

CONFLICT-RELATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE

One of the cornerstones of our current social system is the gender people are assigned at birth. This social construct and system results in inequality, which conditions and limits opportunities (on a personal, professional, economic, social and athletic level). This system creates unequal power relationships that put women's position and status at a disadvantage.

This system, which regulates and conditions every areas of our lives, also shapes the way in which conflicts affect women and men, with differences in terms of impact and the possibility of authentic participation in decision-making and subsequent peace processes.

This inequality is extremely noticeable in the way conflicts affect men and women in terms of decision-making, the impact on their own lives and their participation in subsequent peace processes.

In the pursuit of both military and political objectives, sexual violence is used a weapon of war. The United Nations provides figures to capture the magnitude of this situation¹

Over the 100 days of the genocide of '94 in Rwanda, an estimated 100,000 to 250,000 women were raped; 60,000 in the Sierra Leone war; 40,000 in Liberia, and 60,000 in former Yugoslavia, and more than 200,000 women have been raped in the DRC since 1998²

In 2017, the United Nations Stabilisation Mission (MONUSCO) in the DRC verified 804 cases of conflict-related sexual violence, an increase in numbers from the previous report. During the same period, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) reported 5,783 cases of conflict-related sexual violence, almost twice as many as in 2016. Likewise, it should be noted that only those cases reported to the authorities are counted, making it difficult to truly quantify the scope of how much conflict-related sexual violence is committed.

The international community's growing concern has led to several United Nations Security Council³ resolutions on this issue. These resolutions recognise the disproportionate impact that conflict has on women and girls and call for full and equal participation of women at all levels of post-conflict reconstruction and decision-making, both locally and internationally, as a way to combat sexual violence. To that end, the post of **United Nations Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict** was created in 2010, which was held by Sierra Leone's Zaina Hawa Bangura from 2012 to 2017 and is currently held by Mrs. **Pramila Patten**.

Sexual violence was only internationally recognised as a crime in 1992 in the wake of the conflict in former Yugoslavia. International criminal courts (both in the former Yugoslavia and in Rwanda) have passed several milestones since then, from declaring sexual violence a weapon to defining it as a **crime against humanity**⁴, a **war crime**⁵ and **even as a crime of genocide**⁶.

According to the United Nations, the term "conflict-related sexual violence" (CRSV) refers to rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, forced abortion, enforced sterilization, forced marriage and any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity. It is either directly or indirectly linked to a conflict, motivated by political, military, psychological objectives, to control the territory, population or resources. Sexual violence remains a central, even growing, feature of the conflict in the DRC, where the main issue is the impunity with the perpetrators act as a rule rather than the exception. The term "sexual violence" is used to describe acts of a sexual nature imposed by force, or coercion, such as that caused by fear of violence, duress, detention, psychological oppression or abuse of power directed against any victim – man, woman, boy or girl. Taking advantage of a coercive environment or of the victim's incapacity to give genuine consent is also a form of coercion. Sexual violence encompasses rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, forced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence of a comparable gravity⁷.

¹ <http://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/rwanda/about/bgsexualviolence.shtml>

² Other sources cite that over 100,000 women were victims of rape from 2005-2006 alone.

³ Resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, 2122

⁴ ICTY

⁵ ICTR

⁶ Akayeso Case Study

⁷ Definition taken from the Red Cross website. <http://www.icrc.org/spa/resources/documents/faq/sexual-violence-questions-and-answers.htm>

ACTIVITY PROPOSAL

STOP RAPE NOW!

PARTICIPATE IN THE UNITED NATIONS CAMPAIGN TO END CONFLICT-RELATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE.



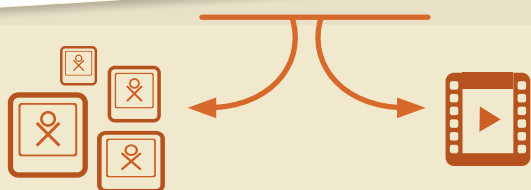
Objective: To raise local awareness about conflict-related sexual violence and demonstrate our position against this type of violence.

Development: Participants will be asked to take a photo with their arms crossed in the shape of an X (the symbol proposed to represent the commitment to ending CRSV).









The photos can then be displayed in meeting rooms or other shared spaces. The caption can include facts and figures from this file to create even more awareness about the extent of this issue. We encourage you to send us your photos and upload them to our social media, as well as to invite people you know to join the initiative.

An alternative is to use the photos to make a video like the one below, made by the University for Peace.

You can also find links, websites, audiovisual resources and other materials, as well as other ways to participate (through advocacy and awareness-raising) on the United Nations campaign website at <https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/about-us/un-action/#>.



RESOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION

-  **Website of the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict**
<https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/conflict-related-sexual-violence>
-  **United Nations website on sexual violence in DRC**
<https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/about-us/un-action/#>
-  **Video about on sexual violence against women:**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hjy3vzWoOqU>
-  **Enough video «The Lawyer»**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZYhebo94WFM>
-  **United Nations resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, 2122, 2467**
-  **ALBOAN and Amparo Sanchez video: Mama Africa:**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4v6xGLQeFuJ>
-  **Journal of a trip to the Congo (esp):**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tCSM8w_3r0U&t=39s
-  **Mining research (esp):**
<https://www.tecnologia Libre de conflicto.org/congo-mujeres-mineria-investigacion/>

A project from:



www.alboan.org

For a:



www.tecnologia Libre de conflicto.org

Cooperate:

