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KEY REPORT: SRSG-SVC MISSION TO UKRAINE TO SIGN A FRAMEWORK OF COOPERATION WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF UKRAINE

Following the outbreak of conflict in Ukraine earlier this year, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (SRSG-SVC) Pramila Patten completed a mission to Ukraine, Poland, and Moldova. SRSG Patten was accompanied by a delegation of experts from the UN Action Secretariat, the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence (TOE), and the Office of the SRSG-SVC. The primary objective and outcome of the mission was the successful signing of a Framework of Cooperation (FoC) between the UN and the Government of Ukraine on the prevention of and response to conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV).

The FoC focuses on several areas for action, including: strengthening national policies and programmes for prevention and response, establishing risk mitigation measures to prevent trafficking for sexual exploitation or prostitution, enhancing protection for civilians forcibly displaced both internally and abroad, supporting monitoring and reporting of sexual violence cases, expanding capacities of stakeholders to engage in prevention and response, and ensuring survivors have access to a full range of needed relief, support and reintegration services.

During the visit to Kyiv, SRSG Patten held meetings with key government officials, including the Vice Prime Minister and the Prosecutor General, and participated in a roundtable with ministerial focal points. In addition, she met with NGOs and members of civil society to discuss challenges arising around the need for holistic care for survivors of CRSV and protection from human trafficking for those forcibly displaced. Meetings with representatives of Ukrainian Ministries allowed for further discussions around survivor-centred mechanisms for documenting and reporting of CRSV cases, as well as the establishment of One-Stop Centers for survivor support and mapping of anticipated needs for additional service hubs.

The delegation's technical meetings in Lviv provided important insight as well, helping to clarify the concrete forms of assistance required in Ukraine to respond to CRSV, including the need to strengthen referral pathways and to scale-up service delivery to meet the growing needs of survivors. Conferring with UN entities and field personnel on the ground, both in Ukraine and border areas of neighbouring Poland and Moldova, the delegation identified the need to foster and employ a firm survivor-centred approach, as well as areas to expand existing services available to CRSV survivors in the context of the ongoing conflict.

SRSG Patten and the UN Action Network will continue to provide support through high-level advocacy, provision of guidance materials relating to the establishment of the Monitoring, Analysis and Reporting Arrangements (MARA), prevention and survivor-centred approaches, and preparation of future coordinated technical trainings to address CRSV in the region.

Welcome to UN Action's third newsletter, showcasing some of our current initiatives, members and partners in the global response to conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV). UN Action is a Network of 23 UN entities united with the goal of ending sexual violence during and in the wake of armed conflict. Guided by the Network's Strategic Framework 2020-2025, the first half of 2022 was filled with initiatives to further a survivor-centred approach, ensure prevention of CRSV, and enhance justice and accountability for survivors.

DONOR HIGHLIGHT: SWITZERLAND

Since the creation of UN Action in 2007, Switzerland has been a staunch political and financial supporter of the Network and the CRSV mandate. Historically, Switzerland has expressed interest in CRSV preventative measures that target the root causes and guarantee gender equality, support the work of civil society and women human rights defenders, and ensure accountability.

In 2016, UN Action deployed an international inter-agency sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) expert seconded by Switzerland to the UN Country Team in Mali. The deployment enhanced Mali's national capacity to address SGBV, including CRSV, through structured coordination with key ministries, elected institutions and civil society to address issues around GBV in the context of conflict; a comprehensive national strategy was developed and adopted due to the groundwork laid by the expert in 2018.

Switzerland also regularly participates in the Network's initiatives. For example, Switzerland attended the donors session of UN Action's Strategic Planning Retreat, as well as UN Action's Donor Roundtable, in 2020 and 2021 respectively. Since 2020, Switzerland has contributed to UN Action's fund, the CRSV-Multi-Partner Trust Fund (CRSV-MPTF). UN Action wishes to congratulate the Permanent Mission of Switzerland on its membership to the UN Security Council for 2023-2024 and looks forward to continuing our fruitful collaboration! Merci beaucoup; Danke Vielmal; Grazie mille!

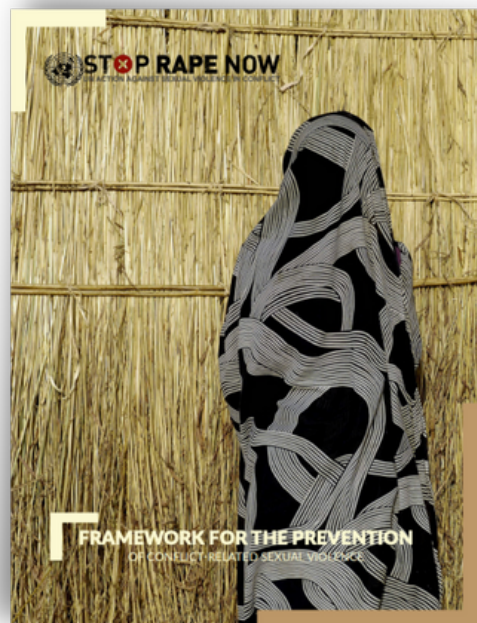
IN SPOTLIGHT: INTERNATIONAL DAY

The International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict (IDESVIC) is observed annually on 19 June. This year, the Office of SRSR-SVC commemorated the 8th official observance of the day around the theme 'Prevention as Protection: Enhancing structural and operational prevention of CRSV'. Co-hosted by the Office of the SRSR-SVC, the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (OSRSG-CAAC), and the Permanent Mission of Argentina to the UN, the event was held in-person, for the first time since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, at UNHQ in New York City.

"Every new wave of warfare brings with it a rising tide of human tragedy, including new waves of war's oldest, most silenced, and least condemned crime", emphasised SRSR Patten. In her remarks, she advocated for the need for concrete, targeted efforts to prevent the heinous crime of sexual violence in contexts of conflict from happening in the first place. As Secretary-General Guterres has stated: "*When we talk about war crimes, we cannot forget that the worst of crimes is war itself*". The current context of great global turbulence makes it abundantly clear that no amount of protection or assistance is a substitute for peace. It is critical to reinforce compliance, publicly denounce transgressions, and mitigate the ever-rising risk of intimidation and reprisals against frontline actors and activists who put their lives on the line to address these crimes. Prevention is the best form of protection, including the prevention of conflict itself, through the concerted and proactive waging of inclusive, just, and durable peace.

At this event, SRSR Patten soft-launched the [Framework on the Prevention of CRSV](#), which is a comprehensive prevention strategy that draws upon ground truths and the lived experiences of survivors of CRSV, responding to calls from governments and civil society organisations for a targeted prevention plan. Building upon the UN's collective knowledge and experience, the framework is intended to serve as a roadmap for more tailored, timely, and effective interventions.

SRSR Patten took the opportunity of the event to highlight that the international community is not short on political commitments but are, instead, short on "concrete action, political courage, technical capacity, and financial resources". She called upon all stakeholders, from Member States to UN entities, to civil society and the private sector to foster the prevention of CRSV through compliance with international norms and break the vicious cycle of violence and impunity.



UN ACTION COORDINATOR IN FOCUS: MS. BERNADETTE SENE

Ms. Bernadette Sene took on the role of the Coordinator of UN Action in early 2019, equipped with more than 20 years of experience working in peacekeeping and humanitarian settings, including as a Senior Women's Protection Adviser (Mali) and in Child Protection. Since she took on the role as the UN Action Coordinator, the Network has grown from 14 to 23 member entities, enhanced its knowledge-building work on critical issues such as the nexus of CRSV and violent extremism/terrorism, the prevention of CRSV, and what it means to take a survivor-centred approach to CRSV, and launched catalytic joint initiatives, including its current efforts to revitalise the "Stop Rape Now" public awareness campaign on ending war's oldest crime.



In May 2022, Ms. Sene accompanied SRSG Patten on a mission to Ukraine, Poland, and Moldova to ascertain how UN Action could best support those responding to the war. Ms. Sene was inspired by the goodwill of volunteers and the rapid mobilisation of the UN and its partners working to ensure those most vulnerable were protected from further harm, including the Blue Dot and Orange Dot centres that provided life-saving support and a place of rest on a long, dangerous journey.

Echoing the strategic vision of SRSG Patten, Ms. Sene consistently advocates for the prioritisation of prevention efforts to ensure CRSV does not happen in the first place and the need for holistic survivor-centred services, such as specialised mental health services, as well as preventative measures and economic empowerment support that build resilience and decrease vulnerability to CRSV.

"We need to support survivors throughout their healing journey, from recovery to reintegration into society, through providing medical, psychological, livelihoods responses, including their pursuit of justice and reparations".

Ms. Sene highlights and believes in the importance of "speaking directly with survivors to understand their needs and making funds available through coordination mechanisms" to avoid the duplication of efforts. UN Action will be supporting those responding to the crisis by enhancing their knowledge and capacity on CRSV to best support survivors – through an innovative virtual training hub – as well as implementing joint catalytic programmes that directly respond to the needs in and around Ukraine as identified in the Framework of Cooperation between the UN and the Government of Ukraine. Through strengthened coordination, the international community can ensure that priorities are identified together, including those established by national authorities, and the remaining gaps in CRSV prevention and response are addressed.

UN ACTION MEMBER PROFILES: NEWEST MEMBERS

The UN Action Network is pleased to announce our two newest members who joined during Summer 2022: the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Department of Global Communications (UNDGC). We look forward to these members' guidance in the nexus between climate change and CRSV and with CRSV advocacy efforts, respectively.



United Nations
Environment Programme



United
Nations

Department of Global Communications

SPECIAL COLUMN: UN ACTION ENGAGEMENT WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR

In 2021, UN Action created both Advocacy and Fundraising Strategies for 2022-2026 with an overarching goal of raising \$100 million USD by 2026 for the CRSV-MPTF. As such, the Network prioritised forging new strategic partnerships with the private sector, as reflected in its 2020-2025 Strategic Framework. To kickstart this ambition, SRSG Patten and the UN Action Coordinator travelled to the Middle East region in November 2021 and March 2022 to meet with new stakeholders, including private sector companies. Organisations include financial institutions, humanitarian aid agencies and international consulting firms.

One such company, CTG (Committed to Good), a humanitarian staffing company, worked with UN Action to write a first-of-its-kind white paper on private sector engagement in CRSV efforts, Addressing CRSV: Private Sector Opportunities for Engagement. The paper acts as a how-to guide for companies of various locations, sizes and sectors to support CRSV prevention and response initiatives as a strategic partner of UN Action.

Moving forward, UN Action is eager to build new partnerships with non-traditional donors and looks forward to the innovative approaches the private sector can bring to support CRSV survivors.

CORE GROUP FEATURE: THE NEXUS BETWEEN VIOLENT EXTREMISM, TERRORISM, AND CRSV

In 2021, a new thematic working group was formed to better understand the nexus between violent extremism, terrorism and CRSV. Led by the TOE and UNODC, and consisting of member entities from OCHA, UNODA, UNOCT, DPPA, IOM, CTED, and UN Women, the first three meetings focused on discussions to understand the conceptual and legal framing of CRSV in the context of violent extremism and terrorism. Recognising the complexities around this subject and as an exercise in continuous learning, the working group organised a series of brownbag discussions in 2022.

The first brownbag was held on 28 February 2022 with UN Action Focal Points, CRSV Focal Points, and Senior/Women's Protection Advisers from various settings. A representative from the OSRSG-SVC gave a presentation on the historical and theoretical context of the nexus and how it has been articulated in Security Council resolutions. Other topics of discussion included justice and accountability efforts, UN collaboration in this thematic area, prevention, and the situation of returnees.

The second brownbag was held on 6 May 2022 that focused on the provision of services to CRSV survivors in the context of terrorism/violent extremism and counterterrorism. The brownbag included two presentations from experts from Amnesty International and the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation, King's College London which touched upon terrorism legislation, treatment of children, and the impacts of counterterrorism measures on civil society organisations.

UN Action is looking forward to hosting a third brownbag on this critical topic in the coming months!



UN Action organised an event around the margins of the 77th General Assembly high-level week in September 2022. The aim of the event was to learn more about CRSV, bring together new stakeholders to meet SRSG Patten, and explore how they can support CRSV survivors through UN Action. The event also launched the Framework for the Prevention of CRSV and featured remarks by the OSRSG-SVC's newest partners, including Bibliothèques Sans Frontières, the Chalhoub Group and the Global Tree Fund.