



CONFLICT-RELATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE

DEFINITION¹

- The term “conflict-related sexual violence” refers to rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, forced abortion, enforced sterilization, forced marriage, and any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity perpetrated against women, men, girls or boys that is directly or indirectly linked to a conflict.
- This link may be evident in the profile of the perpetrator, who is often affiliated with a State or non-State armed group, which includes terrorist entities or networks; the profile of the victim, who is frequently an actual or perceived member of a persecuted political, ethnic or religious minority, or targeted on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity; the climate of impunity, which is generally associated with State collapse; cross-border consequences, such as displacement or trafficking; and/or violations of the provisions of a ceasefire agreement.
- The term also encompasses trafficking in persons for the purpose of sexual violence and/or exploitation, when committed in situations of conflict.

GBV VS CRSV: WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?

Gender-based violence	Conflict-related sexual violence
Gender-based violence is defined as an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person’s will, and that is based on socially ascribed (gender) differences between males and females. ²	CRSV is a form of SGBV. SGBV is any type of violence directed against individuals or groups based on their sex or gender [...] <u>SGBV is endemic in all societies</u> , due to the global nature of gender inequality and not necessarily, conflict related...While <u>CRSV is one form of SGBV</u> , other forms include female genital mutilation, intimate partner violence, domestic violence, and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. ³
Crime defined by national legislation ⁴	Crime defined in international legal instruments (e.g. Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court) – can constitute a war crime, crime against humanity, and genocide.
National Jurisdiction	National, international and universal jurisdiction

¹ [SG’s Annual Report on Conflict-related Sexual Violence](#)

² [IASC Guidelines for GBV in humanitarian settings](#) and [GBV AOR WG Handbook](#)

³ [Handbook for UN Field missions on preventing and responding to CRSV \(2020\)](#)

⁴ The exception to this is the international crime of gender persecution, which is a crime against humanity. Gender persecution can include acts of sexual violence, but also other severe deprivations of fundamental rights (including civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights violations) on the basis of a person’s gender. More information on the crime of gender persecution is available in [Identifying gender persecution in conflict and atrocities: A toolkit for documenters, investigators, and adjudicators of crimes against humanity](#).



SEXUAL VIOLENCE AS AN INTERNATIONAL CRIME

The [Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court](#) criminalizes **sexual violence** in the following forms:

- **As a war crime**, when committed as part of an international or non-international armed conflict
- **A crime against humanity**, when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population.
- **An act of genocide**, when it is committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group.

SECURITY COUNCIL FRAMEWORK

The Security Council has adopted seven resolutions specifically addressing sexual violence in conflict (Security Council Resolutions [1820](#) (2008), [1888](#) (2009), [1960](#) (2010) and [2106](#) (2013), [2122](#) (2013), [2242](#) (2015), and [2467 \(2019\)](#)), which have further strengthened the international legal framework on the prevention of and response to this scourge. The most recent resolution on this issue ([2467 \(2019\)](#)) introduces language on survivor-centered approaches and the continuum of violence against women and girls, and recognizes national ownership and responsibility in addressing root causes of sexual violence, and names structural gender inequality and discrimination as a root cause.



HOW CAN UN WOMEN ADDRESS CRSV?

UN Women's approach to addressing CRSV focuses on tackling gender inequality and impunity as root causes. UN Women also contributes where possible to the monitoring and reporting of CRSV incidents as a member of the [MARA](#); to accountability efforts through the Headquarters-managed SGBV Justice Expert Deployment Programme, through which investigators and gender advisors are deployed to national and international investigations; and to service delivery to survivors through its direct support to women's rights organizations. The following are some examples of ways in which UN Women can contribute to tackling CRSV at the country level.

Prevention:

- Raising awareness and disseminating information on CRSV including trafficking in persons (early warning indicators, reporting mechanisms)
- Supporting women's organizations in the establishment/strengthening of local early warning and protection mechanisms in cooperation with local authorities (E.g. Hotlines, protection protocols, safe houses, apps)
- Conducting training to security forces (Military, Police, Paramilitary/foreign legion/armed civilian groups) on CRSV
- Assisting Security Sector institutions in the development of codes of conduct addressing CRSV
- Supporting capacity-building of women and girls, particularly women leaders and human rights defenders on the adoption of self-care strategies
- Supporting the creation of safe assembly spaces and network-building for women leaders and human rights defenders.
- Advocating and assisting in the development of 1325 NAPs explicitly addressing CRSV and the adoption of protective legal frameworks
- Supporting women's organizations involved in mediation efforts / support the inclusion of CRSV prevention and response considerations in ceasefire and peace agreements

Response:

- Support efforts to establish/strengthen women-led local protection structures and services in partnership with government authorities, local women's organizations/networks. (E.g. Health care, legal counselling, psycho-social support services).⁵
- Raising awareness and disseminating information about referral pathways in crisis affected communities drawing on appropriate gender-responsive communication techniques⁶.
- Strengthening coordination with response actors to ensure proper referral of survivors and provision of quality essential services that respond to survivors' needs and priorities in line with do no harm principles and other international standards.⁷

⁵ Raise awareness amongst women CSOs about [Women, Peace and Humanitarian Fund](#) calls for proposals and, if possible, provide support in application process.

⁶ [UN Women - How to promote a gender-responsive participation revolution in humanitarian settings - Guidance Note.pdf](#) ([interagencystandingcommittee.org](#))

⁷ [The Inter-Agency Minimum Standards for Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies Programming - World | ReliefWeb](#)



- Support the provision of emergency livelihoods assistance to survivors of violence, including through unconditional cash transfers and national social protection systems.⁸

Justice and Accountability:

- Awareness-raising/ training judges, legal counselors on CRSV
- Assistance to judiciary and transitional justice processes, and advocacy to combat impunity for CRSV
- Provide support to survivors seeking justice for CRSV

EXAMPLES OF UN WOMEN'S WORK ON CONFLICT-RELATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Colombia: In Colombia, women peacebuilders, environmental activists, social leaders, journalists and other women human rights defenders live under continuous threats by parties to the conflict to their physical integrity and lives. The ProDefensoras Initiative focuses on prevention and the protection of women leaders and human rights defenders in Colombia. The partnership between the Ombudsman's Office, the Embassy of Norway, and UN Women for this purpose focuses on providing women leaders and defenders, their organizations, and communities in Colombia with a safe, favorable and protective environment to defend human rights and contribute to sustainable development and peace. Working together with the civil society and the public institutions, ProDefensoras supports initiatives for the comprehensive protection of women defenders advocating for the associative life of women and their networks and closing the implementation gaps between the current public policy and international standards, and the reality of the regions.

Myanmar: UN Women, in collaboration with UNODC, through funding from the UN Action Multi-Partner Trust Fund, implemented a project to support economic empowerment and leadership skills of crisis affected women, including survivors of sexual violence in conflict, enabling them to benefit from strengthened protection services, response, prevention and reintegration efforts in relation to human trafficking. Through this project, Myanmar Police Forces officers were trained on trafficking prevention, and community dialogues were developed. Local partners were supported to provide referrals to essential services including psychosocial and legal support. The project also supported the economic empowerment of 155 crisis-affected women through the provision of artisan skills, business training and start-up capital and supported community-based protection mechanisms through the training of 48 community mobilizers, to build individual and community resilience to trafficking in persons.

Uganda: In collaboration with UNICEF, UN Women helped reintegrate hundreds of women and girls formerly abducted by the LRA, many of them with children born of rape, through income generation activities and access to land. Thanks to this programme, many of them were operating successful businesses and were not shunned by the community, and could use this income to support their children's education and medical needs and regularly participate in community activities.

[Home | Gender-Based Violence Area of Responsibility \(gbvaor.net\)](#)

⁸ [UN Women - How to promote gender equality in humanitarian cash and voucher assistance - Guidance Note.pdf \(interagencystandingcommittee.org\)](#)



Bosnia-i-Herzegovina: UN Women participates in a joint programme with UNDP, UNFPA, and IOM to tackle the legacy of CRSV among survivors that have received little or no support and recognition for twenty years. The project aimed at improving access to both justice and services, and to combat stigma through educational programmes and engaging the media and law enforcement officials. UN Women supported the economic empowerment of survivors through tailor-made livelihood programmes and access to reparations. UN Women has also supported partners in providing comprehensive and effective care for wartime rape survivors and witnesses before, during, and after their trials, and monitoring and documenting the treatment of witnesses by judges and prosecutors.

KEY RESOURCES AND KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS ON CRSV

- [Analytical and Conceptual Framing of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, UN Action network](#)
- [Strengthening Prevention of Conflict-related Sexual Violence with Nonstate Armed Groups: A Preliminary Framework for Key Prevention Strategies, OCHA UNICEF](#)
- [Matrix: Early Warning Indicators on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence](#)
- [Draft Global Code of Conduct for Investigating and Documenting Conflict-Related Sexual Violence \(“The Murad Code”\)](#)
- [The International Protocol on the Documentation and Investigation of Sexual Violence in Conflict](#)
- [Guidance for Mediators: Addressing Conflict-Related Sexual Violence in Ceasefire and Peace Agreements](#)
- [Peacekeeping Operations: Preventing and Responding to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence \(2020 Annual Report\)](#)
- [Model Legislative Provisions and Guidance on Investigation and Prosecution of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence](#)
- [The Handbook for United Nations Field Missions on Preventing and Responding to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence](#)
- [Do’s and don’ts in community-based psychosocial support for sexual violence survivors in conflict-affected settings, WHO UNFPA UNICEF](#)
- [UN Action – Digital Library on Conflict-related Sexual Violence](#)