

Statement by the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-based Violence The International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict June 19th 2021

Today, the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-based Violence in Emergencies ([Call to Action on GBV](#)), a global network of more than 90 states, donors, international organisations and NGOs, raises our collective voice to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict. Sexual violence is a prevalent form of gender-based violence in emergencies and conflicts. This is an important day to honour survivors of sexual violence and pay tribute to those who have devoted and lost their lives around the world, when standing up against these crimes and human rights violations.

Conflict-related sexual violence is a pervasive and life-threatening health and protection issue and a grave violation of human rights that is a threat to international peace and security. It disproportionately affects women and girls and is rooted in gender inequality and discriminatory structural norms. Conflict-related sexual violence is also a violation of international humanitarian law, and may constitute international crimes, such as war crimes, genocide or crimes against humanity. It can be employed as a cruel tactic of war, terror, political repression and torture. Like with all forms of gender-based violence, during the global COVID-19 pandemic and the further breakdown of systems, survivors face significant barriers to access to essential services, training of judicial and security actors has been suspended, humanitarian access has been limited, and sociocultural and structural impediments to reporting have been amplified. Reports of CRSV are numerous, outrage when it is reported is fierce, and yet CRSV persists. In fact, it is notoriously under-reported, like all forms of GBV, due to the fear of stigmatisation or retaliation, limited access to trusted service providers and impunity for perpetrators.

We welcome the numerous UN Council resolutions to combat sexual violence and the concrete work and recommendations by the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. We, the Call to Action partners, are committed to working together effectively to mitigating, preventing and responding to all forms of gender-based violence, including conflict-related sexual violence. Partners of the Call to Action are committed to the following, as outlined in the recently updated multi-year Road Map:

- To ensure that efforts to combat gender-based violence, including sexual violence, are integrated and implemented across all levels and sectors of response in conflict situations and crises.
- To promote survivor-centred access to justice and credible systems of accountability, which places the rights, safety and wishes of survivors at the centre of accountability mechanisms.
- To ensure all victims/survivors will be treated fairly, respectfully, equally, with dignity and without discrimination;
- To ensure that no action should be taken that could worsen the situation or trauma of a victim/survivor;
- To provide non-discriminatory access to specialized GBV-services, including medical and psychosocial care.
- To mainstream gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls throughout humanitarian action in conflicts and combat gender inequality, which is the root cause of violence against women and girls, including conflict-related sexual violence.

On this International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict, we call on all humanitarians to join us in achieving these key objectives, while reaffirming our own commitment to the Call to Action and to accountability to survivors of all forms of GBV. For additional information on the Call to Action and how to become a partner, please visit www.calltoactiongbv.com