



STOP RAPE NOW

UN ACTION AGAINST SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT



FRAMEWORK FOR THE PREVENTION

OF CONFLICT-RELATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE

"Although it is a crime as old as war itself, conflict-related sexual violence is preventable. It is not an inevitable by-product of war. It is never an accident. Though many conflicts are characterized by widespread sexual violence, not all are. We can and must prevent it."



Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and Under Secretary-General, Ms. Pramila Patten

Introducing the Framework

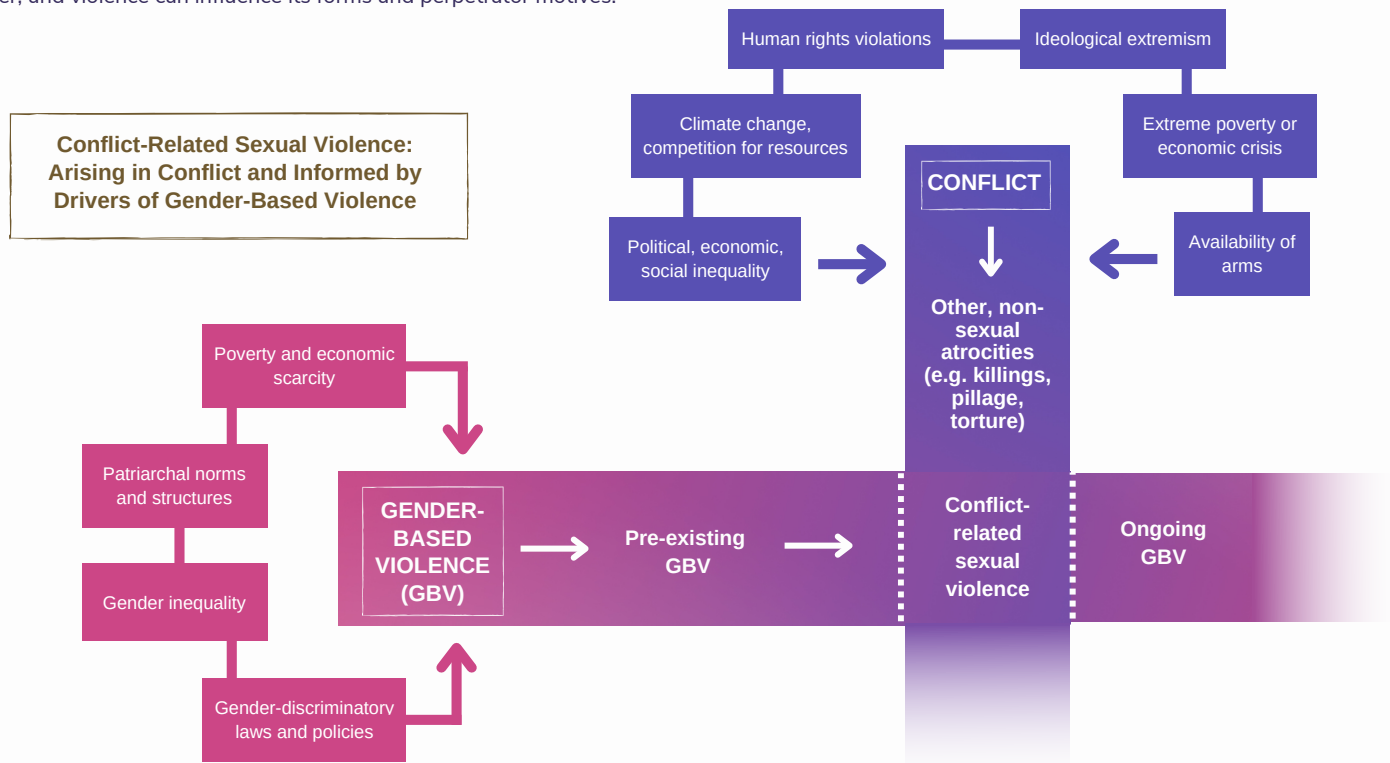
Through a series of resolutions on women, peace and security, the United Nations Security Council ("Security Council") has emphasised that sexual violence, when used as a tactic of war, torture, or terrorism or as part of a widespread or systematic attack against a civilian population, can significantly exacerbate situations of armed conflict and threaten international peace and security. The Security Council has thus taken conflict-related sexual violence up as an area of grave concern, asserting the need for effective prevention and response measures in order to promote the maintenance of international peace and security.

Now, the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict and the United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict network present this Framework for the Prevention of Conflict-related Sexual Violence.

The Framework outlines critical considerations for the prevention of conflict-related sexual violence in a clear, comprehensive way, in order to guide the development and support of structural and operational measures. Further, this Framework aims to dismantle silos, guiding diverse actors to take part in mutually reinforcing efforts at local through international levels. In guiding the prevention of conflict-related sexual violence, the Framework contributes to the realization of the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda, the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, and other calls to action from the UN Secretary General. It also advances the overall prevention of conflict and human suffering, which lies at the heart of the United Nations mandate.

The Foundation

The Framework is based on a presentation of foundational concepts. It begins with the working description of "conflict-related sexual violence" as presented by the United Nations Secretary-General. Then, as prevention of any kind of violence starts with the identification of its root causes, it is essential to clarify the way armed conflict gives rise to the occurrence of conflict-related sexual violence, while pre-existing norms around gender, power, and violence can influence its forms and perpetrator motives.



Due to these intersecting forces, longstanding efforts targeting the prevention of armed conflict on one hand and gender-based violence on the other are of utmost relevance to the prevention of conflict-related sexual violence. This Framework thus builds upon substantial existing guidance developed by key political and humanitarian actors focused on prevention of conflict and gender-based violence. It adds value by highlighting considerations and approaches relevant to the prevention of conflict-related sexual violence in particular.

The Framework

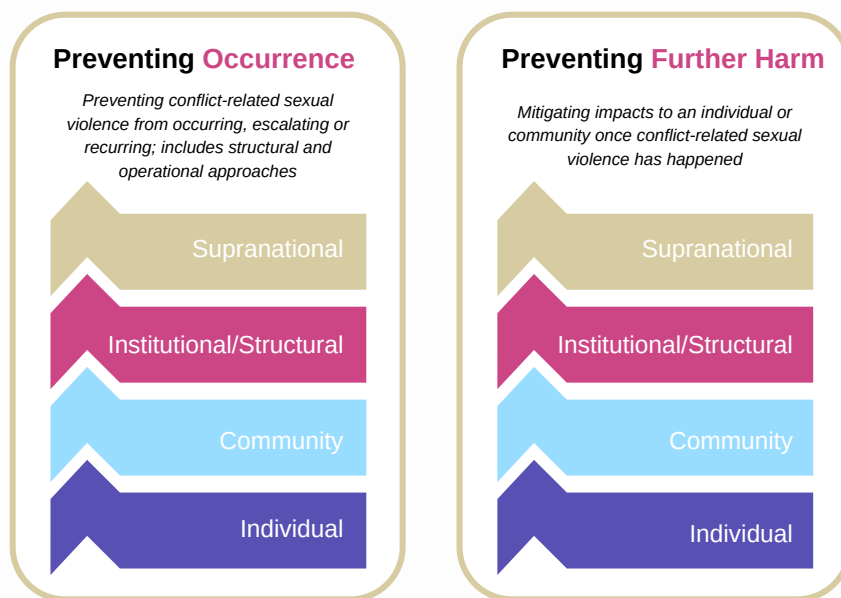
This Framework conceptualises the prevention of conflict-related sexual violence as having two main aspects:

- preventing occurrence of conflict-related sexual violence and
- preventing further harm once the violence has occurred.

The first aspect refers to preventing the occurrence, escalation, and recurrence of conflict-related sexual violence. This requires a.) building upon broader efforts to prevent conflict and atrocities, as well as gender-based violence generally; b.) developing structural and operational approaches (such as strengthening social norms and rule of law and developing early warning systems indicators specifically focused on conflict-related sexual violence); and c.) disaggregating forms of conflict-related sexual violence and identifying interventions tailored to diverse perpetrators.

Second, preventing conflict-related sexual violence can include efforts to reduce its harmful impacts so as to avoid deepening harm to survivors and their communities. In a humanitarian and international security context, this might refer to the work of first line responders and service providers, who can mitigate the immediate impacts of violence through, inter alia, medical care, psychosocial support, safe shelter, and police protection. The Framework emphasises the importance of taking a survivor-centred approach to service provision, highlighting the need for preparedness for extreme forms of conflict-related sexual violence including gang rape, sexual torture, and enslavement by terrorist organizations.

For both aspects of prevention, this Framework adopts the public health concept of an ecological model as an additional organising principle. Here, an ecological approach helps conceptualise how efforts to prevent conflict-related sexual violence may be enacted at multiple, interacting levels: supranational (including regional and international), institutional / structural, community, and individual.



The Framework itself consists of (2) tables organising approaches to the prevention of occurrence on one hand and the prevention of further harm on the other. These approaches range from fundamental, structural measures taken with an eye to long-term impact, to nearer-term operational measures that can be adopted at multiple levels to prepare for and respond to more immediate risk of conflict-related sexual violence.



Next Steps

The complete Framework will be disseminated in August 2022. For more information, please contact the UN Action Coordinator (seneb@un.org).