

# IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

**Newsletter of the  
GBV-MIG Canada  
Research Team**



*May/June  
2025*  
**Issue 20**

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Warmest greetings from the GBV-MIG Canada Team!

Coming out at a highly uncertain and challenging historical juncture for Canada and the world the present newsletter continues to provide a snapshot of our latest project and project team news; research briefs; community activities and resources; as well as selective events related to violence, migrants and refugees in Canada and globally. In this newsletter (May/June 2025) we are pleased to include two new features: a profile of a community-based organization ([THANS](#)) and an introduction to a new international project, *Growing Up Across Borders* ([GRABS](#)) that will continue and expand on our current work by focusing on migrant youth. A huge thank-you to all our students and research collaborators for their contributions in this newsletter!

As always we would appreciate knowing from you (at: [gbv-mig@smu.ca](mailto:gbv-mig@smu.ca)) whether and / or how our work may be useful or relevant to your work. Constructive feedback about how we can improve what we do would be also greatly appreciated.

With best wishes,

*Evie*

On behalf of the GBV-MIG Canada Team

# TEAM ACTIVITIES

Spring/Summer 2025

## Publications

Tastsoglou, E., Freedman, J. "Gender-Based and Intersectional Violence in Migration and Refugee Contexts: A Contextual Global Approach", International Sociology, Special Issue on Gender and Contextual Global Approaches, co-edited by M. Abraham and S. Vasil. 2025. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02685809251347939>

## Conferences

Tastsoglou, E., Kazakou, E. "The Continuum of Gender-Based Violence in the Experiences of Asylum Seeking Women in the Eastern Mediterranean", presentation at the Congress of Social Sciences and Humanities/ Canadian Sociological Association, June 10, 2025.

Rohn, E., Dawson, M., Tastsoglou, E., Holtmann, C., Wilkinson, L. "Examining Femicide Risk among Migrant and Refugee Women Girls in Canada", presentation at the Congress of Social Sciences and Humanities/ Canadian Sociological Association, June 10, 2025.

# EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES



**October 29–30<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

## **8<sup>th</sup> ACS–Metropolis Identities Conference in Saskatoon**

Reaffirming Canada: Confronting Challenges to Unity, Diversity and Identities



## **Job Opportunity**

The Centre for Migrant Worker Rights Nova Scotia (CMWR NS) is hiring! They are looking for a Community-Based Research and Project Coordinator (Mental Health) for a contract from July to December 2025.

Find out more [here](#).

Stay connected!    

# FROM THE RESEARCHER'S DESK

**Research Brief: Holtmann, C., Tastsoglou, E., Dawson, M., & Wilkinson, L. (2023). "Surviving Gender-Based Violence: A Social Ecological Approach to Migrant and Refugee Women's Resilience." Canadian Ethnic Studies, 55(3), 57-77.**

Written by: By Romulo Schembida and Kathereh Salimi

Canada is home to a large immigrant population, many of whom have endured significant challenges. Among them, many migrant and refugee women (MRW) face the harsh reality of gender-based violence (GBV). The recent article *Surviving Gender-Based Violence* (Holtmann et al., 2023) explores the experiences of professionals working to support MRW survivors of GBV, highlighting the remarkable resilience of survivors and the networks that support their recovery. The research draws on interviews with 43 professionals who provide essential services to MRW and implement public policies aimed at supporting them.

In the study, gender-based violence encompasses physical, psychological, financial, and sexual abuse. It also includes threats related to gender identity and sexual orientation. Rather than adopting an individualistic approach that views resilience as a personal trait, the study employs a social-ecological framework. This perspective defines resilience as a process that unfolds over time, involving interactions between individuals, agents, and institutions, thus creating a reflexive space for recovery. Diverse cultural backgrounds and community ties shape distinct pathways to resilience.

This comprehensive understanding aligns with international standards set by organizations such as the United Nations. For MRW, GBV is often exacerbated by systemic barriers, including language difficulties, economic disadvantages, and cultural misunderstandings. Research indicates that nearly 30 percent of immigrant and refugee women have experienced some form of intimate partner violence, underscoring the urgent need to address these issues.



Professionals interviewed for the study emphasized the personal strength of MRW. These women rebuild their lives by overcoming trauma, pursuing education, and acquiring skills to meet their needs. They quickly form new social connections and adapt to their circumstances with notable resourcefulness. Although many professionals downplayed their own roles, they highlighted the agency and determination of the women they supported.

Safe spaces are a crucial component of resilience. These environments allow MRW to connect with others who share similar experiences, fostering trust and mutual understanding. However, many survivors do not view public service agencies as safe due to fears of retaliation within their communities and do not trust that authorities will adequately respond to incidents of violence.

# FROM THE RESEARCHER'S DESK



The study identifies resilience as a multi-layered process operating at individual, relational, community, and societal levels. Individually, MRW demonstrate strength and adaptability. Relationally, resilience is nurtured through support networks of family, friends, and peers. At the community level, partnerships between NGOs and public institutions provide comprehensive care. Finally, at the societal level, intersectional and inclusive protective policies – that are MRW-sensitive and MRW-informed – create the structural conditions necessary for survivors to heal and thrive.

## About the authors



Khatereh Salimi is a graduate student in the Department of Sociology and Criminology at the University of Manitoba.



Romulo is a Second year PhD student in Sociology at the University of Manitoba. His research interests are in migration, employment, and human rights.

Resilience cannot be achieved in isolation. It requires a supportive environment in which individuals feel safe, become aware of their circumstances, learn about available resources, and access both public and private supports. The stories of MRW in Canada, as they emerge through the experiences and observations of professionals working with them, reflect their courage and determination and serve as a call to action. By implementing inclusive and compassionate systems, professionals providing public anti-violence services to migrant and refugee women GBV survivors and the broader society can ensure that all individuals have the opportunity to rebuild their lives and flourish.

## References

Holtmann, C., Tastsoglou, E., Dawson, M., & Wilkinson, L. (2023). Surviving Gender-Based Violence: A Social Ecological Approach to Migrant and Refugee Women's Resilience. *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 55(3), 57-77.

# FROM THE RESEARCHER'S DESK

Research Brief: Tastsoglou, E., Freedman, J. "Gender-Based and Intersectional Violence in Migration and Refugee Contexts: A Contextual Global Approach", *International Sociology*, Special Issue on Gender and Contextual Global Approaches, co-edited by M. Abraham and S. Vasil. 2025. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02685809251347939>

Written by: Andrea D. Martin

Gender-based violence (GBV) constitutes one of the most grave violations of human rights and poses a significant barrier to the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Migrant and refugee women are particularly at risk, yet their experiences often remain invisible in both research and policy debates. Between 2019 and 2023, the "Violence against Women Migrants and Refugees: Analyzing Causes and Effective Policy Response" (GBV-MIG) international project—a collaboration of seven national teams funded by the EU Gender-Net Plus Consortium and the national agencies of the respective countries—set out to explore how GBV unfolds across diverse migration trajectories and to identify policy responses capable of reducing women's vulnerability. Drawing on feminist, intersectional, and contextual lenses, the project sought to balance global commonalities in GBV with the specific historical, legal, and social contexts of Austria, the Czech Republic, France, Ireland, Norway, Canada, and Israel.

The project addressed two interrelated questions: first, what global and context-specific dynamics produce and perpetuate GBV against migrant and refugee women; and second, how can policy-making and service provision be improved to prevent violence and support survivors?

To answer these questions, the GBV-MIG project employed a mixed-qualitative design across seven countries. Each national team began with comprehensive literature reviews and policy analyses to map existing frameworks on gender, migration, and violence. Key informant interviews with policymakers, NGO staff, health-care providers, and other stakeholders provided meso-level insights into institutional practices and service gaps.

In-depth semi-structured interviews with migrant and refugee women captured micro-level experiences of violence, survival strategies, and interactions with authorities. Ethical safeguards—co-developed across teams and in interaction with local, institutional ethics boards—ensured participant safety and minimized re-traumatization, while thematic coding and cross-case comparison enabled the identification of both common structural drivers and context-specific variations in GBV.

The GBV-MIG project produced several findings. First, GBV in migration contexts exhibits a dual character: it is rooted in global structures of gendered and racialized inequality yet manifests differently in each national setting. Structural drivers—such as restrictive immigration laws, securitized borders, and underfunded support services—create conditions of precarity that expose women to violence at every stage of migration. Second, women face heightened risks during the journey itself: limited legal pathways force many to rely on smugglers or endure informal border crossings, where physical, sexual, and emotional violence by traffickers, border guards, or fellow migrants is commonplace. Third, upon arrival, ambiguous or dependent legal statuses reinforce women's fear of deportation or family separation, trapping survivors in abusive relationships. For example, in Canada, sponsored spouses reported threats of withdrawal of sponsorship, while in France, recognition of spousal abuse as grounds for independent residency varied widely across prefectures.



# FROM THE RESEARCHER'S DESK

Intersectionality was used as a critical lens for understanding differential vulnerabilities. Migrant women's experiences intersect with race, class, nationality, age, sexual orientation, and gender identity to shape both the forms of violence they endure and their ability to access help. Racialized women fleeing conflict zones, for example, often encountered culturalist stereotypes that framed GBV as a "foreign" problem, diverting attention from systemic policy failures. In Israel, asylum-seeking women lacked translation services when filing police complaints, while in Norway, prolonged family-reunification waiting periods compounded survivors' legal and economic marginalization.

Finally, institutional gaps and structural violence underpin interpersonal abuse. Many national systems exclude undocumented or precariously documented women from social assistance, health care, and legal aid. Across countries, siloed services and a lack of trauma-informed, multilingual support mean that women frequently find no safe route to report violence. The project's comparative analysis revealed that even well-intentioned policies—such as shelter referrals or emergency housing—can have unintended gendered effects when implementation lacks coordination or cultural competency.

The GBV-MIG findings underscore the need for holistic, intersectional policy frameworks that address both macro-level structures and individual needs. Governments must broaden legal definitions of GBV to encompass the full spectrum of violence encountered by migrant and refugee women. Additionally, residency protections should be decoupled from abusive relationships. And finally, social services must adopt trauma-informed, multilingual models that coordinate across immigration, health, justice, and social welfare sectors.



The GBV-MIG project affirms that GBV against migrant and refugee women is neither inevitable nor only the result of individual actors; it is deeply embedded in global migration governance, legal regimes, and intersecting systems of inequality. Effective prevention and redress require systemic change—laws that protect rather than punish, inclusive services that empower rather than marginalize, and policies co-produced with those most affected. By illuminating both shared structural roots and context-specific diversities, the GBV-MIG project offers a roadmap for scholars, practitioners, and policymakers committed to gender justice in migration.

## About the author



Andrea D. Martin is a Master's student in Sociology at the University of New Brunswick's Fredericton campus. Her research examines the barriers women survivors of intimate partner violence face in securing safe, affordable housing across New Brunswick.

## European Court Challenges to EU Border Management in the Aegean

Written by: Eva Kazakou

### Introduction

In the Aegean region, where the struggle for refuge collides with rigid border enforcement, the human cost of EU migration policies is starkly evident. While EU legal frameworks and member states claim to uphold fundamental rights, the experiences of many migrants suggest otherwise, often marked by excessive force, pushbacks, and a lack of accountability.

This research piece reviews selected legal cases brought before the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) and General Court of the European Union (GC), focusing on Greece and the role of Frontex. The selected cases span the period from 2014 to 2025 and are geographically limited to the Aegean region. They were chosen because they involve incidents that occurred specifically at the initial stages of border crossing in the EU via the Aegean route (including first interaction with authorities, Greek or Frontex). The selection was made through a systematic search of ECtHR and GC databases, using available filters<sup>[1]</sup> to identify cases involving border crossings, maritime interceptions, and early procedural violations. The cases are grouped into three categories: (1) excessive use of force and deaths at the borders, (2) pushbacks and denial of asylum, and (3) failed joint responsibility and legal barriers to accountability. While not exhaustive, the selection reflects the available rulings and applications that document rights violations during this critical stage of the journey. Together, these cases illustrate the systemic nature of border violence and the legal obstacles faced by migrants in their search for protection.

<sup>[1]</sup> E.g. "Border checks," "Borders, asylum and immigration," "Immigration policy," "Safeguards," and "Fundamental rights".

### 1. Excessive Use of Force and Deaths at the Borders

ALMUKHLAS and Huda Hadi Kareem AL-MALIKI v. Greece (Application No. 22776/18)

In this case, the European Court of Human Rights ruled in March 2025 (nearly a decade after the events) that Greek authorities violated Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights, which safeguards the right to life. The case concerned the death of Ameer Mokhlas, a 17-year-old Iraqi asylum seeker who was fatally shot in August 2015 during a maritime interception involving the Hellenic Coast Guard and a Frontex vessel near the island of Symi. Mokhlas had been aboard the yacht YAVUZUM 16 at the time. His parents alleged that the use of force was unjustified and that the Greek authorities failed to carry out an effective and impartial investigation. The Court upheld these claims, finding serious procedural shortcomings and a lack of accountability.

Two more cases are along similar lines and are currently pending before the European Court of Human Rights. In Douaa ALKHATIB et al. v. Greece (Application No. 3566/16), the family of a Syrian man fatally shot during a Greek coast guard operation in 2014 alleges excessive use of force and an inadequate investigation, claiming a violation of Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights. In S.S. v. Greece (Application No. 30221/21), a Syrian woman argues that her child died in a 2019 shipwreck off Kos due to coast guard negligence, and that authorities focused on smuggling charges against survivors rather than investigating state responsibility.

### 2. Pushbacks and Denial of Access to Asylum

S.A.A. and Others v. Greece (Application No. 22146/21)

In this pending case before the European Court of Human Rights, eleven Syrian nationals allege that they were forcibly pushed back from Crete to Turkey during the night of 20–21 October 2020. According to their claims, they were subjected to inhuman treatment and arbitrary detention, denied access to asylum procedures, and returned without any legal process.

# FROM THE RESEARCHER'S DESK

The applicants argue that these actions violated multiple rights protected under the European Convention on Human Rights. Under Article 2, they contend that the pushback operation placed their lives at risk. Relying on Article 3, they allege that they were subjected to ill-treatment both before and during the forced return. With reference to Article 5, they claim they were detained unlawfully and were not informed of the reasons for their detention in a language they could understand. Finally, under Article 13, they argue that they had no access to effective legal remedies to challenge either their detention or their expulsion.

Similarly, several other cases challenge the practice of pushbacks and the denial of access to asylum procedures. In G.R.J. v. Greece (Application No. 15067/21) and A.A.J. and H.J. v. Greece (Application No. 24982/21), an Afghan minor and two Guinean nationals claim they were pushed back from Samos and Lesbos to Turkey without a chance to seek asylum, violating their rights to life and protection from inhuman treatment, under the European Convention. In K.K. v. Greece and 17 Other Applications (Application No. 1712/21), 18 applicants of various nationalities allege they were collectively expelled from Greece between October and December 2020, putting their lives at risk and denying them access to legal remedies. In Hamoudi v. Frontex (Case T-136/22), a Syrian man alleges he was collectively expelled to sea after entering Greece in April 2020. The General Court dismissed his claim for lack of evidence, but he has appealed the decision.

### 3. Failed Joint Responsibility and Legal Barriers to Accountability

SS and ST v. Frontex (Case T-282/21)

In May 2021, the organisation front-LEX initiated legal action against Frontex, requesting that the agency be ordered to stop its operations in the Aegean Sea. This was based on what they described as clear and overwhelming evidence of serious and ongoing violations of fundamental rights in the region. The case was filed on behalf of two individuals, identified as SS and ST, who argued that Frontex had contributed to the violations they experienced during their journey to Greece.

Their claim was brought before the General Court of the European Union and was grounded in Article 46(4) of Regulation (EU) 2019/1896, which allows the Executive Director of Frontex to suspend or terminate operations in cases of serious and persistent breaches of fundamental rights. They also invoked Article 265 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), which permits action against an EU institution for failing to act when legally required.

However, the Court dismissed the case as inadmissible, concluding that Frontex had responded to the applicants' request and thus could not be considered inactive under Article 265 TFEU. As a result, the Court did not examine whether any rights violations had occurred.

Similarly, in ST v. Frontex (Case T-600/22), a Congolese national, represented by an NGO, challenged Frontex's failure to protect migrants during joint operations. However, the General Court dismissed the case on procedural grounds related to identification issues and imposed costs on the applicant, highlighting the legal challenges of holding EU agencies accountable. Likewise, in Case T-600/21, applicants seeking compensation from Frontex for damages suffered during an alleged pushback had their claim rejected, as the General Court ruled that Frontex was not directly responsible for operational decisions made by Greek authorities.

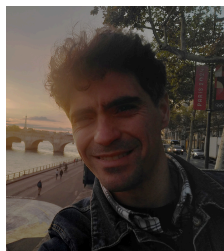
### Conclusion

These cases highlight the gap between the EU's human rights ideals and the harsh realities of border management. Whether it is the tragic loss of life and the failure to conduct thorough investigations or the complex challenges of holding EU agencies accountable in practice, vulnerable individuals crossing borders in search of safety continue to suffer at the intersection of state security and the precarious conditions they face. Although legal frameworks exist to protect them, procedural obstacles and fragmented accountability often hinder justice. In light of both the decisions already made and the ongoing challenges in securing justice, these cases underscore the entrenched difficulties in addressing human rights violations. The protracted nature of these procedures reveals the complexities and delays in achieving meaningful accountability, further complicating the pursuit of a more humane and rights-respecting approach to border management.



# FROM THE RESEARCHER'S DESK

## GRABS Project



Hello, I am Juan Manuel Moreno and am a doctoral researcher within the Growing Up Across Borders (GRABS) project at the Centre for Sociological and Political Research (CRESPPA), Université Paris 8, France.

In late July 2025, I will be travelling to Kijipuktuk-Halifax, Nova Scotia, on a short research visit to meet colleagues at Saint Mary's University and hopefully connect with local actors and community-based organisations involved in work with young people with experiences of forced displacement and migration.

In this article, I share a bit about the GRABS project and my PhD research.

### About the GRABS project

GRABS is a five-year research project financed by the European Research Council (ERC). Our aim is to investigate the experiences of young people (aged 15-25) growing up in situations of forced migration and mobility across borders.

The project aims to better understand how lived experiences of violence, displacement, migration and borders impact young people's lives and transition to adulthood, crossing geographical mobility with mobility across the life course. GRABS methodological approach is grounded in decolonial and critical feminist intersectional approaches and inclusive, participatory, and ethically responsible practices, working with young people to create space for them to co-produce knowledge and narrate their own stories.



GRABS. Illustration by [Juanchila](#) 16.10.2024 (CC NC-ND-4.0 2025) for GRABS project.

The GRABS project is carried out by a small team of five researchers based in Paris including a principal investigator, Professor Jane Freedman, two post-docs, Dr Isabel Morrel and Dr Glenda Santana de Andrade, and two PhD candidates, Jessi Kume and Juan Manuel Moreno. The GRABS team works in collaboration with researchers and community-based organisations internationally and particularly across five case study countries in Europe (France, Greece, UK), Canada (*Kijipuktuk*-Halifax and *Odawaa*-Ottawa) and South Africa (*eThekwin*-Durban, *eGoli*-Johannesburg, and *!Hui !Gaeb*-Cape Town). These five country cases (and their various in-country locations) are all places of destination for people on the move, but with varying asylum and refugee regimes, different health and social welfare structures, and contrasting historical, social, economic and political contexts.

You can visit the GRABS website to find out more: <https://erc-grabs.univ-paris8.fr/>

# FROM THE RESEARCHER'S DESK

## About my PhD project

Within the larger GRABS project, in my PhD I will examine how young people with lived experiences of forced migration and displacement struggle, cope, and mobilise to navigate and renegotiate external and internal barriers to make a home of the places they inhabit.

My research will be focused in the context of Kijipuktuk-Halifax, where I will be partnering with Professor Evangelia Tastsoglou and other colleagues at Saint Marys University.

## Context of my PhD research

Over the past 40 years, the increasing context of externalisation and securitisation of migration and refugee regimes have led to a normalisation in the disconnection and omission of migrants' lived experiences and realities from migration and refugee policies. In addition, contemporary non-entrée, restrictive and repatriation-focused approaches have further silenced the deep colonial and racialised roots of current migration & refugee regimes, therefore allowing the maintenance and reproduction of colonial forms and structures of control over the (im)mobility, exclusion, and undesirability of racialised groups of people.[1] These developments have most clearly manifested through the imposition of restrictive external and internal borders that people navigate to make somewhere they inhabit.

## Research focus & scope

In what today is known as Canada, young people's lived experiences of forced displaced and uprooting, their struggles and mobilisations, are intrinsically connected to the multigenerational and ongoing lived experiences and struggles of colonial dispossession, extraction, displacement, exploitation, and ultimately genocide of Indigenous Peoples to the land. In the case of my research, these are the Mi'kmaq People in Kijipuktuk-Halifax.

Any serious decolonial approach to the examination of the lived experiences of forcibly displaced people must be put in context with the enduring (past and present) legacy of colonialism and in solidarity with Indigenous People's experiences and struggles. I will, to the best of my capacity and with humility and respect refer to, learn from, and champion/support Indigenous People's lived experiences, alternative knowledges and struggles.

Finally, by young people on the move, I am referring to young newcomers who are aged 15 to 25 years of age, and who are in different situations of irregularity and/or forced displacement and/or (im)mobility (be that people who have been recognised and relocated through the UN- refugee status determination process), asylum seekers/refugee claimants (as it is referred to in Canada), and other forcibly displaced migrants/newcomers to the settler colonial territorial context of Canada.

## Theoretical and methodological approach

### Theory

I want to examine these issues through a decolonial and intersectional frame. In doing so, I will be drawing from three broad lines of decolonial theory and interdisciplinary work, including works on Necropolitics which refers to policies and structures that let die and/or let live in injury, fast or slow, through exclusion, expulsion, marginalisation, and othering; works on Slow violence which examine gradual, uneven, and often-unseen contemporary processes and frameworks of dispossession, exclusion, and intergenerational harm; and the concept of Deracination which examines the historically emergent and structural factors that place certain racialised and marginalised groups, time and again, in precarious living conditions that 'deracinate' (uproot) and lead to forced displacement.[2]

[1] See for instance, Chimni, B. S. (1998). The geopolitics of refugee studies: A view from the South. *Journal of refugee studies*, 11(4), 350-374. Body; FitzGerald, D. S. (2019). *Refuge beyond reach: How rich democracies repel asylum seekers*. Oxford University Press; Marfleet, P. (2007). Refugees and history: why we must address the past. *Refugee survey quarterly*, 26(3), 136-148. Body; Mayblin, L. (2017). *Asylum after empire: Colonial legacies in the politics of asylum seeking*. Rowman & Littlefield; Mayblin, L., & Turner, J. (2021). *Migration studies and colonialism*. John Wiley & Sons.

[2] On Necropolitics, see for instance Mbembe, A. (2003). *Necropolitics*, 15 Pub. Culture, 11, 18. <https://doi.org/10.1215/08992363-15-1-11>; Davies, T., Isakjee, A., & Dhesi, S. (2017). Violent inaction: The necropolitical experience of refugees in Europe. *Antipode*, 49(5), 1263-1284. <https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12325>; On Slow violence, see Mayblin, L. (2019). Producing slow violence: Imagining asylum as economic migration. In *Impoverishment and Asylum* (pp. 46-73). Routledge; Tyner, J. A. (2020). The slow and the fast violence of displacement. *The handbook of displacement*, 79-88.; Pain, R., & Cahill, C. (2022). Critical political geographies of slow violence and resistance. *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space*, 40(2), 359-372. <https://doi.org/10.1177/23996544221085753>; On Deracination, see Arboleda Quiñonez, S. (2007). Los afrocolombianos: entre la retórica del multiculturalismo y el fuego cruzado del destierro. *The Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology*, 12(1), 213-222 <https://doi.org/10.1525/jlca.2007.12.1.213>; Vergara-Figueroa, A. (2018). *Afrodescendant Resistance to Deracination in Colombia: Massacre at Bellavista-Bojayá-Chocó*. Palgrave MacMillan.

# FROM THE RESEARCHER'S DESK

## Method

My intended methodological approach will involve creative participatory methods involving a mixed use of comics-based approaches using my own interests and drawing skills, & photovoice methodology as media for critical storytelling, expression, and knowledge co-production.[3]

Both forms of visual stimuli-based methodologies have received increasing attention within qualitative social science research in recent years, and they offer several opportunities for critical qualitative social research; in the case of comic-based approaches it is their usefulness to create spaces for ambiguity and interpretation through their multi-modality, which helps challenged long-held assumptions. As for photovoice, it can open critically engaged reflections, culturally grounded and contextually situated discussions around issues, priorities.

In addition, both are useful in supporting research engagement and dissemination to/with wider audiences, including 'hard to reach' / 'marginalised' audiences, as it allows to distil research findings into more engaging forms.

These approaches are initial ideas, and I will be adapting and co-designing them with the young people on the move taking part in the research.

## Get in Touch

I will be visiting Kijipuktuk-Halifax during the last two weeks of July. If you find the research project interesting and would like to get in touch to collaborate and/or participate in any form, please get in touch by sending me an email at [juan-manuel.moreno@univ-paris8.fr](mailto:juan-manuel.moreno@univ-paris8.fr). Also, my GRABS project profile page can be accessed [here](#).

[3] For an introduction to comic-based approaches see Kuttner et al. (2020). Comics-based research: The affordances of comics for research across disciplines. *Qualitative Research*, 21(2), 195-214. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794120918845>; Rainford (2021) A critical reflection on the dual use of comic-based approaches <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/20597991211060681>; For photovoice methodology, see Sutton-Brown, C.A. (2014) Photovoice: A Methodological Guide, *Photography and Culture*, 7:2, 169-185. <https://doi.org/10.2752/175145214X13999922103165>.

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

### Greek Coast Guard Officers Charged Over Deadly Pylos Shipwreck

Seventeen members of the Greek Coast Guard have been charged with serious criminal offences in connection with the deadly shipwreck near Pylos in June 2023, which led to the deaths of hundreds of migrants. The charges, announced on May 23, 2025, include multiple counts of manslaughter by negligence and exposure leading to death.

The incident involved a fishing boat named *Adriana*, which was carrying an estimated 750 people (mostly from Syria, Pakistan, and Egypt) on its way from Libya to Italy. On June 14, 2023, the vessel sank in international waters near Pylos, off Greece's southwestern coast. Only 104 people survived. More than 80 bodies were recovered, and hundreds are still missing.

A judicial investigation found that the Greek Coast Guard had been aware of the vessel's dangerous condition for several hours but did not act in time. According to the non-profit organisation [Refugee Support Aegean \(RSA\)](#), some survivors said the ship capsized after an attempt to pull the vessel by the coast guard. Greek authorities initially claimed that those on board had refused assistance and that the vessel capsized on its own.

RSA has described the charges as an important step toward justice, echoing long-standing calls from survivors and victims' families for answers and accountability.

The case has drawn international attention and raised ongoing concerns about how European countries respond to people trying to cross borders in search of safety. This is the same Pylos shipwreck we have been following closely in this newsletter. You can track how the case has developed through our previous issues: <https://www.smu.ca/gendernet/newsletters.html>

Reported by: Eva Kazakou



## The Aegean Observatory

### Lives Lost and Lives Saved: Refugee Shipwrecks and Rescues in Greece

Over the past few months, Greece has seen another wave of tragic incidents at sea involving people trying to reach safety. Shipwrecks near Lesbos and Ikaria have left people dead or missing, while rescue operations off the coast of Crete thankfully brought more than 500 people to shore.

#### **Lesbos: At Least Seven Dead After Boat Capsizes**

*(Northeastern Aegean Sea, near the coast of Turkey)*

On April 3, a boat carrying 31 people overturned near Skala Sykamnias on the island of Lesbos. Greek coast guard crews rescued 23 survivors, but seven people—two children, three women, and two men—were found dead in the water. One person remains missing. The group is believed to have crossed over from Turkey in the early morning hours, hoping to reach Europe. The rough sea and overcrowded boat likely contributed to the tragedy.

#### **Ikaria: Survivors Found, But Others Still Missing**

*(Central Aegean Sea, west of Samos and north of Patmos)*

On April 13, another shipwreck occurred near the Avlakas area of Ikaria. Fifteen people made it to shore on their own and were later found by local authorities. However, others who were reportedly on board are still missing. A major search and rescue effort followed, involving patrol boats, helicopters, and teams on foot. No official number has been confirmed for how many people were originally on the boat.

#### **Crete: Over 500 Rescued in Just Two Days**

*(Southern Greece, facing North Africa)*

On May 23 and 24, Greek authorities carried out five separate rescue missions off the southern coast of Crete. In just 48 hours, they brought 508 people to safety. These rescues took place in several locations, including Kalo Limenes, Gavdos, and Trypiti beach. Among those rescued were many women and children. Four suspected smugglers from Sudan were arrested during the operations.

These recent shipwrecks and rescue efforts underline the painful reality: the Mediterranean is still one of the deadliest migration routes in the world. When safe and legal pathways to asylum are blocked or severely limited, people are left with no choice but to risk their lives at sea. These recent shipwrecks and rescues show the human cost of restrictive border policies and the criminalization of migration. They are not isolated incidents, but part of a system that treats movement as a threat rather than a right.

What's urgently needed is not more deterrence, but coordinated, humane action—based on solidarity, shared international responsibility, and a genuine commitment to protecting human life and rights: at sea, at the border, and beyond.

**Reported by: Eva Kazakou**

## UN Women estimates over 28,000 women and girls killed in Gaza since October 2023

On average, one woman and one girl are killed every hour in attacks by Israeli forces, which has created devastating consequences for children, families and communities. These numbers highlight the shattering human toll of the conflict, particularly the lives and futures of women and girls gone too soon. Since the collapse of the ceasefire in March 2025 and the ongoing blockade on humanitarian aid, conditions in the Gaza strip have worsened. The entire Gaza population is continuously running out of food and essential supplies, creating increasing risks of famine, especially for the 1 million women and girls, who are facing catastrophic levels of hunger. The humanitarian aid blockade has meant that women and girls are trapped, facing displacement, rising maternal mortality rates, and a severe lack of safety and protection mechanisms.



Photo: UN Women/Samar Abu Elouf

UN Women continue to work with women-led organizations in Gaza, trying to deliver essential services and support to the affected populations despite these dire circumstances. Countless lives are still hanging in the balance, in wait of an immediate significant surge in access to humanitarian aid, support and funding.

**Reported by: Sarah Delorme**

## LOCAL NEWS: QUÉBEC

### Châteauguay femicide victim “wanted divorce”

On May 14<sup>th</sup>, Simone Mahan, 45-year-old mother of three children, was killed by her partner, Marcellin Koman, in Châteauguay, on Montreal's South Shore. The 49-year-old man was arrested shortly after and charged with second-degree murder. According to Koman's sister, Simone had recently mentioned wanting a divorce, however, she says she did not think anything of it at the time. According to neighbors, the family, from the Ivory Coast in West Africa, had lived in this neighborhood for about five to six years.



Image retrieved from [CTV News](#).



Image retrieved from [La Presse](#).

According to Geneviève Rondeau, intervention coordinator for the Châteauguay shelter, announcing a separation or a divorce is often the riskiest moment for a woman victim of violence. Rondeau explains that the victim feels isolated and ashamed and does not want anyone else to be involved. She adds that risks tend to be under-estimated as coercive control and physical violence take place at home, sometimes without the intervention of the police. It makes these situations invisible for the majority of closed ones, which can lead to the worst case: femicide.

**Reported by: Sarah Delorme**



# COMMUNITY RESOURCES ON FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION/CUTTING (FGM/C) ACROSS CANADA

## Canada

- END FGM Canada Network:
  - [info@endfgm.ca](mailto:info@endfgm.ca)
- Société des obstétriciens et gynécologues du Canada (SOGC) :
  - 613-730-4192
  - [info@sogc.com](mailto:info@sogc.com)
- Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting in Canada

## Nova Scotia

- Halifax Refugee Clinic
  - 902-422-6736
  - [halifaxrefugeeclinic@gmail.com](mailto:halifaxrefugeeclinic@gmail.com)
- Jocelyn Stairs, MD
  - Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology, Dalhousie University
  - [jocelyn.stairs@dal.ca](mailto:jocelyn.stairs@dal.ca)
- YMCA of Greater Halifax/Dartmouth
  - Centre for Immigrant Programs
  - 902-457-9622
  - [yis@halifax.ymca.ca](mailto:yis@halifax.ymca.ca)

## British Columbia

- Multi-lingual Orientation Service Association for Immigrant Communities (MOSAIC) Vancouver
  - 604-254-9626
  - [info@mosaicbc.org](mailto:info@mosaicbc.org)

## Québec

- Afrique au Féminin
  - 514-272-3274
  - [info@afriqueaufeminin.org](mailto:info@afriqueaufeminin.org)
- Élise Dubuc, MD
  - Clinique de gynécologie médicale et esthétique Sensolia, Montréal, Québec
  - 514-757-6898
- Fondation Sensolia
  - 514-757-6898
- Réseau d'action pour l'égalité des femmes immigrées et racisées du Québec, Montréal, Québec
  - 514-849-3956
  - [accueil@rafiq.ca](mailto:accueil@rafiq.ca)

## Ontario

- Angela Deane, MD
  - Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology, University of Toronto
  - 416-978-2216
  - [obgyn@utoronto.ca](mailto:obgyn@utoronto.ca)
- Flourish Project, Women's Health in Women's Hands, Toronto, Ontario
  - 416-593-7655
  - [flourish@whiwh.com](mailto:flourish@whiwh.com)
- Trauma-Informed Support for Survivors of Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting
- Women's Health in Women's Hands, Toronto, Ontario
  - 416-593-7655
  - [info@whiwh.com](mailto:info@whiwh.com)

## Alberta

- Mosaic Primary Care Network (PCN) Calgary
  - 403-250-5059

## Manitoba

- Sexuality Education Resource Centre (SERC) Manitoba
  - 204-982-7800

# COMMUNITY RESOURCES: Québec

## List of resources for victims of sexual assault and immigrant women

- [Government of Quebec website list of organizations that help victims of sexual assault](#)
- [Help and resources for victims of domestic violence](#)
- [Assistance aux femmes: Services for immigrant women](#)



## COMMUNITY RESOURCE HIGHLIGHT

### Organizational Profile: The Transition House Association of Nova Scotia

The Transition House Association of Nova Scotia (THANS) is an umbrella association of violence against women organizations across the province. Our members support women and their families experiencing violence by offering services such as: 24/7 emergency shelter and crisis lines, safety planning, counselling, outreach, referrals and advocacy, court accompaniment, and system navigation.

Our mission is to eliminate violence against women in Nova Scotia by supporting and strengthening the work of our members. THANS works in partnership with government and community stakeholders to ensure sustainable funding, effective policies, and comprehensive services that meet the needs of survivors. We also lead public education and advocacy efforts to raise awareness and drive systemic change.

Our members work with many migrants and refugees in their local communities, regardless of immigration status. We always provide safe and confidential services, and strive to be as culturally relevant and safe as possible for all living in our spaces. Some examples include creating specific space for spiritual or religious practice, or creating culturally specific meals for residents.

THANS member recently received PocketTalks, which are hand-held translators that can be used in real-time to provide accurate, contextual translations. Our support workers use these to break down language barriers and ensure communication is as effortless as possible for clients. We continue to work collaboratively with other immigrant-serving organizations to provide training to front-line staff and work together to support migrants and refugees experiencing gender-based violence find autonomy, safety, and empowerment.

#### GBV-MIG Newsletter Editorial Committee



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