ACT Gender Security Guidelines

Threats to men, women and LGBTI staff

Christian Aid/ E.Wigley

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Gender security: an overview

"I've had plenty of security incidents. Sexual harassment is part of the culture here and sexual violence is a key threat"

The global context for humanitarians is becoming more challenging. With targeted attacks on aid workers increasing in recent years, including the rise of reported sexual violence within the sector, our duty of care for staff is ever more important. Sexual violence is *never* the fault of the survivor. We should remain aware of this when undertaking prevention training, avoiding any tendency to 'victim blame'.

Do men and women face different risks?

All staff face varying threats based on their gender, identity and sexual orientation. Gendered risks are not just about women. Men experience specific vulnerabilities too.

It is essential for the humanitarian and development community to include gender considerations in every aspect of risk analysis, policy and programme implementation. We also need to consider the differing gendered risks faced by local, national and international staff.

Gender security should be a standard component of all ACT member security plans. Gender security threats exist everywhere and so must be addressed equally with other concerns to ensure we comply with security guidelines and policy.
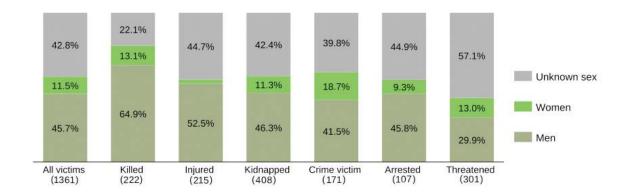
What kind of gender and security data do we have?

The short answer to this question is, very little. Information on gender is not readily available in relation to threats affecting aid workers and aid delivery. The sex of many is recorded 'unknown' in collected data. The scarcity with which information on person's sex is made public is likely a result of a general lack of awareness of the importance of gender analysis.

In 2011, Insecurity Insights analysed the differences and similarities in men's and women's experiences of security events to help agencies think about the potential gender implications of security management. This is our best start in determining that differences exist and need to be explored more fully.

Sexual violence in humanitarian settings is rarely reported as a security incident and the data demonstrates a lack of gender disaggregation.

More recently however, in 2017, Insecurity Insights, in collaboration with other organisations, released new data on sexual violence incidents from January 2015 to March 2017. They report that 76 aid workers in 27 countries were survivors of sexual violence. Sexual harassment and assault within the sector is not a new issue. However, the sector is finally recognising it as an issue as more humanitarians come forward to speak about their personal experiences.

Recent research from Report the Abuse suggests:

'86% of humanitarians know a colleague affected by sexual violence'

Sexual harassment and assault, often occurs within our sector. The perpetrators are often our own colleagues.

These guidelines were developed following gender and security training for ACT members in Bangkok and the adaptation of Christian Aid's 'Gender Security Train-the-Trainer' initiative. Open discussion and training with staff globally, have enabled us to recognise the strong yet neglected need for this area of work.

As a sector, we have a moral obligation and a duty of care to protect our staff. These guidelines aim to support ACT members to proactively identify and manage these gendered risks.

For an explanation on gender & security terminology, please refer to the definitions at the back of the document.

Statement

ACT has committed itself to incorporating gender awareness into all its work. The SSCP has a gender security specialist within the group. This document highlights the gender and security threats facing *every* member of staff and helps the ACT Alliance to proactively identify and manage these gendered risks.

As ACT Alliance is a global Christian organisation representing many different cultural, societal and theological beliefs, this document will discuss all issues related to gender openly and without bias.

How to use these guidelines

- As an introduction to the concept of gender security for all staff
- As a tool for all ACT organisations to ensure duty of care for every staff member
- For HR to ensure equal, unbiased and open employment standards
- For security personnel and managers to adapt their security plans and risk assessments
- In conjunction with wider gender security training, further reading and risk assessment tools

Threats to Men

"I need to be aware of my own safety and security, as a man too. We are travelling to the neediest areas which also means more conflict-ridden areas''

Men tend to occupy work positions within the NGO sector where their level of exposure to certain threats, often violent, puts them at a high level of risk. This is especially true for drivers as the majority of <u>attacks on aid workers occur on the road</u>.

Men can face immeasurable pressure to assert their masculinity in many operating situations. Because of this tendency, they can be inherently more vulnerable. This may lead to unnecessary risk taking, pressure to be seen as dominant in some cultures and peer pressure to accept risk. Male LGBTI staff are often more vulnerable to sexual violence than heterosexual men.

Common Threats Faced by Men
- Stereotypes and expectations connected to masculinity
- Job exposure – driver, guard, field worker
- Lack of care over well-being, including excessive alcohol consumption
- Sexual violence including rape (often referred to as 'male' rape)

1. **Stereotypes and expectations**
   - Display a culturally 'dominant' role and associated pressure to accept risk
   - To respond to other male aggressive behaviour
   - Additional peer pressure in high-stress environments
   - Not prioritise their own health and well-being
   - Indulge in unsafe sexual practices
   - Not seek counselling and support following an incident

2. **Job exposure**
   - Risky job roles e.g guards or drivers (most incidents happen on the road)
   - More likely to be imprisoned or detained
   - More likely to arouse suspicison from political or extremist groups
   - More affected by extreme violence or death

3. **Sexual violence and rape**
   - Security forces – as punishment and/or to assert punishment
   - During detention or imprisonment
   - During conflict
   - From older to younger males
   - LGBTI community – punishment rape

Threats to Women

''Since people come from different backgrounds, we all have a different perception of what masculinity and femininity is. We need to bring everyone onto the same page''

Women are too often confronted with restrictive environments or cultural beliefs, where others can make it difficult for them to carry out their job role effectively.

Women experience sexual harassment and assault more widely, although it's certainly something that also affects men. Most perpetrators are male. Incidents are widely under-reported, and the issue has been neglected in general security training. Yet, reports are increasing and perpetrators are often fellow humanitarian colleagues. Sexual violence is *never* the fault of the survivor.

Generally there's a societal acceptance for unequal power relations between women and men, where men feel they should display power over women. Perpetrators can assert their perceived dominance through threats and control. Survivors fear being blamed or not being believed, offering explanations such as perpetrators being more respected and having more rights e.g. male staff members in senior positions. The cultural or contextual environment can create barriers.

Difficulty in reporting can lead women to feel powerless. Humanitarians fear reporting because of retaliations from their organisations. Perpetrators are still commonly promoted or transferred after getting reports of sexual violence filed against them.

Common Threats Faced by Women

- Stereotypes connected to femininity
- Sexual and gender based violence including harassment
- Sexual exploitation and abuse
- Gender discrimination
- Resistance to report abuse due to victim blame

1. **Stereotypes and expectations**
   - Pushing women to choose less safe roles or accepting more risk than they feel safe with
   - Women prevented from taking roles due to their gender
   - Seen as weaker or less able to cope
   - Stereotypes of female western aid workers and / or national staff present specific risks

2. *Sexual Violence (this also applies to men who may face more stigmatisation)*
   - Sexual harassment in the workplace
   - Sexual violence
   - Power relations in the workplace
   - In some contexts, limited legal or police protection/support
   - Lack of post-attack medical, legal and psychosocial support options, access to PEP kits
   - Long term psychological trauma
   - Stigma, exclusion from family and community
   - Difficulty in reporting or support to report
   - Victim blame

3. **Soft Targets for Crime**
   - Robbery, mugging
   - Threats and extortion
   - Workplace threats/intimidation/mental or physical abuse
   - Threats in field as aid workers, or threatened/harassed by police or other groups
   - Domestic violence
   - Harmful practices such as honour attacks

4. **Discrimination**
   - Cultural restrictions on behaviour, gender roles, equality
   - Lack of legal status in some contexts
   - Employment options/equality/breaking stereotypes
   - Economic/social pressure and effect on decision-making
   - Negative perceptions when employed in foreign NGOs
   - Kidnapping/abduction where women are priority targets

Threats to LGBTI staff

''I have a global experience of being gay. The entire NGO was given a death threat due to staff gossip. Working for a faith based organisation I was told I couldn't disclose. We need to implement our 'do no harm policy' and be the LGBTI community's voice''

LGBTI - *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex*

ACT Alliance members have an obligation to protect the inherent human dignity of every person, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or expression.

We need to acknowledge that some of our staff identify as LGBTI whether publicly or not. Therefore, if our organisations deploy staff to the field or place them in otherwise dangerous circumstances we have a duty of care to ensure their safety.

Report the Abuse, shared the first public data regarding sexual violence experienced by humanitarians. Little has been done to recognise LGBTI specific threats or address their security needs, yet 20% of sexual violence survivors identified as being LGBTI.

One of the main challenges in addressing the security needs of LGBTI staff is the fact that in many cases, their sexual orientation and/or gender identity will not be known. The individual choice to be open or not with this information should always be respected.

This is especially relevant for NGOs who have in their Code of Conduct a philosophy of human rights for all people, especially the most vulnerable globally. It needs to be recorded that being a member of the LGBTI community is not against the law anywhere, rather it is the practice of same gender relationships that is illegal. Currently this is the case in several countries around the world and several countries still impose the death penalty.

It should be recognised that due to prejudice, LGBTI staff often have limited access to available benefits. This is especially true for family benefits since they sometimes need to be secretive about their personal life. This additional stress can make work in the aid sector more challenging for LGBTI staff.

Common threats faced by LGBTI staff

- Discrimination
- Violence including sexual violence
- Harassment
- Unsafe to disclose personal life

1. **Discrimination**
   - Within or outside the workplace
   - Possible legal/criminal challenges if status disclosed
   - Lack of legal support, or active harassment, if incidents/issues reported to authorities

2. **Violence, including sexual violence**
   - Violence, harassment or inability to work with communities in some contexts if sexual orientation or gender identity is known
   - Rape, including 'corrective' rape *(see definition at the end of document)*
   - Murder or torture based on their sexual orientation or gender identity/expression

3. **Disclosure**
   - Employer may make assumptions which limits the person's ability to make informed decisions concerning their own safety
   - Stress related to isolation
   - Challenges in accessing appropriate medical care
   - Inability to discuss threats or challenges without disclosing identity
   - Lack of access to family benefits where available
   - Accidental disclosure by others
   - Blackmail
   - Social media can affect safety

Your gender security plan

Gender security should be a standard component of all ACT member security plans locally, nationally and internationally. Gender threats exist everywhere and so must be addressed equally with other concerns.

A security plan should incorporate an overview of the gender security context analysis, gender risk assessment and detail risk mitigation strategies for all threats identified.

A security briefing should be made available for all staff. That way, staff can gain knowledge of the situation without disclosing their status if they identify as LGBTI, or have had a previous experience of sexual violence that they wish to keep confidential. The security briefing can refer readers to the security plan for additional information on how to mitigate these risks, report incidents or what post-incident care is available.

- Create a section in your country security plans to incorporate gendered security risks
- List the specific and contextual threats faced by male and female staff in your context and include a section on LGBTI staff, international, national and local staff. For example, a national, LGBTI staff member may face more risks that international LGBTI staff (for example).
- Awareness needs to be maintained about the difference between perceived risk and actual risk. This can present a challenge especially when mixing international and national staff or in a context where women are perceived as weak or needing "protection".
- The ACT SSCP has the 'ACT Alliance Security Risk Assessment Tool' free to download from the SSCP website (www.act-security.org). While this tool is beneficial for general risk assessments, for a gender security risk assessment, additional information would need to be examined.

Some questions to consider

- What are the religious, social and cultural expectations of men/women/LGBTI staff in the country/region/operating area?

- How do security forces react to male staff in this context? Do they react differently to female staff?

- How might national, international and local staff face differing threats?

- What is the gender balance in your organisation and are males predominant in field level roles (including drivers)?

- How might women (differentiate between local, national and international) in your office be at risk of sexual harassment and assault?

- What reporting mechanisms are in place? What is the external reporting environment like?

- Women can have reduced legal rights or protection by police. Could reporting do more harm?

- Are PEP kits available to survivors following a sexual attack? Are staff aware of them?

- What gender security training do you offer?

- How are you ensuring you track gender through incident reporting?

For a more thorough overview, see pg. 37 for 'Practical tools and guidance for Gendered Security Risk Management' *(EISF – Gender and Security briefing paper)*

Gender security risk mitigation – an example

Subject

A female, international staff member is travelling overseas to conduct a field visit

Context

She is unmarried and new to the country and context. The partner has reported that harassment has occurred.

Risk

Harassment (sexual and verbal)

Reduce the probability of an incident

✓ Ask the partner where the harassment has occurred and how it was dealt with. Don't make assumptions that the incident has come from 'outside'. Perpetrators are often colleagues.

✓ Be aware of the different risks facing international, national and local staff

✓ Reinforce acceptance strategy with staff and communities in which you work to emphasise their role in providing a safe environment for all your staff to work.

✓ Ensure your protocol states that there is no tolerance for harassment and that this is respected by partners and staff.

✓ Brief the female staff member on the risks and how the issue has been dealt with.

- ✓ Ask whether they are comfortable continuing work in that environment. Ensure all staff members are aware of the risks and can offer support.
- ✓ Brief the staff member on the cultural background. *Both* men and women are asked, for example, to adhere to traditional dress codes, not just women. Ensure that dress codes are used to represent broader security issues, not just sexual violence.
- ✓ Consider the risk of allowing staff to travel alone in certain contexts.
- ✓ Recognise that harassment can come from anywhere, not just the community. It can be from staff in the office and from field staff so ensure hotels are secure and any other prevention is thought about e.g. rape alarms, door wedges and avoidance of ground floor rooms
- ✓ Liaise with other organisations active in the area to share information on incidents or concerns to better adapt your own strategies.
- ✓ Provide gender security training with emphasis on sexual harassment and assault for *all* staff and partners

Reduce Impact of an Incident

- ✓ Evacuate staff member from at-risk area if necessary.
- ✓ Offer immediate medical support, counselling and legal advice, but only with consent. Also offer this to other staff present and be aware of vicarious trauma.
- ✓ Ensure all staff understand the reporting system for incidents and feel supported and encourage when and *if* deciding to report an incident.
- ✓ Ensure confidentiality of affected staff.
- ✓ Investigate all incidents fully and withhold the perpetrator from working whilst investigations take place
- ✓ Ask what support the survivor needs and discuss options such as compassionate leave
- ✓ Give the option of reporting but outline risks where reporting to local authorities may do more harm
- ✓ Increase level of engagement with community around acceptance and provision of safety for staff.
- ✓ Ensure male staff feel confident in reporting incidents or concerns related to gender-based threats.
- ✓ Track incidents and record gender so that your organisation and other ACT members can better understand gender related threats in your context. Liaise with Insecurity Insight to contribute to their growing databased of information.

Gender Security Training

The ACT SSCP offers gender security training, both through their own trainers and through ACT staff based in various global regions who have attended ACT gender security workshops.

- Provide a space where female staff can discuss their concerns separate from male staff, but ensure the discussion is shared in a way that allows male staff to understand the issues while keeping women safe. This can include addressing gender bias within the cultural context.
- Promote an open discussion about how male staff may be affected and placed at elevated risk by the types of roles they are employed in.
- All staff should be trained on Code of Conduct and how this relates to gender security issues.
- Ensure all staff are properly briefed on threats and advised on effective mitigation strategies.
- Ensure all staff feel confident in reporting incidents or concerns related to gender-based threats. With LGBTI issues, confidentiality awareness is key to ensure staff are confident to report harassment, abuse, inequality or other incidents
- EISF provide some interesting gender security case studies which can be used for discussion and to explore differing scenarios in 'Gender and Security Guidelines' , from pg. 14

Prevention and Reporting

"I have never seen a complaint handled well; it is more a question of degrees of badly'' – Report the Abuse

Training is a key part of prevention and raising awareness of gender & security issues. However, there is often too much attention on how individuals can prevent their own sexual assault. We must be aware of 'victim blame' and too much focus on arguable 'prevention' tactics such as 'dressing appropriately' and 'avoiding alcohol'. Sexual harassment and assault is *never* the fault of the victim.

Focus also on the perpetrator's actions; discuss issues of consent and emphasise zero tolerance toward this behaviour.

Please see the 'Prevention, Policy & Procedure Checklist' from 'Report the Abuse' for more on reporting. See the website for forthcoming toolkits.

Immediate and Long-Term Care

If there has been an incident of sexual violence or other security incident that has affected a staff member, visitor, consultant or volunteer, you will need to ensure that the individual(s) is aware and able to receive immediate emergency medical and psychological care. Whether to report or seek such support, is the choice of the survivor.

Rape and other types of sexual violence can cause medical injury, pregnancy and psychological stress, sometimes with long term effects. Also, HIV infection must be considered and **Post Exposure Prophylactic** (PEP) kits are likely to be needed. Please note that PEP should be ideally given within 24 hours and certainly within 72 hours after contact with fluids. Emergency contraception can be given to prevent unwanted pregnancies after rape. Read more on the Interhealth website and WHO. Organisations need to consider whether to have PEP kits on the ground if they are not confident staff can access drugs in time.

It is generally advisable to keep the clothes from the incident, unwashed, and document any information where possible in the event of a criminal trial.

Long term counselling and possible medical care may be required and organisations should ensure this is available. Confidentiality is important as well as briefing staff on how to be supportive of the affected individual(s) without isolating them or making them feel uncomfortable returning to work.

Reporting Incidents

Staff must be aware of how they can report incidents of harassment, abuse, sexual violence, discrimination or other gender security-related matter confidentially. They must also have confidence that their complaint will be actioned and they will not be targeted or feel that they were at fault.

Confidentiality is especially important with LGBTI staff who do not wish their status to become known within the organization or in the local context. Management and or HR departments may want to consult legal/labour advice on how confidentiality can be maintained while also investigating and taking action against those responsible.

If a survivor confides in you *and* the perpetrator is someone within the organisation, it can be policy to report the perpetrator (keeping confidentially of the survivor intact) to ensure the safety of wider staff. However, ideally the survivor themselves should feel empowered to be the one reporting, if they so choose.

In a post incident situation, the risk assessment and risk mitigation strategies should be revisited to find ways to prevent similar incidents from occurring again in the future.

The SSCP would also ask that where possible, information related to the incident (sanitised for names, roles or other specifics) be shared with:

Aid Worker Security Database   (www.aidworkersecurity.org)
Insecurity Insight   (www.insecurityinsight.org)
Report the Abuse   (http://reporttheabuse.org/)

This helps the aid sector track incidents and improve our understanding of the threats globally.

Definitions	

Abduction	The illegal seizure and detaining of a person for reasons other than financial or material gain.
Acceptance	Preferred NGO security strategy focused on gaining acceptance in the community and deriving security from that support.
Bisexual	Refers to a sexual orientation for those who are romantically and/or sexually attracted to more than one sex or gender. It should be noted that not everyone who is attracted to more than one sex identify themselves as bisexual.
Corrective rape	Is a hate crime in which one or more people are raped because of their perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. The common intended consequence of the rape, as seen by the perpetrator, is to turn the person heterosexual or to enforce conformity with gender stereotypes.
Deterrence	NGO security strategy focused on countering a threat with a counter-threat such as security guards or withdrawal of services.
Duty of Care	The responsibility all organizations have to ensure the safety, security and well-being of their staff.
Do No Harm	The responsibility of all aid organizations to not put individuals, groups or communities at risk through the nature of their programming.
ECP	Emergency Contraceptive Pill. Prevent unwanted pregnancy after rape.
Femininity	Femininity (also called girlishness, womanliness or womanhood) is a set of attributes, behaviours, and roles generally associated with girls and women.
Gender	The term 'gender' refers to socially constructed roles, attributes and opportunities, associated with biological sex in a given context.
Gender identity	How individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. One's gender identity can be the same or different than the sex assigned at birth.
GBV (Gender Based Violence)	Any act of violence based on gender, that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering, including threats of such acts.
Heterosexual	Refers to a sexual orientation for those who are romantically and/or sexually attracted to the opposite sex or gender.
Homosexual	Refers to a sexual orientation for those who are romantically and/or sexually attracted to the same sex or gender.
Informed Consent	Informed consent is related to voluntarily, freely, without consent and without threat, agreeing or disagreeing to an act. This impacts on

whether or not some is giving their informed consent to engage in sexual activities.

With regard to field work, the concept that staff can only chose to accept the risks involved in their work if they are properly informed of what the threats are, what mitigation measures are in place and they have been adequately trained in how to manage these risks.

Kidnapping	The illegal seizure and detaining of a person for financial or other material gain.
LGBTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex.
Masculinities	Masculinity (also called boyhood, manliness, or manhood) is a set of attributes, behaviours and roles generally associated with boys and men
PEP kits	Post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) is short-term antiretroviral treatment to reduce the likelihood of HIV infection after potential exposure, either occupationally or through sexual intercourse. PEP should be administered within 72 hours.
Protection	NGO security strategy utilizing technology, infrastructure or physical elements to increase security levels.
Risk	Risk is the level of exposure to a threat faced by staff.
Sex	Sex refers to physical/biological attributes defining male, female and intersexed characteristics.
Sexual orientation	Term that refers to being romantically or sexually attracted to people of a specific gender.
Threat	A threat is a condition of life in a context that negatively affects the life, welfare, safety and security of staff.
Transgender	Transgender refers to those who feel that they are a different gender identity than their biological sex or want to express their gender in a way that they choose.
Intersex	Having either male and female sexual organs or other sexual characteristics.

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Sources of Information

- **European Interagency Security Forum (EISF)**

Gender and Security – Guidelines for Mainstreaming Gender in Security Risk Management - pg. 37 for risk management

Inclusion and Security of LGBTI Aid Workers

Protection Manual for LGBTI Defenders

EISF are currently conducting research into the security of staff with diverse profiles

- **Insecurity Insight**

Aid, Gender and Security: The Gendered Nature of Security Events Affecting Aid workers and Aid Delivery

- **LGBT Aid and Development workers**

LGBT Aid and Development workers – network and resources

- **RedR**

NGO Security: Does Gender Matter?

Gender and Peacekeeping

- **Report the Abuse**

Report the Abuse – Breaking the silence against and within the humanitarian & development community

Report your experience

Prevention, Policy and Procedure Checklist

- **PEP kits –** Interhealth website and WHO

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