

## SGBV in different phases of migration:

*SGBV can occur at every phase of migration. Many factors influence whether different types of SGBV occur.*

<b>1. Prior to departure:</b>
Sexual violence and torture of women, girls, boys and men is widespread during conflict and often is a reason for flight. Other common forms of SGBV include abduction, sexual slavery, and forced pregnancy. Sexual violence and other forms of SGBV, such as female genital mutilation or cutting and persecution related to sexual orientation, can constitute grounds for refugee status.
<p><b>Personal Narrative:</b> “Pierre,” a 35-year-old man with a disability, explained how witnessing genital violence contributed to his decision to flee: “I saw men being harassed sexually by [the M23 (rebel military group)] in Goma. It was the war in 2012, when they took Goma for some days. People were harassed, others were sexually traumatized. That is one of the reasons I left and became a refugee. They targeted men and women ... I have seen those men, the rapists cutting off a man’s penis. I could testify to this. It made me feel traumatized.”</p> <p>Source: <a href="#">“We Have a Broken Heart”: Sexual Violence against Refugees in Nairobi and Mombasa</a>, Women’s Refugee Commission</p>
<b>2. During travel (physical movement):</b>
SGBV can occur at the hands of traffickers or border guards and other individuals in positions of authority. For example, sex in exchange for free passage or for “protection” during travel. Migrants are also vulnerable to SGBV inflicted upon them by other migrants, and by local communities. Individual risk factors such as disability, sexual orientation, age, and separation from other family and community members can also increase one’s risk.
<p><b>Personal Narrative:</b> Oumo is a young woman from a conflict-affected sub-Saharan African country. She fled her country of origin a month before the team met her, due to the political persecution of her family, including the killing of her brother-in-law and the disappearance of her sister. Fearing for her life, she was travelling alone towards Germany. During her journey to Greece, Oumo was forced to engage in transactional sex twice, the first time to access a fake passport and the second time to gain passage on a boat from Turkey. “I had no choice,” Oumo explained. Upon arrival on a Greek island, Oumo slept outside at the port for two nights without any shelter, privacy or information regarding the services available to her. She had been unable to get registered. “I fear that I will go crazy,” she admitted.</p>

Source: [Protection Risks for Women and Girls in the European Refugee and Migrant Crisis](#); UNHCR, UNPF, Women's Refugee Commission

### 3. In Transit (stationary for a period of time):

Common types of SGBV during transit (in refugee camps and in urban situations) include domestic violence, sexual assault and rape, forced marriage, survival sex, sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian workers, and sexual abuse in schools, and sexual and gender-based violence by host community as retribution over depletion of natural resources. Turkey, Libya, Greece, Serbia, France and Italy are locations that host a large number of migrants who consider themselves to be 'in transit' to the destination of their preference. They are also countries where statistics and personal stories of SGBV are most evident.

**Personal Narrative:** A health provider who had worked with refugees and migrants transiting through Libya described: "We heard stories that men and boys are raped by their captors in detention or by other detainees. One guy told us that in the detention center if someone tried to escape, then all the other men in the room are forced to have sex with this person, otherwise they will kill him. We heard that many times. We heard that men are forced to have sex with other men, with other detainees, and [with] guards themselves."

Source: [More than One Million Pains](#): Sexual violence against men and boys on the Central Mediterranean route to Italy. Women's Refugee Commission.

### 4. During reception:

Unfortunately, SGBV is present in European AZCs, including Dutch AZCs. From personal reports given by migrants, we know about unwanted sexual activities, but also the use of sex as a coping mechanism. There is evidence that men, women, boys and girls solicit themselves in order to make some extra money, to access power, sometimes for things as small as gaining some phone credit or cigarettes. There are also cases of boys in reception centers who are groomed by local Europeans to provide sexual services in exchange for money. The months following an asylum seeker's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday mark a particularly vulnerable window of time when they are no longer considered a child and thus are not eligible to the same protections, and yet, they lack the social support system that more mature and established asylum seekers have. The small amount of income that asylum seekers can earn without a residence permit incentivises them to seek income through other means, including through the drug and sex trades.

For those who have suffered prior to their departure from their home countries, and then may have experience SGBV in transit, this type of violence adds another layer of trauma. The longer individuals wait before they know about their asylum claim, or have to wait for housing, the greater the risk and exposure to threats of SGBV within the AZC.

**Personal Narrative** “Ik was alleen in onze kamer in het kamp vlakbij Antwerpen. Oskar, de minnaar van mijn moeder, kwam bij mij op de kamer. Ik was depressief en hij gaf mij een tablet. Hij zei dat het mijn hoofd helder zou maken en ging weg. Na een tijdje werd ik zeer vrolijk en hij kwam terug. Hij verkrachtte mij. Ik was achttien jaar. Ik was misselijk en moest overgeven naast het bed. Er lag ook veel bloed op het bed. Toen kwam mijn moeder binnen, ze zag het bloed, de kots en mij. Ze sloeg mij. Daarna neukte Oskar mij en mijn moeder wanneer hij maar wou. Nadien liet hij ook zijn vrienden ons neuken. Ik was niet alleen, er waren nog veel meisjes die hetzelfde lot ondergingen. Niemand durfde reageren uit schrik om het land uitgezet te worden. Daarna werd ik zwanger. Maar ik kende de vader niet. Ik probeerde eerst met alcohol en andere middelen zelf abortus te plegen. Ik hief zware dingen op om de foetus te verliezen, maar omdat niets lukte, heeft een vriend met een priem in mijn baarmoeder gestoken. Ik verloor veel bloed en werd overgebracht naar een ziekenhuis. Er werden veel vragen gesteld in dat ziekenhuis, maar ik zweeg en weende voortdurend. De arts zei me dat ik na deze ‘foltering’ geen kindjes meer kon krijgen. Dat is het ergste wat mij kon overkomen. Na dat incident moesten mijn moeder en ik zelf het kamp verlaten. Van zodra ik mijn papieren in handen had, ben ik met enkele spullen weggelopen zonder naar mijn moeder om te kijken. Aan het station ontmoette ik een meisje. We waren vlug vriendinnen en ze werd mijn lief. Ze heeft me geholpen om me in Gent terug op school in te schrijven. We moesten hard werken als prostituee, om geld te verdienen om te eten, te studeren en ons kot te betalen. Maar dat is nu verleden tijd. Nu kan ik met mijn handen werken en eerlijk mijn boterham verdienen zonder mijn lichaam te moeten misbruiken.

Jonge Oekraïense Vluchtelingen, woont in België sinds 2003.

**Source:** [Seksueel geweld tegen vluchtelingen, asielzoekers en mensen zonder wettig verblijf in België en Nederland](#). Keygnaert. I. 2008.