

# CONFLICT-RELATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE

REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL



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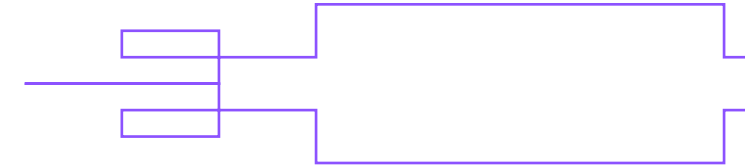


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"CONFLICT-RELATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE IS NOW WIDELY RECOGNIZED AS A WAR CRIME THAT IS PREVENTABLE AND PUNISHABLE. THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL HAS PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE PAST DECADE BY PASSING SUCCESSIVE RESOLUTIONS THAT EMPHASIZE ACCOUNTABILITY FOR PERPETRATORS AND SERVICES FOR SURVIVORS."

- UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL ANTÓNIO GUTERRES

# INTRODUCTION



1. The present report, which covers the period from January to December 2019, is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution [2467 \(2019\)](#), in which the Council requested me to report on the implementation of resolutions [1820 \(2008\)](#), [1888 \(2009\)](#), [1960 \(2010\)](#) and [2106 \(2013\)](#).

2. In April 2019, through the adoption of resolution [2467 \(2019\)](#), the Security Council recognized the need for a survivor-centred approach to inform all measures to prevent and address sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations. On 30 October, the Office of my Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict marked the 10-year anniversary of the mandate through a survivors' hearing and the launch of a Global Survivors Fund spearheaded by the Nobel Laureates, Denis Mukwege and Nadia Murad. The event represented a milestone and provided an opportunity to take stock of the significant normative, institutional and operational progress achieved, and to set the stage for a new decade of decisive action, with a focus on empowering survivors and fostering compliance with existing commitments.

3. The year 2020 is also pivotal for the women and peace and security agenda. In addition to marking the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#), and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the visionary Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), it will also mark 75 years since the establishment of the United Nations itself, with its founding promise of gender equality enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations (1945). Despite important progress on the policy and operational fronts, we face an increasingly complex global security environment in which sexual violence remains a cruel tactic of war, torture, terror and political repression, and a brutally effective tool of displacement and dehumanization. We have yet to adequately invest in tackling the structural root causes that drive and perpetuate this violence, including gender inequality, which is exacerbated by conflict and militarization. A survivor-centred, rights-based response aims to create a safe and participatory environment, including through contextualized solutions that build resilience

and address the diverse experiences of all survivors. This approach is critical to ensuring that no one is left behind or excluded from the dividends of peace and development.

4. The term "conflict-related sexual violence", as used in the present report, 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 perpetrated against women, men, girls or boys that is directly or indirectly linked to a conflict. This link may be evident in the profile of the perpetrator, who is often affiliated with a State or non-State armed group, which includes terrorist entities or networks; the profile of the victim, who is frequently an actual or perceived member of a persecuted political, ethnic or religious minority, or targeted on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity; the climate of impunity, which is generally associated with State collapse; cross-border consequences, such as displacement or trafficking; and/or violations of the provisions of a ceasefire agreement. The term also encompasses trafficking in persons for the purpose of sexual violence and/or exploitation, when committed in situations of conflict.

5. While many countries are affected by the threat, occurrence or legacy of conflict-related sexual violence, the present report is focused on 19 countries for which information verified by the United Nations exists. It should be read in conjunction with my 10 previous reports, which provide a cumulative basis for the listing of 54 parties (see annex). The majority of listed parties are non-State actors, with several having been designated as terrorist groups according to the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida sanctions list. National military and police forces that are listed are required to adopt specific, time-bound commitments and action plans to address violations and are prohibited from participating in United Nations peace operations. Effective implementation of commitments, including the cessation of violations, is a key consideration for the delisting of parties. Non-State armed groups are also required to implement action plans to prevent and address sexual violence.

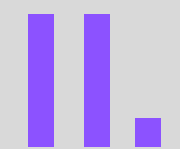
6. The increased presence of women's protection advisers, who are responsible for convening the monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements on conflict-related sexual violence in the field, has improved the availability and quality of information. At the time of writing, women's protection advisers are deployed in seven United Nations peace operations. All peacekeeping missions with mandates that include the protection of civilians have established monitoring arrangements and incorporated the matrix of early warning indicators of conflict-related sexual violence into their broader protection structures. The special political missions in Iraq and Somalia have also established such arrangements.

7. Strengthening the capacity of national rule of law institutions is critical in order to advance credible and inclusive accountability processes for past crimes, as well as for prevention and deterrence of future crimes. In this regard, the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, in accordance with its mandate under Security Council resolution [1888 \(2009\)](#) continues to convene, coordinate and collaborate with United Nations system entities so as to assist national authorities in strengthening institutional safeguards against impunity, as part of broader efforts to reinforce the rule of law. Since its establishment, the Team of Experts has engaged in the Central African Republic, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Iraq, Liberia, Mali, Myanmar, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and the Sudan, in follow-up to the high-level political engagements of my Special Representative and with the consent of Member States. In 2019, the Team of Experts contributed to addressing impunity and supporting victims, complementing the efforts of United Nations system entities through the Global Focal Point for the Rule of Law. In the Central African Republic, the Team of Experts continued to assist the national authorities, including the joint rapid response and prevention unit for addressing sexual violence against women and children, to increase their capacity to investigate and prosecute conflict-related sexual violence. The United Nations also supported a dedicated criminal court session in Bangui on sexual and gender-based violence. In eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Team of Experts continued to provide technical assistance to Congolese judicial authorities, and in Guinea, as a full member of the steering committee established by the Government to organize trials for the crimes of 28 September 2009, in which at least 156 people were killed or disappeared and at least 109 women and girls were victims of sexual violence (see [A/74/139](#)), the Team continued to support national efforts, including through the deployment of a dedicated senior judicial adviser. In Nigeria, the Team of Experts collaborated with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and international non-governmental organizations to support training for members of the

national judiciary, including the specialized unit working on Boko Haram-related cases. In South Sudan, the Team of Experts facilitated the adoption by the South Sudan National Police Service of its action plan on addressing conflict-related sexual violence.

8. The United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict network, which comprises 14 entities, is dedicated to amplifying advocacy, improving coordination and accountability, and supporting country efforts to prevent conflict-related sexual violence and respond effectively to the needs of survivors, in accordance with the priorities articulated by the network and its Chair, my Special Representative. In 2019, the network was reinforced through the addition of a new member, the Office for Disarmament Affairs, and nine new projects were launched. In Myanmar, one project was aimed at enhancing accountability for conflict-related sexual violence, and another at promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in the context of preventing human trafficking. In South Sudan, the network financed the scaling up of a one-stop centre for survivors and a project to build the capacity of the justice and security sector. The network further supported two projects in Iraq aimed at strengthening psychosocial services and establishing mechanisms for reparations. In addition, it supported the finalization of the national strategy on preventing and eliminating gender-based violence in the Central African Republic and continued to support the Gender-based Violence Information Management System. At the global level, the International Organization for Migration and the Office of my Special Representative organized a workshop on reparations, which focused on ensuring complementarity between national and international efforts to improve access to remedies for survivors. The network also initiated a mapping exercise to identify and fill gaps in guidance and operational tools, as requested by the Security Council in its resolution [2467 \(2019\)](#). The network also worked in Somalia, which resulted in support for a joint project for women and girls formerly associated with Al-Shabaab, as well as providing technical assistance in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Myanmar.

9. While acknowledging that conflict-related sexual violence committed by parties to conflict is distinct from incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse that continue to be committed by United Nations personnel in complex operating environments, I reiterate my commitment to improve the way the Organization prevents and addresses such conduct. In my report on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse ([A/73/744](#)), I provided information on efforts to strengthen the system-wide response and ensure full implementation of the zero-tolerance policy.



## Sexual Violence as a Tactic of War and Terrorism: Patterns, Trends and Emerging Concerns

10. The past decade has seen a paradigm shift in global understanding of the impacts of the atrocity of conflict-related sexual violence, particularly in terms of its relevance to international peace and security, the multisectoral services needed by survivors, the imperative need for gender-responsive security sector reform, and the necessity of tackling gender inequality as a root cause in times of war or conflict, and in times of peace. While the silence has been broken, and the issue has galvanized global attention on conflict-related sexual violence as an obstacle to peacebuilding and recovery, we must never allow these atrocities to persist with impunity, to become entrenched and “normalized” in post-conflict societies. The international community must never lose sight of the profound human suffering at the heart of this agenda. Accordingly, a range of experiences and the views and perspectives of survivors, which illustrate critical trends and emerging concerns, are presented in paragraphs 17 to 62 below, and should be read while bearing in mind that there are countless

other stories that will never be heard. Most survivors face insurmountable social, structural and security barriers, including stigma, the repercussions of which are potentially deadly, and such barriers prevent their cases from being counted, addressed or reflected in the historical record. The present report is limited to incidents verified by the United Nations and does not purport to capture the prevalence of cases. While it cannot reflect the scale of these crimes, it serves to convey their severity.

11. In the Central African Republic, a mother of six was subjected to sexual violence by ex-Séléka elements who seized control of her village. During a reprisal attack by anti-balaka forces, she was abducted and repeatedly raped. Eventually, she escaped from captivity and walked more than 130 kilometres on foot before finding safety in a United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) base. The United Nations transferred her to

Bangui for medical care, and then to a local non-governmental organization for psychosocial support and literacy training. This survivor now works on behalf of other survivors of sexual violence, conducting outreach and referrals. Her exceptional journey from victim to activist shows what is possible when timely and appropriate support is available. Indeed, in recent years, there has been a positive trend with respect to an increasing number of survivors becoming mobilized as advocates and champions and politically engaged in the pursuit of peace. Yet, in the contexts covered in the present report, humanitarian services for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence remain chronically underfunded, and many struggle simply to meet their basic needs in the aftermath of these atrocities. Funding shortfalls for the programmatic response, including sexual and reproductive health care, result in major gaps in the reach and coverage of life-saving, and potentially life-changing, interventions.

12. In northern Mali, two sisters of adolescent age were abducted and gang raped by members of the Mouvement national de libération de l'Azawad. Upon their release, the girls received medical treatment, but no complaint was filed with the police, despite the identity of the perpetrators being known to the family, owing to the fear of reprisals. In such cases, impunity remains the rule and accountability the rare exception, which emboldens perpetrators and perpetuates vicious cycles of abuse. This case is illustrative of the fact that access to justice continues to be constrained by a number of factors, including stigma, the absence of protective measures for victims and witnesses, the limited availability of legal aid, limited awareness of avenues for redress, and the weakness of local institutions. In some cases, security sector actors are themselves complicit in the crimes and/or the intimidation of victims and witnesses. Women and girls face daunting gender-based barriers to justice, which are associated with social, cultural and economic disempowerment. At the global level, there remains a glaring discrepancy between the documentation of crimes, which is extensive, and their adjudication, which remains elusive.

13. The issue of reparations for crimes of conflict-related sexual violence has acquired increased prominence in global discourse over the past year, against the backdrop of decades of related efforts in the field of transitional justice. Attempts to pursue the provision of assistance and reparations in practice will require innovative approaches to ensure sustainable funding, including private sector partnerships, to provide assistance to victims in contexts where a reparations gap exists. Closing the gap can help survivors to rebuild their lives and livelihoods, as well as restore confidence in national institutions. Yet, reparations remain the justice intervention that survivors seek the most but receive the least. In several contexts covered herein, the slow pace of justice and the absence of reparations have led

to increased recourse to traditional and/or customary courts, which tend to resolve cases of rape through the awarding of material assistance to the family of the victim. While such an approach can temporarily alleviate economic hardship, they achieve little in terms of punishing and deterring perpetrators, or with respect to upholding women's rights. Some promising developments in this context include: (a) the judgment in the case of Alimasi Frederic, alias "Kokodikoko" in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which found the State liable for reparations for failing to protect civilians from sexual violence by militias; (b) the delivery of compensation to over one third of registered victims of conflict-related sexual violence in Colombia; and (c) efforts in Iraq to develop a reparations law and relief programme for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, with initial grants disbursed in 2019. In contexts such as the Western Balkans, victims of wartime sexual violence have been belatedly recognized as legitimate war victims, an official status that renders them eligible for reparations. However, in other settings, such as Nepal, few survivors of sexual violence have come forward to claim reparations, owing to the onerous legal and administrative thresholds.

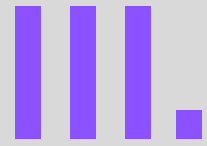
14. In Tanganyika Province in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a young man was stripped naked, raped and forced to rape his own mother during a Twa militia attack on his village. It took him many months to overcome the profound sense of shame and the fear of stigmatization and reprisals, in order to seek support. The use of sexual violence to shred the social fabric and fracture families, including through the violation of cultural taboos, continues to be particularly evident in the context of ethnic and intercommunal conflicts. The rape of men and boys has been used to attack their socially constructed identity as "protectors", and to inflict humiliation, given prevailing stereotypes about masculine invulnerability. The risks and repercussions of conflict-related sexual violence are linked with identity-based vulnerabilities, which are multiple and intersecting. During the reporting period, women and girls continued to account for the vast majority of recorded victims, placed at elevated risk by structural gender-based discrimination in political, economic and social life. Men and boys continued to suffer sexual violence in detention in several settings. Individuals were also targeted on the basis of their actual or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity as a form of persecution. Refugees and migrants faced heightened risks of sexual violence during flight and in displacement settings, leading to increased recourse to negative coping mechanisms, such as early and forced marriage, and the withdrawal of women and girls from employment and education, as observed in Iraq, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen and among the displaced Rohingya community in Bangladesh. Indigenous women have been targeted primarily in the context of conflicts over ancestral land and natural resources, as seen during the conflict periods in Colombia and

Guatemala. Persons living with disabilities have also been sexually abused, including following separation from their caregivers in the chaos of war, as documented in the Syrian Arab Republic. The trauma of sexual violence echoes across generations, affecting in particular children born of wartime rape, who often experience a lack of identity and belonging in highly polarized societies. The plight and rights of children born of war need to be further examined, including the question of whether these children are particularly susceptible to recruitment, radicalization and trafficking, and what can be done to support their social integration. A survivor-centred approach, as articulated by the Security Council in a resolution for the first time in 2019 (resolution [2467 \(2019\)](#)), requires the recognition that survivors are not a homogenous group, but suffer differentiated harms based on intersecting inequalities, which can compound over time in the absence of a tailored response. It further recognizes that the specific rights, needs and aspirations of survivors must be prioritized in all policies, programmes and operations.

15. A survivor-centred approach must also inform prevention and early warning efforts, as conflict-related sexual violence is often preceded by discrimination, persecution, hate speech and incitement based on gender and group identity, as seen in Burundi, Myanmar, South Sudan and elsewhere. Gender-based hate speech and harassment, compounded by restricted civic space, as outlined in my Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech, has resulted in a negative trend of attacks and reprisals against women human rights defenders, including as part of political and electoral repression. In the absence of effective security guarantees, the past year has seen many women retreat from prominent leadership roles in the peace and transitional justice process, for example in Colombia, following threats and attacks against themselves and their families. Nevertheless, there has been an unprecedented level of engagement by religious leaders from across the spectrum of faiths in recent years to help transform harmful social norms, including by imams in Mali, Yazidi and Sunni leaders in Iraq, the South Sudan Council of Churches, and the Interreligious Council in Bosnia and Herzegovina, all of which have condemned sexual violence and called for efforts to alleviate the socially corrosive effects of stigma. By using their moral authority, religious leaders could significantly contribute to addressing the root causes of these crimes, such as entrenched gender inequality and related codes of honour and shame. Such engagement is of particular importance in the context of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), as women and children formerly associated with violent extremist and terrorist groups are viewed primarily as "affiliates" rather than victims. In the words of one survivor of sexual slavery, from Sinjar, Iraq: "I was just 14 when I was kidnapped by ISIL. I was separated from my family. ISIL took us prisoner

and tortured us for three long years. They are the criminals, but we continue to suffer, and they are not held accountable." Given the repressive patriarchal ideology of many armed groups, built on controlling women's sexuality and reproduction as part of self-perpetuation strategies, sexual violence has been recognized as a form of extremist violence and a tactic of terrorism. Yet counter-terrorism trials that are under way in Iraq, Mali and Nigeria do not take sexual violence offences into account. Moreover, patterns of gender-based repression and sexual violence persist in areas affected by the Boko Haram insurgency, including across borders, as a factor driving displacement and linked with trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation, which generates profits for armed and criminal groups. A regional response to such trafficking is required, involving intergovernmental cooperation and information-sharing in the Lake Chad basin and the Sahel.

16. As a survivor of wartime sexual violence from Guatemala told the United Nations in 2019: "We do not want history to repeat. We are working for peace and justice so that our children and grandchildren will never know this suffering." Indeed, sexual violence is linked with broader trends related to peacebuilding and social justice. The present report finds that patterns of conflict-related sexual violence do not occur in a vacuum, but directly correlate with factors such as the resurgence of hostilities, militarization, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, mass population displacement, the rise of violent extremism, the collapsed rule of law and the proximity of arms bearers to civilian populations. Successive reports over the past decade indicate that conflict-related sexual violence is concentrated in contexts of detention, captivity, displacement and in rural and remote locations where women undertake essential livelihood activities. These are also the contexts most affected by humanitarian access restrictions and poor service coverage. Despite the adoption of numerous commitments to address conflict-related sexual violence, broader political, economic and security factors inhibit enforcement, preventing linear progress from commitments to compliance. Accordingly, the end goal of conflict-related sexual violence agenda is not a "war without rape", but rather a world without war. As witnessed in the Sudan and elsewhere in 2019, women are powerful agents of change. They are not just victims of war, but vectors of peace and progress. Women's participation in peace processes has been proven to enhance their sustainability, and yet it remains a challenge to secure their involvement and to ensure that the issues disproportionately and structurally affecting women are duly addressed. At the dawn of a new decade of action on this mandate, we must harness the transformative power of women's leadership, and of amplifying the perspectives and experiences of survivors, in order to move from resolutions to results.



## Sexual violence in conflict-affected settings

### Afghanistan

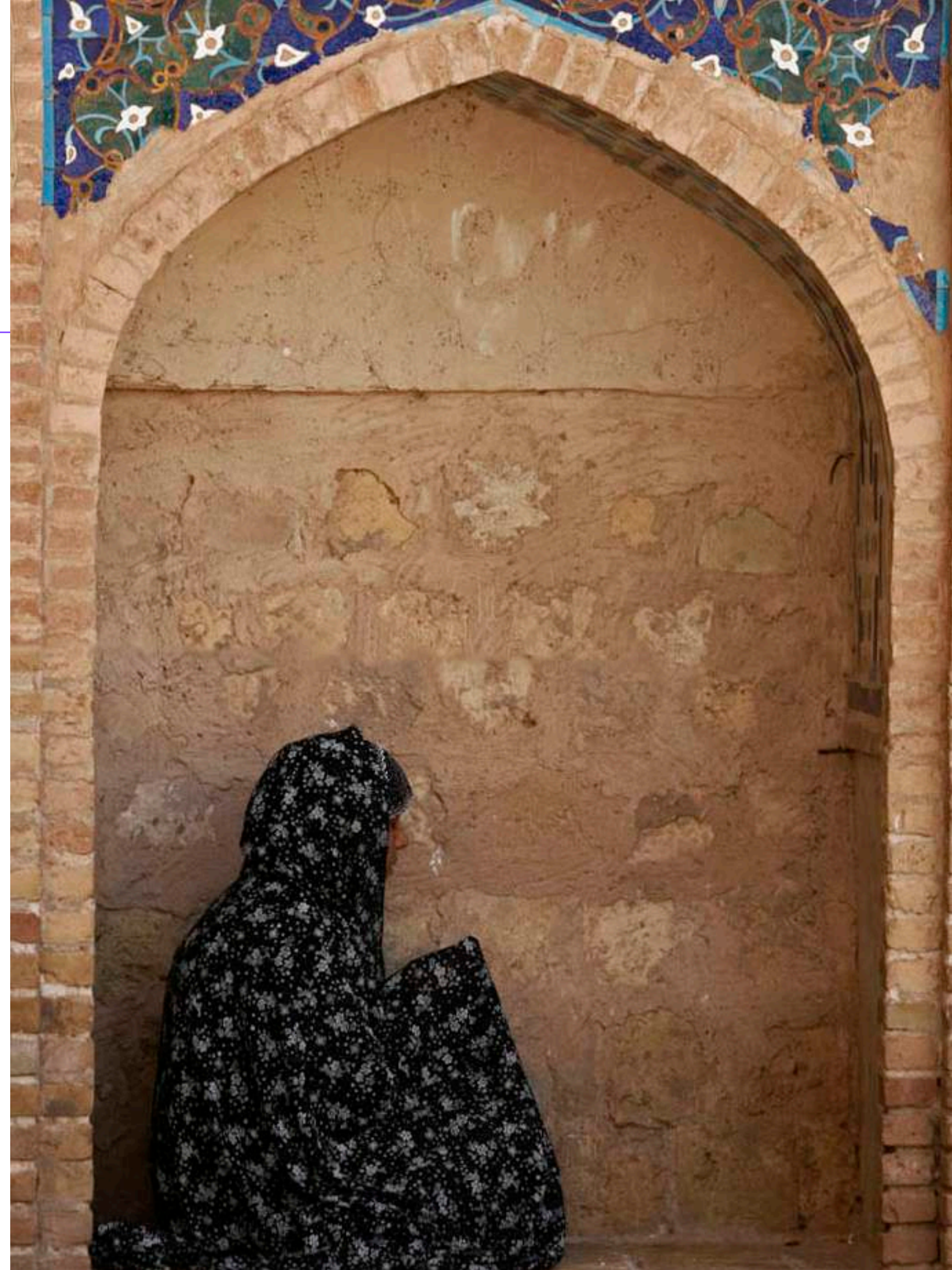


17. The underreporting of sexual violence remains a concern in Afghanistan, stemming from an overall situation of gender-based inequality, discriminatory social norms and stigmatization, which prevent women and girls from accessing information or services. This is exacerbated by a climate of impunity, widespread violence and limited access to areas under the control of armed groups. In 2019, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) documented 102 cases of sexual violence, 27 of which were able to be verified as conflict-related, affecting 7 women, 7 girls and 13 boys. Those incidents were attributed to members of the Taliban. The Afghan National Defence and Security Forces and a pro-government militia were also implicated. Two of these incidents were documented as bacha bazi, a practice involving the sexual abuse of boys by men in positions of power. Eight cases were transferred to the national judicial system, resulting in four convictions. The United Nations received further information of 18 credible allegations of conflict-related sexual violence, which could not be verified owing to safety concerns.

18. The Government continued its efforts to harmonize domestic laws and policies with international standards, promulgating a Law on Protection of Child Rights, and a policy for the protection of women in war and emergency situations, as well as reviewing the Law on Elimination of Violence against Women and approving draft regulations on emergency funds for victims. Family protection centres and women-friendly spaces exist in several provinces to provide holistic assistance to survivors of sexual violence. In August, the Government launched its second national action plan on the implementation of Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#), with support from the United Nations. In remote areas, where State authority is limited, the use of local conflict resolution mechanisms to address sexual violence has resulted in some survivors being compelled to marry the perpetrator or face retaliation.

### Recommendation

19. I commend the Government's efforts to put in place a more protective legal and policy framework for women, girls and boys at risk, and urge the full implementation thereof, with particular attention being given to rural and remote communities and to combating impunity for perpetrators of sexual violence. I reiterate the importance of an inclusive Afghan-led peace process with the meaningful participation of women, young people and minorities and call for the creation of the spaces for women to actively participate in all levels of decision-making so as to solidify gains made and enhance women's rights.



UNAMA PHOTO | FRAIDOO POYA

# Central African Republic



20. The Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation (S/2019/145, annex), signed between the Government and 14 armed groups in February 2019, calls for the cessation of all forms of sexual and gender-based violence (article 5). However, signatories continue to flagrantly use sexual violence as a tactic of terror against civilians. Many challenges remain with respect to monitoring, owing to access constraints, attacks by armed groups against humanitarians and large-scale displacement. In 2019, MINUSCA verified 322 incidents of conflict-related sexual violence, affecting 187 women,

124 girls, 3 men, 2 boys and 6 females of unknown age. These incidents included 174 rapes or attempted rapes and 15 cases of forced marriage. In terms of the profile of the perpetrators, 83 cases were attributed to ex-Séléka groups, 48 to Fulanis, who may have been affiliated with ex-Séléka, 47 to anti-balaka, 19 to Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation, 2 to the Lord's Resistance Army, 1 to criminal gangs, and several to unidentified perpetrators. A total of seven verified cases were attributed to the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic. Reports indicate that 60 per cent of these incidents were

committed by more than one perpetrator. Moreover, as the number of displaced persons increased, 2019 also saw a marked increase in the level of sexual violence occurring in internal displacement sites and host communities, as well as in rural locations, in particular while women and girls were fleeing attacks, or in the course of collecting firewood and food.

21. In Basse-Kotto prefecture, women and girls were systematically abducted by anti-balaka elements, who sexually abused the victims before selling them. The Government responded by designating the Minister for the Promotion of Women, Family and Child Protection as focal point to tackle trafficking in persons. In Mbomou prefecture in the east, which remains largely inaccessible owing to the absence of roads, the Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique and Union pour la paix en Centrafrique continue to perpetrate sexual violence, leading to mass displacement. The fear of reprisals, stigmatization, the lack of services and widespread impunity prevent victims from reporting these crimes and receiving assistance. The proliferation of and trafficking in small arms is also common in the area. United Nations partners have established provisional psychosocial assistance structures (centres d'écoute) in sites for internally displaced persons and have disseminated information on referral pathways. The United Nations also trained members of the Armed Forces and the Forces de sécurité intérieure deployed in Mbomou on prevention of and response to conflict-related sexual violence. In Bangui, three shelters offering temporary protection and services to victims and witnesses of sexual violence were opened in 2019. However, gaps remain, including in terms of sexual and reproductive health care for survivors, as well as HIV prevention and related services, in rural locations throughout the country. In July, Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation, Front démocratique du peuple centrafricain, and anti-balaka elements joined the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, which contributed to a decrease in conflict-related sexual violence in the west of the country, where these groups had largely been operational.

22. In May, my Special Representative visited Bangui and Bria and met with survivors and local service providers who were struggling to provide a holistic response in a context of severely constrained resources and limited physical security and access. These challenges were raised in the course of a constructive dialogue with the Government, which led to the signing of a new joint communiqué between the United Nations

and the national authorities to strengthen protection, service delivery and accountability. The Government also took steps to reinforce the joint rapid response unit to prevent sexual violence against women and children, by finalizing the appointment of all staff and integrating its operational costs into the national budget, which is pending parliamentary approval. In August, following reports of widespread sexual violence in the first months of the year along transhumance corridors near Kaga Bandoro, the joint rapid response unit carried out a field investigation with United Nations support, which resulted in interviews with 264 victims of rape, attempted rape and torture. A quarter of the victims identified ex-Séléka elements as the perpetrators, and unidentified armed men were responsible for the remaining incidents. The cases were transmitted to the prosecutor and criminal trials were held at the Bangui and Bouar courts of appeal. A criminal session involving 22 cases of conflict-related sexual violence was initiated in December in Bangui. The Special Prosecutor and investigating judges of the Special Criminal Court continued to implement their prosecutorial strategy, and the Victim and Witness Protection Unit became operational. MINUSCA also supported vetting to prevent the integration of past perpetrators of sexual violence into the armed forces.

## Recommendation

23. I commend the Government on the adoption of the new joint communiqué and call for the development of an action plan, with support from my Special Representative, and the nomination of a special adviser on conflict-related sexual violence within the Office of the President. I further call upon all parties to comply with the peace accord and end the use of sexual violence, hold perpetrators accountable and guarantee the security of humanitarian personnel.

# Colombia



24. The signature of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace between the Government of Colombia and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) in 2016, remains a global milestone in the effective integration of gender considerations within a peace agreement and in the meaningful participation of women in conflict resolution. The implementation of the provisions on gender and women's rights has, however, lagged behind that of other measures ([CEDAW/C/COL/CO/9](#)). In 2019, the National Victims' Unit recorded 107,445 victims of the armed conflict, 365 of whom were victims of conflict-related sexual violence. Women and girls made up 89 per cent of the victims, with 35 men and 3 individuals who identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or intersex also affected. Moreover, 166 victims were Colombians of African descent (143 women, 22 men and 1 who identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or intersex), 15 were from indigenous communities (14 women and 1 man), 28 were persons living with disabilities (23 women, 3 men and 2 individuals who identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or intersex persons). Among the cases, 51 were recorded as having been perpetrated against children (31 girls and 20 boys). The United Nations documented 10 cases of sexual violence in which the alleged perpetrators were members of the Ejército de Liberación Nacional, criminal groups and other violent groups. Members of the military were allegedly involved in three cases. The United Nations documented nine cases of sexual violence in the border areas between the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Colombia, where transborder armed groups operate.

25. The Ombudsperson's early warning system corroborates the correlation between a high concentration of sexual violence and conflict dynamics. In regions such as Antioquia, Chocó, Cauca and Nariño, numerous armed actors such as Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia, criminal groups and dissident groups of FARC-EP, continue to compete for control of territory and local illegal economies. Border areas and transit routes for refugees and migrants are being exploited by illegal armed actors to recruit vulnerable persons, notably indigenous people, into illicit economic activities. In this context, women and girls face heightened risks of human trafficking, including for the purposes of sexual slavery

and exploitation. The Office of the Ombudsperson reported 480 threats directed against women leaders and women human rights defenders, including misogynistic insults and threats of sexual violence. Access to justice remains a challenge for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, particularly in rural areas, despite an increase in the number of formal complaints following institutional efforts to address the issue. The Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repitition continued to make progress. The Special Jurisdiction for Peace decreed that amnesty could not be granted in cases of conflict-related sexual violence, and that investigations related to child recruitment should consider linkages with conflict-related sexual violence. In addition, the Truth Commission has prioritized the collection of testimonies from survivors of wartime sexual violence. The national police has implemented a project to reinforce prevention and response measures in cases of sexual violence in conflict-affected areas, including through the deployment of mobile teams.

## Recommendation

26. I urge the Government to accelerate the implementation of the gender provisions of the peace agreement. I call for the authorities to enhance their capacity to effectively prosecute and deliver reparations for conflict-related sexual violence, including for survivors in rural and border areas, and to continue expanding service coverage to ensure a holistic response, including protection and security guarantees for victims, witnesses and women's human rights defenders.

# Democratic Republic of the Congo



27. Instability increased in the eastern parts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo as from 30 December 2018, during the post-electoral period, with North Kivu, South Kivu, Maniema and Ituri Provinces particularly affected. In 2019, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) documented 1,409 cases of conflict-related sexual violence, which represents an increase of 34 per cent since 2018. Of those cases, 955 are attributed to non-State armed groups. In terms of State actors, the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo were implicated in 383 of these incidents, which represents a 76 per cent increase from the previous year. The Congolese National Police bore responsibility for 62 cases, and nine incidents were attributed to other State actors. The increase in reports of sexual violence coincided with a rise in the number of military operations. The rotation of troops of the armed forces had a negative impact on discipline and accountability, linked with a lack of supervision and oversight of soldiers. Ethnically motivated violence spiked in 2019, particularly in South Kivu and Ituri Provinces. In Ituri, Lendu militia targeted Hema women and girls during attacks on villages. Members of the armed forces, deployed to Ituri to defend the local population, were also implicated in sexual violence, particularly against women and girls attempting to flee their villages. Nduma défense du Congo-Renové led by Guidon Shimirayi Mwissa and the Nyatura reportedly used rape as a form of intimidation and punishment against women and girls perceived as supporting an opposing armed group.

28. The illicit exploitation of natural resources continues to be a root cause and driver of conflict in the east of the country. In Tanganyika, South Kivu and Maniema, Twa militia targeted villages in mineral-rich locations, using sexual violence as a form of retaliation against rival ethnic groups. In Nyiragongo, North Kivu, in areas known for the lucrative charcoal trade, the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda attacked women who came into the Virunga National Park to purchase fuel. Inadequate material resources for, and inconsistent remuneration of, military personnel, and the deployment of battalions in close proximity to residential areas have led to patterns of predatory behaviour by members of the security forces against the civilian population, including looting, pillage and rape. This dynamic was documented in Beni in late 2019, in the context of operations against the Allied Democratic Forces. Despite a spike in voluntary surrenders by members of armed groups, in the absence of a functioning national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, many combatants returned to the bush and resumed hostilities. Other former combatants were integrated into the national military, without proper training on prevention of and response to sexual violence.

29. Emblematic cases, such as the trial of Ntabo Ntaberi Sheka and Serafin Lionso for mass rape, are ongoing. Lieutenant Colonel Mabilia Ngoma Alma of the armed forces

remains at large, despite having received a sentence of life imprisonment, in November 2018, for crimes against humanity, including rape. The Government and the United Nations worked closely to engage the Force de résistance patriotique de l'Ituri in peace negotiations, which decreased the levels of reported sexual violence perpetrated by this group. In March, MONUSCO launched the Shabunda action plan, designed to prevent and address conflict-related sexual violence perpetrated by Mai Mai Raia Mutomboki factions, which had been responsible for the highest number of recorded incidents in 2018. This plan led to an almost 72 per cent decrease in the number of reported incidents of conflict-related sexual violence in the region, and to the trial of Mai-Mai Raia Mutomboki faction leader, "Kokodikoko", who was sentenced to life imprisonment for crimes against humanity, including rape and sexual slavery. Despite this encouraging trend, other Mai-Mai Raia Mutomboki factions continued to commit sexual violence against local populations in gold-rich areas of South Kivu. The trial against Justin Matata Banaloki, alias "Cobra Matata", who is accused of crimes against humanity, including rape, commenced in 2019, and in July 2019, the International Criminal Court convicted Bosco Ntaganda of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including rape and sexual slavery. The procedure for claiming reparations is arduous, and legal clinics lack funding to assist survivors after judgments are delivered. During her visit in December 2019, my Special Representative participated in the launch of the Congolese National Police action plan on the fight against sexual violence, and signed an addendum to the joint communiqué of 2013 with the Prime Minister.

## Recommendation

30. I welcome the signing of an addendum to the joint communiqué between the Government and the United Nations and encourage its effective implementation. I urge the National Assembly to ensure the adoption of pending legislation on the protection of victims and witnesses, the provision of legal aid and the establishment of a national reparations fund. I urge the Government to ensure that perpetrators of sexual violence are not integrated into national institutions.



# Iraq

31. Civilians formerly held captive by ISIL in the Syrian Arab Republic, including survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, continued to return to Iraq throughout 2019. In November, the Directorate of Yazidi Affairs of the Ministry of Endowment and Religious Affairs of the Kurdistan Regional Government released statistics regarding members of the Yazidi community who had been reported missing since 2014: of the estimated 6,417 Yazidis abducted, 3,524 have been rescued or escaped from their abductors (1,197 women, 339 men, 1,038 girls and 950 boys), and 2,893 remain missing. These figures do not include other affected groups, such as the Turkmen Shi'a. The Commission for Investigation and Gathering Evidence of the Kurdistan Regional Government, established in 2014 to collect evidence on crimes committed by ISIL, has to date recorded more than 1,000 cases of conflict-related sexual violence, predominantly against Yazidi women and girls. Sexual violence continues to be underreported owing to the fear of reprisals, stigma, the absence of services and ongoing security concerns. Displacement camps constitute sites of heightened risk, given the increased number of female-headed households and perceived affiliation with extremist groups. Humanitarian access to the camps has enabled survivors of sexual violence committed in previous years to seek support. For instance, 16 cases, including eight cases of forced marriage, six cases of rape and two cases of forced prostitution, which occurred in 2015 and 2016, were recently documented. Fourteen of these incidents were attributed to ISIL. Two were linked to the Iraqi security forces. The United Nations also verified five cases of sexual violence committed by ISIL affiliates in the Hawijah district of Kirkuk, their last stronghold in Iraq.

32. The Iraqi Presidency submitted a draft law on female Yazidi survivors in April, calling for crimes committed against Yazidis to be considered as genocide and for the perpetrators to be held accountable, as well as establishing a national day of remembrance and outlining reparations measures. The draft law, as amended to include other minority groups and children born of rape, is pending adoption by the Parliament. However, there are still no indictments for sexual violence committed by ISIL. The Ministry of Migration and Displacement established a relief programme for Yazidi female survivors of ISIL captivity,

known as the survivors' grant. Between April and July, the Ministry disbursed individual grants of 2 million Iraqi dinars (approximately \$1,700) to 899 survivors. Since July, however, budgetary allocations to this scheme have stalled. The Head of the Yazidi Supreme Spiritual Council issued an edict acknowledging the suffering of Yazidi women who were enslaved by ISIL and welcoming their return, though this did not refer to the social integration of children conceived as a result of rape. Challenges relating to holistic service provision, in particular access to justice, livelihood support and mental health care, persist in certain areas. United Nations partners operate 55 safe centres for women and support the functioning of five Government-run women's shelters.

## Recommendation

33. I commend the Government for its efforts to implement the joint communiqué in partnership with my Special Representative and the United Nations system, and for considering legislation on assistance and reparations for victims. I reiterate the importance of sexual violence prosecutions being conducted in line with international standards and note that ISIL affiliates should be prosecuted for these specific crimes. I urge the Government to ensure protection and assistance for children born of rape and their mothers.



MEMBERS OF AN ETHNIC YEZIDI FAMILY SLEEP IN THE SHADE IN SHEKHADI VILLAGE AFTER FLEEING SINJAR.

# Libya



34. Chronic underreporting of conflict-related sexual violence during 2019 was linked to a fear of reprisals, stigma and entrenched gender-based discrimination, in an overall context of volatility. The military offensive on Tripoli by forces under the control of the Commander of the Libyan National Army, General Khalifa Haftar, exacerbated instability and restricted monitoring and reporting. As a result of severely limited access to detention facilities, the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) verified only seven cases in 2019, affecting four women, two girls and one male activist for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex rights. In the Mitiga detention facility, controlled by the Special Deterrence Force, under the Ministry of Interior, female inmates are denied due process and unable to challenge the legality of their detention. Four female detainees were subjected to rape and forced nudity, and the activist for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex rights was reportedly gang raped, by Special Deterrence Force guards. UNSMIL also documented patterns of sexual violence, sexual exploitation, extortion and trafficking of refugees and migrants in Zawiyah, Tajura', Gharyan, Tariq al Sikkah and Khums detention centres, some of which are linked with the Department for Combating Illegal Migration. Some migrant women and girls are at high risk of being sold for forced labour or sexual exploitation to transnational criminal networks, some with links to armed groups. In Tariq al-Sikkah, two girls were subjected to public beatings and sexual abuse.

35. The United Nations has urged the Government to launch an investigation in order to locate people who have gone missing from detention centres and may have fallen victim to human trafficking. The Free Legal Aid Coalition for Conflict-Related Survivors in Libya, established by civil society with UNSMIL support, has conducted prison visits, provided legal advice to survivors of sexual violence and advocated the adoption of legislation to enhance protection. The routes to the Libyan coasts, as departure points for Europe, continue to be havens for illegal smugglers and transnational criminal networks.

## Recommendation

36. I urge the authorities to grant humanitarian access to detention facilities and to put in place measures to protect and assist detainees who have suffered, or are at risk of, sexual violence. I also urge the Government to adopt anti-trafficking legislation and, with the support of the United Nations, strengthen its rule of law institutions to ensure that allegations of sexual violence can be effectively investigated and prosecuted.

# Mali



MINUSMA PHOTO | MARCO DORMINO

37. Delays in the implementation of the 2015 Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, particularly in terms of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, contributed to persistent instability in the northern and central regions, which has impeded humanitarian access and reporting. Populations living in areas with weak state presence are particularly vulnerable to attacks by armed groups and extremist elements, which propel forced displacement. In 2019, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) verified 27 cases of conflict-related sexual violence against 15 women, 11 girls and 1 man. The perpetrators included members of Mouvement pour le salut de l'Azawad, Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad and unidentified armed men. Allegations of sexual slavery, forced marriage, castration and forced pregnancy were also reported. While the available information suggests that most cases were perpetrated by unidentified armed elements, it also indicates that members of non-State armed groups (namely, Mouvement arabe de l'Azawad, led by Sidi Mohamed, Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad and Mouvement pour le salut de l'Azawad) have committed conflict-related sexual violence. Cases were also attributed to members of the Malian Defence and Security Forces. In addition, MINUSMA verified 22 incidents that occurred in 2018 but were not reported at the time, owing to a lack of access to safe and confidential services.

38. The visit of my Special Representative in 2019 culminated in the signing of a joint communiqué with the Government to prevent and respond to conflict-related sexual violence, which subsequently led to the drafting of an action plan focused on four strategic areas: prevention, protection, service delivery and accountability. MINUSMA also continued to monitor the implementation of the unilateral communiqués to address conflict-related sexual violence issued by Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad in 2017 and Platform coalition of armed groups (Plateforme des

mouvements du 14 juin 2014 d'Alger) in 2016. Access to justice continues to be a major challenge, owing to inadequate budgetary allocations and limited training of judicial personnel, with not a single case of conflict-related sexual violence having been brought to trial. Civil society organizations play a critical role in supporting victims to come forward and testify in conditions of safety and security, and in advocating the adoption of legislation to promote gender equality. In terms of community engagement to alleviate stigma and shift harmful social norms, MINUSMA hosted a workshop with 113 imams from the High Islamic Council of Mali, resulting in a signed declaration and fatwa to prevent conflict-related sexual violence.

## Recommendation

39. I welcome the joint communiqué signed by the Government and the United Nations and call for its full implementation. I urge the authorities to address key challenges inhibiting access to justice for survivors, and to ensure the effective prosecution of cases of conflict-related sexual violence, in particular the 115 cases still pending before the tribunal of commune III in Bamako. I also encourage the meaningful participation of women in the monitoring and implementation of the peace agreement.

# Myanmar



UN WOMEN PHOTO | KHALED ARAFAT AHMED

40. In 2019, Rohingya and other ethnic minorities remained at risk of conflict-related sexual violence. The increased fighting between the Myanmar armed forces (Tatmadaw Kyi) and various armed groups, including the Arakan Army, the Kachin Independence Army, and the Ta'ang National Liberation Army, caused civilian casualties and displacement in Rakhine, Southern Chin, Northern Shan and Kachin States. Women, girls and boys remain at risk of trafficking, especially from Northern Shan and Kachin States, and from refugee camps in Bangladesh. Risks of forced marriage, forced pregnancy, sexual exploitation, detention and forced labour are common among women and girls living in camps for internally displaced persons and in conflict-affected areas. The high level of risk is compounded by a lack of livelihood and economic opportunities and restrictions imposed by the authorities on humanitarian actors.

41. The lack of accountability for crimes of conflict-related sexual violence perpetrated against the Rohingya in northern Rakhine remains unchanged. As presented in its report, the independent international fact-finding mission on Myanmar on sexual and gender-based violence found that sexual violence was a hallmark of Tatmadaw operations in 2016 and 2017. Moreover, it showed that those violations were perpetrated against Rohingya women and girls in order to intimidate, terrorize and punish the civilian population as a tactic of war. Following the signature of a joint communiqué in 2018 on prevention of and response to conflict-related sexual violence between the Government and the United Nations, a national committee on addressing conflict-related sexual violence was formed and a working group on monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements was established. The United Nations, along with civil society partners, strengthened referral pathways for the provision of multisectoral services to survivors of sexual violence, including mental health and psychosocial assistance, especially in conflict-affected areas. The Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement is gradually implementing standard operating procedures for case management and clinical guidelines for responding to rape. In July, the Child Rights Law was enacted, criminalizing sexual violence and requiring the Government, the Tatmadaw and armed groups to take measures to protect children from sexual violence.

The draft law on the prevention of violence against women, developed in March 2013, is still pending parliamentary adoption, as are revisions to the Constitution and Penal Code recommended by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women ([CEDAW/C/MMR/CO/EP/1](#)).

## Recommendation

42. I urge the Government to implement the joint communiqué and action plan to prevent and address conflict-related sexual violence, in close coordination with my Special Representative and the United Nations country team. I further call upon the Government to advance relevant legislative reforms and to implement the recommendations contained in the report of the independent international fact-finding mission on Myanmar on sexual and gender-based violence, and to comply with the provisional measures ordered by the International Court of Justice. I urge the Government to grant humanitarian access to conflict-affected areas and to support the deployment of a women's protection adviser to the Office of the Resident Coordinator.

# Somalia



43. The protracted conflict in Somalia, coupled with the de facto control of certain areas by Al-Shabaab and entrenched gender-based inequality, have heightened the risk of sexual violence faced by women and girls, and severely limited reporting. In 2019, sexual violence continued to be employed by Al-Shabaab as a strategy of social control in the communities under their influence. Women and girls were systematically abducted and forced to marry combatants as a reward for fighters and an incentive for new recruits. This practice permitted recruits to enhance their social status by marrying women from more prominent clans. Many women and girls who managed to escape were subjected to threats and, in some cases, sexual exploitation, in refugee and displacement settings. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia verified cases of conflict-related sexual violence perpetrated against 220 girls and 19 women, attributed to: unknown armed actors (120), Al-Shabaab (26), Jubbaland forces (18), clan militias (19), Galmudug police (5), Southwest forces (4) and Puntland police (2). The Somali Police Force was implicated in 14 incidents and 32 cases involved members of the Somali National Army. Out of these cases, 78 cases (46 per cent) took place in Jubbaland State.

44. During her official visit in July, my Special Representative agreed with the Government to develop a new national action plan to end sexual violence in conflict, in order to advance implementation of the joint communiqué. Training on the prevention of sexual violence for Somali security forces continued in 2019, with 906 members of the national armed forces trained. In addition, 30 female police officers, operating in different districts of Mogadishu, were trained on techniques to investigate sexual and gender-based crimes. The national strategy to prevent and counter violent extremism, adopted in 2016, reflected consultations with women on their experiences as victims of terrorism and their roles in peacebuilding and reconciliation. Pursuant to the National Programme for the Treatment and Handling of Disengaged Combatants, construction began on rehabilitation centres for women ex-combatants, including those who have suffered sexual violence,

in Kismaayo and Baidoa, which will provide them with counselling, education and livelihood support. Impunity for sexual violence crimes remains a major concern, with different legal systems continuing to operate in parallel, often resulting in the release of suspects from police custody following mediation by traditional leaders. The sexual offences bill, which would ensure that rape is no longer classified as a “crime against morality”, has not yet been approved. Following consultations on the bill by Islamic religious scholars, provisions intended to criminalize child marriage were removed. In terms of service delivery, the lack of sustainable funding for personnel in Government health-care facilities compromises the availability of assistance, including emergency contraception and post-exposure prophylaxis.

## Recommendation

45. I commend the Government on its commitment to implement a new national action plan on ending sexual violence in conflict with the support of my Special Representative and the United Nations system, and call for the enforcement of the zero-tolerance policy on sexual violence by the national security forces. I reiterate my calls for the Government to adopt and enact the sexual offences bill, ensuring that any amendments thereto are in line with international standards.



UN PHOTO | ERIC KANALSTEIN

## South Sudan



46. South Sudan has endured protracted conflict and instability, during which crimes of conflict-related sexual violence have reached appalling levels of brutality, often committed with marked political and ethnic undertones. Despite explicit provisions in the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities between the Government of the Republic of South Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (in Opposition) and the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan prohibiting sexual violence, its use as a tactic of war remained of serious concern in 2019. The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) documented 224 cases of conflict-related sexual violence affecting 133 women, 66 girls, 19 men and 6 boys. Prior incidents, which had taken place between 2014 and 2018, affecting 55 women and 26 girls, were also verified during the period under review. Delays in reporting and persistent underreporting are linked with fear and stigma, limited humanitarian access and the occurrence of sexual violence in remote areas. The year under review saw a decrease in reported cases compared with 2018, which can be attributed to a reduction in armed clashes resulting from the implementation of the permanent ceasefire and the Revitalized Agreement. However, the proximity of cantonment sites to civilian population centres continues to create a significant risk of sexual violence.

47. The majority of incidents of sexual violence were recorded in Central Equatoria, where fighting between Government forces and armed opposition groups that remain non-signatories to the peace agreement intensified. Rape, sexual slavery and sexual torture were used for the purposes of intimidation and punishment, based on perceived political affiliation. Moreover, sexual violence was employed as an ethnically based strategy, aimed at transforming the demographics of the region. Other areas such as Unity (16 incidents), Upper Nile (16 incidents), Western Bahr el-Ghazal (11 incidents), and Western Equatoria (8 incidents) were affected by active hostilities, arising either from internal strife generated by opposition groups or clashes between local militias characterized by a large presence of armed youth. The South Sudan People's Defence Forces were implicated in 37 per cent of the cases. Cases were also attributed to members of the South Sudan National Police Service and the National Security Services. Major General Ochan Puot's forces allied to the South Sudan People's Defence Forces were implicated in 12 per cent of cases. The pro-Riek Machar Sudan People's Liberation Army in Opposition (SPLA-IO/RM) was responsible for 15 per cent of incidents. Other actors such as the National Salvation Front (NAS), community-based militias and unidentified armed men accounted for the balance of reported incidents. The Panel of Experts on South Sudan of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to

resolution [2206 \(2015\)](#) also reported on the use of sexual violence by state security forces against alleged supporters of NAS and civilians. Patterns of attacks against women while travelling to or from urban centres, or during home invasions, persisted in 2019. The violence did not spare pregnant women, or children as young as 3 years of age. In some cases, civilians were killed after being sexually assaulted. In August, four men in Upper Nile were beheaded after suffering mutilation of their sexual organs. Sexual violence against men was also carried out as a form of torture in detention and remains underreported as a result of entrenched sociocultural norms. Although the definition of rape enshrined in the Penal Code Act (2008) is gender-neutral, male survivors fear being classified as homosexuals and liable to prosecution under section 248 of the Code, which criminalizes “carnal intercourse against the order of nature”.

48. Humanitarian actors continue to experience attacks by armed groups. During the reporting period, the compound of a humanitarian organization was attacked in Upper Nile, and two staff members were sexually assaulted, resulting in the suspension of the organization’s projects. Perpetrators continue to exploit the prevailing climate of insecurity, limited state authority, and widespread impunity. Weak rule of law, militarization and permissive command and control structures contribute to the normalization of extreme violence, including sexual violence. Stigma and shame impede access to the limited services available for survivors, resulting in many untreated sexually transmitted infections, including HIV. In response, campaigns have been implemented to raise awareness of sexual violence and to promote HIV testing and treatment. With United Nations support, nine one-stop centres are currently operating in eight locations across the country, facilitating the delivery of holistic services. Their coverage outside of urban areas, however, remains limited. Initiatives focused on long-term resilience and income generation for women are scarce. With the aim of shifting harmful social norms that drive and

perpetuate sexual and gender-based violence, the South Sudan Council of Churches issued a statement, signed by influential religious leaders, denouncing the stigma associated with sexual violence and promoting social reintegration and cohesion.

49. Notwithstanding the persistent challenges, progress was also observed in 2019. The implementation of the action plans adopted pursuant to both the 2014 joint communiqué, signed by President Kiir and the United Nations, and the unilateral communiqué, signed by Riek Machar, leader of SPLA-IO/RM, continued to advance. With UNMISS support, over 700 officers of the South Sudan People’s Defence Forces and 150 SPLA-IO/RM officers were trained on relevant legal frameworks prohibiting the use of sexual violence, as well as on the principle of command responsibility. SPLA-IO/RM issued four command orders, one of which instructed commanders in Western and Central Equatoria to form committees to investigate alleged cases of sexual violence. The National Salvation Front, a non-signatory group to the peace agreement, issued two similar orders. In November, the South Sudan National Police Service also launched an action plan. In follow-up to the 2018 report by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) documenting abductions of women and children in Western Equatoria, my Special Representative met with Riek Machar in Addis Ababa in July to advocate the immediate release of all women and children held against their will on military bases of SPLA-IO/RM. On 29 July and 26 December, Riek Machar issued command orders calling for the release of these women and girls. In order to facilitate the full implementation of those orders, UNMISS and the United Nations country team continued to engage with local commanders so as to encourage the release and referral of abducted women and children to medical and psychosocial support structures. Political advocacy is ongoing to secure the release of all women and children held against their will.

50. Criminal accountability for crimes of conflict-related sexual violence remains extremely limited. During the reporting period, a civilian court sentenced six pro Taban Deng Sudan People’s Liberation Army in Opposition elements and one member of the South Sudan People’s Defence Forces for the rape of four women, with prison terms ranging between two and six years and the obligation to make payments in compensation to victims. Two of the perpetrators subsequently escaped detention. The investigation of the national committee established by Republican Order 25/2018 into the widespread sexual violence committed in Bentiu in 2018, was finalized in February 2019, but has not been made public. The Government presented some key findings from this investigation to the Human Rights Council, acknowledging only 16 incidents of rape, which were characterized as “isolated acts of random criminality”. The weakness of the formal justice system has increased reliance on customary and traditional mechanisms to adjudicate cases of sexual violence. In two such cases, reportedly perpetrated by SPLA-IO/RM elements against minors, a customary court in Western Bahr el-Ghazal sentenced perpetrators to pay compensation to the survivors’ families, in amounts ranging from 20,000 to 30,000 South Sudanese pounds (\$153 to \$230) and a fine of 3,000 South Sudanese pounds (\$23), in lieu of a three-month term of imprisonment. The creation of a specialized court to prosecute crimes of sexual and gender-based violence remains pending. The United Nations continues to support the authorities in convening mobile courts for prosecuting serious crimes in various parts of the country.

## Recommendation

51. I welcome the establishment of a Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity and urge all parties to fully comply with the provisions prohibiting the use of sexual violence contained in the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities and the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict. I encourage the Government to accelerate implementation of the action plans for the South Sudan People’s Defence Forces and the South Sudan National Police Service, to establish a specialized court to prosecute sexual and gender-based crimes, and to provide services, reparations and redress to survivors. I call for the immediate safe release of all women and children abducted during the course of hostilities.

# The Sudan



UNAMID PHOTO | MOHAMAD ALMAHADI

52. Following the fall of the President, Omer Al-Bashir, on 11 April 2019, and the subsequent formation of a transitional Government in August, there has been a reduction in the intensity and frequency of clashes between Government forces and the Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid (SLA-AW), as well as other factions operating in the greater Jebel Marra area. However, localized attacks against internally displaced persons and other vulnerable communities continued to expose civilians, particularly women and girls, to conflict-related sexual violence. During the reporting period, the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) documented 191 cases of sexual violence, affecting 135 women, 54 girls and 2 boys. Rape and attempted rape constituted 80 per cent of these cases. Incidents were attributed to armed nomads, members of SLA-AW and militia groups. Government security forces, including the Sudanese Armed Forces, elements of the Rapid Support Forces and the Sudan Police Force, were also implicated. A spike in rape and other forms of sexual violence against girls was identified in the second half of the year in the context of armed clashes between SLA-AW factions in the Jebel Marra area, aimed at gaining control of territory in the south-east. According to the Humanitarian Aid Commission in Central Darfur, an estimated 125 women were allegedly raped between May and June, following fighting among SLA-AW splinter factions in various villages of northern Jebel Marra. Survivors described the perpetrators as former SLA-AW combatants now affiliated with the Rapid Support Forces. UNAMID noted a peak in cases, allegedly perpetrated by armed nomads during the rainy season, to intimidate farming communities and impede critical livelihood activities. In July, a group of armed men launched a series of attacks against several groups of women working in farming areas of Arwala, Nang Kosi, Zari, Taringa and Boronga villages. In one such incident, an adolescent girl was reportedly raped.

53. Women and women-led organizations played a vital role in the peaceful demonstrations that began in December 2018. However, a number were also subjected to sexual assault as a form of political violence. In June, Sudan's security forces, including presumed members of the Rapid Support Forces, were identified as resorting to excessive force to disperse protesters, including the use of sexual violence. A total of 61 casualties were acknowledged by the authorities. In response, the Prime Minister announced the creation of a National Investigation Committee in accordance with the Constitutional Document to investigate. Several rape allegations were transmitted to the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan. The Government's Unit for Combating Violence against

Women and Children coordinated the provision of multisectoral services for survivors, with support from the United Nations.

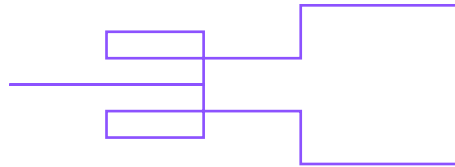
54. In the second half of 2019, UNAMID implemented community outreach activities in the greater Jebel Marra area, aimed at raising awareness among sexual violence survivors of the support services available. The United Nations supported extensive training for Sudanese civilian, military and police counterparts, to build their capacity to respond to sexual violence. In addition, 120 judicial officers were trained on enhancing accountability and access to justice for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) supported the establishment of 40 gender desks in police stations in four Darfur states, and supported training for 112 police personnel, prosecutors and social workers on the application of human rights standards in the investigation and prosecution of sexual and gender-based violence. Access to specialized medical care in several areas, including to Post-Exposure Prophylaxis, remains limited for sexual violence survivors, often resulting in HIV infections or unwanted pregnancies. The 2015 amendment to the Sudan Criminal Act, distinguishing rape from adultery, has not yet been widely disseminated among the police in remote locations where sexual violence has been prevalent. Moreover, the absence of a comprehensive witness protection and reparations law, inadequate legal aid, and the limited presence of rule of law institutions in remote locations, continue to discourage survivors from seeking justice.

## Recommendation

55. I commend the Government on the adoption of a framework of cooperation to address conflict-related sexual violence with my Special Representative on behalf of the United Nations. I encourage the authorities to ensure accountability for crimes of sexual violence and to develop laws on reparations for survivors and protection for victims and witnesses.



# Syrian Arab Republic



56. After nine years of armed conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic, ongoing hostilities continue to inflict disproportionate and devastating suffering on civilians. Incidents of conflict-related sexual violence continue to be reported, although the prevailing security situation and generalized context of structural gender-based inequality prevent the collection of comprehensive data. Available information indicates that rape and sexual exploitation are prevalent in internally displaced person and refugee camp settings and conflict-affected areas, and that fear and threats of sexual violence, including in the context of abduction or detention, has been a major factor in inducing displacement and driving families to flee their homes.

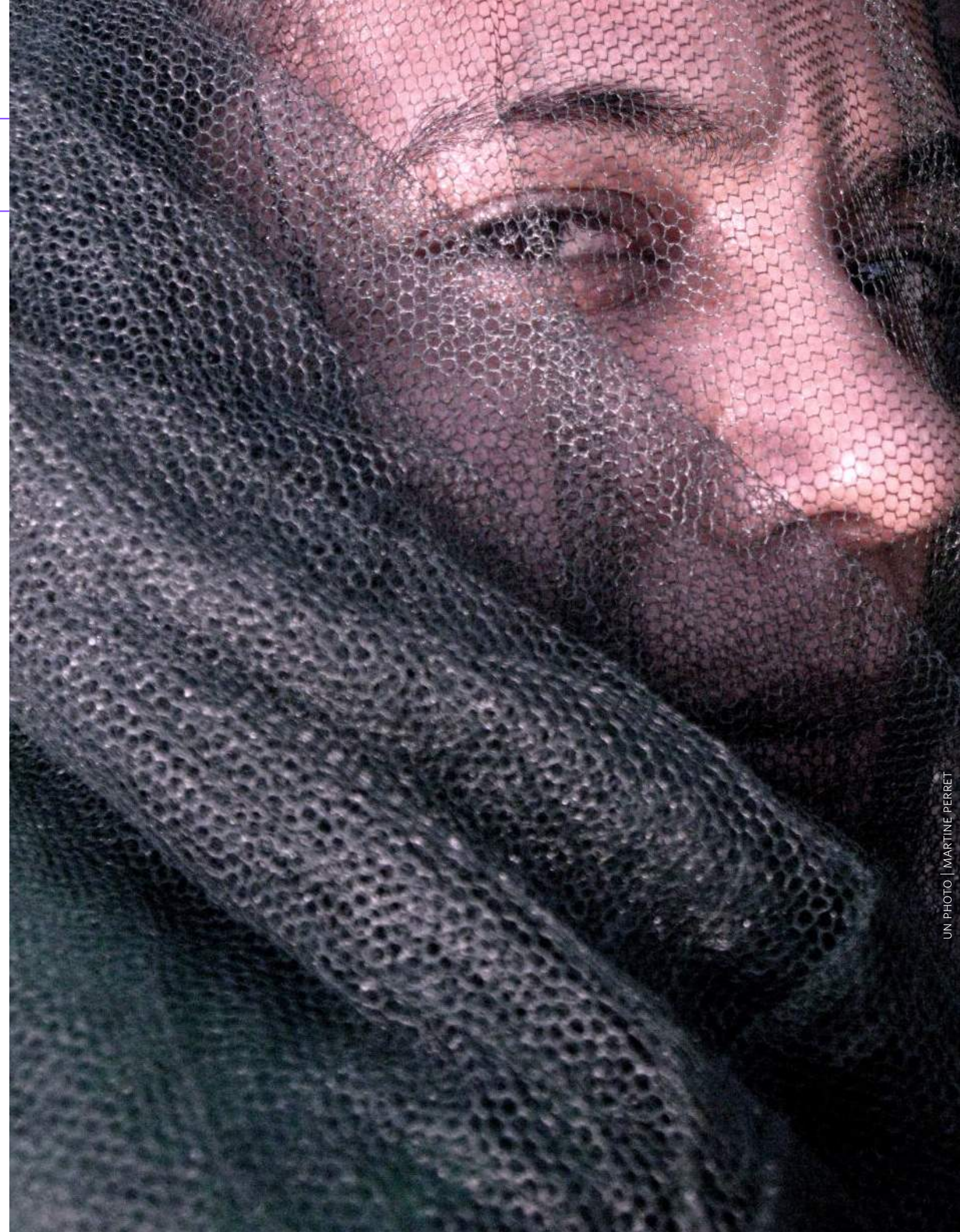
57. Humanitarian partners have signalled the use of negative coping mechanisms, such as the early marriage of girls in the name of physical and financial security and/or to overcome the stigma affecting actual or perceived victims of sexual violence. Threats of sexual violence have been documented as a recurrent pattern, circumscribing the mobility of women and girls. The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic reports that civilians have been subjected to various forms of sexual violence in government detention facilities, at checkpoints and in areas under the control of armed groups throughout the conflict (see [A/HRC/43/CRP.6](#)). This includes the rape of women and girls to extract information from them or to compel family members to surrender, as well as the systematic sexual torture of men and boys. Moreover, as fighting between the Syrian Democratic Forces and ISIL escalated in the north-east, larger numbers of survivors of sexual slavery reached the camp for internally displaced persons in Hawl, with 125 survivors having been identified to date. It was verified that 39 children born as a result of sexual slavery were subsequently left in orphanages by their mothers. A Yazidi woman who refused to abandon her children has remained in the camp, as she is therefore precluded from rejoining her community. Indeed, the lack of community acceptance of children born of rape is a factor inhibiting return.

58. The United Nations has supported capacity-building for local service providers on the clinical management of rape. Gender-based violence specialists note the limited availability of services in many locations, critical funding gaps, access challenges and a lack of respect for safety and confidentiality principles in certain health facilities. Justice

remains elusive, with not a single perpetrator having been prosecuted for sexual violence offences. Recently, however, the German federal public prosecutor indicted and arrested a former Syrian official, Anwar R., affiliated with the Syrian General Intelligence Service's Division 251, for more than 4,000 counts of torture as a crime against humanity, including rape and aggravated sexual assault.

## Recommendation

59. I urge all parties to the conflict, including the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, to immediately cease the perpetration of sexual violence and to ensure that victims of sexual violence committed by terrorist groups designated as such by the United Nations are treated as victims of terrorism and entitled to holistic support, including reparations and redress. I further call upon the parties to provide full cooperation in identifying missing, abducted and arbitrarily detained women and girls, and facilitating their safe return to their families. I recall that any decision regarding children should be guided by the principles of the best interests of the child and family reunification. I commend the countries hosting Syrian refugees and encourage them to enhance protection measures for persons affected by, or at risk of, sexual violence and/or exploitation.



# Yemen



60. Since the onset of the conflict five years ago, Yemen has faced the world's largest humanitarian crisis, with 24.1 million people in need of assistance and 14.4 million in need of protection. In addition, 3.65 million people have been displaced, with 46,660 households newly displaced in 2019. The humanitarian crisis and widespread violence have exacerbated pre-existing gender-based discrimination, leading to increased risks of sexual violence and more frequent recourse to negative coping mechanisms. For instance, in camps for internally displaced persons, desperate parents have viewed child marriage as a way to protect girls from sexual harassment and abuse. Thirty-three child marriages were reported in Sana'a, Aden, Ibb and Dali' Governorates in 2019. Efforts are being made to strengthen referral pathways for service delivery in these areas, though humanitarian actors continue to face severe access restrictions, particularly in areas controlled by the Houthis (who are also known as Ansar Allah) linked with collapsed rule of law and the proliferation of armed militias.

61. In 2019, women and children faced a high risk of sexual violence, particularly in displacement settings and areas controlled by parties to the conflict. The Panel of Experts on Yemen established pursuant to resolution [2140 \(2014\)](#), documented that women political leaders and activists have been systematically targeted by the Houthis since 2017. For instance, the arrest, detention and ill-treatment of 11 women, 3 of whom were repeatedly raped in custody, was documented. Female Houthi guards, identified as zainabiyath, were also implicated in abetting the rape of women, including during interrogations ([S/2020/70](#)). The Security Council adopted resolution [2511 \(2020\)](#), in which it, inter alia, condemned the use of conflict-related sexual violence in Houthi-controlled areas. The United Nations further documented six cases of conflict-related sexual violence against three women, one girl and two boys. In one of the incidents, the two boys

were raped by unidentified armed men in Ta'izz Governorate. Two other incidents took place in Aden, allegedly committed by Southern Transitional Council troops. Sudanese soldiers stationed in Hudaydah Governorate were responsible for one attempted rape in April and one verified case of rape in September. The Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts (Group of Eminent Experts on Yemen) documented 37 cases of sexual violence that occurred between 2016 and 2019, by members of the Security Belt Forces. Yemeni armed forces were also implicated (see [A/HRC/42/17](#)). Moreover, the Group of Eminent Experts reported on sexual violence in detention centres, including secret prisons, in Houthi-controlled areas. In one case, a boy detained in the Political Security Organization detention centre, was subjected to sexual assault, namely beatings on his genitals, forced nudity and threats of rape. The Group of Eminent Experts concluded that there are "reasonable grounds to believe that all parties to the conflict committed gender-based violence, including sexual violence".

## Recommendation

62. I urge all parties to commit to preventing and addressing conflict-related sexual violence, and to facilitating safe access for humanitarian service providers to deliver assistance to survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, and those at risk.

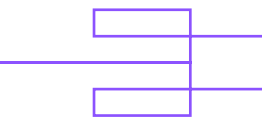


UNDP PHOTO | ALEKSANDAR ZAHORODNI

## IV.

### Addressing crimes of sexual violence in post-conflict settings

# Bosnia and Herzegovina



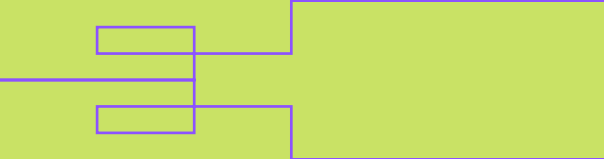
63. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, events such as the upcoming twenty-fifth anniversaries of the Srebrenica massacre and the Dayton Peace Agreement, which aim to honour the memory of the victims, can risk triggering retraumatization and pain among survivors of conflict-related sexual violence who have struggled to achieve recognition as legitimate victims of the war, and still often lack social support systems. In addition, the climate of political polarization, in which the pain of survivors is sometimes manipulated to fuel collective grievances, as well as continuing economic hardship and social rejection, have fostered transgenerational trauma, which is particularly evident in cases of children born of wartime rape. In response, the authorities have taken steps to improve the quality and expand the availability of medical, psychosocial, legal and financial assistance for survivors. Furthermore, the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Policy has expedited the implementation of the Special Category of Civilian Victims of War status, in order to encourage the registration of victims of wartime sexual violence who have not come forward to date. There have also been institutional efforts to foster a survivor-centred approach in service delivery and to uphold ethical best practice standards. The United Nations has forged strategic partnerships with faith-based organizations and grass-roots youth groups to promote transformative narratives around conflict-related sexual violence. This is part of a concerted effort to tackle harmful social norms related to shame and victim-blame, as well as the persistent threats faced by victims and witnesses who have testified in war crimes trials, as part of a broader public dialogue on the preservation of peace.



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photo irin | tommy trenchard

# Côte d'Ivoire



64. The political situation in Côte d'Ivoire has stabilized in recent years, with an attendant de-escalation in violence. The drawdown of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) in 2017, and the delisting of the Forces armées de Côte d'Ivoire from the annex to the annual report on conflict-related sexual violence, also in 2017 (see [S/2017/249](#)), are important signs of progress in the consolidation of peace. The monitoring and reporting of conflict-related sexual violence continues to be carried out by a national committee consisting of members of the security forces, the national human rights commission and civil society organizations, with support from the United Nations. In the lead-up to the 2020 presidential elections, this committee is taking measures to prevent renewed patterns of political violence, including sexual violence, by putting in place early warning mechanisms. Training and capacity-building to help the security forces deter and detect sexual violence has taken place, specialized gender desks have been established within the national police, and justice sector officials have been trained on relevant legal frameworks prohibiting sexual violence. Despite the publication of a presidential ordinance in 2018, granting amnesty to individuals prosecuted or sentenced for offences relating to the 2010-2011 post-electoral crisis, institutional counterparts affirm that perpetrators of crimes of international concern will not benefit from immunity. Although the Government has provided general compensation to many victims of the post-electoral violence, no cases of sexual violence committed in this context have progressed to trial and none of the survivors have received reparations.



UN PHOTO | SANDESH TIMILSINA

# Nepal



65. In Nepal, survivors of conflict-related sexual violence continue to face obstacles in accessing services, justice and reparations, almost 14 years after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (2006). Fears of social stigma and the absence of criminal accountability for serious crimes, including sexual violence, deter survivors from coming forward to seek redress. The national transitional justice mechanisms, namely the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Commission of Investigation on Enforced Disappeared Persons, established in 2014, have yet to resolve a single case. Out of the 63,000 complaints registered, 308 relate to conflict-related sexual violence committed during the conflict era by both government security forces and Maoist rebels. Advances in truth-telling initiatives and reparations, and efforts to identify the perpetrators of these crimes, have been limited. The Government is finalizing its second national action plan on the implementation of Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#), which incorporates the key priorities of survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, including the social reintegration challenges faced by women ex-combatants and children born of rape.



PHOTO IRIN | AMANTHA PERERA

# Sri Lanka



66. In Sri Lanka, the Government has made express commitments to address sexual violence, torture, abduction and intimidation, as part of the legacy of the conflict. It has established an Office on Missing Persons and an Office for Reparations, though the creation of a truth and reconciliation commission or judicial mechanism has been delayed. United Nations human rights mechanisms have urged the Government to ensure that reparations are made available to survivors of conflict-related sexual violence and that all perpetrators, including State actors, are held accountable and removed from the security apparatus.

## Recommendation

67. I urge governments of countries undergoing post-conflict transitional justice processes to ensure that survivors of wartime sexual violence have full access to national relief, recovery and reparations programmes on a basis of equality before the law, and that concrete measures are taken to end the vicious cycle of violence and impunity for these crimes. I further call upon these governments to ensure gender-responsive security sector reform, the provision of comprehensive services for survivors and children born of rape, and to prioritize efforts to alleviate stigma, as part of measures to repair the social fabric torn by conflict.

# V.

## Other situations of concern



# Burundi

68. The political and human rights crisis that began in 2015 remains unchanged, with heightened risks of sexual violence facing women and girls, including as a strategy of intimidation and punishment for their perceived political affiliation. The Commission of Inquiry on Burundi recalled, in its latest report, the political context in which crimes have been committed in recent years, including sexual violence ([A/HRC/42/49](#)). During the reporting period, a prominent opposition politician, Marie Claire Niyongere, was sexually assaulted and killed. Most of the cases of sexual violence were attributed to the security and intelligence forces and to members of the *Imbonerakure*, the youth wing of the ruling party. The *Imbonerakure* operate in both urban and rural areas, and in association with the national security forces, the National Intelligence Service and local authorities. Sexual violence has been committed in survivors' places of residence, in conjunction with beatings, abductions and the execution of family members. Women have also been raped in the course of their daily livelihood activities, as well as during attempts to flee the country, and in some cases upon their return. The Government has established four one-stop centres to provide comprehensive assistance to survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. Obstacles to human rights monitoring include the closure of independent local non governmental organizations and media outlets not affiliated with the Government. The Government also requested the closure of the OHCHR country office, which took effect in February 2019. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimates that more than 367,000 Burundians have sought refuge in neighbouring countries, and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reports that 1.77 million are in need of humanitarian assistance.

## Recommendation

69. I urge the Government to adopt measures to ensure access to justice for survivors of sexual violence and to hold perpetrators accountable, including members of the security forces and *Imbonerakure*. I call upon the Government to cooperate with United Nations human rights mechanisms, in particular the Commission of Inquiry.

# Nigeria

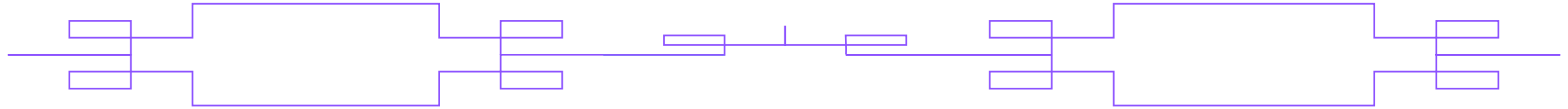


PHOTO | UNICEF NIGERIA

AFTER MORE THAN TWO YEARS OF BEING HELD HOSTAGE BY BOKO HARAM, IN NORTHEAST NIGERIA, ONE OF THE CHIBOK GIRLS RECOUNTS THE HORRIFIC CONDITIONS THEY EXPERIENCED.

70. Despite commendable progress, the Government continues to face challenges in countering the decade-long Boko Haram insurgency. The high number of security incidents attributed to two main factions of Boko Haram have continued since late 2018 in north-east Nigeria and parts of Cameroon, Chad and the Niger, resulting in many civilian and military casualties and a major humanitarian crisis. More than 9.5 million people across the affected regions require humanitarian assistance and protection, and an estimated 2.7 million have been forced to flee their homes. In this context, women and girls face a heightened risk of conflict-related sexual violence, including abduction, rape, sexual slavery and forced marriage. During the reporting period, the United Nations documented 826 allegations of conflict-related sexual violence, including rape and forced marriage. Sexual violence continues to be underreported owing to fears of stigma, gender-based inequality and social norms that silence the survivors in order to uphold family reputation. Of all the recorded incidents, 88 per cent were attributed to armed groups, including Boko Haram and the Civilian Joint Task Force. Security forces, such as the police and the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps were implicated in the remaining 12 per cent of cases. It was also reported that 281 of the incidents occurred when Boko Haram abducted women and girls from their homes, marketplaces or public transportation. Situations of rape, forced marriage, exposure to sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancies were also recorded. Forced and child marriage are used as negative coping mechanisms to alleviate economic desperation and to deter armed groups from abducting unmarried girls. Given the limited economic opportunities and restricted humanitarian access in areas controlled by armed groups, many women and girls have suffered sexual exploitation.

71. A total of 477 women and girls formerly abducted by, or associated with, armed groups benefited from livelihood support, which facilitated their acceptance by family and community members in the context of reintegration processes. During the reporting period, 217 girls were separated from the Civilian Joint Task Force and supported to reintegrate into their communities. Two girls were also released from administrative custody by the

military. Specialized training workshops for judges were conducted in partnership with the National Association of Women Judges of Nigeria and counter-terrorism investigators. Furthermore, the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons is receiving capacity-building support to respond to sexual violence in the context of trafficking. The United Nations is implementing an initiative known as the “Heroines of peace” to champion women’s rights and roles in building sustainable peace in north-east Nigeria. In 2019, a court martial instituted by the Nigerian Armed Forces convicted and sentenced one soldier for the rape of a 14-year-old displaced girl, marking the first such conviction to date. The Terrorism Prevention Act (2011) does not explicitly criminalize sexual violence as an act of terrorism, and counter-terrorism investigators and prosecutors have failed to address sexual violence as an integral aspect of Boko Haram ideology and operations, thereby impeding access to justice for survivors.

## Recommendation

72. I urge the Government to ensure accountability for crimes of sexual violence and holistic services for survivors. I encourage the authorities to effectively include sexual violence offences into investigations and prosecutions of Boko Haram militants, and to support the socioeconomic reintegration of women and girls who have been held captive by this group.



# VI.

## Gap Assessment Pursuant To Security Council Resolution 2467 (2019)

“**[D]**espite its repeated condemnation of violence, including sexual violence, against women and children in situations of armed conflict, and despite its calls addressed to all parties to armed conflict for the cessation of such acts with immediate effect, such acts continue to occur, often with impunity, and in some situations have become systematic and widespread, reaching appalling levels of brutality”

United Nations Security Council Resolution 2467 (2019)

73. The Security Council, in resolution [2467 \(2019\)](#), reiterates the grave concern expressed in resolutions [1888 \(2009\)](#), [1960 \(2010\)](#) and [2106 \(2013\)](#) that “despite its repeated condemnation of violence, including sexual violence, against women and children in situations of armed conflict, and despite its calls addressed to all parties to armed conflict for the cessation of such acts with immediate effect, such acts continue to occur, often with impunity, and in some situations have become systematic and widespread, reaching appalling levels of brutality”. In accordance with the Council’s request in paragraph 5 of its resolution [2467 \(2019\)](#) this section assesses gaps in compliance and the monitoring and implementation of commitments by parties to conflict.
74. The level of compliance by all parties to conflict with the resolutions of the Security Council remains low, after a decade of concerted focus. The present report is the ninth since parties credibly suspected of committing or being responsible for patterns of rape or other forms of sexual violence in countries on the agenda of the Security Council were first listed pursuant to resolution 1960 (2010). Since then, 65 parties (50 non-State actors and 15 State actors) have been listed across 11 countries.
75. Only one State actor, the Forces armées de Côte d’Ivoire, has been delisted, as specified in my report in 2017 (S/2017/249), on the basis of the implementation of commitments and measures outlined in Security Council resolutions [1960 \(2010\)](#) and [2106 \(2013\)](#). Ten parties from Côte d’Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Syrian Arab Republic were also removed from the list when they disbanded, ceased to exist, disintegrated or were absorbed by larger groups.
76. Consistent with the report of the Secretary-General ([A/64/742-S/2010/181](#)), a party can be delisted if the attributed systematic patterns of sexual violence have ceased according to information verified by the United Nations, and if measures specified in resolutions [1960 \(2010\)](#) (para. 5), [2106 \(2013\)](#) (paras. 1 and 10) and [2467 \(2019\)](#) (paras. 1 and 2) have been implemented. Consideration for the purpose of delisting requires a clear commitment from a party to conflict, which, at a minimum, includes a formal undertaking of time-bound commitments that may take the form of a joint and/or unilateral communiqué or framework of cooperation, with implementation plans that specify activities, benchmarks and timelines. To date, seven governments whose national forces (military, police or intelligence services) are listed have assumed formal commitments to prevent and address conflict-related sexual violence and are at various stages of implementation. This number represents all the listed State parties, with the exception of the Syrian Arab Armed Forces and intelligence services, which have been listed for eight years and four years, respectively, and have not made any commitments or adopted concrete and credible measures on their own.

## Gap Assessment Pursuant To Security Council Resolution 2467 (2019)

77. Eight non-State actors have issued unilateral communiqués specifically addressing sexual violence in accordance with Security Council resolutions, namely: pro-Riek Machar Sudan People's Liberation Army in Opposition and the National Salvation Front (NAS) in South Sudan; and in Mali the coalition Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad (consisting of the Mouvement national pour la libération de l'Azawad, Haut Conseil pour l'unité de l'Azawad, and Mouvement arabe de l'Azawad, led by Sidi Mohamed), and the Platform coalition of armed groups (consisting of Coordination des mouvements et fronts patriotiques de résistance, Groupe d'autodéfense des Touaregs Imghad et leurs alliés, and Mouvement arabe de l'Azawad, led by Ould Moulaye).
78. Forty-two listed parties have not assumed any commitments, with 30 (71 per cent) having been listed for over five years. It is notable that 26 of these parties are non-State actors. In all relevant resolutions, the Security Council expresses its intention to consider the application of targeted sanctions against those who perpetrate and/or direct sexual violence in conflict. Since its first consideration of the thematic agenda item on sexual violence in conflict, the Council has adopted designation criteria, which include designation related to responsibility for acts of sexual violence, in eight sanctions regimes, namely pertaining to the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Libya, Mali, Somalia, South Sudan, the Sudan and Yemen. Furthermore, in the context of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions [1267 \(1999\)](#), [1989 \(2011\)](#) and [2253 \(2015\)](#) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities, the Council, in its resolution [2368 \(2017\)](#), reaffirmed its "intention to consider targeted sanctions for individuals and entities associated with ISIL or Al-Qaida involved in trafficking in persons in areas affected by armed conflict and in sexual violence in conflict".
79. During the 10-year period of the mandate, there has been no designation of individuals or entities for sanctions specifically as a result of crimes of sexual violence. However, 21 individuals and four entities in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan, have had crimes of sexual violence added to the narrative accounts of their violations, although their designations were primarily based on other grounds. Furthermore, it should be noted that there is limited correlation between the parties listed in my annual reports and the individuals and entities designated by sanctions committees. Therefore, the referral of persistent perpetrators listed in my reports for the consideration of relevant sanctions committees is an important aspect of enhancing compliance. The use of sanctions and other targeted measures by the Security Council may increase the perceived or actual cost for perpetrators, thereby serving as a deterrent.
80. The resolutions on sexual violence in conflict have put in place a compliance framework that consists of: regular monitoring at the field level; reporting to the Security Council, including the listing of parties, reviewed in the format of an annual open debate; a mandate for my Special Representative to engage State and non-State parties to adopt prevention commitments; briefings to the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security, as established in resolution [2242 \(2015\)](#); and the expressed intent of the Council to adopt sanctions, as appropriate. Ad hoc invitations to my Special Representative to provide country-specific briefings to the Council and its subsidiary bodies, as well as initiatives such as the work of the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security continue to be important forums in which to address sexual violence in armed conflict and post-conflict situations and all other aspects of the women and peace and security agenda. At the same time, my Special Representative will continue to work with United Nations system entities, Member States, civil society and other relevant interlocutors to identify the best means and approach to consistently monitor the implementation of commitments by parties, the disregard and non-compliance of persistent perpetrators and the specific means by which to periodically bring to the attention of the Council detailed information on compliance and/or non-compliance. It is hoped that these overall efforts will help to close any existing gap in the compliance system, which is vital for a strengthening of protection and prevention, by putting greater scrutiny and pressure on listed parties.
81. The recommendations articulated in my previous report ([S/2019/280](#)) set out a comprehensive platform to address gaps in the overall response and ways to support local, national and regional efforts to meet the needs of survivors. Several of those recommendations relate specifically to how the Security Council can strengthen and monitor the implementation of commitments by parties to conflict. Therefore, I urge the Security Council and other relevant actors to ensure their full implementation. Moreover, in paragraph 2 of its resolution [2467 \(2019\)](#), the Council welcomed the efforts undertaken by my Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, the Team of Experts on Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, women protection advisers and other relevant United Nations entities in seeking time-bound commitments and implementation plans by all parties to conflict to prevent and address all forms of sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations, and encouraged a more systematic approach and the acceleration of such efforts. Given the considerable political and operational challenges related to such engagements, I urge the Security Council to continue to support these efforts, including through consistent monitoring of progress on the implementation of commitments.



# ANNEX

## List of parties credibly suspected of committing or being responsible for patterns of rape or other forms of sexual violence in situations of armed conflict on the agenda of the Security Council

The following list does not purport to be comprehensive, but rather includes parties in relation to which credible information is available. It should be noted that the names of countries appear only to indicate the locations where those parties are suspected of committing violations.

### Parties in the Central African Republic

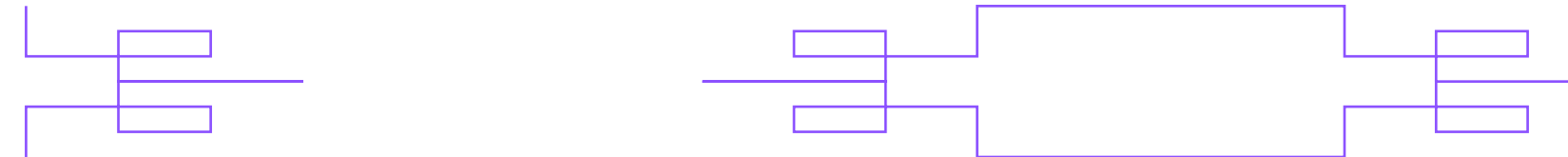
#### 1. Non-State actors:

- (A)** Lord's Resistance Army;
- (B)** Ex-Séléka factions: Union pour la paix en Centrafrique, Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique, Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique - Gula faction, Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique - Abdoulaye Hussein faction, Rassemblement patriotique pour le renouveau de la Centrafrique; Mouvement national pour la libération de la Centrafrique; Mouvement des libérateurs centrafricains pour la justice;
- (C)** Front démocratique du peuple centrafricain - Abdoulaye Miskine;
- (D)** Révolution et justice;
- (E)** Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation - Abbas Siddiki;
- (F)** Anti-balaka associated militia.

### Parties in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

#### 1. Non-State actors:

- (A)** Alliance des patriotes pour un Congo libre et souverain-Janvier;
- (B)** Alliance des patriotes pour un Congo libre et souverain-Rénové led by "General" Mapenzi Bulere Likuwe;
- (C)** Allied Democratic Forces;
- (D)** Forces pour la défense du Congo;
- (E)** Bana Mura militias;
- (F)** Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda;
- (G)** Force de résistance patriotique de l'Ituri;



- (H)** Kamuina Nsapu;
- (I)** Lord's Resistance Army;
- (J)** Nduma défense du Congo;
- (K)** Nduma défense du Congo-Rénové led by "General" Guidon Shimiray Mwissa;
- (L)** Mai-Mai Kifuafua;
- (M)** All Mai-Mai Simba factions;
- (N)** Nyatura;
- (O)** Mai-Mai Raia Mutomboki;
- (P)** Mai Mai Apa na Pale;
- (Q)** Mai Mai Malaika;
- (R)** Mai Mai Fimbo na Fimbo;
- (S)** Mai Mai Yakutumba;
- (T)** Lendu militias;
- (U)** All Twa militia.

#### 2. State actors:

- (A)** Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo\*;
- (B)** Congolese National Police.\*

### Parties in Iraq

#### Non-State actors:

Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant.

# ANNEX

## Parties in Mali

Non-State actors:

- (A) Mouvement national de libération de l'Azawad, part of Coordination des mouvements de Azawad;\*
- (B) Ansar Eddine, part of Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin;
- (C) Mouvement pour l'unification et le jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest whose former members joined Islamic State in the Greater Sahara;
- (D) Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, part of Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin;
- (E) Groupe d'autodéfense des Touaregs Imghad et leurs alliés, part of Platform coalition of armed groups/Plateforme des mouvements du 14 juin 2014 d'Alger.\*

## Parties in Myanmar

State actors:

Myanmar Armed Forces (Tatmadaw Kyi).\*

## Parties in Somalia

1. Non-State actors:

- (A) Al-Shabaab.

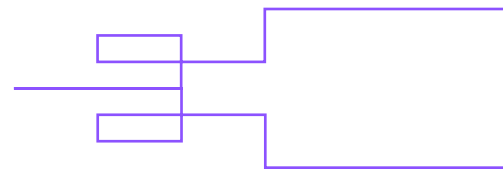
2. State actors:

- (A) Somali National Army;\*
- (B) Somali Police Force\* (and allied militia);
- (C) Puntland forces.

## Parties in South Sudan

1. Non-State actors:

- (A) Lord's Resistance Army;
- (B) Justice and Equality Movement;
- (C) pro-Riek Machar Sudan People's Liberation Army in Opposition;\*
- (D) Sudan People's Liberation Army in Opposition forces aligned with Vice-President Taban Deng.



2. State actors:

South Sudan Government Security Forces including:

- (A) South Sudan People's Defence Forces;\*
- (B) South Sudan National Police Service.\*

## Parties in the Sudan

1. Non-State actors:

- (A) Justice and Equality Movement;
- (B) Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid faction.

2. State actors:

- (A) Sudanese Armed Forces;
- (B) Rapid Support Forces.

## Parties in the Syrian Arab Republic

1. Non-State actors:

- (A) Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant;
- (B) Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham led by Nusra Front (Levant Liberation Organization);
- (C) Army of Islam;
- (D) Ahrar al-Sham;

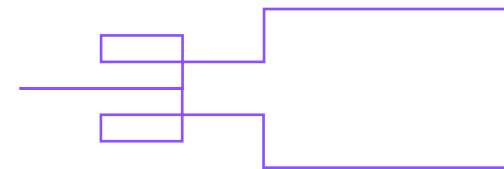
2. State actors:

- (A) Syrian Arab Armed Forces;
- (B) Intelligence services.
- (C) National Defence Forces and pro-government militias.

## Other parties of concern on the agenda of the Security Council

Non-State actors:

Boko Haram.





UN PHOTO | ERIC KANALSTEIN

The year 2020 marks the dawn of a new decade of action for the Sexual Violence in Conflict mandate, which was established through the unanimous adoption of Security Council resolution 1888 (2009). This eleventh annual Report of the Secretary-General on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (S/2020/487), submitted pursuant to Security Council resolutions 2106 (2013) and 2467 (2019), focuses on sexual violence as both a tactic of war and a tactic of terrorism and calls for the reinforcement of a vision based on the power of women as agents of change and amplifying the voices of survivors. The report spans 19 country situations, covering the period of January to December 2019, based on cases documented by the United Nations system. It includes 13 conflict settings, four post-conflict countries, and two additional situations of concern. It highlights patterns and trends of violations, as well as challenges faced and actions taken by States to protect women, girls, men and boys from such violence. To chart the way forward, each country section includes a targeted, actionable recommendation, building on the recommendations made in previous reporting cycles. The present report specifically calls for action in: (a) unpacking the concept of survivor-centered approach, as outlined in Security Council resolution 2467 (2019), to support victims to become survivors who are empowered to engage in political life and decision-making; (b) fostering compliance with international obligations by parties to armed conflict, particularly persistent perpetrators of conflict-related sexual violence; and, (c) ensuring accountability and promoting access to justice for survivors, including reparations and redress to facilitate their social and economic reintegration. This report should be read in conjunction with the previous report (S/2019/280) which outlined a comprehensive platform of recommendations to address gaps in the response and strategies to support local, national and regional efforts to meet the needs of survivors. In this new decade of action, the focus is on moving from commitments to compliance, and from resolutions to results.

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