



# STOP RAPE NOW

## UN ACTION AGAINST SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT

### UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict (UN Action)

UN Action unites the work of 13 UN entities with the goal of ending sexual violence during and in the wake of conflict. Endorsed by the Secretary-General's Policy Committee in June 2007, it represents a concerted effort by the UN to “work as one” – amplifying advocacy, improving coordination and accountability, and supporting country efforts to prevent conflict-related sexual violence and respond effectively to the needs of survivors. According to an independent review conducted in 2013, “UN Action has proven itself to be a uniquely well-structured, rapidly mobilized, visible and effective mechanism in providing a global platform for advocacy, accountability and coordination”.

### Why did the UN establish UN Action?

Sexual violence during and in the aftermath of conflict is a present-day emergency affecting millions of people, primarily women and girls. It is frequently a conscious strategy employed on a large scale by armed groups to humiliate opponents, shred societies and destroy individuals. It is the only crime for which a community's response is more often to punish the victim, rather than the perpetrator. Sexual violence during conflict remains vastly under-addressed due to weak national protection mechanisms, inadequate rule of law and judicial systems, and piecemeal services for survivors. Many still view sexual violence as an inevitable, if regrettable, consequence of conflict and displacement – an attitude which encourages impunity for perpetrators and silences survivors. Yet rape during conflict can constitute a war crime, crime against humanity and act of genocide.

In 2008, the UN Security Council adopted resolution 1820, linking sexual violence with the maintenance of international peace and security, demanding the “cessation by all parties to armed conflict of all acts of sexual violence”. In 2009, the Council adopted resolution 1888, mandating new mechanisms to advance implementation. In 2010, resolution 1960 was adopted to strengthen monitoring and accountability, and in 2013, resolution 2106 emphasized prevention and the central role of civil society organizations.



Although a range of governmental, non-governmental and international initiatives to address sexual violence are being implemented, the scale and complexity of the problem, coupled with poor coordination, has meant huge gaps in the response. The creation of UN Action responds to calls from women's rights organizations, NGOs and rape survivors for the UN to do much more to provide a holistic response. It reinforces efforts by UN entities to better coordinate and streamline their activities, as well as to protect civilians from violence in conflict-affected settings.

### What are the aims of UN Action?

UN Action is committed to aligning the UN's work more effectively behind national efforts to address sexual violence, and to

deepen partnerships with NGOs and civil society organisations at all levels. It builds upon existing coordination mechanisms including the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and the work of the humanitarian Protection Cluster.

UN Action aims to strengthen both the UN's response to survivors and efforts to prevent sexual violence during and after conflict – recognising that the problem is a peace and security challenge, as well as a humanitarian and developmental issue. UN Action supports women's engagement in conflict prevention and enhances their influence over peace negotiations and post-conflict recovery processes. UN Action seeks to strengthen services for survivors, including health care, legal support and economic assistance to help them rebuild their lives.



### What are the focus areas of UN Action?

UN Action has three main pillars:

- 1. Country Level Action:** strategic support to integrated UN Missions to help them design comprehensive strategies to combat conflict-related sexual violence, and targeted support to strengthen joint UN programming. For example, UN Action has supported the design and implementation of the first-ever *Comprehensive Strategy on Combating Sexual Violence in the DRC*, as well as the Joint Government-UN Programme on Sexual Violence in Liberia.
- 2. Advocating for Action:** advocacy to raise public awareness and generate political will to address sexual violence as part of broader UN campaigns to *Stop Rape Now* and *UNITE to End Violence Against Women*.

**3. Learning by Doing:** creation of a knowledge hub of tools and guidance, including new data-collection methodologies, promising approaches to tackling stigma and providing psychosocial support, and scenario-based training for peacekeepers and other protection actors.

### What guides UN Action?

- Rape is not an inevitable consequence of conflict. It must be prevented.
- Conflict-related sexual violence is a violation of fundamental human dignity and rights.
- Attempts to end sexual violence must address gender-based inequalities by empowering women, and promoting their human rights.
- Women must guide advocacy and programming efforts to end sexual violence and secure peace.
- Constructive involvement of men and boys is vital.
- Sexual violence in conflict, and the impunity of the perpetrators, are among history's greatest silences. We all have a duty to act.

UN Action seeks to marshal the UN's response to Security Council Resolutions 1820, 1888, 1960 and 2106, broadening the constituency for addressing conflict-related sexual violence.

### For more information:

The work of UN Action is governed by a Steering Committee consisting of Principals from the 13 UN entities, supported by a small Secretariat, and chaired by the SRSG on Sexual Violence in Conflict. Funding for the network's activities is channelled through a **Multi-Partner Trust Fund**. For more info please contact Nadine Puechguirbal: [puechguirbal@un.org](mailto:puechguirbal@un.org) ; or Letitia Anderson: [letitia.anderson@unwomen.org](mailto:letitia.anderson@unwomen.org) or visit: [www.stoprapenow.org](http://www.stoprapenow.org);

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