



REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL ON

13TH

CONFLICT-RELATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE

JANUARY – DECEMBER 2021 S/2022/272

Burkina Faso and Mozambique have been added as emerging concerns

18 COUNTRIES
13 CONFLICT SETTINGS
3 POST-CONFLICT SITUATIONS
2 SITUATIONS OF CONCERN

WOMEN AND GIRLS

account for more than
3,198
of the reported cases
[97%]

The annexed list of parties credibly suspected of committing or being responsible for patterns of sexual violence in situations of armed conflict on the Security Council agenda includes a total of

49 PARTIES

12 CASES

of conflict-related sexual violence against
LGBTQI
individuals were recorded, noting that this is often not captured in the reporting process.

THE UNITED NATIONS ACTION AGAINST SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT NETWORK

coordinates the work of
21 ENTITIES
In 2021, through the CRSV Multi-Partner Trust Fund UN Action provided funding for service-providers in Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq to address sexual violence despite pandemic-related constraints.

SENIOR WOMEN PROTECTION ADVISORS (SWPAS)

The Security Council has called for the deployment of Senior Women's Protection Advisers (SWPAs) in the mandate authorizations and renewals of nine peace operations

More than **2,300 CASES**
[76% OF THE TOTAL]

were reported in the countries where SWPAs are deployed.

3,293 CASES OF CRSV

with the highest number recorded in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo (1,016)**.

While the report conveys the severity and brutality of verified incidents, it does not purport to reflect the global scale or prevalence of this crime.

More than
83 CASES
[1%]

were reported against
MEN AND BOYS

In **1,565 CASES** the victims were
CHILDREN (48%)
GIRLS account for **1,539**
[98%] of the cases

Since the adoption resolution 1960 (2010),
69 PARTIES
(53 NON-STATE ACTORS AND 16 STATE ACTORS)

have been listed across
11 COUNTRIES

The Office of the SRSG on Sexual Violence in Conflict has signed

11
JOINT COMMUNIQUÉS OR FRAMEWORKS OF COOPERATION

with Member States to address CRSV

A country section has been added on **ETHIOPIA**

reflecting primarily the findings of the joint investigation report of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission and OHCHR, which detailed acts of sexual violence

8

SECURITY COUNCIL SANCTIONS REGIMES

include sexual violence within their designation criteria.

39 PARTIES

listed in the annex have not assumed commitments to address CRSV.

27 PARTIES
(70% of listed entities) are persistent perpetrators, having appeared in the annex for 5 or more years without taking corrective action.

THE TEAM OF EXPERTS ON THE RULE OF LAW AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT

engaged in
14
conflict-affected settings, including the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Mali, South Sudan, and elsewhere to strengthen institutional safeguards against impunity.

9

SECURITY SECTOR ACTORS

have adopted formal commitments to address CRSV.

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

KEY THEMES

RISING MILITARIZATION IN THE MIDST OF A PANDEMIC

In 2021, rising inequality, increased militarization, reduced civic space and the illicit flow of small arms and light weapons fuelled widespread and systematic conflict-related sexual violence, in the midst of a global pandemic. A series of unconstitutional shifts of power were followed by insecurity, economic shocks, and human rights violations, including the use of sexual violence in the lead up to, during, and in the wake of these events, targeting opposition groups and rival communities.

Overlapping security and humanitarian crises disrupted the functioning of social and judicial services and dramatically curtailed the operating space for humanitarian workers and human rights monitors. Service providers were subjected to threats and attacks compelling the closure of essential services, including emergency post-rape care and sexual and reproductive healthcare. Longstanding barriers to reporting, such as stigma, fear of retaliation, and weak rule of law institutions, already exacerbated by the pandemic, deepened owing to conflict and political crises.

Women peacebuilders, human rights defenders, and activists were specifically targeted, including through gender-based hate speech and reprisals, in order to exclude them from public life. Shrinking civic space, coupled with misogynistic threats, were worrying trends observed against political activists, including online.

Survivors continued to demonstrate agency and resilience, illustrating the importance of protection as a foundation for active political participation. The majority of survivors came from socioeconomically marginalized communities, including in remote and rural areas where State authority is weak, and were often targeted for their actual or perceived ethnic, religious or gender identity.

For displaced, refugee and migrant women, the collapse of protective social networks in settings affected by interconnected security and humanitarian crises heightened risks of sexual violence, particularly for those in detention facilities.

Across diverse contexts, women and girls suffered ongoing attacks and threats of sexual violence in the course of livelihood activities. Women and girls engaged in agriculture, gathering firewood, or returning home to retrieve essential items after displacement, were raped and in some cases abducted and held by armed groups. A rise in negative coping mechanisms, such as early and forced marriage, was observed in the face of economic desperation.

Entrenched localized conflicts continued to give rise to patterns of sexual violence, with terrorist groups grafting onto local grievances. A discernible trend was the use of sexual violence and exploitation in the context of abduction and sexual slavery, including by violent extremist groups. The severe humanitarian, security and political crises observed during the reporting period exacerbated the root causes of sexual violence including gender-based inequality. Structural prevention is all the more crucial given the importance of fostering a protective environment that inhibits sexual violence and enables safe reporting and response.

PROGRESS & CHALLENGES

THREE GROUNDBREAKING RULINGS DESPITE PREVAILING IMPUNITY

While impunity for crimes of conflict-related sexual violence remains the norm and the pace of justice is painfully slow, three ground-breaking decisions were handed down in 2021. Firstly, two decades after the kidnapping and sexual abuse of Colombian journalist Jineth Bedoya, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights issued a landmark ruling finding the State responsible for a number of violations. Secondly, in Guatemala, five former members of the paramilitary group, Civil Self-Defense Patrols, were convicted and sentenced for crimes of sexual violence committed against indigenous Maya Achi women in the early 1980s. Thirdly, a former official of the Syrian General Intelligence Service, Anwar R., was convicted by the Higher Regional Court in Koblenz, Germany, for crimes against humanity including acts of sexual violence, committed in 2011 and 2012.

In Iraq, the 2021 Yazidi survivors law stipulated that the policy of rape and sexual slavery enacted by Da'esh against Yazidis and other groups, meets the elements of genocide and crimes against humanity. In terms of support to national authorities to align legislative frameworks with international standards, the SRSG-SVC launched Model Legislative Provisions and Guidance on the Investigation and Prosecution of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence and signed a framework of cooperation with the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Overall, the level of compliance by parties to conflict remains low despite the robust framework put in place by the Security Council since 2008. Nonetheless, in an encouraging development, the Security Council Sanctions Committee on Libya listed Osama Al Kuni Ibrahim, de facto manager of the Al Nasr detention centre in Zawiyah, for violations including sexual violence.

The vast majority of listed parties in the annex of the annual report are, as in previous years, non-State actors. Listing is based on cumulative evidence documented over the years. New listings this cycle include: an alliance of armed groups in the Central African Republic, the Coalition des patriotes pour le changement, and a new Mai-Mai militia group, Union des patriotes pour la défense des citoyens in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The National armed forces of the Central African Republic also appear in the list following patterns documented over several years, and a recent increase in verified cases.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

TARGETED AND ACTIONABLE RECOMMENDATIONS ON STRUCTURAL PREVENTION

- Encourage the Security Council to give due consideration to the early warning signs of sexual violence in its monitoring of global crises and take appropriate and timely action;
- Encourage all State and non-State parties to conflict to adopt time-bound commitments to prevent and address conflict-related sexual violence and monitor compliance;
- Encourage Member States to protect politically active women, including women human rights defenders, journalists and peacebuilders and those working directly on conflict-related sexual violence from any form of reprisals and ensure these risks are addressed and perpetrators prosecuted; and to ensure timely mitigation measures for civilians facing imminent risk of conflict-related sexual violence, including those in detention, displacement or migration settings;
- Adopt a survivor-centred approach to preventing and responding to conflict-related sexual violence that recognizes that survivors are unique individuals and seeks to empower them by prioritizing their diverse needs, perspectives and aspirations;
- Tackle the root causes of conflict-related sexual violence, including structural gender inequality and harmful social norms that lead to the stigmatization and discrimination;
- Address chronic funding shortfalls by providing sustained and predictable financial support to the conflict-related sexual violence multi-partner trust fund (CRSV MPTF).

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OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON
SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT

<http://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/>



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