

# TRIPLE JEOPARDY: Protecting At-Risk Refugee Survivors of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

## SGBV AGAINST OLDER REFUGEES

### 1. AIM

This module seeks to provide participants with an understanding of how age, gender and displacement increases vulnerability to SGBV. It helps participants become familiar with the forms and perpetrators of SGBV against older refugees.

### 2. USE

This module may be used as part of a half-, one- or two-day training (see *Model Agendas*).

TIME	METHODOLOGY	MATERIALS
1 hour, 30 minutes	PowerPoint Brainstorming Discussion Group work Case study	Flip chart Markers SGBV Against Older Refugees PowerPoint Projector Case studies handout

### 3. GENERAL BACKGROUND

Helpful **definitions** for this and other modules include:

- **Forced Displacement:** (For the purpose of this training): People forced to leave or flee their countries due to conflict, violence, persecution or human rights violations. According to UNHCR, 65.3 million people were displaced in 2015.
- **Vulnerability:** A person's diminished ability to mitigate exposure to risk (in this case, the risk of exposure to SGBV) due to internal, environmental or systemic causes and contributing factors.
- **Root Cause:** The fundamental reason for the occurrence of a problem (in this case, SGBV).
- **Contributing Factor:** Something that is partly responsible for a development or phenomenon.
- **Older Refugees:** Refugee men and women perceived as "old" in the local social and cultural context.

### Resources

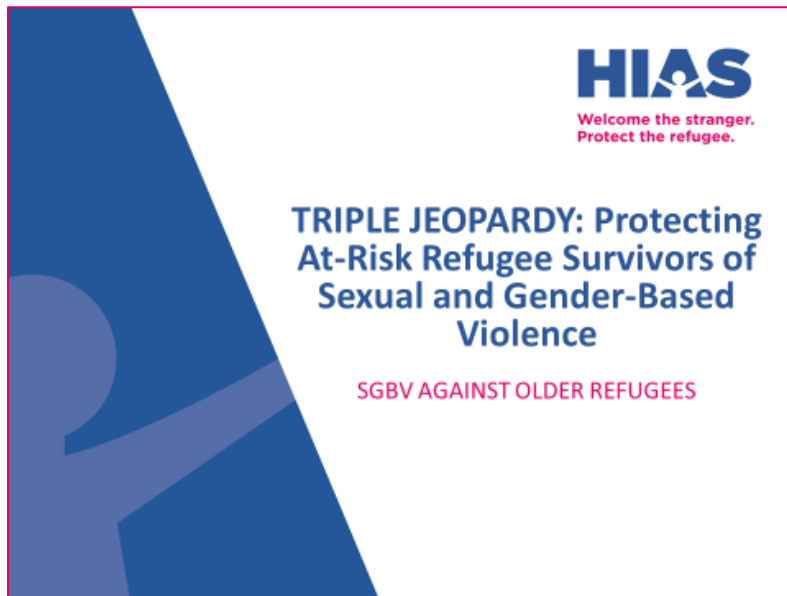
Triple Jeopardy Report, pp. 17-21.

HelpAge International (2002) [Encouraging Agencies to Pay Attention to the Needs, Knowledge and Experience of Older People](#). UNICEF (2003) [Sexual and Gender-Based Violence against Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons](#). Macdonald, Flora (2002) [Legal Protection of the Vulnerable: The Case of Older IDPs](#). United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2016) [Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2015](#). United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2013) [Working with Older Persons in Forced Displacement](#).

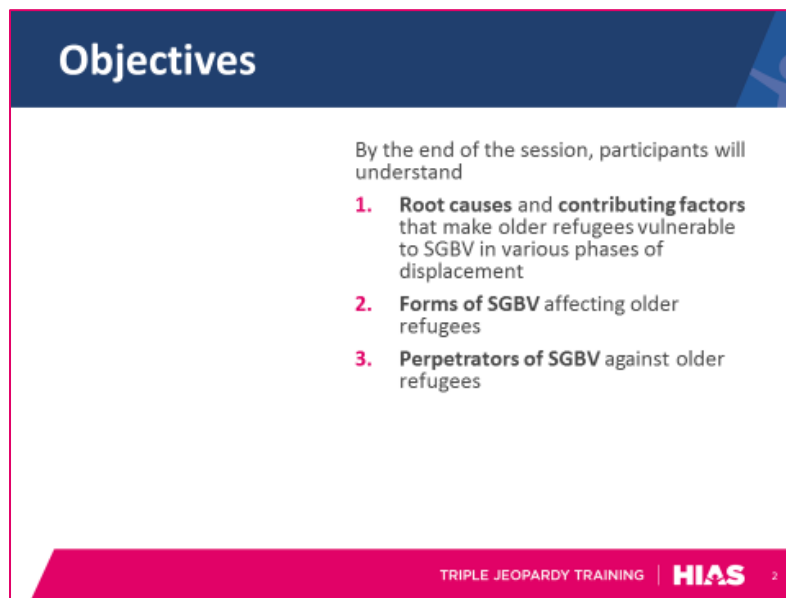
#### 4. SLIDES

This section provides you background and resources, where appropriate, for each PowerPoint slide in the module. It also gives you instructions to facilitate group discussions and exercises.

##### SLIDE 1: COVER



## SLIDE 2: OBJECTIVES



### Objectives

By the end of the session, participants will understand

1. **Root causes and contributing factors** that make older refugees vulnerable to SGBV in various phases of displacement
2. **Forms of SGBV** affecting older refugees
3. **Perpetrators of SGBV** against older refugees

TRIPLE JEOPARDY TRAINING | HIAS 2

### Background

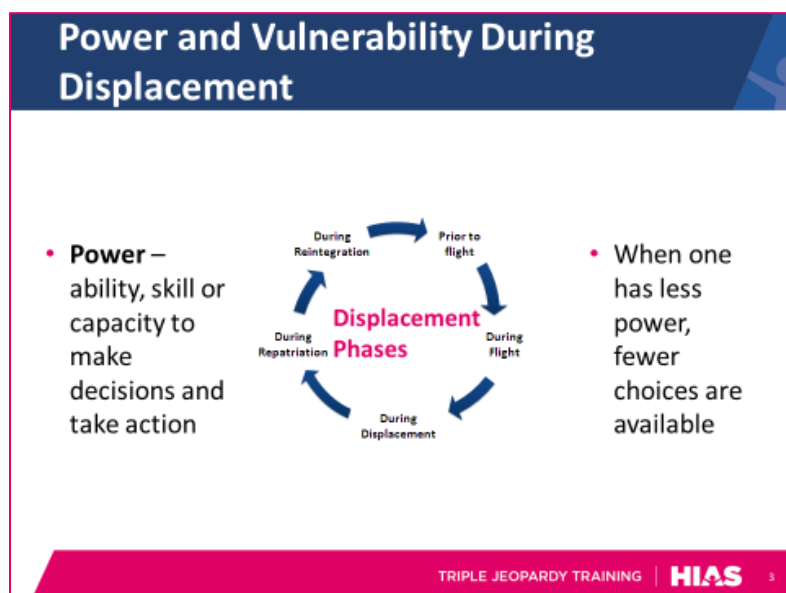
- Through the analysis of case studies based on interviews with older refugees who are survivors of SGBV, participants will identify the causes and contributing factors that make older refugees vulnerable to SGBV throughout displacement.
- Participants will identify potential perpetrators of SGBV and types of SGBV experienced by older refugees based on the findings of the *Triple Jeopardy* report.

### Resources

Triple Jeopardy Report, pp. 17-21.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2016) [Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2015](#).

### SLIDE 3: POWER AND VULNERABILITY DURING DISPLACEMENT



#### Background

- People are forced to flee from their home countries for various reasons, including war, political unrest, conflict, human rights violations, lack of access to basic services and other forms of individual or group persecution or fear of persecution.
- The cycle of displacement includes several phases: Prior to Flight – Flight – Displacement – Repatriation/Resettlement – Reintegration. Not all refugees necessarily go through all the phases of displacement.
- Displacement creates more risks and vulnerability due to a breakdown in community and institutional protection mechanisms and/or capacity of people to protect themselves.
- People are more at risk of violations during the first three phases of displacement since there are major protection gaps during displacement and upon arrival.
- Vulnerability to SGBV varies according to a refugee's ability to access information, resources and services, which allow him or her to make informed decisions and have the power to act independently.
- This vulnerability is increased for older refugees, who are disproportionately affected by the breakdown of family and community support networks, and encounter greater barriers in accessing information, resources and services, including in later stages of displacement after arrival in a country of asylum.

#### Resources

Triple Jeopardy Report, pp. 17-21.

HelpAge International (2002) [Encouraging Agencies to Pay Attention to Needs, Knowledge and Experience of Older People](#). UNICEF (2003) [Sexual and Gender-Based Violence against Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons](#). Macdonald, Flora (2002) [Legal Protection of the Vulnerable: The Case of Older IDPs](#). Singh, Eghdami & Singh (2014) [The Concept of Social Vulnerability: A Review from Disasters Perspectives](#).

#### SLIDE 4: ROOT CAUSES

## Root Causes

SGBV against older refugees is caused by abuse of the fundamental imbalance of power between

- Nationals and refugees
- Men and women
- Young and older people

TRIPLE JEOPARDY TRAINING | **HIAS** 4

#### Background

- **Root Cause:** The fundamental reason for the occurrence of a problem.
- The fundamental root cause of SGBV against older refugees is abuse of the imbalance of power related to age, gender and legal status in relationships, households, communities and protection approaches by government and humanitarian agencies.
- This imbalance provides more power to nationals than refugees, to men more than women, and to the young more than the old.
- There is a general bias among humanitarian agencies toward the young, often neglecting older refugees who can become invisible.
- Older people who are displaced due to crisis and conflict experience multiple, intersecting and sometimes mutually reinforcing forms of discrimination and oppression, adding to their risk of SGBV.
- Older refugee women are particularly vulnerable to SGBV, which is caused by structural inequalities relating to gender, disability and displacement, reducing their power in relationships, households and communities.
- Specific discrimination against older women who are widows or unmarried has existed throughout history, at times resulting in accusations that women are “witches” or are a threat to normative heterosexual households.

#### Resources

Triple Jeopardy Report, pp. 17-21.

## SLIDE 5: CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

### Contributing Factors

Factors that contribute to SGBV against older refugees include

- Instability in the country of origin or asylum
- Ineffective legal systems
- Lack of humanitarian assistance, medical care
- Lack of access to information
- Inability to communicate
- Limited financial resources
- Inability to earn an income, pursue a profession
- Collapse of social systems of support
- Low self esteem due to loss of social role and resources

TRIPLE JEOPARDY TRAINING | **HIAS** 5

### Background

- **Contributing Factor:** Something that is partly responsible for the development of the phenomenon.
- Contributing factors that are partly responsible for the vulnerability of older refugees to SGBV include external social factors, like political instability, lack of effective law enforcement or legal systems and limited humanitarian assistance or medical care.
- Other contributing factors include refugees' access to information, their ability to communicate in a language common in the country of asylum, their vocational skills or professional training and their access to financial resources.

### Resources

Triple Jeopardy Report, pp. 17-21.

### Forced Displacement Intensifies Risk of SGBV Against Older Refugees

- Older family members may be left alone or with young family caregivers, exposing them to risk
- Older people may be viewed as a burden by forcibly displaced families
  - This can lead to denial of food, power, other resources
- Gender roles are affected during displacement
  - E.g., older women left to care for grandchildren become heads of their households; older men who can no longer work, undermining breadwinner role

TRIPLE JEOPARDY TRAINING | HIAS 6

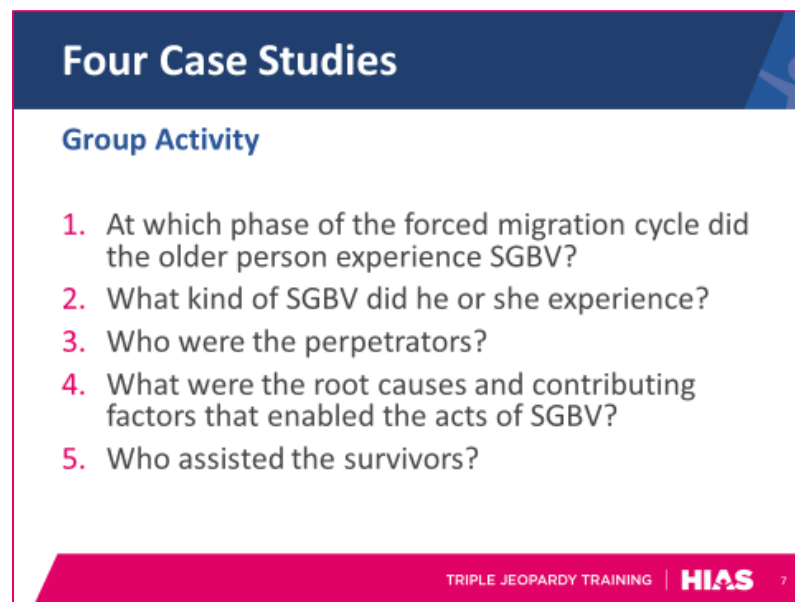
#### Background

- In addition to these contributing factors, there are a range of other factors that make older refugees more vulnerable to SGBV.
- There may be a breakdown in family and community support networks. This may result in older people seeking assistance from people who are less familiar with them, or being left alone while other family members seek work outside the home.
- Many older women are left alone in charge of grandchildren because of the ravaging impacts of HIV/AIDS and armed conflicts that kill the middle generation.
- Lack of social and financial support during flight or in the country of asylum may lead families to perceive an older person (some with an intersecting disability) as a “burden,” resulting in greater risk of abuse, SGBV, trafficking and abandonment.
- Inadequate shelter disproportionately affects older refugees with disabilities, who become isolated in the home due to environmental barriers.
- Changes to transportation – both availability and cost – can add to the vulnerability of older people who may be unable to access services and assistance on an equal basis with others. In camp settings, they may rely on other community members to collect materials and rations, exposing them to greater risk of exploitation.
- Perceptions about the capacity of older refugees to fend for themselves can also increase their vulnerability to SGBV. Likewise, service providers may question the capacity of older people to learn new information, and therefore exclude them from prevention programs, and even question their reports of abuse, in turn reinforcing a cycle of impunity.
- New disabilities affecting older people can change the gender roles in households. In traditional communities, men who become disabled or frail and are no longer able to be breadwinners, or women disabled during migration who cannot care for their families, may be viewed as not fulfilling their gender roles. This can lead to tension, violence and SGBV.

#### Resources

HIAS (2015) [Triple Jeopardy Report](#), pp. 7-8, 17-21.

HelpAge International (2002) [Encouraging Agencies to Pay Attention to the Needs, Knowledge and Experience of Older People](#). Women’s Refugee Commission (2015) [I See That It Is Possible: Gender-Based Violence Disability Toolkit](#). United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2013) [Working with Older Persons in Forced Displacement](#).



## Four Case Studies

### Group Activity

1. At which phase of the forced migration cycle did the older person experience SGBV?
2. What kind of SGBV did he or she experience?
3. Who were the perpetrators?
4. What were the root causes and contributing factors that enabled the acts of SGBV?
5. Who assisted the survivors?

TRIPLE JEOPARDY TRAINING | HIAS 7

### Materials

Flip chart and markers, case study handout

### Background

- These four case studies are taken from interviews with older refugees conducted during the research phase of the *Triple Jeopardy* report.
- The exercise enables participants to: understand the nature of SGBV specific to older refugees; identify root causes and contributing factors; recognize types, perpetrators and consequences of SGBV; and understand how to help older refugees who experience SGBV to access support and assistance.

### Group Activity (60 minutes)

- Divide participants into four groups and distribute one case study per group.
- Each group member should read the case study (5 minutes).
- Group members should write out answers to the 5 questions indicated on the slide (15 minutes).
- Ask a volunteer from each group to summarize the story of the case, and another to present the group's answers to all the participants, allowing a few minutes for questions (7 minutes per group; total about 30 minutes).

### Possible Answers

#### Case Study 1 – Khadija

**Phases of migration cycle:** In the country of asylum.

**SGBV:** Gender-based abandonment by husband as Khadija did not bare any sons. Gender-based violence against Khadija's daughter because Khadija was accused of witchcraft.

**Perpetrators:** Husband; unknown attacker who spilled boiling oil and water on her daughter's back; policemen.

**Root causes:** Ethnic tensions, poverty, generalized violence, gender/age/legal status power imbalances.

#### Contributing factor

- Security operations against refugees and foreigners connected to terrorism.



**Supporter:** UNHCR facilitating Khadija's relocation to Nairobi. Neighbors protecting her family from police wrongdoing.

### **Case Study 2 – Nadine**

**Phases of migration cycle:** In country of origin prior to flight (gang rape).

**SGBV:** Gang rape; psychological violence.

**Perpetrators:** Armed men.

**Root causes:** Armed conflict and generalized violence. Gender power imbalance.

**Contributing factors**

- Sole breadwinner and head of household.
- Negative attitudes toward older persons in the labor market.

**Supporters:** Neighbors and clinic in country of origin. Church and clinic in country of asylum. NGO counselor.

### **Case Study 3 – Bol**

**Phases of migration cycle:** In the country of asylum.

**SGBV:** Psychological violence - mockery for having to do women's chores and being "half a man."

Economic violence – Bol wants to control financial resources of his wife; potential forced marriage of Bol's underage daughter.

**Perpetrators:** Bol, male neighbors, Bol's mother-in-law.

**Root causes:** The abuse of power by others due to Bol's inability to fulfill gender roles. Bol's own frustration at not being able to "act like a man" leads him to also abuse his own power over his wife. Discrimination in livelihood opportunities on the basis of disability and older age.

**Contributing factors**

- Perceptions of NGO staff relating to Bol's capacity to engage in livelihoods, and perhaps a lack of reasonable accommodations to address barriers.
- Emotional distress resulting from changing gender roles brought about by displacement.
- Poverty, leading to potential violation of his daughter's rights.

**Supporter:** Bol's wife, who earns income to support the family.

**Comment:** At times, survivors of SGBV may also be perpetrators of SGBV and other forms of violence. In this case, the man who feels he has lost his gender-related power wants to reassert it by demanding control by force over his wife and daughter.

### **Case Study 4 – Mariam**

**Phase of migration cycle:** In the country of origin and asylum.

**SGBV:** Rape, accusation of being a witch, burning of tent.

**Perpetrators:** Janjaweed and fellow male refugees.

**Root causes:** The combination of social attitudes toward gender, SGBV survivors and widows.

**Contributing factors**

- Poverty.
- Lack of adult males in the family.
- A community in displacement and under great stress.

**Supporters:** Community leader responsible for food distribution. UNHCR relocating Mariam and her family.

### **Resources**

Triple Jeopardy Report, pp. 17-21.

## SLIDE 9: SUMMARY

### Summary

- SGBV occurs in all phases of forced displacement
- Root causes of SGBV are connected to power imbalances relating to gender, nationality and age
- Contributing factors include political instability, broken legal systems, barriers to language information
- Perpetrators include caregivers, family, refugee and local communities, state and non-state agents
- Vulnerability of older refugees to SGBV is intensified by social exclusion, barriers to services, breakdown of family and community support networks and limited roles for older persons as keepers of cultural and communal wisdom

TRIPLE JEOPARDY TRAINING | **HIAS** 8

### Background

- Present the summary points.
- Ask participants for any questions or requests for clarification.