



OVERVIEW

Official register of survivors of conflict-related sexual and reproductive violence (CRSRV): Yes, there is a [Unique Register of Victims](#) (*Registro Único de Víctimas* or RUV) that includes “victims of crimes against sexual freedom and integrity”; however, not all forms of sexual and reproductive violence are included.

Official number of survivors of CRSRV: 9,826,986 registered victims of the armed conflict, including 43,602 victims of CRSRV (RUV, as of October 2024). Approximately 90% of CRSRV victims are women, with a significant number of Afro-Colombian women affected. Additionally, 1,143 individuals are registered in the RUV as born as a result of sexual violence (as of 2023).

Estimates of the real number of survivors of CRSRV: No compiled data is available, but the real number of survivors of CRSRV is presumed to be higher than the number included in the RUV.

Domestic legal framework for administrative reparation: Yes, there is a domestic reparation programme. The RUV is open for registration as long as certain requirements are met, in accordance with Law 2343 of 2023, which extends the terms for the declaration of victimising events.

Mechanism to implement the administrative reparation programme: Yes, there is a multi-layered system involving several state institutions.

Domestic avenues for reparation through courts: There are several, including ordinary courts, the contentious-administrative jurisdiction, and transitional justice mechanisms under Justice and Peace and the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP).

Approximate number of survivors who have received some formal reparation for CRSRV: Approximately 11,695 women victims of CRSRV have received psychosocial care through the VIVIFICARTE and ERE-G programmes of the Victims’ Unit; 21,869 women have received physical health services; and 8,816 victims of CRSRV registered in the RUV, along with 583 persons born of conflict-related sexual violence, have received compensation.

Survivors’ perceptions of the state of implementation of reparations: Survivors feel that impunity prevails and that victims are not accessing comprehensive reparations, either through the National Reparation Programme or the courts.

Final Peace Agreement: This was signed between the Government of Colombia and the FARC-EP, and included several explicit provisions on CRSRV, including the recognition of the harm caused by this grave violation, the commitment to the prosecution of this act in the JEP and reparation for survivors.

Ongoing CRSRV: Yes, conflict-related sexual and reproductive violence continues.



Strengthening Meeting for the Women of Gonawindua, organised by Universidad del Rosario. August 2024.

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NATURE AND SCOPE OF CRSRV

Throughout more than six decades of internal armed conflict, all armed groups (paramilitaries, guerrillas, state forces and foreign troops) have systematically used multiple forms of CRSRV, including rape, the threat of sexual violence, sexual harassment, forced sterilisation, forced contraception, forced pregnancy, forced abortion, trafficking for sexual exploitation, sexual slavery, forced witnessing of sexual acts, forced performance of or consent to sexual violence, torture, forced nudity, mutilation of sexual organs, and forced bodily or performative gender changes. Many children have been born as a result of CRSRV.

The CRSRV has been used to silence, intimidate and/or punish victims, human rights defenders, journalists and political leaders, as well as to exercise territorial control and ensure the militarisation of different regions. This violence has occurred alongside other crimes, such as forced internal displacement, massacres, forced recruitment and land dispossession.

Women, girls and members of the LGBTIQ+ population have been disproportionately affected. Indigenous, rural and Afro-descendant women are at greater risk of sexual violence due to the militarisation of their territories and persistent racial and socio-economic discrimination.

Armed groups use CRSRV for different purposes. For instance, paramilitary groups often employ it to intimidate, silence and punish human rights defenders, journalists and leaders, whereas guerrilla groups more frequently conduct forced abortions and sterilisations as part of forced recruitment practices.

HARMS CAUSED TO SURVIVORS, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

Survivors have suffered physical, moral, spiritual, mental, material and intergenerational harm, some of which have also affected their children, partners, parents, other family members, and their communities. The lack of a prompt and adequate response to these harms has deprived victims of access to justice, truth and reparation, as well as access to education, vocational training and other forms of support. Victims describe the impacts of CRSRV within a continuum of structural, everyday violence and in the context of the armed conflict.

For victims belonging to Indigenous peoples and black or Afro-descendant communities, whose worldviews and ways of life are based on an ancestral relationship

with their territories, CRSRV generates spiritual impacts and disharmonises the life cycles of the territories and their ecosystems. CRSRV affects the continuity of the communal ways of life of Indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples, as well as rural and peasant communities.

Stigmatisation by families and communities is also a source of re-victimisation, and generates further harm for victims.

SURVIVORS' PERSPECTIVES

Survivors seek reparations that address their needs and respond to the harm they have experienced. They seek remedies and support to overcome poverty, vulnerability and exclusion, including compensation and access to employment opportunities, education and housing. They also hope that the reparations provided for in the national reparations programme under the Victims and Land Restitution Law ([Law 1448/2011](#) and its three [Decree-Laws](#)) will provide transformative reparations to address the structural causes that enabled this violence.

Survivors need adequate quality mental, psychosocial and physical health services to overcome some of the most extreme harms caused by CRSRV. They indicate that the health consequences do not allow them to claim justice and reparation and to exercise other rights.

Survivors need to be recognised as victims and to have full acknowledgement of what they have suffered, including a diligent investigation of violations, followed by prosecution and punishment of perpetrators. They note that high levels of impunity continue to generate additional harm.

LGBTIQ+ survivors want to be recognised as rights holders, as prevailing stereotypes prevent them from being perceived as victims. Heterosexual men, on the other hand, mostly remain silent due to the shame and feelings of emasculation they experience. The underreporting of cases needs to be addressed, especially in relation to heterosexual men and LGBTIQ+ persons. Given the extent of stigma, male survivors need an individualised approach to enable them to express themselves and participate in the reparation process, ensuring adequate reparation.

Victims also highlight the lack of state coordination to ensure comprehensive reparation. Often, reparations are provided in an isolated and uncoordinated manner, as compensation without additional accompaniment, which reduces the reparative value of the process. Survivors indicate that the impact of reparations would be greater if they were provided in an integrated manner, in a well-designed process where each type of reparation complements the

others. For example, a victim could benefit from quality rehabilitation, receive compensation and at the same time get support to access justice and improve their livelihood, while state institutions address the structural causes of conflict-related sexual and reproductive violence.

SURVIVORS' INITIATIVES

There is significant capacity for organisation and collective action among women victims of some forms of CRSRV and other violence suffered in the context of the armed conflict. In this regard, feminist and women's rights organisations have created important advocacy and organising opportunities for LGBTIQ+ victims.

The network of survivor and civil society organisations working to combat CRSRV operates at different levels: it includes international civil society organisations, national organisations, local organisations, and indigenous women's organisations and authorities, as well as community councils, whose mandate includes combating CRSRV. Some LGBTIQ+ organisations are also active in this fight. These organisations

are complemented by others working on women's rights within and outside the armed conflict, forming alliances to address CRSRV in a comprehensive manner.

An important campaign that has mobilised and brought together victims of CRSRV in Colombia is "No es hora de callar" ("It is not the time to be silent"), led by journalist and survivor of sexual violence Jineth Bedoya. Launched in 2010, this campaign seeks to raise awareness of the problems of gender-based violence, including impunity, and to ensure reparations for victims.

The Victims' Law provides for the [participation of victims](#) in its implementation and monitoring. Participation roundtables exist at the national, municipal, district and departmental levels. These roundtables bring together victims' representatives from all over the country, integrating more than 4,000 victims' organisations, and more than half of the participants are women. The Mesa Nacional de Participación Efectiva de Víctimas ("National Roundtable for the Effective Participation of Victims") includes representatives by victimising event, such as sexual violence, and a differential approach covering gender, LGBTIQ+ and ethnic issues.

REPARATION

IN THEORY	IN PRACTICE
Legal remedies <i>Judicial redress by the State:</i> Council of State and Constitutional Court. <i>Reparation for individual perpetrators:</i> Ordinary criminal courts. <i>Transitional judicial remedies:</i> Justice and Peace and Special Jurisdiction for Peace (indirect route).	Legal remedies <i>Council of State:</i> Issued a limited number of decisions ordering reparation for CRSRV. However, there is no prompt justice and implementation levels are low. <i>Constitutional Court:</i> Central to the protection of the right to reparation of victims of CRSRV. It has established a mechanism to monitor the measures taken by the government to comply with its orders and supervised the investigation of cases of CRSRV. Relevant cases include: • Helena's case: Acknowledges that, although Helena was a member of the guerrilla, as a victim of reproductive violence she is entitled to reparations under the Victims' Law. • Carmen's case: Removes time limitations for victims of CRSRV to register and claim reparations under the Victims' Law. <i>Justice and Peace Law:</i> Of the 72 convictions in 17 years, 25 of them resulted in convictions for CRSRV crimes, but this did not always translate into reparations for victims.
Administrative programme Law 1448 of 2011, together with three Decrees-Laws regulating reparations for Indigenous, Afro-descendant and Roma peoples, establishes the National System for Comprehensive Victim Support and Reparation to Victims (SNARIV). It created three key institutions: the Victims' Unit, the Land Restitution Unit and the National Centre for Historical Memory. The Victims' Law recognises victims of CRSRV, including children born of CRSRV, and establishes assistance and reparation measures. Law 2078 of 8 January 2021 extended Law 1448 of 2011 for ten years until 2031. The reparations provided for include compensation, restitution, including land restitution, rehabilitation, measures of satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition. It also recognises individual and collective reparations.	Administrative programme <i>Compensation:</i> One-off payment equivalent to 30 times the minimum wage in Colombia at the time of payment (in January 2024, approximately USD 7,320, with a minimum wage of USD 314 per month). <i>Satisfaction measures:</i> Various initiatives have been implemented such as Fragments, a letter of dignification that recognises the harm suffered by victims when registering in the RUV, and the declaration of 25 May as the National Day for the Dignification of Victims of CRSRV in Colombia.

IN THEORY	IN PRACTICE
	Collective reparation Only 16 (2%) of the people registered as collective subjects of reparation in the RUV have had their right to collective reparation fulfilled. Collective harms resulting from CRSRV events in various groups and communities are still not adequately addressed, although women's organisations affected by these events are recognised as subjects of collective reparation.
<u>Final Peace Agreement (2016)</u> It contains a chapter on victims' rights, in which it creates a system with several mechanisms to seek reparation, justice, truth and non-repetition. These include the JEP, the Unit for the Search for the Disappeared and the Truth Commission.	Final Peace Agreement <i>Comprehensive Peace System:</i> It has not been implemented as an articulated victim-centred system. <i>Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP):</i> • Macro-case 02: On the territorial situation of Tumaco, Ricaurte and Barbacoas (Nariño): 15 former FARC-EP members were charged with war crimes and crimes against humanity, including sexual violence, sexual slavery and bias-based violence, documenting more than 168 incidents of CRSRV. • Macro-case 05: It has advanced the investigation of CRSRV crimes by conducting a participatory process with accredited victims, in collaboration with the Global Survivors Fund (GSF). • Macro-case 11: Opened in September 2023, it addresses sexual and other forms of gender-based violence at the national level, divided into three sub-cases: (1) Acts committed by members of the FARC-EP; (2) Acts committed by the security forces; and (3) Acts committed by armed actors (FARC and security forces) against their own comrades. • Macro-case 01: Related to the kidnappings committed by the FARC-EP, where acts of sexual violence were imputed and some of those appearing have acknowledged their responsibility.

OPPORTUNITIES

The Victims' Law has generated important processes, some of which represent significant opportunities for survivors to obtain reparations. However, the lack of access to adequate and prompt rehabilitation services remains a challenge. This could be partially addressed by building on existing opportunities and reflecting on their impact. These opportunities include:

1. **Fénix Process:** A physical and mental health rehabilitation services programme implemented by the Secretary of Health of the Department of Valle del Cauca. This programme brought together different institutions at the local level to leverage health resources (financial and human) to provide victims of CRSRV with comprehensive services that go beyond gynaecological care.
2. **Entrelazando:** A Victims' Unit strategy that offers community-based rehabilitation services to address collective harm, especially in rural populations. Its success lies in fostering ownership and restoring the social fabric in communities, promoting participation, healing potential and leadership.
3. **Vivificarte:** A psychosocial and differential strategy created by the Victims' Unit, aimed at women victims of CRSRV. It focuses on strengthening women's capacities with a rights-based perspective and complementing rehabilitation care.

Another opportunity lies in the judicial processes before the JEP for the crime of CRSRV. These processes have made the occurrence of these crimes visible and recognised that could lead to the imposition of restorative sanctions for the perpetrators. These sanctions should include a restorative dimension and could become an example of gender justice and reparation.

In addition, the decade-long extension of the Victims' Law allows for the continuation of reparations for survivors of CRSRV, whilst the extension of the deadline for declaration and inclusion in the RUV until 2025, provides an opportunity for victims who have not yet done so, to register. Additionally, the implementation of the victims' chapter of the Final Peace Agreement, strengthens and centres victims' rights.

The Constitutional Court's decisions in the cases of Helena and Carmen have opened up new opportunities for victims of CRSRV to access reparations, including female ex-combatants and those victims who did not register within the initial deadlines of the Victims' Law.

Finally, the judgment of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in the case of [*Jineth Bedoya Lima et al. v. Colombia*](#),

together with the reparations ordered, creates new opportunities to address the structural causes of sexual violence in Colombia and to grant collective reparations to victims of sexual violence who were leaders, human rights defenders or journalists.

MAIN CHALLENGES

- **Impunity:** In more than 90% of the cases, the perpetrator has not been determined; criminal proceedings are either shelved or show no progress.
- **Lack of adequate rehabilitation services:** Inadequacy of adequate rehabilitation services, including the provision of timely care.
- **Lack of a gender, differential and intersectional approach:** Reparation providers have not received the necessary training and tools to address CRSRV in an appropriate and sensitive manner, which affects the recognition of the specific harms suffered by victims.
- **Lack of pedagogy for victims:** Lack of orientation programmes for victims on the different mechanisms of the Victims' Law and justice, so that they are aware of and have clear expectations about each scenario.
- **Failure to address the structural causes of CRSRV:** Need to address and eliminate the structural causes that perpetuate CRSRV.
- **Lack of information on children born of CRSRV:** Inadequate assistance and rehabilitation measures for children born of CRSRV due to lack of data.
- **Fragmented institutional processes:** Significant bureaucratic barriers due to fragmented processes, which demotivate victims by requiring a burden of paperwork that makes it difficult for them to access their rights. These barriers are compounded when institutions apply stereotypes based on victims' gender, ethnic identity, sexual orientation or gender identity, which further deters survivors of CRSRV from exercising their right to reparation.
- **Lack of knowledge about specificities of diverse groups:** Less knowledge about the specific needs of heterosexual men, LGBTIQ+ survivors, and children born of CRSRV, as well as limited collective efforts to address their needs.
- **Limited focus on CRSRV:** The narrow focus on rape limits reparation for survivors of other form of sexual violence, such as reproductive violence, resulting in insufficient or non-existent reparation. In fact, there is no explicit recognition of forms of reproductive violence as violations covered by the Victims' Law.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- Simplify access to reparations under the public policy on victims and the mechanisms provided for in the Final Peace Agreement, by reducing bureaucratic burdens and coordinating the reparations system to ensure that all survivors of CRSRV receive comprehensive support. This streamlining should also include the provision of rapid and urgent assistance and rehabilitation to victims of CRSRV.
- Ensure that victims receive accurate and timely information about reparations through the different avenues available, and that they are supported in filing claims. This includes informing survivors of any changes ordered by competent bodies, such as the Constitutional Court.
- Prioritise physical and mental health rehabilitation (including psychosocial support). This prioritisation should include an intersectional approach that includes gender identity, sexual orientation, class, ethnicity and other grounds.
- Promote the investigation, prosecution and punishment of CRSRV. Ensure that proper sanctions in macro-cases are developed informed by the perspectives of victims of CRSRV.
- Continue to map the various forms of sexual and reproductive violence in the context of the armed conflict to ensure that those who have not yet reported are aware of their rights and have the opportunity to talk about what happened to them and access reparations. These efforts should include a focus on children born of CRSRV as well as heterosexual men, and should ensure safe spaces where they can speak out and get help from existing support networks.
- Evaluate the impact of programmes such as Vivificarte, Entrelazando or Fénix Process, both to define good practices and to find ways to further strengthen these programmes, so that comprehensive rehabilitation is provided to all victims of CRSRV.



This country report is an excerpt from the Study on the situation and opportunities of the right to reparation for victims and survivors of sexual and reproductive violence of the armed conflict in Colombia. To read the full report, scan this QR code.

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