



Australian Government

Australian Civil-Military Centre

Civil-Military Occasional Papers

# Conflict-related Sexual and Gender-based Violence

An Introductory Overview to Support Prevention and Response Efforts

1/2014

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## **Acknowledgments**

The author is grateful for the support from staff of the Australian Civil-Military Centre—in particular, Philippa Nicholson, Kelisiana Thynne, Michelle Jones and Michelle Lovi. Special thanks also to Ann Shteir.

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ISBN: 978-1-921933-02-8

Published in 2014

## Abstract

Sexual and gender-based violence is widespread in conflict-affected environments. The field of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence is active and constantly expanding. Recent research and analysis are drawing attention to the complexity of this form of violence, reflecting a shift away from simplified narratives. They also point to the need for a more inclusive understanding of sexual violence, which acknowledges, for example, male victims and survivors, as well as the experiences and motivations of perpetrators.

The wealth of information, activity and debate that characterises this field can be daunting. This paper offers an introductory overview of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence, in particular for those who are beginning their involvement with the subject—whether they are civilian, military or police. It examines a number of dominant patterns of sexual and gender-based violence in conflict-affected environments. It surveys a range of causes and motivations that can contribute to the perpetration of this form of violence, and explores persistent gaps and weaknesses in current efforts to deal with such violence. Throughout the report, where relevant, information is provided about what is being done to prevent and respond to conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence, with a sampling of efforts from the international, regional and domestic levels.

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# Contents

Abstract	1
Executive Summary	4
Introduction	6
Experiences of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence	9
> Women and girls account for the majority of survivors of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence	14
> Sexual violence against men and boys is ‘regular’ and ‘widespread’ in conflict-affected environments	17
> Girls and boys account for a large number of survivors of conflict-related sexual violence	19
> Sexual violence has profound physical, psychological and social consequences	21
> Domestic violence is widespread in conflict-affected environments	25
> Civilians continue to be vulnerable to sexual exploitation and abuse by UN peacekeeping and humanitarian personnel	27
Causes of and motivations for conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence	30
> Gender inequality and concepts of manhood	30
> Serving a ‘specific purpose’	33
> ‘Less strategic’ and ‘more complex’	37
Gaps and weaknesses in effectively preventing and responding to conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence	39
> Accountability and justice	39
> Support services for survivors	42
> Knowledge and data	44
Conclusion	47
Appendix A – Terminology	48
Appendix B – Practical tools	51
Endnotes	53
References	62

## Executive Summary

Sexual violence—often examined under the umbrella term ‘sexual and gender-based violence’—is widespread in conflict and post-conflict environments. It has been described as a ‘hallmark’ of recent and continuing intrastate conflicts (UNIFEM & DPKO 2010, pp. 10, 14). Reports from Syria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, Mali, Sudan, Myanmar and Chad, among others, reflect this characterisation. The field of conflict-related sexual violence is active and constantly evolving and expanding. There has been much activity by civilian, military and police personnel, non-government organisations, UN humanitarian organisations, UN peacekeeping operations, regional organisations, policy makers, practitioners and scholars at many levels to prevent and respond to sexual violence. New tools, research and on-the-ground initiatives and approaches are being developed regularly, resolutions are being negotiated and adopted in the UN Security Council, and cases relating to sexual violence are being heard at the International Criminal Court and in the ad hoc International Criminal Tribunals. Workshops, seminars, debates and conferences are being held, and new data and analyses are constantly emerging.

The complexity of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence is increasingly acknowledged through recent research (Cohen et al. 2013; Wood 2006; Baaz & Stern 2010; OCHA 2008a; HSRP 2012). This trend reflects a shift away from simplified narratives in which sexual violence is portrayed as predominantly a tactic of war (the incidence of which is increasing) and in which the perpetrators are predominantly uniformed men and the survivors are disproportionately women. Although some of these assertions are correct, they do not tell the complete story. Instead, recent data, research and analysis demonstrate considerable variation in the perpetration of sexual violence between and within conflicts (Cohen et al. 2013; Wood 2006; Aas 2010). They also point to the need for a more inclusive understanding of experiences and the perpetration of sexual violence in conflict-affected environments. For example, a more inclusive understanding acknowledges that men can be survivors and that women can be perpetrators. It recognises, too, that some armed groups explicitly prohibit sexual violence (Wood 2011).

There is also a growing understanding of the variation in the causes of and motivations for sexual and gender-based violence. Although sexual violence has been and continues to be used as a ‘deliberate strategy’ and a tool ‘to serve specific purposes’ (Annan 2004; UNIFEM & DPKO 2010, p. 10), many other ‘less strategic’ and ‘more complex’ factors (Baaz & Stern 2010, p. 16) can influence the perpetration of this form of violence. Among these factors are entrenched and widespread beliefs and norms about the subordinate status of women, a breakdown in law and order, poor relations between armed forces and the civilian population, and post-traumatic stress disorder and other conflict-related trauma.

The wealth of information, activity and debate and the complexity that characterises the field of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence can be daunting. This paper provides an introductory overview for those who are beginning their involvement with the subject as it applies to conflict and post-conflict environments—whether they are civilian, military or police. With its focus on improving understanding, the paper aims to support efforts to prevent and respond to sexual violence. As part of this effort, it is also intended to support the mandate of the Australian Civil–

Military Centre, to 'support the development of national civil-military capabilities to prevent, prepare for and respond more effectively to conflicts and disasters overseas' and to support the centre's contributions to the implementation of the Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2012–2018.

A number of dominant patterns of sexual and gender-based violence in conflict and post-conflict settings are explored:

- > Women and girls account for the majority of survivors of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence.
- > Sexual violence against men and boys is 'regular' and 'widespread' in conflict-affected environments.
- > Girls and boys account for a large number of survivors of conflict-related sexual violence.
- > Sexual violence has profound physical, psychological and social consequences.
- > Domestic violence is widespread in conflict and post-conflict environments.
- > Civilians continue to be vulnerable to sexual exploitation and abuse by UN peacekeeping and humanitarian personnel.

Despite the proliferation of activity at the local, national, regional and international levels to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence in conflict-affected environments, a number of major gaps and weaknesses remain. Some important progress has been made in recent years at the international and national levels, but most conflict-affected countries continue to be characterised by widespread impunity for perpetrators of sexual violence and limited access to justice for survivors of sexual violence. Although the UN has reported progress in efforts to support survivors, overall the lack of support services remains a 'serious weakness', especially in rural and remote areas (UN Security Council 2012, p. 15; UN General Assembly & Security Council 2013, p. 12). Furthermore, where support services and structures do exist, survivors often face a variety of obstacles when seeking help. Additionally, despite the prevalence of sexual violence in conflict, there is a serious dearth of data on the matter.

This paper provides an introduction to a complex and active field. As well, the report aims to encourage readers to stay well informed about the subject. After all, to contribute effectively to prevention and response efforts, it is first necessary to have a sound understanding of patterns of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence and factors that contribute to such violence as it occurs in conflict-affected environments.

# Introduction

Sexual violence—often examined under the umbrella term ‘sexual and gender-based violence’—has been described as a ‘hallmark’ of recent and continuing intrastate conflicts (UNIFEM & DPKO 2010, pp. 10, 14). Reports from Syria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, Mali, Sudan, Myanmar and Chad, among others, reflect this characterisation. In the past decade—and in particular in the past five years—much activity has been taking place at the local, national, regional and global levels to prevent and respond to sexual violence in these environments. This activity ranges from the provision of training on conflict-related sexual violence for UN peacekeeping personnel, UN human rights officers, community health workers and female magistrates (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2013, pp. 2, 16, 26; 2012, p. 27; 2010, pp. 7, 26) to the UK-led Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict, endorsed by 119 countries (and counting) (UK FCO; UK FCO 2013c), and from the provision of street lights and lanterns in refugee camps (UNHCR 2012b) to the maintenance of a live, crowdsourced map of rape in Syria (Women’s Media Center).

This paper offers an introductory overview for those who are beginning to become involved in the subject of sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict environments, whether they are civilian, military or police. The wealth of information, activity and debate that characterises this field can be daunting. There is a rich array of more specialised research and writing, but there is a dearth of literature that provides an introductory overview of the issues and the broader field, especially for general, non-specialist audiences.

## A sample of initiatives

- UN Security Council Resolution 2106 (2013)
- UK team of experts to combat and prevent sexual violence in conflict (ongoing)
- Establishment of a gender-based mobile court system in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (ongoing)
- Operation Anti-Sexual Harassment/ Assault, Egypt (ongoing)
- UN-hosted workshop ‘Male-directed Sexual Violence: Increasing Understanding for a Better Response’ (2013)

The aim of the paper is to improve understanding of conflict-related sexual violence. With this focus on improving understanding, the intention is to support efforts to prevent and respond to sexual violence. As part of this, the paper is also intended to support the mandate of the Australian Civil–Military Centre, to ‘support the development of national civil–military capabilities to prevent, prepare for and respond more effectively to conflicts and disasters overseas’. Given its mandate, the Australian Civil–Military Centre has been charged with contributing to the implementation of the Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2012–2018, which was officially launched in March 2012. The Action Plan<sup>2</sup> provides a whole-of-government framework to guide the integration of a gender perspective across Australia’s peace and security efforts (Australian Government 2012).<sup>3</sup> In view of Australia’s two-year term on the UN Security Council (January 2013 to December 2014), these contributions should also be seen in a broader global context, given the Security Council’s agenda for



responding to conflict-related sexual violence as well as its wider agenda in relation to women, peace and security.

A number of different terms are commonly used to refer to acts of sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict settings (see Appendix A). Among them are ‘sexual violence’, ‘sexual and gender-based violence’, ‘gender-based violence’, ‘conflict-related sexual violence’, ‘gender violence’, ‘violence against women’, and sometimes ‘sexual exploitation and abuse’. Despite considerable overlap between the terms, their meanings and application can differ in important ways. This paper considers sexual violence as part of the broader spectrum of ‘sexual and gender-based violence’, or ‘SGBV’.

The umbrella term ‘sexual and gender-based violence’ covers physical, sexual and psychological violence, or the threat of such, directed against women, girls, men and boys ‘because of their sex and/or their socially constructed gender roles’ (Women’s Initiatives for Gender Justice; UNHCR 2003, p. 11; 2008a, p. 7). It encompasses a wide range of acts in the home, in the wider community and more broadly within the state that are perpetrated during peacetime as well as during conflict and other periods of unrest and crisis (UNHCR 2003, p. 11; 2008a, p. 7). These include the following (in no particular order):

- rape
- forced pregnancy
- forced abortion
- trafficking
- forced prostitution
- sexual slavery
- forced sterilisation
- domestic violence, including intimate partner violence
- the intentional spread of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS
- sexual harassment
- harmful traditional practices, including female genital mutilation, early and forced marriages, and honour killings
- sex-selective abortion and infanticide
- sex-selective killing<sup>4</sup>
- targeted attacks against female students and girls schools
- sexual mutilation
- humiliating treatment such as enforced public nudity.

Although this paper is particularly concerned with sexualised forms of violence, the more inclusive umbrella concept of sexual and gender-based violence is important for a number of reasons. It highlights the links between different types of violence in conflict-related environments—for example, rape and honour killings (see p. 22). It also focuses attention on the fact that the forms of violence included under the umbrella term are often perpetrated on the basis of ‘socially ascribed (gender) differences between males and females’ (IASC 2005, p. 7) or sex (UNHCR 2003, p. 10). In the words of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, ‘The term “gender-based violence” highlights ... the relationship between females’ subordinate status in society and their increased vulnerability to

violence’ (2005, p. 7). It thus helps focus on the reality that women and girls are disproportionately affected by sexual and gender-based violence, in conflict as well as in peacetime. That said, it is also important to recognise that, in the case of some forms of sexual and gender-based violence, gender alone is an ‘insufficient explanatory tool’: some forms of sexual violence, for example, are linked to other crimes such as indiscriminate killing, forced displacement and looting (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2010, p. 3).

This paper is presented in three main sections. The first section examines dominant patterns of sexual and gender-based violence in conflict and post-conflict environments. The second section examines a range of causes and motivations that can contribute to the perpetration of sexual violence. The third section explores persistent gaps and weaknesses in current efforts to deal with sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict environments. Throughout the report, where relevant, information is provided about what is being done to prevent and respond to this type of violence, with a sampling of efforts from the international, regional and domestic levels. The paper is supported by two appendices: Appendix A looks at the terminology associated with ‘sexual and gender-based violence’; Appendix B provides a list of practical tools developed by non-government organisations, UN bodies and other organisations for those working to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence on the ground.

This introductory overview is the result of desk-based research and draws on a broad sampling of the literature produced by non-government organisations, academic disciplines, think tanks, the United Nations and other organisations. The paper examines experiences from a multitude of continuing and past conflicts of varying types, as well as environments of unrest and violence such as Syria<sup>5</sup>, Libya, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Liberia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Rwanda. The paper also draws on the Australian Civil–Military Centre’s occasional paper *Gendered Crises, Gendered Responses: the necessity and utility of a gender perspective in conflicts and disasters* (2013). The extensive endnotes and the range of sources used are in part intended for readers who are interested in pursuing further research in this area.

It should be noted that some of the examples and quotes provided might disturb because of the experiences of sexual and gender-based violence they describe. They are included because they help to create a clear picture of the scope and character of sexual and gender-based violence experienced by women, men, girls and boys in conflict-affected environments. Every effort is made to respect the dignity and humanity of survivors of sexual violence and adhere to the Australian Council for International Development Code of Conduct (ACFID 2010, p. 19).



Helen Hakena from the Leitana Nehan Women’s Movement in Bougainville at 6th Pacific Regional Meeting on Violence Against Women and Girls, Fiji, 2012 (photo by the Fiji Women’s Crisis Centre).

# Experiences of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence

Sexual and gender-based violence is reported in a wide range of conflict and post-conflict situations, as well as in situations of unrest. A recent cross-national data analysis found that ‘high or very high levels of civil war-related rape were reported in nearly every region of the globe between 1980 and 2009’ (Cohen et al. 2013, p. 3). Data and accounts from continuing conflict situations suggest that the trend continues. For example, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria, as well as NGO and news reports, accuse security forces and pro-government militia (shabbiha) of using sexual violence against women, men, girls and boys in detention facilities, at checkpoints, and during home raids and sweeps of residential areas (UN HRC 2012a; 2011; Human Rights Watch 2012a; Sulzer 2012; BBC News 2012). Refugees have cited both perpetration and fear of rape as a reason for fleeing the country (Sulzer 2012, p. 5; IRC 2013a, p. 2; UN HRC 2013, p. 75). Similarly, in North Kivu Province in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the UN Refugee Agency has recently reported a sharp increase in registered cases of sexual violence associated with renewed fighting between the army and various rebel groups, including the M23 movement:<sup>6</sup> compared with 108 registered cases in 2012, the agency’s protection monitoring teams registered 705 cases of sexual violence in the first half of 2013 (UNHCR 2013). The Lord’s Resistance Army continues to abduct women and girls for use as sex slaves in

‘The Security Council,

... 1. Stresses that sexual violence, when used or commissioned as a tactic of war in order to deliberately target civilians or as a part of a widespread or systematic attack against civilian populations, can significantly exacerbate situations of armed conflict and may impede the restoration of international peace and security ... and expresses its readiness, when considering situations on the agenda of the Council, to, where necessary, adopt appropriate steps to address widespread or systematic sexual violence.’

Security Council Resolution 1820  
(UN Security Council 2008a)

Central Africa and the Great Lakes Region of Africa, as do armed elements in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Darfur and Mali (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2013). According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, about 800 cases of sexual and gender-based violence were reported in the first half of 2013 in Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia (UN News 2013).

The frequency and magnitude of sexual violence in armed conflicts are reflected in the treatment of such violence by the International Criminal Court and the ad hoc International Criminal Tribunals for the Former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, as well as by the Special Court for Sierra Leone. Under international law, ‘depending on the circumstances of the offence’, sexual violence can constitute a war crime, a crime against humanity (including an act of torture) or a

constituent act of genocide (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2010, p. 2). In the words of the Rome Statute (the treaty that established the International Criminal Court), these crimes constitute ‘the most serious crimes of concern to the international community as a whole’ (ICC 2002, Article 5). In 2008, with the adoption of Security Council Resolution 1820, the UN Security Council also first

explicitly recognised sexual violence as a matter of international peace and security and thus within its jurisdiction (UN Security Council 2008a).<sup>7</sup> Resolution 1820 has been followed by a number of resolutions focused on conflict-related sexual violence, forming part of the Security Council's broader women, peace and security agenda.<sup>8</sup>

Until relatively recently mainstream portrayals of conflict-related sexual violence relied on a number of widely accepted assertions. Recent research and analysis are increasingly challenging these assertions and drawing attention to the complexity of this form of violence (Cohen et al. 2013; Wood 2006; Baaz & Stern 2010; OCHA 2008a; HSRP 2012). One common assertion has been that high levels of sexual violence are characteristic of all conflicts (HSRP 2012, p. 20); another is that sexual violence—and its strategic use—is increasing (HSRP 2012, p. 20).

In reality, there is 'enormous' and 'puzzling' variation in the perpetration of sexual violence between and within conflicts (Cohen et al. 2013, p. 2; Wood 2006, p. 308; Aas 2010, pp. 5–6). This variation relates to a wide range of factors—the type of sexual violence (gang rape, sexual slavery or sexual torture, for example); the type of victim (male, female, member of particular ethnic group, and so on); the prevalence of sexual

'Many armed groups, including some state militaries, leftist insurgent groups, and secessionist ethnic groups, do not engage in widespread rape despite frequent interaction with civilians on otherwise intimate terms.'

(Wood 2011: 38)

violence (whether widespread or more limited); the location (in private, in public or in detention); the type of perpetrator (state or non-state, uniformed or civilian, male or female); the number of perpetrators; and the motivation for this particular type of violence (Wood 2006). Some armed groups, for example, have been ordered to use rape, as was the case with Bosnian Serb forces during the war in the Balkans (UN Security Council 1994, p. 59). Some tolerate it. Others have limited or prohibited the perpetration of sexual violence, two examples being the insurgency in El Salvador and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in Sri Lanka (Cohen et al. 2013; Wood 2006). There can also be variation within armed groups: interviews conducted with the Mai Mai militia group in the Democratic Republic of the Congo revealed differing attitudes to rape, soldiers of the Mai Mai Shikito sub-group being almost keen to declare they did not rape, while soldiers of the Mai Mai Kifuafua sub-group were 'more likely to admit to raping...' (Kelly 2010, p. 9).

Mainstream portrayals of conflict-related sexual violence have also presented women and girls as disproportionately the survivors, and men—in particular, combatants—as the predominant perpetrators (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2012, p. 2; HSRP 2012, p. 20). It is increasingly understood, however, that this does not tell the complete story. Mainstream portrayals are being challenged to some extent by calls for a more inclusive understanding of sexual violence in conflict environments. Such an understanding recognises, for example, that male survivors (see Section 2.2) and female perpetrators might be 'more numerous than generally believed' (Simon Fraser University 2012).

Although sexual violence is committed more often by male perpetrators, women and girls have been known to encourage, organise and commit violence, including sexual and gender-based violence against women and men. Examples of this can be seen in the conflicts in the Democratic Republic of

the Congo, Darfur (Amnesty International 2004, p. 24), Sierra Leone (Cohen, cited in Kristof & Wudunn 2009, p. 76), the Rwandan genocide,<sup>9</sup> the Balkans (UN Security Council 1994, p. 59) and, in the case of female members of the US armed forces, in US military prisons in Iraq and Afghanistan and at Guantanamo Bay (Wood 2011, p. 45; Hersh 2004; Leonnig & Priest 2005). In some cases the rates of female perpetration are quite high: in a 2010 study of 998 households in Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo women were reported to have committed sexual violence in 41.1 per cent of cases against females and 10 per cent of cases against males (Johnson et al. 2010, p. 553).

A more inclusive understanding of sexual violence also acknowledges the experiences and motivations of perpetrators rather than solely the experiences of survivors (Kelly 2010, p. 1). This shift in focus has drawn attention to the complex reality that perpetrators can simultaneously be victims (McKay & Mazurana 2004, p. 121), often with their own histories of trauma and victimisation. Examples are child soldiers who rape women at checkpoints, husbands who assault their wives and children at home (Baaz & Stern 2010, p. 46) and, as recounted by Human Rights Watch, female combatants in Liberia who captured girls for sexual servitude to deflect acts of sexual violence directed at themselves (2004, pp. 2, 29). Perpetrators can be unwilling, compelled to engage in sexual violence under threat of being harmed themselves (Kelly 2010, p. 8). There are also calls for greater recognition of the psychological needs of men who are forced to rape—not just those who are raped—as well as the male relatives of

‘We are always sent by our chiefs who tell us: “Do this!” Despite your refusal, they oblige you to do it; otherwise you will be beaten seriously. As a result, you will do it unwillingly. And you can even rape because of that.’

Mai Mai soldier, Democratic Republic of the Congo (cited in Kelly 2010: p. 8)

female survivors of sexual violence and those forced to watch sexual violence against family members (Carpenter 2006, p. 96; Kaufman 2012, p. 6; UK FCO 2013a, p. 2).

It is worth noting that in response to the widespread activity in relation to and focus on conflict-related sexual violence, especially in the past few years, some experts have cautioned against a dominant focus on sexual violence, characterising it as ‘hyper-attention’

(Engle 2012; Otto 2012). The World Health Organization has suggested the subject might be ‘over-researched’ in some situations (2007, p. 7). In the view of some academics, this dominant focus relies on and entrenches the image of women as vulnerable and sexualised and detracts attention from the elements of the women, peace and security international agenda concerned with women’s participation and agency, as well as other forms of non-sexual violence perpetrated against women (Engle 2012; Otto 2012; Rubio-Marín 2012, p. 73). The ‘hyper-attention’ also reinforces the shame of rape and assumes that rape is the worst crime that can be inflicted on women (Engle 2012; Otto 2012; Rubio-Marín 2012, p. 72).<sup>10</sup> In the view of some researchers, this dominant focus also deflects attention and resources from other concerns that communities in conflict-affected environments have—such as food security and returning home—as well as from other forms of violence that can be committed on a large or even larger scale—such as mass killings, torture and forced labour (Baaz & Stern 2010, p. 12). Research from the Democratic Republic of the Congo further suggests that this focus on sexual violence can have serious and widespread consequences among conflict-affected populations. Specifically, researchers have observed that the singular focus on sexual violence—backed by

considerable donor funding—has encouraged the perception that rape allegations can be used as an effective income-earning strategy and a means of obtaining free health services only available to rape survivors (Baaz & Stern 2010, pp. 51, 53–54). This trend has the potential to encourage a climate in which raped women are increasingly questioned as ‘legitimate’ victims (Baaz & Stern 2010, p. 58).



### What is being done?

As noted, the field of conflict-related sexual violence is active and constantly evolving. It is characterised by a proliferation of activity at the local, national, regional and international levels that aims to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence in conflict-affected environments.<sup>11</sup> A large and growing community of civilian, police and military personnel, non-government organisations, UN humanitarian organisations, UN peacekeeping operations, regional organisations, policy makers, practitioners and scholars populates the field. New tools, policy, research, and on-the-ground initiatives and approaches are being developed and launched regularly. Workshops, seminars, debates and conferences are also held regularly and provide forums for rich debate and new thinking. New data and analyses are constantly emerging<sup>12</sup> and, inevitably, by the time this paper is published, there will be a plethora of new programs, approaches, research findings and reports that are not covered here.

Examples here and throughout this paper illustrate prevention and response efforts that have been developed. The following list is by no means comprehensive: the proliferation of initiatives and practices makes that impossible. Rather, it provides a sampling of efforts.<sup>13</sup>

- National governments have developed **national strategies and action plans to combat sexual and gender-based violence**; this includes the governments of Côte d’Ivoire, Sierra Leone and Timor Leste (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2013). Countries hosting UN peacekeeping operations have also developed joint government–UN comprehensive strategies to combat sexual violence, among them the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which in 2009 launched a joint strategy with the Sexual Violence Unit of the UN peacekeeping mission, MONUSCO (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2010, p. 14).
- In 2010 the UN Secretary-General appointed a **UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict** to provide ‘coherent and strategic leadership’ throughout the United Nations (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2010, p. 9; 2013, p. 2). This includes briefing the Security Council on country-specific situations and liaising with the Security Council’s sanctions committees and expert groups (Security Council Report 2013).<sup>14</sup>
- NATO included conflict-related sexual violence in the scenario developed for Steadfast Pinnacle 2013, a high-level **leadership exercise** in operational planning for commanders from different NATO organisations (Skrinyár 2013).

- > In response to the ‘epidemic’ of sexual assault and harassment<sup>15</sup> in Egypt (Trew 2013), volunteer-based **anti-sexual harassment groups** have been established. They deploy to sites of protest and areas where assault and harassment—or ‘sexual terrorism’, as some groups call it—are commonly reported, such as subway stations. Initiatives include the campaign Operation Anti-Sexual Harassment/Assault (or OpAntiSH), the groups Tahrir Bodyguard and HarassMap, and the Imprint Movement (Kholaf 2013; Kears 2012b).
- > Under the auspices of UN Action against Sexual Violence,<sup>16</sup> UN Women and the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations have rolled out **scenario-based pre-deployment training on conflict-related sexual violence for UN peacekeeping personnel** in troop-contributing countries and regional training centres (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2013, p. 2; 2012, p. 27). Material has also been developed for use in standardised training for UN police (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2012, p. 27).

Women, men, girls and boys—including survivors of sexual and gender-based violence—are not only recipients and beneficiaries of external efforts to deal with sexual and gender-based violence: they also mobilise to protect themselves and, in some cases, respond to the violence they experience first hand. In Somalia, for example, more than 500 women participate in volunteer community patrols; this community protection mechanism is supported by the UN Development Programme and co-managed by the community, police and the District Safety Committee (UNDP 2011, p. 45). In some communities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, designated villagers are responsible for banging pots or blowing whistles as an early-warning community alarm scheme—established by the UN peacekeeping operation—to warn military forces about intruders (UNIFEM & DPKO 2010, p. 26). Among other community protection initiatives are community policing centres in camps and simple acts such as moving around in groups in recognition of the basic principle of ‘safety in numbers’ (UNIFEM & DPKO 2010, p. 26; UN General Assembly & Security Council 2013, p. 17). Mobile and online technologies are also being harnessed to support community protection efforts. HarassMap, for example, is a volunteer-based initiative that maintains a digital map of incidents of sexual harassment in Egypt; the incidents are reported by survivors and witnesses via SMS, Twitter and Facebook. The HarassMap map lets survivors and witnesses share their experiences of sexual harassment; this also helps improve others’ safety by building and maintaining a map of where sexual harassment is occurring.

‘If sexual harassment happens 2 u / u witness incident that’s already taken place plz report it: SMS to 6069 / send details @harassmap #endSH.’

(cited in Kears 2012a)

The following sections explore a number of dominant patterns of sexual and gender-based violence in conflict and post-conflict settings.



## Women and girls account for the majority of survivors of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence

Women and girls are disproportionately affected by sexual and gender-based violence in conflict and post-conflict environments.<sup>17</sup> Such targeting has been observed in the well-known cases of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Rwanda and Sierra Leone and more recently in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It has also been reported from Darfur, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Timor Leste, Myanmar, Somalia, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Mali, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Kashmir, the Central African Republic, Libya and Syria, to name a few (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2013; 2012).

Experts say those in the female population who are most at risk of sexual and gender-based violence are refugee and internally displaced women and girls,<sup>18</sup> unaccompanied girls, displaced women and girls in urban settings, girl mothers, and women and girls with physical and mental disabilities (UN 2002; UNHCR 2008A; Women's Refugee Commission 2012; Save the Children 2012, p. 2; Ward 2005, p. 186).

Despite the difficulty associated with capturing data on this form of violence (see p. 44), the following are some figures collected from recent and continuing conflicts (not disaggregated by age):<sup>19</sup>

'To be raped by gangs of men is very normal for women.'

Woman, Democratic Republic of the Congo  
(cited in UN General Assembly & Security Council 2010, p. 6)

- > Of 162 unverified reports of sexual violence in Syria compiled by the Women's Media Center's Women Under Siege project and covering the period from March 2011 to March 2013, 80 per cent involved females (ages 7–46) and, of those, 85 per cent involved rape (Wolfe 2013).
- > A total of 15,275 rape cases were registered in the Democratic Republic of the Congo during 2009 (UNIFEM & DPKO 2010, p. 14).
- > Between 2001 and 2009, 489,687 women experienced sexual violence in Colombia in municipalities that had state and non-state fighting forces present (Oxfam 2010, p. 1).
- > Between October 2004 and mid-February 2005 Médecins Sans Frontières treated 297 rape survivors in West Darfur, 99 per cent of whom were women (MSF 2005, p. 3).

The proximity of many contemporary conflicts to the everyday lives of civilians heightens women's and girls' vulnerability to sexual and gender-based violence.<sup>20</sup> In Mali (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2013, p. 12), Syria (Human Rights Watch 2012a; UN HRC 2012a, p. 18; BBC News 2012) and Libya (Sayed 2013; UN HRC 2012b) women and girls are raped and subjected to humiliating treatment in their homes during house searches and sweeps of residential neighbourhoods (UN HRC 2011, p. 14; 2012a, p. 1). They are attacked while walking to and from market or school, at checkpoints in their neighbourhoods, while using the lavatories in shelters and camps, and when collecting firewood, water and other staples away from their homes or shelters. A recent UN report observed that in Darfur women and girls are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence 'during the cultivation and harvest



season’ (June–November) because they need to spend more time away from their homes and outside of camps (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2013, p. 16). In the case of activities considered ‘women’s work’—such as firewood collection—the associated risks are practically unavoidable (Women’s Refugee Commission 2006b; UNHCR 1998, p. 16).<sup>21</sup>

Women and girls are also subjected to sexual violence in detention and during interrogation. This has been widely reported in Syria (HRW 2012a; UN HRC 2012a, p. 93) and in Libya (UN HRC 2012b). Further, they are subjected to widespread sexual and gender-based violence during public protests in situations of civil and political unrest. Sexual abuse has been described as an ‘epidemic’ in the continuing protests in Egypt, especially around Tahrir Square (Trew 2013). At a protest in Tahrir Square in July 2013 more than 100 cases of sexual violence against women—including mob assaults and rape with a sharp object—were documented by grassroots activists (cited in Eltahawy 2013).

Displacement increases women’s and girls’ vulnerability to sexual and gender-based violence. They are targeted while fleeing to camps, as has recently been reported in Somalia (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2013, p. 3), and on arrival in camps. The camps can be overcrowded, lacking privacy, poorly lit and insecure (Women’s Refugee Commission 2009, p. 11–12; Brun 2010, p. 4).<sup>22</sup> This is especially the case when camps are established hastily to cater for sudden influxes of people. The conditions, combined with the realities of unemployment and shortages of food, money and other basic necessities, create a situation where sexual and gender-based violence—including rape, sexual harassment, early and forced marriages of girls and young women, prostitution, sexual exploitation and abuse, trafficking and domestic violence—can thrive (UNHCR 2008a).<sup>23</sup>

Women and girls are also at risk of sexual and gender-based violence from within fighting forces. Whether they join voluntarily or are conscripted or abducted, they are vulnerable to rape and sexual servitude at the time of recruitment or abduction and throughout their time with the forces. They are known to play a range of, often overlapping, roles, including as fighters, cooks, cleaners, porters, nurses, spies, looters and messengers.<sup>24</sup> They can also be simultaneously assigned explicit roles as sex slaves (boys as well) or ‘bush wives’ forced to marry commanders and other combatants. The latest UN

From December 2011 to December 2012, ‘a total of 35 cases of rape were reported [in Darfur] involving attacks on women and girls engaged in farming, fetching water or firewood or returning from the market or school.’

(UN General Assembly & Security Council 2013, p. 16)

#### **Girls in fighting forces forced to provide sexual services, 1990–2003**

- Africa. Angola, Burundi, DRC, Liberia, Mozambique, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Uganda
- Americas. Colombia, Honduras, Peru
- Asia. Burma, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Timor-Leste
- Europe. Bosnia–Herzegovina, Kosovo (Yugoslavia)

(McKay & Mazurana 2004, p. 26)

Secretary-General's report on sexual violence in conflict, for example, identifies forced marriage by armed groups as an 'emerging concern' and provides examples of this practice in the Central African Republic, Mali and Somalia (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2013). In the case of the civil war in Liberia, although some female fighters were able to protect themselves by developing a particularly fearsome and strong reputation, 'Girl fighters were collectively known as "wives", whether attached to a particular soldier or not' (HRW 2004, pp. 2, 29). This label highlights their implicit or assumed sexual role. Similar experiences have been reported in other conflict settings, such as Sierra Leone (Coulter et al. 2008, p. 12).

While sexual and gender-based violence often dominates discussions of women's experiences of conflict in particular, it is important to recognise that civilian women and girls are also subject to other forms of violence during conflict. This includes mass killings, abduction, detention, torture and forced labour (Cohen et al. 2013, pp. 7, 8). The International Rescue Committee noted, for example, that in the case of Syria sexual violence has accompanied other forms of violence such as torture, shooting, kidnapping and burning (IRC 2012a, p. 5).



### What is being done?

- National police forces have created **specialised women and child protection units or desks** in a number of countries, among them South Sudan, Darfur, Sri Lanka, Liberia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Kosovo and Sierra Leone (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2013; IRC 2012b, p. 21). These units have often been established with assistance from UN peacekeeping missions, the UN Development Programme and other international partners (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2010, p. 15; UNIFEM & DPKO 2010, p. 36; UNDP 2011, p. 43).
- The United Nations is deploying **women's protection advisers** in its peacekeeping operations to help strengthen existing response efforts (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2012, p. 4; Hersh 2013). Such advisers are currently deployed to South Sudan (Hersh 2013, p. 2; UN General Assembly & Security Council 2013, p. 26), and there are plans to deploy them in the Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2013, p. 26).<sup>25</sup>
- Non-government organisations, UN humanitarian agencies and peacekeeping personnel have developed **'fuel-related protection' initiatives** to help reduce the requirement for women and girls to venture out of their communities and camps to collect firewood where they are vulnerable to sexual violence. These initiatives have tended to focus on direct provision of cooking fuel (firewood, charcoal, and so on), physical protection during fuel collection, development and promotion of alternative fuel sources (kerosene, biogas, and so on), and promotion and development of fuel-efficient technologies such as fuel-efficient stoves and fuel-efficient rations (for example, pre-soaked beans)

(Women's Refugee Commission 2006a; UNIFEM & DPKO 2010, p. 25; Women's Refugee Commission 2010; Bizzarri 2010; UNHCR 2012b).

- > UN peacekeeping operations have organised vehicular, and sometimes aerial, **armed firewood patrols**, as well as patrols around water sources and marketplaces and foot patrols to facilitate agricultural harvesting and foraging (UNIFEM & DPKO 2010, pp. 21–23; 2013, p. 16; AusAID 2010, p. 12).

## Sexual violence against men and boys is 'regular' and 'widespread' in conflict-affected environments

Despite a lack of hard data, sexual violence against men and boys (also called 'male sexual violence') has been reported in more than 25 conflicts in the past decade and has been recognised as 'regular and unexceptional, pervasive and widespread' (Sivakumaran 2007, pp. 260, 257–8; OCHA 2008b, p. 1; UN Security Council 1994, Section IV, F).<sup>26</sup>

During the Bosnian conflict, it is estimated that 80 per cent of 5000 male concentration camp detainees held near Sarajevo were sexually abused (Stemple 2011). Research shows that about a third of the male population in Liberia might have been sexually abused during the conflict (UNFPA 2010, p. 27). In a 2010 survey of 1005 households in the Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo 23.6 per cent of men (and

A population-based survey conducted in Liberia in 2008 of 1666 adults revealed that 32.6 per cent of male combatants had been exposed to sexual violence, including 16.5 per cent who had been forced into sexual servitude.

(Johnson et al. 2008)

39.7 per cent of women) reported exposure to sexual violence and for 64.5 per cent of these men the sexual violence was conflict-related (Johnson et al. 2010, p. 558). Reports from the post-election violence in Kenya and Guinea have referred to male sexual violence, including forced circumcision in the case of Kenya (Grey & Shepherd 2012, p. 128; UN General Assembly & Security Council 2012). More recently, reports from Libya and Syria point to men and boys being subjected to sexual violence (Human Rights Watch 2012a; Wolfe 2013; UN General Assembly & Security Council 2012, pp. 12, 23).

Men and boys are vulnerable to a range of gender-specific forms of sexual violence in conflict situations. They can themselves be raped, forced to perform sexual acts on the perpetrator, forced to rape other civilians (including their own family members) or forced to watch the rape of their kin (Carpenter 2006, pp. 95–96). Men are also the victims of forced sterilisation through castration and other forms of sexual mutilation (Sivakumaran 2007, p. 265). They can be subjected to genital violence not intended to sterilise, forced nudity and forced masturbation—of the victim and the perpetrator (Sivakumaran 2007; WHO 2003, p. 16). Male sexual violence is particularly prevalent in detention settings (WHO 2003, p. 16; OCHA 2008b, p. 3; Russell 2007, p. 22), as has been documented, for instance, in Libya, Afghanistan and Syria (Sayed 2013; UN HRC 2011, p. 14; 2012a; 2012b; UN General Assembly & Security Council 2013, p. 4). Such violence is also perpetrated in the context of military

operations, military conscription and abduction, as well as in camps and shelters, where boys are particularly vulnerable (Russell 2007, p. 22; Johnson et al. 2008).

Although male sexual violence has been gaining more mainstream attention in the past decade,<sup>27</sup> male survivors of conflict-related sexual violence—including boys—were largely invisible until fairly recently—mentioned, if at all, in a footnote or as an add-on sentence. In the words of a recent legal analysis of male sexual violence, ‘Male victimization is under-theorized and under-studied’ (Henry

‘The danger of characterizing sexual violence against men and boys only under the rubric of torture is that men and boys will continue to be seen as unsusceptible to sexual violence, reinforcing the view that sexual violence is a problem for women and girls alone.’

(Sivakumaran 2010, p. 273)

et al. 2013, pp. 4–5). There are various explanations for this invisibility. First, sexual violence is often conflated with violence against women and girls, in part because women and girls constitute the majority of survivors (Carpenter 2006, p. 86). This trend has been reinforced by the fact that in the recent past investigative bodies, courts and human rights organisations have often recorded male sexual violence ‘under the rubric of torture’, ‘abuse’ or ‘physical injury’ (Sivakumaran 2007, pp. 254, 256;

OCHA 2008b, p. 2; Cohen et al. 2013, p. 10; Grey & Shepherd 2012, p. 128; Carpenter 2006, p. 95), rather than as being associated explicitly with sexual violence. For example, cases before the International Criminal Court and ad hoc criminal tribunals relating to male sexual violence ‘are generally prosecuted under non-sexual criminal classifications’ (Henry et al. 2013, p. 2).

Another explanation for the invisibility of sexual violence against men and boys is the limited awareness among medical practitioners and humanitarian workers—perhaps because of a lack of training—which may prevent recognition of the signs of male sexual violence (Russell et al. 2011, p. 4). A clear indication of the lack of recognition given to male experiences of sexual violence is the fact that in some countries medical services for survivors of sexual violence are located in gynaecology departments (UNHCR 2012a, p. 4, note 11). Pervasive under-reporting is a third—and crucial—explanation. This is a result of survivors’ shame, confusion, guilt, fear, isolation and ignorance and the stigma associated with male sexual violence (Sivakumaran 2007, p. 255; Russell et al. 2011, p. 4; Russell 2007, p. 22; Baaz & Stern 2010, p. 44). Furthermore, in some countries national legislation on rape often excludes the possibility of there being male survivors (UNHCR 2012a, p. 6, note 12): the Ugandan Penal Code, for example, defines rape as ‘the unlawful carnal knowledge of a woman or girl without her consent’ (Government of Uganda 1950, Chapter XIV, para. 123). Finally, male sexual violence might be invisible in order to protect the survivors: in countries where homosexuality is illegal—76 countries in total, including Afghanistan, Sudan, Uganda, Liberia and Libya—male survivors of sexual violence are vulnerable to criminal prosecution and imprisonment under anti-sodomy laws if they report the crime (Itaborahy & Zhu 2013, p. 22; UNHCR 2012a, p. 10; Henry et al. 2013).



## What is being done?

- > In July 2013 the UN Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict hosted a **two-day workshop**, ‘Male-directed Sexual Violence: Increasing Understanding for a Better Response’ (UN Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict 2013).<sup>28</sup>
- > In April 2013 the first **South–South Institute on Sexual Violence against Men and Boys in Conflict and Displacement** was held in Uganda, organised by the Refugee Law Project in collaboration with a number of other parties (Dolan 2013).
- > The UN Secretary-General has been devoting **increasing attention** to male sexual violence in his reports on conflict-related sexual violence. His 2012 report noted that the ‘situation of male victims’ of sexual violence ‘require[s] deeper examination’ (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2012, p. 3). His 2013 report described sexual violence against men and boys as an ‘emerging concern’ and recommended adequate resourcing for ‘further research, monitoring and reporting, prevention initiatives and service provision ...’ (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2013, pp. 2, 3, 29).
- > In its first trial the **International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia** convicted Duško Tadić of cruel treatment and inhumane acts; this included his role in incidents related to male sexual violence (Henry et al. 2013, p. 8; ICTY 2013a). Male sexual violence has also been examined in the tribunal’s cases of Češić, Mucić et al., Todorović and Simić (ICTY 2013a).

## Girls and boys account for a large number of survivors of conflict-related sexual violence

Girls and boys are inherently more vulnerable than adults to sexual violence in conflict-affected environments. Some non-government organisations and UN agencies have found that in many conflicts girls and boys under the age of 18 account for a large number of sexual violence survivors, sometimes even the majority (Save the Children 2012, p. 2).<sup>29</sup> Research by Save the Children UK suggests that ‘significant levels’ of sexual abuse are perpetrated against boys and girls by peacekeepers and aid workers, and the levels could be higher still in view of ‘chronic underreporting’ (Csáky 2008, p. 1, 12).<sup>30</sup> There are reports of girls and boys in Syria being raped in unofficial and official detention centres (UNHCR 2013, p. 17). The latest report of the UN Secretary-General on sexual violence in conflict notes that children accounted for about a third of the approximately 1700 registered rape cases in Mogadishu and surrounding areas of Somalia (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2013, p. 14). Survivors and women’s groups in Colombia say that many of the survivors of sexual violence in that country are children (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2013, p. 6).<sup>31</sup>

Despite girls' and boys' inherent vulnerability to sexual violence, and the reports just cited, recent analyses by non-government organisations, UN organisations and research institutions have highlighted how 'little is known about the incidence or prevalence of wartime sexual violence against children' (HSRP 2012, p. 60; Rowley et al. 2012, p. 3). This is probably because of a more limited research focus on sexual violence against children compared with adults. One possible explanation for the limited research focus is the 'ethical and methodological challenges' presented when conducting research into sexual violence and conflict-affected children (Rowley et al. 2012, p. 3).

Even less information is available on sexual violence against boys (Sivakunaram 2010, p. 269). Boys are often placed in the same category as men rather than given specific attention, or they are concealed in the category of 'women and children'. Yet they do have 'very different experiences of sexual violence' (Save the Children 2012, p. 2).<sup>32</sup> For instance, in Afghanistan, warlords and other military leaders use boys as sexual slaves in the reported practice of *bacha baazi* (boy-play) (UN Security Council 2008b, p. 14). It is also known that boys are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence in situations of detention, as in Syria (UN HRC 2011, p. 14), and when forced to join fighting forces (Russell et al. 2011, p. 5; Sivakunaram 2010, p. 270).

'Very little significant research has been conducted on the issue of sexual violence against children in conflict.'

(Save the Children 2012, p. 1).

Among the children at heightened risk of sexual violence in conflict are the following:

- > children with disabilities
- > orphans and unaccompanied children
- > refugee and internally displaced children, and other children dependent on assistance
- > members of child-headed households
- > working children
- > girl mothers
- > children born of rape

(Save the Children 2012, p. 2;  
Csáky 2008, p. 1).



## What is being done?

- > In 2009, as part of its thematic work on children and armed conflict,<sup>33</sup> the **UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1882**, which added sexual violence as a 'trigger' for placing parties to armed conflict on the UN Secretary-General's 'list of shame' and called on parties engaged in sexual violence against children to prepare time-bound action plans outlining their steps to stop such crimes (UN Security Council 2009; Security Council Report 2013, p. 9).
- > The Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has signed an **action plan** committing the Congolese armed forces to end the recruitment and use of child soldiers and to stop and prevent sexual violence against children (Zerrougui 2013; UN General

Assembly 2013a, p. 5). As of July 2013, the Congolese armed forces are among 18 armed forces and non-state armed groups on the Secretary-General's 'list of shame' that have developed and signed action plans (UN General Assembly 2013a, p. 6).<sup>34</sup>

- Save the Children UK has established **child protection clubs** in Southern Sudan to provide a safe place for children and to offer training on children's rights (Csáky 2008, p. 19).
- The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic has adopted **legislation** that strengthens sanctions for the perpetration of sexual violence against children (UN General Assembly 2013a, p. 9).
- In 2010 **First Step Cambodia**, a non-government organisation, was established to provide specialised social work services for boys and young men who are survivors of sexual abuse and their families and provide special training and support for those working with male survivors (FSC).

## Sexual violence has profound physical, psychological and social consequences

Sexual violence has short- and long-term physical, psychological and social consequences for survivors.<sup>35</sup> For women and girls, sexual violence can lead to both genital and non-genital physical injury (WHO 2003, p. 12) such as traumatic fistulas<sup>36</sup> and chronic incontinence. Among other physical consequences are an increased risk of sexually transmitted infections (including HIV/AIDS), reproductive health problems such as infertility, unwanted pregnancy, self-induced and unsafe abortions, and death as a result of pregnancy or delivery complications. Young survivors whose bodies are not yet fully developed are especially vulnerable (UNHCR & CRR 2011, p. 22).<sup>37</sup> For men and boys, sexual violence can cause genital and rectal injury, sexual dysfunction and sexually transmitted infection (UNHCR 2012a, p. 10).<sup>38</sup>

Survivors of sexual violence can experience a wide range of psychological effects, including PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder),<sup>39</sup> rape trauma syndrome,<sup>40</sup> depression, anxiety, feelings of rage and shame, self-blame, memory loss and suicidal ideation (Amnesty International 2007, p. 30; García-Moreno et al. 2013, p. 32; PHR & Harvard Humanitarian Initiative 2009, p. 5; Johnson et al. 2008, p. 688).<sup>41</sup> Male survivors of sexual violence are often particularly concerned about their masculinity, their inability to prevent the sexual attack, and the opinions of others (WHO 2003, p. 16).<sup>42</sup> They can also become confused about their sexual orientation (Russell et al. 2011, p. 3): when a perpetrator's motivation is the 'homosexualisation' of the victim this can be the intended effect (Sivakumaran 2007; Russell et al. 2011, p. 3).

'In a study of over 1000 [Rwandan] genocide widows undertaken in the year 2000, 67 per cent of rape survivors were HIV-positive.'

(Ward 2005, p. 190)

Child survivors of sexual violence experience physical and psychological consequences similar to those experienced by adults, as well as consequences that are more unique to their age. In addition



to the symptoms just mentioned, these consequences can include learning problems, cognitive impairment, low self-esteem and body image concerns, inappropriate sexual behaviour, and a long-term sense of insecurity (WHO 2003, p. 81; Save the Children 2012, pp. 3–4). Studies have also shown that experiences of sexual violence tend to make children more vulnerable to future violence through risky coping and survival strategies and more prone to perpetrating sexual violence when they are adults (Save the Children 2012, p. 4).

The stigma associated with sexual violence has far-reaching consequences for both female and male survivors. Both can face rejection and ostracism by their families and communities (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2013, p. 3; Ward 2005, p. 190; Manjoo & McRaith 2011, p. 17; UNHCR 2012a, p. 10; Russell et al. 2011, p. 3). Physicians for Human Rights and the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative

‘Honor is everything to my family. One day, my brother brought all the females in the family together and told them, “I will kill all of you before I let anyone touch you. I promise I will do this for you, to protect you”.’

Syrian woman, Lebanon  
(cited in IRC 2012a, p. 6)

found that, among Darfuri refugee women in Chad, ‘Women with confirmed rapes were six times more likely to be divorced or separated than those who were not raped’ (PHR & Harvard Humanitarian Initiative 2009, p. 5). Syrian female rape survivors have been abandoned by their husbands and face divorce and loss of their children (Sulzer 2012, p. 14; UN HRC 2012a, p. 91; Ghafour 2013). Female ex-combatants and women and girls who have been associated with

fighting forces can face particularly severe stigma during reintegration because they are often considered ‘likely’ survivors of sexual violence and as a result may be ostracised by their families and communities (UN 2002, p. 134; Anderlini 2010, p. 29; O’Neill & Vary 2011, p. 80). The stigma and shame associated with rape can result in survivors refusing to tell their partners or families what has happened, as has been observed in Darfur and among Darfuri refugees (Gingerich & Leaning 2004, p. 23; PHR 2006, p. 26; PHR & Harvard Humanitarian Initiative 2009, p. 5). Such stigma and rejection can have the effect of denying survivors the very support structures they need, making them economically and socially vulnerable (Amnesty International 2004, p. 18) and forcing them into poverty, risky survival strategies such as prostitution, and further vulnerability to violence (UN 2002; UNHCR 2008a, p. 202).

Moreover, the stigma associated with sexual violence often places the burden of blame on the survivor. Social and legal norms that blame rape survivors are evident in Afghanistan and in Somalia (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2010, p. 8; 2013, p. 15), as well as in Darfur, where female rape survivors have been imprisoned and fined for ‘illegal pregnancy’ (UNHCR 2008a, p. 202; MSF 2005, p. 6). In cultures that place a high value on notions of honour and virginity, rape survivors can be considered ‘spoiled’ and thus unmarriageable (PHR 2006, p. 30). They can also be at risk of being killed in the name of honour since their rape is seen as bringing shame to their family. The United Nations has reported that in various provinces in Afghanistan women and girls have been publicly stoned or punished in other ways for reporting sexual violence (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2013, p. 4). It has also been reported that Syrian girls and young women who are released from prison might be killed by family members,<sup>43</sup> forced to commit suicide, or forced to hastily marry



a male relative, male member of the community or even a contact in another country to ‘save their honour’ (IRC 2012a, p. 6; Sulzer 2012, p. 14; UN HRC 2012a, p. 91; UN General Assembly & Security Council 2013, p. 19; Ghafour 2013).<sup>44</sup>

Children born of rape can face similar rejection. In a series of interviews conducted by Amnesty International in Darfur in 2004 communities that indicated some openness about accepting rape survivors back into their communities still would not accept any children born of rape (2004, p. 17). This places women under pressure to abandon babies born of rape (Amnesty International 2004, p. 17; PHR 2006, p. 30). The stigma and rejection that often accompany rape are reflected in ways of referring to children born of rape—‘children of bad memories’ and ‘devil’s children’ in Rwanda and ‘children of shame’ in Kosovo (Women’s Refugee Commission 2009, p. 5; Rowley et al. 2012, p. 3). It has been noted in a number of recent reports that not enough is known about women who become pregnant as a result of rape and about the children born of rape (Rowley et al. 2012, p. 4; UN General Assembly & Security Council 2013). The 2013 UN Secretary-General’s report on sexual violence in conflict recommended more research, monitoring, reporting and initiatives to respond to such individuals’ unique vulnerabilities and experiences (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2013, pp. 3, 30).

The consequences of sexual violence reach beyond the survivors. For those forced to witness sexual violence—in particular, against family members—the consequences can be severe, producing, among other things, feelings of helplessness and anger, depression, suicidal ideation, and a tendency toward future violence (Kaufman 2012, p. 6). The risk and fear of sexual violence can force women and girls to stay at home and prevent them from productively engaging in the local economy and participating in politics; they can also force girls out of school (Manjoo & McRaith 2011, p. 17; Lackenbauer & Langlais 2013, p. 33). As has been witnessed and reported among Syrian refugees, feelings of insecurity and fear about sexual violence can promote early or forced marriages of girls (UN Women 2013a; IRIN 2012; Remnick 2013). Sexual violence can also exacerbate ethnic and other tensions and ‘further entrench conflict and instability’ (Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations 2013, p. 2).



### What is being done?

- In collaboration with Johns Hopkins University and the University of Washington, the International Rescue Committee has introduced **cognitive processing therapy** into its work with sexual violence survivors in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (IRC 2013b). This specialised mental health treatment is for survivors who demonstrate particularly high levels of trauma and is intended to teach women ‘skills to change thoughts about the sexual violence that trigger distress and that interfere with functioning’ (IRC 2013b). The treatment is available alongside more **holistic support services** the International Rescue Committee delivers in partnership with local non-government and community-based organisations and includes psychosocial support (individual counselling and group support), free medical care and referral services, family counselling and mediation, legal assistance and socio-economic support (IRC 2008, p. 1).

- > Local and international non-government organisations, UN humanitarian organisations, UN peacekeeping operations and national governments have established **referral systems for survivors** to help them gain access to medical, psychosocial, legal and rehabilitation support (UNIFEM & DPKO 2010, p. 29). In 2012 the Sierra Leone Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs launched the National Referral Protocol for Victims of Gender-based Violence (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2013, p. 22). In Somaliland the Hargeisa Central Hospital now has a Sexual Assault and Referral Centre, supported by the UN Development Programme; it serves as a 'one stop' centre providing integrated services (medical treatment, documentation of evidence and legal assistance) to sexual violence survivors (UN Security Council 2012, p. 14; UNDP 2011, p. 101).
- > In Afghanistan the Ministry of Women's Affairs manages a **system of shelters** to provide protection and legal assistance for women fleeing violence, including domestic violence and forced marriage, and who are at risk of honour killing. In addition to 14 'official' shelters, there are also non-government and private shelters (HRW 2012b, p. 4).
- > The Physicians for Human Rights' Sexual Violence in Conflict Zones team has developed the **MediCapt mobile app** in collaboration with partners. This allows health care providers to collect forensic evidence of atrocities such as sexual violence, including photographing injuries, and to securely transmit the data to authorities for use in court (PHR 2013).<sup>45</sup> The app is currently being used in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Mok 2013).



A women's group in Central African Republic joins UN Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Zainab Hawa Bangura, in the 'stop rape in war' campaign. (UN Photo/C. Silveiro)

## Domestic violence is widespread in conflict-affected environments

It is commonly assumed that most perpetrators of sexual violence in conflict-affected environments are armed men. This assumption is, however, being challenged by the growing focus and awareness on the perpetration of sexual and gender-based violence by non-combatants (Cohen et al. 2013; HSRP 2012; IRC 2012b). Domestic violence, including intimate partner violence, is one example. In the words of a recent report by the International Rescue Committee about domestic violence in West Africa, ‘Even though the focus of the humanitarian community has often been on armed groups, the primary threat to women in West Africa is not a man with a gun or a stranger. It is their husbands’ (IRC 2012b, p. 3). An IRC assessment of Syrian refugees in Lebanon reported that domestic violence is ‘among the most common types of violence women currently experience (in displacement)’ (2012a, p. 6). Recent research suggests that particularly high levels of domestic sexual violence, perpetrated in the household or extended family by intimate partners or household or family members, are being seen in conflict-affected environments (HSRP 2012, p. 20, 21, 36).<sup>46</sup> The 2012 Human Security Report revealed that even in the countries with the worst rates of ‘combatant-perpetrated sexual violence’, such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, ‘the evidence indicates that the nationwide incidence of domestic sexual violence is higher than rape by rebels, militias, government troops, or other strangers’ (HSRP 2012, p. 36).

Post-conflict environments are often characterised by high levels of domestic violence (Manjoo & McRaith 2011; Rehn & Sirleaf 2002). A survey conducted in post-conflict Guatemala in 2006 found that ‘only 17 percent of women ... reported that they had not been victim of mistreatment at home’ (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2006). The United

Nations has reported severe cases of domestic violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Timor Leste (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2012, p. 18). High rates of domestic violence are regularly reported in Papua New Guinea (MSF 2011). A recent UN multi-country study of men and violence in the Asia-Pacific region found that, of the men surveyed in Bougainville, 80 per cent reported they had perpetrated physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence during their lifetime (Fulu et al. 2013, p. 28). An increase in domestic violence also

‘Worldwide, almost one third (30%) of all women who have been in a relationship have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by their intimate partner. In some regions, 38% of women have experienced intimate partner violence.’

(García-Moreno et al. 2013: 2)

‘Before the war, things were ok. We had income and food, but when he comes home now without anything to eat, he starts fighting with me.’

Displaced woman,  
Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo  
(cited in Slegh et al. 2012, p. 6)

coincides with periods of unrest and violence, such as the post-election violence in Côte d’Ivoire in 2011 (IRC 2012b, p. 7). Small arms and light weapons, which circulate in communities long after the end of conflict, are ‘an acknowledged means through which domestic violence occurs’ (Pytlak n.d., p. 4).<sup>47</sup>

While domestic violence is also widespread in peacetime,<sup>48</sup> a number of conflict-related factors can contribute to the perpetration of such violence during and after conflict (Rehn & Sirleaf 2002, p. 14). For one, conflict can normalise violence in the community and in the home, facilitated by weak or non-existent legal and security structures, widespread impunity, and weak community norms and support structures (see Section 3.3) (Aas 2010, p. 5; Security Council Report 2013, p. 34; UN General Assembly & Security Council 2012, p. 5; Baaz & Stern 2010, p. 33). Domestic violence can be an outlet through which men are able to reassert their power and dominance as men (Anderlini 2010, p. 16; Refugee Law Project 2008; UNFPA 2010, p. 44; IRC 2012b; Fulu et al. 2013, p. 6). This can occur during and following conflict where men have experienced a loss of traditional roles—described as a ‘sense of lost “manhood”’ (Slegh et al. 2012, p. 6)—due to injury, the effects of conflict-related psychological trauma, economic change and displacement resulting in unemployment, the loss of livelihoods or idleness, and food insecurity (Fulu et al. 2013, pp. 5, 6; Shteir 2013; Lackenbauer & Langlais 2013, p. 55). In addition, PTSD, depression, stress and anxiety associated with experiences of violent conflict can contribute to violence in the family (Badkhen 2012; IRC 2012a, p. 6). For men who have survived sexual violence or who have witnessed it, perpetrating abuse themselves can serve as a ‘dysfunctional and destructive coping mechanism’ (Kaufman 2012, p. 8).



### What is being done?

- Médecins Sans Frontières Australia has opened the 9 Mile Clinic in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea.<sup>49</sup> The clinic trains local nursing officers and provides a package of five **essential services to survivors of family and sexual violence**—emergency medical care; psychological first aid; prophylaxis for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections; emergency contraception; and vaccination to prevent hepatitis B and tetanus (MSF Australia 2013).
- In 2007 the Government of Sierra Leone passed the **Domestic Violence Act**, which establishes ‘basic rights for women in the home’ and outlines their entitlement to free medical care (IRC 2012b, p. 21).
- In Liberia the International Rescue Committee has worked with US-based Men’s Resources International on the project **Part of the Solution: Involving Men in Preventing Gender-Based Violence**. As part of this initiative, it helped establish Men’s Action Groups (to work alongside Women’s Action Groups) and helped to organise, with the Action Groups, a community awareness raising campaign in 2007 titled ‘Men as Partners in Ending Violence Against Women (MAPEVAW)’ that used skits, song, parades and sports programs to deliver their message (MRI 2007).

## Civilians continue to be vulnerable to sexual exploitation and abuse by UN peacekeeping and humanitarian personnel

Incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse by UN peacekeeping personnel and UN and NGO humanitarian personnel first received global attention in 2002 following publication of a report by the UN Refugee Agency and Save the Children UK detailing allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian aid workers and peacekeepers in 40 agencies in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone (IASC 2010, p. 1). Acts of sexual exploitation and abuse before 2002 had been reported as occurring in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Cambodia and Timor Leste in the 1990s (UN General Assembly 2005, p. 7). Following the reports from West Africa, there were also revelations of serious misconduct by UN peacekeepers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2004 (UN General Assembly 2005, p. 7). Incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse have included sex trafficking, prostitution rings, rape, the exchange of sex for food and non-food household items, the production of pornography, and fathering and then abandoning ‘peacekeeper babies’ (Jordan 2005; Higate 2004; Rehn & Sirleaf 2002, p. 16; Martin 2005).

Sexual exploitation and abuse, including prostitution and trafficking, have commonly thrived in countries that host peacekeeping and humanitarian operations. There are a number of enabling factors. First, the relationship between international personnel and the local beneficiary population is unavoidably characterised by ‘inherently unequal power dynamics’ (Kofi Annan, cited in Jordan 2005). Whereas peacekeepers and aid workers can earn considerable money working in conflict-affected environments, the local population often faces extreme poverty and high rates of joblessness (Higate 2004; Jennings 2008, p. 7). In this context the exchange of sex for food, for example, becomes a survival tactic for members of the local population (Csáky 2008, p. 1; UN General Assembly 2009a, p. 16). Beyond financial power and influence, many peacekeepers are armed and can use the power of their uniform and weaponry to sexually exploit and abuse a civilian population often traumatised by war (Csáky 2008, p. 8). In addition, peacekeeping missions continue to be made up of predominantly unaccompanied foreign men (Martin 2005, p. 3), many of whom might have deployed with discriminatory attitudes about women and come from countries that either accept or condone prostitution and other types of sexual and gender-based violence (Csáky 2008, p. 8).

Since 2001 the UN has instituted a wide range of reforms to improve its ability to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse by its personnel. One result is a steady decline in allegations of such acts of misconduct, particularly in the past few years (see Figure 1).<sup>50</sup>

The allegations received within the UN system in 2012 and 2011 cover a range of acts, including rape and other forms of sexual assault, the sexual abuse of minors, and the exchange of money, employment, goods or services for sex—this last referred to as ‘prohibited consensual activities’ (UN General Assembly 2013b, p. 4; 2012, p. 5). Six allegations in 2012 involved paternity claims (UN General Assembly 2013b, p. 7). The allegations received in 2011 and 2012 were made against predominantly male, but sometimes female,<sup>51</sup> military, civilian and police personnel as well as contractors (UN General Assembly 2013b; 2012, p. 5).<sup>52</sup> Member states reported a range of disciplinary measures taken, including imprisonment, a reduction in rank, dismissal from service, fines and the imposition of extra duty (UN General Assembly 2013b, p. 6; 2012, p. 7). Although there has

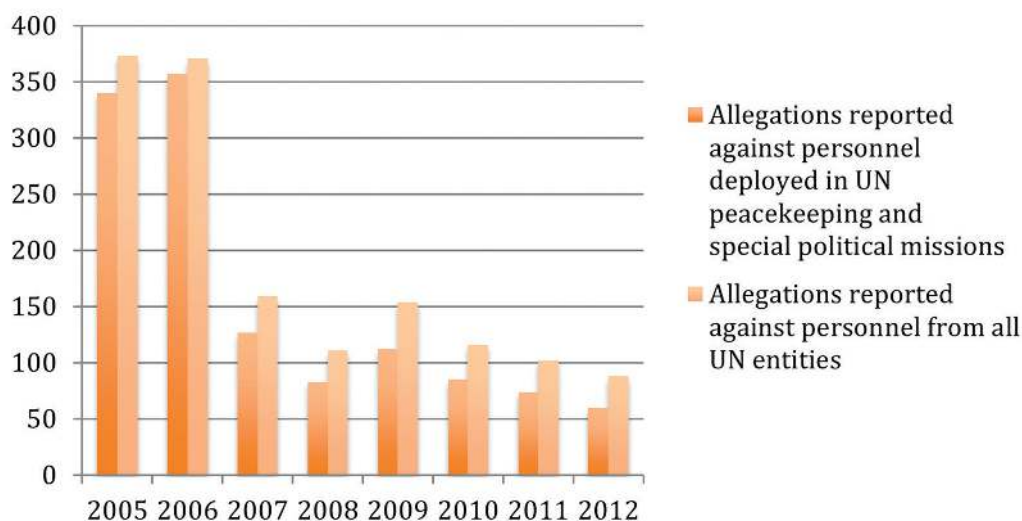


Figure 1 – Allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse committed by personnel from UN entities, including UN peacekeeping operations.<sup>53</sup> (Sources: UN General Assembly 2013b; 2012; 2010; 2009b)

been a noticeable improvement in troop-contributing countries' responsiveness to UN requests for investigations, a recent UN report noted that member states are less forthcoming with UN requests for information about the results of those investigations and any disciplinary action taken (UN General Assembly 2013b, p. 8).<sup>54</sup>



### What is being done?

- In 2003 the UN Secretary-General promulgated the **Secretary-General's Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse**, which functions as a zero-tolerance policy and code of conduct for all UN staff. It defines and prohibits sexual exploitation and abuse—including sexual activity with children and the exchange of money, employment, goods or services for sex—and identifies the responsibilities of those in management and leadership positions (UN Secretariat 2003, p. 2). In 2007 a **revised model memorandum of understanding** was introduced that legally binds troop and police peacekeeping personnel to the standards outlined in the bulletin (UN General Assembly 2013b, p. 11). The bulletin is complemented, reinforced and sometimes superseded by **mission-specific codes** of conduct and other guidance documents.<sup>55</sup> UN agencies and non-government organisations have developed their own organisation-specific codes of conduct, among them the UN Refugee Agency, the World Food Programme, Oxfam Great Britain and Care International (IASC Task Force 2013c, p. 11).<sup>56</sup>



- > Peacekeeping missions have established **conduct and discipline teams** to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse (UN General Assembly 2013b, p. 13). UN and NGO humanitarian organisations have established **sexual exploitation and abuse, or SEA, focal points**—in some cases full-time positions, task forces, dedicated departments and working groups, and also linked to in-country networks (Csáky 2008, p. 12; IASC Task Force 2013a; 2013c, pp. 18, 20; ECHA/ECPS UN and NGO Task Force on Protection From Sexual Exploitation and Abuse 2008).
- > In 2011 the **Inter-Agency Standing Committee Task Force on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by Our Own Staff** was established in recognition of the high risk of sexual exploitation and abuse in humanitarian contexts and also of the slow progress in dealing with sexual exploitation and abuse in the humanitarian sector (compared with peacekeeping missions) (IASC 2010).<sup>57</sup> The task force comprises more than 40 NGO and UN entities and is co-chaired by UNICEF and the International Medical Corps. Its work includes the development and dissemination of minimum operating standards on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (endorsed in 2012) and the development of joint community-based complaint mechanisms (IASC Task Force 2013c; UN General Assembly 2013b, p. 14).
- > To prevent the (re)deployment and (re)hiring of previous perpetrators of sexual exploitation and abuse and other related violations, a number of tools are in use in the UN system, including a **human rights screening policy** and a **misconduct tracking system** (UN General Assembly 2013b, p. 10).
- > The **Building Safer Organisations initiative** was established in 2004 to augment the capacity of non-government organisations to respond to allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse by NGO personnel. Currently hosted by the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership International, the project delivers training in conducting investigations and has published guidelines on receiving and investigating allegations, among other things (IASC Task Force 2013b).

# Causes of and motivations for conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence

The causes of and motivations for sexual and gender-based violence vary considerably in conflict-affected environments. As observed in a discussion paper by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 'Sexual violence in conflict is motivated and perpetuated by a complex mix of individual and collective, pre-meditated and circumstantial reasons' (OCHA 2008b, p. 1).

This section explores a range of factors that can contribute to the perpetration of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence, particularly sexualised violence.

'A phenomenon as complex as wartime rape may have any number of conceivable causes.'

(Cohen 2011, p. 4)

## Gender inequality and concepts of manhood

Underlying many acts of sexual and gender-based violence in conflict-affected environments (and in peacetime) are beliefs about the subordinate status of women and girls, as well as expressions of dominance, power and aggression by men (Rehn & Sirleaf 2002, p. 10; Fulu et al. 2013, pp. 5, 6).<sup>58</sup> According to the Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman in Colombia, a 'generalized practice' of sexual violence by Colombian security forces is due in part to 'existing ideas in the local culture, such as that a woman's body is an object that belongs to men' (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2012, p. 6). Ideas of power and dominance in relation to women are found in the World Health Organization's explanation of the motivations for sexual violence:

Sexual violence is an aggressive act. The underlying factors in many sexually violent acts are power and control, not, as is widely perceived, a craving for sex. Rarely is it a crime of passion. It is rather a violent, aggressive and hostile act used as a means to degrade, dominate, humiliate, terrorize and control women. (WHO 2003, p. 9).

A survey of 708 men and 754 women conducted in 2012 in Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo by the Sonke Gender Justice Network, Promundo-US and the Institute for Mental Health of Goma revealed 'high degrees of rape-supportive attitudes among the men' (Slegh et al. 2012, p. 10). In the survey men clearly expressed their right to have sex with their partners and their expectation that women will accept this right, even when forced (Slegh et al. 2012, p. 10). A recent UN multi-country study of violence in the Asia-Pacific region produced similar findings: 70–80 per cent of men who had raped reported a 'sense of sexual entitlement'—a 'belief that they have the right to sex, regardless of consent' (Fulu et al. 2013, p. 3). These findings are indicative of a clear and widespread belief in the subordination of women.<sup>59</sup>

'Many decades of work by activists and scholars have shown that gender inequality, patriarchy and men's power over women create an environment in which violence against women is widespread and accepted.'

(Fulu et al. 2013, p. 6)



The perpetration of sexual and gender-based violence in male-dominated military forces (including peacekeeping forces) and organisations such as the police is often linked to entrenched discriminatory attitudes toward women, or sexism. In countries such as Canada and the United States—although things are gradually changing—the military has been seen widely as a ‘man’s world’ and female personnel as ‘second class citizens’ (Sacks 2005, p. 18; Williams 2013). Attitudes about the inferiority of women have been encouraged and constructed alongside ideals of hyper-masculinity, in which male aggression is natural and ‘sexual conquest enviable’ (Whitworth 2004; Kilmartin, cited in Bruni 2013; Enloe 1989, 2000). Some researchers have explored how the development of group cohesion and solidarity within military forces, including through training and socialisation, has been reinforced by the use of ‘often violently misogynist, racist, and homophobic messages’ (Whitworth 2004, p. 152), including the ‘denigration’ of women, homosexuals and people of colour as ‘outsiders’ or ‘the other’ (Whitworth 2004, p. 161; Wood 2011, p. 51).<sup>60</sup> Refugees International has identified ‘a hyper-masculine culture’ as a crucial factor in encouraging sexual exploitation and abuse in UN peacekeeping operations (Martin 2005, p. ii).

The pervasive ‘boys will be boys’ attitude within military institutions, including peacekeeping operations, is, however, gradually changing (Martin 2005, p. iii). In Australia, Canada and the United States, for example, military culture is under increasing scrutiny, and the armed forces are trying to better understand, prevent and respond to cases of sexual harassment and abuse, discrimination and sexualised treatment of female personnel. They are also trying to eradicate often widespread cultures that encourage silence and hostility toward victims (Australian Human Rights Commission 2012, 2011; Bruni 2013; Bailey & Auld 2013; US Department of Defense 2012; Tilghman 2013; Australian Minister for Defence 2012).

Sexual and gender-based violence in conflict-affected environments can also be influenced by culturally accepted ideas about what it means to be a man (manhood) and a woman (womanhood) (Fulu et al. 2013, p. 5; Baaz & Stern 2010, p. 41). For example, sexual violence against women and girls can serve as a form of psychological violence toward men (Carpenter 2006, p. 96), in which their identity as protectors and providers is attacked.<sup>61</sup> This motivation is made particularly obvious when men are forced to watch while female family members, including wives and daughters, are raped or when they are forced to rape members of their own family, as has been reported recently in Syria (UN HRC 2012a, p. 92). In the words of the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, its Causes and Consequences, ‘Sexual violence against women is meant to demonstrate victory over the men of the other group who have failed to protect their women. It is a message of castration and emasculation of the enemy group’ (UN ECOSOC 1998, para. 12).

‘... amongst cadets there was a strong culture of commodification of women, particularly as sexual objects. Female cadets were often treated as “game” after hours, rather than as respected colleagues. Female cadets were often harassed by male cadets [and] these sorts of actions were simply part of the culture at ADFA.’

Former female cadet,  
Australian Defence Force Academy  
(cited in Australian Human Rights  
Commission 2011, p. xii).



## What is being done?

- > In the Balkans, CARE, in partnership with other non-government organisations, has helped develop a **youth-led community and school-based campaign called ‘Be a Man’** aimed at helping young men consider ‘new ways of being (Balkan) men’ by challenging social, ethnic and religious norms, including those relating to sexual violence (Kaufman 2012, p. 12).
- > The Australian Human Rights Commission is carrying out a multi-phase **review of the treatment of women in the Australian Defence Force** that includes an examination of the culture and structures and their impact on women. The review has included a ‘cultural review’ of the treatment of women at the Australian Defence Force Academy (the Defence Force’s education institution), a review of the effectiveness of cultural change for improving women’s representation in the force’s senior ranks, and a follow-up review of the implementation of the recommendations (Australian Human Rights Commission 2012; 2011, pp. xi, xv).<sup>62</sup> Male leadership in the Australian Defence Force has played a crucial role in supporting the review process and in reinforcing the importance of zero tolerance for inappropriate conduct and treatment of women. This leadership was exemplified by a **YouTube video** message issued by the Australian Chief of Army following allegations in 2013 about a group of Army personnel who produced and distributed demeaning and sexualised material about women.<sup>63</sup> Parallel to this review process, Defence initiated an external review of allegations of sexual and other abuse in Defence (DLA Piper Review), to which one response was the establishment of the **Australian Defence Abuse Response Taskforce** ‘to assess and respond to individual cases of abuse in Defence’ against female and male personnel (Australian Department of Defence n.d.).
- > In partnership with UN agencies, more than 400 national non-government organisations from more than 30 countries have established **MenEngage Alliance**, a global network aimed at promoting the engagement of men and boys in gender equality and efforts to reduce gender-based violence (MenEngage).
- > The non-government organisation Women for Women International has developed the **Men’s Leadership Program** to sensitise and encourage traditional, civic and military leaders to use their position to advocate for women’s rights (Women for Women International n.d.). The program has been piloted in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq and Nigeria and involves training sessions and brainstorming working groups on topics such as women’s participation in the family and community and preventing gender-based violence.<sup>64</sup>



Sudanese football teams play football as part of campaign 'We Can End Violence Against Women', organised by African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Abu Shouk Internally Displaced Persons Camp, North Darfur, 2009. (UN Photo/Albert González Farran)

## Serving a 'specific purpose'

Today it is widely accepted that sexual violence is used to instil fear, intimidate, humiliate, punish, and demonstrate control, dominance and victory over ('enemy') communities, whether they are, for example, political opponents or members of other ethnic or religious groups (Sivakumaran 2007; Russell 2007, p. 22; Zawati 2007, pp. 33, 35). This explains why sexual violence against women is often a public spectacle, with the perpetrators forcing communities and families to watch (Sivakumaran 2007, p. 268; Gingerich & Leaning 2004). In the case of the *Prosecutor v Jean-Paul Akayesu*, a former mayor, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, noted how many Tutsi women were 'subjected to the worst public humiliation, mutilated, and raped several times, often in public, in the Bureau Communal premises or in other public places...', while others were forced to undress and perform activities naked (ICTR 1998, paras. 731, 437). Beyond these broad, overarching motivations, sexual and gender-based violence has been and continues to be used as a 'deliberate strategy' and a tool 'to serve specific purposes' (Annan 2004; UNIFEM & DPKO 2010, p. 10).

'Of those targeted, rape appeared to be used as a means to punish, terrorize, and send a message to those who supported the revolution.'

International Commission of Inquiry on Libya  
(UN HRC 2012b, p. 13)

## Ethnic cleansing and genocide

In recent decades sexual violence has been used as a form of ethnic cleansing and genocide. Among the methods are forced impregnation, intentional harm to the reproductive organs of both women and men, and creating a stigma that makes rape survivors 'un-marriageable' (Sivakumaran 2007, pp. 270–74; Russell et al. 2011, p. 2). Testimony from the war in the Balkans has clearly shown how the Serbs used rape as a tool of ethnic cleansing. The 1994 final report of the Commission of Experts on the war in the Former Yugoslavia noted, 'Survivors of some camps report that they believe they were detained for the purpose of rape' and 'Some captors also state that they are trying to impregnate the women. Pregnant women are detained until it is too late for them to obtain an abortion' (UN Security Council 1994, p. 59). The same report provided details about a woman who was detained and raped by her neighbour and told 'she would give birth to a chetnik boy who would kill Muslims when he grew up. They repeatedly said their President had ordered them to do this ...' (p. 59). In the context of the Bosnian war, male survivors have also described how Serb perpetrators used sexual violence as a means to attack and destroy the Muslim population. In the words of one male survivor of Serbian concentration camps, 'Serb torturers would beat us, step or jump on us until they tired out. They were deliberately aiming their beatings at our testicles saying "you'll never make Muslim children again".' (International Court of Justice 1993, p. 14).

The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda was the first international court to present a judgment that included rape as a crime of genocide. The 1998 judgment in the case of the *Prosecutor v Jean-Paul Akayesu* noted:

In light of all the evidence before it, the Chamber is satisfied that the acts of rape and sexual violence ... were committed solely against Tutsi women ... These rapes resulted in physical and psychological destruction of Tutsi women, their families and their communities. Sexual violence was an integral part of the process of destruction, specifically targeting Tutsi women and specifically contributing to their destruction and to the destruction of the Tutsi group as a whole. (ICTR 1998, para. 731)

Survivors and eyewitnesses of sexual attacks by Janjaweed and government forces in Darfur said rape was one means of destroying the non-Arab ethnic groups—in particular the Fur, Zaghawa and Masalit—by 'polluting' the 'tribal blood line' (Gingerich & Leaning 2004, p. 18; PHR 2006, p. 10). Communities under attack were sometimes called 'slaves' (PHR & Harvard Humanitarian Initiative 2009, p. 3), a clear demonstration of the ethnic dimension of the attacks against non-Arab groups.

## Promoting displacement

Sexual violence has also been used to forcibly displace populations internally and across borders. This has been reported for the Balkans (UN Security Council 1994), Darfur (International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur 2005; Gingerich & Leaning 2004, p. 18) and more recently in Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Libya, Mali and Syria (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2013, p. 3). The 1994 final report of the Commission of Experts on the war in the Former Yugoslavia noted, 'Many reports state that perpetrators said they were ordered to rape, or that the aim was

to ensure that the victims/survivors and their families would never want to return to the area’ (UN Security Council 1994, p. 59). The International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur reported that ‘rape and sexual violence have been used by the Janjaweed and Government soldiers (or at least with their complicity) as a deliberate strategy with a view to achieve certain objectives, including terrorizing the population, ensuring control over the movement of the IDP population [internally displaced persons] and perpetuating its displacement’ (2005, p. 94).

‘Get out, slaves!’

‘This land is for the Arabs, not the blacks!’

Overheard by survivors of an assault by  
Janjaweed and government forces on  
Terbeba, West Darfur, 2004  
(cited in PHR 2006, p. 22)

Armed groups can also use sexual violence to displace populations from areas required for drug trafficking and from areas with significant mining and agricultural wealth (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2013, p. 3). This

tactic has been used by armed groups in Colombia (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2013, p. 3). Further, Congolese armed groups have used sexual violence as a form of punishment against civilians who have prevented poaching and mineral trafficking and as a way of displacing populations in order to control resource-rich areas such as the Okapi Reserve (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2013, pp. 3, 9).

### **As a form of torture**

Sexual torture in detention—described by Wood as ‘custodial sexual violence’ (2011, p. 47)—has been widely used in conflict environments. The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia first recognised rape as a form of torture in its case against four former members of the Bosnian armed forces and their actions at the Celebici prison camp (ICTY 2013a). In its 1998 judgment the tribunal judges found Hazim Delic guilty of torture for the multiple rapes of a Bosnian Serb female, in which the purpose of at least one of the rapes ‘was to obtain information ... as it was committed in the context of interrogation’ (ICTY 1998, para 963). When handing down the judgment, the judges noted, ‘There can be no question that acts of rape may constitute torture under customary international law’ (ICTY 2013a). As in Bosnia and Herzegovina, according to reports on the conflicts in both Libya and Syria sexual violence has been used to ‘extract information’ from detainees during interrogations (UN HRC 2012b, pp. 13, 14; 2013, p. 17).

### **Political repression**

In situations of civil and political unrest, sexual violence has been used as a tool of political repression. During the post-election violence in Guinea in 2009, sexual violence was used to ‘punish women for participating in public life’ (UNIFEM & DPKO 2010, p. 10). Following the declaration of the contested results of the 2007 presidential election in Kenya, widespread sexual violence was reported (1500 cases, according to the United Nations), including rape against women and forced circumcision of men (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2012, p. 22; IRIN 2008).<sup>65</sup> Sexual violence has also been part of the ‘repertoire’ of tactics used against protestors in Egypt (UN General Assembly & Security

Council 2012, p. 21) since 2011, including as a means of scaring women away from participating in public demonstrations (Amnesty International 2013, p. 7; Tadros 2013). Further, AIDS-Free World has documented how sexual violence was ‘systematically’ used in Zimbabwe during the 2008 presidential election by members of President Robert Mugabe’s ZANU-PF party against female members of the opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change, to intimidate and punish voters (2009, pp. 10, 13).<sup>66</sup>

‘Unless you love ZANU-PF, we are going to kill you because you don’t listen. That is what we’re raping you for.’

‘You are the one involved with MDC [the Movement for Democratic Change], doing all the MDC duties, and we will rape you.’

Remarks by ZANU-PF perpetrators to victims and survivors, Zimbabwe (cited in AIDS-Free World 2009, p. 19)

## Military bonding and cohesion, entertainment and morale

Rape and other forms of sexual violence have also been used as a tool for military bonding among combatants, as part of initiation rituals, and for ‘combatant socialisation’, especially among combatant groups that rely on forced recruitment (Cohen 2011; Russell et al. 2011, p.5). The United Nations has gathered reports from a number of conflicts in which men and boys, as new recruits, have been forced to commit sexual violence against their own relatives as a means of severing their ties with their community and binding them to the group (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2010, p. 6). Research from Sierra Leone suggests that the Revolutionary United Front rebels—who almost entirely consisted of forced recruits—used gang rape for similar purposes (Cohen, cited in Wood 2011, p. 57). Additionally, sexual violence has served as a form of entertainment for male soldiers and as a means of boosting troop morale (OCHA 2008b, p. 4): the use of ‘comfort women’, forced into prostitution by the Japanese imperial army during World War II, is an example (Enloe 2000, pp. 79–89).



### What is being done?

- > Eleven of the 16 cases currently before the **International Criminal Court** involve charges for gender-based crimes (Inder et al. 2012, p. 103).<sup>67</sup> The charges include rape as a crime against humanity and as a war crime, sexual slavery as a crime against humanity and as a war crime, and ‘persecution (by means of rape and other inhumane acts) as a crime against humanity’ (Inder et al. 2012, pp. 104–5).<sup>68</sup>
- > By mid-2013, the **International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia** had issued charges of sexual violence against 78 individuals out of a total of 161 accused (ICTY 2013b). Twenty-nine individuals have been ‘convicted for their responsibility for crimes of sexual violence’ and, of these, four have been additionally convicted for ‘failing to prevent or punish the actual perpetrators of the crimes’ (ICTY 2013b).



- > In 2012 the Office of the Prosecutor of the **International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda** organised an international workshop on the ‘Prosecution of Conflict-related Sexual and Gender-based Violence Crimes’, and it is developing a ‘best practices’ manual that documents its experience of prosecuting sexual violence-related cases (ICTR 2012). These initiatives are part of a lengthy process of examination and reflection as the Tribunal prepares to complete its work by the end of 2014 (ICTR 2012). The tribunal has a ‘mixed’ record on sexual violence prosecutions and has been the subject of considerable criticism for its poor record of sexual violence-related convictions (Buss 2010, p. 61), so this process will allow other national and international war crimes institutions to benefit from the lessons of the Rwandan Tribunal (Buss 2010, p. 64; ICTR 2012).

## ‘Less strategic’ and ‘more complex’

Although strategic and tactical examples of sexual violence have received more attention, it is increasingly understood that such violence is often ‘much less strategic and far more complex’ (Baaz & Stern 2010, p. 16). Beliefs about the subordinate status of women and about manhood can help explain the perpetration of sexual and gender-based violence (these are explored separately in p. 30.) But many other factors cause and motivate individuals to commit sexual violence. It can be for sexual gratification, revenge (for supporting opposing groups or being related to a member of the opposing group) or conformity with the behaviour of one’s military unit (Cohen et al. 2013, p. 10; UN General Assembly & Security Council 2013, p. 19). It can be linked to weak legal and security institutions (for example, looting), a culture of impunity, and a breakdown in family and community norms and support structures (Security Council Report 2013, p. 34; UN General Assembly & Security Council 2012, p. 5; Baaz & Stern 2010, p. 33).

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo sexual violence has been attributed in part to poor relations between armed forces and the civilian population (Baaz & Stern 2010, pp. 23–24, 29, 33; Jones & Smith 2012). In the context of the 2012 clashes between the Congolese armed forces and the M23 rebel movement, the national army was described as ‘visibly drunk, angry, paranoid and intent on demanding money and cigarettes from civilians’, and civilians accused the soldiers of rape and looting (Jones & Smith 2012). Sexual violence can also be linked to low morale as well as alcohol and drug abuse among military forces.<sup>69</sup> In the International Criminal Court trial of Jean-Pierre Bemba Gombo, who commanded the Movement for the Liberation of Congo in the Central African Republic, one witness recently spoke of how rebels raped ‘after abusing drugs’ (Open Society Justice Initiative 2013).

‘Wartime rape is often not an intentional strategy of war; it is more frequently tolerated than ordered.’

(Cohen et al. 2013, p. 1)

Sexual violence can also result from an individual’s own ‘victimisation history’, including struggles with PTSD and other forms of conflict-related trauma (Fulu et al. 2013, p. 5). This is common among demobilised combatants (Baaz & Stern 2010, pp. 43, 46; Badkhen 2012; IRC 2012a, p. 6) as well as



among civilians who have been directly exposed to violence, including sexual violence (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2012, p. 18; Kaufman 2012, p. 8). Sexual violence in Liberia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example, is often attributed to former combatants, including former child soldiers, who have been ‘brutalised by the conflict’ (UNIFEM & DPKO 2010, p. 12; UN General Assembly & Security Council 2010, p. 6) and have not sought or received appropriate support (Baaz & Stern 2010, pp. 43, 46).<sup>70</sup> In the words of one report on sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the trauma experienced by combatants and others tends to make them ‘more prone—in the short term and when proper countermeasures are lacking—to perpetrate new violent acts’ (Baaz & Stern 2010, p. 46).



### What is being done?

- > Military commanders in the Congolese national army have disseminated **direct orders not to rape** (Baaz & Stern 2010, p. 49).
- > In 2013 armed groups in the Central African Republic signed a **ceasefire agreement and a declaration of principles** that included provisions calling for the immediate cessation of sexual violence and made sexual violence a prohibited act and therefore a ‘condition of the ceasefire agreement’ (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2013, p. 5; Security Council Report 2013, p. 8).
- > In Liberia a battalion of the UN peacekeeping operation, UNMIL, established the ‘Agro Farm Projects’ which focused on **involving young men**—including demobilised combatants and unemployed youth—**in productive activities** so that they are less susceptible to recruitment into armed groups and criminal networks. UNMIL has also organised other activities targeting especially young men, including sporting events and vocational training (UNIFEM & DPKO 2010, p. 28). The military component of the UN peacekeeping mission in Haiti, MINUSTAH, participated in repairing a soccer field ‘to provide young men with a recreational outlet’ (UNIFEM & DPKO 2010, p. 30).
- > In Colombia the security forces have adopted a **zero-tolerance policy and codes of conduct** to prevent sexual violence and other human rights violations (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2013, p. 7). The Minister of the Interior in the Government of Côte d’Ivoire has committed to developing similar codes of conduct (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2013, p. 8).
- > The UN Security Council added sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Resolution 1807) and in Somalia (Resolution 2002) as a **criterion for targeted sanctions** (Security Council Report 2013, pp. 39–40).

# Gaps and weaknesses in effectively preventing and responding to conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence

Although some experts are concerned about ‘hyper-attention’ being given to conflict-related sexual violence (Engle 2012; Otto 2012; Baaz & Stern 2010), many others argue that still more attention is needed, supported by additional funding, to redress gaps and weaknesses in existing prevention and response efforts. A number of these gaps and weaknesses are examined here.

## Accountability and justice

In recent years important progress has been made at the national and international levels toward accountability and justice for survivors of sexual violence. In 2011, for example, the Congolese courts, including mobile courts, convicted 193 members of the National Army and Congolese National Police Force—among them high-ranking commanders—of sexual violence-related crimes (UNDP 2011, pp. 21, 78). Another example of progress is the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative under the leadership of the UK Government. Unfortunately, however, widespread impunity persists in most conflict-affected countries for perpetrators of sexual violence, and access to justice for survivors remains limited.<sup>71</sup> Importantly, impunity is rife in peacetime too: a recent UN multi-country study of the Asia-Pacific region found that 72–97 per cent of male perpetrators of rape faced no legal consequences in most sites surveyed (Fulu et al. 2013, p. 3).

Impunity and lack of justice take many different forms. A recent UN report noted that alleged or convicted rapists in Afghanistan who are commanders or members of armed groups or gangs can use their influence and networks to protect themselves from arrest and prosecution (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2013, p. 4). The same report observed that impunity in Darfur is a ‘major challenge’ when the cases involve government soldiers or police personnel (p. 17). As of 2008, of a total of 48 trials and guilty pleas and 15 individuals facing sexual violence-related charges, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda had found only five individuals guilty of rape-related charges (Buss 2010, p. 63). In Bosnia and Herzegovina fewer than 40 rape cases have been prosecuted since the war ended 17 years ago (Zuvela 2012). In the case of Côte d’Ivoire in 2009–10, 630 cases of sexual violence were reported, 19 alleged perpetrators were arrested, and the conviction rate was less than 1 per cent (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2010, p. 7). Instead of facing disciplinary action, alleged perpetrators have been transferred to other duty stations, promoted, and given lucrative postings, including peacekeeping deployments (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2012, p. 18; 2013, pp. 21, 17). In the case of male survivors of sexual violence, legal redress can be impossible where legal definitions of rape exclude males (see p. 17). In Liberia and

‘Today it is still largely “cost-free” to rape a woman, child or man in conflict.’

Zainab Bangura, UN Secretary-General’s  
Special Representative on Sexual Violence  
in Conflict (Bangura 2013, p. 3)

Bosnia and Herzegovina, survivors of sexual violence continue to live in the same communities as their former rapists (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2012, p. 18; Amnesty International 2009, p. 3).

Reparations are a crucial element of justice for survivors. They include restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction, and guarantees of non-repetition (UN General Assembly 2006, p. 7).<sup>72</sup> In the words of a report by the UN Secretary-General, ‘Reparations are arguably the most victim-centred justice mechanism available and the most significant means of making a difference in the lives of victims’ (UN Security Council 2011, p. 8). Despite the importance of reparations, though, many reparations programs, including those that would benefit survivors of sexual violence, ‘... have remained, to this day, largely unimplemented’ (Rubio-Marín 2012, p. 72). As of 2012 there have been no convictions or reparations in relation to the high rates of sexual violence that took place in Kosovo (UNFPA & MHRR 2012, p. 7). In Bosnia and Herzegovina, survivors are often able to receive only a disability pension, rather than reparations, and according to Amnesty International, the social benefits available to them are significantly less than for war veterans (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2012, p. 20; Amnesty International 2009, p. 41). In the Serb Republic, because of a law that fails to recognise psychological trauma, sexual violence survivors must prove ‘damage to at least 60 percent of their body as civilian victims of war’ if they want to receive reparations (Zuvela 2012; Amnesty International 2009, pp. 41–42). In the Democratic Republic of the Congo a law drafted in 2009 to establish a reparation fund is yet to be introduced to parliament (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2013, p. 11). Finally, according to a 2011 report, few child survivors have benefited from reparations programs (UN Security Council 2011, p. 8).

Impunity for conflict-related sexual violence results from a range of factors. Under-reporting by survivors is one factor (see p. 45). But under-reporting is not only a cause of impunity: it is also a consequence of impunity when survivors consider it futile to report abuse (Csáky 2008, pp. 1, 15). Impunity is also facilitated by the realities of domestic judicial systems and processes in many conflict-affected countries. Domestic justice systems in conflict and post-conflict environments are often weak, under-resourced and barely functioning and have ‘limited reach’ away from cities (IRC 2012b, p. 13). Investigations and prosecutions of sexual violence commonly move slowly because of a lack of capacity, expertise or resources or a lack of will, and all these factors can result in a backlog of cases—as observed in Colombia and Côte d’Ivoire (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2013, pp. 7, 8, 26; 2012, p. 5). Magistrates, prosecutors and police often lack understanding and relevant

In Côte d’Ivoire, victims and survivors are charged US\$100 for a medical certificate, which is required in rape cases.

(UN General Assembly & Security Council 2013, p. 8).

capacity for supporting and protecting survivors who agree to be witnesses, both during and after trials (Amnesty International 2009). They also have limited understanding of gender-related matters such as sexual violence. Medical and legal fees can also prevent survivors from reporting and pursuing a case of sexual violence.

In Somalia, for example, police and court officials require a payment to file and process cases (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2013, pp. 8, 14; IRC 2012b, p. 13). In the Democratic Republic of the Congo survivors who are trying to gain access to

reparations must not only navigate a labyrinthine judicial system with complex paperwork but also pay numerous fees and charges, including 6 per cent of the total reparation (Aho et al. 2013, p. 6).

With weak formal justice systems, communities often rely on and turn to traditional justice systems, customary law and religious law such as Sharia to handle cases of sexual violence. In Sierra Leone, for example, 70 per cent of the population uses customary law (UNDP 2011, p. 96). Such systems and laws often do not give priority to the individual rights of survivors and can exacerbate the vulnerability of survivors to further violations, including further sexual violence. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo pursuing a rape case through a traditional justice system can result in a financial settlement payable to the survivors' families, rather than any justice for the survivors themselves (Selimovic et al. 2012, p. 47). Additionally, it is common practice in many countries for survivors to be forced to marry the perpetrator or a relative of the perpetrator (McDaniel 2013; UN General Assembly & Security Council 2013, pp. 3, 14).



### What is being done?

- > In 2013 the UK Government established a permanent **multidisciplinary team of experts** to support the United Nations and civil society in investigating allegations of sexual violence in conflict settings (UK Stabilisation Unit). The team includes police, forensic experts, doctors, psychologists, lawyers, and experts in the subject of gender-based violence (Hague 2012; Borger 2012).<sup>73</sup>
- > In 2009 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo a **gender-based mobile court system** was established with support from UN Women, the UN Development Programme and other partners (UNDP 2011, p. 21). According to UN Women, from 2009 to 2012 the gender mobile court heard 382 cases, resulting in 204 convictions of rape (Xinhua 2013).
- > National governments have pursued justice and accountability through the introduction and amendment of **national legislation**: in Libya national legislation has been drafted that defines rape in conflict as a war crime and proposes to increase the sentencing for convicted rapists and provide compensation to survivors (Hooper 2013); in 2012 Sierra Leone passed the Sexual Offences Law, which mandates 'stiff minimum sentences for perpetrators of sexual violence' (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2013, p. 21); in 2006 the Democratic Republic of the Congo introduced legislation that defined rape (including female and male victims) and criminalised it (Keralis 2010, p. 13; Manjoo & McRaith 2011, p. 26); and Liberia amended its existing 'rape law' in 2005 to increase the sentencing for convicted rapists and expand the definition of rape to account for the use of foreign objects and the perpetration of gang rape (National Transitional Government of the Republic of Liberia 2005; Manjoo & McRaith 2011, p. 30; UN General Assembly & Security Council 2012, p. 19).<sup>74</sup>
- > In Liberia the 2008 Sexual Offences Act established Criminal Court E, a **national court with 'dedicated competence' to handle cases of sexual violence** (UN General

Assembly & Security Council 2010, p. 7; p. 19). It began hearing cases in 2009 (Manjoo & McRaith 2011, p. 30).<sup>75</sup>

- In a 2011 declaration, member states of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (of Africa) committed to directing their relevant ministries to ‘establish and strengthen special courts, sessions and procedures’ in order to **fast-track cases** of sexual and gender-based violence in the police and judiciary (ICGLR 2011, p. 4).



Members of Women in Black, a peace and justice organization, attend a memorial service, held every year in Srebrenica, Bosnia-Herzegovina, July 2011. (Julia Dowling. The Advocacy Project)

## Support services for survivors

Female and male survivors require prompt, wide-ranging and confidential services, including medical and psychosocial support, legal assistance, and social reintegration and rehabilitation services. Although the United Nations has reported progress in efforts to support survivors (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2013, p. 10), overall the lack of support services remains a ‘serious weakness’, especially in rural and remote areas (UN Security Council 2012, p. 15; UN General Assembly & Security Council 2013, p. 12; Amnesty International 2009, p. 3). A 2011 report by Médecins Sans Frontières highlighted how the medical, and especially psychological, needs of survivors of family and sexual violence in Papua New Guinea continued to be largely unmet by health facilities, despite some recent progress (MSF 2011). In West Africa the International Rescue Committee has noted that basic services are ‘frequently lacking’ (IRC 2012b, p. 9). Sierra Leone, for example, has fewer than 50

licensed social workers (IRC 2012b, p. 21). In Afghanistan, government, non-government and privately run shelters operate for women fleeing abuse and at risk of honour killings, but they do not exist at all in the more conservative southern part of the country (Human Rights Watch 2012b, pp. 4, 6, 12). The recent G8 Declaration on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict noted that child survivors are often excluded from ‘adult-centric’ services and support (UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office 2013a, p. 3).

Where support services and structures do exist, survivors often face a variety of obstacles in obtaining help. Conflict and insecurity can impede their access to medical treatment; this has been the case in Mali, for example, where armed men have seized control of hospitals (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2013, pp. 10, 13). When free treatment and services are unavailable, survivors can be prevented from gaining access to support if they are unable to pay the associated fees (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2013, pp. 10, 13). A recent report by the International Rescue Committee noted that in Sierra Leone survivors are charged for health care even where legislation mandates free medical care (IRC 2012b, p. 21). When services and support are unavailable or inadequate, the consequences can be dire—including heightened vulnerability to further violence and injury (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2013, p. 4).



### What is being done?

- The Congolese Government is working to establish **minimum standards of quality of care** for survivors of sexual violence in the areas of medical, psychosocial and legal support and socio-economic reintegration (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2013, p. 10).
- In Somalia the **Somaliland Women’s Law Association**, supported by the UN Development Programme, provides assistance to women survivors (and defendants) to help them use the national legal system ‘to protect their rights and seek redress for harm’ (UNDP 2011, p. 45).
- The Rome Statute, which established the International Criminal Court, also established the **Trust Fund for Victims**. The Trust Fund is mandated to implement ‘reparations ordered by the Court’ and to provide integrated physical and psychological and/or material assistance to survivors and their families (Trust Fund for Victims 2013, p. 1). It currently has projects in northern Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, supporting 110,000 survivors (Trust Fund for Victims 2013, p. 1).
- In 2007 a **UN-wide strategy on assistance to victims** of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse was adopted. It elaborated the assistance and support that should be given to complainants and survivors, including children born of sexual exploitation and abuse—notably medical care, legal services, psychosocial support and material care ‘such as food, clothing, emergency and safe shelter’, as well as support to pursue paternity and child support claims (UN General Assembly 2008, pp. 3–4). In 2009 **inter-agency**



**guidance** was produced on 'Establishing Country-based Mechanisms for Assisting Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by UN/NGO/IGO Staff and Related Personnel' (IASC Task Force 2013c, p. 31).

- In 2004 Foundation RamaLevina, a Congolese non-government organisation, launched a **mobile health program** in order to reach vulnerable sexual violence survivors in rural and remote areas (Kohli et al. 2012).



Launch of G8 Declaration on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict with UK Foreign Secretary William Hague, Special Representative of the UN Secretary General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Zainab Hawa Bangura and Special Envoy of UN High Commissioner for Refugees Angelina Jolie, April 2013. (Foreign and Commonwealth Office)

## Knowledge and data

Despite the prevalence of sexual violence in conflict, 'much remains unknown' about the magnitude, patterns and causes of such violence (Cohen et al. 2013, p. 1). This is due in large part to the lack of robust cross-national data. According to one recent analysis, 'the evidence base remains scant' (Rowley et al. 2012, p. 1). Importantly, this lack of data is linked to a larger 'data gap' on gender issues more generally (Clinton 2012).<sup>76</sup> Many obstacles can hinder efforts to capture data on sexual violence, among them widespread under-reporting and the limitations of data collection in insecure environments, often characterised by population movements and service disruptions (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2010, p. 11; 2013, p. 18; Ward 2005, p. 178).



Once collected, the information itself presents challenges. Some experts argue that the data that do exist (including the figures used in this paper) are ‘estimates at best’ (Rowley et al. 2012, p. 2), ‘unreliable’ (Peterman et al. 2011, p. 1) and ‘highly educated guesses’ (Cohen et al. 2013, p. 11). Using the existing data to measure the magnitude of sexual violence and better understand its perpetration is also made difficult by the fact that researchers use varying definitions of sexual violence, sample from different population groups, and rely on different data collection methodologies (Wood 2006, p. 318; Cohen et al. 2013, p. 11; Rowley et al. 2012, p. 2). The International Commission of Inquiry on Libya noted, ‘The prevailing culture of silence, the lack of reliable statistics, the evident use of torture to extract confessions, and the political sensitivity of the issue combine to make this issue the most difficult one for the Commission to investigate’ (UN HRC 2012b, p. 14). In order to avoid further endangering and (re)traumatising survivors, effective data collection efforts must adopt a survivor-centred approach, and personnel must be appropriately experienced, trained and equipped to carry out ethical and safe research, documentation and monitoring (Hersh 2013, p. 2; WHO 2007).

Sexual violence is under-reported for a variety of reasons, including stigma, shame, fear of retaliation by the perpetrator/s (especially if armed), fear of further violence (such as honour killings), fear of losing material assistance if the perpetrator is a peacekeeper or aid worker, a lack of support and victim-oriented services, ignorance about one’s rights and how to report incidents, a lack of faith and trust in the judicial system and wider response structures, as well as the risks for witnesses and journalists who report the crimes, and first-responders such as humanitarian workers.

(drawn from IAWG 1999, p. 36; UN General Assembly & Security Council 2013, p. 4; Csáky 2008, p. 1; Martin 2005, p. iii).

In view of the lack of basic data, experts disagree about whether rates of sexual violence have changed (Hoover Green et al. 2012). The 2012 Human Security Report argued that levels of sexual violence worldwide are probably declining rather than increasing (HSRP 2012, p. 2). Others point to evidence of an increasing incidence of sexual violence in conflicts such as that in Syria and argue that, overall, ‘We do not have enough data to determine whether the incidence of wartime rape is increasing, decreasing, or holding steady’ (Cohen et al. 2013, p. 8). There is also disagreement about whether it is even important to measure the extent of sexual violence, some arguing that the resources would be better spent on other research priorities (Rowley et al. 2012, p. 2).



### What is being done?

- In **Resolution 1960 (2010)** the UN Security Council highlighted the need for UN actors, national institutions, service providers, civil society organisations and women’s groups to ‘enhance data collection and analysis of incidents, trends, and patterns of rape and other forms of sexual violence’ (UN Security Council 2010). The resolution established the **monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements** the UN is in the process of

rolling out. The arrangements are intended to ensure 'systematic gathering of timely and accurate information on conflict-related sexual violence' (Security Council Report 2013, p. 10).

- The US-based Women's Media Center launched the Women Under Siege project to document and raise awareness about sexualised violence as a tool of war. The project includes a **live crowdsourced map of rape in Syria**; it compiles reports submitted by survivors, witnesses and first-responders via email, Twitter (#RapeinSyria) or directly to the website (Women's Media Center; Wolfe & Mullaly 2012).<sup>77</sup>
- In collaboration with the Sexual Violence Research Initiative, the World Health Organization consulted with UN, NGO and academic experts to identify **priority research themes and questions for research** on conflict-related sexual violence. This initiative is intended to 'advance the field in a more systematic way, and ensure that research efforts make the best use of limited resources' (Rowley et al. 2012, p. 1).

## Conclusion

Sexual and gender-based violence is widespread in conflict and post-conflict environments and affects women, men, girls and boys. The complexity of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence is being increasingly acknowledged in recent research and analysis. This trend reflects an important move away from simplified narratives that have portrayed sexual violence as predominantly a tactic of war, one whose use is increasing, and that is perpetrated most often by uniformed men against women. These narratives have some truth, but they do not tell the complete story. There is, in fact, considerable variation and complexity in the perpetration of sexual violence between and within conflicts, and this points to the need for a more inclusive and greater understanding of conflict-related sexual violence that acknowledges, for example, male survivors, domestic violence—less newsworthy than combatant-perpetrated sexual violence but often much more common—and the complex factors that motivate male and female perpetrators to commit sexual and gender-based violence.

The field of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence has evolved to respond to this type of violence, and it is active and constantly expanding. New initiatives and efforts are being developed and implemented regularly; some of them are canvassed in this paper. There are also many coming initiatives. Among these are an international protocol on the investigation and documentation of sexual violence in conflict (UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office 2013a, p. 3); a sexual and gender-based violence regional training facility expected to be operational in Kampala, Uganda, by 2014, to train judicial officers, police, social workers, medical officers and other personnel in managing cases of sexual and gender-based violence (African Union 2013, p. 7; ICGLR 2006, p. 7; ICGLR 2011, p. 5); a ‘Best Practices Manual on the Investigation and Prosecution of Sexual Violence’ being developed by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda Office of the Prosecutor (Jallow 2013, p. 4); and plans by the UK Government to host a major conference on conflict-related sexual violence in London in 2014 (UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office 2013b).

The field is populated by civilian, police and military personnel, non-government organisations, UN humanitarian organisations, UN peacekeeping operations, regional organisations, policy makers, practitioners, and scholars working at the local, national, regional and global levels. It also includes female and male survivors who mobilise to protect themselves and to respond to the violence directed at them. Important progress has been made to prevent and respond to conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence, but major gaps and weaknesses remain—especially in the areas of justice and accountability, support services for survivors and robust data.

For those who are new to the subject of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence, the wealth of information, activity and debate that characterises the field can be daunting. This paper provides an introduction to a complex and active field. As well, the report aims to encourage readers to stay well informed about the subject. After all, in order to effectively contribute to prevention and response efforts it is first necessary to have a sound understanding of patterns of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence and the factors that contribute to such violence as it occurs in conflict-affected environments.

## Appendix A – Terminology

A number of terms are commonly used to refer to acts of sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict settings. Among them are ‘sexual violence’, ‘sexual and gender-based violence’, ‘gender-based violence’, ‘conflict-related sexual violence’, ‘violence against women’, ‘sexual and reproductive violence’, and sometimes ‘sexual exploitation and abuse’. Despite much overlap between the terms, their meanings and application can differ in important ways. While the term ‘sexual and gender-based violence’ is used in this paper, a few additional terms are explored here.

### Sexual violence

Under international law, the main sources for defining sexual violence are the Elements of Crimes of the International Criminal Court and the statutes and case law of the International Tribunals for the Former Yugoslavia and Rwanda and the Special Court for Sierra Leone (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2010, p. 2). On the basis of these sources, sexual violence is deemed to encompass the following:

- > rape
- > sexual slavery
- > enforced prostitution
- > forced pregnancy
- > enforced sterilisation
- > ‘any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity’ (ICC 2002, Article 7).

Depending on the type, sexual violence can constitute a war crime, a crime against humanity (including an act of torture) or a constituent act of genocide (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2010, p. 2).

Although the foregoing forms of violence can be gender based, this definition of sexual violence rests on a recognition that gender alone is an ‘insufficient explanatory tool’ and this form of wartime violence is often linked to other crimes such as indiscriminate killing, forced displacement and looting (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2010, p. 3).

The International Criminal Court’s Elements of Crimes offers a detailed definition of sexual violence that also covers situations in which victims are forced to perpetrate acts of sexual violence themselves, such as forced incest. This is a frequently cited experience for male survivors and one that is often missing from more general definitions:

The perpetrator committed an act of a sexual nature against one or more persons or caused such person or persons to engage in an act of a sexual nature by force, or by threat of force or coercion, such as that caused by fear of violence, duress, detention, psychological oppression or

abuse of power, against such person or persons or another person, or by taking advantage of a coercive environment or such person's or persons' incapacity to give genuine consent (ICC 2011, p. 10).

## Conflict-related sexual violence

As the United Nation's work on sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict settings has accelerated in the past decade, and especially since 2008, the term 'conflict-related sexual violence' has come to the fore. The agreed UN working definition is 'incidents or 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 or children'. To be considered 'conflict-related sexual violence', these 'incidents or patterns occur in conflict or post-conflict settings or other situations ...' and 'also have a direct or indirect nexus with the conflict or political strife itself ...' (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2012, p. 2).

## Gender-based violence

The term 'gender-based violence' draws attention to the fact that this form of violence is perpetrated on the basis of 'socially ascribed (gender) differences between males and females' or sex (IASC 2005, p. 7; UNHCR 2003, p. 10). Noting that women and girls are disproportionately the survivors of gender-based violence, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee has explained that this form of violence highlights 'the relationship between females' subordinate status in society and their increased vulnerability to violence' (IASC 2005, p. 7).<sup>78</sup>

## Rape

There is no commonly accepted definition of 'rape' in international law (ICTR 1998, para. 686). For the purposes of its 1998 judgment in the case of the *Prosecutor v Jean-Paul Akayesu*, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda provided some useful reflections on rape as well as a definition:

The Tribunal notes that while rape has been historically defined in national jurisdictions as non-consensual sexual intercourse, variations on the form of rape may include acts which involve the insertion of objects and/or the use of bodily orifices not considered to be intrinsically sexual ... The Tribunal considers that rape is a form of aggression and that the central elements of the crime of rape cannot be captured in a mechanical description of objects and body parts ... The Tribunal defines rape as a physical invasion of a sexual nature, committed on a person under circumstances which are coercive. (ICTR 1998, paras 686–88).

## Sexual exploitation and sexual abuse

The term 'SGBV', or sexual and gender-based violence, is sometimes used interchangeably with 'SEA', or 'sexual exploitation and sexual abuse'. While 'sexual and gender-based violence' includes acts of sexual exploitation and abuse, the term 'SEA' specifically refers to acts of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse committed by UN and other international personnel, including NGO personnel, against members of the local beneficiary population. The UN Secretary-General's Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse' defines the two types of abuse as follows:

- Sexual exploitation 'means any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another'.
- Sexual abuse 'means the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions' (UN Secretariat 2003, p. 1).

## Appendix B – Practical tools

Following is a selection of practical tools developed by non-government organisations, UN bodies and other organisations that focus explicitly on sexual and gender-based violence and provide detailed guidance on and tips for responding to sexual and gender-based violence on the ground in conflict settings.<sup>79</sup>

### Non-government organisations

- International Rescue Committee, 'Caring for Child Survivors of Sexual Abuse: Guidelines for Health and Psychosocial Service Providers in Humanitarian Settings' (2012)
- Keeping Children Safe (network of NGOs), 'Keeping Children Safe: A Toolkit for Child Protection' (2011)
- Norwegian Refugee Council, 'Camp Management Toolkit' (2004)
- Reproductive Health Response in Crises Consortium, 'Gender-Based Violence Tools Manual (2004)
- WITNESS, 'Conducting Safe, Effective and Ethical Interviews with Survivors of Sexual and Gender-based Violence', WITNESS Video for Change how-to series

### United Nations

- UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), 'Working with Men and Boy Survivors of Sexual and Gender-based Violence in Forced Displacement', Need to Know Guidance #4 (2012)
- UN Department of Political Affairs, 'Guidance for Mediators: Addressing Conflict-Related Sexual Violence in Ceasefire and Peace Agreements' (2012)
- UN Population Fund, 'Managing Gender-Based Violence Programs in Emergencies', free e-learning course and companion guide, <http://www.unfpa.org/public/home/publications/pid/10495> (2012)
- Global Protection Cluster, 'Handbook for Coordinating Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings (2010)
- UNHCR, 'The Heightened Risk Identification Tool', 2nd edition (2010)
- UN Fund for Women, DPKO & UN Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict, 'Addressing Conflict-related Sexual Violence: an analytical inventory of peacekeeping practice' (2010)
- UNHCR, 'UNHCR Handbook for the Protection of Women and Girls (2008)
- World Health Organization, 'WHO Ethical and Safety Recommendations for Researching, Documenting and Monitoring Sexual Violence in Emergencies' (2007)



- International Organization for Migration, 'The IOM Handbook on Direct Assistance for Victims of Trafficking (2007)
- UNHCR, 'UNHCR Standard Operating Procedures for Prevention of and Response to SGBV' (2006)
- IASC, 'IASC Guidelines for Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings: Focusing on Prevention of and Response to Sexual Violence in Emergencies' (2005) (intended to be used alongside above IASC handbook)
- UNHCR, 'Sexual and Gender-based Violence against Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons – Guidelines for Prevention and Response' (2003)
- IASC, 'Plan of Action on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Humanitarian Crises; (2002)
- UNHCR, 'Manager's Quick Guide: 10 minimum steps to prevent and respond to SGBV'

## Other organisations

- Child Protection Working Group, 'Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action' (2012)
- InterAction, e-learning tools on sexual exploitation and abuse and SEA-related training curricula, <http://www.interaction.org/work/sea>
- Global Protection Cluster – Gender-based Violence Area of Responsibility Working Group, 'Handbook for Coordinating Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings' (2010)
- The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Task Force on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) by Our Own Staff, 'Tools', <http://www.pseataaskforce.org/en/tools>
- Inter-Agency Standing Committee Task Force on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) by Our Own Staff, 'To Serve with Pride: Zero Tolerance for Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, 20-minute film, <http://www.pseataaskforce.org>
- The Inter-Agency Standing Committee Task Force on Safe Access to Firewood and Alternative Energy in Humanitarian Settings (IASC Task Force SAFE), 'Matrix on Agency Roles and Responsibilities for Ensuring a Coordinated Multi-Sectoral Fuel Strategy in Humanitarian Settings' (2009) and 'Decision Tree Diagrams on Factors Affecting Choice of Fuel Strategy in Humanitarian Settings' (2009)

## Endnotes

1. Terminology on ‘victim’ and ‘survivor’ varies in the field of sexual and gender-based violence. Some sources use ‘victim’, others use ‘survivor’ or a combination of the two to identify those who have experienced sexual and gender-based violence. For the most part, this paper uses ‘survivor’ to emphasise the agency of those who have experienced such violence. That said, usage of the terms varies according to the context.
2. As of December 2013, the Australian National Action Plan is one of 43 national action plans that have been developed to contribute to the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security (2000). In a Presidential Statement in 2004, the UN Security Council encouraged UN member states to develop national action plans (UN Security Council 2004, p. 3). The Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom PeaceWomen Project monitors national implementation on its website and houses all 43 NAPs. See <http://peacewomen.org/naps>
3. In particular, the Australian Civil-Military Centre is tasked to ‘Develop guidelines for the protection of civilians, including women and girls’ (1.2) and ‘Incorporate the protection of the rights of women and girls in bilateral and multilateral discussions on the protection of civilians in conflict and post-conflict situations, particularly with regard to Gender Based Violence’ (Australian Government 2012, p. 4.10).
4. Men and boys can be particularly vulnerable to sex-selective killing, as was seen during the Rwandan genocide and the war in the Balkans. See also note 60.
5. The University of Toronto International Human Rights Program hosted a conference in February 2013 on ‘Sexual Violence in the Recent Conflicts in Libya & Syria: Challenges to Protecting Victims & Protecting Accountability’. The program, background paper and recommendations, as well as links to interviews with panelists, are available at <http://ihrp.law.utoronto.ca/events/sexual-violence-recent-conflicts-libya-syria>
6. The M23 rebel movement was formed in 2012 following a mutiny by former rebels from the National Congress for the Defense of the People (CNDP) who had integrated into the Congolese armed forces—see Human Rights Watch (2013) for more information.
7. The UN Security Council recognised the relevance of sexual violence to its work in the following way: ‘The Security Council ... 1. Stresses that sexual violence, when used or commissioned as a tactic of war in order to deliberately target civilians or as a part of a widespread or systematic attack against civilian populations, can significantly exacerbate situations of armed conflict and may impede the restoration of international peace and security, affirms in this regard that effective steps to prevent and respond to such acts of sexual violence can significantly contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security, and expresses its readiness, when considering situations on the agenda of the Council, to, where necessary, adopt appropriate steps to address widespread or systematic sexual violence’ (UN Security Council 2008a, p. 1).

8. This international agenda began with the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in 2000, which focused on myriad issues relating to women's participation and protection. The resolutions that followed and built on Resolution 1325—Resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), and most recently 2106 (2013)—became increasingly narrow in focus, dealing with sexual violence almost exclusively (with the exception of Resolution 1889). Shteir (2013) summarises these resolutions in Appendix B of that document.
9. A very detailed and disturbing account of female perpetrators of violence can be found in *Rwanda—not so innocent: when women become killers* (African Rights 1995).
10. Based on this argument, the sexual violence-focused resolutions of the Security Council are also known by some as the 'victimisation' resolutions (Engle 2012).
11. The UN Secretary-General's reports on sexual violence in conflict (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2013, 2012, 2010) and the 2010 UN publication *Addressing Conflict-related Sexual Violence: an analytical inventory of peacekeeping practice* (UNIFEM & DPKO 2010) are useful sources for learning about concrete UN prevention and response initiatives.
12. The issue has also been receiving considerable mainstream attention, a recent *Vanity Fair* article about rape in Syria being an example (Di Giovanni 2013).
13. The effectiveness of these efforts is not discussed in this paper. Recent analysis has pointed to very limited evaluation of existing prevention and response programs (Rowley et al. 2012, p. 4). One exception is Spangaro et al. (2013), who provide a review of the impact of initiatives to reduce the risks and incidence of conflict-related sexual violence. They argue that there is limited implementation of initiatives focused on reducing the risks and incidence of sexual violence in armed conflict (p. 10). An international survey on priority themes for research on conflict-related sexual violence identified the scope and effectiveness of prevention programs and response programs as the top two themes (Rowley et al. 2012, p. 5).
14. The Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General has eight priority countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Central African Republic, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, South Sudan and Sudan (Security Council Report 2013, p. 8).
15. According to the Australian Human Rights Commission, sexual harassment is defined as 'any unwanted or unwelcome sexual behaviour, which makes a person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated' (n.d.).
16. UN Action is a network of 13 UN entities chaired by the SRSG on Sexual Violence in Conflict and dedicated to ending sexual violence in conflict through a focus on coordination.
17. Women and girls are also disproportionately vulnerable to sexual violence in contexts of natural disasters (see Shteir 2013).
18. According to the UN Refugee Agency, 'Refugee women are affected more than any other women's population group in the world' by violence against women (UNHCR 2008b).

19. Data from past conflicts include almost half (49 per cent) of a random sampling of 205 women and girls in Liberia reporting personally experiencing 'at least one act of physical or sexual violence by a combatant' (Swiss et al., cited in Kaufman 2012, p. 4); approximately 250,000 women and girls being victims of rape and other forms of sexual violence during the conflict in Sierra Leone (UN General Assembly & Security Council 2012, p. 20); at least 250,000 women and girls being raped during the Rwandan genocide (International Panel of Eminent Personalities to Investigate the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda and Surrounding Events, cited in Rehn & Sirleaf 2002, p. 9); between 20,000 and 50,000 women being raped during the war in the Balkans (Amnesty International 2009, p. 5); approximately 20,000 being raped during the fighting in Kosovo (Rehn & Sirleaf 2002, p. 16); and one in four women reporting sexual violence during the 1999 crisis in Timor Leste, compared with one in eight after the crisis (Hynes et al. 2004, cited in UNIFEM & DPKO 2010, p. 14).
20. For example, of 297 rape survivors treated by Médecins Sans Frontières in West Darfur between October 2004 and February 2005, 82 per cent had been attacked while 'pursuing their ordinary daily activities' (MSF 2005, p. 3).
21. In a discussion with Burundian and Congolese refugees in camps in Tanzania, a suggestion that men might participate in firewood collection as a means to protect women and girls from sexual violence was 'loudly denounced' on cultural grounds, one male respondent stating that 'he would rather have his own wife raped by a stranger whilst collecting firewood than suffer the degradation and shame of collecting the firewood himself' (UNHCR 1998, p. 16).
22. Similar conditions are regularly reported in shelters and camps established for survivors of natural disasters (see Shteir 2013).
23. Boys and young men are also victims of sexual assault and rape in camps, including in schools in exchange for grades or school materials (UNHCR & Centre for Refugee Research 2011, p. 16).
24. McKay and Mazurana conducted a very detailed study of girls in fighting forces, with case studies in Northern Uganda, Sierra Leone and Mozambique but with global scope as well. The study provides a breakdown of the types of roles girls assume in fighting forces (2004, p. 24).
25. Refugees International has published an analysis of some of the challenges in establishing and deploying UN women's protection advisers (Hersh 2013).
26. Male sexual violence has been reported in Afghanistan, Algeria, Burundi, Chechnya, Congo-Brazzaville, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, East Timor, Egypt, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Iraq, Israel and Palestine, Kenya, Liberia, Libya, Malaysia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syria, Turkey, Uganda, US facilities abroad, Uzbekistan, Yemen, the Former Yugoslavia, and Zimbabwe (drawn from OCHA 2008a, p. 1; Sivakumaran 2007, pp. 257-58).
27. Efforts to focus attention on male survivors have faced some resistance since there is a concern this will detract attention and much-needed funding from dealing with sexual violence against women and girls (Sivakunaram 2010, p. 276). Helpful reading on male sexual violence includes Sivakumaran (2007); Refugee Law Project (2008); Grey and Shepherd (2012); Zawati (2007); Lewis

(2010); Russell (2007); Russell et al. (2011); and Linos (2009). OCHA (2008b) provides a review of literature focused on male sexual violence. At a recent South–South Institute on Sexual Violence against Men and Boys in Conflict and Displacement experts identified four major challenges in the area of responding to male sexual violence: medical and psychosocial support; legal redress; recovery for survivors, including recovering livelihoods and standing within the community; and stigma and shame (Dolan 2013, pp. 3–4).

28. Presentations from the July 2013 workshop are available at <http://www.slideshare.net/osrsgsvc/presentations>
29. For information on children’s experience of armed conflict more generally, two useful sources are the website of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (<http://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org>) and the website of the Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict, a network of international NGOs (<http://watchlist.org>).
30. For another report on under-reporting of SEA, see Lattu (2008).
31. In other examples, based on research conducted by the Child Protection Sub-Cluster in Côte d’Ivoire, during the 2010–11 post-election crisis in that country, children accounted for 51.7 per cent of cases of sexual violence out of a total of 1121 rights violations (UNICEF & Save the Children 2011, pp. 7, 9). In the Democratic Republic of the Congo the UN Population Fund has estimated that children represented more than 65 per cent of victims of sexual violence during 2008, the majority being adolescent girls (HRW 2009, p. 14).
32. It is important to recognise that boys can be vulnerable to particular forms of gender-based violence such as castration. In the words of one group of experts, ‘A ten-year old boy is not castrated because he is a child; he is castrated because he is a future man’ (Russell et al. 2011, p. 1).
33. The Security Council agenda on children and armed conflict is framed by nine resolutions—1261, 1314, 1379, 1460, 1539, 1612, 1882, 1998 and 2068. For analysis of the Security Council’s work on children and armed conflict, see Security Council Report (2010).
34. The website of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict has a list of the parties that have developed action plans. See <http://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/our-work/action-plans>
35. Some of these consequences may in fact have been the ‘very purpose for the rape in the first place’; this is known as ‘rape plus’ where the ‘plus’ can refer to the intentional infection of HIV by the perpetrator, infertility or social ostracism (Sivakumaran 2007, p. 264; Manjoo & McRaith 2011, p. 16.)
36. A fistula is a hole or tear near the vagina that leads to chronic incontinence. While the majority of cases are obstetric and caused by prolonged labour without appropriate medical attention, fistulas can also be caused by particularly traumatic and brutal sexual attacks (UNHCR 2008a;

EngenderHealth). A detailed fact sheet about traumatic fistula, caused by sexual violence specifically, is available at <http://www.friendsofunfpa.org/netcommunity/page.aspx?pid=293>

37. Women who have undergone female genital mutilation, a practice common in various parts of Africa, parts of Asia and the Middle East (WHO 2012), are at increased risk of injury and contracting sexually transmitted diseases due to rape (Amnesty International 2004, p. 18).
38. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees 2012 guidelines for working with men and boy survivors of sexual and gender-based violence in forced displacement provide a very detailed list of the physical, psychological, social, economic and legal consequences and needs of male sexual violence survivors (2012a, p. 10).
39. According to the World Health Organization, 'Post-traumatic Stress Disorder appears to be more common in [victims of sexual violence] who were threatened with a weapon and/or extreme physical force, in those raped by strangers, and in cases where physical injuries were inflicted' (2003, p. 15).
40. Rape trauma syndrome is a type of PTSD very common among survivors of sexual violence (WHO 2003, pp. 13–16). As a term, it is used to describe the emotional responses to sexual violence, including 'feelings of hopelessness, loss of control, anger and guilt' (The Advocates for Human Rights).
41. A 2013 report by the World Health Organization, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and the South African Medical Research Council found that globally 'women who have experienced nonpartner sexual violence are 2.3 times more likely to have alcohol use disorders and 2.6 times more likely to have depression or anxiety than women who have not experienced non-partner sexual violence' (García-Moreno et al. 2013, p. 32).
42. In a study conducted by the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture between 1997 and 1998, symptoms of PTSD were present in 30 per cent of men who had been tortured but not sexually assaulted, in 55 per cent of those who had been sexually assaulted but not raped, and over 70 per cent for those men who had been raped (Peel 2004, p. 67).
43. Although International Rescue Committee reports indicate that honour killings have occurred against rape survivors, the committee also points out that the frequency of conflict-related rape has led to families demonstrating greater acceptance of rape survivors (IRC 2012a, p. 8).
44. In many countries rape survivors may be forced to marry their perpetrator (McDaniel 2013).
45. The PHR mobile app won first prize in the US government-sponsored 2013 USAID – Humanity United Tech Challenge for Atrocity Prevention competition (PHR 2013).
46. Domestic violence is also common following natural disasters (see Shteir 2013).
47. According to various studies in Cambodia in the 1990s, many women—'as many as 75 per cent in one study—were victims/survivors of domestic violence, often at the hands of men who have kept the small arms and light weapons they used during the war' (Rehn & Sirleaf 2002, p. 15).

48. For example, the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2005 *Personal Safety Survey* found that ‘15% of Australian women had experienced physical or sexual violence from a previous partner and 2.1% from a current partner since the age of fifteen’, compared with 4.9 and 0.9 per cent of Australian men respectively (ABS data cited in Campbell 2011, p. 1).
49. For more information about MSF’s work to support survivors of family and sexual violence in Papua New Guinea, see MSF (2011) and a video at <http://www.msf.org/sexualviolence>
50. According to a recent report by the UN Secretary-General, the majority of allegations for the 2012 and 2011 reporting periods came from the peacekeeping missions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), South Sudan (UNMISS), Liberia (UNMIL) and Haiti (MINUSTAH) (UN General Assembly 2013b, p. 4).
51. A 2008 report by Save the Children UK referred to an incident where the perpetrator was a woman (Csáky 2008, p. 9).
52. For military and police personnel, allegations are referred to the appropriate member state for investigation and, where substantiated, disciplinary action. For substantiated allegations, the personnel can be repatriated and barred from future UN deployments, as occurred with nine police and eight military personnel (UN General Assembly 2013b, p. 6).
53. ‘UN entities’ refers to the departments, agencies, funds and programs of the United Nations system, including the Department of Field Support, which supports peacekeeping and special political missions, the United Nations Children’s Fund and the World Food Programme. The graph in Figure 1 shows the total number of allegations for the UN system as a whole as well as the number of allegations specifically relating to UN peacekeeping operations and special political missions.
54. There have been calls among some UN member states for a legally binding multilateral convention to address the criminal misconduct of UN officials and experts while serving on mission since they are protected through diplomatic immunity. Though convention text has been drafted, there is resistance among some member states who argue that there are other more effective mechanisms for bridging the existing ‘jurisdictional gaps’ (UN DPI 2010, 2013).
55. In Haiti, for example, a Force Commander’s Directive is a strict policy for military peacekeepers that ‘overrides’ aspects of the bulletin for the purposes of military personnel in the mission (Jennings 2008, p. 20).
56. See <http://www.pseataaskforce.org/en/tools> for examples of standards of conduct developed by UN agencies and NGOs.
57. It assumed the work of the Executive Committees on Humanitarian Affairs and Peace and Security (ECHA/ECPS) UN and NGO Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Taskforce, which was dissolved in 2011 (IASC Task Force 2013a).



58. The link between women's subordinate status and gender-based violence is also recognised in General Recommendation No. 19 by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women: 'Traditional attitudes by which women are regarded as subordinate to men or as having stereotyped roles perpetuate widespread practices involving violence or coercion, such as family violence and abuse, forced marriage, dowry deaths, acid attacks and female circumcision. Such prejudices and practices may justify gender-based violence as a form of protection or control of women' (UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women 1992, para.11).
59. Additional statistics from the Congolese survey support this point: 74.8 per cent of men believed that a 'woman who does not dress decently is asking to be raped'; 61.4 per cent of men were of the opinion that 'women deserve some times to be beaten'; and 64.9 per cent of men believed that 'women should accept partner violence to keep the family together' (Slegh et al. 2012, p. 9).
60. For example, until recently US drill sergeants referred to new recruits as 'ladies' and 'fags' (Wood 2011, p. 51).
61. This belief and norm helps explain why non-combatant males (including adolescent boys) are more vulnerable to sex-selective mass executions and massacres than females. Male vulnerability to sex-selective killing has been seen in Timor Leste, Bosnia and Herzegovina (UN General Assembly 1999), Colombia, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and most recently in Syria and Darfur with the recent resumption of atrocities (Gendercide Watch; Carpenter 2006, pp. 89–90; HSRP 2005, p. 102; Amnesty International 2012; Kristof 2013). This vulnerability is a consequence of men and boys being automatically identified as 'potential' combatants (and infant boys as future combatants) and thus 'legitimate' targets (Carpenter 2006, p. 88). See more in Shteir (2013).
62. The Broderick Review, as it is known, has outlined 31 wide-ranging recommendations in relation to the Australian Defence Force Academy and 21 recommendations in relation to the broader Australian Defence Force. For more information on the different phases of this review process and the reports, see <https://defencereview.humanrights.gov.au>
63. The YouTube video is available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SSR19QL8ZvI>
64. For a report on the Men's Leadership Program in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, see Women for Women International (2007).
65. The President of Kenya has been indicted by the International Criminal Court as an 'indirect co-perpetrator' for crimes against humanity including murder, deportation and rape; his trial is due to begin in 2014 (ICC 2013). The current Deputy President and a number of public figures have also been indicted for their role during the post-election violence.
66. AIDS-Free World (2009) details other types of extreme violence, in addition to sexual violence, that were perpetrated against MDC supporters.

67. There are eight ‘situations’ currently before the International Criminal Court—Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Darfur (Sudan), the Central African Republic, Kenya, Libya, Côte d’Ivoire and Mali.
68. The Women’s Initiatives for Gender Justice (2012) *Gender Report Card* provides a very detailed analysis of the manner in which the ICC handles charges of gender-based crimes (Inder et al. 2012).
69. The UN multi-country study on men and violence in the Asia–Pacific region—though not focused specifically on conflict environments—found that alcohol was the least common reason given by the surveyed men when asked why they raped (Fulu et al. 2013, p. 3).
70. Without proper psychosocial support as well as adequate job training, and with limited livelihood options, former combatants are vulnerable to alcoholism and drug abuse and recruitment into criminal groups, even re-recruitment into armed groups (Anderlini 2006, p. 2; HRW 2004, pp. 33–43, 39; IRIN 2008).
71. For a detailed study of justice for sexual violence survivors in Bosnia and Herzegovina, see Amnesty International (2009).
72. The ‘Basic Principles and Guidelines’ were previously adopted by the Commission on Human Rights (replaced by the UN Human Rights Council) (Resolution 2005/35) and by the UN Economic and Social Council (Resolution 2005/30). The resolution provides a detailed explanation of the different forms of reparations.
73. The United Nations has established a similar mechanism. In 2011 the UN Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict became operational. It is a multidisciplinary team with rapid deployment capability that monitors sexual violence globally and will deploy to assist national authorities with rule of law in situations with extensive sexual violence reported (UN GA/SC 2012: 25; UNGA/SC 2010: 10). The Team is part of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (Security Council Report 2013: 10). To date, the UN Team of Experts has provided advice to governments in the Central African Republic, Colombia, Côte d’Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Liberia, Somalia and South Sudan (Deen 2013; UN General Assembly & Security Council 2013, p. 27).
74. According to one expert, the increase in sentencing is being linked to a ‘backlash’ in which women are not reporting rape or are being threatened, given the possibility of sentences as severe as the death penalty (Aas 2010, p. 13).
75. According to one expert, the public location of the special court has meant that survivors are reluctant to come forward and thus the court has overseen few cases to date (Aas 2010, p. 13).
76. A number of initiatives have been established to address this gender data gap, among them the World Bank’s gender data portal, the OECD’s Gender Initiative, and the US State Department’s Data 2X (Clinton 2012).

77. Mobile technology is playing a growing role in initiatives addressing sexual and gender-based violence, both in conflict-affected environments and more generally (Mok 2013). The Global Safe Cities Free of Violence against Women and Girls Programme (2010–16) is one example. Led by UN Women in partnership with a number of UN bodies and non-government organisations, this program includes multiple initiatives. Microsoft has partnered with UN Women to explore ways that mobile technology can be used to document, prevent and respond to sexual violence and harassment (UN Women 2013b). For more information, see <http://saynotoviolence.org/join-say-no/safe-cities-women-and-girls>. Despite these advances, it is important to acknowledge that access to mobile technology depends on many factors, including affordability, literacy, gender and status (OCHA 2012, p. 13). In Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya, for example, more men have access to mobile phones and the internet than women (OCHA 2012, p. 20).
78. Importantly, although it is rarely acknowledged, whether acts of violence are gender-based is not always easy to determine. As a 2010 Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency Working Paper on Gender based Violence asked, ‘How can one determine to what extent torture, execution or any other act of violence is linked to the sex/gender of the victim?’ (Baaz & Stern 2010, p. 7, note 5).
79. The Australian Civil–Military Centre’s occasional paper *Gendered Crises, Gendered Responses: the necessity and utility of a gender perspective in conflicts and disasters* (2013) provides a broader list of practical tools that are intended to support the adoption of a gender perspective in conflict and disaster settings (Shteir 2013).

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