

Building the world's first systematic datasets on technology-facilitated gender-based violence

CONFLICT • DISPLACEMENT • REFUGE

TRACE is a three-year project coordinated by the University of Birmingham, bringing together 15 academic, legal, humanitarian, policy and survivor-led organisations to investigate TF-GBV across conflict, displacement and refuge.

7M+

online data points

3,600

asylum decisions

3,000+

investigative & legal records

200+

survivor interviews

150+

practitioners engaged

The gap TRACE will address

There are currently no systematic datasets capable of tracing technology-facilitated gender-based violence across borders and different stages of displacement. Existing evidence is fragmented by country, platform, offence type and institutional setting.

TRACE will create the **world's first systematic, comparative datasets** across conflict, transit and refuge. Harmonised classifications will reveal perpetrator strategies, links between online and offline offending, escalation pathways and gaps in institutional responses.

What the evidence base will bring together

- **Responsible OSINT and computational analysis** of more than seven million data points from social media, encrypted applications, image-based abuse platforms and other online sources, including evidence of current and emerging offences.
- **Administrative records**, including 3,600 asylum decisions and selected police, prosecution, trafficking and service-use data.
- **More than 3,000 investigative transcripts, legal decisions, reports and related records** from international bodies.
- **More than 200 trauma-informed survivor interviews**, alongside interviews and workshops with practitioners across law enforcement, justice, humanitarian and support systems.

Carefully governed AI-assisted tools will identify patterns at scale, with human review, bias testing and safeguards against harmful disclosure.

What TRACE will produce

- **Harmonised comparative datasets** and a cross-context typology of offences, technologies and perpetrator strategies.
- **A conceptual framework** linking TF-GBV across the conflict-displacement-refuge continuum.
- **Comparative interdisciplinary analyses** spanning social science, law, policy and computational methods.
- **Reusable methods and research resources** where ethical, legal and safeguarding requirements permit.



**Conflict &
mass atrocity
settings**



**Transit corridors &
border regimes**



**Refuge &
destination
contexts**

← TF-GBV as a cross-border, cumulative and evolving continuum →

Three connected empirical strands

- **Conflict and mass atrocity**
How digital technologies are used to facilitate, document, distribute or amplify gender-based violence.
- **Transit corridors and border regimes**
Digitally enabled trafficking, exploitation, coercion and targeting during displacement.
- **Refuge and destination contexts**
Continuing abuse after arrival, including links with domestic abuse, sexual violence, asylum and workplace exploitation.

Why this matters to researchers

- A rare cross-context evidence base for testing theories of technology-facilitated harm, victimisation and institutional response.
- Comparable data spanning conflict, migration and destination settings, rather than single-country or single-platform studies.
- Opportunities to link qualitative, administrative, legal and computational evidence at unprecedented scale.
- Shared concepts and harmonised classifications that can support cumulative and comparative research.
- A platform for interdisciplinary collaboration across GBV, migration, criminology, law, human rights, AI and computational social science.

Join the TRACE mailing list

Scan the QR code to sign up for updates, events and collaboration opportunities.



RESEARCH COLLABORATION & EXCHANGE

TRACE welcomes connections with researchers working on TF-GBV, GBV, migration and displacement, criminology, law, human rights, digital harms, AI and related fields. We are particularly interested in comparative methods, conceptual development, data harmonisation and knowledge exchange.

PROJECT CONTACT

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