**The issue of gender-based violence against refugees.**

Gender-based violence (GBV) against refugees is an issue which affects millions of individuals across the world. There are many forms of violence towards these people for instance physical, psychological, and sexual abuse and although this can affect any refugee, there is a disproportionate impact on women and girls. Since refugees are away from any support networks they may have had, they are particularly vulnerable to GBV. Given this can have a long-lasting impact on an individual's mental health, well-being, and safety, addressing this issue is of immense importance.

The prevalence of GBV among refugees is alarmingly high. In zones of conflict such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), women and girls have become victims of cruel violence and abuse. Reports indicate that rape forms the majority of violations, with women being subjected to brutal violence, torture, and sexual exploitation. In Chad, women fleeing Sudanese conflict have reported being raped, highlighting the extreme vulnerabilities faced by displaced women during their journeys to safety. Similarly, in Afghanistan, increasing restrictions on women and girls, high rates of domestic violence, and a deteriorating economic situation have contributed to a mental health crisis among female refugees.

The risks of GBV are not confined to conflict zones. Women who have fled continue to face sexual violence, exploitation, enslavement, and human trafficking. It is estimated that 90 percent of these women are raped during their journeys to safe countries. Even after reaching such countries, survivors of sexual violence often remain in dangerous situations, facing added risks of GBV and being prevented from accessing essential services.

Partner violence is another significantly concerning issue for forcibly displaced women. In certain settings, the risks of intimate partner violence are thought to be up to 20 percent higher than for non-displaced women and girls. This violence is heightened by further forms of discrimination, including disability, poverty, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

The consequences of GBV are devastating and long-lasting. Survivors often suffer from physical injuries, psychological trauma, and social stigmatization. With access to justice being still limited, survivors fear retaliation and social marginalization. In many locations, humanitarian access is cut off, and resources and assistance are scarce, further worsening the plight of refugees who are GBV survivors.

**Points to consider**

* How should the risks of GBV be mitigated?
* What resources should be provided for survivors in rebuilding their lives?
* The consequences of GBV.

**Useful Links**

[Gender-based violence | Global Focus](https://reporting.unhcr.org/global-report-2023/outcome-areas/gender-based-violence)

[Gender-based violence | UNHCR](https://www.unhcr.org/what-we-do/protect-human-rights/protection/gender-based-violence)

[Sexual and Gender-Based Violence against Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons. Guidelines for Prevention and Response, UNHCR (SGVB Guidelines) | UNHCR](https://www.unhcr.org/media/sexual-and-gender-based-violence-against-refugees-returnees-and-internally-displaced-persons)

[Violence against refugee women surged in 2020, but grassroots solutions can help tackle scourge | UN News](https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/11/1106592)