

CONCEPT NOTE

High-Level Virtual Event

Reparations for Survivors of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence: Status and Prospects

**Organised during the 76th Session of the
United Nations General Assembly**

27 September 2021
10.00-12.00 EST / 4.00-6.00 pm CET

Context

"The individual interim reparations allow us to be acknowledged, to feel that we are being accepted by others. We were able to develop our own activities, and those who saw us as losers now see us differently. Today we can send our children to school, we no longer have to choose, we are relieved. Medical support allows us to be in better health and this is also important for us to be able to work. Psychological support helps us to overcome our sorrows. The individual interim reparation measures have changed our lives". (Quote from a survivor)

Though there is a recognised right to reparations, only a tiny minority of survivors of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) worldwide ever receive reparations. They have not been high priority on the policy agenda at the international, national, or local level. Equally, the implementation gap is of worrying proportions and has dire consequences for survivors/victims who have been waiting for reparations for years and, in some cases, for decades.

The United Nations General Assembly has made clear its commitment to the right to reparation by adopting the *Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law* (2005) among other instruments, and the Security Council has also endorsed a survivor-centered approach in preventing and responding to CRSV, including reparation in *resolution 2467* (2019). Further, progress has been made by some countries in putting reparations for victims of CRSV on the agenda. For example, the Iraqi Parliament adopted in 2021 a new law for reparations for Yazidi survivors/victims of ISIS captivity and those of other minority components. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Government publicly committed to creating a national fund for reparations, prioritising survivors/victims of CRSV amongst other groups. Colombia has also included survivors/victims of CRSV, including children born from rape, within its domestic reparations programme.

For survivors and victims, reparations are a right and a priority. Reparations recognise harms inflicted on them, provide financial or other material support so that they can rebuild their lives, play a deterrent role, and contribute to holistic transitional justice.

Taking stock of reparations for CRSV

It is time for a review of the status of reparations for survivors of CRSV by all stakeholders and affirm and renew commitments to make reparations accessible to victims.

To highlight these issues, the Global Survivors Fund, the UN Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, the Permanent Missions of France, Japan, the Republic of Korea, and the United Kingdom are organising a high-level virtual side-event during the 76th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. The event will consider critical challenges, opportunities and actionable recommendations regarding reparations of CRSV amongst all stakeholders, including survivors themselves. During the event, the Global Survivors Fund will present the lessons learned from its work in numerous countries, and the preliminary findings of its Global Reparations Study.

An outline of the event

Objectives: To take stock of the status, opportunities and challenges regarding reparations for survivors of CRSV; to reflect on progress made by governments and other actors; to chart the prospects for feasible, survivor-centric and comprehensive reparations for victims of CRSV, and call duty bearers to action.

Format: This two-hours dialogue will gather representatives of the United Nations and its member states, survivors of CRSV, reparations and international law experts, and civil society organisations.

The opening session will include **Nobel Peace Prize laureate Dr. Denis Mukwege, Under-Secretary-General Pramila Patten**, and the Permanent Missions of France, Japan and the Republic of Korea.

The first session will address the global status, progress and challenges related to reparations for survivors of CRSV, including a presentation of some of the preliminary findings of the Global Reparations Study conducted by GSF in over 20 countries. The session will pay particular attention to survivors' perceptions and expectations and highlight progress in specific countries. States that have recently undertaken steps to enhance access to reparations for CRSV will also be heard.

The second session will discuss the prospects for feasible, survivor-centric, co-creation and comprehensive reparations programmes, including the responsibility of duty bearers.

The closing session will include remarks by, **Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Ms. Nadia Murad, Professor Pablo de Greiff**, the former UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation, and guarantees of non-recurrence and member of the GSF Board, as well as a representative of the government of the United Kingdom on key outcomes and recommendations going forward, calling states to action.

The event will take place in a virtual Zoom format on:
Monday 27 September 2021, 10:10 am-12:00 pm EST, 4.00-6:00 pm CET
Simultaneous translation will be available in Arabic, English, French and Spanish.

Background on GSF

The Global Survivors Fund ("GSF") was launched in October 2019 by Dr Denis Mukwege and Nadia Murad, who jointly received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2018. It also builds on the long-standing advocacy efforts of the United Nations Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. The GSF's mission is to enhance access to reparations for survivors of CRSV worldwide, thus responding to a gap long identified by survivors. GSF acts to provide interim reparative measures in situations where states or other parties are unable or unwilling to meet their responsibilities. GSF advocates for duty bearers as well as the international community to develop reparations programmes, and guides states and civil society by providing expertise and technical support for designing reparations programmes. GSF's survivor-centric approach is the cornerstone of its work.

Background on the OSRSG-SVC

The United Nations Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (OSRSG-SVC) is an office of the United Nations Secretariat that supports the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (SRSG-SVC). The Special Representative serves as the United Nations' spokesperson and political advocate on CRSV. The SRSG-SVC chairs the United Nations Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict inter-agency and network (UN Action) and her work is supported by the United Nations Team of Experts on the Rule of Law/Sexual Violence in Conflict (TOE). The OSRSG-SVC was established by Security Council resolution 1888 (2009), one in a series of resolutions which recognised the detrimental impact that sexual violence in conflict has on communities and acknowledged that this crime undermines efforts to ensure peace and security and rebuild societies once a conflict has ended.