



Photo: Uriel Sinai/Getty Images

PROGRESS REPORT 2009-2010

UN ACTION AGAINST SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT



**STOP
RAPE
NOW**

UN ACTION AGAINST SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT

**UN ACTION AGAINST SEXUAL
VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT**

PROGRESS REPORT 2009-2010

CONTEXT

1 **Sexual violence during and in the wake of conflict** is a serious, present-day emergency affecting millions of people, primarily women and girls. It is often a conscious strategy deployed on a large scale by armed groups (state and non-state actors) to humiliate opponents, destroy individuals and shred societies. The UN Secretary-General has described conflict-related sexual violence as “*efficient brutality perpetrated with impunity*”. It is one of the only crimes for which a community’s response is more often to stigmatize the victim rather than prosecute the perpetrator. It remains under-reported and under-addressed due to the stigma associated with rape, piecemeal services for survivors, weak protection mechanisms, and inadequate rule of law and judicial responses. Yet sexual violence during conflict can constitute a war crime, crime against humanity, act of genocide or form of torture.

2 Conflict-related sexual violence has received **widespread condemnation** – including from the UN’s paramount peace and security body – the Security Council. In June 2008, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1820, identifying conflict-related sexual violence as a core security challenge and an impediment to the maintenance of international peace and security. Resolution 1820 demanded the “immediate and complete cessation by all parties to armed conflict of all acts of sexual violence against civilians”. In September 2009, the Security Council adopted a follow-on Resolution (1888) to advance the implementation of 1820. Resolution 1888 called for the UN Secretary-General to appoint a Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict to provide coherent and strategic leadership, and to promote cooperation and coordination “primarily through the inter-agency initiative United Nations Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict”.

AIMS OF UN ACTION AGAINST SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT

3 **United Nations Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict (UN Action)** unites the work of 13 UN system entities – DPA, DPKO, OCHA, OHCHR, PBSO, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIFEM, WFP and WHO – with the goal of ending sexual violence during and in the wake of conflict. Launched in March 2007, it represents a concerted effort by the United Nations to “work as one” – improving coordination and accountability, amplifying advocacy, and supporting country efforts to prevent conflict-related sexual violence and respond more effectively to the needs of survivors. In June 2007, the Secretary-General’s Policy Committee endorsed UN Action as “a critical joint UN system-wide initiative to guide advocacy, knowledge building, resource mobilization, and joint programming around sexual violence in conflict”.

4 The creation of UN Action in 2007 responded to calls from within the United Nations as well as from women’s rights organizations, NGOs and Member States to **elevate sexual violence politically as a peace and security challenge**, as well as a humanitarian, gender and development issue. UN Action operates through, and in support of existing coordination mechanisms, such as the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. It responds directly to the “Brussels Calls to Action” from the International Symposium on Sexual Violence in Conflict and Beyond (June 2006). It complements the gender-based violence (GBV) Area of Responsibility under the Protection Cluster, which is co-led by UNFPA and UNICEF, and coordinates the protection efforts of humanitarian actors such as UNHCR, WHO and a range of NGOs during crises. The UN Action network additionally embraces peace and security actors such as DPKO, DPA, PBSO, and developmental entities such as UNIFEM and UNDP.

5 Joint programming by the UN Action network: (i) focuses on preventing sexual violence and protecting civilians, particularly women and girls, from attack by armed groups, (ii) responds more comprehensively to the needs of sexual violence survivors by addressing the consequences of war-time rape, (iii) supports women's engagement in conflict prevention and enhances their influence in peace negotiations, and (iv) strengthens rule of law and judicial responses to sexual violence as part of reconstruction and development efforts.

FOCUS AND STRUCTURE OF UN ACTION

6 UN Action structures its activities around three pillars: **Country Level Action**, which includes strategic support to Integrated UN Missions and UN Country Teams to help them design Comprehensive Strategies to combat conflict-related sexual violence, in addition to efforts to strengthen capacity; **Advocating for Action**, which includes advocacy to raise public awareness and generate political will as part of the broader *Stop Rape Now* Campaign and the Secretary-General's *UNiTE to end Violence against Women* Campaign; and **Learning by Doing**, which includes developing tools to improve monitoring and reporting on prevalence, trends and patterns in sexual violence, as well as the effectiveness of the UN's response – as demanded by Security Council Resolutions 1820 and 1888.

7 UN Action is governed by a **Steering Committee**, comprising Principals and Senior Officials from the 13 member entities of UN Action, as well as the SRSG for Children and Armed Conflict and the S-G's Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women. This Steering Committee is chaired by the newly-appointed SRSG on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Margot Wallström, and supported by a small Secretariat working out of the SRSG's Office. **Focal Points** from the UN Action member entities develop a Strategic Framework, which sets targets and deliverables for the UN Action network over a two year period. The Focal Points meet regularly to plan activities and monitor progress. UN Action's work is funded by voluntary contributions from a range of Governments. These include Norway, Finland and Sweden – whose funds are pooled in a Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) managed by UNDP, as well as Switzerland, Canada, the Republic of Korea, and Australia – whose funds were directed to UNIFEM or UNDP, which managed them on behalf of the broader network.

8 The following report provides information on **key achievements** during 2009 and early 2010, including detailed information on specific deliverables funded through the MDTF, as part of obligatory reporting requirements (this information is highlighted at the end of the paragraph with a *). It also identifies **challenges and opportunities** for the second half of 2010 and 2011.

SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2009 AND EARLY 2010

9 For the UN Action network, the highlight of 2009 was the adoption of **Security Council Resolution 1888**. The swift passage of this action-oriented Resolution, co-sponsored by 56 Member States, signalled robust political commitment to addressing sexual violence as a peace and security issue. It also gave focus to the work of the UN Action network, which was recognised by the Council as the primary mechanism for improving the coherence of UN efforts. The 13 member entities have started to rise above institutional mandates to “deliver as one” both at global level and through Integrated UN Missions in countries such as the DRC and Liberia. However, challenges remain as very few countries currently have a comprehensive strategic framework to guide the UN’s response to conflict-related sexual violence, and competing institutional priorities coupled with weak coordination mechanisms often encourage UN agencies to work in silos.



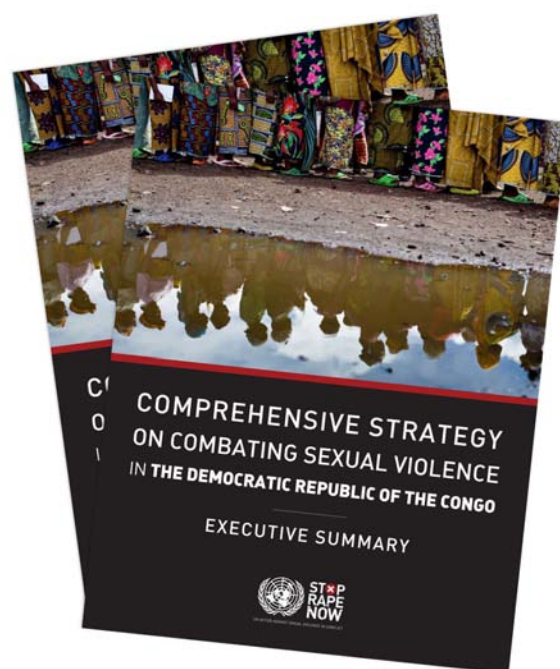
Unanimous adoption of Security Council Resolution 1888 (30 September 2009)

Support for Country-Level Action

10 There are currently eight UN peacekeeping missions authorized by the Security Council to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence (MINURCAT, MINUSTAH, MONUC, UNAMID, UNIFIL, UNMIL, UNMIS and UNOCI). However, there are multiple operational and

practical challenges for peacekeepers and humanitarians in translating these mandates into effective interventions to **protect** civilians from sexual violence during conflict. The UN is also struggling to determine **how best to respond to sexual violence which has become entrenched after conflict**. These analytic and strategic challenges are compounded by often **weak coordination mechanisms**. To meet these challenges, the UN Action network has provided **strategic support to UN Peacekeeping Operations and UN Country Teams** in five conflict-affected settings – the DRC, Liberia, Sudan (Darfur), Chad and Côte d’Ivoire. In all settings, the strategic support has been designed either to help the UN Country Team and Peacekeeping Operation to design a Comprehensive Strategy to combat sexual violence, or to oversee implementation of the strategy and improve coordination across the UN system.

¹¹ In March 2009, UN Action engaged a consultant to conduct an independent assessment of UN Action’s strategic support to the Integrated UN Mission in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**. The assessment concluded that the *Comprehensive Strategy on Combating Sexual Violence in the DRC* and its four pillar structure – multi-sectoral response, security sector reform, prevention and protection, combating impunity, plus the cross-cutting element of data and reporting – provided an ambitious but comprehensive platform for UN system action. The outstanding challenge was to move from strategic planning to implementation. The UN Action network therefore agreed to finance a second Senior Adviser on Sexual Violence to support the DSRSG and lead agencies to develop action plans for each of the pillars, and to establish a pooled funding arrangement to support implementation of the Strategy within the framework of the Stabilization and Recovery Funding Facility (SRFF) for Eastern DRC. Outstanding challenges include strengthening Government ownership of the



UN ACTION AGAINST SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT

Comprehensive Strategy, in particular at provincial level; streamlining the coordination architecture; centralizing the various databases on sexual violence across UN agencies and within MONUC to create one central source for all data; and addressing systemic weaknesses in the judicial system and the delivery of services for sexual violence survivors. MONUC is in the process of creating a Sexual Violence Unit to assume responsibility for coordinating the UN system response to sexual violence in eastern DRC.

¹² The UN Action network is co-financing a Programme Manager to oversee implementation of the ambitious Joint Programme on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) in **Liberia**. Rape is now the number one crime in Liberia. It was a core feature of the conflict, yet it was never adequately addressed during peace talks, DDR, post-conflict reconstruction and development programming. Sexual violence thus remains a chronic social problem and is compounded by a range of social, economic, and cultural drivers that require better understanding and consideration in the development of policies and programmes. The political will to address this violence is reflected in strong Government leadership and commitment, but institutional capacity is weak. The UN, during the transition from humanitarian to development work and with the potential drawdown of UNMIL following the elections of 2011, is seeking to optimise its impact and move to “working as one” with a well-coordinated and coherent programme of action. The Joint Programme on SGBV is one aspect of this. The recent independent assessment of UN Action’s strategic support recommends fuller engagement by UN Action at global and national levels with the issue of sexual violence in post-conflict settings such as Liberia. Suggested areas of future support include: (1) enhancing the UN’s capacity to ‘deliver-as-one’ through a thorough review of the Joint Programme on SGBV with the Government of Liberia, and (2) harnessing the strong gender and advocacy capacities of UNMIL and the UNCT in Liberia to outline a clear and action-based UN strategy and workplan on addressing sexual violence in Liberia within the UN commitments of Security Council Resolutions 1325, 1820, and 1888. This is to support the work of the UN internally on the ground and is complementary to, but distinct from, the Joint Programme. It could consider actions related to the role of media and communications, research and engagement of civil society. Such a strategy would encourage analysis of risks and patterns of sexual violence as part of broader political and security analysis – especially in the context of upcoming elections.

13 During 2009, UN Action co-financed two GBV Coordinators for **North and South Darfur** to support UNFPA's capacity to coordinate the international community's response to GBV, including sexual violence. The political situation in Darfur tested this strategic support, as it coincided with the indictment of President Bashir for war crimes and crimes against humanity by the ICC, and the expulsion of a number of international NGOs providing services to sexual violence survivors. Respect for basic human rights, including protecting civilians from physical and sexual violence, is largely ignored by all parties to the conflict in Darfur. The legal framework provides little redress for rape survivors, and stigma inhibits reporting as do weakened psycho-social, mental health and reproductive health services. The UN Security Council recently called upon UNAMID to develop a *Comprehensive Strategy to Combat Sexual Violence* (SCR1881). Key elements of a successful strategy will include strengthening community response mechanisms, working with government institutions to strengthen health, judicial and rule of law services, widening the operating space for INGOs and NGOs, adjusting State Plans of Action on GBV, and enhancing protection of women and girls from sexual violence.

14 The human rights situation in **Chad** is marked by serious and widespread violations, including pervasive cases of violence against women. In eastern Chad, women face the threat of rape and other forms of sexual violence at the hands of militia, armed groups and Chadian Government soldiers, and in almost all cases of reported sexual violence, identified perpetrators go unpunished. A UN Action mission to eastern Chad in November 2009 noted a broad humanitarian effort on the ground and important rule of law programming, but concluded that the absence of a comprehensive strategy for sexual and gender-based violence made it difficult to identify programme gaps and mobilize resources for a sustainable response. UN Action has consequently deployed a consultant for 3 months, hosted by UNFPA, to work with UN system agencies and MINURCAT to develop a comprehensive strategy to combat GBV, including sexual violence.*

15 The picture is similar in **Côte d'Ivoire**, where a UN Action assessment mission in January 2010 concluded that the absence of a comprehensive strategy to address the consequences of sexual violence during the conflict was inhibiting a fully effective response by the national government, UN system and NGO partners. In Côte d'Ivoire and other post-conflict and post-crisis settings, the paramount challenges for the UN include help with reforming rule of law and judicial institutions so that they respond effectively to sexual violence after conflict. This is complicated by the fact that many post-conflict institutions, such as the national police and military, have integrated perpetrators, who have gone unpunished and are now charged with public protection. It is made more difficult when the Ministry of Gender is tasked with coordinating the response to GBV, including sexual violence, and yet does not systematically or consistently reach out to rule of law actors. The UN is similarly challenged, often choosing to analyse sexual violence through a gender, reproductive health and development lens, overlooking other key drivers of sexual violence relating to conflict and instability.*

16 Two of the constraints inhibiting a comprehensive, coordinated response to conflict-related sexual violence are limited capacity to coordinate prevention and response activities, and weak monitoring and evaluation to improve programming within a multi-sectoral framework. UN Action financed a number of **capacity building efforts** in 2009. These included a workshop, organised by UNHCR and UNFPA, to train GBV and protection staff from South Sudan, Darfur Sudan, Chad, Central African Republic, Liberia and Nepal in (i) the adoption of Standard Operating Procedures for coordinating GBV actors in humanitarian settings, and (ii) the safe and ethical collection of GBV data to improve programming. The UN Action Secretariat also organised briefing sessions for staff in member entities to outline why sexual violence is now a core peace and security challenge, what Security Council Resolutions 1820 and 1888 demand from the UN system, and how the UN Action network can ensure a coherent and amplified response.*

17 Another key capacity building initiative supported by the UN Action network in 2009 was the operationalization of the **Team of Experts**, as called for in operative paragraph 8 of SCR1888. DPKO, UNDP and OHCHR, on behalf of the broader UN Action network, have developed

a concept note detailing the mandate, composition, functions and management structure of the Team. The Team will consist of 3-8 experts seconded by UN entities, headed by a team leader, and supported by a roster of standby experts. The Team will be rapidly deployed to assist with strengthening the rule of law in situations where conflict-related sexual violence is a serious concern, with the consent of the host government. The Team will review issues of impunity related to sexual violence, and work closely with legal and judicial officials to identify gaps in the national response and encourage a holistic approach, including by enhancing criminal accountability, responsiveness to victims, and judicial capacity. The Team will also make recommendations to improve coordination of domestic and international efforts to reinforce the government's ability to address sexual violence during and in the aftermath of armed conflict. In performing its tasks, the Team will work closely with United Nations entities to ensure full implementation of the measures called for by Resolutions 1820 and 1888. An essential element of this work is to ensure the funds are available to translate strategic and technical support into sustained programmatic interventions which have both immediate and lasting impact. UN Action and specifically DPKO, OHCHR and UNDP will focus on mobilizing resources to support this longer term effort.*

Advocacy for Action: Galvanizing Political Will

18 Since its inception, UN Action has sought to **elevate sexual violence to a place on the international peace and security agenda**. Its efforts have heightened awareness that conflict-related sexual violence is not just a gender or developmental issue, but a war tactic and illicit means of attaining military, political and economic ends. UN Action built its political and strategic advocacy on the foundation of international criminal law, which recognizes sexual violence as a war crime, crime against humanity, act of torture or genocide, depending on the circumstances of the offence. UN Action's main message, to the guardians of global public opinion and global peace, is that *there can be no security without women's security*. This highlights the fact that sexual violence attacks not only the rights of women, but the peace process itself. It undercuts the socio-economic cohesion, identity and stability of communities, by destroying not only people,

but their sense of being a people. This new paradigm affirms that sexual violence is not cultural or collateral, but criminal. It is not an inevitable by-product of war, but a tactic that can be commanded, condoned or condemned. The effect of this new understanding has been two-fold: it confirms that prevention is possible, and it expands the circle of action to embrace non-traditional constituencies such as peacemakers, peacekeepers and peacebuilders.

19 Advocacy efforts have taken this message to the general public in 2009 under the campaign banner: “**Get Cross! Stop Rape Now**”. The aim has been to build a vocal, visible constituency for an issue that has been called “history’s greatest silence” and “the world’s least condemned war crime”. “Get Cross” refers to the need to galvanise global outrage. It also explains the significance of the campaign’s distinctive crossed-arm tag gesture and is shorthand for the “5 key asks” of the campaign:

WHAT IS YOUR COUNTRY DOING TO ENHANCE SECURITY FOR WOMEN AFFECTED BY WAR ?

- C** ontributing troops or police – including women – to peacekeeping missions?
- R** esource mobilization to fund services for survivors?
- O** versight and training of the security sector in sexual violence prevention/response?
- S** upporting legal measures to end impunity?
- S** ponsoring women’s full and equal participation in peace talks?

20 UN Action’s website www.stoprapienow.org is a repository of advocacy resources, breaking news, events, and field updates on conflict-related sexual violence for use by practitioners and the public. It is an interactive site for social mobilization, featuring a “global photo map” of people from all walks of life displaying the crossed-arm gesture in a show of solidarity with survivors. A Public Service Announcement (PSA) has been produced and pitched to major news networks

with technical support from OCHA. It features high-profile personalities representing the spectrum of actors needed to address sexual violence (UN Messenger of Peace Charlize Theron, UNIFEM Goodwill Ambassador Nicole Kidman, Congolese war surgeon Dr. Mukwege, former peacekeeper Major General Cammaert and Liberian peace activist, Leymah Gbowee). This will drive increased traffic to the website where visitors are offered actionable ways to show solidarity. UN Action has disseminated key messages on sexual violence to UN Information Centres (UNICs) at country-level and through UNIFEM's *Say No to Violence against Women* network. It has created a dedicated "action drive" as part of the *Say No* campaign to mobilize a coalition of committed citizens calling for action under the banner: "200,000 women raped during war in the Congo - 200,000 people say never again". People can "stand up and be counted" by signing an online petition, sending a letter to their elected officials and disseminating information through social networking sites. UN Action has also mobilized new media (Facebook/Twitter) to engage a range of civil society actors.*



21 Following the adoption of SCR1820, UN Action's advocacy efforts focused on **disseminating the resolution and interpreting its implications for the UN system, parties to armed conflict, Member States and civil society partners.** UN Action produced a "tool kit" on 1820, consisting of a PowerPoint explaining how 1820 builds on 1325; a poster outlining the obligations of Member States, the UN system and NGOs; campaign pins; and a pen with a retractable banner containing a "cheat-sheet" summary of 1820. In early 2009, UN Action convened inter-agency meetings to help frame issues and facilitate contributions for the Secretary-General's first 1820 report, compiled by DPKO. Targeted advocacy with Security Council members led to the adoption of a robust and action-oriented follow-on resolution – SCR1888. UN Action has since helped **publicise the aims of Resolutions 1820/1888** to sustain political will for their implementation and to raise awareness of the new obligations and opportunities they imply. This has included seminars on the implications of the resolutions for a range of donors and civil society partners, and UN entities in New York and Geneva, as well as a "webinar" for field colleagues.

UN ACTION AGAINST SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT

Regular briefings are presented to Missions rotating onto the Security Council as non-permanent members and/or Chairs of relevant Sanctions Committees, in conjunction with UNIFEM, DPKO and the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security. In addition, UN Action has organised seminars for the academic community and published advocacy articles and OpEds to guide understanding of when sexual violence constitutes a threat to international peace and security, to publicise the use of rape as a tool of political repression, and to explain why it has been war's "ultimate secret weapon".

22 UN Action's global "**Stop Rape Now**" campaign frames the UN system's efforts to deliver Campaign Outcome 5 of the Secretary-General's *UNiTE to End Violence against Women* campaign. UN Action contributed a photo montage of prominent men performing the crossed-arm tag gesture to "Get Cross" about sexual violence for the launch of the Secretary-General's Men Leaders Network in November 2009. UN Action used the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence as a platform for generating crossed-arm photos from high-level UN officials and colleagues in the field. A UN Action Advocacy Working Group has been established to build internal support for this work across the UN system at global and country levels, helping the UN to speak with one voice on conflict-related sexual violence.*

23 Under UN Action auspices, DPKO joined forces with UNIFEM in 2008 to compile an inventory of promising practice employed by uniformed peacekeepers to combat sexual violence and build a safe environment for women and girls. This document, **Addressing Conflict-Related Sexual Violence – An Analytical Inventory of Peacekeeping Practice**, captures innovative strategies at the tactical level, as well as a checklist of emerging elements for an effective response at the strategic level. The document also provides a basis for distilling operational scenario-



Villagers on their way to a local market walk past a MONUC patrol, there to assure stability during the electoral period in the DRC.
[UN Photo/Martine Perret]

based training for military personnel. In early 2009, two field-validation missions were undertaken to DRC (MONUC) and Liberia (UNMIL) to verify and develop the content of the inventory. Throughout 2009, there appears to have been a virtuous cycle of increased attention to sexual violence leading to increased good practice on the ground. In addition, DPKO has now developed Gender Guidelines for the police and is finalising Gender Guidelines for the military. It is also developing Guidance around the implementation of SCRs 1820 and 1888 for Peacekeeping Operations. All of this guidance seeks to replace *improvisation* with *systematisation*.

24 In June 2009, UNIFEM, DPA, DPKO, UNDP and OCHA – under the auspices of UN Action and in partnership with the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue – organised a Colloquium of high-level mediators, subject experts, and women’s rights advocates to discuss means of **addressing conflict-related sexual violence in peace processes**. This was in direct response to SCR1820 (OPs 3 and 12), which call on the UN system and the wider international community to address sexual violence in efforts aimed at mediation and conflict-resolution. The goal of the meeting was to develop practical guidance (Operational Guidance Notes) for mediation teams on pre-ceasefire humanitarian-access and human-rights agreements; ceasefires and ceasefire monitoring; DDR and SSR arrangements; justice; and reparations and recovery. Participants highlighted the many difficulties of incorporating provisions on sexual violence into peace agreements, including resource constraints; unreliable data on the prevalence and circumstances of conflict-related sexual violence; the often weak domestic constituency advocating on this issue; compressed timeframes for concluding agreements; resistance among negotiating parties to full accountability; and failure to ensure adequate numbers of women mediators, negotiators, peacekeepers, and ceasefire monitors. Nevertheless, there was consensus that far less had been done to advance this issue in peace talks than could be done, and that more systematic attention could be paid even within existing mandates. Next steps include finalization and launch of the Operational Guidance Notes on DPA’s Peacemaker website. Following the Colloquium, a joint strategy has been developed between DPA and UNIFEM which seeks to support greater and more effective participation by women in peace processes. One component of the strategy is the recruitment of a Senior Gender and Mediation Expert in the third quarter of 2010 (funding permitted), who will be a part of DPA’s Standby Team of Mediation Experts. In the meantime, UNIFEM will provide a staff member on an interim basis to carry out this function starting April 2010.*

Learning by Doing: Creating a Knowledge Hub on Sexual Violence in Conflict

25 UN Action is in the process of creating a “**knowledge hub**” on conflict-related sexual violence to improve information on the prevalence, trends and patterns of sexual violence in armed conflict, and to collate information on promising responses by the UN and partners, particularly around **preventing** sexual violence. Much of the knowledge generation work responds specifically to operative paragraphs of SCR1888.

26 WHO, with UNFPA, UNICEF and the Centre for Disease Control (CDC), are developing a **standardized data collection survey tool that can collect data on the prevalence of conflict-related sexual violence**. This will help meet demands for more information on the scale and patterns of sexual violence as requested by SCRs 1820/1888 and 1612/1882. It complements efforts by UNFPA, UNHCR and the IRC to improve GBV incidence data through the roll out of a GBV Information Management System. WHO, with CDC, has now completed a literature review and analysis of data collection methodologies; proposed a minimum and expanded set of data elements to answer questions on the magnitude of conflict-related sexual violence, impact on individuals and communities, and factors increasing risk or protection; and, based on this, has designed draft instruments for measuring sexual violence victimization and perpetration. The tools will be finalized and available for piloting in a couple of conflict-affected settings in early 2011.

27 UNICEF is spearheading efforts by the UN Action network to **generate specific proposals and performance benchmarks to monitor and report on the UN’s response to conflict-related sexual violence** as demanded by OP 15 of SCR1820. A comprehensive set of performance benchmarks have been developed by UNICEF. These will help identify gaps in the UN’s response to conflict-related sexual violence. The performance benchmarks are being reviewed by the UN Action network.

28 UNICEF and OCHA are developing a set of tools and approaches to **engage parties to conflict**, calling upon them to respect international law and to stop using rape and other forms of sexual violence against civilians. This project has the broad objective of enhancing understanding of how to influence state and non-state actors who perpetrate sexual violence or allow it to take place in areas under their control. The project will focus on the members of state and non-state armed groups as perpetrators (or potential perpetrators) of sexual violence and potential interventions that could influence them to stop raping civilians during conflict and displacement. The research process will identify both protective factors that keep state and non-state actors from committing sexual violence, and a more nuanced understanding of what motivates actors to use sexual violence as an explicit tactic of war. An expert technical working group has been established to guide this work.*

29 OCHA and partners working within the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), and with support from UN Action, are developing a tool to measure whether a humanitarian project is designed to ensure that women, girls, men and boys benefit equally or that it advances gender equality. This “**gender marker**” will help track spending on projects that promote gender equality or directly address GBV, including sexual violence, through humanitarian appeals and funding mechanisms including CAPs, CERFs and pooled funds. This project should permit measurement of funds committed to address conflict-related sexual violence, and to identify gaps. The gender marker will be rolled out in 10 countries in 2010/11.*

MOVING FORWARD: PRIORITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR 2010-2011

30 The UN Action network provides a vehicle for ensuring greater coherence in the UN's response to conflict-related sexual violence at the global level, as well as in selected countries, through strategic support, advocacy and knowledge building. The emphasis moving forward under the leadership of the SRSG will be on strengthening accountability and implementation, building on the strong political will and inter-agency coordination that exists. The SRSG has outlined the 5 priorities for her mandate, namely ending impunity, empowering women to be agents of change, mobilizing political ownership, increasing recognition of rape as a tactic and consequence of war, and harmonising the UN's response. The UN Action network will align visibly behind these priorities. However, key challenges remain. These include ensuring that: (i) strategic planning translates into effective protection, prevention and response interventions on the ground and thereby makes a real difference to the lives of women and girls; (ii) advocacy – particularly by the SRSG on Sexual Violence in Conflict – is not divorced from the capacity of the UN system to respond, and (iii) the political leverage of the SRSG is maximised.



SRSG on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Margot Wallström.

31 During 2010-11, UN Action will continue to provide strategic support to the UN system in countries where sexual violence is a tactic of war and an impediment to peace and security. One key challenge for the network is **prioritization**. This includes consideration of whether to limit UN Action support to countries on the Security Council's agenda, where peacekeepers have been mandated to protect civilians – namely the DRC, South Sudan, Darfur Sudan, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Central African Republic, Liberia and Haiti – or to broaden the scope to countries where sexual violence is being used as a tactic of political repression and civil unrest – such as Colombia, Guinea, Zimbabwe and Myanmar. UN Action has limited financial and human resources and it would be counterproductive for the network to promise more than it can deliver. In

practice, this means extending strategic support to a limited number of about 5 or 6 conflict-affected contexts, where there is a clear demand from the UN system and government at country level for support. These should include contexts where sexual violence is *currently* being used as a tactic of war (i.e. eastern DRC and Darfur), one or two contexts where sexual violence has become *entrenched as a chronic social problem* after conflict (e.g. Liberia and perhaps Côte d'Ivoire), and at least one setting outside of Africa (perhaps Nepal).

32 The UN Action network must urgently augment the number of skilled sexual violence advisers and consultants in 2010/11. The network is committed to elaborating a capacity building strategy which includes the possible creation of a **stand-by roster of Sexual Violence Advisers**, building off the existing GenCap and other mechanisms. This should enable UN Action to identify, train and deploy Advisers to assist the UN system to design and implement comprehensive strategies to address sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict settings. The UN Action network will organise a workshop bringing together Advisers and consultants who have helped to design and implement these strategies over the past 2 years. The lessons learned from these experiences will help inform the design of future comprehensive strategies. They may also help identify the core skill-set required by the new cadre of professionals – Women Protection Advisers (WPAs). WPAs are mandated by SCR1888 (OP 12) to be identified from among gender advisers and human rights protection units to help UN peacekeeping operations protect women and children from sexual violence in conflict-affected settings.

33 In order to maximise the effectiveness of its strategic support, as well as strengthen coordination, implementation and accountability, the UN Action network must elaborate the scope of its “**catalytic support**”. To date, this has included funding to strengthen inter-agency coordination efforts in Sudan (Darfur), as well as seed monies for a public information campaign in Kenya when social unrest, including sexual violence, broke out after the elections. Moving forward, catalytic support could be extended to finance key data generation and programme monitoring efforts at country level. These would help the UN system to generate better data on the scale and patterns of conflict-related sexual violence, as well as gaps in the UN system’s response, including

protection. Catalytic support could also be used to fund advocacy efforts at country level, as well as system-wide training. These all benefit the UN system as a whole, rather than any one individual agency, and can encourage joint programming as well as plug essential funding gaps.

34 In terms of future **advocacy priorities and challenges**, the focus will be on mobilizing **non-traditional stakeholders**. There is a need to confront head-on the lack of conviction on the part of actors who should be directly engaged. Such actors range from military planners and advisers in peacekeeping operations and regional security bodies, to sanctions experts, or the international early-warning and peacebuilding architecture. For instance, there remain Security Council Members who are either not cognisant or not convinced of the **relevance of this agenda to collective peace and security**. Advocacy must be persuasive to an audience broader than ‘gender experts’, and pitched in a way that debunks the myths that have impaired both the analysis and operational response. These myths include the notion that sexual violence is a ‘private’ matter, that women and communities prefer not to talk about rape, or that sexual violence is an ancient and inevitable by-product, rather than a tactic, of war. There is a continuing need to recall the commitments the Council has made, and to ensure that language agreed in thematic resolutions is not lost in translation when it comes to mandating country-level action.

35 As a complement to advocacy efforts in the realm of high-politics, there is also a need to build a **more vibrant, vast and visible lobby for sustained attention** to the issue. Sexual violence has historically lacked a dedicated and diverse constituency that is well-informed about its nexus with security. This is due, in part, to the taboos, silence and shame that shroud sexual violence, combined with a tendency for it to be eclipsed by the more graphic horrors of war. **Data** that captures the security dynamics and dimensions of sexual violence can provide a rallying-point for advocacy that is **action-oriented and evidence-based**. Generating and disseminating this data, including via new media, is at once a priority and a major challenge. Adding to this challenge, is the need for the UN system to “speak with one voice” to ensure that calls to action are not diluted and drowned out. UN Action has a comparative advantage in being able to produce advocacy statements that reflect the common position of 13 UN entities and are fronted by an SRSG. Moreover, the SRSG can cast a spotlight on **“forgotten conflicts and crises”** (including situations of concomitant conflict and natural disaster), in which sexual violence has or is likely to spike, by mobilizing the collective moral conscience and opening humanitarian space for swift action. Where such crimes fail

to arrest global attention, public pronouncements, real-time testimonies and hard-hitting statistics can help turn the tide of public indifference. For a force-multiplier effect, UN Action contemplates **working with war correspondents to improve media representations of rape** – as a war crime, rather than collateral damage, and as central to the narrative of conflict, rather than a side-story. To this end, UN Action will cultivate partnerships with local associations of journalists to counter the trend of victim-blame and impunity. There is emerging evidence that trivial representations of rape have correlated with low conviction rates, whereas media reportage that brings to light the scale, severity and character of war-time sexual violence has prompted responses more commensurate with its gravity. UN Action will continue to present sexual violence as a mainstream peace and security matter, and to challenge media-generated perceptions of rape as an inevitable or second-class crime.

36 Resolution 1888 urges greater focus on **prevention** of sexual violence as a core element of protection of civilians, as well as the creation of a **Team of Experts** to assist governments to strengthen fractured judicial and rule of law systems. We do not yet have a clear sense of the core elements of an effective prevention strategy, nor the spectrum of interventions we are encouraging peacekeepers and humanitarian actors to adopt. The *Analytical Inventory* (see para 23) captures promising practices, and both DPKO and the Protection Cluster are developing guidance on protection and prevention. Nonetheless, more knowledge generation is needed in this area. Whilst the Team of Experts will provide much needed technical support to governments to strengthen their rule of law response, there is clearly no “technical fix” to tackling impunity, particularly when it comes to prosecuting senior military officials who condone sexual violence by their subordinates or instigate campaigns of rape and terror as part of military strategy. Whilst the SRSG can use her political leverage to raise these issue at all levels, eloquent condemnation from mostly Western Governments cannot substitute for action at country level, nor for sustained political pressure by the Security Council and the international community. The SRSG will need to seek out non-traditional allies, such as China, South Africa, the African Union, the World Bank, as well as the African Development Bank, and set clear success criteria for her mandate to ensure that sexual violence is no longer tolerated or side-lined as simply the collateral damage of war.

May 2010



www.stoprapenow.org



UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict (UN Action) unites the work of 13 UN entities to address sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations by improving coordination and accountability, amplifying programming and advocacy, and supporting national efforts to prevent sexual violence and respond effectively to the needs of survivors.

