

# Monitoring and Responding to Conflict- Related Sexual Violence

## Key Messages

- **Conflict-related sexual violence** is sexual violence perpetrated against women, men, girls or boys that is directly or indirectly linked to a conflict.
- Both State and non-State actors perpetrate sexual violence during armed conflict. Deliberately targeting civilians for rape **constitutes a war crime and may also amount to a crime against humanity**.
- A complementary set of **Security Council Resolutions now obligate States and the international community to monitor and respond to sexual violence during armed conflict**.
- **Monitoring conflict-related sexual violence informs advocacy and action to:**
  - Assist survivors;
  - Protect at-risk populations;
  - Prevent further perpetration; and
  - Foster accountability of perpetrators.
- **UNICEF holds key responsibilities within wider United Nations efforts to monitor and respond to conflict-related sexual violence.**

Conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) refers to rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, forced abortion, enforced sterilization, forced marriage, and any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity perpetrated against women, men, girls or boys that is directly or indirectly linked to a conflict.

Both State and non-State actors perpetrate sexual violence during armed conflict. Sexual violence in conflict is recognized as a serious violation of the most basic human rights and of international law. Deliberately targeting civilians for rape constitutes a war crime and may also amount to a crime against humanity. Cases involving sexual violence in conflict are now brought before the International Criminal Court and successfully prosecuted.

The effects of conflict-related sexual violence can be severe and life-long, not only impacting the physical and psychosocial well-being of those directly affected, but also fraying the social fabric of communities and hindering peace, security and post-conflict development.

A complementary set of Security Council Resolutions now obligate States and the international community to monitor and respond to sexual violence during armed conflict.

Monitoring – or analysis of the patterns, trends and dynamics of sexual violence perpetration and victimization – informs advocacy and action to:

- Assist survivors;
- Protect at-risk populations;
- Prevent further perpetration; and
- Foster accountability of perpetrators.

## UNICEF's role in CRSV monitoring and response

As a global leader and one of the largest operational agencies delivering humanitarian assistance and protection in conflict-affected settings, and with a mandate to promote the rights of children and women, UNICEF holds key responsibilities within wider United Nations efforts to prevent and respond to conflict-related sexual violence.

Improving action and accountability to end violations of children's and women's rights is a core component of emergency response within UNICEF's child protection work.

The specific responsibilities of each country office toward monitoring and responding to conflict-related sexual violence are shaped by the legal and normative frameworks – in particular, the applicability of Security Council Resolutions 1612 and 1960, as well as the presence and mandate of United Nations peacekeeping missions and other actors.

**Kit 3.3: Programming – Building Accountability, Monitoring and Responding to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence** contains information to help UNICEF country office staff understand the problem and the response to it, including UNICEF's different roles and responsibilities toward monitoring and responding to conflict-related sexual violence.

