

Comprehensive Strategies to Combat Conflict-Related Sexual Violence

Guidance Note

Background

'Conflict-related sexual violence refers to incidents or (for SCR 1960 listing purposes) patterns of sexual violence, that is rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity, against women, men, girls or boys. Such incidents or patterns occur in conflict or post-conflict settings or other situations of concern (e.g., political strife). They also have a direct or indirect nexus with the conflict or political strife itself, i.e. a temporal, geographical and/or causal link. In addition to the international character of the suspected crimes (that can, depending on the circumstances, constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity, acts of torture or genocide), the link with conflict may be evident in the profile and motivations of the perpetrator(s), the profile of the victim(s), the climate of impunity/weakened State capacity, cross-border dimensions and/or the fact that it violates the terms of a ceasefire agreement.' (Analytical & Conceptual Framing of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, UN Action, 2011)

Since 2008, Comprehensive Strategies to combat conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) have been developed in several countries in order to enhance the effectiveness of UN interventions through strengthened coordination and the development of common goals. The role of UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict (UN Action)¹ in supporting the development and implementation of these Strategies has been particularly important and innovative. UN Action has provided such support in the DRC, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Sudan (Darfur), and Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). Other crisis-affected settings, for example the Republic of Guinea, have also used and adapted the model pioneered by UN Action.

In addition to improving coordination and effectiveness, Comprehensive Strategies have helped the UN system to address the complexity of CRSV through multi-sectoral interagency interventions, by linking humanitarian, peace and security, and development dimensions for a more unified response. The development of Comprehensive Strategies has encouraged a holistic focus on prevention, security, human rights and protection and has increased the attention paid to sexual violence by the UN, international partners, governments and the general public.

This document aims to provide practical guidance and ideas on developing Comprehensive Strategies, and highlights examples of countries where, with the support of UN Action, such Strategies have already been developed and/or implemented. While Comprehensive Strategies have provided an instructive model for joined-up work at the country-level, it is evident that there are no 'one-size fits all' solutions. Each Strategy needs to be tailored to the specific context, the stage of conflict or peace building, the political environment, available resources, and other existing strategies and coordination frameworks. What is critical is that the Strategy is supported by diverse stakeholders and can be implemented on the ground.

¹ UN Action is a network of 13 UN-system entities created in 2007 to amplify advocacy and improve coherence in preventing and addressing conflict-related sexual violence. To learn more, visit: stoprapenow.org

United Nations Security Council Resolutions Mandating Comprehensive Strategies

UN Security Council resolution 1794 (2007), first requested MONUC “to undertake a thorough review” and “to pursue a comprehensive mission-wide strategy”, “in collaboration with the UN Country Team to strengthen prevention, protection and response to sexual violence”.

UN Security Council resolution 1888 (2009) “urges relevant Special Representatives and the Emergency Relief Coordinator of the Secretary-General, with strategic and technical support from the UN Action network, to work with Member States to develop joint Government-United Nations Comprehensive Strategies to Combat Sexual Violence, in consultation with all relevant stakeholders, and to regularly provide updates on this in their standard reporting to Headquarters”.

UN Security Council resolution 2000 (2011) mandates UNOCI to support the efforts of the Ivorian Government in combating sexual and gender-based violence, including “through contributing to the development of a nationally owned multi-sectoral strategy in cooperation with UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict entities”.

Benchmarks for a Comprehensive UN Response

The following are a set of minimum benchmarks for the development of a Comprehensive Strategy. These benchmarks were initially developed to measure the UN’s capacity to prevent and respond to sexual violence in specific settings. Pursuant to the UN Action Strategic Framework 2011-2012, they have been developed through extensive consultation with UN Action Focal Points under the leadership of UNICEF.

The benchmarks provide a useful foundation for designing Comprehensive Strategies and measuring their impact on CRSV prevention and response. These benchmarks can be used to develop the Strategy’s baseline and as indicators to measure the progress of the UN response to CRSV.

No.	Benchmarks
EARLY WARNING, COMMUNITY PROTECTION, HUMANITARIAN ACCESS	
1	Patterns in sexual violence, including vulnerabilities and risks, are deduced through regular information analysis and strengthening of early-warning systems. This information is shared with relevant stakeholders for advocacy and action.
2	Humanitarian actors providing multi-sectoral sexual violence-related assistance have unimpeded access to all affected areas of the country.
3	The protection cluster strategy explicitly outlines strategies related to sexual violence, including humanitarian protection, localized strategies to improve physical protection and peacekeeping mission protection strategies.
4	Number of communities, women’s groups and national authorities empowered to prevent sexual violence.
MEDIATION AND PEACE PROCESSES	
5	The active engagement of parties to conflict is sought in order to discuss the immediate termination of CRSV, in discussion of other violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.
6	Language on CRSV is included in ceasefire and peace agreements. It is of particular importance that sexual violence is included as a prohibited act, especially in the definition or principles of ceasefire. Agreements recognize sexual violence used in conflict as a method and tactic of warfare.

RULE OF LAW	
7	Existence of national legislation criminalizing sexual violence in line with the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.
8	Number of judicial personnel who have received training on CRSV and type and number of transitional justice initiatives supported.
9	Number and proportion of sexual violence cases reported to national police or other security officials that are properly investigated.
10	Number and proportion of sexual violence cases prosecuted in military or civilian courts.
SECURITY SECTOR REFORM & DDR	
11	National disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) includes sexual violence services in assistance packages for adult male and female ex-combatants and women associated with armed groups. <i>Assistance packages include information and awareness, medical, mental health and psychosocial support and reintegration services and assistance could be adapted to each survivor's needs.</i>
12	Reintegration processes (formal and informal) for children include sexual violence services in the assistance package.
13	Number of DDR programmes including prevention activities inside transit camps and within communities of reintegration.
14	Codes of Conduct explicitly prohibit sexual violence and systems are put in place to properly report, investigate and prosecute allegations of sexual violence perpetrated by members of the national police and armed forces.
15	High-level interlocutors within the armed and security forces are appointed to enforce Codes of Conduct.
MULTI-SECTORAL ASSISTANCE	
16	Number and proportion of UN legal service partners providing legal services to support survivors of sexual violence, disaggregated by (1) partner type (Government or CSO) and (2) region/ province/ district.
17	Number and proportion of national police personnel providing specialized sexual violence-related support, disaggregated by sex and areas of operation (district/provincial areas of operation).
18	Number and proportion of health facilities providing clinical management of rape services, in line with international standards and proportion of health facilities providing free clinical management out of the total.
19	Proportion of reported sexual violence cases that receive healthcare including emergency response and long term medical assistance.
20	Number and proportion of psychosocial partners providing psychosocial services for sexual violence survivors and out of total actors providing assistance proportion of UN partners.
21	Analysis of UN partner support directed at sexual violence multi-sectoral service entities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of UN partners providing sexual violence services (by sector) per UN Entity • % of UN partners routinely contributing to inter-agency monitoring and reporting national systems
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT	
22	Inter-agency monitoring and reporting system for sexual violence is in place. This includes: (1) Existence of written agreement of participating agencies on ethical information sharing & flow, outlining systematic information exchange at field & national levels (e.g., Standard Operating Procedures); and, (2) Designated UN Entities as focal points for inter-agency information collection & analysis at field and national levels.

23	Number of concrete actions taken by UN actors at the national level in response to information and analysis received on patterns and trends of sexual violence in-country.
COORDINATION	
24	SOP in place. Referral confidential forms developed and agreed by main actors. Number of referrals using SOP standard referral materials and agreed indications.
25	Case management meetings.
26	GBV sub-cluster meetings and minutes available.

Structure of a Comprehensive Strategy

The suggested structure of a Comprehensive Strategy to combat CRSV is as follows:

Section	Content
Context and Justification	Include a brief background on the context and highlight the main objective of the Strategy and its vision.
Analysis 1) Conflict Analysis 2) Main patterns of CRSV 3) Analysis of causes/contributing factors of CRSV 4) Analysis of consequences of CRSV 5) Analysis of survivors 6) Analysis of perpetrators 7) Main obstacles to effective prevention and response to CRSV 8) Analysis of existing initiatives to combat CRSV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of the conflict, its main parties and its impact on girls, boys, men and women. • Provide qualitative and quantitative (if available) information on patterns of violence. • Provide an analysis of structural, contextual, conflict-related and other causes of, and factors contributing to, sexual violence. • Describe the main consequences observed in the country on individuals, communities and general peace and security. • Provide information on survivors to inform the Strategy's priorities. This might include age and sex disaggregation, geo location and ethnic affiliation, religion and language. This information should be carefully analysed as it could be partial and misleading, considering that in some contexts survivors do not report sexual violence. • Provide information on the profile of alleged perpetrators and their possible motivations. • Describe the barriers to reporting, preventing and responding adequately to CRSV. This could include an analysis of protection mechanisms; role of communities, authorities, women's groups; security sector; the situation of justice; the availability of services, humanitarian access and the capacity of service providers, etc. • Provide a brief overview of the existing activities to prevent and respond to CRSV and of the main actors, coordination mechanisms, policies and frameworks.

<p>Pillar one*: PREVENTION</p>	<p>1. Community and local and national authorities empowerment, early warning, behavioural changes, physical protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide a narrative overview of the main activities and methodologies to be introduced to strengthening communities and authorities to better prevent CRSV, what can be done to promote behavioural change and to strengthen physical protection. <p>2. Security Sector (Reform) and Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide a narrative overview of the main activities and methodologies to ensure that perpetrators are held accountable and excluded from the government and national security structures and that security is strengthened. ➤ Provide a narrative overview of the main activities and methodologies to ensure that CRSV is addressed within DDR programmes and that combatants and individuals associated with armed groups have access to these programmes. <p>3. Mediation strategies and peace processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide a narrative overview of the main activities and methodologies to ensure that CRSV is addressed at the outset of mediation processes (in situations where this applies) including involvement of women in consultations and peace processes, inclusion of language on CRSV in peace and ceasefire agreements and in security arrangements and exclusion of CRSV from amnesties.
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<p>Pillar two: RESPONSE</p>	<p>1) Multi-sectoral assistance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical (including mental health) • Psychosocial • Legal (linked to Justice, see point 2) • Socio-economic reintegration • Strengthening of referral and safe access to services <p>1.Improving quality of assistance: National Protocols</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide a narrative overview of the main activities, methodologies and approaches to ensure that quality assistance is provided to survivors and that effective referral pathways exist. <p><i>See also IASC Establishing Gender-based Violence Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).</i></p> <p>2. Justice Sector/Fight against Impunity/Rule of Law</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide a narrative overview of the main activities and methodologies to ensure that the legal framework is strengthened to address SV, that the judiciary has the capacity to investigate and prosecute SV crimes and that safe access to justice and protection for survivors of SV is strengthened. Also include activities related to transitional justice and CRSV and reparations. <p>3. DDR and SSR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide a narrative overview of the main activities to ensure that women, men, girls and boys associated to armed forces and groups have access to programmes assisting survivors of SCRSV. ➤ Ensure that perpetrators of sexual violence are excluded from armed forces and public service and that conditionality policy is applied and includes CRSV.
<p>Crosscutting pillar: Prevention and response adapted to children</p>	<p>Provide a narrative overview of the main methodologies to ensure that activities are adapted to children.</p>
<p>Crosscutting pillar: Data and Information</p>	<p>Provide a narrative overview of the main activities to be implemented to improve the quality of information collection, sharing and analysis on CRSV.</p>
<p>Guiding Principles</p>	<p>Specify the guiding principles for the Strategy’s implementation in order to protect individuals and communities, to minimise harm to the survivor and maximize efficiency of prevention and response interventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the physical safety of the survivor and those who help them; • Guarantee confidentiality; • Respect the wishes, the rights, and the dignity of the survivor; and, • Ensure non-discrimination. <p><i>See also IASC Establishing Gender-based Violence Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).</i></p>

Implementation arrangements: Roles and Responsibilities, Coordination Mechanisms, Monitoring and Evaluation, Accountability	Describe the roles of different institutions, organisations and agencies for the Comprehensive Strategy’s implementation, coordination mechanisms that will be established to ensure the Strategy’s implementation and the main strategies to conduct M&E and produce timely reporting. Provide a description on how to establish mechanisms to ensure survivor safety and accountability towards beneficiaries.
Results Framework	The RF includes an outcome for each pillar, expected outputs, indicators, main activities, responsibilities, timeline and geographical coverage.
Communication Strategy	This should be a short document highlighting how to disseminate contents and objectives of the Strategy.

* Strategic pillars are normally interlinked. Their interaction should be highlighted in the Strategy to avoid duplication.

Duration of a Strategy

The duration of a Comprehensive Strategy is ideally 5 years but could be longer term depending on the context in-country. After a set period, the Strategy could be revised and updated according to the results of evaluations.

Process of developing a Comprehensive Strategy

The minimum steps to be taken when developing a Comprehensive Strategy are as follows:

- Appoint a focal point agency and a facilitator (who could be external) to coordinate the process.
- Review the main policy frameworks and reports on sexual violence, human rights, the humanitarian situation, security, and long-term development frameworks. Documentation should include reports produced by human rights components, reports by civil society organizations for the Universal Periodic Review process, reports by Human Rights Council special procedures and international human rights NGOs, national human rights institutions, etc.
- Present the process of development of the Strategy to senior management (SRSRG, DSRSRGs, RC/HC and UNCT) and mobilise senior management’s support. Updates on the process of developing and implementing the Strategy should be regularly shared with senior management.
- Conduct consultations within communities, particularly with community and women’s groups. Consultations with local-level stakeholders have generally proved to be invaluable means of identifying problems, capacities and needs of both victims and service providers and of ensuring a transparent and inclusive process.
- Conduct consultations with Ministries, UN entities, NGOs and sectorial experts both through bilateral meetings and through existing coordination mechanisms. It is important to recognise the work of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and to capitalize on the experiences and expertise gained by service providers and communities. Among national actors to be involved, it is important to include Members of Parliament, the judiciary, bar associations, and national human rights institutions. Protection concerns should be prioritised when consulting with national actors (for example with members of civil society, victims’ associations).
- Organise at least one workshop with actors involved in the fight against CRSV with the objective of defining the timeline and action plan to develop the Strategy and to clarify the roles of participants. The workshop is an important step to ensure that all actors feel part of the process and that a roadmap for the development of the Strategy sets a transparent action plan. The workshop could also serve to achieve general agreement on common definitions and

analysis of main patterns of CRSV and perpetrators. It could also be useful to define the main framework of intervention and the priorities to be addressed.

- During the workshop, select a Technical Committee/Expert Group formed by representatives from relevant ministries, UN and NGOs with the objective to revise and approve the contents of the Strategy and ensure consensus and participation. In addition, create Working Groups tasked with developing analysis and priorities related to the Strategy's pillars. These Working Groups should include experts and mandated organisations.
- In countries where Women Protection Advisers (WPAs) are deployed and MARA structures are in place, these structures could be used to coordinate the development of the Strategy.
- Ministries of Gender and Health, Justice, Interior and Defence should be involved. When Peacekeeping Missions are present, it is important to involve Gender, Child Protection, Human Rights, Rule of Law, the military, UNPOL and SSR/DDR mission components. WPAs could be the focal points for the Strategy development.
- Technical Committee and Working Group meetings should be regularly held to discuss the process and to collect and integrate comments on the draft. Minutes of the meetings should be widely circulated among interested parties to ensure transparency and broad-based participation.
- Working documents should be produced and shared throughout the process. Documents produced by the thematic Working Groups should be regularly shared throughout the process in order to allow partners to provide inputs. Consultations on draft priorities and analysis should be held at field locations through existing coordination mechanisms, such as the GBV sub-cluster. Consultations could be organised by members of the Technical Committee/Expert Group with participants at regional/local level in order to adapt and integrate specific needs and recommendations from regions outside of the capital. Timelines for comments should be clear and regularly disseminated.
- If some organisations do not participate in the process, it might be due to the fact that they do not feel involved in the process and/or that they have limited time and capacity. It is recommended to organise bilateral meetings with these organisations and offer support to strengthen their participation.

Operational Plan

Once the Comprehensive Strategy is finalized, in order to ensure its implementation, an Operational Plan and budget should be developed in consultation with national and international partners.

An operational plan should cover a limited amount of time (ideally 24 months) and be revised at the end of the planned programme cycle. The Operational Plan should include detailed activities and their planned budget. Implementing partners, structures and the timeline and location of activities should all be clearly defined.

The budgeting should include a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan, comprising human and financial resources needed to conduct M&E and specifying responsibilities for Monitoring and Reporting.

Links with other policies, frameworks and strategies

In order to ensure ownership and sustainability, it is important that the Strategy is integrated into, and/or cross-referenced in other policies and frameworks that could have an impact on CRSV. Examples include: Peacekeeping Missions Protection of Civilians Strategies, Justice Reform policies, Stabilisation or Peace Building Strategies, Security Sector Reform Strategies, Humanitarian Action Plans, GBV plans, National Plans on Women, Peace and Security and other Development Plans and Frameworks.

In some instances, the risk of overlaps and double funding of activities related to sexual violence included in different frameworks have been highlighted. In order to prevent this risk, activities to be implemented under each framework should be clearly demarcated. For example, in the DRC, a demarcation was articulated between activities to be funded under the Humanitarian Action Plan and those to be funded under the Security and Stability Plan.

Funding

International partners should be involved from the inception of the process. Regular meetings with donors should be organised to provide updates on the progress of development of the Strategy and request feedback and comments.

A resource mobilisation strategy at national and international levels should be developed in parallel with the Operational Plan.

Once a Strategy document is finalised, it is advisable to develop information materials and organise a launch event. Once the first activities are rolled out, media stories, donor field visits and regular briefings could be organised.

The UNCT might consider developing a Joint Programme to support the Strategy's implementation and catalyse resource mobilisation.

Attention and visibility for the Comprehensive Strategy should be sustained through a companion communications strategy. For instance, Quarterly Updates from the Field, highlighting progress in implementation, can be profiled on UN Action's *Stop Rape Now* website.

Support to mobilise resources could also be provided by UN Action through its Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF). It will be important for UNCTs to develop a joint needs analysis and to submit requests through agencies and entities Focal Points at HQ levels.

Consensus-building, Participation and Ownership

Partners should be involved in a productive and participatory process, ensuring that all actors feel consulted, share the same goals, and engage in developing the Strategy for mutual benefit. At the same time, clear responsibilities and leadership roles should be decided at the beginning of the process in order to ensure the maximum accountability. Leadership should be defined to ensure that the process is driven effectively and that it is sustainable. To the extent possible and on the basis of capacity and willingness, the leadership should rest with National Authorities.

The development of a Comprehensive Strategy does not require vast resources and, except for an adviser-facilitator, should rely on the expertise already present in-country. The deployment of an adviser could catalyse resources for the development of the Strategy by strengthening the participation of agencies and entities according to their mandate and expertise. The facilitator should in any case not take over responsibilities from agencies and entities in order to ensure the maximum ownership and sustainability of the Strategy.

Experience has shown that Strategy development is never a perfect process, however in some countries the process was more productive because efforts were focused from the beginning on facilitating participation, developing a shared vision, and maintaining regular communication.

The creation of smaller Thematic Working Groups contributes to strengthening participation. The role of the facilitator in this case is to maximise contributions by fostering coherence among and between stakeholders, and leading participants to the final result.

National ownership is particularly important for the implementation and sustainability of the Strategy. National involvement in the conception, design, development and validation of the Strategy should involve technical level personnel, civil society, parliamentary members and members of the government. Particularly important is the implication of those who will implement measures to hold perpetrators accountable.

A positive example of strong government ownership has been the process in Côte d'Ivoire in 2012. Technical ministries were involved in the development of the Strategy under the coordination of the Ministry of Family, Women and Children through its Gender Directorate. Civil society, including women and human rights groups participated in the development of the Strategy both at local, regional and national levels. The UN Action Adviser had constant consultations with the Government both at senior and technical levels and integrated country priorities in the analysis and actions developed through the process.

Defence and Justice Ministries provided their priorities in the process, and during the planning phase these ministries made commitments to fight impunity.

The Ministry of Family, Women and Children took lead of the process at the outset by organizing consultations, meetings and workshops.

Examples of Strategies and Joint Programmes

In the DRC, the UN Strategy was included in the wider GoDRC GBV Strategy.

Comprehensive Strategy on combating sexual violence in Democratic Republic of Congo

Context

Mass rape in the Democratic Republic of Congo has been a prominent feature of the protracted conflict in the region. Sexual assault is perpetrated by militias and governmental security forces, as well as by civilians. Sexual violence is often committed during attacks on villages, often associated with other abuses and violations against civilians; during displacement and when women conduct their daily chores.

Access to services, particularly health and justice, remains a serious obstacle to assisting survivors, especially considering that the majority of victims are from rural areas. One of the main challenges remains a culture of impunity, and the unwillingness by parties to the conflict to prevent rape by punishing perpetrators but also the involvement of communities and men to prevent sexual violence.

In the DRC, UN Action supported the development of the first Comprehensive Strategy on Combating Sexual Violence through the deployment of a Senior Sexual Violence Adviser and Sexual Violence Experts from 2008 to 2009. The Strategy was launched in 2009.

Support provided by UN Action

In 2010, UN Action supported the start-up of the MONUSCO Sexual Violence Unit through the deployment of a Sexual Violence Adviser and provision of catalytic funds.

Immediately after the launch of the Strategy, an operational plan and costing of activities were developed. The operational plan was integrated in the wider GoDRC National Strategy against Gender Based Violence as a priority action plan for addressing sexual violence in Eastern DRC.

Comprehensive Strategy structure and contents

The Comprehensive Strategy and operational plan include five components; each led by a UN agency or MONUC section:

- 1) Fight against Impunity, lead: Joint Human Rights Office - MONUC/OHCHR;
- 2) Protection and Prevention, lead: UNHCR;
- 3) SSR and sexual violence, lead: MONUC SSR;
- 4) Multi-Sectoral Assistance, lead: UNICEF; and,
- 5) Data and mapping, lead: UNFPA.

Funding

In parallel to the development and costing of the Strategy, a 'window' on sexual violence was created as part of the Stability and Recovery Funding Facility, supporting the Stabilization Plan for Eastern DRC. As the Strategy was launched, the Belgian Government allocated 10 million Euros and the Dutch government 2.7 million dollars to the Funding Facility.

The Comprehensive Strategy was also integrated into the Humanitarian Action Plan and in the Security and Stabilization Support Strategy for Eastern DRC for activities within the framework of stabilization in Eastern DRC.

In Côte d'Ivoire, the government requested UN support to include CRSV in the National GBV Strategy.

National Strategy on Combating Gender Based Violence in Côte d'Ivoire

Context

Conflict, displacement and widespread human rights violations have been ongoing in Côte d'Ivoire since 2002 and throughout the post-electoral crisis in 2010 and 2011. A decade of ongoing crisis has severely affected the population of Côte d'Ivoire. Gender-based violence has been worsened by the crisis and peaks of conflict-related sexual violence have been reported during the fighting. Although there are no statistics on sexual violence before 2011, research conducted by UNICEF and UNFPA in 2008 showed that more than 20% of women and men interviewed had been victims of sexual violence. In 2011, of the 1,976 survivors who received assistance, 776 (39 per cent) were victims of sexual violence (the majority being incidents rape and gang rape). In areas of fighting, 58% of alleged reported perpetrators were men belonging to defence forces or rebel groups. Almost 40% of survivors or sexual violence were children.

In Côte d'Ivoire, most of the perpetrators are not held accountable. Widespread impunity is fuelled by discriminatory provisions within the national legislation, limited capacity of the judiciary and fear of reporting because of possible revenge or stigma. Proliferation of small arms and presence of armed individuals and groups are seriously affecting security.

Support provided by UN Action

The National Strategy was finalised in response to UN Security Council resolution 2000 (2011), which requests UNOCI to 'support the efforts of the Ivorian Government in combating sexual and gender-based violence, including through contributing to the development of a nationally owned multi-sectoral strategy in cooperation with UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict entities'.

Strategic support was first recommended by a UN Action delegation that visited Côte d'Ivoire in January 2010. In response to these recommendations, an adviser was deployed to Côte d'Ivoire in February and March 2012. This also followed the visit of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Margot Wallström, to the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire and the request for strategic support from UN Action by the UNCT and UNOCI.

Comprehensive Strategy structure and contents

The National Strategy on Combating Gender Based Violence in Côte d'Ivoire is a common framework linking together humanitarian, peace and security and development priority actions to address Gender Based Violence. The Strategy was developed in 2012 and includes a narrative analytical section on trends, perpetrators, survivors, challenges and solutions to prevent and respond to GBV. It also includes a Results Framework specifying roles, responsibilities, timelines and main activities for the parties involved.

The National Strategy has four priority axes: Prevention; Justice and the Fight against Impunity; Security Sector Reform and DDR; Multi-sectoral Assistance. Data and Information Management is a crosscutting priority. Some of the key activities contemplated under these axes include: reform of the Criminal Code, adoption of Codes of Conduct, training for defence and security forces, judicial personnel and aid practitioners, establishing dedicated protection police units, standardization and cost-free provision of medical certificates, introduction of early-warning systems, community empowerment and capacity-building of national authorities to prevent sexual violence, etc.

Participation

The Ministry of Family, Women and Children developed the National Strategy with the support of the United Nations through a broad consultation process, involving relevant Ministries (such as Defence, Interior, Health, Social Affairs, Education, Justice, Human Rights), UN entities, international and national NGOs and existing coordination mechanisms. The National Strategy has been developed in synergy with the UNOCI Comprehensive Strategy for the Protection of Civilians (currently under finalisation), the National Gender Policy, the National Action Plan on 1325, the Justice Reform Policy

and other relevant strategic frameworks and policies in Côte d'Ivoire. The National Strategy is in line with UN Security Council resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009) and 1960 (2010) on conflict-related sexual violence.

The duration of the Strategy is five years. After this time, the Strategy will be revised and priorities updated in accordance with contextual developments, as well as the needs and gaps identified during the first phase of the Strategy's implementation. An operational plan was developed, including costing of activities to be implemented between 2012 and 2014.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, a Programme is under development to assist CRSV survivors and their families.

Programme for Improvement of the Status of Survivors of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence

Context

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) witnessed mass rapes, sexual torture, sexual slavery and other forms of sexual violence directed against women, men and children during the war in 1992–1995, affecting an estimated 20,000-50,000 civilians. Sixteen years after the war, the status of survivors of wartime rape and other forms of sexual violence has not been addressed adequately in the country policy framework and survivors are discriminated against and not adequately assisted.

Support provided by UN Action

UNFPA BiH, through the UN Action funded project *“Developing a BiH Strategy and Strengthening Response to Sexual Violence in the Balkans”*, provides financial and technical support to the Government in order to develop a Programme to improve the status of CRSV survivors.

In order to develop the Programme, an expert group was established to conduct a continuous dialogue with civil society, primarily the associations of women victims of war and those organizations providing direct assistance to them, as well as local level institutions and consultations in 10 regions of BiH.

Programme structure and contents

The Programme, which is currently being finalised, aims at improving the ‘realization of human rights of women survivors of wartime rape and torture, as well as their families, through ensuring sufficient resources for redress, rehabilitation, re-integration, and compensation’. Among its priorities are: improvement of the legal framework, strengthening of legal aid and safe access to justice for survivors, improvement of service provider’s capacities to support survivors, and partnership between the governmental and non-governmental sector.

Specific activities will be developed for each region of implementation to ensure that actual needs are addressed. The Programme leans on already existing structures and institutions, in order to improve the existing infrastructure.

In Guinea, the United Nations developed a Joint Programme to support implementation of the National GBV Strategy.

Joint Programme against Gender Based Violence in the Republic of Guinea

Context

In Guinea, women are particularly exposed to abuse and violations due to their status and perceived role in society. Women bear the brunt of a political, social and economic crisis that translates into increased violence and unequal opportunities. During the violent repression of a political demonstration on 28 September 2009, at least 109 women were victims of sexual violence, according to the International Commission of Inquiry.

Sexual and other forms of gender-based violence are perpetrated every day within communities and families but are underreported. According to a study conducted in 2009 by the Ministry of Social Affairs, Women Promotion and Children (recently renamed Ministry of National Solidarity) with the support of UNDP, WHO, UNFPA and UNICEF, more than 90 per cent of the 6,483 women interviewed have been victims of a form of violence during their life. At least 50 per cent of the respondents reported to have been victims of sexual violence.

GBV prevention and assistance are very limited and mostly concentrated in the capital Conakry.

Programme Structure and contents

The Joint Programme against Gender Based Violence in Guinea was developed in 2010 by eight UN agencies. The programme aims at strengthening prevention and response to GBV, particularly through supporting government and civil society efforts to fight against GBV. The programme includes activities to address primarily sexual and domestic violence. The programme was developed to support the implementation of the priority axis of the National Strategy against GBV developed in 2010 by the Ministry of Social Affairs, Women Promotion and Children.

The programme is composed of four priority axes/specific objectives, including:

- 1) GBV prevention through communities and women's empowerment;
- 2) Strengthening of the judiciary and the fight against impunity;
- 3) Multi-sectoral assistance; and,
- 4) Data collection and analysis.

These priority axes include a component adapted to children.

The programme was developed in line with UNiTE, the United Nations Secretary-General's campaign to end violence against women, with UNSC resolutions 1820, 1888, and 1960, and with the approach developed by UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conf

Participation

The programme includes the following agencies: UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO, OHCHR, UNAIDS, UN Women, WFP, UNIDO in cooperation with national partners working in health, psychosocial, justice, defence and security and development. Several are the ministries involved in its implementation, including Social Affairs, Health, Security, Defence, Justice, and Education, national NGOs, the Bar Association and universities. The programme aims at bringing services and assistance to remote areas.

Funding

The Joint Programme is currently being implemented through the support of the Peace Building Fund.

In Liberia, UN Action supported the coordination of the SGBV Joint Programme.

Joint Programme against sexual and gender based violence in Liberia

Context

In Liberia sexual and gender-based violence is largely prevalent and was exacerbated during the war years, when sexual violence was used repeatedly as a weapon of war. Rape continues to be the most frequently reported serious crime in Liberia.

During the conflict, the perpetrators were mainly parties to the conflict. After the conflict the perpetrators include ex-combatants, community or family members, teachers, husbands or partners.

A Joint Programme was developed between the Government of Liberia and the United Nations in 2008 and is helping to address the issue of wide-scale sexual exploitation and abuse cases, and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) through the implementation of both prevention and response measures.

Programme structure and contents

The Joint Programme offers a comprehensive and integrated approach to reducing SGBV in the country and is designed to support Liberia's National GBV Plan of Action (POA), while providing appropriate care and services to survivors of GBV in Liberia.

The Joint Programme has five pillars: Psychosocial (led by WHO); Health (led by UNFPA); Legal (led by UNDP); Security/Protection (led by UNMIL and UNIFEM, now UN Women); Coordination (led by the Ministry of Gender and Development).

Participating UN Agencies include UNICEF, UNDP, UN Women, UNFPA, OHCHR, UNMIL and WHO. The programme started in 2008 for a duration of five years.

Participation

A National GBV Task Force, chaired by the Liberian Ministry of Gender and Development and comprising national and international NGOs, UN agencies and representatives from the Government of Liberia, is charged with implementing the plan of action. The programme management team works closely with the existing GBV unit in the Ministry of Gender. At the head of each Joint Programme pillar, a lead agency works to enhance coordination, effectiveness and accountability, with an emphasis on reporting.

Links to Relevant Strategies and Other Resources

- DRC Comprehensive Strategy on Combating Sexual Violence: www.stoprapenow.org/field-updates/
- UN Action website: www.stoprapenow.org
- Analytical and Conceptual Framing of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence
- IASC Establishing Gender-based Violence Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), 2008
- Handbook for Coordinating Gender-based Violence Interventions in Emergencies, GBV AoR, 2010
- Guidelines for Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings, IASC, 2005
- Ethical and safety recommendations for researching, documenting and monitoring sexual violence in emergencies, WHO, 2007
- Caring for Child Survivors of Sexual Abuse, IRC-UNICEF, 2012
- Do's and don'ts in community-based psychosocial programming in regard to sexual violence in conflict-affected settings, UN Action- WHO-UNFPA-UNICEF, 2012