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**Practical, cultural and
political roadblocks:**

**A way forward for
addressing the needs
of conflict-related
sexual violence
victims/survivors and
their children**

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CRSV	Conflict-related sexual violence
CSO	Civil society organisation
EVAW	Ending violence against women
IDP	Internally displaced person
NAPs-WPS	National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security
NGO	Non-governmental organisations
PSVI	Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative
SGBV	Sexual and gender-based violence
SMSG-SVC	Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict
UNSCR 1325	United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325
WPS	Women, Peace and Security

INTRODUCTION

Sexual violence is a widespread characteristic of conflict and post-conflict environments globally and within Asia-Pacific. Recognition of sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) in conflict has grown in recent years with national governments, civil society, the United Nations, practitioners and academics increasingly acting to prevent and respond to sexual violence and mainstreaming initiatives across different thematic areas and sectors.¹

Global actors including the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (SRSG-SVC) work to end impunity for sexual violence by assisting national authorities to strengthen criminal accountability, responsiveness to survivors, and judicial capacity.² The landmark Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative (PSVI) of the Government of the United Kingdom focuses on international advocacy efforts that are critical in fighting stigma and monitoring conflict contexts.³ At the national level, National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security (NAPs-WPS) are a core mechanism – encouraged by the United Nations Secretary-General, and supported by United Nations Security Council Resolutions – for states to implement activities that address conflict related sexual violence (CRSV) through a single framework that harmonises objectives across government.

While these remain vital global and national actions to eliminate sexual violence in conflict, the focus on advocacy measures has meant that often NAPs-WPS and other mechanisms have failed to deliver the practical and strategic responses most needed by survivors of CRSV.⁴ Physical harm including injury and reproductive health problems, and psychological impacts such as depression, anxiety, and self-blame are prevalent. Social impacts including stigma and discrimination can be pervasive in families and communities. These can cause economic effects such as loss of land access and livelihood production, and contribute to poverty.⁵ Even where support services are in existence, survivors may face barriers in accessing them due to unsafe security settings, inability to pay fees and gender norms that discourage survivors from seeking support.⁶ Ensuring access to psycho-social and health services, education, safe housing and land security, economic opportunities and tackling stigma, are critical in meaningfully responding to these impacts.

While pursuing formal justice processes may be the priority of the international community, many survivors seek the fulfilment of their economic rights and prioritise the state's fulfilment of their rights to a decent standard of living above other objectives.⁷ Yet satisfying these rights often

1 UN Action, Mapping the Global Policy Landscape on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, New York (2016).

2 The other priorities of the SRSG-SVC are: the protection and empowerment of civilians who face sexual violence in conflict, in particular, women and girls who are targeted disproportionately by this crime; to mobilise political ownership by fostering government engagement in developing and implementing strategies to combat sexual violence; to increase recognition of rape as a tactic and consequence of war through awareness-raising activities at the international and country levels; to harmonise the UN's response by leading UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict, a network of focal points from 13 UN agencies that amplify programming and advocacy on this issue in the wider UN agenda; and to emphasise greater national ownership <http://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/about-us/about-the-office/>.

3 Government of the United Kingdom Foreign & Commonwealth Office and The Right Honourable Baroness Anelay of St Johns DBE, "Baroness Anelay leads international call to end stigma of sexual violence", 23 September 2016, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/baroness-anelay-leads-international-call-to-end-stigma-of-sexual-violence>.

4 UN Women, Report of the Regional Symposium on National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security in Asia-Pacific, December 2016, <http://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2016/12/nap-report>.

5 Asia Justice and Rights, Surviving on their Own: Women's Experiences of War, Peace and Impunity, November 2014.

6 Shteir, S. Australian Civil Military Centre, Conflict-related Sexual and Gender-based Violence: An Introductory Overview to support prevention and response efforts, 1/2014, p43.

7 Asia Justice and Rights, Surviving on their Own: Women's Experiences of War, Peace and Impunity, November 2014.

remains secondary to advocacy efforts and pursuing accountability, resulting in the immediate and mid-term needs of victims/survivors and their children going unmet.⁸

This paper provides an overview of three key obstacles to better addressing victim/survivor needs. These barriers have been identified as areas where policymakers and civil society actors can adopt practical strategies to shift the focus of CRSV response to a more victim-centred approach.⁹ Firstly, the evidence base on which responses to CRSV can be designed must be strengthened through an increased understanding of victim/survivor needs supported by comprehensive research and data on CRSV in the region. Secondly, while stigma is recognised as a global barrier to addressing CRSV, adopting a context-specific approach to the social, cultural and religious obstacles to changing social norms must be prioritised. Thirdly, political commitment to responding to victim/survivor needs at the national level must be strategically built by encouraging engagement in multiple tracks of CRSV response simultaneously. This should not approach the implementation of accountability measures and formal justice processes as a precondition to the delivery of support services.

This paper is intended for the use of government actors, civil society stakeholders, service providers, researchers, conflict-victim representatives and advocates to provide strategic guidance on overcoming the roadblocks to addressing CRSV and adopting approaches that can encourage more victim-centred responses.

It offers suggestions for a way forward that recognises the need to build the internal advocacy of victims/survivors and create survivor-led responses. It concludes with a practical framework for building a strategic and effective national architecture of WPS policies and mechanisms, including NAPs-WPS, that can advance CRSV response and be locally implemented and harmonised with existing laws and policies, in order to deliver practical and meaningful benefits for victims/survivors.

1. CONTEXT-SPECIFIC APPROACHES TO UNDERSTANDING CONFLICT-RELATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE VICTIMS/SURVIVORS AND THEIR CHILDREN

THE CHALLENGE

Understanding the nature and impacts of CRSV is critical to designing and implementing effective responses for victims/survivors. Needed responses include a range of policy, legal and social approaches at the national and international levels to provide delivery of support services, strategies to address stigma, the establishment of judicial mechanisms of accountability, and formal and informal reparations. For each of the varied methods of addressing CRSV a tailored research or data collection process is needed to inform the development of evidence-based responses.

⁸ The term 'victims/survivors' is used to reflect the preferences of those consulted in the development of this paper. It reflects that those who have experienced sexual violence have different preferences for how their identity is reflected and referring to only 'victim' or 'survivor' may exclude those who do not identify within that category.

⁹ UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and the Government of the United Kingdom convened a joint Regional Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on: Addressing the needs of conflict-related sexual violence survivors and children born out of rape in National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security in Asia-Pacific, held in Bangkok, Thailand in January 2017. This paper highlights key themes that emerged from this discussion drawing from the expert contributions on the contexts of the Philippines, Indonesia, Nepal, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste.

But the lack of adequate data recorded in Asia-Pacific to date highlights that multiple difficulties exist in researching and understanding CRSV.¹⁰ One obstacle to conducting research is the social barriers that create difficulties for victims/survivors in accessing research and data collection processes. A second barrier to understanding the impacts of CRSV is created by practitioners and policymakers applying rigid definitions of CRSV and of who constitutes a victim/survivor that can exclude some individuals and courses of conduct from being recognised in the data and responses.

The social barriers that inhibit many survivors from reporting their experiences include stigma, fear of reprisals, and a lack of confidence in national institutions.¹¹ Fear that they will not benefit from justice options also deters many survivors from reporting. The Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 found that women do not report violence in conflict predominantly because of the lack of easily accessible services or ways to report safely, receive help and be treated with dignity.¹²

Groups in especially vulnerable situations can experience added burdens that render them invisible in the research on CRSV. Women in remote regions without access to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can be cut off from avenues for reporting. Ethnic minority and Indigenous women may also experience language barriers that inhibit their ability to participate in research if interpreters are not available. Victims/survivors with disabilities can be excluded from access to services or support that can adequately address their needs. For survivors that have been subjected to sexual violence because of their disabilities, this exclusion compounds their vulnerable situation.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugees are often susceptible to ongoing sexual violence. In **Myanmar**, the fragile security situation exposes women to threats of sexual violence.¹³ Sexual violence committed within IDP evacuation centres may be difficult to report due to limited resources, and the intimidation of continuing to live alongside the perpetrator.

The inhibitors to reporting may be even greater when researching children born of rape in conflict. While documentation of the experiences and needs of these children and their mothers is growing in some post-conflict contexts,¹⁴ in Asia-Pacific there has been minimal research conducted on their situation. Developing specialised skills and allocating resources to identifying children born of rape, who addresses their interests, and what their needs are, has been identified as a priority theme for research on sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict settings.¹⁵

Several other challenges in engaging with and better understanding victims/survivors stem from research and data collection practices that apply a limited definition or approach to concepts surrounding CRSV. One example of this is data collection practices for State records that categorise individuals into a single category of identity and may fail to identify CRSV victims/survivors. Official records may classify conflict-affected women in categories such as female combatants, female heads of households, or military widows. The fact these women may also have experienced sexual violence during the conflict can remain overlooked.

10 Davies, S. and True, J. Dispelling 5 Myths about Sexual Violence in Conflict: How can we do better with data on Asia-Pacific?, Spotlight on R2P, June 2014, <https://r2pasiapacific.org/filething/get/1425/Spotlight-SD-JT-Issue-9-June-2014.pdf>.

11 SC/2016/361, Report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence, 20 April 2016.

12 UN Women, Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, (Global Study on UNSCR 1325), 2015.

13 Asia Justice and Rights, *Surviving on their Own: Women's Experiences of War, Peace and Impunity*, November 2014

14 See for example: ICTJ: From Rejection to Redress: Overcoming Legacies of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence in Northern Uganda, October 2015, <https://www.ictj.org/publication/rejection-redress-overcoming-legacies-conflict-sexualviolence-northern-uganda>; Human Rights Watch: I don't think her heart will ever like this baby: Protecting children of rape, the invisible victims of conflict and political violence, 14 February 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/02/14/i-dont-think-her-heart-will-ever-baby>.

15 WHO and SVRI: A research agenda for sexual violence in humanitarian, conflict and post-conflict settings (2013).

Another difficulty in understanding the impact of CRSV in local contexts is that definitions of CRSV used for different purposes may cover only limited forms of conduct that can exclude some victims from its scope. For example, national judicial and truth-seeking mechanisms may use the acts of sexual violence that amount to a crime against humanity in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court within their own mandates of investigation. This lists “rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity” as prohibited acts. The United Nations Secretary-General identifies a wider range of conduct as expressly amounting to CRSV, listing “forced abortion, forced marriage and any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity perpetrated against women, men, girls or boys” in addition to the acts specified in the Rome Statute.¹⁶

However, if these definitions were to be adopted in a national context it is unclear whether this scope of conduct would encompass other forms of sexual violence that may be features of the conflict environment. In particular, if the qualification that sexual violence must be of ‘comparable gravity’ to the expressly defined violations is applied, forms of sexual violence that are prevalent within specific conflict contexts could be excluded on the basis that they are not equally as severe. This includes forms of SGBV, such as family violence and intimate partner violence. Conflict and post-conflict environments are often characterised by high levels of domestic violence exacerbated by weakened social structures and the normalisation of violence. In **Papua, Indonesia** this link has been observed as ‘layered violence’ where victims of violence later become subject to domestic violence.¹⁷ If the definition of CRSV applied by national judicial bodies does not include such conduct, acts committed within the private sphere may be systematically excluded. Other forms of sexual violence that could be excluded at the national level include acts such as sexual harassment at military checkpoints. In addition, practices including early marriage and early-cohabitation have been prevalent in conflict contexts including in **the Philippines** but may need to be specifically included within the scope of investigation.¹⁸ Forcing family and community members to witness the commission of rape is a common feature of CRSV where armed actors intend to destroy the social fabric and cause widespread humiliation. This ‘forced witnessing’ may be another form of sexual assault that might not be accounted for in some definitions of CRSV. Ensuring that the definition of CRSV used for legal purposes is reflective of the realities of the conflict is vital. This is because the formal findings of a judicial forum may be used to determine who is considered to be a victim/survivor that is eligible for reparations, or may inform programmatic responses delivered by government.

Understanding of what constitutes CRSV for legal, policy and social research and investigation purposes can also be restricted by adopting a limited approach to the temporal, geographic or causal link an act of sexual violence has to the conflict. While guiding principles may assist in establishing the parameters of what conduct will be sufficiently ‘linked’ to the conflict,¹⁹ difficulties can arise in determining when a conflict or post-conflict period is understood to have ‘ended’ or whether sexual violence occurring in a specific location is or is not linked to a conflict context.

¹⁶ SC/2016/361, Report of the Secretary-General on conflict related sexual violence 2016.

¹⁷ ICTJ, the Women Commission and the Women Working Group of Papuan People Assembly, *Enough is Enough! Testimonies of Papuan Women Victims of Violence and Human Rights Violations 1963-2009* (2012), https://www.ictj.org/sites/default/files/ICTJ-IDN-Enough-Women_Papua-Report-2010.pdf.

¹⁸ Report of the Transitional Justice and Reconciliation Commission, 2016, http://www.tjrc.ph/skin/vii_tjrc/pdfs/report.pdf.

¹⁹ SC/2016/361, Report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence 2016: “This link with conflict may be evident in the profile of the perpetrator (often affiliated with a State or non-State armed group), the profile of the victim (who is frequently a member of a persecuted political, ethnic or religious minority), the climate of impunity (which is generally associated with State collapse), cross-border consequences (such as displacement or trafficking in persons) and/or violations of the terms of a ceasefire agreement”.

Whether data collection and research of CRSV is being undertaken for judicial or truth-seeking purposes, or to inform the development of laws, policies and programmes, its scope should respond to local conflict-dynamics. This can help to ensure that acts of sexual violence and categories of victims/survivors and their children are not excluded.

A WAY FORWARD

The Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict 2014 highlighted that not only must comprehensive data be collected, but strong co-ordination and harmonisation between agencies and local organisations is needed to ensure integrated data, whether collected for criminal investigation purposes, informing programming, or contributing to other research objectives.²⁰ This co-ordinated approach should guide research initiatives to better identify victims/survivors in order to understand and respond to their needs. Recording the experiences of survivors can also build testimony in judicial and truth-telling proceedings, and be used by governments to fulfil their international obligations to document violations.²¹

Whatever the purpose, research projects should adopt an approach that does not treat victims/survivors as simply providers of evidence, but create a forum for testifying intended to increase their resilience. Research approaches should ensure that individuals, families and communities are engaged in a way that maximises their access to justice and minimises any negative impact the documentation process may have on them.²² To guarantee a 'do no harm' approach, researchers must ensure that the benefits to respondents or communities of documenting sexual violence are greater than the risks to them. Survivors must also have access to basic care and support before disclosing information about their experiences of sexual violence.²³

The safety and security of those disclosing information must be protected, and the confidentiality of their identities must remain secure. It is also paramount that the risks to survivors for participating in the research are appropriately assessed to determine whether it should be conducted. The potential for retaliation against participants by alleged perpetrators or their communities, re-traumatisation, exacerbation of stigma and social isolation, or loss of access to livelihoods are some of the potential risks research participants may face if their cooperation and their experience is not kept confidential. De-identified testimonials and conducting interviews in secure locations are methods of mitigating the risk of breached confidentiality. Researchers must question what benefits participants receive from engaging with them. Re-testifying numerous times to researchers can re-traumatise participants, while not seeing any positive results eventuate that impact their lives. It is also vital that those engaged in CRSV research receive specialised training to ensure that they are able to conduct data collection ethically and sensitively, including specific measures for research involving children. In **Sri Lanka**, the number of victims of CRSV reported during and after the conflict and whether they are also female heads of households, single women, IPD women, war widows or former combatants is sought as priority data with its collection to be accompanied by steps "to ensure gender-sensitive procedural safeguards so as to avert re-victimization".²⁴

20 Summit Report: The Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict, London (2014), p.20. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/390742/PSVI_post_summit_report_Online2.pdf

21 S/RES/1888 (2009).

22 Government of United Kingdom, International Protocol on the Documentation and Investigation of Sexual Violence in Conflict (2014): https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/319054/PSVI_protocol_web.pdf

23 WHO Ethical and Safety Recommendations for researching, documenting and monitoring sexual violence in emergencies (2007): http://www.who.int/gender/documents/OMS_Ethics&Safety10Aug07.pdf

24 CEDAW/C/LKA/Q/8, CEDAW Committee List of issues and questions in relation to the eighth periodic report of Sri Lanka, 29 July 2016.

Research approaches must also recognise that a lack of trust from victims/survivors that their needs will be met operates as a deterrent to reporting and reinforces their silence. Other existing challenges such as stigma compound this silence and must be addressed simultaneously to shift the conditions that cause survivors not to be engaged with. Where support mechanisms such as GBV crisis hotlines, community-based care, and confidential and accessible trauma and multi-sectoral services are made available, reporting of survivors increases.²⁵ This highlights that while data is needed to build well-informed response services, failing to establish services before data is collected can reinforce the conditions that make survivors reluctant to report.

To improve understanding and better respond to the needs of conflict-related sexual violence victims/survivors and their children:

- Recognise the diverse identities that victims/survivors have, and that the vulnerable situations they are placed in may be compounded by multiple categories of identity;
- Adopt a context-specific approach to the scope of CRSV being investigated or researched, and design approaches inclusive of those impacted to ensure research meets their needs and advances objectives that they will benefit from;
- Implement ethical and specialised research approaches, that prioritise the safety, security and confidentiality of participants;
- Do not delay the establishment of basic care and physical and psycho-social services until all data has been collected, as multiple tracks of engaging with victims/survivors can be progressed simultaneously and the availability of support mechanisms increases reporting rates.



²⁵ SC/2016/361, Report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence, 20 April 2016.

2. UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION TOWARDS VICTIMS/SURVIVORS AND PROMOTING COMMUNITY-LED ACTION

THE CHALLENGE

A fundamental barrier to engaging with victims/survivors is that the stigmatisation of sexual violence contributes to violations remaining unreported. This stigma is largely a product of social attitudes that blame the victim-survivor for the violation and suggest they have given the perpetrator cause to sexually assault them. Stigma also draws from cultural norms attached to women's and men's sexual behaviour, in which women's virtue is associated with their sexual purity. In the context of conflict and post-conflict settings, the stigma of having experienced sexual violence can be enhanced by the stain of having been associated with armed actors. As a result, survivors of sexual violence often prefer to maintain silence rather than report the violation. For women and girls, this commonly reflects a fear of being blamed as responsible for the offending. Men and boys often remain silent for fear of being labelled as weak, or perceived as emasculated.²⁶

The commission of CRSV is often driven by a motivation to disrupt social cohesion. The stigmatisation of victims/survivors operates as a continuing impact of this intention. In **the Philippines**, sexual violence against women and girls was in many instances intended to destroy 'the moral fabric' of society where women are seen as 'bearers of honour and culture'.²⁷ Tackling the social, cultural and religious factors that perpetuate stigma are a measure of generating community recovery from the impacts of the conflict as a whole.

Addressing stigma through deepened engagement with communities is critical for two primary reasons. Firstly, discrimination experienced by victims/survivors due to stigma in itself limits the ability of survivors to receive full and equal treatment in their societies. Survivors may be subjected to a range of discriminatory and harmful behaviours including social ostracism, rejection by spouses and family members, and loss of marital prospects. They may be expelled from their homes, consigning them to poverty and homelessness. Women have reported being subjected to physical violence by their husbands as punishment for having been raped by combatants.²⁸ In many countries in Asia-Pacific, practices such as ordering marriage between a rapist and victim are routine, as are providing monetary compensations—or 'blood money'—to ensure no process through the formal justice system takes place.²⁹ Secondly, the impact of stigma can result in discrimination from multiple spheres of society and inhibit the access of survivors to healthcare, education, justice and employment opportunities. Service providers may refuse to deliver support to victims/survivors due to social perceptions that cause them to lay blame with the survivor, or believe that sexual violence is a private matter. These cultural and religious beliefs contribute to the silencing of victims/survivors, with many placing the unity of their communities before their own well-being. In **Myanmar**, this is impacted by the Buddhist belief in *karma* that "negative experiences in one's life are considered the result of bad behaviour in previous lives, and as such, are accepted as fate".³⁰

26 Sexual Violence Research Initiative, Briefing Paper: Care and Support of Male Survivors of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (2016).

27 Report of the Transitional Justice and Reconciliation Commission (2016), http://www.tjrc.ph/skin/vii_tjrc/pdfs/report.pdf.

28 Human Rights Watch, Silenced and Forgotten: Survivors of Nepal's conflict-era sexual violence, 23 September 2014, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2014/09/23/silenced-and-forgotten/survivors-nepals-conflict-era-sexual-violence>.

29 See in the case of Myanmar, Women's League of Burma and Asia Justice and Rights, Access to Justice for Women Survivors of Gender-based violence committed by state actors in Burma, November 2016.

30 Women's League of Burma and Asia Justice and Rights, Access to Justice for Women Survivors of Gender-based violence committed by state actors in Burma, November 2016, p.5.

Victims/survivors may have multiple aspects of their identity that place them in a vulnerable position, making them further stigmatised and compounding their inability to receive support. For men and boys that have suffered sexual violence, social perceptions that they are emasculated and feminised, and fear of being labelled as homosexual, cause many to remain silent about the harm they have suffered.³¹ Women with disabilities, elderly women, LGBTI women, and ethnic or religious minority women are also less likely than other women survivors to disclose abuse due to fear of an increased risk of repercussions.³²

Female ex-combatants that have experienced sexual violence may suffer discrimination on multiple fronts. In **Nepal**, female combatants have been rejected by their families and communities after being raped by fellow combatants and becoming pregnant. They experience multiple sites of marginalisation as a combatant, a victim of sexual violence, and as the mother of a child born out of rape to a combatant.³³

For women that bear children out of rape during conflict, stigma towards both mother and child can have ongoing mental, physical and economic impacts. Mothers raising children born out of rape often live in extreme poverty and are ostracised by their relatives.³⁴ Girls that bear children from rape face additional social, cultural and religious challenges as they may be removed from school, and viewed as no longer in need of care by their communities and families. Children born of rape may experience rejection from their mothers and institutional discrimination that violates their rights across a range of areas. In some circumstances, the inability to establish paternity means that a birth certificate for a child born out of rape cannot be procured.³⁵ This may exacerbate the social and religious stigmatisation already attached to children born out of wedlock in contexts such as **Nepal**, where the absence of a father can mean they are unable to register citizenship.³⁶

A WAY FORWARD

The ubiquitous nature of stigma towards victims/survivors is widely recognised by international organisations and donors as a priority area for action to shift the attitudes that enable discrimination.³⁷ This global commitment must also be met with a deepened understanding of the social, cultural and religious contexts in which this stigma exists. In addition, practical measures for combatting stigma must engage a range of actors and facilitate community-oriented change that builds the internal advocacy of survivors. In some contexts, CRSV has been observed to normalise SGBV even after the conflict itself has ended. It can also destroy social cohesion, and threaten the emotional and economic structures of communities. Community-based interventions to address stigma can mitigate these long-term impacts of CRSV on communities.³⁸

31 ICTJ, *When No One Calls It Rape: Addressing Sexual Violence Against Men and Boys in Transitional Contexts* (2016), https://www.ictj.org/sites/default/files/ICTJ_Report_SexualViolenceMen_2016.pdf.

32 Ward, J. and UN Women, *Violence against Women in Conflict, Post-conflict and Emergency Settings, End VAW Now*, December 2013.

33 ICTJ, *Across the Lines: The Impact of Nepal's Conflict on Women* (2010), <https://www.ictj.org/sites/default/files/ICTJ-Nepal-Across-Lines-2010-English.pdf>.

34 Ward, J. and UN Women, *Violence against Women in Conflict, Post-conflict and Emergency Settings, End VAW Now*, December 2013.

35 Asia Justice and Rights, *Surviving on their Own: Women's Experiences of War, Peace and Impunity*, November 2014.

36 ICTJ, *Across the Lines: The Impact of Nepal's Conflict on Women* (2010).

37 Government of the UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office, *Towards Principles for Global Action: Preventing and Addressing Stigma Associated to Sexual Violence in Conflict*, 22 November 2016, <https://www.wiltonpark.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/WP1508-Towards-Principles-for-Global-Action.pdf>.

38 Jones, N., Cooper, J., Presler-Marshall, E. and Walker, D. *The fallout of rape as a weapon of war: The life-long and intergenerational impacts of sexual violence in conflict*, ODI (2014).

Practical measures to mitigate fear of reprisal and encourage reporting at the local level include awareness raising, behavioural change programmes, school-based interventions, and family education. These educational initiatives may also require building tolerance of different family constructs. For example, in the case of children born of rape, rejection by their mothers may lead to them being raised by grandparents, creating changes to their inheritance rights and family name. Service provision should be designed with the input of victims/survivors and communities to ensure that they are suited to the cultural context. Delivering economic empowerment strategies including livelihood support, skills and vocational training, cash transfers or microfinancing, can reduce stigma by encouraging women's decision-making and raising their social status. However, these must be designed in a way that promotes family and community benefits and does not foster resentment towards the recipient.

Provision of psycho-social support can assist in combatting the impacts of stigma both for survivors and for their families and communities. For male survivors, disclosure to a female service provider, researcher or interpreter may be resisted in some contexts, whereas in other cultures there may be reluctance to disclose in front of another man of their own religion.³⁹

Actions must also be targeted specifically towards children born out of rape to ensure they are free from discrimination. Creating protection mechanisms in schools and communities, and providing tailored support services should be adopted. These measures must be designed in a way that ensures the interventions themselves are not counterproductive by unintentionally building more stigma. Approaches such as granting scholarships to children born of rape need to be assessed for whether they will brand the recipient as a victim and inadvertently contribute to their social ostracism. Instead, initiatives that engage not just the individual but also the family of the victim/survivor, including through strengthening economic opportunities, may benefit the whole family, encourage reunification, and lessen stigma.⁴⁰

Engaging with a diversity of actors is critical to address stigma. While government representatives and civil society figureheads may advocate for the rights of victims/survivors, engaging community leaders who can exert influence at the local level is fundamental to changing the social norms that enable stigma to be perpetuated.

Faith-based organisations and leaders are powerful actors in promoting social cohesion. In **Bangsamoro, Philippines**, Islamic leaders issued a *fatwa* endorsing women's access to reproductive health services and condemning gender-based violence.⁴¹ Other faith-based approaches such as workshops, peer support groups, church gatherings, and prayer groups, have been found to have the potential to change social attitudes and provide increased support for survivors.⁴² However, in some circumstances faith-based actors can also promote traditional attitudes that foster gender inequality. Research and engagement with religious leaders must be undertaken to better understand the circumstances in which they combat, perpetrate or permit violence, and what their role is in responding to the ongoing impacts of stigma for CRSV survivors. This will provide a deepened understanding of how to engage with religious leaders to encourage positive change at the community-level.

39 Sexual Violence Research Initiative, Briefing Paper: Care and Support of Male Survivors of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (2016).

40 UN Women, War-time sexual violence survivors lead businesses and fight stigma, 5 December 2016, <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2016/12/war-time-sexual-violence-survivors-lead-businesses-and-fight-stigma>.

41 UNFPA Philippines, "UNFPA hails new fatwa on early marriage, gender and youth", 23 November 2015, <http://www.unfpa.org.ph/index.php/news/268-unfpa-hails-new-fatwa-on-early-marriage-gender-and-youth>.

42 The role of faith based organisations in preventing and responding to sexual, intimate partner and gender-based violence in conflict settings: A modified critical interpretive synthesis. Magner, K., Desrosiers, J.E., Blunt, I., Hawken, T., Brick, E. University of Otago for the Sexual Violence Research Initiative, SVRI (2015)

Engaging with the media and undertaking memory work such as documenting atrocities, can improve awareness of the violations committed during conflict and serve to de-stigmatise survivors.

At the same time as engaging with local actors, utilising these ground-level experiences to inform the development of policy can assist in ensuring mainstreaming of measures to combat stigma across sectors. Policy approaches can have an impact in mitigating the intergenerational perpetuation of stigma.

To respond to social, cultural and religious discrimination towards victims/survivors and their children:

- Build the internal advocacy of victims/survivors at the country level through community approaches to shifting stigmatising attitudes and tackling gender norms;
- Provide psycho-social support targeting victims/survivors and their families and communities that account for collective trauma experienced, and work to combat cycles of re-traumatisation;
- Provide for locally-led design of interventions to support survivors to ensure that interventions themselves do not inadvertently identify victims/survivors;
- Engage diverse local actors including religious and traditional leaders, and the media, in ensuring context-specific approaches to social change;
- Commit to policy measures that can facilitate efforts to reduce discrimination.



3. BEYOND ACCOUNTABILITY: A VICTIM/SURVIVOR CENTRED APPROACH FOR ADDRESSING CONFLICT-RELATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE

THE CHALLENGE

Over the past two decades, addressing CRSV has been focused on holding perpetrators accountable through the conduct of investigations and prosecutions. International criminal tribunals and hybrid mechanisms have conducted high-profile prosecutions of those responsible for facilitating and committing sexual violence during conflict, and truth commissions have taken place. In post-conflict and transitional settings, the international community continues to urge for formal judicial bodies to be established and accountability measures to be prioritised.

Ensuring that the perpetrators of sexual violence are held accountable for their crimes is essential to providing redress to those violated. But at times this focus on the perpetrator can obscure the other needs of victims/survivors. Additionally, it can create a political stalemate that deters governments from delivering much-needed support and services to survivors and their children. By making the pursuit of accountability a precursor to engaging in all other forms of addressing sexual violence, political resistance to establishing a truth commission or a formal justice process that includes sexual violence within the scope of investigation can mean that attention to delivering other forms of redress is neglected.

This reticence to address conflict-related crimes, including those of sexual violence, is in part due to state actors possibly having been involved in the commission of those crimes. In many contexts in Asia-Pacific, the military has been involved in the perpetration of sexual violence yet maintains a high-level of influence in the post-conflict period. This continued power makes the investigation and prosecution of their war-time actions unlikely.

State resistance to acknowledging CRSV can manifest in multiple ways. Weak legislative frameworks, institutionalised impunity for state actors by providing amnesties and enabling military courts to operate outside the state justice system,⁴³ corruption within the judiciary, and minimal implementation of international laws and standards—including of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)—can all reflect a failure of the State to take responsibility for violations committed during conflict. By failing to accept responsibility for addressing the violations committed during conflict, not only is justice denied but other immediate entitlements of victims/survivors are also ignored.

Increased political commitment is needed to advance mechanisms for receiving practical support to survivors beyond accountability forums alone. This political support is also vital to challenge the stigma suffered by victims/survivors and children born of rape by leaders speaking publicly on the issue, and supporting families and communities.⁴⁴

⁴³ See for example, Constitution of Myanmar, Articles 294 and 343(b).

⁴⁴ Summit Report: The Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict, London (2014), p.21.

A WAY FORWARD

While the need for accountability forums remains fundamental, reorienting the focus of the State to increase attention to the needs and rights of victims/survivors can ensure practical responses and services are received. Interventions can be engaged in on multiple tracks and can operate alongside pursuing accountability for offenders. These measures can function to build resilience, community cohesion, and contribute to sustainable peace.

One strategy to encourage action on CRSV is to engage in increased political advocacy, recognising the global importance of the issue. Global initiatives such as The Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict have been endorsed by 155 countries including several from Asia-Pacific.⁴⁵ Ministers recognised that a co-operative approach to addressing sexual violence in armed conflict, which is often not considered a priority in the face of other pressing security and conflict concerns, would bring greater impact. This improved co-ordination, particularly in support of the work of the United Nations and other multilateral organisations, is vital to improving global efforts.⁴⁶ Affirming their commitment to the Declaration, the Foreign Ministers of **Indonesia, the Philippines and Timor-Leste** publicly emphasised their determination to accelerate efforts to address sexual violence in armed conflict through increased access to justice, including: ensuring accountability for the perpetrators and reparations and rehabilitation for victims; and to provide better access to comprehensive services, such as food, shelter, health care, psycho-social care and education, during and in the aftermath of conflict.⁴⁷ This signifies an encouraging commitment at the global level that must now be coupled with practical measures and national-level policies to ensure that these same actions are afforded to those in their own countries.

The national-level recognition of CRSV is making slow progress in several settings in the region. In **Myanmar**, the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement 2015 expressly mandated that sexual violence must not be committed under the terms of the ceasefire.⁴⁸ In **Nepal**, formal recognition of the victims of conflict-related sexual violence has been recommended as a critical political commitment to provide redress for survivors.⁴⁹ The Government of Nepal has responded to this by committing to the development of its second NAP-WPS having an emphasis on addressing CRSV.

Political sensitivities to acknowledging the occurrence of CRSV should not inhibit the rights of survivors to receive support and social services that can alleviate the physical and mental impacts of their experiences, and economic opportunities to counter poverty. Services can be strategically offered to target communities, and psycho-social support and sexual and reproductive healthcare made available to communities affected by conflict, but without needing formal recognition that the target recipients are conflict-affected. Government social service agencies can use data highlighting the need for these services in specific communities without needing to label them as 'conflict interventions'. Such strategic actions should not be understood to detract from or undermine the necessity of accountability mechanisms, formal apologies, and State acknowledgement

45 A Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/244849/A_DECLARATION_OF_COMMITMENT_TO_END_SEXUAL_VIOLENCE_IN_CONFLICT__TO_PRINT....pdf; G7 Report on the Implementation of the G8 Declaration on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict, <http://www.g8.utoronto.ca/foreign/151125-preventing-sexual-violence.html>

46 Declaration on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict, Adopted by G8 Foreign Ministers, London, 11 April 2013.

47 Joint Statement by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, the Philippines and Timor-Leste on Preventing and Addressing Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict, June 2014.

48 Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement 2015; UN Women Myanmar, The Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement in Myanmar: A Gender Equality and Women's Rights Analysis (2016), <http://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2017/02/the-nationwide-ceasefire-agreement-in-myanmar>.

49 SC/2016/361, Report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence, 20 April 2016.

and acceptance of responsibility for CRSV. Instead, they function parallel to the pursuit of those objectives and may work to sensitise the Government to the prevalence of CRSV and needs of victims/survivors, and can contribute to formal processes becoming more politically viable.

To promote a victim-centric approach that enables the delivery of support and services:

- Reorient advocacy on CRSV to push for the needs of victims/survivors to be met and not dependent on an accountability process taking place first;
- Build political commitment to tackle CRSV at the national and international levels, including through official recognition of atrocities, the establishment of truth commissions and transitional justice mechanisms, delivery of reparations, and public advocacy;
- In the absence of national acknowledgement of the incidence of CRSV, identify target communities for response interventions and strategically deliver support through sectoral service provision frameworks.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CREATING AN EFFECTIVE NATIONAL ARCHITECTURE: A FRAMEWORK OF ACTION TO DELIVER MEANINGFUL RESPONSES FOR CRSV VICTIMS/SURVIVORS AND THEIR CHILDREN

This paper highlights that addressing the needs of victims/survivors and their children through better understanding their needs, combatting stigma, pursuing accountability for the perpetration of sexual violence, and ensuring overall access to and benefits from support and services must all be progressed simultaneously. Making action on one measure contingent on progress on another measure risks stalling all objectives from moving forward. A practical and well-coordinated framework for implementation of these measures can help deliver benefits in a cohesive manner and can promote women's agency and inclusion.

Three stages of action can be advanced to design and implement these measures in a way that benefits victims/survivors. Firstly, an effective, context-specific architecture of mechanisms, frameworks and laws that promote WPS commitments and initiatives on CRSV must be developed. This architecture can involve National Action Plans, transitional justice processes, or laws and policies that are strategic and responsive to the political and social environment. Secondly, the harmonisation of these WPS mechanisms with each-other, and with other existing laws and policies, can create a coherent operating space. Thirdly, this coherent and locally reflective operating space should be used to deliver meaningful and impactful responses for survivors that reflect community needs.

STEP 1: CREATE A STRATEGIC AND NATIONALLY EFFECTIVE WPS ARCHITECTURE FOR RESPONDING TO CRSV

Establishing the framework for advancing WPS commitments, including tackling CRSV, requires building mechanisms, policies and laws that provide mandates and forums to enable the delivery of responses. A NAP-WPS is a single cohesive approach that can address the spectrum of WPS concerns. Yet in contexts where there is a lack of political will to support a NAP-WPS, or an inability to ensure its implementation and monitoring, alternate means of addressing CRSV may be more strategic in the short-term. A national WPS framework that facilitates the delivery of responses to victims/survivors may include all of the options below, only some of them, or an alternate combination of policies, laws, and mechanisms:

National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security

NAPs-WPS are designed to provide a coherent national approach to the implementation of WPS objectives and commitments under UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions by integrating these commitments into national policy. They have been adopted both by conflict-affected countries and regions, and by those countries that focus their WPS activity on maintaining international peace and security and preventing internal conflicts through conflict resolution, preventive diplomacy, peace-keeping, and post-conflict recovery initiatives. As of April 2017, nine countries in the Asia-Pacific region have adopted a NAP-WPS.⁵⁰

NAPs-WPS are a framework for governments and their partners to identify priorities, determine responsibilities, allocate resources, and initiate strategic actions within a defined timeframe. To encourage coherent, targeted and impactful action, NAPs-WPS require strong leadership and coordination that promotes implementation; inclusive processes that enable the participation of

⁵⁰ Afghanistan, Australia, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Nepal, New Zealand, the Philippines, Timor-Leste.

CSOs at all stages of the NAP-WPS cycle; predictable and sustainable financing through costing and allocating budgets for NAP-WPS delivery; robust frameworks for monitoring, reporting and evaluation; and flexibility to adapt to emerging situations.⁵¹ NAPs-WPS can design initiatives for responding to CRSV, particularly the provision of psycho-medical and psycho-social services, and data collection. Governments and CSOs can collaborate in providing social services.⁵²

NAPs-WPS can also support an incremental approach for building political support to address CRSV. In **Nepal**, the first NAP-WPS paid minimal attention to CRSV. But under the current development of the second NAP-WPS, the Government has made clear that CRSV victims/survivors will be the primary beneficiaries. This is in part because the first NAP-WPS was identified as a global good practice example of inclusive design, and this generated the political will to further WPS commitments.⁵³

Transitional justice approaches and truth forums

Transitional justice forums and processes can ensure victims/survivors receive redress and reflect their rights and perspectives. National consultations, truth-seeking processes, criminal justice proceedings, reparations, and institutional reform can all respond to CRSV through engaging survivors and delivering responses that promote empowerment, recognition, and redress.⁵⁴

In Asia-Pacific, a number of past and ongoing truth-seeking processes have included CRSV within their scope of enquiry. In **Sri Lanka**, a Truth Commission has been committed to and a reparations programme is being pursued by civil society to compensate CRSV survivors for the economic effects of sexual violence on victims from lost livelihoods, diminished marriage prospects, social ostracisation, interrupted schooling, and psychological trauma.⁵⁵ In **Aceh**, Indonesia the formation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is also progressing.⁵⁶ In **Timor-Leste**, the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation found that rape was committed as a crime against humanity and made specific recommendations to eliminate GBV and provide support to women.⁵⁷ This truth commission preceded Timor-Leste's development of a NAP-WPS, which now incorporates actions based on the truth commission findings.

Globally, there has been increased political willingness to respond to CRSV through delivering reparations to survivors.⁵⁸ These schemes are intended to deliver justice by ensuring restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition. Reparations should account for the gendered-nature of the harm suffered by both males and females, and should be transformative in addressing gender inequalities in the community.⁵⁹ The design of reparations must also be interpreted in a broad way that focuses on being gender-sensitive and responsive to the realities of victims/survivors' lives.⁶⁰

International mechanisms including CEDAW

51 UN Women, Global Study on UNSCR 1325 (2015).

52 UN Women, Report of the Asia-Pacific Symposium on National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security, December 2016.

53 UN Women, Global Study on UNSCR 1325 (2015).

54 OHCHR, Sexual and gender-based violence in the context of transitional justice, October 2014, http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Women/WRGS/OnePagers/Sexual_and_gender-based_violence.pdf.

55 Centre for Policy Alternatives, Accountability and Reparations for Victims of Conflict Related Sexual Violence in Sri Lanka, July 2016.

56 Amnesty International, "Indonesia: Appointment of Aceh truth commission selection team a step closer to truth and reparation for victims", 30 November 2015, <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/ASA2129762015ENGLISH.pdf>.

57 Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation, *Chega! Report* (2005), <http://www.cavr-timorleste.org/en/chegaReport.htm>

58 UN Women, Global Study on UNSCR 1325, p.117.

59 Guidance Note of the Secretary-General on Reparations for Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, June 2014.

60 UN Women, *The Conflict Did Not Bring Us Flowers: The need for comprehensive reparations for survivors of conflict-related*

International commitments and processes such as the Universal Periodic Review and CEDAW provide frameworks of accountability for the human rights of survivors that the State is obliged to implement at the national level. CEDAW General Recommendation 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations, is one international tool that can complement WPS commitments in countries with a NAP-WPS and can guide their content.⁶¹ It also provides a complementary method of implementing the WPS agenda in those countries that have not yet developed a NAP but have ratified CEDAW. It can also be used by civil society to monitor the delivery of CRSV responses as part of the State's international obligations.

The CEDAW Committee has urged a range of actions in Asia-Pacific to respond to CRSV. These include recommending a comprehensive programme of transformative reparations that addresses violence against women and girls in **Timor-Leste**.⁶² The Committee has encouraged repealing laws that perpetuate impunity for sexual violence committed during and after conflict and ensuring that shelters are adequately equipped and available to women who have suffered SGBV in **Myanmar**.⁶³ It has also urged taking comprehensive measures to provide medical and psychological support to women victims of sexual violence committed during conflict and to establish counselling centres in **Indonesia**.⁶⁴

STEP 2: HARMONISE INITIATIVES ACROSS GOVERNMENT TO ENABLE COORDINATED RESPONSES TO VICTIM/SURVIVOR NEEDS THAT CAN BE DELIVERED AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

Frameworks and mechanisms that advance WPS objectives must be harmonised with existing government initiatives to ensure coherent implementation across sectors. Strategic engagement with gender equality and women's empowerment activities, including the Ending Violence Against Women (EVAW) agenda, can encourage the mainstreaming of CRSV responses throughout government action. These coordinated interventions must be adequately resourced and developed in a way that will deliver benefits to victims/survivors at the local level:

Coordination of government initiatives including policies, plans and laws that advance the gender equality and women's empowerment agenda

Measures to respond to CRSV, including through a NAP-WPS, must be aligned with broader gender equality and women's empowerment initiatives to address the link between women's rights and protections in conflict as in peacetime.

Linking a NAP-WPS to existing laws and legislative priorities is one way in which objectives can be harmonised. In **Indonesia**, the NAP-WPS cross-references the Law on Social Conflict Management and laws implementing international human rights commitments.⁶⁵ NAPs-WPS can also prompt legislative and administrative amendments and change to create a more integrated overall framework. **Nepal** has noted that the NAP-WPS is guiding the amendment of legal provisions to

sexual violence in Kosovo (2016); UN Women, *A Window of Opportunity: Making Transitional Justice Work for Women* (2012).

61 CEDAW/C/GC/30, CEDAW General Recommendation No.30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict, and post-conflict situations, 18 October 2013.

62 CEDAW/C/TLS/CO/2-3, Concluding Observations on the Combined second and third periodic reports of Timor-Leste, 24 November 2015 at 19(c).

63 CEDAW/C/MMR/CO/4-5, Concluding Observations on the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Myanmar, 25 July 2016, at 27(b) and (e).

64 CEDAW/C/IDN/CO/6-7, Concluding Observations on the combined sixth and seventh periodic report of Indonesia, July 2012 at 28(c).

65 The National Action Plan for The Protection and Empowerment of Women and Children During Social Conflict of 2014-2019,

allow for prosecution of sexual violence during the conflict and changes to statutory limitations in existing laws for filing complaints.⁶⁶

NAPs-WPS can also be linked to other National Action Plans. In **Sri Lanka**, the NAP-WPS is being developed to work alongside the National Action Plan on Sexual and Gender Based Violence, which focuses on mobilising women's groups to prevent sexual and gender-based violence, and to work with men and boys to promote positive, non-violent values.⁶⁷ Sri Lanka also has a GBV National Action Plan and national policies targeting female heads of households, presenting opportunities to coordinate actions that address CRSV.

For countries without a NAP-WPS such as **Myanmar**, other frameworks such as the National Action Plan on Women's Advancement can be engaged with to promote action on the empowerment of all women, including those impacted by CRSV.

In environments where acknowledging CRSV may be lacking political support, delivering responses through ERAW initiatives can present a useful entry point. The peacetime occurrence of VAW is increasingly accepted as impeding women's human rights and is an area in which States are often willing to take strong action. In many countries in Asia-Pacific, VAW is tackled through the development of national plans and policies,⁶⁸ engagement with advocacy campaigns to shift social attitudes that legitimise violence against women,⁶⁹ and making public statements of commitment.⁷⁰ Yet these initiatives are largely focused on current victims of violence and rarely target those that have experienced sexual violence during times of conflict. In **Timor-Leste**, the government's domestic violence strategy focuses on the delivery of immediate responses such as emergency healthcare and crisis accommodation. However, the ongoing needs of women victims of conflict in relation to housing, chronic health conditions, psycho-social support and economic empowerment are not accounted for.⁷¹ Both Government and civil society advocates can emphasise that the needs of survivors must be met regardless of who the perpetrator of sexual violence was, to push for the review and amendment of existing ERAW initiatives and laws to be inclusive of CRSV.

Cost and finance actions and attach budgets to action plans and policies to ensure they can be delivered

As part of its obligation to citizens to provide social services, healthcare, and access to justice, the primary responsibility for responding to the needs of victims/survivors rests with the government. Prioritising the allocation of resources to these services is often a challenge for governments and providing them in the context of CRSV can pose further barriers.

Gender-responsive budgeting approaches are a useful tool in ensuring that plans and policies to address CRSV are sufficiently resourced. In the **Philippines**, it is mandated that of the total budget given to local governments, 5 percent must be used on gender-responsive programmes.

Indonesia.

66 CEDAW/C/NPL/CO/4-5/Add.1, Information provided by Nepal in follow-up to the concluding observations, 23 April 2015, para 17.

67 Statement of the Honourable Chandrani Bandara, Ministry of Women's Affairs, Sri Lanka, 13 July 2016 in UN Women Report of the Asia-Pacific Symposium on National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security, December 2016.

68 For example, Timor-Leste's National Action Plan on Gender Based Violence

69 For example, the He for She Campaign and the Secretary-General's Campaign UNiTE to End Violence Against Women, <http://www.un.org/en/women/endviolence/>.

70 For example, UN Women 'Quezon City Mayor Bautista Says, "Stop Street Harassment Of Women In Our City"', December 2015, <http://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/news-and-events/stories/2015/12/stop-street-harassment-of-women-in-our-city>.

71 ACbit, 'Where are they now?: Women victims ten years after the Chega! Report in Timor-Leste', January 2016, <http://www.chegabaita.org/Files/Policy%20paper%20English%20version.pdf>.

Other strategies for financing including bilateral and multilateral cooperation, private sector partnerships, and working with civil society to ensure frameworks are resourced. Where resources are allocated to finance the delivery of CRSV initiatives, existing local governance mechanisms for implementation should be engaged to maximise funding.

Develop localisation strategies that link policy making at the central level with ensuring that benefits reach victims/survivors in remote areas

A frequent challenge of addressing CRSV to date has been that policy frameworks such as NAPs-WPS have focused activities at the central level and budgets have been spent without the benefits reaching survivors themselves.

Stronger localisation mechanisms at the district and village levels are one strategy that can assist in ensuring better access to benefits for victims/survivors. District coordination committees and the allocation of funds to local bodies can help CRSV survivors and their families access support. Victims/survivors and their communities should be involved in the operation of these local bodies from the outset. Capacity-building activities should be delivered to build local skills to engage with the implementation of policies and programmes. Ensuring that NGOs at the grassroots level are entrusted to manage financial resources can also encourage targeted responses to reach conflict-affected women, while enhancing civil society's engagement with these processes.⁷²

In addition, developing tools to monitor implementation at the local level can help keep delivery of responses on track. Using social accountability tools such as 'Community Score Cards' can engage civil society in monitoring and provide a mechanism through which processes can be evaluated and adjusted if they are failing to deliver the expected results.

STEP 3. ENSURE ACTIONABLE, COMMUNITY-LED AND CONTEXT-SPECIFIC RESPONSES FOR VICTIMS/SURVIVORS

The establishment of a robust and cohesive framework for CRSV response can enable support and services to reach victims/survivors and make valuable improvements to their lives. By engaging a range of actors, much needed and accessible services can be delivered to victims/survivors and contribute to their empowerment, and that of their broader communities. This step focuses on the content of interventions to be delivered:

Deliver multi-sectoral services that are accessible to diverse groups of victims/survivors

Recognising that many survivors regard overcoming poverty as their primary objective, practical and meaningful poverty-alleviation measures and access to essential services should be at the forefront of CRSV programme responses, alongside justice initiatives.

Whether delivered via a NAP-WPS or an alternative policy mechanism, survivors must benefit from an array of programmes, including health care, psycho-social care and socio-economic reintegration and livelihood support, and services for women with children born out of sexual violence.⁷³ This requires cooperation and coordination between government and NGOs across health, social services, legal and security sectors.⁷⁴

72 Cordaid and ICAN-GNWP, Costing and Financing 1325: Examining the Resources Needed to Implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325 at the National Level as well as the Gains, Gaps and Glitches on Financing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda (2011).

73 SC/2016/361, Report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence, 20 April 2016.

74 Ward, J. and Marsh, M. UNFPA, Sexual Violence Against Women and Girls in War and its Aftermath: Realities, Responses, and Required Resources (2006).

The Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict highlighted that the integration and co-ordination of service delivery should enable survivors to receive care in an integrated manner, including through 'one-stop' shops that deliver holistic services. The importance of enabling women's strategic participation in designing and implementing these initiatives was also emphasised.⁷⁵

These services should tailor responses to CRSV to the specific needs of victims/survivors that are also female heads of households, ex-combatants or wives for former combatants, refugees or IDPs, survivors with disabilities, ethnic minority women, or children of survivors. In **Sri Lanka**, the need for multi-sectoral services to reach survivors and the implementation of economic empowerment programmes that benefit women in militarised areas who are also heads of households has been highlighted for implementation.⁷⁶

Victim-centric approaches must also be adopted by service providers including by addressing language and literacy barriers, supporting victims/survivors to fill out forms, and ensuring easy access to information including about avenues for access to justice.

Engage a range of actors to both tackle stigma and deliver holistic and effective responses

Government, civil society, service providers, media, and faith leaders are all key actors in shifting stigma towards CRSV. Each actor has a role to play in promoting and delivering support and services to victims/survivors through NAPs-WPS or other policy interventions, and in advancing transitional justice objectives.

They can participate in delivering gender and conflict-sensitive responses to survivors across areas of primary responsibility, and can engage in community education, data collection and research, establishing referral networks and information sharing. Both government and civil society are essential in the monitoring and evaluation of CRSV responses to measure the quality of programmes and care being implemented. This role is critical to evaluate project components such as whether mental health and psycho-social support activities are those that are most effective in improving the well-being of CRSV survivors.⁷⁷

In particular, engagement with conflict victim representatives and local women's groups in all stages of design and implementation is essential to deliver programming that is reflective of survivor needs and promotes their leadership and decision-making.

Ensure responses are ethically delivered, build women's empowerment, and support community cohesion

Targeting programmes specifically to enhance the empowerment of CRSV victims/survivors and their children can promote a shift in household and community dynamics that combats stigma and improves the quality of life of recipients. Survivors must be involved in the design of these approaches from their inception to ensure community dynamics inform programmes and do not inadvertently enhance the stigma towards them or create resentment within communities.

Adopting an integrated approach that combines economic empowerment strategies such as livelihood support and vocational training or microfinancing, with service provision and community engagement in gender equality can help achieve this. Combining gender equality initiatives that benefit both women and their families together with economic empowerment approaches can

75 Summit Report: The Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict, London (2014), p.20.

76 SC/2016/361, Report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence, 20 April 2016.

77 Tol, W. et al, Sexual and Gender-based violence in areas of armed conflict: A systematic review of mental health and psychosocial support interventions, Conflict and Health (2013).

reduce the risk that targeted support of women might disrupt gender norms in the household and place them at risk of intimate partner violence.⁷⁸

An example of this is cash transfers that target women. This intervention can have great benefits if designed and implemented in a sensitive manner that responds to cultural dynamics. Cash transfers can be delivered to women conditional on behaviours such as ensuring children attend school, and that pregnant women access institutional medical care. Cash transfers may have positive impacts within the household by reducing intra-household conflict and alleviating stress over financial and food security. The inclusion of a gender component has been found to mitigate the risk of violence in the household as a backlash.⁷⁹ When targeting victims/survivors for receipt of cash transfers, care must be taken not to place an undue burden on them for managing household finances, but rather enhancing their decision-making power and autonomy.



78 WHO, 16 ideas for addressing violence against women in the context of the HIV epidemic (2013), http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/95156/1/9789241506533_eng.pdf.

79 Bell, E., Government of the UK, DFID, Violence against women and cash transfers in humanitarian contexts, February 2015, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/425303/cash-transfers-humanitarian-settings.pdf.