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Sharing Knowledge, Maximising Impact: Addressing the intersection of CRSV and LGBTQI+ Hate Crimes Summary Report



Overview

This peer-to-peer learning exchange brought together practitioners across civil society and international community in **Ukraine** to examine the critical nexus between hate crimes against the LGBTQI+ population and conflict-related sexual violence. Experts from **Myanmar** were included to share potential learnings across contexts. The secure gathering identified systemic gaps in documentation, law enforcement, and the humanitarian response, while establishing pathways for enhanced international support and coordination.



Key Findings

Documentation Challenges

Since 2022, organisations like Projector Ukraine have documented 257 potential CRSV cases against LGBTQI+ persons, including torture, humiliation, and inhumane treatment in areas under occupation by the Russian Federation.

Soldiers of the Russian Federation have systemically targeted LGBTQI+ individuals and organisations, seemingly with the intention of illegal detention and/or violence. RF soldiers have been video-taped searching community and health centers for personal data and client information to specifically identify LGBTQI+ individuals.

Many cases remain undocumented due to fear of disclosure, repeated risks, and lack of trust in law enforcement as well as other national or local institutions that could provide essential services. Stigma remains high among Ukrainians, particularly in rural areas.

Systemic Barriers

There are significant gaps in Ukrainian law enforcement institutions that exacerbate documentation, service provision, and advocacy challenges.

There is a lack of specific categorisation and recognition of LGBTQI+ hate crimes in official statistics or reporting. This leads to the “invisibilisation” of such hate crimes, and the vulnerabilities faced by this particular group. Crimes against LGBTQI+ individuals are instead often missclassified as ‘hooliganism’ or ‘inter-personal conflict’ rather than hate crimes or CRSV.

Law enforcement personnel generally are also insufficiently trained in a survivor-centred approach to CRSV, especially when working with LGBTQI+ individuals and at the oblast level. While humanitarian actors are generally better trained, there are no unified guidelines on how to address this community’s specific needs with respect to CRSV.

Gay, bisexual, and trans men are also excluded from evacuation services due to national conscription concerns.

Service providers run by government institutions offer some essential services that are supportive of the LGBTQI+ community, but the majority of these are in central cities like Kyiv or Lviv.

Faith-based service providers are often unwilling to serve LGBTQI+ individuals. Secular service providers often prioritise serving women and girls, or even treating LGBTQI+ individuals as women rather than recognising their intersecting and unique needs.

Ukraine's national laws are currently limited when it comes to recognising the rights of LGBTQI+ persons, including the lack of comprehensive hate crime legislation, no recognition of same-sex partnerships, and lack of political will.

This context continues to impact humanitarian and service eligibility as well as access/willingness to access support that may exist. CSOs are therefore often forced to work 'quietly' and without much advocacy to protect survivors.



Solutions & Recommendations

Strengthen Documentation Systems

Immediate Actions

- Establish safe, accessible reporting mechanisms through trusted intermediaries (like Projector and other CSOs) and connect them to the UN HRMMU
- Provide training on a survivor-centred approach to CRSV specifically to trusted intermediaries who are already aware of working with LGBTQI+ populations but may require additional CRSV specific knowledge
- For Survivor Relief Centres and existing service providers that support survivors generally, develop specialised protocols for engaging with LGBTQI+ individuals or ensure that treating LGBTQI+ individuals is mainstreamed into survivor-centred approach to CRSV trainings
- Create warm referral pathways that allow CSOs to mediate between survivors and law enforcement
- Ensure documentation serves multiple purposes accountability, reparations, transitional justice, and future survivor readiness

Longer-term Actions

- Invest in secure communications infrastructure for survivors of CRSV, including for LGBTQI+ survivors
- Consider an LGBTQI+ survivors network to be officially recognized by the Government of Ukraine and work in a coordinated and collaborative approach with existing survivors' networks
- Build the capacities of oblast-level organisations and local-level service providers for comprehensive documentation

Transforming Law Enforcement Engagement

Immediate Actions

- Implement/integrate systemic training on a survivor-centred approach to working with LGBTQI+ survivors in trainings with prosecutors and police - including with the Team of Experts on Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict
- Create or integrate LGBTQI+ services and considerations into specialised units with demonstrated capacity with working with LGBTQI+ survivors of CRSV
- Develop standardised protocols that ensure fair treatment regardless of SOGIESC identities

Longer-term Actions

- Advocate for institutional reform, mandating top-down directives from Ministries requiring inclusive practices
- Advocate for legislative reform that establish specific categories and considerations of LGBTQI+ hate crimes, including in the national efforts to address CRSV

National Response to CRSV

Immediate Actions

- Integrate LGBTQI+ considerations into the Implementation Plan for the Framework of Cooperation between the Government of Ukraine and the United Nations on the prevention and response to CRSV
- LGBTQI+ CSOs to join the Inter-Agency Working Group on the Prevention and Response to CRSV
- Engage more regularly with national stakeholders leading the CRSV response with the request to advocate for the inclusion of LGBTQI+ survivors, according to the principle of a survivor-centred approach

Longer-term Actions

- Advocate for LGBTQI+ individuals to be considered in reparative measures
- Prioritise training, resourcing, and awareness raising to address stigma in smaller oblasts and rural communities



Global Engagements and Working with the International Community

Immediate Actions

- Redesign reporting systems to accommodate diverse gender identities beyond binary classifications
- Work closely with the UN HRMMU to revise protocols for documentation and referrals for LGBTQI+ hate crimes and CRSV
- Establish, or integrate LGBTQI+ considerations into existing, safe spaces with trained staff, appropriate environments, and trauma-informed services
- Ensure evacuation services are accessible to all
- Address correction settings protocols for transgender and non-binary individuals at the national level
- Engage with the UN Action Network to continue to raise awareness on this nexus issue at the global level, including through a global roundtable bringing together practitioners from additional countries

Longer-term Actions

- Advocate with international partners for sustained, flexible funding for LGBTQI+ community-based organisations, especially those providing services
- Advocate for comprehensive hate crime legislation and push for legal recognition of same-sex partnerships
- Ensure LGBTQI+ narratives are centred in conflict documentation around the RF's large-scale invasion of Ukraine
- Expand public education campaigns to address the root causes of violence against the LGBTQI+ population generally

Conclusion

This peer-to-peer learning engagement demonstrated that there is indeed an urgent need to better address the nexus of CRSV and LGBTQI+ hate crimes. But it also showed that there is support and a great willingness from the international and local community to do so. The Government of Ukraine's progress since February 2022 in quickly adapting to the needs of CRSV survivors generally demonstrates provides a roadmap for better inclusion of this particular group of survivors. The international community must continue to recognise that this work is not peripheral, but central to a comprehensive, survivor-centred response to CRSV.



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