

**Remarks of SRSB-SVC Pramila Patten**  
**11<sup>th</sup> International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in**  
**Conflict, “*Breaking the Cycle, Healing the Scars: Addressing the***  
***Intergenerational Effects of CRSV*”**  
**CR 5, 10.00am-12.30pm (EDT), 19 June 2025**  
**[10 mins]**

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Thank you, Sherwin, for that introduction and for moderating today’s event.

Your Excellency, Francisco Fabián Tropepi, Permanent Representative of Argentina to the United Nations,

Under-Secretary-General, Ms. Virginia Gamba,

Distinguished guests and participants:

As we gather to mark the eleventh official commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict, I would like to commend the visionary leadership of **Argentina** in putting this date on the global calendar. Since **2015**, it has become an opportunity to *stand in solidarity with survivors – many of whom feel forgotten, in the forgotten corners of the world – and to pay tribute to those risking their lives to support them on the frontlines – often underfunded, under fire, and overstretched.*

Each year, this occasion has become *more widely commemorated the world over*. It is fitting that we “commemorate”, rather than “celebrate”, this milestone, given the *grim reality of a world in the grip of crisis*. Needs are mounting, even as funding for lifesaving aid is slashed, *straining the humanitarian sector to breaking point.*

As we survey the security landscape, we see a *growing gap* between *commitments made on the world stage*, and *compliance by parties in theatres of war.*

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This year’s focus on **addressing the intergenerational effects of conflict-related sexual violence** compels us to ask the question: ***When does wartime atrocity end?***

Long after soldiers retreat, and treaties are signed, the weapon of rape keeps attacking bodies and minds, relationships and reputations, families and communities. Some scholars have therefore called sexual violence ***the most enduring tactic of war***.

For too many women and children, ***war is not over when it's over***. Its effects echo *long after the final battle and far beyond the battlefield*. We see it in the eyes of survivors, in the children born of war, in the hospitals reduced to rubble and ruin, in fractured families, and in the sprawling refugee camps where civilians languish. The legacy of war is *written on the bodies of women and girls*, in ways that have been *written out of history*. Their pain has been dismissed as “collateral” or “inevitable”, and prolonged through silence, denial, and neglect. **Left unaddressed, the harms and trauma compound over time.**

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Conflicts in **the Balkans** and **Rwanda** in the **1990s** were turning-points in the global recognition of the gravity of wartime rape. Yet, research published in **2024** found that **86 percent** of survivors of sexual violence in **Kosovo** continued to suffer post-traumatic stress **25 years** after the end of the conflict. Further illustrating the long-term consequences of this crime, a survivor testified to the **Bosnian War Crimes Commission**: *“They took my body that night, but they also took my family, my future, and my peace. I live now, not as the person I was, but as a person who remembers”*.

In the words of a survivor of the **1994 Rwandan Genocide**: *“Rape did not end the day the soldiers left my house. It continues every time I am shunned, every time my child asks who his father is, every time I feel the sickness in my body that they left behind. The war ended, but for me, the battle never stopped”*.

The effects of this scourge are ***long-lasting and life-changing*** – manifested in physical and psychological trauma, HIV, STIs, unwanted and unsafe pregnancies, poverty and socioeconomic exclusion, ostracism and reprisals, often linked with social codes of *honor, shame and victim-blame*. It is hence critical to sustain survivor-centered, trauma-informed care, to prevent further, secondary harms.

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Today's speakers will span a range of perspectives, from across time and space. They include a representative of the Sudanese Government, **Dr. Sulaima**, and a **young woman survivor with a baby born of wartime rape**, who I met on my recent mission to **Sudan**. I also welcome the participation of **Madame Solages**, a civil society activist from **Haiti**, where successive waves of unrest have created cycles of violence and lawlessness, resulting in women and girls from across multiple generations being subjected to sexual violence as a tool of intimidation, punishment, and social control. We will hear a statement on behalf of **the grandmothers of Sepur Zarco**, who sought justice for sexual slavery, used as a tactic of war to shred the social fabric of Indigenous communities during the conflict in **Guatemala** in the **1980s**. I also congratulate the brave **Maya Achi women**, who fought for **over 40 years** for justice, on another milestone verdict for sexual violence as a crime against humanity, delivered last month. Through their sheer determination, these women have *set a powerful precedent and reshaped collective memory*.

As these experiences attest, beyond the delivery of immediate relief, we must foster long-term resilience, in order to ***break the vicious cycle of violence, impunity and risk, and replace it with a virtuous cycle of recognition, reporting, and response***.

The forthcoming annual *Report of the Secretary-General on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence*, compiled by my Office, records violations against victims ranging from **three to 75 years of age**. It documents over **4,500 UN-verified cases** from across **21 country situations**, which represents a **20 percent** increase from **2023**, which was itself a **50 percent** increase from **2022**. Every year, **over 90 percent** of these atrocities target women and girls. At the same, we know this data remains a ***chronic undercount***, reflecting *incident reports*, rather than the scale of *actual incidents*, as *most cases never reach a clinic, let alone a courtroom*.

The report emphasizes that the **drawdown of UN Missions is leading to security vacuums** that threaten to reverse the progress made to protect and assist survivors and to mitigate the risk of recurrence. This, in turn, undermines the ability of women to contribute to conflict recovery, peacebuilding, and development. At the same time, rising militarization and authoritarian rule are *turning back the clock on women's rights*. The report finds that even as the world contends with record numbers of civilians *forced to flee their homes and homelands*, due to persecution and

*seemingly endless cycles of conflict*, the level of respect for binding laws and obligations remains low.

We see this in **Ukraine**, where reports of sexual violence against civilians, detainees, and Prisoners of War have surfaced since the Russian invasion.

We see it in **Sudan**, where sexual violence is once again being used to terrorize and displace communities, with devastating reports of women in **Darfur** committing suicide rather than facing the near-certainty of rape by armed men.

We see it in **eastern DRC**, where countless women have been shunned and shamed in the wake of rape, with some describing the isolation and stigma as *worse than the act of violence itself*, resulting in cycles of exploitation and food insecurity.

We see it in **Myanmar**, where sexual violence is used as a tool to suppress dissent and as a torture tactic during interrogation and detention, with family members forced to witness violations, leaving lasting scars.

And we see the risks multiply amid **spiraling humanitarian crises** in **Gaza, Haiti, Afghanistan, South Sudan** and elsewhere.

What survivors have told me – *time and time again* – is: ***What happened to me could have been prevented.*** They have broken their silence for the sake of justice and future generations. While rape is still subject, in many jurisdictions, to statutes of limitations, the trauma has *no expiry date*. Moreover, the *pace of justice is painfully slow*, often coming years after the crime occurred, when stigma, economic isolation, and untreated injuries have already **destroyed the lives of victims**, and **reverberated across generations**. This includes to the **children born of wartime rape**, who face specific threats and risks, related to statelessness, poverty, exploitation, recruitment and radicalization.

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Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

We do not have the luxury of looking away. We do not have the luxury of reciting words of condemnation and *moving on*, when survivors lack support to *move on with their lives*. Women and girls are paying the price of impunity, militarism, and weaponized misogyny. They are shouldering

the *burden of care* and the *weight of history*, in the face of *funding cuts* that *undercut* international security and cooperation. Thousands of survivors will lose access to medical care, psychosocial support, shelter, and legal redress. The price tag will be more chaos, displacement, broken promises, resentment and extremism, fanning the flames of hostility and fueling the next wave of warfare, wiping out decades of development gains.

If we undermine investment in *women's recovery*, we undermine investment in *conflict recovery*, and we all inherit a *less safe world*.

At this time of *complex crises* and *great global uncertainty*, my *call to action is clear*:

- **Firstly**, the voices of survivors must be *heard and heeded* – *on this day and every day* – not just as stories or statistics, but as the co-creators of durable solutions.
- **Secondly**, for survivors to have *peace and peace of mind*, timely and tailored services must reach them at scale, and our investment must be joined-up, catalytic and sustainable. The implementation gap is, *in reality*, a funding and access gap. We therefore need *sustained political resolve and resources equal to the scale and duration of the challenge*. This includes replenishing the **CRSV Multi-Partner Trust Fund**, which supports the operational arms of my mandate.
- **Thirdly**, the existing normative framework and institutional architecture – which has yielded such a *dramatic shift in paradigm and perspective* over the past **15** years, elevating sexual violence from the *sidelines of history* to a *redline of international law* – must be strengthened and sustained. We cannot risk a reversal of the trajectory of progress. What we have achieved to date gives us hope. For instance, the interagency coordination network I Chair, **UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict**, has supported **over 60** joint, catalytic interventions across **18** conflict settings, enabling **thousands of survivors** to access multisectoral services. These efforts include: establishing and equipping Survivor Relief Centers across **Ukraine**; economically empowering survivors in **South Sudan**; providing safe shelters in **Darfur**; aiding reintegration of abducted women and children in **Somalia**; and supporting one-stop service centers in **Mali**. There have also been encouraging developments in terms of transitional justice, supported by my **Team of Experts on the Rule of Law**. For instance, in **Ukraine**, law enforcement officials have been trained on trauma-informed investigations and prosecutions. Technical support to

legislative reform processes, to improve alignment with international standards, has been provided in **Iraq, Libya, South Sudan** and elsewhere. Operational continuity must be maintained in **contexts of transition**, including through the presence of Security Council-mandated **Women's Protection Advisers**, which are currently deployed in **less than half of the countries we cover**.

- **Finally**, to drive transformation, we must *dig deeper* and *unearth the root causes* of conflict-related sexual violence, namely gender inequality and discrimination. We must *silence the guns* and *amplify the voices of women*. We owe this not only to *future generations*, and to *present survivors*, but also to the *human rights defenders of the past*, who were imprisoned, persecuted, and killed for forging new freedoms.

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Excellencies,

How we meet this moment of crisis is the *true test of our resolve*. **While political dynamics and funding decisions may vary, the laws, rights, needs and mandate remain**. We must, likewise, remain principled and coherent to avoid *wartime rape* becoming *ever-more entrenched in peacetime reality*, through impunity and the absence of redress. Survivors deserve more than promises – they deserve protection, assistance, and a *future free from fear*. The scars and trauma left in the wake of wartime sexual violence cast a *long, dark shadow*. We must remain steadfast in bringing to *all* those affected the *light of healing and hope*.

Thank you.

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## **Dr. Sulaima Elkhailifa's video remarks at the event to commemorate the International Day of Elimination of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, virtual participation from Sudan, 19 June 2025, UNHQ**

### **Introduction:**

- Today, we gather to honor the survivors and victims of conflict-related sexual violence, an atrocity that leaves deep, lasting scars on women, girls, and communities at large.
- We must reaffirm our collective responsibility to end this violence, hold perpetrators accountable, and ensure that survivors receive the support, justice, and dignity they deserve.

### **Ending Conflict-Related Sexual Violence:**

- Conflict-related sexual violence continues to be used as a weapon of war, leaving countless women and girls vulnerable to rape, sexual slavery, and torture.
- The time to end this violence is now. We must work together to eradicate it from conflict zones globally, with a particular focus on Sudan and other affected regions.

### **Ending Impunity and Enhancing Access to Justice:**

- Impunity for these crimes must end. We must hold perpetrators accountable, regardless of their position or power.
- The international community must support Sudan's efforts to strengthen the rule of law and create a justice system where survivors are heard, and perpetrators are brought to justice.
- The UN and other international bodies can play a crucial role in helping Sudan implement comprehensive legal frameworks that protect women and girls from sexual violence.

### **Enhancing Services for Women and Girls:**

- Survivors of conflict-related sexual violence need more than just legal justice; they need comprehensive services that include healthcare, mental health support, legal aid, and social reintegration.
- We must ensure that these services are accessible, sustainable, and that they respect the dignity of survivors.
- A focus on rehabilitation and psychosocial support is crucial to help women and girls heal from the trauma they have suffered.

### **International Support and Funding:**

- I call on the international community to stand with Sudanese women and girls. Do not look away from their pain, their struggles, and their strength.
- We need your continued financial and technical support. Funding is essential to expand and sustain the programs needed to address conflict-related sexual violence.
- It is through these investments that we can ensure lasting change and the creation of a future free from sexual violence.

### **Framework of Cooperation:**

- Sudan has signed a framework of cooperation with the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, a step forward in ensuring the protection of women and girls.
- This agreement is a powerful tool for ending sexual violence in conflict, but it is only through action that we can achieve tangible results.
- International partners can assist in scaling up these interventions and ensure that they reach all corners of Sudan, particularly in conflict-affected regions.

### **Transitional Justice and Memorial for Survivors:**

- Transitional justice is key to ensuring accountability, healing, and reconciliation. It allows us to address the root causes of violence and offer survivors a sense of justice.
- Memorializing the experiences of survivors and respecting their voices is essential for preventing the repetition of such horrors. We must honor their strength and resilience, ensuring their stories are never forgotten.

### **Conclusion:**

- Today is not just a day to remember, but a day to act. The international community must not stand by; we must stand with Sudanese women.
- Let us be the generation that finally ends conflict-related sexual violence, brings justice to survivors, and creates a world where women and girls can live in peace, dignity, and security.

**Event to commemorate the 11<sup>th</sup> official observance of the**  
**International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict**  
***“Breaking the Cycle, Healing the Scars: Addressing the Intergenerational***  
***Effects of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSV)”***

I watched this video and it reminded me the movie of the Haitian filmmaker Rachel Magloire “*Les Enfants du Coup d’Etat*”, a documentary that shared the voices of Haitian Women survivors who were raped during the Coup d’Etat in Haiti the years between 1991 and 1994 and after until 1999 forced to carry pregnancies in a country where abortion is completely criminalized. I also recall the stories of Haitian women who were subjected to systematic sexual violence during the Duvalier dictatorship. I come from a country that was once colonized, the use of rape as a weapon of domination and dehumanization dates back to slavery, when the rape of enslaved Black women was institutionalized to maintain systems of control and exploitation. This violence doesn’t stop. Today, my country faces a multidimensional crisis. With the expansion of the power of the gangs, between January and March 2025, at least 1,617 people were killed, 580 others injured in violence involving gangs, 161 kidnappings, and more than 1.3 million people were displaced, more than half of whom are women and girls. But it’s also thousands of women and girls raped, left with no access to justice or contracting STIs, becoming pregnant as a result of rape, and suffering often in complete abandonment. Sexual violence has become a strategic weapon of war used by armed groups in territories they attack or control. These acts leave behind not only physical scars but deep individual and collective traumas that are transmitted from one generation to the next. Healing remains inaccessible because justice is denied, support systems are underfunded, and women-centered, culturally grounded responses are lacking. So yes, as a Haitian woman and feminist, as a survivor of sexual violence myself, I know the fundamental importance of Breaking the Cycle, Healing the Scars, and addressing the intergenerational Effects of these violences.

Yet, feminist organizations, especially in the Global South, have developed models and methods of response and healing that are deeply rooted in the lived experiences, cultures, and resilience of survivors. These approaches go far beyond trauma care. They center dignity, reclaim power, and restore autonomy. Like the program in our feminist organization in Haiti, “Sisterhood”.

The way to address Haiti's crisis, especially the security aspect, in the past and today, has consistently failed Haitian Women. The UNSC resolution 1820 found that sexual violence used as a tool of conflict threatens peace, and the WPS agenda makes clear that addressing sexual violence and centering women's leadership is critical to stemming insecurity and securing a sustainable peace. We can't resolve the problems today by erasing the mistakes of the past. Haitian Women and Women anywhere in the world can't heal and be safe if we continue systematically to apply the same wrong formulas that harm them, push them to the margins, and deny their agency. We were always on the frontlines, and we will be tomorrow. We continue to try to influence policies and do recommendations in global spaces of what we need and what we want to see for our safety and also in our country like Haitian Feminists who work on a policy framework proposed to the government of transition to address the specific needs and realities of Haitian women in the Haitian crisis.

In many spaces in the world today, the conflicts are intensifying, but also the expansion of fascism, right-wing movements, racism, sexism, and nationalism are increasing all kinds of violence and discrimination against women. They are also working to restore the rights of women worldwide. It is essential that in spaces like this one, where global policies are shaped, we do not merely discuss the violence women face, but we center the solutions that women themselves have created. We must legitimize their voices, experiences, and leadership. This means including survivors and feminist organizations in decision-making processes, resource allocation, policy design, and implementation. An intersectional and decolonial approach is crucial. Women are not just victims of violence; they are

survivors, organizers, community builders, and changemakers. We must stop erasing them. We must stop silencing them. Breaking the cycles of violence requires moving away from framing women solely as passive victims. Their knowledge, voices, and needs must be placed at the center of building durable, relevant, transformative, and gender-responsive solutions.

**Former AU Special Envoy on Youth Ms. Aya Chebbi's Video Message  
The International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict  
19 June 2025**

Dear Friends,

As the Global Champion in the Fight Against Conflict-Related Sexual Violence and Youth Liaison to SRSG Office, I speak from a generation that refuses to inherit silence.

Conflict-related sexual violence is a wound that doesn't close when the war ends. It echoes through generations. It lingers in the bodies of survivors in the memories passed down, in the shame imposed by society.

And yet, through all this, survivors rise. Youth rise. Young people are not removed from this story. Young people are born into it, into these histories sometimes spoken, often silenced. Young people carry the weight of inherited trauma often without explanation, without justice, without healing.

But also carry the power to transform it. To demand change. Today's theme "**Breaking the Cycle, Healing the Scars: Addressing the Intergenerational Effects of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence**" calls us to action. It reminds us that healing is not passive. It is political. It is personal. It is intergenerational.

Many young people are survivors themselves. Others are children born of rape, living with unanswered questions and stolen origins.

Their voices are too often left out of the conversation. And That must change. We are the generation that will say: this ends with us. To every survivor, every young person who has carried this pain without words. I see you. You are not alone. Your healing is revolutionary. Your story is sacred and your voice is so powerful.

So how do we do this?

It starts with the truth and it demands courage.

The kind of courage that shifts budgets. That reforms institutions. That centers healing instead of hiding. I call on decision-makers to match our urgency:

- Listen to survivors, not as victims, but as leaders.
- Include children born of wartime rape in reparations, justice, and peace processes not just as dependents but as rights-holders.
- Protect young human rights defenders and frontline responders from retaliation.

- And Make space for youth leadership not as an afterthought but as architects of peace.

Young people are not asking for inclusion in the margins but for shifting the center. Intergenerational trauma requires intergenerational co-leadership. Let me explain what that looks like:

- Appoint youth co-leads in national CRSV strategies and transitional justice processes.
- Mandate intergenerational representation in peace negotiation teams, truth commissions, and reparations boards.
- Fund youth-led survivor initiatives through multi-year, core funding not project-based microgrants.
- Prioritize data collection on intergenerational trauma including psychosocial and legal needs of youth born of rape.
- Include young peacebuilders and survivor-advocates in Security Council briefings and field missions. The youth, peace and security (YPS) agenda should be not be isolated from conflict related sexual violence.
- And support cross-generational healing spaces where storytelling, memory work, and collective care are prioritized.

Intergenerational co-leadership is not about inviting young people to the table. It's about co-creating the table together where lived experience is leadership, and where the future is co-authored by those who bear the scars and those who refuse to repeat them.

This is a call for reform. For funding. For political will. For memory. And for healing. Too many of our systems are built to protect perpetrators. We must flip the script. From exclusion to co-leadership.

This is the world young people are building.  
And this is the future survivors deserve.

Thank you.