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**CSSF Women, Peace and Security Helpdesk**

# Women, Peace and Security, Conflict- Related Sexual Violence and Defence

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The Women Peace and Security Helpdesk, managed by Saferworld in partnership with Conciliation Resources, GAPS UK, University of Durham and Women International Peace Centre (WIPC), was established in December 2021 to increase capability across the UK Government on WPS policy and programming in order to make its work on conflict and instability more effective. If you work for the UK government and you would like to send a task request, please email us at [wpshelpdesk@saferworld.org.uk](mailto:wpshelpdesk@saferworld.org.uk). If you do not work for the UK government but have an enquiry about the helpdesk or this report, please email us at [enquiries.wpshelpdesk@saferworld.org.uk](mailto:enquiries.wpshelpdesk@saferworld.org.uk)

**Direct Audience:**

This assignment would be primarily used by the MoD Human Security policy team, as the co-owner of the UK's WPS National Action Plan. The insights from the research and roundtable will be shared with the single services (Army, Navy and Air) and the Permanent Joint Head Quarters (PJHQ) to ensure they are clear on how they can engage with CRSV on military operations and also, enhance training on CRSV.

**Suggested Internal Distribution:**

This report also may be relevant to teams in the FCDO, such as the Gender and Conflict team, CRSV convention team and the PSVI conference and strategy teams.

**Confidentiality Status:**

None



# Abstract

Preventing and responding to conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) is an international priority. The UK Government has committed to advancing this goal, primarily through its policy commitments to the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. Since the fourth UK National Action Plan (NAP) on WPS, policy has been co-owned with the Ministry of Defence, yet there is to date little research on how militaries can engage on CRSV outside of UN peacekeeping missions. This report addresses this gap and presents findings on opportunities and challenges for Defence engagement. Drawing upon a rapid desk review of relevant literatures and nine key informant interviews, it is organised in four sections. The first section reviews past and present UK practice, drawing out existing strengths and limitations with regard to training, doctrine, human resourcing and the utility of the current human security framework. The second section surveys good practice from other contexts to identify possible lessons for UK Defence through four stages of preparation and protection work (prevention, pre-emption, response, and analysis and consolidation) as well as in cross-cutting concerns over training and staffing. The third section deals with risks and limitations, focusing on the Do No Harm principle, variation in mandates, and abuses by partner forces. The final section briefly concludes and provides ten recommendations for action.

# Summary

For the last several decades, conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) has been a major emphasis of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, of which the UK has been a prominent champion. However, there is presently little guidance for national militaries on how best to contribute to prevent and respond to CRSV. This report assesses progress to date, explores available good practice elsewhere, and identifies key risks for future Defence engagement.

The current UK approach has several strengths. Over the last decade some Defence leaders have mandated training and policy development, and CRSV is now somewhat incorporated into doctrine. The UK has funded significant training of partner forces in gender and CRSV, and on select UK deployments and for select UK personnel CRSV has been a meaningful element of training. UK personnel have advanced CRSV and gender-mainstreaming measures when deployed on UN missions, and government work is currently underway on how to improve action on WPS and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) issues. Finally, the recent move to a human security framework appears to have improved ownership of CRSV issues within Defence. Despite these welcome initiatives, current Defence staffing, training and operational application

remain in need of improvement. The inclusion of CRSV is inconsistent and often fragmented, with a greater emphasis on external training than internal development. A preoccupation with kinetics and a narrow war-fighting role continues to limit the inclusion of WPS and CRSV issues, and staffing does not yet appear to reflect previous internal needs assessments or the levels of gender expertise found among some major allies and WPS champion partners.

There are opportunities for Defence to adopt good practice from other contexts. Most guidance emerges from the experience of UN peacekeeping missions, requiring care in direct replication. Informants were only able to offer general impressions of other military practice, and there is a clear need for more thorough research beyond rapid review reports; for example, through focus groups or discussions with partner military gender advisors or equivalent experts. Nevertheless, Defence could enhance its contribution in each of the four stages of engagement identified below – prevention, pre-emption, response, and analysis and consolidation – as well as in cross-cutting training and resourcing. On prevention, Defence should work more closely with partner forces and other agencies specialising in CRSV to develop consistent policy, encourage good practice, establish early-warning systems, and build a referral network in anticipation of violations. On pre-emption, UK operations should consult with women and other at-risk groups to maximise deterrence and protection, for example through changes to patrol use. On response, Defence should integrate CRSV into medical rules of eligibility, provide necessary care where no other options exist, take action to secure crime scenes and deter perpetrators, and ensure appropriate tools and mechanisms for reporting. In the analysis and consolidation stage, Defence should improve its understanding of local institutions, develop a pathway for action following reporting, establish confidential information sharing protocols, and develop proper monitoring and learning systems that integrate external experts and stakeholders. These actions should be supported by a review and reconsideration of training at all levels, the use of scenario as well as awareness training to embed understanding, active efforts to adopt good practice from elsewhere, a willingness to conduct research where clear practice does not exist, and the consolidation of internal expertise and training capacity.

In engaging on CRSV, Defence faces three major risks. First, there is the risk of inadvertent harm created by engagement in inappropriate ways or beyond existing capacities. Training must emphasise the Do No Harm principle and produce clear and reliable guidance on the likely narrow range of scenarios where personnel will interact directly with survivors. Second, Defence must remain conscious of, and actively work to plan for, the differences between peacekeeping and other mandates. Good practice will have to be adapted after consideration of variations in mission, but without abandoning the duty to prevent and respond to CRSV. Third, Defence should give much more consideration to a likely more common scenario where UK personnel become aware of CRSV or related abuses by partner forces. Significant concerns around mission legitimacy, cultural sensitivity and the opportunity to improve partner practices will have to be addressed.

To enhance its work on CRSV, Defence should therefore resource and maintain internal structures; promote leadership and accountability for CRSV tasks; articulate a theory of change and clear strategy; review current doctrine as a priority; ensure appropriate staffing and expertise in all future missions; review training and strongly consider

mainstreamed CRSV scenarios for all; develop active partnerships with other specialist agencies; work more closely with partner militaries and others to develop appropriate reporting and referral tools; commission further studies on challenges, including how best to adopt a survivor-centred approach; and create a system for monitoring its own progress than includes external experts and stakeholders.

## Partners and consultants

The lead researcher was Dr Paul Kirby, Senior Lecturer in Politics and International Relations at Queen Mary, University of London and Visiting Fellow at the Centre for Women, Peace and Security at the London School of Economics. Dr Kirby is also a Co-Director of the UKRI Global Challenges Research Fund Gender, Justice and Security Hub.

Paul has been supported by the Gender Action for Peace and Security network (GAPS), the UK's Women, Peace and Security civil society network. They are a membership organisation of 19 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and experts in the fields of development, human rights, humanitarian aid and peacebuilding. They were founded to progress United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. Their role is to promote and hold the UK Government to account on its international commitments to women in conflict areas worldwide.

Quality Assurance has been conducted by Amy Dwyer, Head of Gender and Peacebuilding at Conciliation Resources.

## Methodology and tools

The report is based on desk-based research and key informant interviews (KIIs). Desk research comprised rapid review of materials in two categories: 1) academic scholarship on how militaries can contribute to the prevention of and responses to conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV); and 2) best practice guidance from militaries, international organisations or other CRSV-focused agencies. The rapid review of material turned up limited examples from comparable militaries outside of a UN peacekeeping framework. Limitations of the literature are discussed in more detail in the report itself. Nine KIIs were conducted remotely during 5–23 September 2022, five with Defence personnel and four with civilian, academic or international organisation experts. Interviewees were assured of confidentiality and provided with a range of

options for their identification in the report, with the option to forego identification altogether. Interviews followed a structured format, with a slightly different set protocol of questions for Defence and external informants. For consistency, informants are referred to by a letter identifier in the body of the report (e.g. 'Interviewee A'). Informants' professional roles are listed in Appendix 1.

# Abbreviations

CCT: Cross-cutting theme

CRSV: Conflict-related sexual violence

FCDO: Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

GENAD: Gender advisor

GFP: Gender focal point

IHL: International humanitarian law

KII: Key informant interview

LoAC: Law of Armed Conflict

MARA: Monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangement

MoD: Ministry of Defence

MRoE: Medical rules of eligibility

NAP: National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security

NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NGO: Non-governmental organisation

PDT: Pre-deployment training

PSVI: Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative

SEA: Sexual exploitation and abuse

STANAG: NATO Standardisation Agreement

UN: United Nations

WPS: Women, Peace and Security

# Introduction

Conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) is a violation of human rights and of international humanitarian law, and often also a war crime, element of a crime against humanity or constitutive act of genocide.<sup>1</sup> It has been repeatedly affirmed as a fundamental issue of international peace and security by the United Nations Security Council, generating obligations on states to respond and emphasising the role of military leaders to ‘demonstrate commitment and political will to prevent sexual violence and enforce accountability’.<sup>2</sup> Sexual violence can also be a form of torture, a dimension of protection of civilians and human trafficking response, and an issue affecting children in armed conflict. Sexual violence is deployed by a variety of actors for a range of purposes, including terrorising civilians, as a method of interrogation or punishment, to target social groups, as a military tactic or ‘weapon’, and more opportunistically in situations of instability or lawlessness.<sup>3</sup> Scholars have explored a variety of functions that CRSV fulfils within armed groups, spanning criminality, strategy, socialisation and a nexus with military labour and financing.<sup>4</sup> CRSV and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) overlap in that acts of SEA may also be acts of CRSV, for example sexual assault of military personnel carried out within a conflict setting. However, the two categories are often kept distinct in policy terms, with the term SEA focusing on a range of acts involving power imbalances within an organisation, and thus related to professional standards expected of personnel within Defence.<sup>5</sup>

The United Kingdom has been a long-standing advocate of action to prevent and respond to sexual violence, as well as a diplomatic champion of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. The Ministry of Defence (MoD) recently issued a Joint Service Publication (JSP) on Human Security, dealing with WPS and CRSV, and integrating gender perspectives.<sup>6</sup> The JSP envisions that the MoD Human Security team will meet WPS obligations by, among other tasks, ensuring that human security is incorporated across Defence; providing Defence input into UK Government, NATO and UN policy, plans, theories of change, guidance, projects and programmes;

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this paper, ‘conflict-related sexual violence’ should be understood in line with United Nations usage as encompassing “rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, forced abortion, enforced sterilization, forced marriage, and any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity perpetrated against women, men, girls or boys that is directly or indirectly linked to a conflict”. See United Nations Security Council (2022) *Conflict-Related Sexual Violence: Report of the Secretary General, S/2022/272*, March, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Security Council (2019) ‘Resolution 2467’, April, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Though other typologies subdivide acts in other ways, this list follows the training materials associated with the *Protocol on the Documentation and Investigation of Sexual Violence in Conflict* developed by the Institute for International Criminal Investigations. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/international-protocol-on-the-documentation-and-investigation-of-sexual-violence-in-conflict-training-materials>

<sup>4</sup> See e.g. Wood E J (2018) ‘Rape as a Practice of War: Toward a Typology of Political Violence’, *Politics & Society*, 46 (4): 513-537; Cohen D K (2016) *Rape During Civil War*. Cornell University Press; Muvumba Sellström A (2020) “‘Inside’ Armed Actor Processes and the Conflict “Outside”: Research on the Prevention of CRSV”, *International Peacekeeping*, 27 (4): 555-561.

<sup>5</sup> SEA is the focus of a concurrent review. The current Defence framework is available in Ministry of Defence (2022) *JSP 769: Zero Tolerance to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse*, July, where the link with CRSV is acknowledged on p. viii.

<sup>6</sup> Ministry of Defence (2021) *JSP 985: Human Security in Defence: Volume 1: Incorporating Human Security in the way we Operate*, December.



working to 'translate' international strategies and policies into Defence activity; and serving as a focal point for a range of international and regional groups as well as the rest of MoD.<sup>7</sup>

In light of this background and the forthcoming Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative (PSVI) conference, the MoD Human Security team has sought advice on how best to support efforts to tackle CRSV. This report presents findings on the following:

- Areas in which Defence intersects with issues of CRSV, considering best practice from international counterparts as well as where CRSV can theoretically intersect with Defence, for example in the role of military personnel as first responders, in documenting war crimes, and in preventing CRSV;
- Risks, challenges and opportunities of Defence to engage on issues of CRSV, considering the capabilities of Defence, avoiding duplication with existing civilian mechanisms and addressing the appropriate division of responsibilities between Defence versus humanitarian, diplomatic or development functions;
- Examples of best practice Defence engagement on CRSV;
- Recommendations for actions that Defence can and should be undertaking to tackle CRSV.

The report addresses these findings in four sections: 1) a brief review of past and current UK practice, drawing out existing strengths and gaps; 2) a discussion of good practice from other military contexts, with indications of transferrable training, operational and analytical tools; 3) a discussion of risks and limitations for Defence, noting differences in capacity, mandates and partnerships; and 4) conclusions and recommendations.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

# Findings and analysis

## 1

### Conflict-Related Sexual Violence in UK Defence Practice

#### 1.1. The UK's Historical Role

The UK has a long-standing interest in the WPS agenda and has frequently played a leading role in high-level discussions and initiatives on CRSV. It has considerable diplomatic cachet as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (where it is the penholder on the WPS agenda), as a founding member of NATO, and as a significant funder of humanitarian and peacekeeping activities. As well as the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative and outputs such as the International Protocol on the Documentation and Investigation of Sexual Violence in Conflict and the Murad Code on respecting and supporting survivors, the UK is also one of the most productive states with regard to WPS plans, and is currently drafting its fifth National Action Plan (NAP).<sup>8</sup> While Defence has always featured in UK NAPs, since the fourth iteration in 2018, the Ministry of Defence has been a 'co-owner' of the agenda, giving it a leading role in ensuring WPS commitments are met.<sup>9</sup> Despite this record, Defence has historically not played a major role in UK efforts in practice, with much work on CRSV instead residing in the foreign or development ministries, now combined as the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO).<sup>10</sup> This review has found expertise and dedication on tackling CRSV among some personnel, as well as evidence of good prior practice and preparatory work, although this work lacks the necessary consistency and coherence to meet declared objectives.

As far back as the UK's first NAP in 2006, gender was to be considered for pre-deployment training (PDT), though there was at that time sparse detail on what the audit or gender-awareness training would entail and which personnel it applied to.<sup>11</sup> In the following years, training of UK personnel developed alongside requests from other militaries, a process led by reservists and civilian experts and described in one study as 'ad hoc'.<sup>12</sup> By the third NAP, training on CRSV and international humanitarian law

<sup>8</sup> See Riberio S F and van der Straten Ponthoz D for the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (2017) International Protocol on the Documentation and Investigation of Sexual Violence in Conflict: Best Practice on the Documentation of Sexual Violence as a Crime or Violation of International Law, Second Edition, March and 'Global Code of Conduct for Gathering and Using Information About Systematic and Conflict-Related Sexual Violence' (Murad Code), Working Version. For a survey of UK WPS work see Kirby P, Wright H and Swaine A (2022) The Future of the UK's Women, Peace and Security Policy, LSE Centre for Women, Peace and Security Policy Brief 07/2022, August.

<sup>9</sup> See United Kingdom (2018) UK National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, 2018-2022, January, pp. 2-3.

<sup>10</sup> Bastick M (2020) Conflict-Related Sexual Violence: Exploring Feminist Engagements with Law and Armed Forces. PhD Dissertation, University of Edinburgh, p. 157.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 155. United Kingdom (2006) *UNSCR1325 – United Kingdom High Level National Action Plan*, March, para 6.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 158.

(IHL) was targeted at community leaders and foreign militaries, with less emphasis on internal capacity.<sup>13</sup> Trainers deployed on UK missions but acting outside an institutionalised Defence framework have ramped up provision in the last decade, instructing over 10,000 African peacekeepers in CRSV response in 2016 alone.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, for nine years the UK led the Peace Support Operations Training Centre (PSOTC) partnership in Sarajevo.<sup>15</sup> Much of this work was supported in origin or development by the PSVI, which has provided considerable resources in the last decade and recently been reinvigorated.

The appointment of General Messenger as Defence Gender Champion in 2015 accelerated movement across WPS and CRSV issues. For a period all UK troops deployed overseas received WPS and CRSV training, and a Steering Group on WPS was convened.<sup>16</sup> A commitment was made to assign gender advisors to all UK missions.<sup>17</sup> Since 2019, CRSV has been addressed through the Human Security framework, where human security should be incorporated from the start of any “Defence activity, either domestic or overseas”.<sup>18</sup> The current Joint Service Publication proposes that human terrain analysis should include gender-sensitive indicators and awareness of why individuals or groups are targeted for violence, supported by engagement with women’s groups.<sup>19</sup> This Human Security approach is “underpinned” by United Nations Security Council Resolutions on WPS, by NATO policy guidance and by the UK NAP.<sup>20</sup> Within this frame, CRSV is incorporated within the WPS Cross-Cutting Theme (CCT), overlapping with others on protection of civilians; children and armed conflict; modern slavery; countering violent extremism; anti-corruption; and cultural property protection. Defence has committed to “tak[ing] appropriate action to prevent and respond to CRSV incidents, including potential, impending and ongoing CRSV threats whilst deterring perpetrators, protecting the vulnerable and responding to and referring victims”.<sup>21</sup>

The ambition and scope of present Defence action is significant. Study participants welcomed these developments, but also expressed caution. For example, many commented positively on the effects of General Messenger’s leadership but indicated that momentum had not been maintained.<sup>22</sup> Independent studies have likewise praised the UK’s ambition but noted fragmentation of effort and the absence of consistent strategy.<sup>23</sup> Challenges highlighted for current UK practice included developing consistent practices around training, clarifying and extending doctrine,

<sup>13</sup> Compare Output 2.3 and 4.1 with Output 5.1 in United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office (2014) *United Kingdom National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security*, p. 13, p. 16, p. 18.

<sup>14</sup> Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Department for International Development and Ministry of Defence (2016) *UK National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2014-17: Report to Parliament*, December, p. 10.

<sup>15</sup> Peace Support Operations Training Centre (2014) *Prevention of Sexual Violence in Conflict: Generic Curriculum for Training in Security Sector*, September, p. 6.

<sup>16</sup> Bastick, op. cit, p. 160.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p. 162.

<sup>18</sup> Ministry of Defence (2021), op. cit., p. 15.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., pp. 16-17.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. i.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p. 8.

<sup>22</sup> Interviewee A; Interviewee D; Interviewee G.

<sup>23</sup> Holmes G (2020) ‘Strengthening UK Support for Gender-Responsive, People-Centred Peacekeeping in Africa’, *RUSI Journal*, 165 (5/6): 36-45; Independent Commission for Aid Impact (2020) *The UK’s Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative: Joint Review*.

building internal capacity, preventing loss of existing expertise, and ensuring that the human security framework continues to deliver.

## 1.2. Training

Though an audit of training provision was beyond the scope of this report, it appears that pre-deployment CRSV training was not provided as standard for a significant period in the recent past. Examples of success instead tended to focus on relatively limited cohorts or deployments. For Operation Newcombe in Mali there is pre-deployment training with an emphasis on reporting mechanisms, and all medics now complete online CRSV training as standard.<sup>24</sup> Operation Newcombe trainings have included scenarios as well as sensitisation to gender issues.<sup>25</sup> Informants with experience of operational planning reported that CRSV serials may be included during force generation, though typically within a broader approach to civilian evacuation or humanitarian response rather than as a stand-alone scenario.<sup>26</sup> Outreach Group within 77 Brigade have created their own approved reporting card for CRSV, filling a gap created by the absence of a standard UN or NATO template.<sup>27</sup> Personnel have also been trained recently on the UN Monitoring, Analysis and Reporting Arrangement (MARA) protocols, indicating some existing work on how Defence may be able to liaise with international and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the field.<sup>28</sup> Though existing guidance would benefit from detailed scrutiny and updating, it appears that several of the principles and limits addressed in this report have already been identified by Defence reviews and trainings. These include the potential benefits of patrols and changes to standard operating procedures, the importance of referral systems, maintenance of victim-survivor confidentiality, and adherence to Do No Harm principles (see below).<sup>29</sup>

Training through efforts like the British Peace Support Team are significant. With UK support, personnel from Gambia, Malawi, Mozambique, and Zambia received training lasting from a few days to several weeks on human security concerns with a significant focus on gender, SEA and CRSV.<sup>30</sup> Work has included training of trainers and mentoring of officers, with personnel then deployed to the African Union AMISOM mission in Somalia.<sup>31</sup> Yet informants shared a sense that at the same time that the UK was engaged in extensive training of others in CRSV and wider gender issues, its own provision was notably less systematic and comprehensive.<sup>32</sup> For example, for Operation Newcombe a significant proportion of training on CRSV is mandated by the United Nations, with supplementary trainings aligned with JSP 985.<sup>33</sup> Where CRSV

<sup>24</sup> Interviewee C; Interviewee F.

<sup>25</sup> Interviewee I.

<sup>26</sup> Interviewee G.

<sup>27</sup> Interviewee F.

<sup>28</sup> Interviewee F.

<sup>29</sup> The terminology of the 'victim-survivor' reflects both ways of describing those who have experienced violations. Each term might be more appropriate, depending on context. See United Nations (2020) *Handbook for United Nations Field Missions on Preventing and Responding to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence*, p. 8, fn. 9.

<sup>30</sup> Interviewee H.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Interviewee A; Interviewee E; Interviewee F. See also Bastick, op. cit., p. 174.

<sup>33</sup> Interviewee I.

has been mentioned in other pre-deployment training this has commonly been as part of a 45-minute PowerPoint session on human security rather than in scenarios.<sup>34</sup>

In 2016 a highly-detailed Defence training needs analysis set out the case for 50 gender advisors, 221 gender focal points and approximately 150 short-term training teams across all services to achieve WPS operational standards.<sup>35</sup> While the current report did not collect information on the figures today, those interviewed doubted that the 2016 proposal had been taken up (see below on comparative indicators for gender expertise). In 2014, a delegation from the FCDO PSVI team had participated in an expert meeting with the UN Office of the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, NATO Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, the Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations, the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, and the Swedish Armed Forces, among others, to produce 22 recommendations for military training on CRSV.<sup>36</sup> Though many of the key principles of that document are addressed below, it is not clear whether they were ever integrated into Defence practice as a comprehensive set, and no informant mentioned the document.

While several informants commented on improvements to the human security advisor training, it was also noted that CRSV received sparse coverage in its earlier incarnations.<sup>37</sup> While moving from awareness-raising in lessons to scenarios – as appears to be becoming common – will improve learning, it was also stressed that CRSV situations should be integrated into exercises for maximal benefit.<sup>38</sup> At present human security appears to be present in all operational planning, though the same is not true of CRSV, which features only in select operations such as when naval elements were deployed in situations involving migrant rescue at sea.<sup>39</sup> A key ongoing limitation is the ad hoc character of the existing gender apparatus: gender or human security advisors are not assigned as standard and may serve in post for relatively short periods; general pre-deployment training has only existed occasionally and seemingly fleetingly; specialist units receive more training but are not well integrated into wider structures and mandates; training courses often have significant interest from foreign forces but suffer from low UK participation; insufficient opportunities exist for gender-specialist personnel to develop skills and progress their careers with a CRSV focus; and some Defence leaders rely too heavily on a Law of Armed Conflict (LoAC) baseline that limits the extent of action on CRSV.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Interviewee G.

<sup>35</sup> Ministry of Defence (2016) *Women, Peace and Security: Training Needs Analysis*, July.

<sup>36</sup> Life Guards Regiment Sweden (2014) 'Recommendations on Training Military to Combat Conflict-Related Sexual Violence', 25 November 2014. Recommendations included such items as 'Military actors should establish a mechanism for monitoring and reporting on conflict-related sexual violence as a regular aspect of analysis, security assessments and day-to-day operations and should share relevant information with other protection actors, as appropriate' and 'Training on conflict-related sexual violence should be coordinated among actors, particularly training provided to the same nations or within the same region. In this spirit, all information on training programs and the training materials should be accessible'

<sup>37</sup> Interviewee A, Interviewee F.

<sup>38</sup> Interviewee D; Interviewee F.

<sup>39</sup> Interviewee G.

<sup>40</sup> Interviewee C; Interviewee D; Interviewee E; Interviewee F; Interviewee G. See also Bastick, op. cit, pp. 163-165.

### 1.3. Doctrine

Prior experiences of training were at least partly related to the absence of clear doctrine. Future experience may therefore be more positive given the integration of human security within Army Land Operations Doctrine in May 2022.<sup>41</sup> After some delay and the lapsing of prior Doctrine Notes in the mid 2010s, UK doctrine now includes a few paragraphs on CRSV alongside WPS.<sup>42</sup> This inclusion was compared favourably to the NATO situation where existing guidance did not rise to the level of doctrine.<sup>43</sup> However, others reported that human security portions of Land Operations Doctrine had previously been ignored in practice at Staff College.<sup>44</sup> It was not immediately clear how inclusion in doctrine would translate into capabilities or training regimens, and a review of the connection between JSP 985 and doctrine has not been possible within the scope of the present task.<sup>45</sup> However, recent improvements in doctrine should be consolidated and supported to prevent any lapse back into less authoritative guidance.

In relation to delivering doctrine and improving practice, informants commented on the UK's lack of internal capacity and reliance on others, for example a single reserved place on the Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations gender advisor course, running only 3–4 times a year, as the main source of UK gender advisors.<sup>46</sup> UK-branded training was often delivered with other military partners or significant reservist and civilian input.<sup>47</sup> In broader partnerships, UK personnel have been involved in NATO working groups to establish a standardisation agreement (STANAG) on CRSV training, though this work appears not to have made recent progress.<sup>48</sup> Several informants raised concerns that a cultural preoccupation with war-fighting in the UK military has left little to no appetite for human security in general training, and that this situation may worsen with the current attention to land war in Europe.<sup>49</sup>

### 1.4. Personnel and Capacity

As well as military culture, integration of CRSV to date is partly explained by challenges in staffing. Informants noted the relatively small footprint of UK forces and acknowledged the trade-offs in doctrine design and training requirements.<sup>50</sup> As will be discussed in more detail below, many indicated a preference for a more systematic and considered approach but covering a limited scope of engagement. The desire for effective action was paired with a sense that considerable goodwill had been wasted where previous UK-initiated projects had lost momentum, with the WPS Chiefs of Defence (CHODS) Network given as an example.<sup>51</sup> Other efforts – such as the Military-Academic Knowledge Exchange Network – appear to have fallen by the wayside.<sup>52</sup> 'Initiative fatigue' was exacerbated by frustration at the loss of institutional

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<sup>41</sup> Interviewee F.

<sup>42</sup> On prior notes see Bastick, *op. cit.*, p. 176.

<sup>43</sup> Interviewee F.

<sup>44</sup> Interviewee E.

<sup>45</sup> The JSP states that Doctrine "will inform the reader on how HS considerations are applied", stressing operational plan, operational order, fragmentary orders and assessment reports. Ministry of Defence (2021), *op. cit.*, p. 18.

<sup>46</sup> Interviewee F.

<sup>47</sup> Interviewee F.

<sup>48</sup> Interviewee C.

<sup>49</sup> Interviewee E; Interviewee F.

<sup>50</sup> Interviewee C; Interviewee D; Interviewee E; Interviewee F.

<sup>51</sup> Interviewee A.

<sup>52</sup> Interviewee A.

knowledge, and the widespread view that many of the fundamental tools are already in place, and have to varying extents been formally considered by Defence in the past decade, but without proper follow-through and implementation. Again, the limits of existing deployment and human resource practices, such as the frequent turn-over in staff in dedicated roles, was identified as a barrier to policy and practice development.

### 1.5. The Human Security Framework

Informants were, however, broadly positive about the prospects of the human security framework for Defence action on CRSV. There was unanimity on the benefit in lessening scepticism or resistance within Defence to issues otherwise too easily framed as applying only to women, or seen as politicised by association with feminism.<sup>53</sup> A focus on pragmatic steps in achieving security – albeit security of a form which differs slightly from that normally addressed by conventional doctrine – was regarded as facilitating training and providing an instant rationale when discussing standard operating procedure or mandate relevance. Informants noted the potential for CRSV to be siloed as a stand-alone topic and treated as a tick-box exercise. Human security potentially allows for a more integrated approach, and one that counters at least some past criticism of the overriding focus on war-fighting, narrowly conceived. At the same time, despite its advantages over a gender or WPS framing, Defence personnel also reported that more work was needed to apply human security at the operational level.<sup>54</sup>

No respondent suggested that Defence would be better served by an alternative framing. However, caution was expressed about the mismatch between the UK's framework and that used by partners or multilateral entities, and about the potential risks of an overbroad or under-resourced human security policy, rather than to the framing itself. In the former case, the UK approach is not equivalent to that found in NATO or the UN, which operate under gender or WPS umbrellas, with the risk that it will be more difficult to join efforts or share good practice. In the latter case, it was foreseen that the human security framing could have the effect of weakening dedicated capacity in any given CCT, with the potential result that Human Security Advisors would specialise in only one CCT to the detriment of others, for example developing deep knowledge of violent extremism but having less understanding of WPS.<sup>55</sup> There was also concern that human security, lacking a natural home elsewhere, could become a repository for everything (such as cultural protection), overburdening advisors and weakening coherence.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Interviewee A; Interviewee C; Interviewee D; Interviewee E; Interviewee F. See also Bastick, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

<sup>54</sup> Interviewee G.

<sup>55</sup> Interviewee A; Interviewee B.

<sup>56</sup> Interviewee E.

## 2

## Good Practice: Principles and Experience

CRSV occurs in diverse forms, posing numerous challenges, and generating a range of possible measures for prevention and response. In current UN guidance, for example, an act of sexual violence is considered “conflict-related” if it meets two of the following three criteria: 1) a temporal link, occurring in a period of instability, armed conflict, occupation or their immediate aftermath; 2) a geographic link, in areas of active conflict or impacted by conflict; and 3) a causal link, where the act arose from conditions of conflict or where the conflict meaningfully contributed to perpetrator motive and opportunity (for example, where an act of rape was ordered by an armed group commander).<sup>57</sup> Supplementary considerations include the profile of the perpetrator and the victim-survivor to inform the determination of a causal link. Whether an atrocity has been perpetrated by a state actor or against a human rights defender may correspond to a pattern of violence of importance to the conflict at large. Research and policy also increasingly recognises the importance of intersectionality – the role of cross-cutting norms and power dynamics of race and ethnicity, economic and social status, disability and sexuality, among others. These require attention alongside gender differences of a binary male/female type to show, for example, where indigenous women may be more vulnerable, or indicate the settings in which men and boys may be at greater risk.<sup>58</sup>

Entity	Materials	Relevance
<b>United Nations Peacekeeping Resource Hub</b>	<i>Specialised Training Materials on Conflict Related Sexual Violence</i> , c. 2017 <sup>59</sup>	Training pack of three modules (strategic, operational, tactical) and six scenario-based exercises corresponding to different UN missions.
<b>Peace Support Operations Training Centre, Sarajevo</b>	<i>Prevention of Sexual Violence in Conflict: Generic Reference Curriculum for Training in Security Sector</i> , September 2014 <sup>60</sup>	Extensive overview of possible sessions, including on mandates for responding to CRSV, evidence collection, military contingent response and pre-deployment preparations

<sup>57</sup> United Nations (2020), op. cit., p. 7.

<sup>58</sup> For an example of intersectionality in policy see European Commission (2020) *EU Gender Action Plan III: An Ambitious Agenda for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in EU External Action*, November, pp. 3-4.

<sup>59</sup> Available at <https://research.un.org/en/peacekeeping-community/training/STMs/CRSV>

<sup>60</sup> Available at <http://mod.gov.ba/dokumenti/PSV%20TM%20Reference%20Curriculum.pdf>



<b>United States Africa Command</b>	<i>Preparing to Prevent: Conflict-Related Sexual Violence Mitigation: Scenario-Based Training</i> , November 2014 <sup>61</sup>	<p>Training guidance in eight scenario exercises, covering standard operating procedure, mitigation, reporting, patrol encounters, internally displaced people's camps, hostilities in progress and sexual slavery. May be of special relevance as explores scenarios beyond peacekeeping.</p>
<b>Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria</b>	<i>Gender Mainstreaming and Dealing with Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Peace Operations</i> , July 2017 <sup>62</sup>	<p>Dedicated section with four modules on SGBV in Peace Operations, covering understanding, response, analysis and prevention. Sections on interview methodology and crime scenes may need review before use with UK forces.</p>
<b>Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office</b>	<i>International Protocol on the Documentation and Investigation of Sexual Violence in Conflict: Training Materials</i> , August 2016 <sup>63</sup>	<p>Eleven-part training guidance to support the Protocol. Primarily aimed at those researching, investigating or documenting CRSV, but individual modules – e.g. on 'Sexual Violence as an International Crime' or 'Storing Information' – may be of relevance to Defence personnel.</p>

Table 1: Select Military Training Manuals on CRSV

Military analysts will therefore have to grasp this complexity in context and adapt practices in light of these dynamics. On paper, the UK's approach mirrors that of the United Nations, noting a range of acts against women, men, girls or boys and "directly

<sup>61</sup> Available at: [https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/186090/CRSV\\_Training\\_Scenarios\\_Preparing\\_to\\_Prevent.pdf](https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/186090/CRSV_Training_Scenarios_Preparing_to_Prevent.pdf)

<sup>62</sup> Available at: <https://issafrica.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/2018-01-30-training-manual-gender-pso.pdf>

<sup>63</sup> Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/international-protocol-on-the-documentation-and-investigation-of-sexual-violence-in-conflict-training-materials>

or indirectly linked to conflict”.<sup>64</sup> The JSP also demonstrates awareness of gender norms and drivers, placing CRSV response within a wider gender perspective approach to operations, and reiterating SEA commitments in parallel.<sup>65</sup> These strengths should be maintained in practical guidance, albeit with a greater awareness of intersectional complications to gender. Defence should explore options for rapid gender conflict analysis, either through its own mechanisms or in collaboration with other UK offices or external agencies. Existing guidance stresses the importance of contextual understanding for prevention efforts.<sup>66</sup> Though Defence will have its own existing materials and specific needs, there is a range of relevant training on military actors and CRSV, as indicated in Table 1.

The range of practical guides demonstrates that work has been done on the role of military actors for CRSV response, with three important caveats.

First, the overwhelming majority of scholarly literature assesses either military responses to SEA, with a heavy focus on the United States military and peacekeeper abuses, or examines the impact of UN peacekeeping on CRSV by other conflict actors. Within the time period of this rapid desk review, no scholarship on the record of national militaries outside of UN contexts was identified. Scholarship also tends to address cross-case correlations or investigate the development of policy, with few efforts to evaluate individual mechanisms of prevention and response (e.g. patrols, training, kinetics) within a broader repertoire.

Secondly, across both scholarly and practitioner literatures, UN peacekeeping missions are the commonly presumed setting. Where national military agencies have produced guidance, this nevertheless tends to assume or borrow from peacekeeping settings.<sup>67</sup> As the section on risks and limitations sets out, there are important points of difference between UN and non-UN deployments that must be considered when adapting guidance. For example, UN guidance states that best practice for a Monitoring, Analysis and Reporting Arrangement (MARA) is to use a network of sources to collect information, verify incidents, share data with other service providers, and contribute to Secretary-General and other UN reports. There is to some extent a verification trail for MARA practices in UN handbooks indicating their utility. Sometimes UK personnel will be part of UN missions and will participate in a MARA. But where Defence is operating under a UK-set remit, personnel are likely to lack the integration with other non-UK service providers, lack a mandate that puts CRSV reporting centre-stage, and lack the mechanisms to directly input into UN reports or equivalent. Many informants were frankly sceptical of the UK’s ability to accomplish these tasks with present resources.

Third, though many documents propose good practice and offer examples, few indicate any strong evaluation basis for knowing which interventions work best and why. Even where Defence is invested in training other militaries, there is little to no monitoring of efficacy in practice.<sup>68</sup> There are exceptions in UN documents where

<sup>64</sup> Ministry of Defence (2021), op. cit., p. 7. Though the JSP cites its definition as following NATO’s policy, NATO in turn takes its definition from the Secretary-General’s reports on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence. See fn. 1 above.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., pp. 7-8.

<sup>66</sup> See e.g. United Nations (2020), op. cit., 90-92; Idris I (2022) ‘Best Practices in CRSV Monitoring and Early Warning’, K4D Helpdesk Report, June, pp. 16-18

<sup>67</sup> E.g. United States Africa Command (AFRICOM) (2014) *Preparing to Prevent: Conflict-Related Sexual Violence Mitigation*, November, p. 7.

<sup>68</sup> Holmes, op. cit., p. 43; Interviewee H,

mission experience is explicitly discussed, but there is nevertheless a clear need for further research into the efficacy of interventions. The next stage of the 'What Works to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls' research programme is an excellent opportunity to support such research.

With these provisos, it is possible to identify four stages of intervention of relevance for military good practice (see Table 2). *Preventative* measures target the causes of sexual violence to avoid the likelihood of rights violations. *Pre-emptive* measures anticipate that sexual violence is occurring or imminent and deploy resources accordingly. *Response* follows violations, including a variety of survivor-centred services and measures against perpetrators. Finally, *analysis and consolidation* combines work on understanding patterns of CRSV with efforts to assist the population and, where appropriate, support other authorities.<sup>69</sup>

## 2.1. Prevention

Prevention is a broad category, often including addressing the root causes of CRSV, and therefore suggesting a longer-term engagement. Prevention often entails campaigns against patriarchal gender norms which facilitate violence against women and gender and sexual minorities and working to establish accountability when violence does take place.<sup>70</sup> In military contexts, this involves providing challenge to attitudes within the organisation that may dismiss WPS as irrelevant or assume SEA to be inevitable. In engaging with other forces, this can mean seeking commitments on combatting CRSV and responding to SEA, training and sensitisation on law and norms, and ultimately to consider sanctions or related measures where abuses persist.<sup>71</sup>

The ability of Defence to pursue this work will depend heavily on length of commitment and mission mandate. In collaboration with other UK ministries and agencies, this should include capacity building with host institutions where possible. Not all barriers relate to deeply held beliefs or cultural practices facilitating violations. In conflict-affected or fragile contexts, partners may suffer from a lack of personnel, insufficient infrastructure for documenting and prosecuting crimes, antiquated medical facilities, and an absence of clear policy to guide action. Defence will also face limitations where it lacks capacity and clear guidelines for action, but will often be in a stronger position to rectify these shortcomings. Several informants suggested a major role for the Royal Military Police in this regard, sharing protocols and systems developed from their own internal experience.<sup>72</sup> Evidence from peacekeeping missions indicates that police can have a pronounced effect on CRSV perpetration. Where mandates include CRSV and protection of civilians, and where UN police units assist host nation law enforcement, train local police forces or conduct joint patrols, high numbers of police can reduce sexual violence risk to close to zero.<sup>73</sup> The same impact was not observed from high levels of military peacekeepers alone. Powerful findings from the UN experience must however be carefully contextualised when drawing lessons for Defence practice.

<sup>69</sup> This typology closely follows that set out in Peace Support Operations Training Centre, op. cit., p. 61.

<sup>70</sup> See e.g. Nordäs, R (2013) *Preventing Conflict-Related Sexual Violence*. Peace Research Institute Oslo Policy Brief 02.

<sup>71</sup> See e.g. United Nations (2021), op. cit., Chapter 9.

<sup>72</sup> Interviewee A; Interviewee C; Interviewee D. See also Institute for Security Studies (2017) *Gender Mainstreaming and Dealing with Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Peace Operations*, July, p. 7\_8, 8\_6

<sup>73</sup> Johansson K and Hultman L (2019) 'UN Peacekeeping and Protection from Sexual Violence', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 63 (7), pp. 1667-1668.

In direct training, Defence may be in a position to encourage partner militaries to align with international humanitarian law, adopt a gender sensitive perspective, and mainstream gender and CRSV scenarios in training of their own forces and relevant services (such as medical response and legal recourse). For example, in the past the UK has supported efforts by civil society groups to train state and local agencies on the use of the *Protocol on Investigation and Documentation*. Such efforts would be in line with operative paragraphs in recent Security Council resolutions on WPS seeking support to affected countries in responding to sexual violence, including through their military structures.<sup>74</sup>

When working in partnership, UK Defence could advocate for women's participation, establish facilities to handle complaints and safeguard evidence, encourage specialised gender offices and units, and liaise with host governments on drafting key policies, such as on SEA perpetrated by partner forces. As the JSP CCT recognises, WPS goals often also contribute to CRSV response. Notwithstanding complexities of identity and the risk of imposing a double or triple burden on female personnel, the greater participation of women in military and security institutions is plausibly linked to greater sensitivity to CRSV abuses.<sup>75</sup> Just as gender advisors and Women Protection Advisors are expected to improve response in Western and international missions, equivalent posts are likely to improve partner nation capacity. Defence may also have a role in facilitating dialogues between partner governments or forces and local women human rights defenders or civil society organisations attentive to gender. There is considerable potential for deeper collaboration between Defence and the Office for Conflict, Stabilisation and Mediation (OCSM) on these measures, which informants believed would help bridge the shorter-term aims of military deployments with longer-term work to enhance security and justice capacity. The OCSM will also have a relevant interest in developing early-warning systems that can better inform the Defence approach on deployment.

In the case of the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), recent UN practice offers a model. The national armed forces of the DRC (FARDC) have been both a partner of the UN MONUC/MONUSCO mission in achieving stabilisation and themselves a major perpetrator of human rights abuses, including CRSV.<sup>76</sup> To address this challenge, after 2008 MONUC introduced conditionality, barring FARDC elements with a record of violations from receiving further UN support. At the same time, MONUC worked actively to improve the DR Congolese military justice system, at that time a departure from prior UN policy.<sup>77</sup> The ability of military authorities to respond to atrocities was notably improved, with impacts for civilian courts, with 70% of prisoners in the major city of eastern DRC in 2012 detained for SGBV offences.<sup>78</sup> The collaboration resulted in a UN Comprehensive Strategy Against Sexual Violence

<sup>74</sup> United Nations Security Council (2019), op. cit., para 26.

<sup>75</sup> See e.g. Wilén N (2020) 'Female Peacekeepers' Added Burden', *International Affairs*, 96 (6): 1585-1602. Also Holmes, op. cit., p. 38

<sup>76</sup> The United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) was initiated in 1999 but from 2010 was renamed the United Nations Organization Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO).

<sup>77</sup> Lotze W (2020) 'The Evolving United Nations Approach to Preventing and Addressing Conflict-Related Sexual Violence: Experiences from the Democratic Republic of the Congo', *International Peacekeeping*, 27 (4): 536-543 and Zerrougui L (2018) 'Strengthening the Rule of Law and Protection of Civilians in the Democratic Republic of Congo', *UN Chronicle*, 2 (55).

<sup>78</sup> Lake M (2014) 'Organizing Hypocrisy: Providing Legal Accountability for Human Rights Violations in Areas of Limited Statehood', *International Studies Quarterly* 58 (3), p. 523.

in Conflict for DRC endorsed and replicated by the national government.<sup>79</sup> Senior MONUSCO staff credit the programme with reducing violations by the FARDC to fewer than half recorded cases of CRSV by 2014.<sup>80</sup> The UN did not act alone, with NGO groups like *Avocats Sans Frontières* innovating a mobile court system and coalitions of state agencies, professional associations and NGOs supporting special police units for the protection of women and children.<sup>81</sup> The role of international actors in promoting improved response has been judged crucial, with the fragility of a host nation's institutions likely increasing the scope for influence.<sup>82</sup>

Crucially, multiple sources identified SEA as corrosive to mission legitimacy, weakening both efforts to combat gendered insecurity and the wider reception of military personnel among populations.<sup>83</sup> Though SEA is the subject of a separate review and so is not extensively discussed here, the links with CRSV are considerable, and military culture is relevant both to how violations are understood within organisations and coalitions and to how it is understood among civilian populations or where perpetrated by enemy forces. Defence's outward-facing action on CRSV will be undermined if there is a perception or evidence that it is failing to deal properly with SEA within its own ranks.<sup>84</sup> Where military norms do not reflect WPS and gender equality commitments, this is highly likely to weaken organisational response to CRSV encountered in the field. Demonstrating 'internal' best practice by dealing with SEA and by enhancing gender knowledge and training will therefore bolster partnerships with others. Measures to effectively prevent sexual violence by partners or hosts is also a key challenge addressed below.

In shorter-term prevention, Defence should enable mission personnel to develop relationships with relevant actors (humanitarian, medical, legal and justice) before incidents of CRSV occur, with special attention to referral pathways and mutual agreement on spheres of responsibility. Though such relationships may not in themselves prevent acts of sexual violence, they require longer term thinking and coordination. Where relationships contribute to capacity building – for example of local medical and justice actors – they can also indicate to would-be perpetrators that there will be a response, and that impunity is not assured. The need for clear demarcations underscores the importance of engaging gender and CRSV issues in leadership, strategy and planning, as well as in trainings provided to operational forces. In planned operations, a gender perspective can also help identify where women or children may be present, to minimise the risks of harm to them, and to develop protocols to assist them once combat is over.<sup>85</sup> Experience from MONUSCO indicates that military actors did not fully consider that women and children might be present at armed group encampments, and did not plan accordingly. The later integration of a gender perspective in the planning stages allowed for improved mitigation, for

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<sup>79</sup> Lotze, op. cit., p. 539.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Lake, op. cit., p. 521.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> AFRICOM, op. cit., p. 6; Anderson L (2010) *Addressing Conflict-Related Sexual Violence: An Analytical Inventory of Peacekeeping Practice*. UNIFEM and DPKO: UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict, June, p. 19.

<sup>84</sup> Some respondents raised this concern with regard to transactional sex and behaviour around base – Interviewee A.

<sup>85</sup> Interviewee E.

example by using drones to identify the geographical clustering of civilians, and establishing referrals for those liberated from imprisonment.<sup>86</sup>

## 2.2. Pre-emption

The second stage of measures is pre-emptive. In response to linked issues of underreporting, stigma, impunity and instability, military planners should assume that CRSV has occurred in a conflict zone and take measures to anticipate violations even in the absence of verified high prevalence.<sup>87</sup> UK doctrine notes have indeed previously suggested the importance of the patrol as ‘disruptive’ action vis-à-vis perpetrators.<sup>88</sup> Much existing guidance centres on the role for patrols and troop deployments in providing immediate deterrence, and to some extent in enabling response. Patrols may be narrowly conceived around a particular activity or longer range to increase a perimeter and generally deter armed group behaviour.<sup>89</sup> For example, patrols may align with firewood collection routes, or be arranged to enable market trade.<sup>90</sup> Patrols can be arranged to reflect women’s and other relevant groups’ mobility patterns, such as routes to water collection, or at risky periods, like the hours before dawn.<sup>91</sup> One meta-analysis of studies on CRSV interventions found evidence that patrols can reduce the risk of violations.<sup>92</sup> UN assessments conclude that “patrols have been particularly well-received when they are close enough on the ground to discern potential threats, but not so close as to impede women’s normal routines”.<sup>93</sup> An intersectional perspective is again critical: though existing guidance tends to assume that ‘women and girls’ are the group at risk, in concrete conflict circumstances vulnerabilities may be more specific and even counter-intuitive, for example where women of a certain ethnicity are targeted, or where perpetrators target individuals on the basis of their presumed sexual orientation or gender identity. The UK’s human security framework already anticipates sex- and age-disaggregated data to provide a more subtle read of conflict dynamics, and this would be usefully supplemented by a consideration of other identities, experiences and social groupings, as is partly implied by the ‘cultural/communal insecurity’ factor.<sup>94</sup>

A related practice is to create safe zones, or *cordons sanitaires* at scale.<sup>95</sup> These more general measures may also contribute to other human security cross-cutting themes such as the Children in Armed Conflict agenda, where peacekeepers have facilitated safe access to schools.<sup>96</sup> Military assets have previously also been used to

<sup>86</sup> Interviewee E.

<sup>87</sup> United Nations (2020), op. cit., p. 18, p. 90. Institute for Security Studies, op. cit., p. 8\_4.

<sup>88</sup> Bastick, op. cit., p. 176.

<sup>89</sup> Institute for Security Studies, op. cit., p. 8\_7.

<sup>90</sup> See e.g. AFRICOM, op. cit., p. 5. Atolagbe A (2011) ‘Good and Bad Examples of How to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Violence: The Case of UNAMID in Darfur’, in Norwegian Armed Forces Defence Command and Staff College, *Sexual Violence, the Armed Forces and Military Operations*, Monograph Series 1 (3), p. 94.

<sup>91</sup> Anderson L (2011) ‘UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict’, in Norwegian Armed Forces Defence Command and Staff College, *Sexual Violence, the Armed Forces and Military Operations*, Monograph Series 1 (3), p. 36.

<sup>92</sup> Spangaro J, Adogu C, Ranmuthugala G, Davies G P, Steinacker L, Zwi A (2013) ‘What Evidence Exists for Initiatives to Reduce Risk and Incidence of Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict and Other Humanitarian Crises? A Systematic Review’, *PLOS ONE* 8 (5): 1-13.

<sup>93</sup> Anderson L (2010), op. cit., p. 21.

<sup>94</sup> Ministry of Defence (2021), op. cit., p. 7, p. 5.

<sup>95</sup> See e.g. Wallström M (2011) ‘SRSG on Sexual Violence in Conflict, UN’, in Norwegian Armed Forces Defence Command and Staff College, *Sexual Violence, the Armed Forces and Military Operations*, Monograph Series 1 (3), p. 19.

<sup>96</sup> Anderson L (2010), op. cit., p. 24.

transport victim-survivors to necessary services.<sup>97</sup> Principles developed for peacekeeping missions may not translate directly to UK deployments, although there is often overlap and collaboration, and UK personnel themselves staff UN missions in crucial posts. There is also some evidence that UK personnel have adjusted patrol patterns in disaster relief missions to address gendered vulnerabilities.<sup>98</sup> Further work is needed to understand the opportunities for engagement, as well as risks (some of which are elaborated in the next section). It is, however, important to acknowledge that there are current Defence personnel who have direct experience of these practices from deployments on peacekeeping missions, and who could contribute to doctrine development.<sup>99</sup>

Pre-emptive measures may be enhanced by paying attention to the composition of patrols and by developing relationships with local populations. Mixed engagement teams may offer greater reassurance to communities and achieve greater situational awareness, including of rights violations in a given area.<sup>100</sup> There is some evidence from UN practice of women's participation in improving the effectiveness of searches and operations.<sup>101</sup> In Darfur, early experience from Nigerian police patrols indicated that exclusively male patrol teams were at a disadvantage in winning the trust of internally displaced people. Once female personnel were included in all patrolling teams, there was increased reporting of sexual violence and harassment, which informed operational planning.<sup>102</sup>

In parallel to the increased deployment of female personnel, consultation with local women's groups has become a significant focus of recent UN Security Council resolutions, including those sponsored by the UK: "underlin[ing] the important roles that civil society organizations, including women's organizations, and networks can play in enhancing community-level protection against sexual violence in armed conflict and post-conflict situations and supporting survivors in accessing justice and reparations".<sup>103</sup> Best practice studies identify dedicated personnel as essential to communication with communities, attending to diverse groups at risk and local leaders as well as women's organisations.<sup>104</sup> Consultation may also be a feature of preventative action. Finally, patrols can confer an indirect benefit, building trust between communities and military actors when successful.<sup>105</sup>

### 2.3. Response

The third stage of activity is response, dealing with measures taken after violations take place. These may include kinetic measures against perpetrators, including detention.<sup>106</sup> Whether such responses are possible will depend on mission mandate,

<sup>97</sup> Anderson (2010), op. cit., p. 36.

<sup>98</sup> Interviewee G.

<sup>99</sup> Interviewee E; Interviewee G.

<sup>100</sup> United Nations (2020), op. cit., p. 50.

<sup>101</sup> Anderson (2010), op. cit., p. 27; Interviewee D. There were however reports that the active deployment of women in such roles had been prevented on Equality Act grounds as disadvantaging male Defence personnel.

<sup>102</sup> Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations (2015) *Whose Security? Practical Examples of Gender Perspectives in Military Operations*. Nordic Centre for Gender, Swedish Armed Forces, p. 51.

<sup>103</sup> United Nations Security Council (2013) 'Resolution 2106', June, para. 21. See also United Nations Security Council (2015) 'Resolution 2242', October, para. 5.

<sup>104</sup> Idris, op. cit., pp. 9-10.

<sup>105</sup> Anderson L (2010), op. cit., p. 22.

<sup>106</sup> Anderson L (2010), op. cit., p. 33; Peace Support Operations Training Centre, op. cit., p. 188; AFRICOM, op. cit., pp. 4-5, p. 18.

whether they are practical given capabilities at the time, and whether they are advisable considering likely consequences, especially for communities that may be re-targeted by armed groups. More widely discussed in the existing literature is the role of militaries in providing care to victim-survivors, and in collecting evidence on CRSV.

Stage	Action
<b>Prevention</b>	<p>Capacity building with host governments and partner military and police forces</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encouraging gender perspectives and specialised roles</li> <li>• Developing policies and protocols</li> <li>• Sharing good practice for documentation and investigation</li> <li>• Issuing joint declarations on combatting CRSV and SEA</li> </ul> <p>Preparing for response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a referral network of capable agencies, building trust</li> <li>• Collaborate to establish early warning systems and rapid gender analysis</li> </ul>
<b>Pre-emption</b>	<p>Patrols and safe zones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proactive deployment in high-risk areas to deter perpetrators</li> <li>• Protected spaces and weapon-free zones</li> <li>• Designed in consultation with women and other at-risk groups to address their needs, including assigning community liaison officers</li> </ul> <p>Coordinating response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modelled on examples such as Joint Protection Teams or Joint Operation Centres</li> <li>• Working with others to confirm referral pathways and holistic response</li> </ul>
<b>Response</b>	<p>First responder function</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide medical care where no other service is available, referring as soon as possible thereafter to qualified services</li> <li>• Integrate CRSV into Defence medical guidance to empower personnel</li> </ul> <p>Protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide forces to support other actors or secure a mass crime scene, as appropriate</li> <li>• Where permitted by mandate and posing no risk to victim-survivors, consider actions against known perpetrators</li> </ul>



	<p>Reporting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop tools and train Defence personnel to ensure appropriate and confidential internal reporting</li> <li>• Create standardised templates requiring reporting on gender and CRSV indicators</li> <li>• Make reporting on CRSV a Commander task in line with NATO policy</li> </ul>
<p><b>Analysis and consolidation</b></p>	<p>Monitoring and analysis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding national and local state and justice institutions, especially how they are viewed by women and other groups at risk of CRSV</li> <li>• Developing systems for reporting to enable action against perpetrators, and for confidential external information sharing</li> <li>• Reporting to the Security Council or other relevant entities on patterns of violations</li> </ul> <p>Future prevention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informing design of environment and response by other actors</li> </ul> <p>Doctrine monitoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrating and adapting international best practice into developing Defence practice</li> <li>• Include academic, civil society and survivor expertise into monitoring and development of doctrine and post-deployment lessons</li> </ul>

*Table 2: Examples of good Defence practice*

As noted above, there is already considerable expertise held by individuals within Defence, who are also keenly aware of key principles for military engagement on CRSV. Further work should extend this expertise through Defence, and in particular work to clarify and negotiate capabilities and experience held by a range of actors – other UK agencies, international organisations, humanitarian agencies, host and troop-contributing governments, local institutions, civil society organisations – in any fragile or conflict-affected context. From a review of available materials, the following relevant principles should guide future Defence consideration of interactions with victim-survivors:

1. Assume that CRSV is present, even in the absence of confirmed cases, recognising that the character of violence and the exact identities of those targeted will vary by conflict.
2. Ensure that any substantive engagement with victim-survivors is carried out by appropriately-trained mission personnel, with attention to appropriate guidance such as the Murad Code.
3. Refer victim-survivors to appropriate services with all due haste, subject to their informed consent.

4. Ensure that informed consent processes are simple and understandable, respecting decisions of victim-survivors (including the decision not to report a rights violation or provide physical evidence).
5. Maintain confidentiality, including through measures to safeguard recorded information about victim-survivors, with informed consent for sharing with other agencies.
6. Be gender inclusive. Personnel should not assume that only women and girls are victims, and should be aware of risks to men and boys, as well as those of diverse gender identities and sexual orientations. Ideally victim-survivors should have the option of choosing which personnel they interact with, for example if they feel more comfortable speaking to a woman.
7. Acknowledge and plan for the overlap with other violations and abuses, even where these may exist in a different CCT, for example where the victim-survivor is a child.<sup>107</sup>

Best practice therefore implies multiple trained individuals deployed, including both men and women, significant understanding of issues and sensitivities, and a supporting architecture of gender-sensitive conflict analysis.

Victim-survivors are likely to require a range of support, from direct medical care to psychosocial and therapeutic treatment to livelihood support and potential legal redress.<sup>108</sup> In peacekeeping practice, mission personnel rely on 'referral pathways', coordinating services which may include governmental and civil society organisations as much as UN agencies. Where the United Nations is supporting a government during or after conflict, One-Stop Centres can offer holistic services while minimising the potential for re-traumatisation or insecurity.<sup>109</sup> In the absence of holistic services, emergency services such as mobile clinics may be deployed. Where a protection mandate is in place, CRSV considerations should be mainstreamed across strategy and operational documents.<sup>110</sup>

The provision of medical support should not be standard practice for Defence personnel but instead provided only where no other option is available (a point discussed in greater detail in the next section). Protocols should focus on emergency provision. In the UK context, one option would be to update the Medical Rules of Eligibility (MRoE) to include CRSV so that UK personnel were authorised to provide emergency treatment before referral where necessary.<sup>111</sup> In some cases, as when victims have also been killed, this will include understanding that the body of the deceased is itself evidence, to respect victim dignity, and to refrain from contaminating the scene.<sup>112</sup> Some informants felt strongly that the first responder function should be sharply limited, and only operate where nested in appropriate referral pathways.<sup>113</sup> Others saw somewhat greater scope for military interaction at the scene of violations, though again only in rare circumstances where few or no other options presented

<sup>107</sup> For sources see United Nations (2020), op. cit., p. 13-15; AFRICOM, op. cit., 24. Input also given by Interviewee B.

<sup>108</sup> United Nations (2020), op. cit., pp. 36-37.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>110</sup> See Ibid., p. 48 for examples.

<sup>111</sup> Interviewee C; Interviewee F; Interviewee I.

<sup>112</sup> Institute for Security Studies, op. cit., 6\_7.

<sup>113</sup> Interviewee B.

themselves.<sup>114</sup> Discussions on this theme underscored potential sources of scepticism and distrust between military and other conflict actors, again indicating the importance of careful doctrine development and ongoing dialogue to build relationships.<sup>115</sup>

Guidance also exists on how military and security actors can respond to ongoing sexual violence. According to the early warning matrix developed for UN peacekeeping practice, militaries should take notice of indicators such as reprisal attacks against civilians, police reports of increased sexual violence, abductions of women and girls and reports of sexual violence in detention or interrogation settings. With the proviso that UK actors may be operating under a different mandate (explored in greater detail below), advised responsive actions in such situations include:

- “Apply political pressure on perpetrators/abusive groups
- Send Joint Protection Team/patrol to area
- Establish Temporary Operating Bases/Mobile Operating Bases
- Help to build local and national response capacity (e.g. establish mechanisms for reporting) and to empower community-based capacity/‘village vigilance committees’ (e.g. engage with youth/women’s groups, engage men as whistle-blowers, etc.)
- Advocate for a stronger presence by the national police (where police are not themselves involved in sexual or other violence)
- Liaise with local authorities to advocate for protection and accountability
- Advocate for the release of forcibly recruited women/girls/boys”<sup>116</sup>

#### 2.4. Analysis and Consolidation

The final stage includes analysis and consolidation of broader measures informing future prevention. A crucial bridge with response is in developing adequate reporting arrangements, so that incidents are known by relevant analysts and reporting personnel have confidence in the efficacy of policy. Relevant guidance – such as that produced by NATO with UK input – makes collecting, reporting and sharing of “objective, accurate and reliable information on the types of conflict-related SGBV [sexual and gender-based violence]” a Commander task.<sup>117</sup> Usually reporting is understood to be a within-mission task, though there may be summaries of evidence submitted to other entities in sharply delimited circumstances.<sup>118</sup> There are varying methods for convening a team to assess information, cooperate with other relevant components, formulate and direct responses and liaise with UN and national bodies. UN policy anticipates the creation of Joint Operation Centres – taking delivery of reports from protection advisors and human rights components to enable response in high risk areas – alongside Joint Mission Analysis Centres – which manage early

<sup>114</sup> Interviewee F. See also See e.g. Institute for Security Studies, op. cit.; Livingstone A (2011) ‘Training Military Personnel to Respond to Sexual Violence’, in Norwegian Armed Forces Defence Command and Staff College, *Sexual Violence, the Armed Forces and Military Operations*, Monograph Series 1 (3), p. 49.

<sup>115</sup> Interviewee C; Interviewee G.

<sup>116</sup> This list is reproduced from United Nations Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict (2011) *Early-Warning Indicators of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence Matrix*, p. 6.

<sup>117</sup> North Atlantic Military Committee (2015) ‘Military Guidelines on the Preventing of, and Response to, Conflict-Related Sexual and Gender-Based Violence’, MCM-0009-2015, June, p. 3

<sup>118</sup> E.g. Institute for Security Studies, op. cit., pp. 6\_18-6\_19.

warning indicators and collate information on parties credibly suspected of CRSV.<sup>119</sup> Crucially, prompts on gender and CRSV must be given in reporting templates to ensure that personnel know that this information is relevant and so that it can be systematically collated.<sup>120</sup> Defence has already developed practice in this area in the 77 Brigade reporting card, and other personnel have experience of related pocket cards including reporting for CRSV in UN missions and in some UK PDTs.<sup>121</sup> With a broader lens there is a priority need for a safe and anonymised data sharing system to enable action even where there are sub-optimal relationships between security, humanitarian and justice actors in a conflict site, and Defence could encourage the establishment of such a system with partners and international agencies.<sup>122</sup> Standardised templates are highlighted as best practice, and guidance exists for relevant indicators in the context of UN peacekeeping practice and MARAs (see Appendix 2).<sup>123</sup>

Though UK mandates are likely to differ from UN peacekeeping ones, work could be undertaken to align early warning indicators and reporting mechanisms. Informants indicated that the status of the UK provides some leeway in mandate design that could facilitate such mechanisms.<sup>124</sup> Understanding the character of host state institutions will provide a sounder basis for decisions about response and referral. Local communities may lack confidence in police or justice response, a factor which should be integrated into protocols.<sup>125</sup> Where Defence is collaborating in a disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programme, the gender perspective will aid in reducing the risk of future violations.<sup>126</sup> Where large numbers of recently demobilised men are entering communities, there will be a need to monitor potential spikes in violence, and potentially to provide resources to mitigate any impact. Where UK forces are not involved in a long-term stabilisation or support mission, intelligence gathered during deployment on sources and causes of CRSV – as might be provided by intelligence on armed group movements and tactics – can nevertheless inform future prevention more indirectly. Where refugee camps are being established, their design can be made more gender-sensitive in response to evidence on patterns of violence.<sup>127</sup> For instance, UN practice documents the effect of changing the location or environment around water sources as reducing CRSV risks.<sup>128</sup> For all these processes, gender advisors or focal points are essential.<sup>129</sup>

## 2.5. General Considerations

The stages of action are linked together in ongoing situations: proper pre-emption can improve response, while effective responses can also act as prevention measures for potential future violations. Ideally, measures from each stage operate together to

<sup>119</sup> United Nations Department of Peace Operations, Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (2022) *Policy: United Nations Field Missions: Preventing and Responding to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence*, 2019.35, January, p. 14.

<sup>120</sup> Interviewee E.

<sup>121</sup> Interviewee C; Interviewee E.

<sup>122</sup> Interviewee B.

<sup>123</sup> Idris, op. cit., pp. 14-15.

<sup>124</sup> Interviewee E.

<sup>125</sup> Institute for Security Studies, op. cit., p. 7\_3.

<sup>126</sup> See e.g. Anderson (2010), op. cit., p. 28.

<sup>127</sup> Anderson (2011), op. cit., p. 37

<sup>128</sup> Anderson (2010) op. cit., p. 22, p. 26.

<sup>129</sup> United Nations (2020), op. cit., p. 27, p. 43.

reduce vulnerabilities of groups and populations and reduce the active threat posed by perpetrators.<sup>130</sup> All four stages should be supported by a review and reconsideration of the full scope of training. In terms of personnel, prevention and response to CRSV must be supported by relevant expertise and established ways of working at all levels, from advising senior leadership through military planners to specialist units to pre-deployment training for all personnel.<sup>131</sup> As noted above, it has not been possible to assess the current overall provision of gender expertise in Defence. Comparative data provides one guide to resourcing. In the latest national reporting to NATO, the United States listed 31 gender advisors (GENADs) and 167 gender focal points (GFPs) across the Department of Defence, general staff and armed forces.<sup>132</sup> Canada listed 61 GENADs and 257 GFPs.<sup>133</sup> For Sweden, the figures were 1 GENAD and 50 GFPs.<sup>134</sup> Other comparator nations, such as Norway and Denmark, reported fewer than 10 people in equivalent roles. The UK did not provide any information in its submission.<sup>135</sup> Though the relationship between internal gender expertise and effective policy is likely to be mediated by many contextual factors, it is plausible to assume that greater resourcing at all ranks increases the capacity to respond to CRSV among other WPS concerns. The appointment of senior Women Protection Advisors can improve alignment between CRSV response and WPS commitments, but only where these are well integrated into operations.<sup>136</sup> In the UK case, the role of Human Security Advisors may be bolstered by greater use of gender focal points.

In terms of training, informants stressed that a basic level of consistent, generalised training should be developed to cover observing, reporting and referring as standard for all personnel.<sup>137</sup> To build this capacity, internal training resources will have to be significantly enhanced and institutionalised, for example at the Defence Academy (an explicit suggestion of several informants).<sup>138</sup> Several informants also mentioned the proposal for a Centre of Excellence (whether on human security or CRSV), seemingly approved by a former Secretary of State for Defence but not yet realised at the time of writing.<sup>139</sup> Informants made somewhat different suggestions as to additional standardisations – for example, that every brigade should have a primary and secondary Human Security Advisor, or that reporting protocols should be part of PDT on all missions.<sup>140</sup> Whether this scale of deployment is practical depends both on Defence resources in the coming period and on the specificities of mandate. Based on recent NATO Military Guidelines, at a minimum reporting on CRSV is a Command task for all missions, implying an appropriate apparatus of reporting training and mechanisms as well as advisors and focal points to ensure that the Commander receives the necessary information.<sup>141</sup>

<sup>130</sup> Peace Support Operations Training Centre, op. cit., p. 66.

<sup>131</sup> See e.g. United Nations (2022), op. cit., pp. 9-10.

<sup>132</sup> NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives (2021) *Summary of the National Reports of NATO Member and Partner Nations to the NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives: Full Report: 2019*, p. 542.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., p. 202.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., p. 671.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., p. 529.

<sup>136</sup> Dönges H E and Kullenberg J (2018) 'What Works (and Fails) in Protection', in Davies S E and True J (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Women, Peace and Security*. Oxford University Press.

<sup>137</sup> Interviewee C; Interviewee D; Interviewee F.

<sup>138</sup> Interviewee F.

<sup>139</sup> Interviewee A; Interviewee D; Interviewee I.

<sup>140</sup> Interviewee C; Interviewee F.

<sup>141</sup> North Atlantic Military Committee, op. cit.

Though many concluded that training should be practical, precise and cover a limited range of engagements, it is also important to bear in mind that for some topics – such as sexual violence against men and boys or people of diverse sexual orientation and gender identity – more significant time for awareness and sensitisation may be required.<sup>142</sup> The human security aspects of doctrine should also be validated through external scrutiny, as is the case with NATO doctrine, seen by the International Committee of the Red Cross in all cases apart from special forces doctrine.<sup>143</sup> Some informants expressed the view that Defence has not made the most of academic and civil society expertise. As well as a sense that civilian actors would bring relevant knowledge to the benefit of training content, there was also a concern that Defence was currently ‘marking its own homework’ on the adequacy of gender training and CRSV response.<sup>144</sup> The alternative would be to develop a system of collaborative monitoring and evaluation that could lead to meaningful improvements where necessary.

Though advanced protocols on military measures to combat CRSV are in their infancy, respondents indicated that there were useful training models in existing centres of excellence (such as the Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations and the Peace Support Operations Training Centre, Sarajevo) which the UK could integrate into its own dedicated internal capacity. Again, there was a sense that important earlier UK efforts in developing military approaches to CRSV had not been sufficiently maintained or consolidated: though Defence personnel had been involved in the drafting of NATO’s first policy on CRSV, and although NATO policy itself credits PSVI, informants tended to view UK practice as quite isolated from what might be being developed elsewhere, even among close allies.<sup>145</sup> Several informants commented on the expertise of other militaries in general terms. Examples given included Norway’s Handbook on CRSV; Canada’s policy of requiring an annual refresher of gender training for any military personnel not on deployment; Zambia’s conceptual framework incorporating multiple insecurities and therefore demonstrating the relevance of military engagement beyond the battlefield; Sweden’s policy of deploying a gender focal point on every mission; the ability of Tanzanian and Ghanaian peacekeepers to develop rapport with local women and secure results on deployment (for example in a willingness to leave base and move among the population, receptive to information); Malawi’s deployment of over a dozen gender focal points and a dedicated GENAD in its MONUSCO contribution; the record of India’s first all-female battalion in apprehending perpetrators in the eastern DRC; and the ongoing effort to develop specific policies on CRSV and gender in the Australian and United States militaries.<sup>146</sup>

Within the limits of this report, it was not possible to discern whether some of the good practice from other militaries referenced by informants were the result of a replicable training programme or of ad hoc practices. In discussions there was a general view that other militaries did not generally have highly developed and consistent training outside of peacekeeping or other mission-contingent contexts, underscoring the need

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<sup>142</sup> Interviewee B.

<sup>143</sup> As reported by Interviewee D.

<sup>144</sup> Interviewee E; Interviewee F.

<sup>145</sup> Interviewee A; Interviewee D; Interviewee E.

<sup>146</sup> Interviewee A; Interviewee D; Interviewee E; Interviewee H.

for better development and learning internationally.<sup>147</sup> Of particular note is the seeming absence of detailed work on how militaries can engage in a survivor-centred way.<sup>148</sup> The latest NATO policy mandates the development of operational guidance in line with a survivor-centred approach.<sup>149</sup> Given the recent survivor emphasis of PSVI, this is a clear opportunity for further analysis. In some regards, the UK was seen as an early innovator for military engagement with CRSV, albeit only in some functions and training missions.<sup>150</sup> Despite the challenges noted by informants, none were able to indicate a military demonstrating comprehensive and systematic good practice outside of UN mandates. For some, the UK was to be commended for already doing more than partners, at least with regard to the training of other militaries.<sup>151</sup> At the same time informants expressed a desire that Defence improve in learning from others and treat future 'partnerships' on CRSV as genuine dialogues rather than as synonymous with training by the UK.<sup>152</sup> Defence should develop guidelines that allow for UK personnel to receive briefings and trainings from other nations where relevant expertise and experience exists, even if this is not always codified in explicit policy or written guidelines.

## 3

### Risks and Limitations

CRSV is a form of violence plagued by difficulties of response. Often under-reported, it can be challenging to identify and map, while conflict conditions themselves prevent survivors from accessing suitable healthcare and services, limitations that also mean that vital evidence suitable for criminal or justice processes is often lost. With regard to Defence engagement on CRSV, there are three particular risks: 1) doing harm in interactions with victim-survivors; 2) inapplicability of practices from different mandates; and 3) responding to violations by partner forces. Each is also underpinned by the challenge of inadequate internal capacity, including on training.

#### 3.1. Do No Harm

Existing practice emphasises that military actors should always ensure that they do no harm.<sup>153</sup> As the UK-supported Murad Codes phrases it, 'Add Value or Don't Do It', indicating attention to role and purpose, recognition of risk, searches for alternative sources of information, and efficient and confidential information sharing.<sup>154</sup> From the survivor perspective, and while acknowledging that there is no single survivor experience or CSRV context, there is a danger of traumatising in interactions with

<sup>147</sup> Interviewee A.

<sup>148</sup> Interviewee B.

<sup>149</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) (2021) 'NATO Policy on Preventing and Responding to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence', 1 June.

<sup>150</sup> Interviewee C; Interviewee F.

<sup>151</sup> Interviewee H.

<sup>152</sup> Interviewee E.

<sup>153</sup> E.g. United Nations (2022), op. cit., p. 6; United Nations (2020), op. cit., p. 13; Idris, op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>154</sup> Murad Code, op. cit., Principle 4

UK military personnel; of re-traumatisation in reporting incidents of CRSV; of lack of informed consent in providing physical proof; of stigmatisation by the local community; and even of retaliatory violence if identified as linked to UK military personnel.<sup>155</sup> Individuals or communities may have reasonable fear of abuse or simply distrust local and state officials. The role of UK personnel in liaising with host national police forces, referring victim-survivors to state provision or legal counsel, and any transfer of information on the identify of victim-survivors should therefore be considered with extreme care.

Both existing guidance and key informants stressed the limits of medical response.<sup>156</sup> Military personnel should therefore provide medical treatment to victims in extreme situations, where no other options are available, and concentrate on liaising with enabling other actors with appropriate capabilities.<sup>157</sup> At the same time, experienced informants indicated that there were few if any examples of UK military personnel interacting with victim-survivors of CRSV in the field to date, indicating that other areas of capacity and doctrine development were more pressing.<sup>158</sup>

Though several existing guides include the possibility of investigation and detailed reporting by military personnel, this carries considerable risk.<sup>159</sup> Interviews should be conducted only after careful and consideration and under clear protocols.<sup>160</sup> Adequate training should be accompanied by clarity on tasks and roles for operation and strategic levels.<sup>161</sup> Missions are also likely to lack systems for proper storage of forensic evidence. For example, Military Police Further Medical Evidence kits are currently only sanctioned for use with military personnel, not civilians or children.<sup>162</sup> Legal implications should also be carefully studied. Informants reported that any forensics gathered by UK personnel are unusable in many court settings, with possible exceptions where the perpetrator was from a partner nation.<sup>163</sup> It was beyond the scope of this paper to assess the legal basis for this apparent rule, and it is possible that there are exceptions or alternatives. Nevertheless, the perception existed among informants that there were significant legal limits to evidence-gathering by UK personnel. Understandably, such perceptions can in themselves become a barrier to action even where there is an understanding that violations have taken place. Legal responsibilities and limits should therefore be clearly communicated at all levels.

Data on patterns of violence may eventually be useful in fora such as the UN Security Council, but Defence should be careful not to replicate investigatory function of others. Depending on the conflict context there may be domestic prosecutorial efforts, international commissions of inquiry, information-gathering by humanitarian agencies and United Nations experts deployed. While there can be no single rule for how UK personnel relate to these other agencies, Defence should make explicit the various possible options for delineating responsibility between agencies in context. Yet

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<sup>155</sup> Interviewee B.

<sup>156</sup> AFRICOM, op. cit., p. 5; Interviewee C.

<sup>157</sup> See also NATO (2021), op. cit., pp. 3-4.

<sup>158</sup> Interviewee C; Interviewee I.

<sup>159</sup> For examples of guides, see AFRICOM, op. cit., p. 5, p. 15; Institute for Security Studies, op. cit., module 6.

<sup>160</sup> Compare with Institute for Security Studies, op. cit., p. 6\_11-6\_12.

<sup>161</sup> Interviewee D.

<sup>162</sup> Interviewee C.

<sup>163</sup> Interviewee C.



assuming enhanced capabilities, military actors may still alienate survivors or inadvertently exacerbate insecurities. In the absence of clear relationships between actors beyond Defence, such as host state medical services or justice actors, survivors may be retraumatised by reporting the same violations to multiple entities operating under siloed or contradictory frameworks.<sup>164</sup> Mission commanders and gender or human security advisors should therefore conduct a thorough assessment of what agencies are operating in a given setting, where primary responsibility lies for preventing and responding to CRSV for the range of actors and forms of abuse, and consequently where (if anywhere) UK action is required.

However, Do No Harm and capability considerations should not be taken to mean that Defence has no obligations or opportunities with regard to CRSV. Harm may arise inadvertently in both intervening and not intervening. While giving proper consideration to the role of other agencies and minimising the risk of perpetuating harm, UK Defence should revisit its training. Both studies and informant feedback underscored the importance of practical, scenario-based training emphasising protocols for reporting and the link between CRSV and mission mandate as the most effective way to generate widespread 'buy-in'.<sup>165</sup> By contrast, PowerPoint-based lessons are generally accepted as ineffective when used in isolation.<sup>166</sup> Such scenario, serial and exercise-based training would provide a minimal basis for knowing both what to do and what not to do.<sup>167</sup> Preparedness is essential where UK personnel are likely to encounter CRSV and to fully meeting obligations under the WPS agenda.<sup>168</sup> Again, training will be most effective when paired with greater sensitisation to the importance of gender and accompanying shifts in military culture. Examples include the role of unconscious bias in perpetuating gender inequality, facilitating abuses and deterring reporting. Progress on CRSV response is thus closely linked to the success of wider WPS as well as SEA policies. At the same time, informants were conscious of the practical limits, especially for generalised training.<sup>169</sup>

### 3.2. Mandates

A second major risk is in adopting inapplicable practice from other, particularly peacekeeping, experiences. Security Council resolutions have emphasised the need for pre-deployment training on CRSV as well as SEA for troop- and police-contributing countries, and existing guidance is largely oriented towards these needs.<sup>170</sup> UN field missions typically coordinate with civilian country teams, UN entities, local civil society and other non-governmental actors. Partners, allies and stakeholders may include groups as varied as regional organisations, state law enforcement, faith organisations, community leaders and local media.<sup>171</sup> With regard to immediate help for victim-survivors, missions are only one part of an ecosystem. Following first responder measures, appropriate agencies would then offer a range of services: medical,

<sup>164</sup> Institute for Security Studies, op. cit., p 6\_19.

<sup>165</sup> Interviewee A; Interviewee D; Interviewee F. See also Axmacher S (2013) 'Review of Scenario-Based Training for Peacekeepers on Prevention and Response to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence', UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict, December.

<sup>166</sup> Tanner, op. cit., p. 89. See also Hammes T X (2009) 'Dumb-Dumb Bullets', *Armed Forces Journal*, 1 July.

<sup>167</sup> Interviewee C.

<sup>168</sup> See e.g. Anderson (2010), op. cit., p. 10.

<sup>169</sup> Interviewee C; Interviewee D; Interviewee E; Interviewee F.

<sup>170</sup> E.g. United Nations Security Council (2010) 'Resolution 1960', December, para. 16.

<sup>171</sup> Institute for Security Studies, op. cit., p. 5\_11.

including immediate access to PEP kits; psychosocial, focused on healing and recovery; livelihood support, promoting empowerment; and legal, to enable access to justice.<sup>172</sup> It is intended that diverse actors will collaborate in protection work to “create a seamless support system for victims/survivors of CRSV”.<sup>173</sup> In established missions, the UN has cooperated with government agencies to create ‘one-stop centres’ that can efficiently manage referral pathways for victim-survivors to available services.

It is often presumed that UN missions will act as neutral brokers for parties to the conflict.<sup>174</sup> For example, peacekeepers have previously provided military escorts to help humanitarian agencies reach victim-survivors.<sup>175</sup> Notwithstanding the desirability of such “windows of access”, not all UK missions will have the resources or mandate to take this same role. The extent to which UK forces will be able to plug in to a comprehensive network of pathways and services is also highly contextual. Humanitarian actors can have a fraught relationship with military forces, even when convened under the umbrella of the United Nations.<sup>176</sup> It cannot be assumed that information on violations, patterns or response will be easily exchanged, despite the emphasis in some guidance.<sup>177</sup> It was emphasised that work on internal capacity should precede building deep partnerships with other CRSV actors.<sup>178</sup> Defence should therefore focus on the below recommendations emphasising internal capacity, strategy and doctrine so that it can make a clear offer to partners who may remain distrustful of military actors. For mission coherence, this implies training for analysis and planners as well as frontline troops.<sup>179</sup>

The possible restrictiveness of UK military mandates with regard to CRSV or protection of civilians again underscores the need for clear training and rules of engagement. As harm may arise both from ill-informed interventions and from failures to intervene appropriately, work is needed to develop doctrine, even if this is to set out clearly those situations in which other actors take precedence or to explain how military actors may inadvertently do harm. Given the variety of possible mandates and force generation protocols, there can be no single rule as to how and when military actors should engage. Informants noted that some hesitancy from military personnel arose from lack of clarity, with troops preferring not to act at all rather than do the ‘wrong thing’ (whether in legal, cultural or survivor senses).<sup>180</sup> Addressing this risk may require a reconsideration of broader strategy and objectives. Several informants commented that where mandates limit the ability of UK personnel to respond effectively to CRSV, these mandates should change.<sup>181</sup> Nor are mandate concerns only a challenge for national militaries: UN missions are also encouraged to give more thought to how their goals and accompanying rules of engagement might limit CRSV response.<sup>182</sup> Nevertheless, where mandates most closely approximate the model of peacekeeping the established good practice covered above will be of considerable

<sup>172</sup> United Nations (2020), *op. cit.*, pp. 36-38.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>174</sup> E.g. United Nations (2022), *op. cit.*, p. 10.

<sup>175</sup> Anderson L (2010), *op. cit.*, p. 30.

<sup>176</sup> Interviewee B.

<sup>177</sup> Anderson L (2010), *op. cit.*, p. 24; Interviewee B; Interviewee C

<sup>178</sup> Interviewee B

<sup>179</sup> Interviewee F.

<sup>180</sup> Interviewee E; Interviewee F.

<sup>181</sup> Interviewee A; Interviewee C; Interviewee E.

<sup>182</sup> Anderson (2010), *op. cit.*, p. 16.

relevance. Where the UK is not engaged in peacekeeping work but is encountering CRSV as an active party to conflict, different considerations may apply, and guidance will have to be adapted based on a considered assessment of Do No Harm principles. There is to date little consideration of what prevention and response to CRSV looks like outside of a UN remit, and in the course of this rapid review no training or best practice guidance was found from other militaries that prepared audiences for non-peacekeeping contexts.

### 3.3. Partner Forces

Finally, Defence may face risks and limits in its work on CRSV due to the identity of perpetrators, above all when they come from partner forces. It is well established in the scholarly literature that national security forces are leading perpetrators of CRSV.<sup>183</sup> Existing guides to practice have highlighted the pattern in context, as where UNMISS sought to engage with state forces responsible for some 60% of CRSV cases.<sup>184</sup> As well as obscuring violence against young girls, there is some evidence to suggest a greater prevalence of sexual violence against men and boys in military and detention settings.<sup>185</sup> Defence personnel commented extensively on the challenges they had experienced in contexts like Afghanistan where it was clear that allies were engaged in violations. Concerns often manifest in a presumed trade-off between adherence to WPS standards and maintaining appropriate cultural sensitivity.<sup>186</sup> National legal systems differ, and some acts may not be illegal despite meeting common definitions of CRSV.<sup>187</sup> At the same time, organisational policies arguably create obligations beyond legal minimums, especially where there is scope to address practices within formal agreements. Addressing violations by partner forces may therefore require revisiting status of forces agreements.<sup>188</sup>

Violations by partners are highly likely to affect mission legitimacy, as mentioned above with regard to SEA.<sup>189</sup> Multiple informants raised the example of violations by partner forces as an area for significant work.<sup>190</sup> Just as sexual violence can negatively impact the reception of missions among a civilian population, so too will violations by partner forces reflect negatively on UK personnel. There is also evidence that confusion over how to respond or failure to respond can negatively affected UK personnel themselves.<sup>191</sup> Shame and regret at complicity in violations conforms with public reports from western forces in Afghanistan.<sup>192</sup> Arguably as relevant is the role of the UK as a source of military knowledge, convened through institutions such as Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. Informants indicated a special responsibility to

<sup>183</sup> Nordås R and Cohen D K (2021) 'Conflict-Related Sexual Violence', *Annual Review of Political Science*, 24, pp. 205-206.

<sup>184</sup> Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations (2022) *NCGM: A Decade of Integrating Gender Perspective in Military Operations*. April, pp. 13-14.

<sup>185</sup> Tanner F (2011) 'Female Engagements; Experiences from Iraq, Africa, and Afghanistan', in Norwegian Armed Forces Defence Command and Staff College, *Sexual Violence, the Armed Forces and Military Operations*, Monograph Series 1 (3), p. 88; Sivakumaran S (2010) 'Lost in Translation: UN Responses to Sexual Violence Against Men and Boys in Situations of Armed Conflict', *International Review of the Red Cross*, 92 (877): 259-277.

<sup>186</sup> Bastick, op. cit., pp. 172-173.

<sup>187</sup> Interviewee D.

<sup>188</sup> Interviewee E.

<sup>189</sup> AFRICOM, op. cit., p. 7.

<sup>190</sup> Interviewee A; Interviewee E; Interviewee F.

<sup>191</sup> Interviewee E; Interviewee G.

<sup>192</sup> Goldstein J (2015) 'U.S. Soldiers Told to Ignore Sexual Abuse of Boys by Afghan Allies', *The New York Times*, 20 September.

inculcate awareness of CRSV with a human rights framework for officers-in-training from other nations.<sup>193</sup> The potential causes of violations by militaries also point to solutions: “the great advantage of military organizations is that they are likely to imitate each other”.<sup>194</sup>

UN policy forbids field missions from providing support or conducting joint operations with any military, armed group or security force either perpetrating or complicit in CRSV.<sup>195</sup> There is a partial and limited parallel in current UK practice, where 77 Brigade often conducts an audit of gender, human security and law of armed conflict capabilities before partnering with other forces. This appears to be an expanding practice, though without clear and consistent parallels in other brigades or branches of Defence.<sup>196</sup> Some pre-deployment training for missions in Mali and South Sudan has covered how to deal with violations by partner forces, with work ongoing on early warning indicators and reporting.<sup>197</sup> Some Defence informants indicated that reporting on abuses by partner forces was included in training, especially within NATO structures, though the majority view remained that training and response mechanisms were not fit for purpose or had only recently been updated.<sup>198</sup>

The Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict has engaged with armed groups to secure reforms preventing CRSV. In South Sudan, the UNMISS mission convinced the government to issue a Joint Communique resulting in plans to combat CRSV for the national army and police.<sup>199</sup> The Communique publicly pledged cooperation on military command, criminal investigation, monitoring, security sector reform, access to justice, survivor services and more (see Appendix 3). The UN also supported the production of clear guidance for soldiers in the form of pocket cards.<sup>200</sup> Though there may again be limits to this model for UK action outside of a UN mission, Defence should actively explore the viability of similar cooperation with partner forces. Joint declarations with national forces can also have an impact on non-state armed groups, as was the case with the National Salvation Front in South Sudan.<sup>201</sup> In sum, violations by partner forces constitutes a major and inescapable challenge for Defence. Despite receiving less attention than other limitations, it is arguably most important, as it is in partnering with others that Defence runs greatest risk in becoming complicit with violations.

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<sup>193</sup> Interviewee B.

<sup>194</sup> Ruffa C (2020) ‘Peacekeeping Military Contingents in Preventing CRSV by Local State Forces’, *International Peacekeeping*, 27 (4), p. 546.

<sup>195</sup> United Nations (2022), op. cit., p. 17.

<sup>196</sup> Interviewee F; Interviewee I.

<sup>197</sup> Interviewee F.

<sup>198</sup> Interviewee I.

<sup>199</sup> Centre for Civilians in Conflict (2020) “We Try to Break the Silence Somehow”: *Preventing Conflict-Related Sexual Violence through UN Peacekeeping*, October, p. 38.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

## 4

### Conclusion

Defence faces significant challenges but also opportunities in engaging positively on CRSV. In the absence of established and tested international good practice for national militaries, a range of tasks require further consideration, including the proper scope and depth of training, the optimal collaboration with agencies and partners, the development of referral pathways and holistic services, the place of CRSV within wider human security frameworks, and the demands of a 'survivor-centred' approach on institutions. Defence personnel already have experience in some of these areas, and this review revealed clear enthusiasm internally and externally for Defence to do more, cognisant of its role within a wider system of prevention and response. The emerging consensus is that the military contribution to preventing and responding to CRSV should be treated as "a valuable but very limited component".<sup>202</sup> A consistent refrain of informants was that Defence should concentrate on accomplishing a narrow range of tasks well, developing capability and capacity from leadership levels down.<sup>203</sup> That the Defence role may be limited should not be taken to mean that it is unimportant, or that the same tasks can be adapted by other actors. As with wider obligations under the WPS agenda, and consistent with the ambition of UK national action plans and declarations, the moment is ripe for meaningful and inclusive action to enter the mainstream.

## 5

### Recommendations

1. Defence should immediately develop, resource and maintain dedicated internal structures for learning on military action against CRSV. These should ensure that prior learning is consistently integrated, that institutional memory is preserved, and that there is capacity to adapt and adopt the best available practice from international organisations, partner militaries and humanitarian and civil society CRSV response.
2. As an immediate priority, Defence should nominate high-level leads for the tasks set out in these recommendations to ensure that delivery is prioritised and that there is clear accountability for progress.
3. Defence should articulate a Theory of Change or equivalent to set clear outputs, outcomes and pathways for what it will achieve on CRSV, aligned with PSVI pledges, NAP commitments and practice on CRSV, and cognisant of risks and the role of other actors.
4. Defence should review current doctrine at the earliest opportunity, with attention to its comprehensiveness and suitability for personnel of various levels and for multiple CRSV contexts and tasks, including addressing violations by partner

<sup>202</sup> Anderson (2010), op. cit., p. 21.

<sup>203</sup> Interviewee A; Interviewee B; Interviewee C; Interviewee D; Interviewee E; Interviewee F.

forces. Consideration should be given to whether and how doctrine should be enhanced.

5. In future planning, structures and doctrine should be supported by appropriate staffing at all levels, in light of existing Defence needs analysis and the implications of a CRSV component in many, if not all, missions.
6. Defence should review internal training provision and strongly consider measures to mainstream CRSV-related scenarios in training for all, enhanced with greater detail for specialist units or relevant mandates. Training should be subject to monitoring, evaluation and learning with clear reporting and robust accountability mechanisms for delivery.
7. Defence should begin work to develop active partnerships with partner militaries, international organisations and the wider CRSV sector to study and improve good practice on military action on CRSV, including by learning from the experiences of militaries that may not have codified their approach in doctrine, clarifying the division of responsibility in conflict settings, and preparing for proper referral and holistic response under different future conflict scenarios.
8. Defence should work closely with partner militaries, international organisations and the wider CRSV sector to develop appropriate reporting and referral tools, with special attention to maintaining confidentiality, informed consent and the safety of survivors. This may result in a standard operating procedure for reporting, while acknowledging that new international protocols should only be issued where there is adequate commitment to implement them.
9. Defence should commission further studies on areas of challenge, such as survivor perspectives on military engagement; implications of CRSV-responsive mandates; and future CRSV-sensitive agreements with partner forces.
10. Defence should create a system for monitoring progress on its CRSV engagement, drawing appropriately on outside expertise from international organisations, survivors' groups, academia and civil society.

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## Appendix 1: Key Informants

### Internal

CRSV lead, UK Defence

Human Security Advisor, UK Defence

Human Security Advisor, UK Defence

Human Security Advisor and gender trainer, UK Defence

Former Gender Advisor, UK Defence

### External

Military CRSV expert, academia and international organisations

WPS and Human Security practitioner, UN, NATO and UK MoD

Gender Advisor and CRSV trainer, regional security organization

CRSV survivor expert, civil society

## Appendix 2: Key Questions When Analyzing CRSV Information<sup>204</sup>

### To identify trends and patterns:

#### Profile of victims/survivors:

- what are the common characteristics regarding who they are and why they are targeted?

#### Incidents of sexual violence:

- Have there been increases/decreases in the number of verified incidents of CRSV compared to the previous reporting period? What could be the reasons?
- What types of CRSV are committed?
- Has any particular type of sexual violence increased/decreased in comparison to the previous reporting period? Why?
- In which geographic areas is CRSV committed? Are there new areas where it has been committed? What could be the reasons?
- Is there a particular context in which CRSV is perpetrated (such as detention, displacement, political repression)?
- Is there a common feature in the way CRSV is perpetrated (such as a mode of attack, a particular time of attack)? Has there been a repetition of similar events and escalation in their seriousness?

#### Profile of perpetrators:

- What are the common features in who they are and how they operate?
- What are the factors triggering their behaviour? Are they driven by ethnic, religious, ideological, or other specific motives?
- Are there signs that perpetrators may be following a plan?
- How is the command and control of the armed group and/or armed forces involved (e.g. have they ordered the attacks; do they have knowledge of them; do they have or not have de facto control over combatants under their responsibility)?

### To assess responses:

#### Multi-sectoral care:

- What type of support or services are available for victims/survivors of SGBV, including CRSV?
- What are the gaps in service delivery?
- Are there particular barriers for victims/survivors accessing care (including geographic location, security concerns, lack of transportation, cost to access services, concern of stigmatization, etc.)?

#### Accountability, justice, and reparations:

- Have the parties to the conflict already taken any protective or preventative measures to address the identified incident or pattern of CRSV?

<sup>204</sup> See United Nations (2020), op. cit., pp. 78-79.

- Have investigation and/or prosecution been carried out?
- What are the national and local legal frameworks and policies related to sexual-violence crimes?
- Have individual or collective reparations been awarded to victims/survivors of CRSV?

To consider contextual factors that contribute to CRSV:

- What are the relevant cultural, historical, political, and socio-economic factors that contribute to CRSV?
- What are the root causes of violations, including the motivation of perpetrators?
- Are there other forms of gender-based discriminations and GBV happening in the country? Are there links with the identified incident or pattern of CRSV?
- Were there pre-existing forms for GBV in the country before the conflict? If so, have they been exacerbated?

## Appendix 3: Joint Communiqué of the Republic of South Sudan and the United Nations on the Prevention of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence<sup>205</sup>

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (SRSG-SVC) visited the Republic of South Sudan from 6 to 10 October 2014, within the framework of United Nations Security Council resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1960 (2010), and 2106 (2013). The objective of the visit was to better understand the situation in South Sudan, particularly the trends and patterns of conflict-related sexual violence and challenges in preventing and responding to such crimes, and to agree on concrete response measures with the Government.

During the visit, the SRSG-SVC met with His Excellency Salva Kiir Mayardit, President of the Republic of South Sudan, as well as the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Veterans' Affairs, Justice, Information and Broadcasting, Interior, Health, Gender, Child and Social Welfare, high-level representatives of the Sudan People's Liberation Army and the Inspector-General of the South Sudanese Police Service. The Special Representative also met with the South Sudan National Human Rights Commission, the Speaker of Parliament and the Diplomatic community, and consulted with the United Nations system, representatives of civil society organisations, including women's groups, media organizations, youth groups and faith-based organizations, representatives of national and international non-governmental organisations, and survivors of sexual violence themselves.

The Special Representative takes note of the efforts being undertaken by the South Sudan authorities, including strengthening of domestic legislation, efforts towards the ratification of key international human rights instruments, and the strengthening of institutions such as the South Sudan National Human Rights Commission and the Law Review Commission. She is encouraged by South Sudan's endorsement of the "Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict" launched in the margins of the 68th General Assembly in September 2013, and the prohibition of "any acts of rape, sexual abuse and torture" under the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement signed on 23 January 2013.

The Special Representative also emphasized South Sudan's membership of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) as an opportunity to implement the Protocol on the Prevention and Suppression of Sexual Violence against Women and Children (2006) and the Declaration of the Heads of State and Government of the Member States of the ICGLR on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) (2011).

Notwithstanding the measures that have been taken, addressing conflict-related sexual violence in South Sudan continues to be a challenge. The President affirmed the strong commitment of the Government of South Sudan to combat this crime, including addressing impunity for such crimes.

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<sup>205</sup> Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (2014) 'Joint Communiqué of the Republic of South Sudan and the United Nations on the Prevention of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence', 12 October.

The South Sudan authorities reiterate the commitment of the Government to cooperate with the United Nations and other stakeholders to address the problem, including undertaking the following concrete measures:

Developing an action plan specific to the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), which will include, *inter alia*, the issuance of clear order prohibiting sexual violence through the chain of command, timely investigation of alleged violations, reinforcement of the military justice system to ensure accountability for sexual violence crimes, and training for military personnel;

Developing an action plan specific to the South Sudan National Police Service, which will include, *inter alia*, the provision of the Special Police Units with the capacity to investigate sexual violence crimes, training for police personnel, and recruitment of more female police officers;

Ensuring and facilitating the monitoring of sexual violence in the framework of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement and / or other ceasefire agreement, and ensuring that sexual violence is reflected in specific provisions of any peace agreements, including those related to security arrangements, transitional justice mechanisms, and ensuring that perpetrators of sexual violence crimes are excluded from amnesty provisions;

Addressing sexual violence concerns in any security sector reform processes and arrangements, including through the provision of adequate training for all security sectors personnel, encouraging the inclusion of more women in the security sector and effective vetting processes to exclude from the security sector those who are responsible for acts of sexual violence;

Enhancing the justice system, including through strengthening the legal framework, bolstering the capacity of prosecutors and judges and improving access to justice for survivors of sexual violence;

Ensuring the provision of appropriate services for survivors of sexual violence, including medical, psycho-social, legal and other urgent needs, and encouraging and supporting the work of service providers; and

Speaking out publicly against sexual violence at the highest level and in the strongest terms, and undertaking a national awareness raising and prevention campaign on sexual violence, in collaboration with the United Nations.

The United Nations will continue to support the efforts of the Government of South Sudan to combat sexual violence. In this regard, the Special Representative avails the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law/Sexual Violence in Conflict, which, in coordination with the United Nations system in South Sudan will support South Sudan's efforts to develop an implementation plan in accordance with the priorities expressed by this Joint Communiqué, and mobilize assistance for its implementation.

The President will appoint a high level focal point to lead and coordinate Government efforts and work with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and the United Nations system to ensure the full implementation of the Joint Communiqué.

The international community and donors are encouraged to provide financial and technical support to the Government of South Sudan towards the full implementation of the priorities set out in this Joint Communiqué.

*Sunday, 12 October 2014*