



PROFESSIONALISM FOR INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATES

International Human Rights Program



INTRODUCTION TO THE IHRP

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DO HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATES NEED PROFESSIONALISM?

- Yes!
- “Doing good” does not exempt you from professional obligations
- Different, higher standard for lawyers

3 MODELS OF HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYERING

- Transnational litigator
- Representative before a human rights body
- Human rights advocate

SOURCES OF PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

- Ontario:
 - LSO Rules of Professional Conduct
- International:
 - International Bar Association Principles
 - Lund-London Guidelines for fact-finding
 - Jurisdiction of practice
- Rules/Codes can conflict or miss dimensions of transnational practice and human rights advocacy

SPECIFIC CONCERNS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATES

- No traditional client
- Not providing conventional legal services
- Employed by NGO (which receives funding)
- Working with vulnerable individuals and groups

NO TRADITIONAL LAWYER-CLIENT RELATIONSHIP

- Who are you accountable to? Who do you take instructions from?
 - Employer NGO
 - Funders?
 - Impacted individuals/communities
 - “The cause”
- “Objectivity” and accuracy

WORKING WITH VULNERABLE INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS

- Competence
 - Cultural competence
 - Trauma-informed
 - Laws and political circumstances
- Communication
 - Language barrier
 - Legal sophistication
- “Do no harm”
- Informed consent



CASE STUDY #1

IMMIGRATION DETENTION IN CANADA

In Canada, migrants are regularly placed in administrative detention. Migrants rights activists have been speaking for years about children being detained with their parents in immigration holding centres, which resemble medium-security prisons. When children are not detained, they are separated from their parents, and may be placed with friends, relatives, or even child protective services. A mental health professional advises that both options are extremely detrimental.



CASE STUDY #1: IMMIGRATION DETENTION IN CANADA

- LSO Rules of Professional Conduct
- Who are you accountable to?
 - Interviewees?
 - Children?
 - Parents?
 - Front-line advocates and community organizations?
 - The law school?
 - “The cause”?
- “Objective” reporting by incorporating statements of border services

CASE STUDY #1: IMMIGRATION DETENTION IN CANADA

➤ Competence

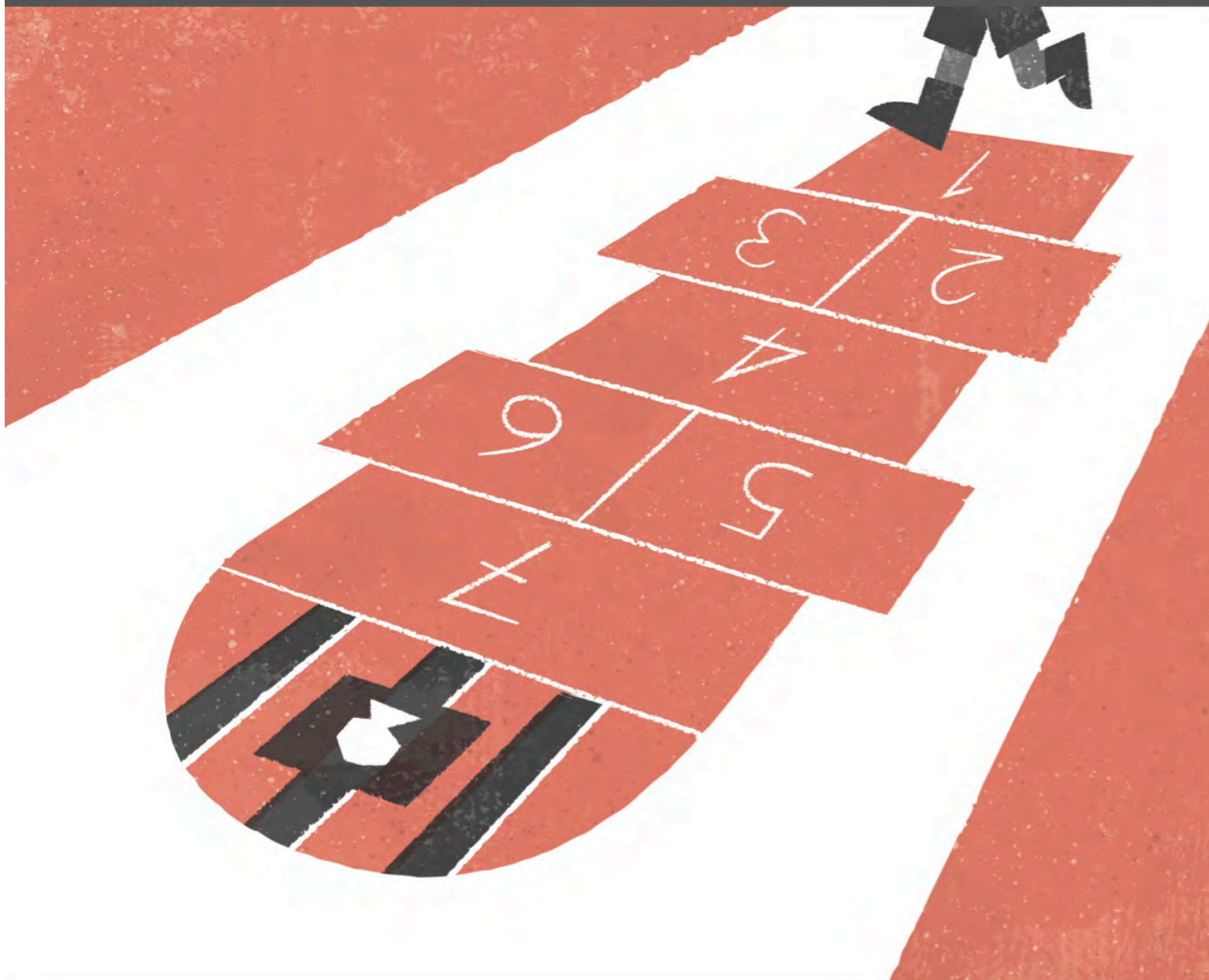
- Canadian immigration/refugee system
- Cultural sensitivity: impacted individuals are migrants and come from a variety of cultural backgrounds
- Interviewing vulnerable individuals
- Interviewing children

➤ Communication

- Informed consent
- Potential language barriers
- Translating legal terminology

Invisible Citizens

Canadian Children in Immigration Detention



“No Life for a Child”

A Roadmap to End Immigration Detention of Children and Family Separation



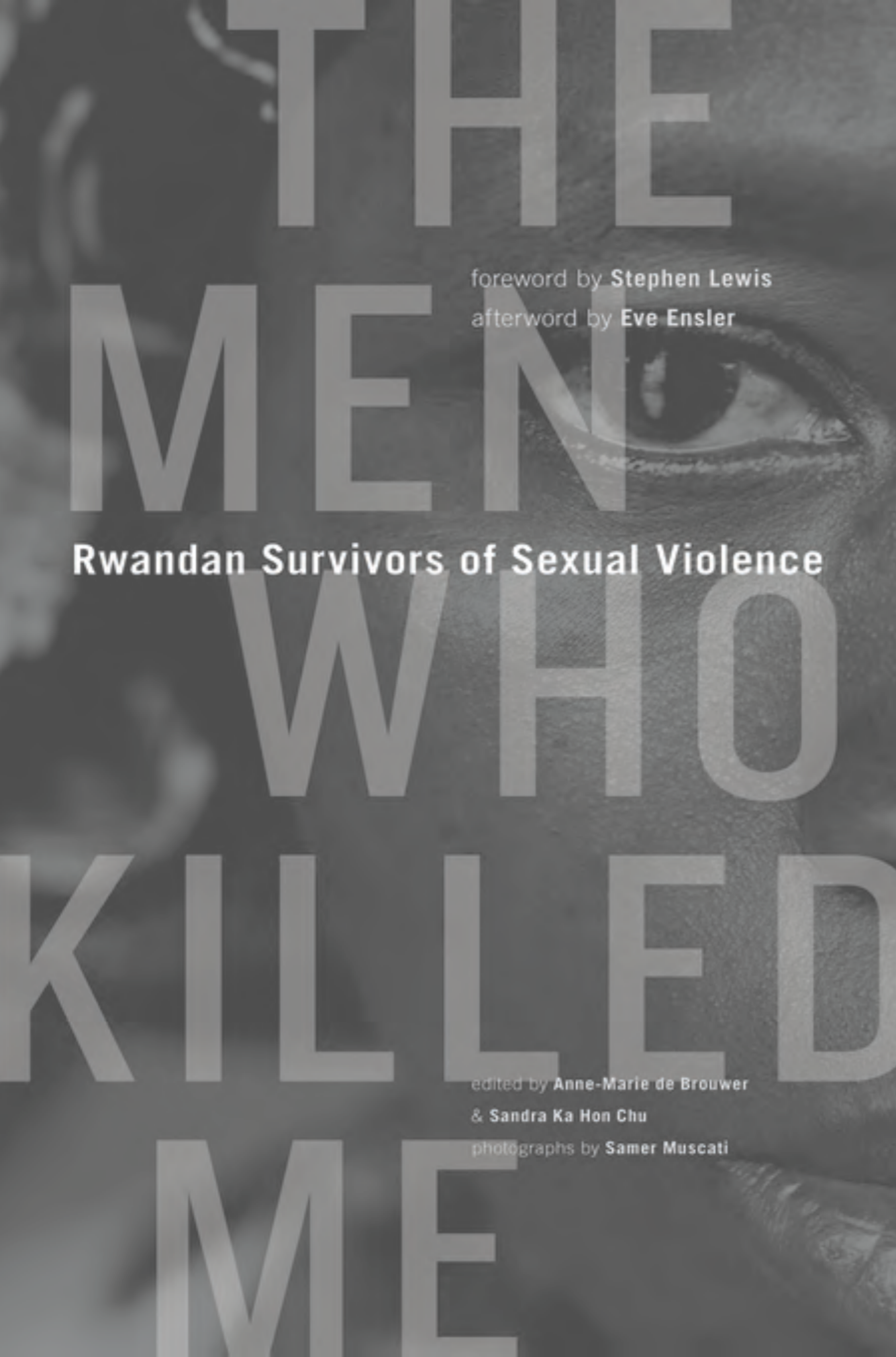
“We Have No Rights”

Arbitrary imprisonment and cruel treatment of migrants with mental health issues in Canada



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HUMAN RIGHTS
PROGRAM



foreword by Stephen Lewis
afterword by Eve Ensler

Rwandan Survivors of Sexual Violence

edited by Anne-Marie de Brouwer
& Sandra Ka Hon Chu
photographs by Samer Muscati

CASE STUDY #2

SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN RWANDA

Ten years ago, you interviewed women and men who survived sexual violence during the Rwandan genocide and published a book of their testimonies. With the 25th anniversary of the genocide approaching, you want to find out how survivors' lives have been impacted by their access to services and access to justice.

CASE STUDY #2: SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN RWANDA

- Who are you accountable to?
- What does competency mean?
- What does informed consent look like?
- How do you abide by the “do no harm” principle?
- What does “objective” and accurate reporting look like?