



UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict

Annual Progress Report 2023

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

| | |
|-----------|--|
| CAR | Central African Republic |
| CMR | Clinical Management of Rape |
| CERF | Central Emergency Relief Fund |
| CRSV | Conflict-Related Sexual Violence |
| CRSV-MPTF | Conflict-Related Sexual Violence Multi-Partner Trust Fund |
| CSO | Civil Society Organisation |
| CTED | United Nations Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate |
| DPPA | United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs |
| DPO | United Nations Department of Peace Operations |
| DRC | Democratic Republic of the Congo |
| EU | European Union |
| FoC | Framework of Cooperation |
| GBV | Gender-based violence |
| GBV AoR | Gender-based Violence Area of Responsibility |
| GMSS | Global MARA Support System |
| IDP | Internally Displaced Person |
| ILO | International Labour Organisation |
| IOM | International Organization for Migration |
| IPV | Intimate Partner Violence |
| ISIL | Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant |
| ITC | International Trade Centre |
| JCs | Joint Communiqués |
| JPO | Junior Professional Officer |
| LGBTQI | Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex |
| MARA | Monitoring, Analysis and Reporting Arrangement |
| MHPSS | Mental Health and Psychosocial Support |
| MINUSCA | United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic |
| MINUSMA | United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali |
| MONUSCO | United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo |
| MOU | Memorandum of Understanding |
| MPTF | Multi-Partner Trust Fund |

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| MPTFO | UNDP Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office |
| M&E | Monitoring and Evaluation |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organisation |
| OCHA | United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs |
| OHCHR | United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights |
| OSAPG | United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide |
| OSGEY | United Nations Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth |
| OSRSG-CAAC | United Nations Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict |
| OSCE | Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe |
| OSRSG-SVC | Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict |
| OSRSG-VAC | Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children |
| PHC | Primary Healthcare Doctors |
| PUNOs | Participating UN Organizations |
| RMC | Resource Management Committee |
| RSF | Rapid Support Forces |
| SDGs | Sustainable Development Goals |
| SGBV | Sexual and Gender-based Violence |
| SRSG | Special Representative of the Secretary-General |
| SRSG-CAAC | Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict |
| SRSG-SVC | Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict |
| SVC | Sexual Violence in Conflict |
| SWPA | Senior Women Protection Adviser |
| TOE | UN Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict |
| TORs | Terms of Reference |
| UN | United Nations |
| UN Action | UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict |
| UNAction MPTF | UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict Multi-Partner Trust Fund |
| UNAIDS | Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS |
| UNCT | United Nations Country Team |
| UNDGC | United Nations Department of Global Communications |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNEP | United Nations Environment Programme |

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| UNFPA | United Nations Population Fund |
| UNHCR | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| UNIDIR | United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research |
| UNITAD | United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability Against Da'esh/ISIL Crimes |
| UNITAMS | United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan |
| UNOCT | United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism |
| UNODA | United Nations of Disarmament Affairs |
| UNODC | United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime |
| UNSMIL | United Nations Support Mission in Libya |
| UN Women | United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women |
| WHO | World Health Organization |
| WHRDs | Women Human Rights Defenders |
| WFP | World Food Program |
| WLO | Women-Led Organisations |
| WPA | Women's Protection Adviser |
| WPS | Women, Peace and Security |
| YPS | Youth, Peace and Security |

UN ACTION ENTITIES



CTED - United Nations Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate



UNDP - United Nations Development Programme



DPPA - Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs



UNEP - United Nations Environment Programme



DPO - Department of Peace Operations



UNFPA - United Nations Population Fund



ILO - International Labour Organization



UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

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|---|--|---|---|
|  | IOM - International Organization for Migration |  | UNICEF - United Nations Children's Fund |
|  | ITC - International Trade Centre |  | UNOCT - United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism |
|  | OCHA - Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs |  | UNODA - United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs |
|  | OHCHR - Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights |  | UNODC - United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime |
|  | OSAPG - Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide |  | UN Women - United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women |
|  | OSRSG-CAAC - Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict |  | UN Youth Office - United Nations Youth Office |
|  | OSRSG-VAC - Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children |  | WFP - World Food Program |
|  | UNAIDS - Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS |  | WHO - World Health Organization |
|  | UNDGC - United Nations Department of Global Communications | | |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The United Nations Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict Network ([UN Action or the Network](#)) strengthened its efforts to prevent and respond to conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) throughout 2023. Working in alignment with its 2020 – 2025 Strategic Framework and 2022 – 2023 Workplan, the Network continued to ensure that CRSV is prevented, survivors' needs are met, and accountability of perpetrators is enhanced through coordinated and multi-stakeholder initiatives and activities, at both the international and country level.

During this period, UN Action was able to coordinate at all levels, from convening its Steering Committee, to advancing initiatives at the technical-level through Network entity Focal Points, and to organising knowledge-sharing webinars and public events. As the drivers of the Network, Focal Points continued to meet monthly for regular meetings and, additionally, for emergency meetings to share timely information on CRSV reports and trends and to coordinate actions and messaging on the UN's response. In total, Focal Points were convened on five situations of concern to strengthen capacity and technical expertise on CRSV, including emergency meetings to specifically discuss the humanitarian situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The monthly Focal Points meeting also served as a platform to map how member entities are working on and internally mainstreaming CRSV; in 2023 nine UN Action member entities presented their mandates and intersections with CRSV.

To help increase the Network's visibility, UN Action hosted two external brownbags: one on what it means to apply a survivor-centred approach in the pursuit of transitional justice and one on the nexus of CRSV with arms control and disarmament. It also expanded its online Digital Library as a hub for information sharing by populating new reports, research and guidelines from an array of stakeholders around the prevention and response to CRSV. Furthermore, the Network hosted an exhibition titled "A CRSV Survivor's Journey" at the UNHQ from June to August to showcase the gravity of CRSV as an urgent threat to international peace and security while highlighting the voices of survivors and the work of UN Action. The exhibition, which brought in over 50,000 visitors, was developed with various collaborators and sponsors comprised of Member States, UN entities, survivors' networks, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the private sector.

In 2023, the Network continued to expand from 24 to 25 UN entities with the addition of the World Food Programme (WFP). Various situations of concern to the CRSV mandate have shed light on the intersection of food insecurity and CRSV, as survivors may face the impossible choice between economic subsistence and sexual violence. With the addition of the WFP to the Network, there will be a better understanding of this crucial nexus between food insecurity, poverty and sexual violence.

Through 2023, UN Action continued to invest in deepening the understanding of CRSV in emerging and priority areas by developing new knowledge products and disseminating information to a range of stakeholders, which it will accelerate the roll-out of in the coming years. For example, the Network made progress in the development of guidelines on the application of a survivor-centred approach. In order to translate UN Security Council resolution 2467 (2019) on a survivor-centred approach into practice, this guidance document aims to give concrete examples and recommendations, based in actual situations and scenarios, for those in the UN system to apply in specific contexts where CRSV is a matter of concern. In addition, the Network strengthened the

understanding of what it means to provide mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) to survivors of CRSV. Through the development of an initial conceptual framing of the nexus of CRSV and MHPSS, this research initiative assist those working on trauma-informed MHPSS support to survivors, children born of CRSV and their communities.

Acknowledging these notable successes, UN Action advanced in its efforts to garner predictable and sustainable resources for its fund, the Conflict-Related Sexual Violence Multi-Partner Trust Fund ([CRSV-MPTF](#)). As a result, in 2023, UN Action supported three projects in the DRC, Mali and Ukraine. The Network also pursued strategic partnerships with non-traditional stakeholders, including with the University of Ottawa to bridge the gap between academia and the UN system to collectively respond to CRSV.

The SRSG-SVC and members of the UN Action Secretariat also engaged in numerous advocacy and fundraising missions throughout 2023 intending to garner the needed financial resources to adequately address CRSV. This included travels to Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Norway, Lithuania, Jordan, Germany, Austria, Belgium and Canada.

Moving forward, the Network will continue to prioritise advancing the needs of CRSV survivors. The Network's strategy focuses on ensuring that political agreements are translated into tangible actions at the country level in ways that directly improve survivors' lives through expanded access to comprehensive, life-saving, multi-sectoral services, including quality medical and psychosocial services, sexual and reproductive health and rights, rehabilitation, livelihood support, enhanced accountability through judicial reforms, and support for reparations-related processes. UN Action will be guided by its newly developed 2024 - 2025 Workplan to bring the Network to the end of its 2020 – 2025 Strategic Framework.

As always, UN Action will focus on its clear strategic priorities, while responding to rapidly shifting situations of concern, guided by the SRSG-SVC's vision, Security Council resolutions relevant to CRSV, and the needs of survivors of CRSV.

INTRODUCTION

The UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict Network ([UN Action or the Network](#)) brings together the collective experience and institutional capacity of the UN system, and since inception in 2007 has filled critical knowledge gaps, generated policy, guidance, and training materials to inform evidence-based prevention and response to conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) at the global and country-level. UN Action funds these efforts through the Conflict-Related Sexual Violence Multi-Partner Trust Fund ([CRSV-MPTF or the Fund](#)), which (including activities funded through its predecessor, the [UN Action MPTF](#)), has supported 58 projects across 22 conflict-affected countries since 2008, as well as regional and global-level initiatives. These projects have fostered collaboration across UN entities and catalysed innovative initiatives and programming in CRSV. Notably, the UN Action Network is the only UN system-wide initiative that leads advocacy, knowledge-building, resource mobilisation and joint programming to prevent and respond to CRSV and is comprised of 25 UN entities¹. This report details work undertaken by the Network in 2023, as it relates to deliverables specified in [UN Action’s Strategic Framework for 2020 – 2025](#) and its attending 2022 – 2023 Workplan.

UN ACTION OVERVIEW

UN Action was created in 2007 in response to the “[Call to Action](#)” of the June 2006 *Symposium on Sexual Violence in Conflict and Beyond*, held in Brussels. The establishment of UN Action responded to calls from within the UN, as well as from women’s rights organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and Member States, to elevate sexual violence politically, as a peace and security challenge, and as a humanitarian, human rights, gender and development issue.

In June 2007, the Secretary-General’s Policy Committee endorsed UN Action as “a critical joint UN system-wide initiative to guide advocacy, knowledge-building, resource mobilisation, and joint programming around sexual violence in conflict”. In all relevant Security Council resolutions, notably [1820 \(2008\)](#), [1888 \(2009\)](#), [1960 \(2010\)](#), [2106 \(2013\)](#), [2331 \(2016\)](#) and [2467 \(2019\)](#), the Council specifically highlights UN Action as *the* critical interagency coordination forum to address CRSV.

| Resolution 1820 (2008) | Resolution 1888 (2009) | Resolution 1960 (2010) |
|--|--|---|
| Provided the conceptual foundation and broad framing of CRSV and identified sexual violence as part of the Peace and Security Agenda | Created the role of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, as well as the role of UN Action to implement the CRSV mandate | Established the UN’s reporting mechanism to collect data on CRSV cases and patterns at the local level and affirmed the Security Council’s commitment to leverage all means to address CRSV |
| Resolution 2106 (2013) | Resolution 2242 (2015) | Resolution 2331 (2016) |
| Called for prevention efforts to address CRSV and noted that | Recognised that CRSV is used strategically by certain terrorist | Identified that human trafficking can be used to exacerbate conflict, while |

¹ CTED, DPPA, DPO, ILO, IOM, ITC, OCHA, OHCHR, OSAPG, OSRSG-CAAC, OSRSG-VAC, UNAIDS, UNDGC, UNDP, UNEP UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNOCT, UNODC, UNODA, UN Youth Office, UN Women, WFP, WHO.

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| women and girls are disproportionately affected by CRSV | groups and used as a tactic of terrorism | classifying human trafficking survivors as terrorism survivors |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Resolution 2467 (2019)</p> <p>Highlighted the need for a survivor-centred approach in the prevention and response to CRSV and acknowledged the need to tackle CRSV root causes</p> | | |

In line with the relevant Security Council resolutions mentioned above, UN Action seeks to synergise efforts of humanitarian, human rights, development, political, peacekeeping, and security actors to address CRSV – reinforcing good practices, strengthening coordination, and avoiding duplication of efforts. To achieve this synergy of action, UN Action harnesses the comparative strengths of each UN entity for a force-multiplier effect, recognising that sexual violence requires a broad-based, multisectoral response.

UN Action works through a network of Focal Points from each member entity and is governed by a Steering Committee consisting of UN Principals from each of the 25 entities. The Security Council appointed the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (SRSG-SVC) to provide strategic guidance as the Chair of the Network; this work is supported by a Secretariat, located in the Office of the SRSG-SVC.

Further, UN Action is the primary consultation forum for the [annual Report of the Secretary-General on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence](#). The Report serves not only as a public record of this crime, but also as a global advocacy instrument for driving the field of CRSV prevention and response forward. Annually, the Report brings new trends and patterns on CRSV to light, and additionally, serves as an information base and reference tool for strategic advocacy and enhanced operational response.

Subsequent annual Reports of the Secretary-General to the Security Council have detailed critical dimensions and emerging challenges for addressing CRSV. Most recently, these include addressing the specific needs and challenges faced by children born of wartime rape and their mothers, the use of sexual violence to pursue strategies and tactics of terrorism, sexual slavery and conflict-driven human trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation, sexual slavery and forced marriage, as well as the need for enhanced justice and accountability, including reparations for survivors of CRSV. In 2019, the Security Council enshrined these new areas into resolution 2467, thereby providing strategic direction on essential elements that need to be considered in a survivor-centred approach to addressing CRSV. Further, the Security Council, under Operative Paragraph 34 in the same resolution, encouraged UN Action to *revise and continue development of innovative operational tools and guidance* in these new areas.

Shortly after the issuance of Security Council resolution 2467, UN Action developed its new [Strategic Framework \(2020 – 2025\)](#), focusing particularly on a comprehensive and survivor-centred approach to CRSV, with a renewed emphasis on prevention of CRSV, including addressing its structural root causes.

The overarching goal of UN Action is that CRSV is prevented, survivors' needs are met, and accountability of perpetrators is enhanced.

SDG ACHIEVEMENTS

The work of UN Action contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), primarily SDGs 5 and 16, as a matter relating to the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda:



To achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls



To promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

UN ACTION IN 2023: ADAPTING TO AN EVOLVING CONTEXT

In 2023, as is outlined in the [annual Report of the Secretary-General on Conflict-related Sexual Violence](#), the outbreak and escalation of conflict exposed civilians to heightened levels of sexual violence, fueled by arms proliferation and increased militarisation. Arms bearers from both State and non-State armed groups targeted civilians, particularly displaced, refugee and migrant women and girls, with rape, gang rape and abductions, amid record levels of internal and cross-border displacement. Sexual violence curtailed women's livelihoods and girls' access to education, while generating profits for armed and violent extremist groups, including through conflict-driven trafficking in persons for the purposes of sexual exploitation. Women and girls were disproportionately affected by sexual violence, yet women's voices are still muted or missing from key decision-making forums on matters of peace and security. With the accelerated drawdown of peace operations in Mali and the Sudan, UN entities have encountered significant challenges to sustain the implementation of Security Council resolutions on sexual violence in conflict, including the continued function of monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements (MARA) and engagement with parties to conflict. Sexual violence continued to be used as a tactic of war, torture and terrorism amid deepening political and security crises. Escalating cycles of violence, in turn, hindered or cut short the implementation of peace processes in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Mali, South Sudan, and the Sudan. UN designated terrorist groups, other non-State armed groups and transnational criminal networks used sexual violence as a tactic to incentivise recruitment and gain control over territory and lucrative natural resources. In Mali, Myanmar, South Sudan and Ukraine, private contractors or militias and self-defence groups were used to reinforce military operations. The complex array of actors has complicated attribution of responsibility, undermining accountability for these crimes.

Women and girls, in particular, were attacked in their homes, on roads, and while undertaking essential livelihood activities, including in and around displacement sites in Cameroon, Libya, Mozambique and elsewhere. In 2023, humanitarian access was severely constrained in almost all settings covered in the present report. Attacks on health centres in Haiti, Mali, Myanmar, the Sudan, and Ukraine limited access to life saving services including sexual and reproductive health

care. In Mali and the Sudan, armed actors threatened victims and/or health workers to suppress reporting, while harassment and reprisals against human rights defenders were reported in South Sudan and the DRC.

Owing to withdrawals of UN peace operations in the Sudan and Mali, and the ongoing transition of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), organisations and networks providing support to survivors have had to contend with or plan for a reduced security umbrella in delivering services.

At the same time, digital threats, including misogynistic hate speech, gendered disinformation, and incitement to violence hindered women's participation in public life, amid a global push back on generational gains made on gender equality. Despite entrenched and emerging challenges, survivors and service providers continued to report sexual violence crimes. In addition, arms bearers perpetrated sexual violence crimes, reported in the DRC, Myanmar, South Sudan, the Sudan and elsewhere, demonstrating that the illicit proliferation and widespread availability of small arms and light weapons directly facilitated incidents of sexual violence. By fuelling armed conflict, weapons proliferation contributed to the creation of an environment conducive to the perpetration of sexual violence with impunity. Moreover, sexual violence played a significant role in the political economy of war, with trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation and increasingly, kidnapping, with the threat and use of sexual violence to extort higher ransom, enabling armed and extremist groups to generate revenue.

In the face of such challenges, and within the constraints of extremely limited resources, UN Action not only continued to deliver on its priorities, but expanded its impact and reach, through global level coordination, advocacy and public awareness-raising and knowledge production and dissemination. At the country-level, UN Action Network members implemented projects in the DRC and Mali, and launched a multi-year, large-scale project involving six UN Action members in Ukraine, with the coordination support of the UN Action Secretariat funded through the CRSV-MPTF.

These complex crises required multi-faceted, focused and coordinated responses: on the one hand ensuring a cohesive and common approach across the humanitarian-peacebuilding-development spectrum of UN entities that comprise the Network, and on the other hand building and rolling out new knowledge products.

UN ACTION NETWORK GROWTH

In 2023, the Network expanded from 24 to 25 UN entities with the addition of the World Food Programme (WFP). During the SRSG-SVC's mission to the DRC in June 2023, she met with multiple women and girls who had been subjected to CRSV while undertaking essential livelihood activities, such as searching for food, or collecting wood and water. It became apparent that survivors were faced with the impossible choice between economic subsistence and sexual violence, and that there is a clear link between food insecurity and the occurrence of CRSV. With the addition of WFP to the Network, there will be a better understanding of this crucial nexus between food insecurity, poverty and sexual violence.

RESPONDING TO NEW AND EXISTING SITUATIONS THROUGH HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL ADVOCACY

In her capacity as Chair of the UN Action Network and the CRSV mandate holder, the SRSG-SVC [published ten individual and joint statements](#), advocating for collective action to prevent and/or respond to CRSV in current and emerging situations of concern, including Ukraine, the Sudan, the DRC, Colombia, and Israel and the State of Palestine. The SRSG-SVC also announced a new partnership with the University of Ottawa through the signing of a Framework of Cooperation ([FoC](#)) in May 2023. The purpose of this partnership is to bridge the gap between the UN and those in academia working on CRSV to ensure that research findings are effectively integrated into policies and programming, through regular information exchange, technical collaboration and joint problem-solving, using modern and innovative technologies.

As the UN faces an increasing reality of mission drawdowns, as occurred in Mali and the Sudan, there is a need to ensure the continuity of the MARA and to sustain protection and response measures for CRSV survivors and those at risk in the absence of peacekeeping operations. In response, the Network has leveraged its knowledge and experience, for example by drawing from findings of the assessment it conducted in 2022 on the operationalisation of the MARA and facilitating the sharing of lessons learned from UNFPA Myanmar with UNFPA Mali, to provide insight to the Mali team on what the MARA could look like if it were to be led by UNFPA.

In addition, as part of its commitment to speaking in one voice, in July, the Network released a joint [press statement](#) urging immediate action to protect women and girls from sexual violence in and around internally displaced people (IDP) camps in the DRC. The Network urged all parties to immediately cease the use of sexual violence and called on the Government to provide multisectoral assistance to survivors of CRSV and to provide unimpeded access for humanitarian actors to protect and respond to survivors' needs. It was read at the UN Geneva press briefing, promoted by MONUSCO, picked up by various media outlets and shared with concerned Member States.

UN ACTION'S STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The UN Action Network developed its [2020 – 2025 Strategic Framework](#) in 2020, through an intensive and iterative process that led to the delineation of a new Goal, Theory of Change four main Outcome Areas and a General Outcome related to overall coordination and advocacy, as well as specific activities, which were further detailed in its 2020 – 2021 and 2022 - 2023 Workplans.

The overarching goal of UN Action is that *CRSV is prevented, survivors' needs are met, and accountability of perpetrators is enhanced*.

The five attending Outcomes are:

- **General Outcome related to Overall Coordination of the UN Action Network:** UN agencies cooperate and share information to reinforce coordination and coherence and improve the system-wide response and implementation of UN Security Council resolutions on CRSV;
- **Outcome 1 related to Prevention, Protection and Support to Survivors:** Survivors and at-risk groups are supported and protected and CRSV risks are prevented and mitigated;
- **Outcome 2 related to Capacity Building and Strategic Engagement:** Duty-bearers and

decision-makers take action to address both the immediate risks as well as the root causes of CRSV at the global and national level and promote compliance and accountability;

- **Outcome 3 related to Knowledge Building and the development of Policies, Guidance and Tools:** UN Action member entities contribute to advancing the implementation of the CRSV/WPS agenda in a way that is informed by relevant guidance, policies, and tools on addressing CRSV and its root causes;
- **Outcome 4 related to Data Collection, Management, Monitoring, Analysis and Harmonisation:** Reliable, timely and objective information on CRSV trends, risks and patterns, supports evidence-based high-level advocacy, enhances engagement with, and pressure on, parties to conflict, and informs impactful, survivor-centred solutions.

UN Action also developed targets with linked indicators for each of these Outcome areas. As living tools, UN Action's overall Governance Documents, Strategic Framework and Workplan are regularly reviewed and updated in consultation with decision-makers and key stakeholders, including country counterparts.

INITIATIVES UNDERTAKEN BY UN ACTION IN 2023

INITIATIVES UNDER GENERAL OUTCOME RELATED TO OVERALL COORDINATION OF THE NETWORK

With its now 25 members, UN Action has steadily grown its reach and capacity. The Network continued to be supported by the [UN Action Secretariat](#), composed of the UN Action Coordinator (coordinating the UN Action Network), a Programme Officer (serving as Deputy UN Action Coordinator and supporting knowledge management and learning), a Grants Management, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Programme Officer (supporting projects funded through the CRSV-MPTF as well as overall monitoring and reporting on the Network's initiatives), and an Administrative Assistant. The Secretariat continued to benefit from the support of a Junior Professional Officer (JPO) co-funded by the Government of Japan. Further, in supporting specific thematic areas of focus identified by the UN Action Network, entities were also encouraged to provide additional capacity. UNHCR continued to provide an expert in protection and prevention until June 2023. The contribution of these significant human resources not only bolsters expertise in priority areas for the CRSV agenda but also demonstrates member entities' continued commitment to the success and strengthening of the Network.

Launch of the Strategic Framework Mid Term Review

To ensure that the UN Action Network's initiatives have concrete impact, uncover and address challenges in progress and process at all levels, and consolidate gains, it initiated an independent external review of its 2020 – 2025 Strategic Framework. This involved a comprehensive desk review, focus groups and key informant interviews with over 50 key stakeholders, including the Chair of the Network, Heads of Entities, technical level Focal Points, Member State donors, and civil society partners either serving or representing CRSV survivors, which will be published in a forthcoming public report.

Collective Advocacy and Fundraising

UN Action's public engagement efforts, including through social media and web presence have also grown significantly in the last year. The Network maintains and regularly updates its social

media accounts including on Facebook, X (formerly Twitter) and Instagram. The website (www.stoprapenow.org) has continued to be a critical resource for Network members, partners and colleagues working on CRSV, WPS more generally, and the public. In 2023, the website was visited by 105,000 users, of which 82% were through organic searches. This year, UN Action also published its bi-annual newsletter in [January](#) and [August](#), showcasing the Network's initiatives, members, and supporters in the global response to CRSV. The purpose of this newsletter is to increase awareness of UN Action among UN entities, partners, donors, and the public.

To further increase awareness on CRSV, UN Action hosted an [exhibition](#) titled "A CRSV Survivor's Journey" at the UN Headquarters in New York from June to August 2023. Through an array of photos, videos, text and interactive elements, the exhibition showcased the gravity of CRSV as an urgent threat to international peace and security while highlighting the voices of survivors and the work of UN Action. The exhibition, which brought in over 50,000 visitors, was developed with various collaborators and sponsors: the SEMA Network, the Dr. Denis Mukwege Foundation, Bibliothèques Sans Frontières and VML, and was co-sponsored by the Governments of Republic of Lithuania, Japan, and Norway. The launch event, held on the margins of the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict (19 June), was attended by over 120 participants and featured numerous speakers, including survivors of CRSV from Colombia and South Sudan, and representatives from UNODC, OCHA, and the Permanent Missions of Norway, Japan and Lithuania.

The SRSG-SVC, as Chair of the Network, continued to strategically engage with Governments and partners in situations of concern, as well as traditional and non-traditional stakeholders with the primary purpose of fostering partnerships and advocating for an increase in support to the CRSV mandate.

Following 2021 and 2022 missions to the Gulf Region, the SRSG-SVC and the UN Action Coordinator travelled to Saudi Arabia to speak at the Third Riyadh Humanitarian Forum in February. There, she also continued discussion with the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation to advocate for funding for humanitarian support to CRSV survivors and those at risk. While in the region, SRSG Patten travelled to Bahrain to meet with the Ministry of Social Development, the Royal Humanitarian Foundation and the National Institute for Human Rights to raise awareness of the mandate and raise funds for the work of UN Action. Despite the best efforts of the SRSG-SVC and the UN Action Secretariat, including missions in three consecutive years, funds have not been received from Member States or institutions in the Gulf Region.

In June, SRSG Patten was invited to Norway to speak at a conference on Protecting Children in Armed Conflict, where she also met with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (specifically, the Foreign Minister, the Director-General of Multilateral Affairs and the Norwegian Special Envoy for WPS). Further meetings included with the Norwegian Special Envoy on Ukraine and the Ministry of Defence, as well as key Norwegian international non-governmental organisations, such as the Norwegian Refugee Council. As a steadfast partner to UN Action, Norway renewed its commitment to providing core support to UN Action, and pledged funds for UN Action's multi-sectoral project in Ukraine detailed in a following section of this report.

In October, SRSG Patten, accompanied by the UN Action Grants Management and M&E Officer, visited Lithuania to participate in a roundtable organised by the government on how to address sexual violence in conflict and support survivors. The roundtable brought together various Ministries and Departments of the Lithuanian government, civil society and representatives of the governments of Ukraine, Latvia, Poland and Estonia, and focused, specifically on the experience of Ukraine. During the visit, SRSG Patten met with relevant government authorities including the Chancellor of the Government, the Parliament, Ministries of Justice, Interior, Foreign Affairs and Social Security and Labour, representatives of Ukrainian community organisations and Lithuanian NGOs providing services to Ukrainian refugees. Lithuania also provided a core contribution to UN Action for the first time this year.

Additional fundraising and advocacy missions were undertaken by the SRSG-SVC to Jordan, Germany and Austria to which the UN Action Network contributed its efforts in preparation and follow-up.

The UN Action Deputy Coordinator also represented UN Action at the technical level in two events in 2023. In March, the Deputy Coordinator attended the European Union (EU) Humanitarian Forum in Brussels, which provided an opportunity to the Network to further strengthen cooperation and partnerships with international stakeholders, like I/NGOs, donors and Member States. In collaboration with CARE International, the EU, Belgium, Germany and Spain, the Deputy Coordinator participated in an event that focused on preventing and responding to CRSV by turning international humanitarian law commitments into compliance. This specific mission enabled UN Action to foster a new partnership with the EU through its European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations Directorate-General, which will advance in 2024. Additionally, the Deputy Coordinator represented UN Action at the 53rd Session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva in June 2023. There she participated in a side event which took stock of progress made under strategic partnerships with relevant stakeholders to ensure that survivors of CRSV in the context of the large-scale invasion of Ukraine have access to the care and reparation they deserve and are entitled to.

To forge new innovative partnerships, the SRSG-SVC travelled to Ottawa, Canada in May 2023 to sign a [FoC between her Office and the University of Ottawa](#). Recognising the crucial role of academic institutions in addressing CRSV, the partnership will produce robust and transformative research in areas such as mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) to survivors of CRSV and the use of CRSV in refugee and IDP camps. The OSRSG-SVC also hopes to establish a Fellowship Programme through this partnership that provides a space for South-North and South-South learning, while researching underexplored fields of study relating to CRSV.

Lastly, the Network released a [press statement](#) in July 2023 on behalf of the then 24 UN entities urging immediate action to protect women and girls from sexual violence in and around IDP camps in the DRC. Other concerns raised were the risks that other serious crimes like human trafficking become prevalent in the context of armed conflict, such as sexual exploitation, enslavement, and forced marriage; and the recruitment and use of children, including in combat. The Network urged all parties to immediately cease the use of sexual violence and called the Government of the DRC to provide multisectoral assistance to survivors of CRSV and to provide unimpeded access for humanitarian actors to protect and respond to survivors' needs. It was read at the UN Geneva press

briefing, promoted by MONUSCO, picked up by various media outlets and shared with concerned Member States.

INITIATIVES UNDER OUTCOME 1 RELATED TO PREVENTION, PROTECTION AND SUPPORT TO SURVIVORS

In line with Security Council resolution [2467 \(2019\)](#), UN Action's approach to funding ensures that all supported actions are meaningful for, and designed around the needs and desires of CRSV survivors. All projects funded must clearly articulate a survivor-centred approach, address the root causes of CRSV, support its prevention, foster national ownership and institutional capacity building, and ensure the projects' sustainability amongst other Network priorities.

Through the CRSV-MPTF, UN Action funded projects in the DRC, Mali, and Ukraine. The latter project, launched in August, and being implemented jointly by UNFPA, UN Women, UNODC, UNDP, the WHO and IOM, is UN Action's largest project to date, not only in terms of budget, but also in terms of the number of UN Action members involved.

Achieving Justice and Building Economic Resilience in the DRC

Implemented from March 2022 to June 2023, UN Action funded a project in the DRC, implemented jointly by OHCHR and MONUSCO. The initiative provided access to holistic and multisectoral assistance, including medical, psychosocial, legal and reintegration support to 755 survivors of CRSV and those at risk. The innovative project built the socioeconomic resilience of women involved in the artisanal mining sector, working with and through local women's cooperatives and self-help groups in 13 conflict-free mining sites, whilst also addressing the fight against impunity on CRSV-related crimes.

Project partners set up a One Stop Centre providing medical, psychological, socio-economic reintegration support and referrals for legal assistance. At the conclusion of the project, 755 survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) and CRSV received multisectoral assistance (498 women, 61 girls, 10 boys and 186 men), all of whom were also supported to access legal services through civil society partners.

The project enabled judicial authorities and local customary leaders to address CRSV in South Kivu province. Human rights violations and CRSV committed since 2021 was addressed by encouraging victims to speak out through awareness-raising missions and by supporting to judicial investigations, and hearings.

Through legal clinics, the project partners conducted awareness-raising missions and documented 451 cases of serious human rights violations, including 272 involving sexual violence (235 against women, 31 against girls, one to a boy, and 5 men). Access to justice for victims of CRSV was facilitated through support to victims and witnesses' participation to judicial process. The legal clinics sensitized victims and communities on participating in the judicial investigations, hearings and trials. Legal aid, psychosocial assistance and transport and lodging costs were covered for victims. All victims chose to and were supported in filing complaints before the competent courts at the appropriate Prosecutor's Offices.

The support provided enabled the Congolese justice system to fight impunity and held accountable armed groups leaders, while providing judicial rehabilitation to hundreds of women who accessed justice in very remote areas. Results achieved include the military justice sentencing one warlord (Ndarumanga) to life in prison for crimes against humanity, including sexual slavery and forced pregnancy (the first conviction in the country on the grounds of forced pregnancy). Two other warlords Charlequin and Donat have been detained in preparation for upcoming trials for committing numerous violations, including CRSV against women, men, girls and boys. All three warlords are currently in custody at Bukavu central prison. More armed groups members are under judicial prosecution in the above-mentioned warlords' case, pending their trial in the months. The project partners also trained 47 judicial police officers. Topics of the training included: the legal framework for the protection of victims of human rights violations; sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and CRSV; and national law on these matters.

To raise awareness on CRSV, as well as on public health issues such as COVID-19 mitigation, project partners trained 61 persons including health professionals, religious leaders and members of civil society organisations (CSOs). For awareness-raising at the community-level, the partners produced and distributed materials such as posters, scarves, tote bags, caps and T-shirts with messages like "Stand up for women's rights" and "Together let's fight conflict related-sexual violence". Besides community sensitisation, part of the COVID-19 recovery measures included material support for CRSV survivors, including startup products for their chosen business, such as for baking, soap production, making of matches etc.

A particular innovation of the project has been the technical and material support provided to a local community radio station, which was opened in collaboration with a team of local journalists. In-depth training was provided for journalists and radio managers on gender, community radio management, radio editing and journalistic ethics. As a result, the radio station broadcasts new material four times daily in French, Swahili and Kirega on topics such as women's rights, GBV, education, health and agriculture; to date, the station has already broadcast 218 programmes. The set-up now also supports income-generating activities through the installation of an internet café / small business centre.

In support of the economic empowerment and strengthening of women jeweller's cooperatives, two women were trained to lead trainings for others on lapidary, the art of working with gemstones and jewellery production. These women have now started to train other survivors. The project partners supported the legal and financial set-up of the cooperatives, which will allow the groups to have access to the necessary machinery for lapidary production, and the capacity to follow industry leading standards in ethical sourcing and jewellery production. To do this, the partners travelled to the mining sites related to the project to evaluate working conditions and verify the sourcing of precious metals to be used in jewellery production. The cooperatives have also been provided with necessary equipment and trained in developing business plans and marketing. The founding members are now working on branding, to allow them to operate independently at the conclusion of the project.

Responding to the urgent needs of women and girls affected by CRSV in Mali

Initiated in March 2023, the project was originally planned to be implemented by UNFPA and UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). The project aimed to

prevent and respond to CRSV in IDP camps located in the Gao and Menaka regions, to ensure that survivors of and those at-risk of GBV, including CRSV, have access to appropriate holistic care services and livelihoods and that communities are engaged on CRSV prevention and response, within the contexts of the challenges and safety risks of the prevailing insecurity in the region. An additional focus of the project was to increase engagement and capacity of signatory armed groups to prevent and respond to CRSV through dialogues and encouragement to abide by their commitments on zero-tolerance for CRSV. However, on June 30th, 2023, two weeks after the Government of Mali requested the withdrawal of MINUSMA, the UN Security Council unanimously approved the complete withdrawal of UN peacekeeping forces in Mali by 31 December 2023.

The region of Menaka was the first area to experience the closure of the MINUSMA camps and since then, the region has experienced an increase of attacks against civilians, criminality, as well as clashes between the parties in conflict. In addition, due to the withdrawal of MINUSMA, activities related to the engagement with parties to conflict required reprogramming.

Still, in 2023, UNFPA brought effective results under very difficult circumstances. UNFPA and its partners progressed towards the goal of increasing the capacity of communities to reduce risks, prevent and respond to GBV/CRSV in targeted areas, using mobile clinics to reach out to communities with less access to services and provided training to service providers for a more effective response.

In partnership with the Regional Directorate of Health in Menaka and Gao, UNFPA used two approaches to build community capacity to promote behaviour change and encourage the reporting and referral of GBV cases, including CRSV. The first was through the establishment of 24 early-warning mechanism “*comités*”. These play an important role in identifying incidents and referring survivors to reference centres for case management. In 2023, each *comité* developed an action plan that included sensitisation activities, awareness-raising sessions within the community and the promotion of radio programmes that disseminate prevention messages and information for survivors. The plans also include activities to follow up on cases identified through the mobile clinics or other appropriate mechanisms and the organisation of community dialogues. Another part of this is the mentorship programme where 130 women and girls have been trained as mentors on prevention and response to GBV and CRSV, aiming to promote information sharing and communication for positive behaviour change. The mentors each have an action plan that aims at strengthening their capacities to share key information on GBV and CRSV, be alert to concerning situations, as well as how to refer cases they identify for appropriate care. These two approaches have reached 8,729 people who have benefited from awareness-raising sessions on GBV and CRSV identification, prevention and response, as well as messages to reduce stigma of survivors and create an enabling environment to increase reporting and access to integrated care.

Over the year, 362 survivors were assisted with comprehensive case management in mobile clinics and at a One Stop Center. In the IDP camps, 2,967 women and girl GBV survivors and those at risk benefited from psychosocial support; 602 of them were during the listening sessions (both individual and collective). Culinary activities were conducted as part of the psychosocial support interventions and contributed to building life skills for survivors; 2,364 women also benefitted

from culinary activities. Finally, UNFPA procured 2,500 Dignity kits of which 517 have already been distributed among women survivors in the IDP camps.

In 2024, UNFPA and its partners will continue to expand these activities, whilst ensuring the sustainability of the community early-warning systems and mentorship programme, as the project concludes.

Strengthening National and Community-Based CRSV Response through “UNited Action to Empower CRSV Survivors in Ukraine”

In recognition of the ongoing war in Ukraine, which shows minimal signs of abating and continues to exacerbate risks of GBV, including CRSV, UN Action recognised the need for a large-scale, sustained multi-sectoral response, including efforts to prevent CRSV, meet survivors’ needs, and enhance accountability for CRSV. The project, which began in August, and will run for two years, has been co-designed based on identified needs and complementarity, and is jointly being implemented by UNODC, UNDP, IOM, UN Women, WHO, and UNFPA. The project will ensure that the rights and needs of CRSV survivors are properly addressed through improved system-wide responses at the national and community level, including civil society (particularly women-led organisations and survivors networks), with strengthened awareness, knowledge, capacity and technical expertise, increased availability and accessibility of comprehensive survivor-centred multi-sectoral assistance, and by mitigating risks, improving the survivor-centred gender-sensitive justice and reparation framework along with reinforced coordination, cooperation, and coherence among key international and domestic actors. The project includes nine key outcomes which are fully aligned with the Implementation Plan of the Government of Ukraine-UN FoC on the Prevention and Response to CRSV. The joint project is anchored in localisation efforts and will foster national ownership and leadership for a sustainable, survivor-centred response that also empowers civil society, survivor networks and women’s rights defenders, and to date is the largest project both in terms of UN Action members involved, and in scale that has been implemented by the Network.

During the first four months of the project, activities have been primarily focused on setting up the systems and tools for comprehensive planning, monitoring and evaluation, internal coordination, communication and reporting, knowledge management, as well as stakeholder engagement.

Despite the short implementation period, the project partners carried out several programmatic activities. UNFPA conducted a series of workshops to train regional media, public sector communication experts, and journalism students on survivor-centred, gender-responsive, and trauma-informed media reporting of CRSV. These sessions reached 192 participants (64 male, 128 female) across various regions, enhancing their understanding and skills in ethical reporting on CRSV. Efforts were also focused on developing a national Clinical Management of Rape (CMR) protocol and survivor-centred forensic procedures, involving collaboration with multiple UN agencies and local partners. This includes hosting discussions and roundtables with national and international experts to address gaps and challenges in the CMR protocol, aiming to improve access to healthcare for survivors. Preliminary work has also begun on developing an Information Sharing Protocol for ethical and gender-responsive data management related to CRSV, marking a foundational step towards better data handling and survivor support.

UN Women conducted consultations with women-led organisations (WLOs) on the topic of their suitability as implementing partners, as well as to gather firsthand information and analyse the current landscape relevant to the project objectives. UN Women also explored modalities for the inclusion of survivor networks in the project, in particular ‘SEMA Ukraine’, a network of female survivors.

UNDP held consultations with the Office of the Prosecutor General to identify needs in engaging psychologists, in areas requiring the involvement of experts such as assisting victims and survivors in trauma-informed, survivor-centred, and gender-responsive manner throughout criminal investigations and trials. UNDP also held consultations with a national organisation, the Free Legal Aid Coordination Center, about building staff and lawyers’ capacities on sensitive communication with CRSV survivors, rights and services survivors are entitled to, and referral mechanisms and pathways.

WHO conducted a series of advocacy and technical meetings with the Ministry of Health, healthcare institution representatives and CSOs on raising awareness and gaining commitment for the implementation of project-related activities such as capacity building for the healthcare workers and managers, piloting a quality assessment (tool) of the services available for survivors, and the use of updated training packages for the primary and emergency health care professionals. This included two intersectoral and technical meetings with the Ministry of Healthcare, Ministry of Interior and the National Police, CSOs and other UN agencies to abolish the mandatory reporting for CRSV and other forms of GBV violence. WHO has also conducted trainings on CMR and Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) for the primary healthcare doctors (PHC) across 10 regions of Ukraine. 230 PHC doctors had their capacity enhanced with appropriate knowledge and skills in providing CRSV and other GBV survivors with a range of services using the WHO guidelines and national legislation. WHO also supported translation into the Ukrainian language and verification of CMR-IPV protocol and guidelines for health managers to deepen and expand their understanding of GBV as a public health concern among the different levels of medical practitioners. All the above progress made is contributing towards improved availability and accessibility of the essential healthcare services for survivors of CRSV, which remains a gap.

Jointly, several of the implementing agencies, WHO, UNFPA, UNODC, IOM and UN Women alongside a related Technical Working Group on Sexual and Reproductive Health in Crisis have collaboratively worked to address system-level barriers in accessing quality essential healthcare and support services for GBV and CRSV survivors at the manager/policy level, which impacts the practice at the community level. This relates particularly to the legislative analysis, drafting, advocacy and technical support to the Government for the development of the national CMR protocol.

The project supports access to interim and long-term reparative measures in Ukraine. To achieve this, in 2023, IOM initiated an extensive mapping of CSOs that work on the protection of survivors of CRSV as well as governmental stakeholders that provide services to CRSV survivors. Once the mapping is concluded, the identified organisations and stakeholders will be involved in gathering testimonies of violations which, in turn, will serve to improve the categorisation of crimes and legal framework for reparations and remedies.

As the project accelerates implementation in 2024 and beyond, the partners plan to strengthen cooperation, coordination, and coherence, as well as improve the availability and accessibility of the essential healthcare and GBV services for survivors as outlined in their joint workplan. This includes strengthening the capacities of WLOs and community-based groups, including through launching a small grants program to deliver primary assistance, comprising legal aid and counselling to survivors of CRSV. Additionally, safety audits will be conducted in collaboration with local governments in several high-risk locations for trafficking in persons. The project partners will provide training for the free legal aid system and psychological services provision will be launched in April. The project will assess CSOs, particularly in relation to their documentation protocols, and finalise a mapping to assess the capacities of governmental actors to be engaged. In 2024, the partners will continue to strengthen the capacity of government entities in dealing with reparations by providing them with the necessary training and equipment, amongst numerous other joint initiatives to be implemented in this comprehensive project.

INITIATIVES UNDER OUTCOME 2 RELATED TO CAPACITY BUILDING AND STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT

Outcome 2 of UN Action's Strategic Framework 2020-2025 calls for activities that ensure that duty-bearers and decision-makers take action to address both the immediate risks and root causes of CRSV at the global and national levels to promote compliance and accountability. The Network advances such initiatives by strengthening the capacity and technical expertise of those engaging in CRSV efforts, as well as through joint and sustained high-level advocacy.

Monthly Focal Points Meeting

UN Action's monthly Focal Points meetings serve as an important forum for coordinating progress on the Network's Workplan, and for the UN Action Network to consult with country counterparts, including Women's Protection Advisers (WPAs) and CRSV Focal Points, to discuss how entities are individually and collectively engaging on the CRSV mandate in situations of concern, particularly in support of the implementation of [Joint Communiqués \(JCs\)](#), FoCs, and attending to CRSV-related national strategies and plans. UN Action also uses this forum to identify gaps in implementation and to strategise on how these can be filled. WPAs and field-based staff who are responsible for implementing the CRSV mandate are encouraged to be candid in sharing challenges they face and to recommend ways in which the Network can further support with CRSV mandate implementation.

With the emergence of new crises and conflicts, UN Action Focal Points convened rapidly to share timely information on CRSV reports and trends in situations of concern, and to discuss the coordination of actions and key messaging of the UN's response. Discussions on specific countries of concern or emergencies were also incorporated as a standing item in the monthly Focal Points meetings, if the space allowed for such a discussion, which are illustrated as examples in the table below.

| Monthly Focal Points Meeting | | | |
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| Month | Country | Discussion Focus | Entity's Support |
| April | Libya | Focal Points were briefed by the Senior Women's Protection Advisor (SWPA) in Libya who | UN Women has provided technical support for the draft national law on |

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| | | spoke about CRSV trends and patterns, specifically the use of CRSV in detention settings and against men. Challenges currently faced in the implementation of the CRSV mandate include the impunity of perpetrators, fragmented actions by those in-country, and deprioritisation of CRSV. However, despite these barriers, the MARA in Libya is incredibly strong and demonstrates cooperation and coordination on this issue. | <p>combatting violence against women by deploying legal experts. It also has provided capacity building trainings to 400 women human rights defenders to identify cases of online violence.</p> <p>UNODC is conducting an ongoing justice assessment in Libya, which will look at issues of GBV against women and violence against children.</p> |
| May | Sudan | The SWPA of the UN Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS) and the OHCHR Gender Advisor in Sudan briefed on the deteriorating situation in Sudan amidst the outbreak of conflict on 15 April 2023. The UN has been attempting to be in close contact with local organisations, women human rights defenders (WHRDs) and others across the country to hear about their experiences and shed light on trends and patterns of CRSV. The MARA working group, however, continues to be the best way to share information and ensure coordinated action. | <p>OCHA's Gender in Humanitarian Action group is working on a gender assessment with UN Women.</p> <p>UNFPA, through the GBV Sub-Cluster, has been updating a service mapping and developing awareness-raising materials.</p> |
| June | Iraq | The SWPA in Iraq briefed on lessons learned and findings from her time as a SWPA. It is clear that the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) is using CRSV as a weapon against women and girls, more so than perceptions of ISIL targeting groups based on ethnicity. She recommended that the best way to ensure CRSV survivors are supported with services and | UNICEF recalled that it implemented a UN Action project in Iraq in 2021 and 2022 which strengthened the capacity of key government/local service providers in the context of the transition towards recovery and stabilisation, namely on GBV case management. |

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| | | assistance is by mainstreaming CRSV activities in existing UN programmes. | |
| August | Sudan | UN colleagues in Sudan, including the SWPA , the GBV Area of Responsibility (GBV AoR) Coordinator , and a representative from OCHA , provided an update on the humanitarian situation in Sudan as it relates to CRSV. Despite increases in CRSV cases, access issues and supply shortages inhibit the provision of services to survivors. WHRDs and service providers to CRSV survivors are also facing threats. | <p>UNHCR continues to coordinate the GBV response in refugee settings, including in Egypt, Chad, South Sudan and Ethiopia.</p> <p>OHCHR is working with the SWPA to collect, monitor and report credible cases of CRSV for accountability purposes.</p> |
| | Ukraine | UNFPA Ukraine provided an update on trends and patterns in Ukraine, particularly in line with the implementation of the UN's FoC on the prevention and response to CRSV with the Government of Ukraine. UNFPA continues to enhance comprehensive, holistic services to increase the willingness of survivors to seek help; however, there is room for improvement in meaningfully engaging survivors of CRSV in its work. | The TOE held a workshop for senior investigators focused on building strong legal cases on CRSV. It also enhanced the capacity of police in Ukraine through trainings and providing additional material on how to treat cases of CRSV. |
| Emergency Meetings | | | |
| July | DRC | Representatives from MONUSCO , UNFPA DRC , WHO African Region , UNODC Southern Africa and the GBV AoR convened to discuss the rapidly deteriorating security situation and the recent rise in CRSV cases in the DRC. Activities being carried out include strengthening GBV coordination, collaboration with religious leaders, provision of psychosocial support to survivors, and facilitating legal justice. Challenges identified by | <p>UNODA and its partner, UNIDIR, recently published a report that indicated one of its affiliated Non-Governmental Organisation (NGOs) found that 87% of CRSV incidents in the DRC involved a firearm.</p> <p>After the completion of a recent visit to Kinshasa, CTED found a lack of</p> |

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| | | field colleagues included funding shortages, accessing and security issues, and monitoring barriers. | awareness amongst military and traditional actors around CRSV, particularly its use as a tactic of terrorism. |
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Additionally, the monthly Focal Points meeting served as a platform to map how member entities are working on and internally mainstreaming CRSV. In 2023, nine UN Action member entities presented on their mandates and intersections with preventing and responding to sexual violence in conflict.

| Month | Entity | Mainstreaming CRSV |
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| February | OCHA | OCHA works on CRSV through its protection of civilians mandate, the WPS agenda, and related Security Council resolutions. It has a unique role to play in the area of gender equality as a convener of humanitarian action, which is institutionalised through three key priorities: i) drive robust gender analysis; ii) enhance women's organisations and women's meaningful participation in humanitarian decision-making; and iii) prioritise prevention, response, and mitigation of GBV, including CRSV. |
| | UNICEF | UNICEF uses its GBV in emergencies programme model for its response to CRSV. This model has three cross-cutting pillars: i) supporting survivors to access services; ii) mitigating risks to GBV across all sectors; and iii) prevention. UNICEF's advocacy has been focused on how to take into account the needs of CRSV survivors when funding GBV service provision and GBV programming. |
| April | UNFPA | UNFPA facilitates multi-sectoral lifesaving services for GBV and CRSV survivors and those at risk, as part of its mandate as a humanitarian actor. In relation to CRSV, UNFPA's position is to avoid creating a hierarchy across different forms of GBV. UNFPA is also the lead GBV agency in IDP camps and leads 32 GBV Sub-Clusters and AoRs where they are activated. |
| May | UNODC | UNODC's mandate is guided by international treaties related to transnational organised crime, corruption, and drug control, as well as |

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| | | relevant UN Security Council resolutions on terrorism and UN standards and norms in crime prevention and criminal justice. Its expertise relating to CRSV is linked with efforts to prevent terrorism, trafficking in persons, violence against women, and violence against children. These efforts are realised through normative work, data collection, research and analysis, and delivery of technical assistance. This includes capacity building, providing legal and advisory services, and the development guidance and policies. |
| September | WFP | As a new member of the Network, WFP aims to strategically embed how it works on CRSV into its existing approaches to GBV protection, including by addressing root causes. Its priorities include risk mitigation, re-energising its commitments to referral pathways, and increasing understanding of and investment in addressing root causes on the nexus of gender inequality, food and nutrition. |
| | UN Women | Leading the WPS agenda, UN Women addresses CRSV mainly through its protection pillar. Its work centred on addressing the root causes of CRSV at the global, regional and country-levels, while ensuring a survivor-centred approach and close relationships with local women's organisations in all efforts. UN Women also provides trainings for police and the military on preventing CRSV and on country's legal frameworks to address CRSV. |
| October | UNODA | UNODA provides support to the UN system on issues related to arms control and disarmament. CRSV is primarily linked to its prevention pillar, whereby UNODA is advocating for more data and research on how weapons are being used in the perpetration of CRSV. It also developed and is implementing a training manual on gender mainstreaming, specifically related to small arms policies, which includes a CRSV section. |
| November | UN Youth Office (formerly the UN Office | The UN Youth Office is responsible for implementing the Youth, Peace and Security |

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| | of Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth) | (YPS) agenda to work for and with young people. While CRSV has never been a standalone priority of the YPS agenda, CRSV has been discussed through the lens of various other subjects, such as agency, empowerment and the prevention of violence. |
| December | UNOCT | UNOCT has a mandate on policy coordination and technical assistance, assessing entry points to address CRSV within a terrorism context while establishing thematic connections. Its Human Rights and Gender Section provides technical assistance and support to programmes and policy functions to develop capacity-building tools on the intersection of SGBV and CRSV with terrorism and violent extremism. |

Mission Preparation and Updates

Given the reach of the 25 Network members in the field, UN Action monthly Focal Points meetings were also used as a platform for entities to support the preparation of and hear the outcomes from the SRSG-SVC's field visits. In 2023, the Focal Points were invited to provide background information from their respective field colleagues for missions to Colombia, DRC, South Sudan, Lithuania, and the Central African Republic (CAR). Upon the SRSG-SVC's return, colleagues who accompanied the missions briefed Focal Points on findings, challenges, lessons learned and recommended ways forward.

Coordinating with the Central Emergency Relief Fund (CERF)

To better understand and seek synergies with other UN funding mechanisms, the Network continued to be briefed by other funds in the monthly Focal Points meeting. In February 2023, CERF, a tool for humanitarian financing managed by OCHA, presented its work and purpose as a kick-start to emergency responses. In relation to CRSV, the fact that CRSV is not tracked as a priority area for CERF funding indicates the critical need for UN entities to bring the issue to the table. It became apparent that the best way to have CERF allocate more funds to CRSV specifically would be to raise the profile of CRSV as a priority through Network entities and in the SRSG-SVC's political advocacy.

Comprehensive Response in Ukraine

Throughout 2023, the Network continued to be actively engaged in the prevention and response to CRSV within the context of Ukraine. Most prominently, UN Action established itself as a coordination body that continues to create tools and guidelines to support the implementation of a number of areas of the FoC through the Interdepartmental Working Groups on Combating Sexual Violence established by the Ukrainian Government. Alongside UNFPA, the UN Action Secretariat co-chairs the Government's Sub-Working Group on the provision of comprehensive assistance to survivors of CRSV. In 2023, this Working Group alone met twice, and its progress was presented at larger coordination meetings three additional times.

MINUSMA Transition

On 30 June 2023, the UN Security Council issued resolution 2690 which called for the withdrawal of the MINUSMA by 31 December 2023 in line with the Malian Government's request. As such, UN Action supported colleagues in Mali to ensure the continued provision of services to CRSV survivors, as well as a coordinated transition of all CRSV-related activities to remaining UN entities in-country. One such critical activity requiring support during the transition was the MARA. As the MARA mechanism in Myanmar differs from other countries, whereby there is no peacekeeping or political mission on the ground despite an agreement with the Government to address CRSV, UN Action facilitated a discussion between UNFPA Mali and UNFPA Myanmar to provide insight to the Mali team on what the MARA could look like without MINUSMA. Colleagues at UNFPA Myanmar shed light on challenges, promising practices and lessons learned in its implementation of the MARA in line with UN Security Council resolution 1960.

High-Level Advocacy

Once data is collected from the field, it is vital that UN senior officials use reliable and objective information on CRSV trends and patterns for further advocacy and engagement on CRSV. The SRSG-SVC published ten press statements in 2023 on the mandate, including on various priority issues for the Network and the TOE:

| Statements on Situations of Concern | | |
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| Sudan | 24 May 2023 | The SRSG-SVC expressed grave concern about reports of sexual violence against women and girls, including allegations of rape, in the context of violent hostilities which erupted between the Sudan Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) on 15 April 2023. She called on both parties to comply with their obligations under international law and respect their commitments as per the May 2023 Jeddah Talks. |
| DRC | 25 May 2023 | In response to alleged acts of sexual violence against women and girls in and around IDP camps near Goma, the SRSG-SVC expressed deep alarm about CRSV perpetrated by armed men against women and girls attempting to return to their homes or as they carry out their daily livelihood activities, including collecting firewood, food or water. |
| Colombia | 1 June 2023 | Following a mission to Colombia, the SRSG-SVC renewed her Office's engagement with Colombian authorities to support efforts on the prevention and response to CRSV. She urged that advancements towards peace can play a pivotal role in reducing the impact of armed conflict on civilians, including sexual violence, and deliver the dividends of peace that will improve the living conditions of communities. |
| Sudan | 1 August 2023 | In response to the escalating allegations of CRSV in Sudan, the SRSG-SVC engaged with the Deputy |

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| | | Commander of the RSF where she raised concerns about increasing sexual violence in Khartoum and Darfur. As a next step, the SRSG-SVC urged the RSF to issue a formal undertaking in the form of a Unilateral Communiqué condemning CRSV and committing to effective measures to prevent and address such violations. |
| Israel and the State of Palestine | 8 December 2023 | In the aftermath of the 7 October attacks by Hamas in Israel, the SRSG-SVC expressed grave concern about reports of sexual violence against hostages in Hamas captivity. She called for the hostages' immediate, safe and unconditional release and reiterated the Secretary-General's call for a humanitarian ceasefire. |
| Israel and the State of Palestine | 21 December 2023 | After meeting with the families of some of the hostages in Hamas captivity, the SRSG-SVC reiterated her call for the immediate, safe and unconditional release of the hostages, especially the 15 women, after 75 days in captivity. She noted that the reports of sexual violence committed by Hamas must be promptly and rigorously investigated. |
| Joint Statements | | |
| Joint Statement by OSCE Special Representative Richey and SRSG-SVC on preventing and responding to trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation and sexual violence in the context of the Russian invasion of Ukraine | 30 March 2023 | The Organisation for Security and Coordination in Europe (OSCE) Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings Valiant Richey and the SRSG-SVC expressed their grave concern about the harm of sexual exploitation, and sexual violence and its cost for the whole of society, as a result of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. |
| Joint Statement by EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell, and SRSG-SVC on the occasion of the International | 19 June 2023 | To commemorate the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict, this joint statement called for more decisive action to prevent and eliminate CRSV, and to advance gender equality as a political priority. The senior officials also recognised the heightened risk of sexual violence through the facilitation and promotion of online digital channels. |

| | | |
|--|-------------------|---|
| Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict | | |
| Other Press Statements | | |
| SRSG-SVC welcomes the formal opening of a dedicated case on CRSV by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace in Colombia | 28 September 2023 | The SRSG-SVC commended the formal opening by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace in Colombia of a dedicated case on SGBV, reproductive violence and other gender-based crimes on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity committed in the context of the armed conflict. |
| New Partnerships | | |
| The OSRSG-SVC and the University of Ottawa sign a partnership to fight sexual violence in conflict | 2 May 2023 | Through the signing of an FoC between the OSRSG-SVC and the University of Ottawa, both parties expressed their commitment to prevent and respond to CRSV. The Framework will lead to the creation of a Gender, Peace and Security Collaboratory that will support the OSRSG-SVC in its efforts through robust, transformation, and critical research on CRSV. |

INITIATIVES UNDER OUTCOME 3 RELATED TO KNOWLEDGE BUILDING AND DEVELOPMENT OF POLICIES, GUIDANCE AND TOOLS

Under Outcome 3 of the UN Action Strategic Framework 2020-2025, entities committed to advancing the implementation of the CRSV and WPS agenda through the development of guidance, policies and tools. Such products would help fill gaps in knowledge, practices, advocacy and technical expertise to improve CRSV prevention and response. Therefore, through UN Action's thematic working groups, numerous knowledge building tools were conceptualised and/or created throughout 2023.

CRSV Capacity Building Working Group

UN Action's response to the crisis in Ukraine in early 2022 triggered requests from various UN field offices and civil society partners for trainings on CRSV, starting with the fundamentals of CRSV. Similar requests were made from colleagues based in Ethiopia and Mozambique. At the end of 2022, the Network formed a working group, led by DPO and UNFPA, on capacity building to assess the training needs for those working on CRSV, with the aim of designing and delivering tailored trainings on the fundamentals of CRSV. In 2023, UN Action developed a draft training on fundamentals of CRSV with the objective of system wide-endorsement and roll out in 2024.

In addition, as part of peer learning across UN agencies, in November, UNFPA and UNICEF oriented Network members on the [GBV Accountability Framework](#), named as such to drive home the point that it is each individual's responsibility to hold oneself accountable to mainstreaming GBV. The Framework was an outcome of conversations with donors and the UN on why GBV was not being prioritised, and what could be done to ensure it would be prioritised in coordination efforts and funding. The original actors in developing this inter-agency initiative included many UN Action entities, major international organisations and Member States, and the basic premise for the Framework is that all humanitarian actors, not just GBV specialists, have a role to play in the prioritisation and integration of the prevention and response to GBV across all sectors. The Framework includes one page of high-level actions for each category of actors across the humanitarian programme cycle and covers six categories of actors (donors, humanitarian coordinators, humanitarian country teams, GBV mainstreaming agencies, GBV coordination leads, and GBV specialist agencies).

Framework for the Prevention of CRSV

In September 2022, the Network led the development and launch of the [Framework for the Prevention of CRSV](#), a practical tool and guidance that can be implemented at the regional, national, and local levels to provide stakeholders, especially governments and UN agencies, a guideline to foster stronger prevention efforts. The Framework is a critical component for the holistic approach to combatting CRSV. Following missions to the DRC, CAR and South Sudan in 2023, the SRSG-SVC secured political will at the highest-levels of the respective governments, where UN Action entities have field presences, to ensure the full implementation of the Framework. To advance this work, a roadmap for the Framework's implementation was also developed with a pilot to be rolled out in South Sudan in 2024.

Principles of a Survivor-Centred Approach

UN Action frames all its initiatives through a survivor-centred lens when it comes to preventing and responding to CRSV. This requires that initiatives are informed by basic principles that foster empowerment, allow participation and leadership of survivors, and promotes their safety, well-being, and recovery in a manner that deliberately centres their wishes and needs. Following Security Council resolution 2467 (2019), where a survivor-centred approach to CRSV was articulated for the first time at the highest-levels of the UN, the Network identified the need to build new knowledge to inform what it means to take a survivor-centred approach in the specific context of the prevention and response to CRSV. In 2022, under the leadership of UN Women, the Core Group working on this theme continued to develop a document provisionally titled, 'Advancing Principles of a Survivor-Centred Approach to the Prevention and Response of CRSV'. The working group collected case studies illustrating when a survivor-centred approach was successfully, or unsuccessfully, applied in the response to CRSV from UN Action members and CSO partners, including the [All Survivors Project](#) and [Nadia's Initiative](#). The Network is currently consulting with organisations representing survivors of CRSV, including SEMA, to ensure the principles, case studies and practical guidelines captured are appropriate, relevant and accurately reflect the needs and wishes of survivors.

Further, in March, UN Action hosted a brownbag webinar attended by nearly 50 participants to share experiences from Guatemala and the DRC on what it means to apply a survivor-centred approach in the pursuit of transitional justice. Led by UN Women and OHCHR, the webinar was an opportunity to discuss promising practices, lessons learned as well as challenges with taking a

survivor-centred approach in practice. UN Women presented the case of the *abuelas of Sepur Zarco* and OHCHR presented learnings from its work in the DRC and the case of Sheka. One key factor for success identified was the strong involvement and presence of civil society – for example, in Guatemala, civil society led the process of documenting the cases and served as the bridge with judicial authorities. UN Women summarised in three key terms the process of transitional justice: “transformation”, “leadership”, and “respecting rights”.

The Nexus of CRSV, Arms Control and Disarmament

To better understand the critical nexus between CRSV, arms control and disarmament, the UN Action Network hosted a [webinar](#) on the occasion of the 16 Days of Activism against GBV using the humanitarian situation in the Sudan as a case study. Representatives from UNODA, UNIDIR and UNODC shed light on arms control as a means for CRSV prevention. For example, the representative from UNIDIR presented findings from the 2023 report, [Addressing Weapons in Conflict-related Sexual Violence: The Arms Control and Disarmament Toolbox](#). The report addressed themes raised in the Secretary-General’s 2022 annual report on CRSV, which indicated that ‘the proliferation of small arms and light weapons is one of the factors fuelling systematic and widespread CRSV’ and provided a backdrop for the roundtable discussion. It also illustrated some interesting conclusions and recommendations, including the need to disaggregate data by weapon to better inform CRSV prevention efforts and to use the MARA Working Group in-country to collect information on weapon trends and analysis. UNODC complemented the UNIDIR findings by raising the importance of implementing policies to prevent access to firearms and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. It is critical to disaggregate firearm data by age and gender to have a greater understanding of the issue. Not doing so could act as a hindrance to comprehensive response in conflict and non-conflict settings.

Economic Empowerment for Survivors of CRSV

In conflict and post-conflict settings, women are often engaged in insecure work which hinders their economic security. After exposure to CRSV, they can become even more vulnerable to economic hardship with even less access to economic opportunity, creating cycles of dependency and poverty. Recognising that survivors of CRSV require not only immediate medical, psychosocial and legal assistance, but also, in the long-term, to become economically self-reliant as part of their journey to healing, UN Action has increased focus on economic empowerment. Last year, to lay the groundwork for a whole of UN Action approach, the Network, led by ITC, hosted two brownbags. The first established the concept of economic empowerment for survivors of CRSV, and the second shared promising economic empowerment and livelihood practices implemented by entities. To implement these practices, UN Action has funded two projects with a focus on economic empowerment, including the one in the DRC summarised earlier in this report and one to be implemented in South Sudan in 2024. These projects will allow the Network to further define its approach in this area through a white paper and practical guidelines to be developed in 2024.

Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)

In addition, the Network strengthened the understanding of what it means to provide MHPSS to survivors of CRSV. Through the development of an initial conceptual framing of the nexus of CRSV and MHPSS (drawing from interviews with UNICEF, WHO, UNFPA, the UN Office on Youth Affairs, and UN Women, as well as existing policies, guidance, projects and knowledge),

this research initiative will support the work of those working on trauma-informed MHPSS support to survivors, children born of CRSV and their communities. The final guidance document aims to be finalised in 2024.

INITIATIVES UNDER OUTCOME 4 RELATED TO DATA COLLECTION, MANAGEMENT, MONITORING, ANALYSIS AND HARMONISATION

A main priority in advancing the CRSV mandate is ensuring that reliable, timely and objective information on CRSV trends, risk and patterns are gathered. In turn, this crucial information supports evidence-based high-level advocacy, therefore, enhancing engagement with and pressure on parties to conflict and informing survivor-centred solutions. As a platform to adopt a “One UN” approach, the UN Action Network provides reporting on CRSV trends from the field, which can, and often is, translated into political advocacy and strategic engagement at the international level.

Annual Report of the Secretary-General on Conflict-related Sexual Violence

UN Action is the primary consultation forum for the annual Report of the Secretary-General on CRSV. The Report serves not only as a public record of events, but also as a global advocacy instrument for driving the field of CRSV prevention and response forward. Annually, the Report brings new concerns and information on CRSV to light, and additionally, serves as a reference tool, as well as a basis for strategic advocacy and enhanced operational response. In 2023, as per usual practice, Focal Points worked with the OSRSG-SVC and country counterparts to bring timely and quality data and analysis into the report. The UN Action Steering Committee also met in April 2023 to review and endorse the annual Report.

Monitoring, Analysis and Reporting Arrangements (the MARA)

In 2022, UN Action finalised an assessment of the operationalisation of the MARA and related monitoring and analysis mechanisms, which are critical for coordination and programmatic responses by the UN system and partners in affected countries. In 2023, based on the recommendations from the assessment, the Network developed a ToR and brought on board an expert to lead two priority workstreams: the update of the [Provisional Guidance Note on the Implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1960 \(2010\)](#), and the opportunity to strengthen the operationalisation of the MARA. The update of the Provisional Guidance Note aims to provide user-friendly information and guidance applicable across different country settings, reflecting policy and guidance developments and operational practices since 2011. In order to strengthen and look to the next generation of the MARA, the exploration of a “Global MARA Support System (GMSS)” began, which aims to support trend analysis within and across contexts and years, support mission-based teams and their field Focal Points in data collection and verification, ensure data security, and enable collaboration with the OSRSG-SVC during reporting. UN Action secured funding from the UK Government to assess whether a GMSS is needed, appropriate and feasible, in order to strengthen the operationalisation of the MARA in targeted conflict-affected contexts. These workstreams will continue into 2024 through a Working Group co-led by DPO and the UN Action Secretariat.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

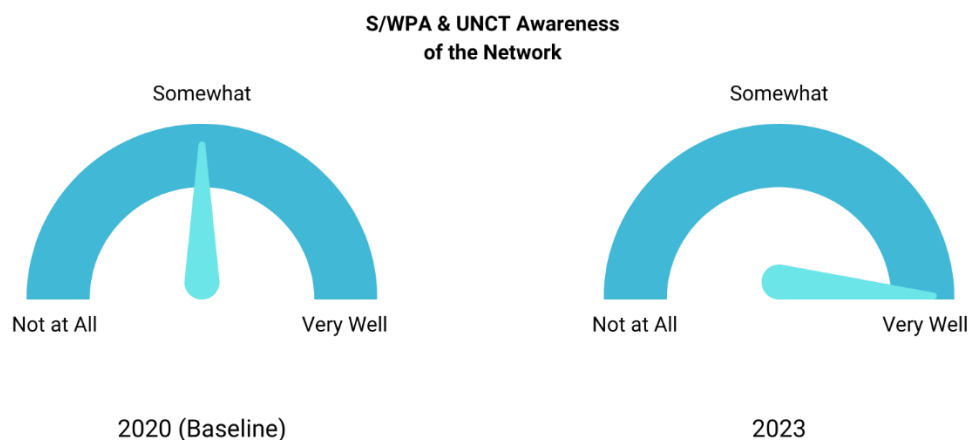
The UN Action Secretariat tracks the progress and effectiveness of the Network’s initiatives on an annual basis through an extensive M&E exercise in line with its 2020 – 2025 Strategic Framework. As part of this, UN Action collects qualitative and quantitative data from diverse sources, such as

annual reports, meeting readouts, press statements, social media monitoring and surveys, and measures it against baseline information collected in previous years, including annual surveys with Focal Points. This information then informs a range of the Network’s political advocacy and strategic engagements on CRSV. The exercises also act as a forum for Focal Points to express how the Network can better engage in CRSV efforts, including how UN Action can ensure the meaningful participation of local women’s organisations and survivor’s networks in the development of JCs or FoCs. In addition, Focal Points are able to rate the coordination, cooperation and coherence of the Network, which is then analysed against baseline data collected in previous years. Information is collected through surveys from SWPAs / UNCT leads on CRSV at the baseline and Strategic Framework mid-point and will also be collected following the completion of the current Strategic Framework at the end of 2025.

For the 2023 reporting period, SWPAs and UNCT leads on CRSV from a number of countries, including Somalia Iraq, South Sudan, Mali and Myanmar, responded to the survey.

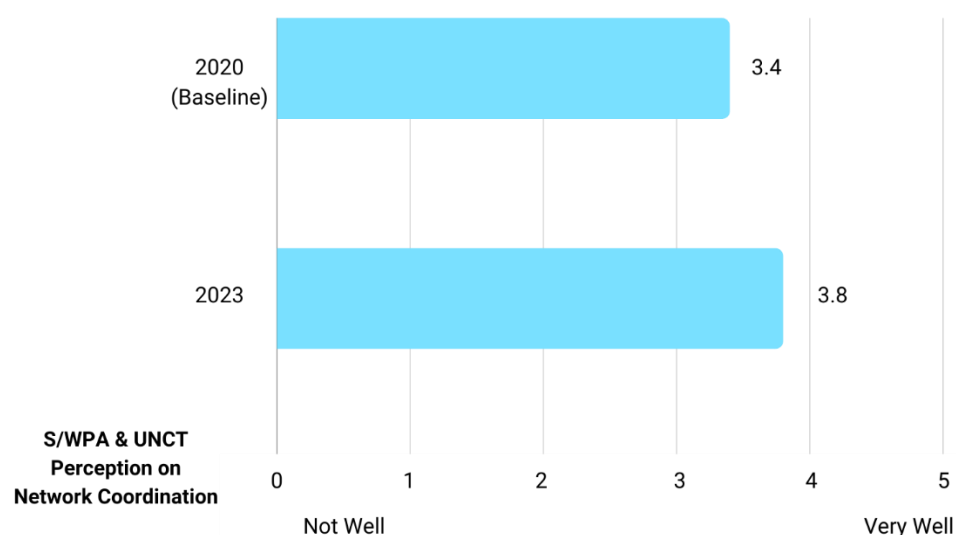
Increased Awareness

Increased Awareness: As compared to the baseline, when asked about how aware they were of the Network and its goals and objectives, results indicate that field colleagues are more aware of UN Action then they were in 2020.



Increasing Coordination, Cooperation and Coherence

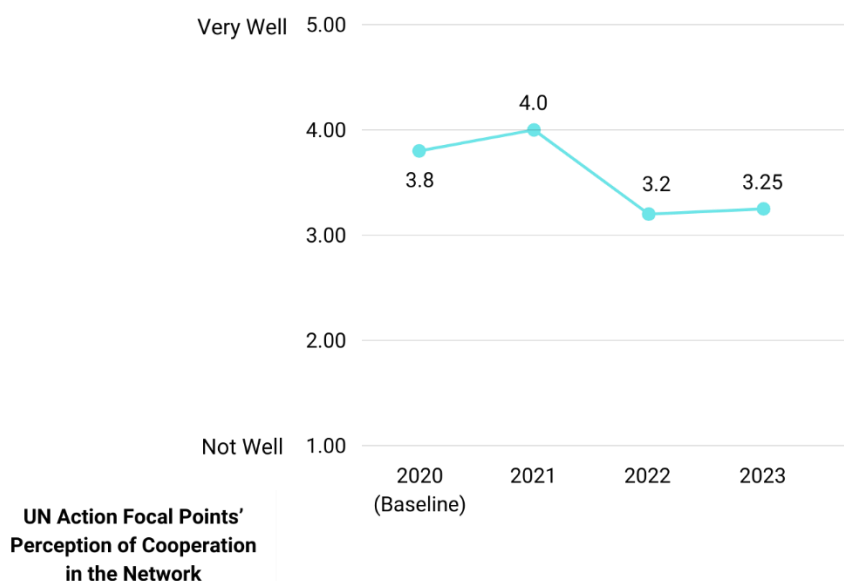
Focal Points and SWPAs were asked how well they felt the UN Action Network us currently functioning in terms of coordination (for example that this is smooth, regular and timely).



As compared to baseline, SWPAs felt that the Network has improved slightly in this area. Whereas for Focal Points, there has been no change since baseline in how they perceive the Network coordinates which they have

consistently rated a 4 out of a possible 5. They noted that communication was efficient and clear and appreciated regular updates via email, and the comprehensive agendas and meeting notes. One Focal Point suggested that coordination could be improved by cross-pollinating information across thematic and technical working groups, and knowledge sharing among the UN Action-funded funded projects being implemented across the various contexts.

SWPAs observed that though “there may be more regular coordination and communications at the HQ level...it would also be good if UN Action network can ensure regular coordination and communications involving colleagues at the field level”. SWPAs also suggested that they would appreciate: i) more systematic information sharing about other country contexts; ii) knowledge on how partners are progressing; iii) brainstorming opportunities on collective strategies; and iv) being informed of results achieved. This is in line with UN Action’s push to deepen its coordination at all levels – particularly prioritising country-level support.



In terms of cooperation (i.e. individual and collective ownership of the contributions to Network initiatives), baseline Focal Points's perceptions have varied over the years.

An area of strength, noted by one Focal Point, was the collaboration around the development of joint, survivor-centred projects. Another Focal Point suggested that "If the aim is to spark more ownership among members, interactive

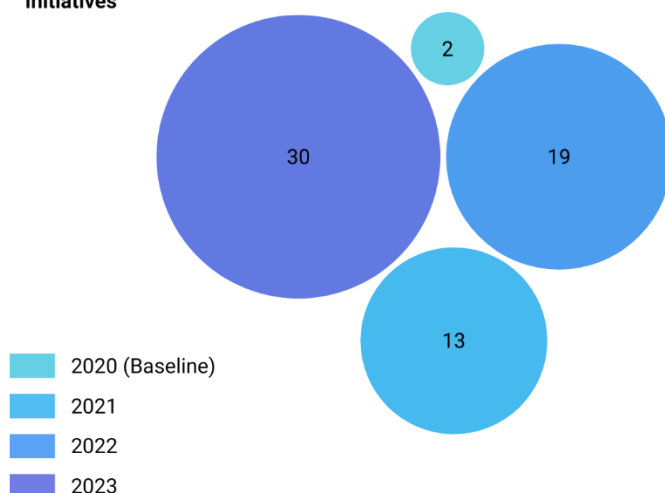
methodologies for the monthly meetings could be helpful (such as break out room discussions, jam boards, polls, etc)". The same Focal Point also suggested more "action oriented" meetings with a tailored methodology to spark more discussion. As an example, the Focal Point noted there is a lot of potential to strengthen joint advocacy on CRSV among the members, and one such initiative could be to create joint key messages that could be mainstreamed into leaderships talking points for high profile meetings and events etc.

SWPAs' perception of the Network's cooperation has remained consistent since the baseline assessment, with scores of 3.3 and 3.4 out of 5 on two separate occasions. One SWPA observed that cooperation tends to be more organic at the country level, rather than facilitated by the UN Action Network. In contrast, a respondent from Mali highlighted that UN Action had effectively supported the Mali Country Office in exchanging information with other Country Offices facing similar challenges.

An area identified for improvement was the sharing of additional information beyond the management of funded projects, including advocacy strategies and tools. Similarly, another respondent suggested that UN Action should leverage its influence at headquarters, particularly with Principals and Heads of Entities, to drive change at the Country Representative level. This could include ensuring the availability of data, facilitating cooperation for the MARA, or assisting with adequate staffing for SWPA teams. As one SWPA noted, "I am alone; no others assist with my work as I have no WPAs in my Office."

Advocacy

Number of Advocacy Initiatives



UN Action’s collective advocacy has significantly expanded since 2020, with continuous improvements observed each year. In 2023, the Network capitalised on 30 opportunities to raise awareness about CRSV prevention and response. Notable initiatives included the publication of a joint press statement in July urging immediate action in the DRC, the launch of the “A CRSV Survivor’s Journey” exhibition, the release of biannual newsletters currently reaching over 700 recipients, and participation in two high-profile events at the EU Humanitarian

Forum.

Network members also leveraged the influence of their Principals and Heads of Entities by using key moments to advocate on the issue. On average leadership raised the issue of CRSV three times over the course of the year, most frequently during International Women’s Day (four Principals), the 67th Session of CSW (two Principals), IDESVIC (two Principals), the 16 Days of Activism against GBV (one Principal), the Security Council Open Debate on WPS (one Principal) and the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (one Principal).

MOVING FORWARD: CHALLENGES AND PRIORITIES

While in previous years, UN Action could rely, for the most part on regular, multi-year core funding, in acknowledgement of the changing funding landscape and donor attention, the Network has increased its efforts to secure core contributions for its strategic priorities, for example from Norway and Lithuania, whilst bringing on board new Member State donors such as Canada, and Germany for country and / or thematically delineated funds, and encouraged donors to provide in kind support such as the contribution of a JPO from the Government of Japan. This approach will continue in 2024 as UN Action actively reassess its fundraising strategy in this new environment. In addition, the Network will establish new fundraising mechanisms, such as accepting donations from the public, including concerned citizens and philanthropists, which it has not done previously.

Through a united and growing network working across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, UN Action will continue to build and roll-out new areas of knowledge. In recognition of the illicit proliferation and widespread availability of small arms and light weapons directly fuelling incidents of sexual violence, the Network will expand its work on disarmament as means of CRSV prevention. It will also strengthen its reach in the area of economic empowerment as a form of both protection from CRSV and recovery for survivors who may face stigma and isolation. In addition, with the welcoming of the WFP to the Network, UN Action will solidify the conceptual and practical connections between food insecurity and CRSV to enhance resilience and strengthen

protection from CSRV. Along the lines of holistic prevention, the Network will roll-out the Framework for the Prevention of CSRV in pilot countries, notably South Sudan.

With the increasing reality being faced of mission drawdowns and the need to ensure the continuity of the MARA and sustain protection and response measures for CSRV survivors and those at risk in the absence of peacekeeping operations, the Network has leveraged its knowledge and experience, for example, drawing from findings of the assessment it conducted in 2022 on the Operationalization of the MARA, and facilitating the sharing of lessons between UNCTs and UN agencies who have faced such situations with those in transition. This area of work is a pressing priority for the Network, and in 2024 UN Action will assess the feasibility of establishing a “Global MARA Support System”, which would support trend analysis within and across contexts and years, support mission-based teams and their field Focal Points in data collection and verification, ensure data security, and enable collaboration with the OSRSG-SVC during reporting.

UN Action will also work through a progressively inclusive and intersectional lens as part of its survivor-centred approach to preventing and responding to CSRV. This will recognise that survivors are unique individuals. The Network’s initiatives will seek to advocate for and to empower survivors by prioritising their needs, perspectives and wishes, and will pay special attention to intersecting inequalities, namely ethnicity, religion, migratory status, disability, age, political affiliation, sexual orientation and gender identity, and HIV status, among others. Through these shared tenets, UN Action will be able to ensure that survivors’ rights are respected, that they are treated with dignity, and that their capacity to make informed decisions and to guide interventions to prevent future incidents of CSRV is embraced.

In 2024, as it reaches the final two years of its 2020 – 2025 Strategic Framework, UN Action will finalise the results of the rigorous and independent evaluation it is currently conducting of the Network’s shortfalls and successes since 2020. The evaluation involved a comprehensive desk review, focus groups and key informant interviews with 50 participants across UN Action’s key stakeholder groups including the leadership of the Network (e.g. the Chair, and Heads of Entities), technical-level Focal Points from member entities, SWPAs, UNCTs, agencies implementing UN Action funded projects, donor Member States, civil society partners, and organisations either representing or working closely with survivors. Results will be outlined in a public report to be published in 2024 and will feed into the Network’s strategic planning, re-orientation of focus and process and the concrete activities in its 2024 – 2025 Workplan.

As always, UN Action will focus on its clear strategic priorities, while responding to rapidly shifting situations of concern, ensuring creativity in the current challenging financial operating environment, guided by the SRSG-SVC's vision, the shared goals of its 25 Network members, Security Council resolutions relevant to CSRV, and above all, the needs of survivors themselves.

RESOURCES

The 2023 Secretary-General’s annual Report on CSRV called upon Member States, donors and regional and intergovernmental organisations to provide “predictable financial support to the conflict-related sexual violence multi-partner trust fund for the work of the United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict network”. Even before UN Action was officially established in 2007, the Network has been funded through voluntary contributions for all staffing, programmatic and operational costs. Though the Network invests significant efforts to ensure that

adequate resources are mobilised to address the chronic funding shortfalls for preventing and addressing CRSV, donor contributions continue to fall below levels of the Network's projected needs.

A. Core Contributors

| | | | |
|---|---------|---|----------------|
|  | Canada |  | Lithuania |
|  | France |  | Netherlands |
|  | Germany |  | Norway |
|  | Japan |  | United Kingdom |

B. Project-Specific Allocations

| Project | Countries Supported | Participating UN Organisations | Total \$USD |
|---|---------------------|--|-------------|
| Mitigating gender-based violence including conflict-related sexual violence and COVID 19 effects on women and girls while reinforcing women's response in DRC (CRSV_UNA_04) | DRC | OHCHR, DPO | \$512,782 |
| CRSV response to the urgent needs of affected women and girls in Ménaka and Gao regions in Mali (CRSV_UNA_05) | Mali | UNFPA (in partnership with MINUSMA prior to its closure) | \$900,583 |
| UNited Action to Empower Survivors of CRSV (CRSV_UNA_06) | Ukraine | IOM, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, UN Women, WHO | \$7,156,750 |
| Net Funded Amount Total: \$ 8,570,115 | | | |

C. Other Contributions

| Contributor | In-Kind Contribution | Location of Support |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Japan | JPO | USA (New York, UN Headquarters) |

You can follow the UN Action Network on Facebook, Instagram and X
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For more information, contact: Ms Letitia Anderson (andersonl@un.org).

ANNEX

GOVERNANCE AND STRUCTURE OF UN ACTION

The UN Action Network Steering Committee

UN Action is governed by a Steering Committee comprised of principals and senior officials from its member entities and is chaired by the SRSG-SVC. As per the Terms of Reference (TORs), the Steering Committee serves as a high-level forum for discussing and coordinating substantive policy and operational matters regarding CRSV, to take consensus-based decisions on concerted courses of action.

The UN Action Network Focal Points

UN Action Focal Points serve as the main technical representatives for entities in the UN Action Network and serve as the liaison between the entity, including its country offices/missions, and UN Action, to ensure two-way communication, knowledge sharing and coordinated action.

The UN Action Secretariat

The UN Action Secretariat, located in the Office of the SRSG-SVC, coordinates and convenes the UN Action Network at the working level, and provides technical and administrative support. It supports the preparation of the annual Report of the Secretary-General on CRSV, frames advocacy messages for UN Action and the SRSG-SVC, supports and engages in joint missions of situations of concern, conducts training, briefings and outreach activities, and develops strategic partnerships with a broad range of actors. The Secretariat also facilitates UN Action's strategic planning, monitors the implementation of agreed-upon deliverables in line with UN Action's Strategic Framework and Workplan, and evaluates and reports on the impact of UN Action's activities.

UN ACTION'S FUND: THE CRSV-MPTF

The CRSV-MPTF succeeds the UN Action MPTF, which operated from 1 January 2009 to 31 December 2019, and builds upon past achievements, best practices, and lessons learned, in an effort to reinforce synergies between UN entities, governments, and their partners in preventing and responding to CRSV, galvanised by Security Council resolution [2467 \(2019\)](#).

Relaunched in 2020 as the CRSV-MPTF, the new Fund aims to increase coherence, bring attention to critical gaps and underfinanced priorities, consolidate and coordinate efforts to reduce fragmentation, and ensure impact at the country level across the UN system with regard to the CRSV agenda. Under the CRSV-MPTF, two Windows were established – one for UN Action and the other for the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict (TOE). Each Window has its oversight and decision-making body and is guided by the strategic leadership of the SRSG-SVC. The decision-making process for the use of funds is outlined in relevant governance documents. The UN Action Steering Committee, chaired by the SRSG-SVC, provides oversight and strategic advice. The MPTF Office of UNDP serves as the Administrative Agent using the pass-through fund management modality.

The CRSV-MPTF focuses on four CRSV-specific outcomes:

1. Holistic survivor-centred prevention and protection responses to CRSV are provided by international institutions and actors, in line with Security Council resolution 2467 (2019);

2. Strengthened national and international institutions prevent CRSV by addressing gender-based inequality and discrimination as the root-cause and driver of sexual violence;
3. Greater justice and accountability for CRSV including a victim-centred approach through strengthened capacity and technical expertise of national and international institutions; and
4. Better cooperation and information sharing between UN agencies reinforce coordination and improve system-wide response and implementation of UN Security Council resolutions on CRSV.

The UN Action Window of the CRSV-MPTF

Through the UN Action Window of the CRSV-MPTF, all 25 UN entities who are members of the UN Action Network are eligible to receive funding from the CRSV-MPTF. If the funding situation allows, projects that fit under the UN Action Strategic Framework and the Network's Funding Strategy may be granted funds based on a call for proposals issued on a biannual (twice-yearly) basis.

To take resource allocation decisions for the UN Action Window of the CRSV-MPTF, the UN Action Network established a Resource Management Committee (RMC), a sub-committee of UN Action Focal Points. The RMC comprises five UN Action Focal Points, one of whom serves as the Chairperson, nominated every year by the broader group of UN Action Focal Points and endorsed by the SRSG-SVC. Resource allocation decisions are made by the RMC based on its Operational Guidance and the UN Action Network Funding Strategy. In 2023, the RMC comprised UN Women (as Chair), UNODC, DPO, OCHA and IOM.

The UN Action Secretariat manages the technical and operational functioning of the CRSV-MPTF, including support to the SRSG-SVC, the UN Action Steering Committee and the RMC in matters related to funding through, and fundraising for the CRSV-MPTF. It also supports the PUNOs submitting proposals for consideration through vetting of projects, grant administration, reporting, monitoring and evaluation.