

**A network to centre refugee women in international law, policy and practice**

## **Workshop: Gender sensitivity in asylum interviews**

**Date:** Wednesday 30 April 2025

**Time:** 09:30am-11:30 BST/ 08:30am- 10:30am UTC (please adjust for your own time zone)

**Zoom link:** *to follow*

### **Agenda**

Research and experience show that gender-sensitive asylum interviewing is critical for women and survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) to feel able to give a full account of the reasons for their claim. Without this, there is a risk of poor communication, re-traumatisation, misunderstanding, failure to collect relevant evidence and – consequently – an unfair decision. Due to limited guidance<sup>i</sup> and failure to implement existing guidance, evidence suggests that many claimants do not have a good experience at their interview.<sup>ii</sup>

To support improved understanding and good practice, WiRL is holding a participatory workshop in which experts from academia and the field will share knowledge and provide guidance based on their own experience as the basis for interactive work with participants.

### **Agenda**

Introduction to the workshop and objectives (Moira Dustin and Christel Querton, WiRL)

Part 1. Impact of interviews on decision making

- The use of rape myths and resulting victim-blaming mechanisms in asylum interviews and decisions on the grounds of SGBV (Lore Roels)

Part 2. Interviewing techniques & questions

- Gender-sensitive interviews in refugee status determination and beyond: the PEACE model and using dialogue in interviews (Giulia Cragnolini)
- Trauma-informed participatory approaches to interviewing GBV survivors (Jasmin Lilian Diab)
- Reflection on interview techniques, questions and the impact on decision making – discussion in breakout groups
- Breakout group feedback and plenary discussion

Break (5 minutes)

Part 3. Safe spaces

- Building safe spaces (Devika Kapoor)
- How would you build a safe space? (Devika Kapoor)

Concluding comments (Moira Dustin and Christel Querton)

**Participants:** This workshop is for advocates and caseworkers who work with asylum-seeking and refugee women and survivors of GBV, as well as for academics who conduct semi-structured interviews with these groups as part of their research.

**Follow-up:** this is a closed workshop for a limited number of participants, however materials from the event will be published on the WiRL website after the event.

### **Biographical notes of facilitators**

**Jasmin Lilian Diab** is the director of the Institute for Migration Studies (IMS) at LAU, where she also serves as an assistant professor and coordinator of migration studies at the Department of Communication, Mobility and Identity. In 2025, her research was awarded the Lisa Gilad Prize from the International Association for the Study of Forced Migration (IASFM). Dr. Diab is a research affiliate at the Centre for Refugee Studies at York University and a global fellow at Brown University's Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Studies. As of 2024, she is a visiting professor in migration studies at Sciences Po Lyon.

**Giulia Cragolini** is an independent expert in the field of migration and asylum. She has been working for refugee protection for more than ten years with the UN Refugee Agency. She operated in Italy and in some of the biggest protection operations, such as Turkey, Niger and Rwanda. She has extensive experience in refugee status determination and capacity development. She has conducted several trainings on behalf of UNHCR and EUAA (European Union Agency for Asylum, previously EASO) and has a specific focus on interview techniques, in particular of vulnerable persons. She acted as peacekeeper at the United Nations Mission to Cote d'Ivoire, in the aftermath of the civil war. Her studies focused on human rights, asylum and migration issues. She holds a Masters degree in International Sciences and Diplomatic Relations and a Master of Arts in Human Rights and Conflict Management.

**Devika Kapoor** is a Trainer and Coordinator at Amna. Her work includes conducting Identity Informed and Trauma Informed Trainings. She also manages and coordinates the Humanitarian Wellbeing groups and Therapeutic groups.

Her experience includes providing mental health care to marginalised communities and individuals in conflict with law. Her practice is informed by a rights-based approach to mental health and healing.

**Lore Roels** (she/her) is a PhD researcher at the Migration Law Research Group and the Gender & Violence Team of the International Centre for Reproductive Health at Ghent University, Belgium. She is a member of the University's interfaculty Centre for the Social Study of Migration and Refugees (CESSMIR) and Human Rights Centre (HRC), and a steering group member of the international Women in Refugee Law (WiRL) network. In the context of her research, she worked with NANSEN NGO, a centre of legal expertise on international protection based in Brussels, where she developed guidelines and provided training for lawyers on misconceptions in gender-related asylum procedures. Her doctoral research echoes UNHCR's concern that asylum authorities might base credibility assessments on stereotypical and erroneous perceptions of gender. It aims to analyse the gender-(in)sensitivities in asylum application assessments of persons fleeing sexual and gender-based violence, using the Belgian asylum procedure and the non-refoulement procedure before the European Court of Human Rights as case studies.

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<sup>i</sup> Hungarian Helsinki Committee. (2015) *Credibility Assessment in Asylum Procedures - A Multidisciplinary Training Manual, Vol 2*; UNHCR. (2005) *Ensuring Gender Sensitivity in the Context of Refugee Status Determination and Resettlement. Module 2 (Resource Package)* <https://www.refworld.org/reference/manuals/unhcr/2005/en/40043>.

<sup>ii</sup> Bögner, D., Brewin, C., & Herlihy, J. (2010). Refugees' Experiences of Home Office Interviews: A Qualitative Study on the Disclosure of Sensitive Personal Information. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 36(3), 519–535.