

Understanding common terms

Gender-based violence: The SDC defines gender-based violence as an “umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person’s will and that is based on socially ascribed (i.e., gender) differences between males and females. It includes acts that inflict physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty. These acts can occur in public or in private”. (...) The term ‘GBV’ is most commonly used to underscore how systemic inequality between males and females – which exists in every society in the world – acts as a unifying and foundational characteristic of most forms of violence perpetrated against women and girls”.¹ The term ‘gender-based violence’ is also increasingly used by some actors to highlight the gendered dimensions of certain forms of violence against men and boys—particularly some forms of sexual violence committed with the explicit purpose of reinforcing gender inequitable norms of masculinity and femininity (e.g. sexual violence committed by conflict parties aimed at humiliating the enemy).²

LGBTIQ+: In alignment with evolving terminology used in most international guidelines on GBV, in this document, the term LGBTIQ+ is used to refer to persons of non-conforming gender identities, expressions and sexualities. In many societies, people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex or queer and other non-conforming gender identities and sexualities are subject to violence with the explicit purpose of reinforcing gender inequitable norms of masculinity and femininity.

Why GBV and not SGBV?

SDC now uses the term GBV. The term SGBV which is included in most of the older SDC/FDFA policy papers emphasised the specific importance of sexual violence and especially conflict-related sexual violence. Conflict-related sexual violence is a form of gendered violence, whether it is committed against women or men. In the interest of emphasising the continuum of gendered violence that reflects the steep increase in all forms of gender-based violence during crises and conflicts, it makes sense to not single out sexual violence specifically.

Types of GBV: Gender-based violence is prevalent in many forms, including physical, sexual, emotional and economic violence – when these forms of violence occur among intimate partners it is called “intimate partner violence” (IPV) and when it is committed by intimate partners and/or other members of the survivor’s family, it is also called “domestic violence”. GBV also includes inter-generational violence against daughters/daughters-in-law, child marriage, dowry, female genital mutilation/cutting, trafficking and so-called ‘honour’ crimes. When GBV is committed by staff of development or humanitarian actors, it is called SEAH (sexual exploitation, sexual abuse and sexual harassment). Conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) such as rape, sexual slavery,

1 IASC (Inter-Agency Standing Committee). 2015. Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action. Reducing risk, promoting resilience and aiding recovery.

2 Ibid.

enforced prostitution and enforced sterilisation are also types of GBV committed upon women, men and LGBTIQ+ persons. Tech-facilitated or cyber violence is yet another form of highly prevalent GBV, which includes online gender and sexual harassment, cyberstalking, image-based sexual abuse, use of technology to commit or procure sexual assault or abuse, use of technology to locate survivors and hate speech.

Who experiences GBV?

Women and girls are disproportionately affected by gender-based violence because of systematic inequality between males and females in every society.

Men and boys also experience GBV. This violence against males is based on socially constructed ideas of what it means to be a man and to exercise male power.

LGBTIQ+: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex or queer and other (+) non-conforming gender identities and sexualities are at risk of persecution, discrimination and violence as a result of their real or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

Women and girls with disabilities are far more likely to face abuse than women without disabilities due to stigma and discrimination.

Other intersecting forms of discrimination: across genders and sexuality, those marginalised on account of race/caste/ethnicity or class are particularly vulnerable to GBV.

The FDFA promotes an inclusive and intersectional approach to GBV response: all individuals, regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation, can be victims of GBV and have a right to adequate services.

Conflict-related sexual violence: "Conflict-related sexual violence refers to incidents or patterns of sexual violence against women, men, girls or boys occurring in a conflict or post-conflict setting that have direct or indirect links with the conflict itself or that occur in other situations of concern such as in the context of political repression". (...) Conflict-related sexual violence takes multiple forms such as, rape, forced pregnancy, forced sterilisation, forced abortion, forced prostitution, sexual exploitation, trafficking, sexual enslavement, forced circumcision, castration, forced nudity or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity. Depending on the circumstances, it could constitute a war crime, a crime against humanity, genocide, torture or other gross violations of human rights (...) The right to an effective remedy is enshrined in international human rights law and humanitarian law as established in various international and regional instruments."³

³ UN (2014). Guidance Note of the Secretary-General. Reparations for conflict-related sexual violence, p. 3–4.

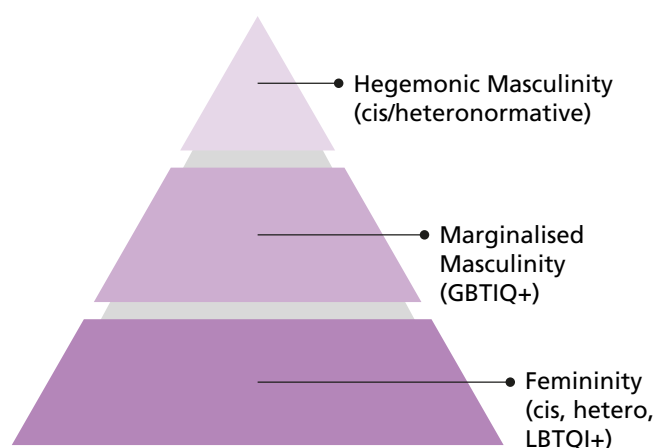
Survivors of CRSV need the same services as survivors of sexual violence committed by a perpetrator not connected to conflict parties. No hierarchy of survivors should be created; defending the right to remedy for all survivors of all forms of GBV is important.

She/her/they/theirs: Recognising that women and girls are disproportionately affected by GBV while acknowledging the diversity of survivors that include LGBTIQ+ persons and men and boys, in this toolkit the pronouns “she/her/they/theirs” is used to refer to survivors.

Patriarchal social norms:

Patriarchy literally means rule of men – patriarchal social norms are rules and expectations of behaviour as per a gender hierarchy whereby men, and cis-hetero men in particular, are at the top of the hierarchy, have privileges and entitlements, and women and girls and those with diverse gender and sexual identities are at the bottom. These social norms have created dominant

and hegemonic social constructions of male entitlement and masculinity, which then perpetuate violence against women and girls. Across the world, GBV is predominantly committed by men upon women, girls and LGBTIQ+ communities; GBV against men and boys is also largely committed by men.



Continuum: As GBV is an expression of gender inequitable norms, it is highly prevalent in all contexts and usually increases during conflicts and other humanitarian crisis. The violence during armed conflicts often includes sexual violence as a weapon of war aimed at destroying the individual survivor as well as her/their family and community; however sexual violence also increases because of a breakdown in protective structures. The destruction and trauma of any kind of crisis and involuntary displacement disrupts relationships in families and in communities, leading to an increase in intimate partner violence, domestic violence and other forms of GBV, such as forced prostitution, trafficking, early and forced marriage etc.

Nexus: The SDC regards interventions for the prevention of and response to gender-based violence as crucial in humanitarian and development contexts. In humanitarian contexts, it is important to consider that GBV was prevalent before the crisis and will be prevalent for many decades to come; hence, interventions should be structured from the beginning with a long-term perspective, investing in strengthening local professional capacity and the voices of women-led organisations. In the often long transition from the acute crisis to a development context, the SDC promotes the anchoring of GBV services in local and national government frameworks, policies and budgets at the earliest possible point in time. The nexus also works in the other direction: a GBV programme in a development context should be prepared to respond to increased prevalence of GBV after a crisis, e.g. a natural disaster.