, in Angola)

[IV- 2] *I left in Somalia just when they killed my Mum and my bother right in front of me [...] So, the gun shot up in the air, one hit on one wall and hit me on the side and I have wounds. [...] So the father said: "My daughter you need to leave this place". And the father of the children at that time was here in South Africa. So I came and I came to Kenya. So when I was in Kenya I called the husband and from there they put me here in South Africa. So that's the story of me leaving Somalia.*

Cherifa (Somali, living in South Africa)

[IV- 4] *When I was 14 my older sister got married and she decided to go with me to Goma. [...]. When I left there, at the age of 16, there were soldiers who came to the house. That's when I was raped, they even cut my stomach with the knife. It was five soldiers and the sixth was the one who cut me. And then I went to the hospital, I stayed in the hospital for two years. After three months in the hospital, I was told that I was pregnant. They asked if they can take the child for adoption or if I want to keep the child. I decided to stay with the child. [...] After nine months I had the child, they told the hospital that I still have to stay there. [...] I was in Goma, they transferred me to Boukavou, to the Panzi hospital. When I had the child, one year, I was told to stay for another year to see how it progresses, all that there. I stayed at the hospital and then after that my older sister said, OK, since you are well, you can come home. [...] I stayed there. Unfortunately, in 2016, there were more problems, troubles. As usual, the soldiers came to the house, they killed my older sister. My child, they cut my child, one finger is gone.*

Ursulle (from DRC, living in South Africa)

b). Violence caused by precariousness and lack of security

b.1). Legal status (1/2)

Although they are far from the conflicts in their countries of origin and enjoy a freedom of movement which is not granted to the women in the camps, refugee women in cities are often trapped in situations they cannot escape from.

The absence of a clear legal status is at the root of the precariousness and social marginalisation experienced by the refugee women.

The Republic of Angola does not fully subscribe to the 1951 Refugee Convention. In 2015, it drafted a new refugee law under which the circumstances for the recognition of refugee status were limited and which stipulated that this status does not grant the right to work, nor to obtain permits in order to develop commercial activities.

b.1). Legal status (2/2)

- In 2016, the asylum seeker identity document was withdrawn from people from Rwanda, Burundi, Sierra Leone and Liberia because it was considered that the crisis in their countries of origin was over. Therefore, after almost two decades in Angola, these people are now without legal residence and without a work permit. In addition, Angola has a restrictive policy regarding the acquisition of nationality and it does not subscribe to the Convention concerning the Status of Stateless Persons (UN Convention on Statelessness).
- South African legislation grants people who are recognised as refugees the right to work and to move freely in the country. However, the delay in the assessment of the applications is extremely long (it is the country with the highest number of unresolved asylum applications in the southern region; Africa Check, 2016) and the approval rate is low.

b.2). Administrative barriers (2/2)

The need to obtain and/or renew documentation is one of the greatest concerns of the women interviewed.

In South Africa, in order to renew your status as an asylum seeker you have to return to the office where the application was first registered. The travel expenses are often a greater obstacle than the administrative fees for the renewal.

[IV- 6] I had no papers at that exact moment when I was working. So, and, and, Home Affairs move from here Johannesburg to Pretoria, at that time transportation was 70 rand per person. So, would you, would you rather do for 70 Rand to go in and then, how you are going to come back? Food, and then [...], they [the employers] might get a person to replace it for the day... while you've been away.

Aida (Somali, living in South Africa)

b.3). Limited access to services: healthcare, justice, economic precariousness

[IV- 7] *I was ill, seriously ill. [...] I went to Johannesburg but there the woman [the receptionist at the health centre] she made things difficult for me all day. [...] I said [that] I do not work, I do not have the money to pay for the forms. [...] I stayed there from morning till seven o'clock [cries]. There you have to pay, I say no, [...] I do not pay because I do not work. She said you have to pay, if you do not pay, she kept all the papers. So I did not have the money to pay. I went home.*

Beatrice (from DRC, living in South Africa)

[IV- 15] *So, I [was] bleeding. He [an assailant] took the bag, I felt to the ground. I came to the police station. I know [a] bit of English [now], but then I didn't know nothing. So [I cried:] "I'm dead, I'm dead". And they [the police] started laughing, they didn't do anything for me, so I got up and went home. [...] After three days I manage to survive, I went back. I took a translator, someone to translate for me at the police station. So they said [that] there is no visible damages after 24 hours, so we can't help you.*

Cherifa (Somali, living in South Africa)

b.4) Lack of safety (and xenophobia in SA)

- The lack of safety in the urban contexts visited is worrisome. Refugee women end up being the target of muggings, robberies, rapes.
- In South Africa, xenophobia means the refugee and migrant population are even less safe.

[IV- 10; 12] *I can go sell on the market of [...]. I sell there, I go back ... At 7 or 8pm I return home, I take the transport, [...] to take the other transport, these two transports to get to our house. There I met young people, the other took me, he ... How do you say? Yes, after he brought me to ... This person is too big, he hit me, raped me, it was the [...]. He raped me there. [...]*

I do not work anymore. I did not go back to school either. I'm afraid to walk myself ... [...] I think that men will also come, that they will do also, as I said to Mum: "I do not go to school, I prefer to stay home alone". I stay at home. Mum, she makes small trips and buys. She sells and we eat.

Lucie, (from DRC, living in Angola)

c). Female genital mutilations (FGM)

- All Somali women interviewed in South Africa admitted having undergone female genital mutilation. This was also revealed to be the case with the younger women, which corroborates how prevalent this occurrence is at present.
- Since FGM is not legal in South Africa, circular South Africa - Somalia migration has begun among the Somali community for the sole purpose of infibulating young women. The propagation of this practice is being met with the opposition of several women and generating tension within couples, increasing cases of domestic violence and repudiation.

[IV- 22] *In 2014, before he [my husband] brought my daughter [to South Africa], he mutilated [her] without my knowledge. Whatever they did to me, he did without my knowledge. And then and after that, he said: “You know what? I’m going to take the small ones [daughters]; I’m going [to] give them tickets back home [in Somalia] for them to [...] get mutilated as well”. [...] As to say if that, you know, I was not a woman before. [I said to my husband:] “So you want whatever I’ve gone through for my daughters as well. You agree to mutilate the big one. And so you, whatever you want to this ones, you rather kill or go through me first before to go through to them”. So he beat me up.*

Cherifa (Somali, living in South Africa)

[IV- 24] *I don’t want my daughter to be mutilated. [...] We [my husband and I are] arguing about who she [my daughter] belongs to. So we didn’t have her mutilated but he wants to. [...] And, if you go to society, and you go, they still believe in mutilation. So, I can’t actually have a say in it.*

Aida (Somali, living in South Africa)

Conclusions

Without the possibility of the effective enjoyment of rights (legal status, residence permit, work permit, access to social services and justice), the future of refugee women is blocked.

This leads to their marginalisation, exacerbating the precariousness of their conditions, economic dependence and social subordination and exposes women and girls in particular to SGBV risks. Under these conditions, a high incidence of SGBV cases have been recorded and go largely unpunished.

d). Trafficking of Women

- In Morocco, Angola and South Africa the past or present circumstances reported by some women (capture by means of deception and violent and continuous coercion for the purposes of exploitation, among others) point to the possible involvement of transnational trafficking networks.
- Investigating this complex phenomenon exceeded the scope of the Mieza Programme assessment, but it was clear that the cases found were only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to this situation managed by criminal organisations.
- The severity of the traumas experienced by women victims of trafficking requires effective resources for protection and ongoing psychosocial support for social reintegration.
- Experts and specialist organisations were consulted in order to further understand the phenomenon and to see if the Mieza Programme could contribute in this regard and what that contribution could be.

D. THE CONTEXT OF FORCED INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

(DRC: Katana, Kavumu, Lwero, Beni, Goma, Masisi)



Context

The provinces of North Kivu and South Kivu:

- The conflict runs on, to differing degrees of intensity, but never completely ended. One generation knows nothing other than war.
- A high number of armed groups and militias on the ground are active in the territory.
- Widespread insecurity has given rise to frequent and recurrent rapes, constituting the bloodiest manifestation of SGBV in the region.
- Consequently, most women interviewed have endured a succession of forced internal displacements over the years.

- a. Rapes by armed groups;
- b. Child rapes (children under 10) by militias, linked to beliefs in the supernatural.
- c. Rapes carried out by civilians or strangers with no clear links to armed groups.

Sadly, many women spoke of this form of violence occurring throughout their lives, which is further proof of the widespread lack of safety and the heightened risk of suffering repeated rapes.

a). Violence caused by armed groups

A pattern of violence against women that was abhorrently commonplace during the conflict was abductions and gang-rapes.

[III- 11] I was travelling to *Masisi* when I came across a group of outlaws, armed men. There were six of them. [...] It was me and another woman and they took us into the forest. [...] It was in 2006. We spent three days in that forest with those men. [...] They tortured us, raped us, and did anything they wanted. Yes, all of them. [...] The other woman I was with lost consciousness, and so did I. [Long silence] There was a passer-by who had gone to collect [--] in the forest; and he noticed us. He took me to a village. [...] I didn't know where the health centre was because I hadn't been to the village. I was treated with traditional medicines, herbs.

Farida (DRC)

[III- 8] *Criminals came and killed my husband and a child. That was the first time in my life that I'd seen dead bodies. [...] Then, after that period and seeing my husband dead, I decided to go to the Bulengo camp with the others, where I thought I'd find help, assistance and the rest of it [...] But later the Bulengo camp was dismantled. [...] A mother took pity on me and told me: "Mum, don't worry, I have a house in [--] where you can stay". So when I was in that little house [...] there was a soldier there who was a neighbour. He came over and raped me, in front of the children. [...] Since that day my head has not been right. [...] After all these events and seeing the burden I had at home I went crazy. And feeling this craziness I went down to the lake [...]; I wanted to throw myself in. [...] When I was heading down to the lake, without knowing where I was going, a woman [...] took me to a house (the women's centre). [My daughters, except for the youngest] wanted to leave me because of the poverty; they couldn't stand the life they had. [...] (Now) I'm selling wood [...] And my daughter, my daughter was also a victim (of rape) not long ago.*

Aimée (DRC)

Testimony (1/2)

- Aimée's testimony is taken from a long and harrowing account. It demonstrates how the different dynamics of violence and social subordination of women (physical, psychological, cultural, social, economic, etc.) overlap and amount to the inter-generational destruction of a family's life.
- The war and violence by armed groups repeatedly invade her life: both her parents were murdered, followed by her husband.
- Orphaned from an early age in a rural area with scant resources, Aimée has been unable to access formal education and has no possibilities of "social advancement" other than early marriage.
- The conflict has forced the displacement of her and her family at least five times.

Testimony (2/2)

- After being raped, she suffered a trauma that means she is still fighting against psychological instability. That, coupled with illiteracy, prevents her from managing any form of income generating activity (IGA).
- To survive she has no other option but to do a job with a major risk of assault or rape: going to the forests to collect wood. In fact, while she was carrying out this work her daughter was raped by a stranger shortly before the interview.
- For Aimée, the vicious circle of poverty-subordination-violence has not closed, and continues to trap both her and her daughter; the same fate befell her mother and threatens reoccur with her granddaughter.

b). Child rapes (children under 10) by militias and linked to beliefs in the supernatural

[III- 6] This problem happened when I was away; when I was absent. I was in *Masisi* to make arrangements as best I could and only the mother was at home. I received that phone call about what had happened [...] That was in 2013. So after a few weeks I returned home, and found... I did everything possible to get the girl treatment. She was hospitalised. My real regret was that [we are] a poor family because we don't have a house that can resist [well built]. The attackers forced the door and went inside.

Joseph (father of a child victim, DRC)

From the outside, these rapes seem a particularly senseless form of cruelty. In fact, this dynamic of violence results from the convergence of different factors: on the one hand, they highlight cultural aspects such as supernatural beliefs, which proliferate in a social context with a very low level of schooling in the population. More specifically, the belief is that sexual relations with a virgin protects from and/or heals AIDS and also turns people into invincible fighters. Following this logic, attackers look for increasingly younger girls to guarantee they are virgins.

Nevertheless, cultural factors do not fully explain the rapid increase in this type of violence. This could not occur without other structural factors, such as the presence in the territory of poorly paid and untrained armed groups, the result of the serious conflict in the area, and a lack of governance, which means — and the case in Kavumu — a local politician wields territorial control through fear and with militias serving him.

c). Rapes carried out by civilians or strangers with no clear links to armed groups

- Most of the women interviewed were attacked by strangers who were not identified as members of a rebel group, militia or army.
- Clearly, not every attacker is a civilian, despite their appearance, because there are also men belonging to the army or a militia who dress as civilians and are, therefore, difficult to detect.
- These cases give rise to a perpetual lack of safety, to which women and children are exposed, and with countless cases of rape constituting a social practice, used by organised criminals, civilians or in daily interactions.

[III- 13] I'm the eldest in my family and I live with my mother. *My father left us here. [The children] only hear that their father is in Goma, but they don't see him, so he abandoned us. [...] My mother is ill, which means she can't do anything any more; I am the one who works to make sure the other members of the family have food to eat [...] [I] have three younger brothers and sisters [...] I work for others [...] Once I went to work for a woman in her field. I arrived at that field but when I started to work the woman there made things complicated; she didn't give me enough [money], in comparison to what had been agreed. The woman there complicated things. [So] I went directly to a neighbouring field belonging to another person [...] to steal food from others. And, while I was stealing the food, the owner of the fields arrived; he was a man, and he said: "Given that you have just taken some colcaches [yams], when you return we will do this [have sexual relations]. And I'll let you leave with those yams there". I had no other choice; I was alone there. That's how the man took me. I became pregnant. Now I am the mother of a child, a baby of six months. [...] I stopped studying when I was 12, or 13...*

Ahadi (the DRC)

The case of 16-year-old Ahadi is indicative of the **normalisation** of sexual violence in the North Kivu and South Kivu provinces. When she was 15 she was raped by a civilian, allegedly the owner (although there is no evidence to back this up) of the land she went to as a “punishment” for having taken some vegetables and tuber crops. The imbalance between the offence committed by Ahadi and the retribution inflicted on her by the supposed landowner is appalling.

This reflects a huge disregard for women’s dignity, and how rape as a daily social practice has, alarmingly, become something normal.

This case also demonstrates the logic of “taking the law into your own hands”, which is symptomatic of a context where the institutional legal system does not work and where arbitrary individual decisions reign.

Structural causes of SGBV in Kivu

- The conflict
- De-governance
- Impunity
- Certain beliefs and cultural practices.

Psychological effects

[IV-26] *I still have fear in me that what happened to me could be repeated again.*

Cherifa (Somalian, in South Africa)

[V-7] *Physically I am OK, but sometimes I do not sleep. I fear. I cannot tell. I fear, but I don't tell about [it]. I am scared.*

Zara (Somalian, in Ethiopia)

[I- 51] *I want to forget everything. Sometimes I tell myself that I want to be like before. Can I still be like I was before?*

Afeni (Ivorian, in Morocco)

- Ongoing trauma
- Shame, guilt, isolation.

Social effects

III- 21] *So, it gets around, in the village, in the neighbourhood; everyone knows about it; it becomes common knowledge. They see you are pregnant and start to call you 'hussy', or something along those lines. Becoming pregnant in that way. It's now the gossip that feeds the village.*

Ahadi (DRC)

[III- 23] *My husband, who stayed in [-], when he received the news, this news, about the rape; he couldn't stand it. My husband left me; he couldn't cope with the news.*

Joie (DRC)

- Silencing
- Stigma
- Marriage break-up
- Legitimising the attacker.

Access to justice and impunity

[I- 47] *And the women, where do they go to complain? They don't have anywhere to complain. (...) Some are forced to flee, to leave... Complaining? It's not possible.*

Amina (Conakry Guinea, Morocco)

[III- 28] *We don't have the means to investigate these outlaws. So we end up alone and in a country that is not organised enough to carry out investigations, to look for criminals. Due to the situation we live in, we are alone here and don't know what to do.*

Joseph (father of a child victim, DRC)

[III- 2] *I was raped. I didn't know the people who raped me, but others are raped and see the attacker. They catch them, put them in prison, and then a few days later they are set free. After the attacker is freed [...] how does the victim feel? Will she be assaulted again, for the second time?*

Eloise (Congolese, in DRC)

3. THE DREAMS, DESIRES AND REQUIREMENTS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

Dreams? Desires?

[V- 15] *Nothing good comes to my mind. [...] School is no good for [me]. [...] The way I see it now; you see, at my age.*

Salima (Sudanese, in South Sudan)

Some people aren't even able to dream:

- A Central African female refugee (Gado camp, Cameroon) thinking about her future confirms she “only feels distress” . The precariousness and urgency of meeting basic needs in the present removes any chance of imagining and desiring a different future.
- The difficulty of dreaming was not only noted among women of a certain age; teenagers' dreams amount to little more than reproducing the cultural patterns of women's subordination. In the DRC, for instance, two teenage girls admitted they are worried:
 - Because nobody will want to marry them after the violence they have suffered.
 - Because finding and marrying the attacker could be the only way to ensure financial stability and social recognition.

a). Dreams of personal growth: Overcoming stigma and attaining the financial means to live independently

[III- 32] *I am a very simple person and I feel humiliated; even my family discriminate against me. [...] But one day I want to be a great woman, with my own means.*

Eloise (DRC)

[III- 33] *I want to develop myself as a person; I want to be a woman like every other woman.*

Joie (DRC)

[III- 29] *The actual fulfilment] or enjoyment of me living on my own, with my kids, in a place where no one knows me, in a society [where] no one is going to talk or question my living.*

Aida (Somali, in South Africa)

[IV- 16] *My dream, I have to go to school. I can, I can go to school; I did primary, and I stopped in [form] 2, going to [form] 3 [...]. I have to create a business, maybe next time I have to be a business woman! So that [...] [I] will rise up my life.*

Nadia (South Sudanese, Kenya)

b). Dreaming of a better future for children

[III- 34] *I pray to God that my son doesn't not have a life like mine [...] If you look, in life some people live in suffering and others are happy. I ask God to give him a happy life, whenever possible.*

Ahadi (DRC)

[II- 16] *I don't know what God has planned for my children (...) Let them finish with a degree at the end of their studies, that is what my parents wanted for me. (...) I stopped in the second year of accounting and administration (...) If only there was the possibility of sending me even to another place, just to finish my studies, because at the moment I am forgetting everything I know. That's what's happening; I'm losing my knowledge. All that time I've taken to learn... it's in a vacuum like this.*

Laura (Central African, in Cameroon)

The education is regarded as a fundamental means to build a better future.

c). Thinking about my daughters' future: renewing women's social role

[III- 36] *I no longer have hope in this child.. Because [...] I see that in her, and I don't have hope in life. She can live, of course, and I hope she is alive, and that's good. But [...] she won't be able to give birth [...] I pray that she can study because in spite of not having a husband, she can be skilled and intelligent, she can better herself. Life is not just about marrying or giving birth, right? She can study, learn more, and can have a job, and that job could also help the family or other people. Even if she doesn't have a child [...] she can still be better.[...]. We're already not depending on having grandchildren from her. [...] No, no, we're already considering the idea that we won't. God gave her life, and she can continue her studies, become more intelligent; she can finish those studies and then work.*

Monique (mother of a child victim, DRC)

d). Solidarity and the desire for non-repetition

[III- 3] *If I really had the means and chance to do something, what I would change for women is how, when I come across a woman who is suffering, I would also be able to help [her]. To have something to give her; for example, someone looking for food, if I had something to eat I would give her food so [she] can feel alive, feel like other women in life and not be in that hole of having to beg [...]. Therefore, creating something that can keep her afloat. I don't know how to put it; it's deep... What I've lived through hopefully other woman won't have to live through the same.*

Ahadi (the DRC)

e). None of the refugee or migrant women dream of returning to their country of origin

[II- 18] For us, the possibility of going to another country is an opportunity, but to return to the Central African Republic; to tell the truth, at the moment I don't have family [there].

Fátima (Central African, in Cameroon)

Dreaming of family reunification and relocation to third countries:

[IV- 27] This country is not safe. I'm trying to think of ways to bring them [my children] outside or maybe for me to leave this here as well. [...] I want a place where there is peace and I want my children to live with [me]. [...] I know there's no peace in the world but if there is a slightly safer place, because not I'm not only scared for my kids and all, but my younger brother also died in this. [...] It would be a dream come true for me and the kids to live together.

Farida (Somali, living in South Africa)

Demands

(Referring to the work document for more details about women's specific requests and the Mieza Programme plan)

1. Improving economic conditions. Income Generating Activities (IGAs)

[III- 42] After burying my son, well, I guess life goes on. I'm still learning how to sew. [...] With the [sewing] machine I have, which I received as payment instead of money; before, I was farming, breeding chickens, goats too. That was all because of this machine. [...] I also saved up money. I was doing... agriculture. I had a field. Yes. It all comes from this machine. [...] There were other women who wanted to sew, and I dedicated time to training them too. I became a trainer. [...] I know how to play; I know how to teach others to sew. [...] God willing, in the future I want to develop myself further. [...]. Now I'm starting to speak to other people – before I was isolated.

Farida (DRC)

Many women and refugee women's associations requested:

1. Guidance and support to build women's cooperatives around new productive activities, accessing different forms of credit and owning bank accounts.
2. Further support during the early stages of managing a new IGA (technical guidance and providing initial resources).

Central African refugee women and Congolese women also called for young men, who are invariably unemployed and uneducated, to receive training and support to start an IGA as a way of reducing their potential role in violent behaviour against women.

Challenge: updating Income Generating Activities (IGAs)

- The saturation and transformation of the labour market has meant that the IGAs aimed at women over the last three decades (sewing, embroidery, hairdressing, cooking...) have become outdated: these professions no longer guarantee stable financial independence.
- Furthermore, promoting new IGAs means we are one step closer to overcoming social patterns associated with women's professions (generally professions linked to the domestic sphere, to the provision of basic and/or care services), which tend to repeat subordinate roles.

[II- 22] *If only there were training for young girls! [...] When there isn't any, they are left there wondering. [...] Now [...] everything that men do, if they have the opportunity, women can do too.*

Laura (Central African, in Cameroon)

2. Safety and spaces of protection

[I- 69] *A necessity for me. I want to live safely; in fact, I'm scared. In fact, I'm scared that one day... you never know. I'm frightened and there's always fear inside me. I want to feel, how do you say... safe. Perhaps nothing will happen to me; I'll have peace of mind.*

Neige (Ivorian, in Morocco)

- In each context, women and girls asked for the possibility of living safely and protected from the different threats they encounter in their environment.
- To this end, in South Sudan, Ethiopia and Kenya requests were made to set up different protected spaces (from having separate places to carry out recreational activities to a space that guarantees greater confidentiality, and temporary and long-term shelters).

3. Justice, an end to impunity

Yet in some contexts it goes further and women asked for justice, for the attackers to be prosecuted.

More specifically:

1. In the DRC, where women constantly called for: “The end of the war, the end of impunity”
2. In Ethiopia, where Somali women and women’s associations underlined their dissatisfaction with the community mediation system.

There was also a request to receive more legal support to gain refugee status, permanent residency, family reunification and transfers to third countries.

4. Transforming adverse social practices for women

[IV- 40] *To mobilise [against] female genital mutilation, stop doing FGM, to mobilise something like that. At least all women must not let such things happen with their babies; when we have rights to be, stop FGM, so that you cannot do FGM in our country, South Africa.*

Karima (Somali, in South Africa)

[V- 8] *I would like to talk to men, [to explain to them] just not to force [women]. They [men] are using their power. [I would like] to talk to them to give awareness on how to address the ladies.*

Zara (Somali, in Ethiopia)

5. Guidance and psychological support

[III- 37] *They [the psychologists] gave me back my life again [...] I ask you not to leave, not to abandon me. I want to have monitoring, to receive assistance, to receive words of consolation because I'm going through a very, very difficult time. [...] I reached a point where I wanted to die. To die.*

Aimée (DRC)

[I- 70] *Some women need to speak and speak. They are listened to; you listen... [...] They open up their hearts because it feels good.*

Joy (Cameroonian, in Morocco)

6. Education

[V-18] *Because I got married, because I lost my life, I would like to go back to school, and for my baby, I want her boy to be a doctor.*

Samia (Somali, in Ethiopia)

- Understood as an essential part of carrying out IGAs.
- Requested for survivors of SGBV and their families.
- Grants/assistance to access secondary and tertiary education in the host country.

4. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. Due to the generous testimonies of so many women and girls, we have heard harrowing stories of SGBV. Yet we have also seen inspiring examples of resilience, and we have verified the strength and resistance of women and children, and their dreams, desires, plans, and requirements for social change.
2. Of particular relevance are some of the demands that come from communities/contexts which have been strongly affected by SGBV:
 - The call for justice and an end to impunity expressed by so many women from the DRC.
 - The desire to change practices such as FGM, early marriage and community mediation expressed by Somali women and associations.
3. Moreover, the clarity with which women have identified economic independence as an indispensable resource of empowerment is noteworthy, as is the need to update IGAs to move beyond the repetition of customary professional roles (dressmaking, hairdressing, etc.).
4. No longer should we simply regard women as survivors of SGBV, as victims. We should see them as driving forces for change (agency).

5. The extent and severity of the occurrence of SGBV on mobility contexts is a grave concern. In particular, the data compiled indicates:
- a. SGBV is a major cause of women's mobility, and also in cases called "economic migration". The theoretical difference between forced mobility and voluntary ("economic") mobility does not reflect the complexity of the mobility of women, who often experience it as a choice that is forced upon them. That said, they stress that it constitutes an opportunity to gain strength and to build a different future for them and their families.
 - b. Mobility is "gender sensitive": women's experience of mobility is marked by processes, vulnerabilities, risks and goals which differ from those experienced by men. More specifically, mobility exposes women to determined SGBV dynamics.
 - c. SGBV in its own right is not seen a guideline which warrants access to international protection; therefore, migrant women are generally regarded as economic migrants and live unprotected during their migratory journey.

(continued...)

(... continued)

- e. Refugee women experience recurrent SGBV in contexts of origin (conflicts are merciless on women: the proliferation of gang-rapes during conflicts, both in the DRC and CAR is of great concern) and while travelling. Moreover, camps are often unable to offer enough safety guarantees and leave women and girls exposed to new, unsafe situations and SGBV.
- f. Mobility and precariousness in camp life exacerbate unbalanced power dynamics between couples and domestic violence (fighting for rations, attacks, domestic rejection, abandonment...).
- g. Mobility and physical distance do not eliminate certain community practices (early marriage, FGM); they transfer them over to new contexts of refuge, demonstrating the persistence and trans-national action of the extended family (and/or clans. See Kakuma, Kenya).
- h. Prolonged humanitarian crises and stays in camps means precarious situations and SGBV becomes deeply entrenched.

6. The restrictive approach of migration policies and refugee-related policies, or acquiring residency and naturalisation, increases the social and economic marginalisation of women in urban areas, and their vulnerability to SGBV (e.g. Angola, Morocco, South Africa).
7. Instant transformations in the humanitarian sector could create new contexts of vulnerability for women and girls:
 - The depletion of funds is hampering the full implementation of humanitarian agencies' SGBV strategies, while also reducing food supplies to meet the basic needs of the refugee population.
 - They reveal deep-rooted ambiguity in the empowerment discourse connected with some of the new distribution programmes (cash transfers): Does it promote autonomy or is it an exit strategy?
 - The effects of new long-lasting solutions (currently nascent in Ethiopia and Kenya) for the refugee population regarding protection against SGBV are yet to be assessed.

8. Every case examined highlights that SGBV is a multidimensional reality which requires a focused, comprehensive response, on one side, and the psychological and socio-cultural-economic recovery of SGBV survivors, on the other, and a change to the structural conditions which fuel SGBV (conflicts, poverty, impunity, the frailty of legal systems, certain socio-cultural practices, access to education and services...).
9. To this end, there must be a push to prevent SGBV at all levels of society, particularly through:
 - Social awareness.
 - Developing and/or working on the effective implementation of regulatory frameworks to prevent SGBV and ensure protection.
 - Comprehensive gender-oriented policies; that is, oriented towards both men and women to generate equal relations between both sexes from the ground up.

Therefore, the requests of women and refugee women from the CAR is important to professional training and IGA projects, which would also benefit men, particularly young men, and reveal a broader vision of the problems surrounding SGBV.

As a whole, the assessment stage of the Mieza Programme has constituted an enormous listening exercise, detaching from the centre, trying to understand without judging and looking for meetings on equal ground with marginalised and silenced women.

The results confirm the importance of granting visibility to women and girls who have survived SGBV, the importance of giving them a voice and consulting them in order to design future interventions and to rely up them as agents of change.

This assessment is dedicated to every woman who has participated. We appreciate their generosity and bravery.

[V- 1] *My dream for my life [is that] I just want to get educated. Please, I don't want my future to be like my mum's or my sister's. I just want to be educated. I want to be a lawyer so that I can support those women who are still suffering; who don't know what is their right in life. Do you know: human beings; each and every one of us has an ability. It is just the chance, you don't have the chance to show your abilities. [...] **I will never give up in my life.** [...] I'm sure if I was somewhere else, I could do even something better, I could make my life better. [Crying] Because it's on every one of us, God [has] given us an ability, but we don't have the chance to use those abilities to better our lives.*

Lina (a young South Sudanese woman, in Kenya)

[l- 58; 64] *Nevertheless, you fight as best you can, but it'll be all right. [...] I want to work. I want to move forward one day. **The day will come when I will move forward.***

Adèle (ivorian, in Morocco)

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Programa MIEZA para el empoderamiento de las Women africanas refugiadas, migrantes o desplazadas sobrevivientes de VSBG

Programme MIEZA pour l'autonomisation des femmes africaines réfugiées, migrantes ou déplacées survivantes de VSBG

MIEZA Programme for the empowerment of African refugee, migrant or IDP women survivors of SGBV



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