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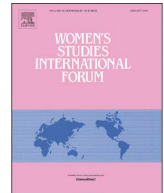

Voices of Yazidi women: Perceptions of journalistic practices in the reporting on ISIS sexual violence

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ABSTRACT

In this article, we use a global transnational feminist perspective to explore Yazidi women's perceptions of the nature and impact of media reporting on women and girls who survived captivity, rape, and trafficking by the self-declared Islamic State (ISIS). Through 26 face-to-face interviews of displaced Yazidi women, we identify five narrative themes that characterize interviewees' reflections in the wake of these atrocities, including the sense of pressure women felt from journalists and other sources to share their stories of ISIS captivity; the belief that some journalistic practices are putting women and girls at risk; the recognition of the severe emotional toll on survivors' that results from repeatedly telling their stories; the sense of urgency and usefulness of going public nonetheless; and the resultant feelings of frustration and betrayal that the willingness to share their traumatic experiences has not resulted in a concerted global response to the genocidal attacks against the Yazidi people. Our findings suggest a paradoxical narrative of victimization and resistance in women's media engagement that is indicative of a kind of "bargaining at the intersection of patriarchies" that has implications for journalists covering sexual violence in conflict zones.

Introduction

On August 3, 2014 Islamic State (ISIS) militants brutally attacked Yazidi villages and towns throughout Sinjar in the Nineveh plains of Iraq. They killed thousands, abducted an estimated 6386 men, women and children and displaced the entire population from their ancestral homeland. Militants justified these extraordinary acts of brutality on religious grounds, subjecting women and girls to horrific sexual violence and enslavement (Otten, 2017). According to the UN, by mid-May 2016, 2587 had escaped, of which 937 were women (United Nations Assistance Mission to Iraq, 2016). Following the Mosul liberation, many remain missing and reliable figures are still unavailable. The survivors who escaped are suffering a range of negative emotional and psychological consequences due to the atrocities they witnessed and experienced (Herman, 1992; Hardi, 2011; Human Rights Watch, 2015;Tekin et al., 2016; Otten, 2017).

Islamic State abuses were many (Otten, 2017), but the significant media attention focused mainly on sexual violence against women and girls, far exceeding reporting on other crimes against men and boys, or the underlying factors that contributed to the conflict. Local and international journalists went directly to the victims and survivors to report on the details of rape and slave markets. Desperate for help, the Yazidi community that welcomed the women and girls back in an unprecedented move, also facilitated and encouraged them to disclose the horrors they endured under ISIS.

Although the first escapees denied having been raped, they gave astonishing accounts to journalists of the brutality perpetrated by ISIS fighters against Yazidi women and girls. Again, women in the Global South became objects of global media discourse as a "Yazidi rape and enslavement" narrative began to dominate much of the domestic and international news about ISIS (Shackle, 2015). Stories ran with sensationalist headlines such as, "Yazidi woman held as sex slave for three months by ISIS and gang raped speaks out about hideous suffering" (Halkon, 2015), "ISIS sells sex slave girls for 'as little as a pack of cigarettes'" (Smith, 2015) and "Yezidi Women undergo operations to 'restore virginity' after being raped by Daesh." (Mustafa, 2015). Human rights advocates questioned whether journalists were harming victims by such reporting, questioning journalists' methods used to elicit information, and the resulting sensationalist publications that exposed victims' identities (Minwalla, 2015; Amnesty International, 2014; Crawford, Green, & Parkinson, 2014; Shackle, 2015). They also raised concerns that in such a conservative culture, the reports could

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ultimately stigmatize the survivors and Yazidi women collectively (Minwalla, 2015; Shackle, 2015). The framing of the stories with gratuitous details of rape and the publication of images and names, raised concerns about compromising the safety of victims and their relatives (e.g. Biggs, 2015; Callimachi, 2015, 2017; Engel & Novogrod, 2015; Mazher, 2015; Tomlinson, 2014). Human rights groups reported that journalists had violated well-established ethical principles for reporting on sexual violence in conflict zones (Amnesty International, 2014) created by the United Nations Global Protection Cluster and the Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma (see Appendix). Missing from these critiques of journalists were the voices of Yazidi women, themselves.

In this paper, we explore the perceptions of Yazidi women as survivors of gender-based violence, and as women who had eluded ISIS capture but were displaced by the attacks, on the how journalists gathered and told their experiences of the genocidal attack. Our research intends to fill an important and timely gap in the scholarly literature on media coverage of sexual violence in conflict zones as there is little work that investigates how women in communities under siege feel about their experiences with journalists. This project adds to the feminist literature on media, the theoretical understanding of women's agency, and highlights practical considerations for journalists covering gender violence in conflict zones.

Theoretical framework

Our scholarly exploration of Yazidi women's perspectives on journalist practices that followed the escape of Yazidi women and girls from ISIS captivity is analyzed through the lens of transnational feminist theorists working in feminist media studies. We also pay particular attention to a central feminist theoretical concern with the difficulties women face in demonstrating agency to shape how journalists portray them and their experiences, and to use media discourse among other strategies, to resist oppression. Broadly speaking, a transnational feminist paradigm takes a critical look at the impact of globalization on dominant and subordinate groups from the perspective that current global power relations are the result of historical trajectories that emerged from earlier periods of imperialism, colonialism, slavery and industrial capitalism that have and continue to produce multiple oppressions and multiple sites of resistance for people living in the Global South and the diaspora (Mohanty, 2003). Transnational feminist scholars have vocally questioned the construction of "third world women" as "natives" and "other" and in need of liberation from oppressive patriarchal, religious and cultural traditions in ways that obscure the patriarchal arrangements that undergird women's lives in the Global North (Deepak, 2011).

Additionally, transnational feminist theorists have questioned liberal feminist approaches to global human rights work that ignore the agency and self-determination of non-Western women and assume that women in the Global South are largely "victims," and that conditions of inequality can be ameliorated by free market investment, or an individual empowerment approach by "white saviors" from the Global North (Deepak, 2011; Grewal, 2013; Mohanty, 1988; Spivak, 1987). Instead, a broad transnational feminist theoretical framing encourages us to examine the web of nation-states, global financial institutions and corporations, including media institutions, that shape global gender, race, class, national, religious, and cultural dynamics in profoundly unequal ways, (e.g. Hedge, 2011; Shome, 2006; Vujnovic, 2016). Vujnovic (2016) theorizes that global news coverage is rooted in global capitalism that is fundamentally exploitative of women, children, and the poor, and is dominated by violence that is often transnational in nature. Generally, contemporary transnational feminist media theorists call on scholars to further examine not only the intersections of race, class, gender, sexualities, geographies and structural and cultural dimensions of global media institutions and practices, but also the social processes by which marginalized groups simultaneously appropriate and resist media representations.

Our research is also informed by contemporary sociological perspectives on human agency, as well as feminist social science perspectives on the nature of feminist consciousness and resistance within patriarchal regimes. We draw from the basic sociological principles that structural and cultural components of social systems set forth complex paths of least resistance, or variable sets of choices that seem most reasonable for individuals to make at any given moment in social interaction to ensure a sense of belonging (Johnson, 2014). Depending on the constellation of structural and cultural arrangements, individuals have more or less freedom to reject these paths, as the possibility of human agency, the ability to act on one's own volition, is always present even if the consequences are dire. Specifically, we are informed by Deniz Kandiyoti's (1988) influential concept of "patriarchal bargains" to understand the kinds of choices available to Yazidi women as they engaged with journalists, as well as women's own interpretation of the nature and usefulness of those interactions. By "patriarchal bargains," Kandiyoti refers to culturally and temporally grounded coping strategies that women "use within a set of concrete constraints" (p. 274), suggesting that "[d]ifferent forms of patriarchy present women with distinct 'rules of the game' and call for different strategies to maximize security and optimize life options with varying potential for active or passive resistance in the face of oppression" (p. 274). Kandiyoti's famous call to avoid a universalizing and essentializing definition of both "patriarchy" and "feminist consciousness" illuminated the importance of analyzing "the nature of patriarchal systems in their cultural, class-specific, and temporal concreteness and reveal how men and women resist, accommodate, adapt, and conflict with each other over resources, rights, and responsibilities, [and] dissolve the artificial divisions apparent in theoretical discussions of the relationships among class, race, and gender, since participants' strategies," in this case discursive media strategies, "are shaped by several levels of constraints" (p. 285).

Previous literature

Over the past several decades, there has been no shortage of scholarly critiques, feminist and otherwise, of media reporting on gender-based violence. Within this literature, feminist media scholars have raised important questions about women's agency in their appropriation and complicity with the complex dynamics of racialized, gendered, global capitalist media institutions, including work that addresses resistance to and compliance with the representations of female sexuality and violence as depicted in film, internet, and pornography. Other work examines women's engagement with media as a part of organized political struggle, such as in Sarnavka's (2003) work on the successes and failures of women's human rights activists who use mainstream media as a vehicle for change, and Queen's (2008) examination of the digital content of an Afghan women's rights organization, the Revolutionary Association of Women of Afghanistan (RAWA), in an effort to show the importance of global and digital coverage for feminist rhetorical analysis. Geertsema (2009) examines three "ideal-typical" feminist approaches to resisting oppressive gender practices and representations in media, namely: 1) liberal feminist perspectives that narrowly focus on women as members of home nation, and focus critiques on improving the coverage of "women's issues" within that nation state; 2) neoliberal, white global feminist perspectives that exercise a U.S.-centric approach that fetishes women around the world through news coverage that lacks understanding or critique, and may be in the service of the relations of global racialized and gendered capitalism; and 3) feminist media practices informed by critical analyses of globalizing forces and connections to local patriarchies, that produce news that foregrounds these local–global linkages, where "reporters understand the culture they work in, give voice to those who are affected by issues and events, and use progressive story stances" (Geertsema, 2009, p. 165).

There is also a decent body global feminist scholarship that examines the extent to which media accounts of cases of rape and sexual

violence reproduce global racialized capitalist patriarchy and in variable ways across geopolitical space (e.g. Alat, 2006; Cuklanz & Moorti, 2009; del Zotto, 2002; Durham, 2015; Dewey & St. Germain, 2012; Patil & Purkayaatha, 2015; Phillips et al., 2015; Rao, 2014). Within this work are scholarly accounts of the particular tropes that have emerged that reproduce racialized notions of "the West" as the white savior of the dark, uncivilized, and/or terrorist "other", and of global south women as those in need of rescue from the not only the West, but from white feminists in the U.S. and Europe (e.g. Durham, 2015; Patil & Purkayaatha, 2015; Phillips et al., 2015; Rao, 2014). Even more directly related, this scholarship examines the narrative tropes deployed by journalists in their coverage of rape as a tactic of war and genocide (e.g. Cuklanz & Moorti, 2009; del Zotto, 2002; Dewey & St. Germain, 2012). For instance, in her analysis of the media coverage of women's experiences in the Kosovo conflict of 1998–1999, del Zotto (2002) argues that women's experiences of war are grossly misrepresented by the media, and more specifically that "mainstream global media constructed a gendered interpretation of that war" (p. 141) by applying a masculinist narrative. The analysis identified six media narratives of women in the Kosovo war, including the trope of the female body torn apart in the context of defiling a woman's "honor", and the rape survivor trope that depicts sexual violence as a systematic practice of warfare but then fails to address the greater debates over rape, war, and international law. Crawley and Simic (2012) analyze Jonathan Torgovnik's highly-acclaimed photojournalism exhibition, *Intended Consequences*, and explore the unintended consequences of including photos of Rwandan women and their children alongside testimonies of the sexual violence women endured during the genocide. While acknowledging the important contributions such work can play in giving voice to survivors, and the struggle to document, understand, and bring forth justice in the aftermath of such crimes against humanity, Crawley and Simic (2012) contend that the exhibition "[constructs] its women as victims and its children as mute ciphers of crime, [which gives] prominence to the narrative framing of a white Western male" (Crawley & Simic, 2012: 95), and thus perpetuates the politics of victimhood and reinforces the assumptions of patriarchy through its focus, framing, and presentation. Hesford (2004) grapples with the politics of representation of rape warfare as a human rights violation in human rights documentaries, particularly in the testimonials of women rape survivors from the Balkan conflicts in the early 1990s. She argues that while victims' testimonies in such genres play a "key role in rebuilding civil institutions, [and] in formulating movements for reparations and restitution," they also raise questions about the "degree to which testimonial subjects (are) romanticized as transnational artifacts… and/or turned into opportunistic spectacles for self-positioning or for certain political agendas" (p. 105). Hesford finds four modes of rhetorical witnessing in human rights documentaries on rape warfare, including the methodological and ethical challenges that emerge for stakeholders as they listen/view victims' testimonials, challenges she calls the "crisis of reference" and by the "crisis of witness" (p. 106).

We have been unable to find scholarly work that explores the perceptions of survivors of gender-based violence of their experiences granting testimonials to journalists, including their perceptions of the impact, or potential impact, these interviews may have on their mental health or physical safety, whether in conflict zones or not. There is some work that addresses the relationship between post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and media reporting of crime victims generally speaking. Maercker & Mehr's, 2006 research that found that, regardless of the accuracy of media reports, the emotional reactions of victims to reports about their victimization were predominantly negative (Maercker & Mehr, 2006), but this work does not address survivors' perceptions about tactics that journalists may use to gain access to survivors and information from them. Furthermore, there is limited social science work that investigates the actual or perceived consequences of journalistic practices in cases where the survivors are members of communities where notions of female honor are fundamental to social organization (see Nwabueze & Oduah, 2015; Rao, 2014 for exceptions), and particularly when under siege.

In light of these important gaps, we ask: What do Yazidi women, themselves, think and feel about the processes by which women's stories were gathered and shared? What can their perspectives can tell us about the conditions under which women can, and do choose, to share deeply risky and traumatic stories of gender-based violence, and the layered limits of those choices? And how can their perspectives inform the field of journalism in the practice of covering gender violence in conflict zones?

Methods

We conducted face-to-face, semi-structured interviews of 26 Yazidi women 18 years of age or older living in the KRI during May of 2016. Thirteen women were survivors of ISIS captivity, and 13 had not been captured but were forced to flee during the attacks. All of the women interviewed were originally from towns and villages in the Sinjar area of the Nineveh Governorate of Iraq, and 25 were displaced in three camps or unfinished buildings in Dohuk and one camp in Sulaymaniyah. One respondent was a Yazidi woman who was living in the KRI at the time ISIS attacked Sinjar. Sherizaan Minwalla, a human rights attorney working and living in the KRI for close to a decade, relied on her contacts in the KRI to identify interpreters, respondents, and to gain permission to visit the camps along with Nikki Junker, a research colleague who also conducted interviews in Dohuk. Participants were recruited into the study through direct verbal solicitation using a combination of purposive and convenience sampling, relying on known contacts to gain permission to interview women in the camps, and to identify interpreters, and to a lesser extent, respondents. We obtained the necessary permission from the Governor's office in Dohuk and Sulaymaniyah in order to conduct interviews in the camps. We provided letters authorizing the research to camp managers on arrival at each camp, and discussed the purpose of the research with camp management. We explained that we were interested in talking to adult women, 18-years and older, regardless of whether they had been captured by ISIS. To minimize the risk of community stigma, and to gain diverse perspectives, we intentionally did not specify an interest in speaking solely with women who had survived captivity, nor did we express any preference for talking with women who had survived rape or sexual assault.

Once a woman expressed an interest in participating, we were extremely careful to avoid replicating the same unethical interview practices we intended to explore, and thus took great pains to ensure we adhered to IRB ethical requirements. We first reviewed our informed consent document with each participant, which had been translated from English into the Kermanji dialect of Kurdish that is spoken by Yazidis, and obtained verbal consent to avoid asking for, or writing down the names of participants. We explained the purpose of the research, confidentiality, privacy, and their rights as participants to refuse to answer questions and to end the interview at any time. We stressed that we were not journalists and that we would not ask them for identifying information or inquire into details of their experiences if held in captivity. While we did not ask respondents if they were survivors, in the end, all our respondents revealed their survivor or non-survivor status to us on their own.

To give participants choice and to avoid drawing unwanted attention from their neighbors, we asked women whether they preferred to be interviewed in their tents or in an office at the camp management facility. Nineteen (73%) of the participants chose to meet in the camp management office rather than in their tents, one was interviewed in an apartment, and one over Skype. These meetings were held privately without children, relatives or friends in the room. We worked only with female interpreters from the Yazidi community who spoke the Kermanji Kurdish dialect.

Interviews ranged from 30 to 40 min, and included a set of open-ended interview questions that explored women's perceptions of the

impact of the ISIS attack on the Yazidi community; conditions facing the displaced Yazidi people including access to resources; and women's perceptions of the strengths of the Yazidi people. These questions laid the groundwork for the next set of questions about Yazidi women's experiences with journalists either personally or based on what they observed in the camps; their perceptions of survivors' interactions with journalists; how the media covered or reported on survivors experiences; and whether and how media attention impacted survivors and the Yazidi people overall. Immediately following each interview, we asked if the respondent had any questions about the research, encouraged them to follow up with our Yazidi interpreters if they had additional questions, and offered to share information on psychosocial services if they expressed an interest. With the exception of three interviews, all were audio recorded. Once transcribed, they were coded manually, and analyzed using the qualitative interpretation strategy known as grounded theory analysis (Charmaz, 2014/2006). Pseudonyms have been used to protect the privacy and safety of participants.

One of the greatest challenges we faced in collecting our data was walking in the shoes of hundreds of journalists before us. Even when we went to great lengths to assure women that we were researchers and not journalists, some among the Yazidi community including the women we interviewed perceived us as journalists. We recognized the importance, and difficulty, of obtaining informed consent under circumstances where victims continue to lack autonomy, and where male relatives or community leaders often made decisions for them. Indeed, these dilemmas are part of the very dynamics of power that brought us to our research. We made a concerted effort to bypass traditional centers of decision-making, but in some cases found it unavoidable to go through camp management in order to conduct our research. We were also limited by the threats to reliability and validity that are inherent in the very practice of relying on translators to convey meanings, and on us as researchers to interpret those meanings appropriately. As we did not fully delve into the specific kinds of media engagement women experienced, our findings and discussion should be understood with some caution.

Findings

Full of compelling and complex narratives of hope, pain, despair, and courage, the interviews revealed five major findings that speak to a set of perceptions widely shared by Yazidi women, regardless of whether or not they were captured by ISIS. First, women voiced shared concerns about pressure survivors faced from journalists, camp managers, and community leaders, to talk about their experiences in captivity. Second, women shared their beliefs that the disclosure of identifying information of survivors by journalists compromised the safety of survivors and those still in ISIS captivity. Third, both survivors and displaced Yazidi women widely expressed their view that the experience of being interviewed by journalists triggered substantial psychosomatic responses, including intrusive thoughts and flashbacks. At the same time, women also shared that the act of speaking to journalists brought some relief. This sense of relief was intertwined with the sentiment that it was, and still is, important to speak out about the attacks in the continued hope that if survivors told and retold their traumatic experiences, the world would respond to help them. Lastly, most women ultimately shared strong feelings that journalists and the world had betrayed them when they gave their harrowing stories, but did not receive help in return.

Pressured to talk

For the nearly half of our respondents who had been captured by ISIS, all but one had interacted directly with journalists after her escape, as had one respondent who was living in the KRI when ISIS attacked Sinjar. Of the survivors who interacted with media, a majority (85%) described what could be defined by the UN and Dart Center guidelines as unethical journalistic reporting practices, including clear violations in the form of quid pro quo promises of money or aid, disclosure of identity without consent, or pressure to reveal details of their experiences of rape and sexual assault. Women shared accounts of journalistic behavior that, while not framed by respondents explicitly as unethical, as none of their retelling was defined in those terms, was nonetheless interpreted by women as problematic. These included asking deeply personal and intimate questions to women about the attacks, or journalists' suggesting they were in a position to help the Yazidi community by publishing the women's stories. Sara's reflection illustrates a patterned response among the survivors that suggest there was a level of pressure from her community to talk. She reported, "At the beginning when I returned [from ISIS] a committee came with a recorder and said we will register your story and I said 'no' so they went to my brother-in-law and told him, 'she's not talking to us.'" Sara and other survivors said that in addition to community pressure, camp managers put journalists in touch with them, and sometimes pressured them to meet with journalists. Sara continued, explaining why she granted interviews:

> [B]ecause they asked us. I said no at the beginning, but they said, "This is for your own benefit. One day you will benefit." So this is the only reason I talked to them. We have no benefit, no change in our situation. We talked to journalists many times. The camp management office is far. I walked so far two times because they said I have to, even though I didn't want to. They said, "It's good for you."

Additionally, there is evidence that journalists benefited from either overt or tacit social pressure for women and girls to speak to them, as implied by Bezar, who provided support to survivors, and also assisted journalists:

> Sometimes I visit the girls with some journalists. They bring with them interpreters from Erbil. Most of them are men - the journalists are men – and the translators are Sorani speaking and the survivors speak Kermanji and they are very different. So many times when I visit with the journalist I have to translate from Sorani to Kermanji. The girls are maybe not comfortable talking to men. Sometimes they don't want to talk to media, but because a friend like me asked them to talk, they talk with the media.

This nexus of perceived coercion from journalists, from community members, from camp managers who come from outside of the community, and from the larger normative context is compounded, as we will discuss further below, by women's own admissions that they expected their participation would yield some concrete benefit. Turko said, "It's better when they are covering their faces and hands, but some of them [journalists] tell us, 'no you should take a picture of your face.' When asked if she, herself, permitted her face to be photographed, she shared that she had, in fact, agreed. When we asked why, given her perspective that it is better to be covered, she explained, "They just told me they would take one and I said, 'ok.' I could say no. I thought I might get some financial support or psychological support." Similarly, shared Nadir, "Many journalists interviewed me (German, Australian, Kurdish). They said they would support me, do things for me, but I have seen nothing and they go away and we never see them again." These coercive tactics, combined with the intense media focus on the rape and enslavement narrative, placed women in difficult situations when confronted with ostensible choices regarding the disclosure of images or details that might reveal their identity within Yazidi and to ISIS militants who often had relatives still in captivity.

Journalists undermined personal and emotional safety of survivors and captive relatives

Throughout the interviews, women recounted engagements with journalists that struck us as blatant ethical breaches. For instance, Alifa

reported, "[journalists came] from Europe and from the United States, and from Iraq. There [was one journalist who] came to us and he interviewed us and we told him, 'Please don't put it on TV,' and he said 'Ok, I swear, I will not put you on TV.' But in the night we opened the TV and we saw ourselves. We called him but he didn't answer. We were so sad, and I was so sad." Rojan described an equally troubling account in the following: "They don't take permission. And my son would say, 'No don't take my picture, I don't want to take a picture.' And they [journalists] would push his hand and take pictures, and I'm buying medicine for 18,000 dinars just to make them sleep."

The majority (80%) of women felt that if journalists were disclosing details of respondents' identities, including names or images including markings like tattoos, then survivors and women and girls still in captivity would be put in grave danger of retaliatory violence and even death. Survivors were considerably more likely (over 90%) than women who had been able to flee (60%) to report such fears. Only one of the 25 respondents, and she was among those that had eluded captivity, stated unequivocally that the disclosure of women's identities was a positive practice, indicating that disclosures of the identities of survivors was important to ensure people believed these stories were true.

After suffering significant trauma, women who escaped from ISIS did not feel safe, even though it was unlikely at the time of our interviews that ISIS would recapture them from the KRI. Others reportedly felt shame and stigmatized despite having been welcomed back by their families and community. Dina, who had escaped initial capture, reported a story of a survivor who was rescued and sold by an ISIS militant to her family. Before leaving, the militant told her that he knew exactly where she would live in the camp in the KRI, and she feared ISIS would recapture her. Although unverified, stories such as these circulated among the displaced to perpetuate terror among survivors and their families. The women's narratives revealed the women felt considerable fear and anxiety due to journalist's disclosure of their identities, through images, names, or unique details about their experiences. Rojan, a survivor said, "I don't want them to take my name or to take picture of my face because all my family is kidnapped and afraid. I told that I don't want them to take a picture of my face and my name." The iconic media image of Yazidi survivors was one of an individual woman looking defeated and vulnerable with a scarf covering most of her face except for her eyes. Efforts by photojournalists to mask women's identities was unsuccessful from the perspective of the survivors, who reported feeling exposed by their eyes and other identifying markers. Sara discussed how the women could still be identified, saying, "With photos, even with my face covered, I did not feel safe. They know everything about me. They can know me from my eyes. Even I know them when they are covered and just by their eyes."

Survivors reportedly witnessed, experienced, or heard about ISIS identifying them through published reports, and then retaliating against relatives or those from the same village. Sara described how she personally suffered retaliation while in captivity, which helped her recognize that disclosing information that could reveal a survivor's identity could have negative consequences.

> It's very bad. I was captured for a whole year and they know me and I have family still with ISIS and if they [ISIS] know, it will be a bad situation. We were in homes for 10 months and they had TVs – women who were rescued went on TV and said things about ISIS and how badly they treated them and how the KRG rescued them – then ISIS would beat us really badly.

Before Sara was sold by her captor to her family, she begged him find her daughter. He told her, "I will, but you have to promise when you go back, you don't go on TV." Ronak, also a survivor, raised concerns about the risks to those in captivity due to disclosing identifying information:

> It is not nice. It's sad when I see this… when they show her face and her… even the tattoo…. It is bad, because when they appear on TV, ISIS beats our girls that they have taken, and they are doing bad stuff for them there, when they hear it from the channel. When I was there, when they are talking about…. When they are talking to a Yazidian girl, and when they see the family, they beat her more, ISIS. It would be better if they didn't show the people, the face and the information about the people. They can say their story, but not show all this stuff that's specific, because when they say stuff in detail, they get hurt. ISIS knows which family this is, and they beat their family.

Falak also personally witnessed ISIS militants discuss retaliation while she was in captivity. "When we were kidnapped we heard a lot, because their families were talking on TV. But when ISIS heard the families talk on TV, ISIS was coming to them and was hurting them and beating them. Because her family was talking on TV, ISIS asked, 'Where is she? Because we should take her.'" Zina traveled to Germany to obtain services after she escaped, and reported that survivors believed ISIS retaliated against women from Kocho, the same village as Nadia Murad, an outspoken survivor who is now a UN Goodwill ambassador. She explained, "There are risks that could have a huge impact if they have relatives in ISIS's hands. If they share information, it will affect them. For example Nadia Murad, when she talked, she heard that ISIS told girls, 'Oh you want to go talk like Nadia?' ISIS harmed them and they looked for girls from Kocho to harm them more." In addition to living in a state of fear and desperation, combined with persistent anxiety about their future and other Yazidis in captivity, women not surprisingly experienced extreme emotional pain when being interviewed by journalists about what they experienced and witnessed in ISIS captivity.

Women suffered intense emotional pain when narrating traumatic experiences

One of the most frequently recurring themes in the women's narratives was the shared feeling that engaging with journalists was fraught with emotional difficulty for women. More specifically, 54% of respondents overall, and almost 70% of survivors, felt that women who had escaped ISIS experienced strong negative emotional and physical responses during these interviews when discussing traumatic events. Of those survivors who had granted interviews, half of them described having flashbacks, as well as feelings of sadness, fatigue, crying, self-flagellation, and fainting during or after interviews. For example, Alifa shared her own experience, "I'm just, like, feeling something changing in my body when I talk about ISIS and remember things." Similarly, Sana, who arrived at the camp one night after an escape from ISIs, found herself in an interview with a journalist the very next morning. As she told what happened to her, she reported, "I was crying too much and I was telling them my story." Some survivors explicitly conveyed that when they talked about their experiences under ISIS, it was like they were reliving the rapes, beatings, and other abuse. Halima revealed:

> It is difficult. And when they come here, each time we tell them our stories, we go back to them, like a flashback. We just go back again to ISIS. I remember everything. We have flashbacks. It is difficult, too much. They remind us of what happened to us again. It's difficult and sometimes when we're sitting together with our family and children and we talk about it, I have pain in my heart. And I tell them, please enough, please enough. I cannot talk about that. Please don't remind me. It's not easy.

Yazidi women who had avoided capture by ISIS also reported that they knew of, or witnessed, survivors' strong emotional or physical responses expressed during media interviews. "They can't talk. They just cry. They can't say what they faced. They just cry. They can't talk to the journalists. Because they have been tortured a lot by ISIS, that's why they can't talk. They keep imagining what they faced," said Bayan. Zina shared her experience witnessing "one girl in Germany [who] kept

fainting, crying and beating herself. Many cry and cannot continue talking." Vian, who had fled during the attacks, observed how her daughter who escaped from ISIS had an intense and negative emotional reaction during the interview, explaining, "[A]bsolutely they cry. My firstborn daughter when she was freed made an interview. She was crying so much she was so desperate, and she said she was dead." Samera, a respondent who, herself, was not captured, described a situation she witnessed with a survivor during an interview with a male journalist and male interpreter, "She was traumatized. She fainted. Her body was shaking and she was lying down for an hour or more in that situation. The journalist who was there, he tried to give her some space and family members, they got her a doctor because she was taking pills, she was taking drugs. After she woke up they didn't ask her anymore questions. They said, 'we are done, we don't want to bother her.'" Perhaps most simply but profoundly put, Manji said, "They always ask about questions that hurt us and we feel sad." These women who had lost everything recognized they had something of value to outsiders, their traumatic stories of sexual violence, and they were willing to suffer the telling and re-telling of these stories, sacrificing their own well-being, if it meant those stories would help their community, particularly those women and children still in captivity. As Sana asserted, "I just wanted to tell the story even if it is a shame. I wanted to tell our story to the world to help us, to help the community for what ISIS did with us."

Yazidi women perceived interviews with journalists worthwhile though painful to share

Despite the emotional difficulty and challenges reported by most survivors and those who escaped captivity and were displaced, the majority of the women (75%) reported that engaging with journalists was worthwhile. Thirty-one percent of the survivors specifically reported positive feelings or emotions after interviews. For instance, Ronak shares this sentiment, though she vacillated:

> When we talk to media we feel comfortable and we feel relaxed. When we speak to the media they make us comfortable because we said our story and when people talk, they feel more relaxed. Sometime we feel happy, and sometime we feel sad. Because sometime they ask us questions, they hurt us, so sometime we feel so sad…. I don't want to say the type of question that they are always asking about… questions that hurt us, and we feel sad.

Erzan echoed Ronak and was joined by several other respondents when she explained:

> It's not bad to reveal your feelings for someone that you're just telling what you faced that's difficulty. It's not a bad thing to talk. Before ISIS came, I was not comfortable to talk in interviews. But now I am talking. Now I'm talking to you here. I've never wanted to be interviewed before. To be honest, on the other hand, most of the girls feel upset after giving the interviews. But still they start to sing. They start to talk more.

Overwhelmingly, women in the community believed that talking to journalists about what happened to women under ISIS captivity would raise global awareness and bring help. Indeed, this perspective was among the most salient of all we report here, and women who survived captivity were almost twice as likely as otherwise displaced Yazidi women to state the importance or value in telling the world what happened to them through journalists. For example, Zebaze said, "If I want, I will not answer. But I answer because I want world to know what happened to us. It was hard what happened to me, it's hard to say, but I still want to say it so the world will understand and know what happened to us." Likewise, Sana explained, "I just wanted to tell the story even if it is shame. Like I wanted to tell our story to the world to help us, to help the community after what ISIS did with us." Similarly, the same theme emerged in Halima's response:

> We could tell them [the journalists] no, we will not tell you, but we tell them our stories and we tell them what happened with us just to get help for our people! And we want protection, and Sinjar, and we want to go back to our home. We want people help us. We want them to listen to us, and to what happened to the Yazidi community. And we just want to get help for our people.

Rojan described how depressed she was after she escaped, and that with her sister in captivity she desperately hoped that help would come once she told her story:

> I have bad psychology and before some days they come to me. I felt like if I told them, if I told them my story, they would go. They would just help my people. It was difficult for me and I was feeling sad but sometimes I will be powerful just to tell them what happened to us. I was just to tell them what happened to the Yazidi community and just to help, just to get help. I'm feeling sad, I feel sad. But I feel also like I have hope that they will help and I agree to because I told them what happened to us. I hope they will help me, they will help our sister who is kidnapped.

Women conveyed concerns about a broader range of issues that negatively impacted them and their community beyond the pervasive rape and enslavement narrative. A number of women complained of the poor services and support she received in the camp, especially the limited medical and psychological services. Nadir described her situation in one of the camps:

> We receive dry food once per month. The health services are not good. It's been about two months and we haven't received anything. Electricity is good for about one week and if is stays like this it is really good, and hopefully it will stay. Otherwise, there are no other services. The clothes I am wearing are the ones I wore when I escaped from ISIS. We don't have any salaries. We don't have anything to even buy new clothes.

Most Yazidi women said that while they initially thought that talking to journalists was important as a way to draw attention to their suffering and for the world to intervene, they eventually realized that the global response they had expected was not forthcoming. They described strong feelings of frustration, anger, and betrayal about what they perceived as an inadequate response from the international community and aid agencies.

Perception that media attention did not lead to adequate global response

With the exception of several references to the "German program" in which more than 1000 survivors were transported to Germany to access mental health services, safety, and other support, women were unable to connect the significant interest in their stories and media attention, to a global response that would help rescue their relatives, return them to Sinjar, or provide the level of psychological and humanitarian support the women felt they needed. More specifically, 60% of women interviewed expressed serious dissatisfaction with the global response to the crisis in the wake of what they understood to be widespread media attention. While both women who had survived captivity and women who were otherwise forced to flee felt equally frustrated with the lack of positive media impact, survivors reported feeling particularly betrayed by what they defined as an unequal exchange between themselves and journalists. Not only did they, personally, receive little to nothing in return for sharing their stories, but they believed that nothing useful has come for the Yazidis in captivity and displacement as a result of the disclosure of their personal traumas. For example, Alifa said, "No one helps us. We just feel sad and tired, and they leave, they just leave. They just finish everything, they write everything, and they leave. We just want them to help us, even by something simple. They come to us, and they just, we just feel sad, and we feel tired, and they go. They don't do anything for us." Other survivors shared this sentiment, like Rojan who reported:

No one helps us. It's just, they just take our information and our stories and they just leave. I met a lot of journalists, media, no one helps us, no one talks to us, no one gives anything. It's very difficult for me because sometimes I meet more than three organization and journalists. Sometimes I just think for like 3 h and I leave my children and just talk and talk and no one helps.

Zebaze, raised similar concerns, “We have talked to German media, Australian media, there has been many media, different kinds of media, you know. Foreign media, like German and Australian, and Kurdish media, but we see no other friends. They say, ‘We'll give your voice to other people,’ but we see nothing.” Halima, a survivor, expressed her frustration as well as her expectation that journalists themselves should respond with assistance:

They, many times journalists people, they come from everywhere, and they take our stories and they don't do anything for us. Like that they come here and they take videos, and they take pictures, and they ask questions and tell us, “Tell us your story,” and then they go. We don't know—we don't know where they're going and what they do with our stories… they ask, “What happened to you? How did you escape? What did they do with you? What did ISIS do with you?” And we tell them everything and we don't know why they come here even and tell nobody to help us. Just one time they took me to the doctor. There were two girls that took me to the doctor and they told me that they would come again, but they didn't come here again…. I just want to ask them why you are taking our voice? Why are you taking our stories and you don't do anything for us?

Yazidi women who had eluded capture expressed a similar view that numerous media interviews and publications yielded little in terms of support for the victims and survivors of ISIS, or the displaced community. Delbreen also conveyed her disappointment, “Almost all the world knows about it. All people wrote about it. And seeing this every time, survivors came, some girls came, there will be a review, there will be an article, something publish about it, but by the end of the day you calculated it, we don't feel that anything has happened.”

Yazidi women expected the intense media response to lead to some sort of tangible response in part, because this was the message conveyed by journalists as well as Yazidi community members in persuading women to talk. Their agency emerged through their courage in taking emotional and security risks when speaking to journalists. Similar to Bosnian rape survivors, Yazidi women realized the voyeuristic nature of the media. Although they were told that giving their stories would help, the reality they found was that it would not be enough to mobilize a global response.

Discussion

Taken together, these narratives suggest that women in this study neither perceived themselves as wholly victims of media practices nor in full control of their stories. Instead, we argue that Yazidi women's media engagement in this historical moment, as well as their very engagement with us as researchers, as illustrative of “bargaining at the intersection of patriarchies,” to borrow from Kandiyoti's (1988) classic concept. As religious minority women occupying positions of marginality in the Global South, they are not simply passive victims of racialized patriarchal religious regimes, local/national media, or Western global corporate media. However, their experiences with journalists demonstrated limited agency where they were not fully able to resist or assert their interests. Yazidi women were often pressured at some level into complicity with local and global media institutions that profit from the sensationalization of violence against women in the Global South in familiar tropes of passive women needing rescue. By engaging with journalists, women faced substantial coercion, psychological, and emotional pain, and even risks to their lives and those of their relatives in captivity. Yet, simultaneously, women shared their stories along a continuum of choice, with extraordinary courage, and with the sincere hope that it was worth the price they paid in doing so- a “bargain” that we argue makes strategic sense “within an internal logic” (Kandiyoti, 1988, p. 283) of competing systems.

Furthermore, we can interpret the paradoxical narrative of media victimization and media engagement as resistance, and illustrative of a bargain situated within competing patriarchal contexts in which Yazidi women have lived before, during, and after ISIS captivity. In these shifting contexts, women's perceptions of the media are wrapped up in the expectation that leaders were genuine about welcoming women back with honor, that journalists would make good on promises, and that the world would respond to their suffering. In framing women's perceptions of journalists' behavior as paradoxical, we do not mean to suggest that all women in our study had the same amount of autonomy in sharing their stories, or a shared set of understandings about the larger political, social, or economic context of their media interactions, or media itself, for that matter. Regardless, this “bargaining” at the collective level, whether conscious or not, would certainly make sense under the particular set of social, cultural, political, and economic circumstances at work in the moment.

More specifically, Yazidi women have lived within a highly structured patriarchal society before the ISIS assault where many had few options aside from traditional roles of marriage and motherhood. By definition, they lost further control over their bodies and choices under the extreme patriarchal control of ISIS captivity. Once they emerged from captivity, they continued to be disempowered and traumatized in displacement, making it difficult to assert themselves and advocate for what they wanted and needed. At this very same moment, Yazidi women were also being asked to adapt to an unprecedented new normative environment where, for the first time in Yazidi history, women who had been raped or abducted were ostensibly permitted to retain their honor and to speak publicly about rape and forced religious conversions, which historically triggered a loss of honor. While the Yazidi community defied ISIS' attempts to destroy family and communal ties by going to great lengths to return abducted Yazidi women and girls, they still grappled with complex questions about honor and shame. The women often reported to us that they felt as if they had lost their honor. Less public have been the cases in which women and girls have faced rejection by their families, and stigma within their communities. Overall, we found that post-ISIS and after community leaders made explicit pronouncements that women and girls would be welcomed back, little attempt was made to work with the Yazidi community in a way that was transformative of more traditional patriarchal attitudes and beliefs about honor and shame. Entangled in this longer and more immediate history, the aftermath of the attacks and the uncertain future ahead has left many Yazidi people with enormous grief and desperation, with little hope in anything, but with a clinging hope that help will come if they just tell their stories.

Equally important, this paradoxical quality of women's stories as one of victimization by journalists and resistance is further complicated by Yazidi women's extremely limited understanding of media. For instance, we cannot ignore the significant and gendered power differential between journalists (whether Iraqi or international) and Yazidi women in the community, particularly in the context of conflict and displacement where Yazidi women have not been empowered to be decision makers. Many women in the Yazidi community are illiterate and do not have access to journalists' discourse on the genocide or the framing of sexual violence; they do not have a familiarity with how reporting or publishing decisions are made; nor do they have a general understanding of who is reading or watching media reports around the world, and with what sympathies. Given both the patriarchal structure and culture of Yazidi society, as well as their relative geographical and social remoteness, Yazidi women have been relatively isolated, and their experience expressing concerns with journalists, most of whom are men (as were most often their translators), has been extremely limited. Yazidi women did not specifically identify “ethical violations”

by journalists as such, perhaps because they did not find them concerning, but also because the very notion of "journalistic ethics" is not readily a part of their cultural and historical experience. Similarly, many women did not appear to us to understand the notion of consent and risks inherent consenting to be interviewed, but not necessarily to the questions, process or outcome. In fact, many women would have found it very difficult to agree to speak to outsiders of one's close community or family without the consent of their family and community. It is also worth noting that the sheer absence of basic mental health/psychosocial services created a vacuum that journalists exploited or unwittingly filled, as women turned to journalists to unload their burdens, only to feel further betrayed that what felt therapeutic simultaneously, or ultimately, later felt exploitative.

In a context awash with extraordinary and ongoing trauma, and with relatives still in captivity, it is reasonable to assume that women in such despair went to great lengths, even against their own wishes, and at risk of enormous personal harm, to secure aid, bring back loved ones safely, and to seek justice in the form of sharing their stories. Like many women around the world, Yazidi women are faced with the familiar gendered dilemma of being asked to put the needs of the community before their own. Specifically, they were faced with the decision to sacrifice by giving up their traumatic stories to the world, despite the personal physical, reputational, and emotional risks. Indeed, Yazidi women were directly encouraged to do so by Yazidi men despite any real evidence that assurances that they would not be stigmatized for losing their honor or treated poorly or rejected by their families and community, particularly over time. Adding further layers of coercion, Yazidi women lived in camps in which they relied on, and felt indebted or obligated to please humanitarian service providers, camp staff, and journalists all of whom exerted additional pressure on survivors to tell their stories.

Two years after the initial attacks, most Yazidi women simply did not understand how such powerful countries, knowing of the horrific abuse being inflicted onto their community in captivity, did not prioritize their rescue from ISIS. For those who do understand, many were appalled by the continued global apathy on moral grounds and were outraged. The women's belief in the value of sharing their stories, followed by deep feelings of betrayal, illustrates their decisions to strike a bargain with a particular intersection of local and global patriarchies.

Practical implications

Based on our findings, we recognize a "crisis of witnessing," as Hesford (2004) articulates, that requires more than simply a suggestion that journalists abide by ethical guidelines. We recognize there are complex factors at play that lead to a widespread disregard for ethical reporting, particularly given dramatic changes in the industry with the emergence of online and social media. That said, journalists, editors, and large multi-media conglomerates are failing to consider the risks they expose their sources to when they disregard ethical guidelines that are the result of years of working with victims and survivors, and aim to prevent harm. At the institutional level, UN agencies responding to displaced populations are well-positioned to take a more active role in advancing the UN Guidelines by working closely with affected communities, NGOs including grantees, government partners, and the media to empower survivors of violence on how to work with journalists by training advocates within affected communities to ensure new victims are not exploited or pressured to talk without understanding their full range of options and consequences. Also important is to establish and apply protocols at camps to ensure everyone is aware of the rights of survivors, and the obligations of journalists.

Around the world, rape and sexual assault put victims at risk of retaliation, rejection, and stigmatization by their families and communities. Taking these basic concepts into account when considering how to report on mass rape in conflict settings can also inform ethical guiding principles on reporting. Here, we would advocate for feminist media practices as articulated in Geertsema's (2009) typology, "[W]here 'reporters understand the culture they work in, give voice to those who are affected by issues and events, and use progressive story stances'" (p. 165). Ultimately, owners and editors of media organizations will have to refuse to promote the institutional, economic, and political incentives for reporters to engage in questionable tactics, and media consumers will have to demand such changes if not.

Conclusion and suggestions for future research

This is the first study to our knowledge to explore journalists' practices of reporting on sexual violence in conflict from the perspective of women who have survived genocidal rape personally or as members of a targeted people. Our findings bear witness to the sentiments of Yazidi women survivors of genocidal attacks, and in that regard, are a vital contribution to the critical task of historical record keeping of the crimes ISIS perpetrated against the Yazidi people. These findings also describe and illuminate important dynamics of interest for transnational feminist theorists regarding the nature of women's agency in relation to local-global media practices. Ultimately, the paradoxical set of perspectives women share on their engagement with journalists "bargaining at the intersection of patriarchies," or narratives and practices of both resistance to and reproduction of their marginalization as it manifests in this particular moment in the history of attacks against the Yazidi people. These findings call into question liberal feminist notions that survivors of mass rape and genocide are inevitably re-victimized and re-traumatized in the retelling of traumatic experiences, but also call into question the power of women's media resistance in this particular moment of the crisis. Our research also raises serious practical implications for the field of journalism, raising questions about the standards and application of professional ethics. At the most macro level, our work speaks to the need to further investigate the economic, political, and institutional contexts in which media organizations openly or tacitly encourage reckless conduct, and to the need for media consumers, themselves, to organize, for media accountability. Time will tell if the bargains women have made to share their excruciating stories with the world will be met with the help they so desperately long for and deserve.

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Appendix A. Select guidelines for ethical reporting on sexual violence in conflict zones

Guideline	United Nations Global Protections Cluster (2013). Media guidelines for reporting on gender-based violence in humanitarian contexts*	Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma (2011). Reporting on sexual violence**
Do not use judgmental language	Avoid judgmental language. Writing about a survivor's history, her/his sexual practices or sexual orientation, what she/he was wearing, where she/he was, what she/he was doing, or what time of day the abuse occurred could imply survivor blame.	Get the language right. Rape or assault is not "sex." A pattern of abuse is not an "affair". Rape or sexual assault is in no way associated with normal sexual activity; trafficking in women is not to be confused with prostitution. People who have suffered sexual violence may not wish to be described as a "victim" unless they choose the word themselves. Many prefer the word "survivor".
	Forms of GBV (gender-based violence) should not be presented as "normal" or part of the culture of the crisis-affected context.	During conflict, rape by combatants is a war crime. Describing it as an unfortunate but predictable aspect of war is not acceptable.
	Unless justifiably relevant to the story, survivor and perpetrator ethnicities should not be reported.	When describing an assault, try to strike a balance when deciding how much graphic detail to include. Too much can be gratuitous; too little can weaken the survivor's case.
	It is also recommended to avoid using the term "alleged" rape or sexual assault or referring to a survivor as an "accuser" as this could reinforce the disbelief that a crime actually occurred and has the potential to reinforce negative stereotypes.	
Do not report details that could put a survivor at risk	The names, photographs, or other identifying information of survivors, their family members, and even at times those of individuals providing assistance should not be used.	Re-check whether you risk compromising a source's anonymity. This means to make sure that the writer didn't leave clues that might inadvertently identify the individual, such as job, age, and location for it may allow for jigsaw identification.
	Other information including certain specifics of the incident and the physical characteristics of the survivors may also endanger the lives of the survivors and those helping then, and should therefore be avoided.	Faces or clothes may need to be obscured in photographs or film. Except in cases where survivors have given their informed consent, photos should not include any identifiable information. It is not recommended to take pictures of survivors. Photos of child survivors should never be used.
		Where possible, images should be used to illustrate a general situation, rather than a specific incident of GBV.
		In some societies, just being suspected of having been raped, can lead to humiliation, being ostracized, and even to further violence. Tread carefully and think about how and where you meet a potential source.
Consult GBV experts who are familiar with the context	The input of local GBV experts will always increase the depth of understanding by providing relevant contextual information.	Brief yourself thoroughly on the likely impacts and causes of sexual violence.
	They will also help in the process of ensuring that survivor's rights are protected by media professionals, by providing the adequate context.	Research local conditions and circumstances.
	If there is ever a question of a story's potential for violating survivors' rights, these experts can also guide media professionals to ensure that they are presenting their story in such a way so as to not increase the risk of further abuse or retribution against survivors, their families, or others who are helping them get care.	If there is a local expert or a support organization involved in the case, consider asking them if speaking to the media is likely to make things worse.

Provide information on local support services and organizations who are addressing GBV in the context	With the consent of service providers, media reports can include the contact information of local support organizations and services in order to allow survivors/witnesses, their families and others who may have experienced or been affected by GBV to access the care they need. It is critical to obtain the consent of service providers prior to printing or broadcasting information on services. In countries where parties to the conflict have been implicated in perpetrating GBV, media professionals must use caution to ensure that service-providing entities do not face retaliation (including violence, threats of violence, and/or getting shut down by the host government).	If appropriate, direct the interviewee, viewers or readers to relevant resources and information about sexual violence.
Meet the needs of the survivor	When interviewing female survivors, a female interviewer and interpreter should be on hand.	However sensitive a male interviewer is, in the majority of cases a female victim is likely to feel safer when interviewed by another woman; if that is not possible, a female colleague should be on hand.
	Survivors have the right to refuse to answer any questions or divulge more information than they are comfortable with. Journalists and other media professionals should provide contact details to interviewees and make themselves available for later contact. This will ensure interviewees are able to keep in touch if they wish or need to do so.	Respect a potential interviewee's right to say no. Nobody should ever be forced to talk in detail about an event as traumatic as rape. Not everybody is in the right place to speak.
	Treat the survivor with respect. Avoid questions, attitudes, or comments that are insensitive to cultural values, that place an individual or group to humiliation, or probing for details that reactivate an individual's or group's pain and grief associated with their exposure to GBV.	Be fair and realistic. Don't coerce, cajole, trick or offer remuneration, and don't suggest that giving an interview will bring more aid/ military intervention.
	Provide detailed and complete information about topics to be covered, and fully informing the survivor on how the information will be used.	Explaining the type of story you're planning to write is likely to help build trust between you and the interviewee and result in better work.
	Ensure a secure and private setting. In recognition that stigma may be associated with any step of an interview process. Media practitioners must do everything they can to avoid exposing the interviewee to further abuse. This includes avoiding actions that may undermine their quality of life or standing in their family or community.	Sexual violence is associated with high degrees of self-blame, guilt and shame. For this reason, avoid any language that might imply the interviewee is responsible in some way. Be careful of asking "why" questions - they are favoured by interrogators.
	Inform the survivor before the interview begins that she/he does not have to answer every question the reporter asks and that she/he has the right to ask the interviewer to skip a specific question or to take a break if the interview becomes upsetting.	Let your interviewee know at the outset how much time it is likely to take. Cutting somebody short while they describing a traumatic experience without prior warning can cause deep hurt.
	The survivor should be asked where and when to hold the interview. Survivors may face increased risk of harm just by being seen with someone who is foreign and are best placed to determine the most appropriate and safest context for the interview. The time of day of the interview should ideally also be determined by the survivor: it may be easier for her to leave the house un-noticed at certain times.	It is important to create a sense of safety during the interview. Try involving the interviewee in the decision-making: ask them if they can recommend a safe location and time.
	Try to make certain that she/he is comfortable and able to tell his/her story without outside pressure, including from the reporter/interpreter or other media professional.	Identify yourself clearly and never pretend not to be a journalist.

	Survivors should also be allowed to have someone with them whom they trust and who can act as a survivor advocate.	Don't be surprised if accounts only make partial sense. Incomplete and contradictory accounts are not prima facie evidence of deception, but rather of the struggle interviewees may experience in making sense of what happened to them. Exercise non-judgmental listening. One should never say you know how they feel, because you do not. Consider letting survivors read portions of your story before publication, as it can lessen the impact of public exposure and help catch factual errors. After reading - and seeing evidence of your intentions - they may decide to share more of their story with you. When describing an assault, try to strike a balance when deciding how much graphic detail to include. Too much can be gratuitous; too little can weaken the survivor's case. Don't underestimate how your own reactions to traumatic detail can influence the conversation. If you are finding the material challenging, acknowledge that silently to yourself, and bring your focus back to what is being said. Usually just trying to listen a little harder, and observing the other's facial expressions, body language, etc., helps.
Determine appropriate use of translators	It is important that the interpreter is briefed about confidentiality and agrees to it before meeting the survivor. Too often interpreters are found at the last minute and may not understand the dynamics and consequences of GBV. They also may not have the vocabulary needed for the interview. If interviewers are trained they can also function as cultural brokers and re-phrase questions so as to minimise harm.	If you are using a translator, brief them on the fundamentals of the ethical principles discussed according to these guidelines. Broadcast journalists should consider recording the interview in the interviewee's own language and keeping the crew to a minimum.

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