

15<sup>TH</sup>

REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL ON

# CONFLICT-RELATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE

JANUARY – DECEMBER 2023 (S/2024/292)



CONFLICT-RELATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE  
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**21** SETTINGS  
**15** CONFLICT SETTINGS  
**3** POST-CONFLICT SITUATIONS  
**3** SITUATIONS OF CONCERN

**WOMEN AND GIRLS**  
account for more than  
**3,522**  
of the reported cases  
**[95%]**

The list of parties credibly suspected of committing or being responsible for patterns of sexual violence includes  
**58 PARTIES**  
The vast majority of parties are, as in previous years, non-State actors, including UN-designated terrorist entities. Listing is based on cumulative evidence documented over the years, and not only in the present report

**7**  
**SANCTIONS REGIMES**  
of the Security Council include sexual violence within their designation criteria

**WOMEN'S PROTECTION ADVISERS (WPAS)**  
are deployed in **7** peace operations/special political missions as well as a non-mission setting. The presence of WPAs contributes to enhanced data collection and analysis on CRSV<sup>1</sup>  
**1,599 CASES [43% OF THE TOTAL]**  
were reported in countries where MARA is established

**3,688**  
**UN VERIFIED CASES OF CRSV**  
representing a 50% increase from the previous reporting cycle, with the highest numbers recorded in **Ethiopia (835)** and the **Democratic Republic of the Congo (733)**  
While the report conveys the severity and brutality of verified incidents, it does not purport to reflect the global scale or prevalence of these crimes

**145 CASES [4% OF THE TOTAL]**  
were reported against  
**MEN AND BOYS**

Since the adoption of resolution 1960 (2010),  
**81 PARTIES [66 NON-STATE ACTORS AND 15 STATE ACTORS]**  
have been listed across  
**12 COUNTRIES**

**21 CASES**  
of conflict-related sexual violence against  
**LGBTQI**  
individuals were recorded

**47 PARTIES**  
have not assumed commitments to address CRSV

**9**  
**SECURITY SECTOR ACTORS**  
have assumed formal commitments to address CRSV

**1,186**  
In **CASES** the victims were **CHILDREN**;  
**GIRLS** account for **1,157 [98%]** of the cases

- Sexual violence in conflict-affected settings
- Sexual violence in post-conflict settings
- Other situations of concern

<sup>1</sup>In addition, a specialist is deployed at regional level focused on implementation of the framework of cooperation on preventing and responding to CRSV between the United Nations and the African Union.

## KEY THEMES

## RISING MILITARIZATION AND THE ILLICIT PROLIFERATION OF ARMS

Sexual violence continued to be used as a tactic of war, torture, and terrorism amid **increased militarization, illicit arms proliferation, and record levels of internal and cross-border displacement**. Against this backdrop, escalating cycles of violence hindered or cut short the implementation of peace or political processes in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, South Sudan, and the Sudan. **Food insecurity** and the increased risks of exposure to sexual violence, particularly in the context of displacement, is highlighted as an emerging concern.

In 2023, weapons bearers perpetrated sexual violence crimes, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Myanmar, South Sudan and the Sudan, demonstrating that the **illicit proliferation** and widespread availability **of small arms and light weapons** and their ammunition **directly facilitated incidents of sexual violence**. By fueling armed conflict, weapons proliferation also contributed to the creation of an environment conducive to the perpetration of sexual violence with impunity.

Globally, conflict-related sexual violence remained a chronic feature of the **political economy of war**. Non-State armed groups, including UN-designated terrorist groups and transnational criminal networks used sexual violence as a tactic to incentivize recruitment and gain control over territory and lucrative natural resources. Women and girls continued to suffer attacks in the course of **essential economic and livelihood activities**, including in the Central African Republic, Haiti, and Somalia.

The **diversity of survivors** continued to highlight the importance of an **intersectional analysis and the use of tailored, survivor-centered approaches**. The report documents cases against women, girls, men, boys and persons with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities, race and ethnicity, as well as persons living with disabilities, ranging in age from three to 70 years.

A discernible trend of **gender-based hate speech, gendered disinformation and incitement to violence**, including through the digital sphere, was used to humiliate and destabilize targeted communities and political opponents such as in Myanmar and Libya, which further hindered women's participation in public life, amid a global pushback on generational gains made on gender equality.

The report continues to relay trends related to the plight of **women and girls who become pregnant following rape, and children born as a result**, in line with the SG's special report on this theme.

To strengthen the nexus between sanctions and conflict-related sexual violence to enhance compliance to international norms by parties to the conflict, it is important to ensure **coherence between the list annexed to the report and the practice of sanctions regimes in imposing targeted and graduated measures against persistent perpetrators**.

## PROGRESS &amp; CHALLENGES

## ENCOURAGING JUDICIAL DEVELOPMENTS DESPITE PREVAILING IMPUNITY

In **Colombia**, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace formally opened "Macro Case 11" in September 2023 to investigate sexual and gender-based violence committed on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity in the context of conflict between the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) and State actors, against civilians as well as within the ranks of both parties.

In the **Central African Republic**, President Touadéra promulgated a law extending Special Criminal Court proceedings until 2028, while the Appeals Chamber upheld the 2022 conviction of a commander of the armed group, Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation (3R), for rape perpetrated by his subordinates on the basis of command responsibility.

In **Iraq**, in June 2023, the Government approved the release of 12 million USD for the implementation of the Yazidi Survivors Law, under which some 1,600 applications for compensation have been approved for Yazidi women and children, as well as for Turkmen, Shabak and Christian women who were held in captivity by Da'esh.

In **Bosnia Herzegovina**, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted a new law in July 2023 on civilian victims of war which recognizes children born as a result of conflict-related rape as a distinct category of victims, granting them specific rights, notably in relation to education and health.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

## PREVENTING SEXUAL VIOLENCE THROUGH GENDER-SENSITIVE & INCLUSIVE PEACE AND SECURITY EFFORTS

Call upon all parties to conflict to **immediately cease all forms of conflict-related sexual violence** in compliance with relevant Security Council resolutions and provide the United Nations with unhindered access to conflict-affected areas and detention centres.

Foster a **gender-responsive security sector**, through the development of effective oversight and accountability mechanisms, including the establishment of vetting and screening to prevent credibly suspected perpetrators from being recruited, retained or promoted within the security forces.

Encourage Member States to adopt **national legislation on arms and ammunition control** and implement the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the Arms Trade Treaty and other relevant instruments.

Recommend that the Security Council ensure that sexual violence is systematically monitored and incorporated as a stand-alone designation criterion for **targeted sanctions** to deter the commission of such violence by all parties.

Encourage Member States to adopt a **survivor-centred approach** to preventing and addressing conflict-related sexual violence that seeks to empower survivors by prioritizing their specific needs and perspectives.

Address **chronic funding shortfalls** by providing predictable financial support to the conflict-related sexual violence multi-partner trust fund (CRSV MPTF).

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The United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict (UN Action) network coordinates the work of 25 UN entities. In 2023, UN Action facilitated a coordinated, multisectoral project by six network entities in Ukraine to build the capacity of relevant stakeholders to prevent conflict-related sexual violence and empower survivors. The network also rolled out the "Framework for the Prevention of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence" and a white paper scoping opportunities for private sector engagement in support of efforts to tackle these crimes.



In 2023, the Security-Council-mandated Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict continued to assist national authorities in over a dozen countries to strengthen rule of law institutions to enhance accountability for conflict-related sexual violence, including in the DRC, CAR, Mali, Guinea, and Ukraine.

