

# Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSV)



## Tip Sheet

Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSV) is a form of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) that includes 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. This link may be evident in the profile of the perpetrator, who is often affiliated with a State or non-State armed group, which includes terrorist entities or networks; the climate of impunity, which is generally associated with State collapse; cross-border consequences, such as displacement or trafficking; and/or violations of the provisions of a ceasefire agreement.

GBV prevention and response is one of the most sensitive and complex areas of humanitarian service delivery. In many places, being identified as a GBV survivor – and, sometimes, as someone who is helping a survivor -- can result in isolation, social stigmatisation, re-traumatisation, rejection from family and community, and, in some extreme cases, death. As such, all work connected to GBV must employ a survivor-centred approach that promotes safety, confidentiality, non-discrimination and respect for the choices of survivors. Any activity that fails to comply with these basic ethical and safety principles runs the risk of creating additional harm for GBV survivors, their families, communities and those who are helping them. This document outlines key messages for different actors who may discuss, engage with, or support work around CRSV.

## For All Actors

### DO

- **DO** uphold the GBV guiding principles of safety, confidentiality, respect and non-discrimination and maintain a survivor-centered and 'Do no harm' approach at all times
- **DO** prioritize making sure a survivor has access to essential GBV services over documentation, investigation or verification of CRSV
- **DO** share information on available GBV services and how to access them

### DO NOT

- **DO NOT** actively seek out CRSV survivors, or ask anyone if they have experienced sexual violence.
- **DO NOT** take any action at any time that may compromise the safety or confidentiality of a GBV survivor or service provider

# For Specialized GBV Actors

(including activists, GBV service providers, women-led organisations, CSOs, NGOs & UN agencies)

## DO

**DO** ensure availability of quality, safe, comprehensive essential services – case management, health, psychosocial, safety & security, legal assistance, economic support, etc. for ALL survivors (including CRSV)

**DO** provide services and assistance to GBV survivors, including survivors of CRSV, in line with the GBV guiding principles (safety, confidentiality, respect and non-discrimination).

**DO** give information about and refer for evidence collection/police follow-up for those who choose to, explaining potential benefits and consequences and based on the survivor's informed consent

**DO** work to strengthen and harmonise referral pathways for all forms of GBV, including CRSV

**DO** increase outreach/awareness-raising to increase access to services for all survivors

**DO** maintain a survivor-centred approach

**DO** share information on trends and patterns identified by service providers to inform investigations, and push back on requests for documentation or data on individual cases, or verification of those cases, unless there is explicit, informed consent based on a complete understanding of potential consequences

**DO** provide information and support for anyone conducting CRSV-related investigations to help them maintain a survivor-centred approach

## DO NOT

**DO NOT** deliberately single out, or prioritize, CRSV survivors over other kinds of GBV survivors in terms of service provision. This can create stigma and put survivors at further risk, as well as creating a hierarchy of GBV that can be damaging.

**DO NOT** seek out individual survivors for reporting, advocacy or media purposes

**DO NOT** encourage survivors to participate in CRSV-related investigations. Share all relevant information about the processes, potential benefits and consequences and allow the survivor to decide

**DO NOT** attempt to investigate or verify cases.

**DO NOT** share information on individual cases or survivors through media or social media, unless based on the explicit request of a survivor and with his/her full understanding of possible consequences

**DO NOT** establish or support separate services or processes for CRSV in parallel with other forms of GBV



# For non-GBV-specialized Humanitarian Actors

## DO

**DO** ensure information is available on GBV services for any survivors who disclose their experience of violence

**DO** make sure staff are trained on how to respond to any disclosure of GBV and refer to appropriate services (e.g. follow the Look-Listen-Link protocol, using the GBV Pocket Guide – see end of document)

**DO** uphold the GBV guiding principles of safety, confidentiality, respect and non-discrimination and maintain a survivor-centered and 'Do no harm' approach at all times

## DO NOT

**DO NOT** attempt to investigate or verify cases

**DO NOT** share information on individual cases or survivors through media or social media, unless based on the explicit request of a survivor and with his/her full understanding of possible consequences

**DO NOT** promise help or support that you are not able or qualified to provide

**DO NOT** seek out individual survivors for reporting, advocacy or media purposes

**DO NOT** encourage survivors to participate in CRSV-related investigations. Share all relevant information about the processes, potential benefits and consequences and allow the survivor to decide

# For CRSV Investigation and Verification Actors

## DO

**DO** make sure that all activities are planned and carried out in a way that protects and respects the dignity, safety and confidentiality of GBV survivors, communities and GBV service providers.

**DO** maintain a 'Do No Harm' and survivor-centered approach at all times

**DO** make sure that any efforts to corroborate or document CRSV do not put a survivor at risk of further harm.

**DO** meet with GBV service providers & women's organisations to understand the situation and context analysis and be guided by their understanding of safety and risks

**DO** ensure information is available on GBV services for any survivors who disclose their experience of violence to an investigation team.

**DO** make sure staff are trained on how to respond to any disclosure of GBV and refer to appropriate services (e.g. follow the Look-Listen-Link protocol, see next page)

## DO NOT

**DO NOT** conduct interviews directly with survivors, unless based on their explicit consent and full understanding of risks and potential consequences (and never conduct interviews with child survivors)

**DO NOT** photograph or record a survivor without explicit, informed consent

**DO NOT** conduct investigations in areas where GBV services are not available

**DO NOT** ask GBV service providers to give further identifiable data on survivors, perpetrators, and service providers for corroboration purposes.

**DO NOT** cite service providers and organizations serving women and girls as sources of CRSV verification. This can increase the risk of retaliation against these actors.

# For Media

## DO

**DO** make sure that any story related to GBV is sensitive and not sensationalized, and upholds the GBV guiding principles of safety, confidentiality, respect and non-discrimination

**DO** provide balanced information in all reporting, and maintain attention on different forms of GBV

**DO** meet with GBV service providers & women's organisations to understand the situation and risks, and how you can best support GBV prevention and response through your reporting

**DO** provide information on local available GBV services and entry points

**DO** be careful about the language you use, making sure it does not imply blame towards a survivor or contribute to harmful stereotypes about survivors or perpetrators.

**DO** use your reporting to highlight the importance of comprehensive services for GBV survivors.

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# LOOK - LISTEN - LINK PROTOCOL



## Adapted from GBV Pocket Guide

### LOOK



**DO** stay calm allow the survivor to speak with you.

**DO** ask how you can support with urgent needs.

**DO** ask the survivor where they would feel most comfortable speaking to you. If they are accompanied, do not assume it is safe to talk in front of that person.

**DO** offer water, private place to sit, tissue etc.

**DO** encourage the survivor to choose someone they feel comfortable with to translate and support them.

**DO NOT** ignore a survivor who approaches you.

**DO NOT** be pushy or intrusive when offering help.

**DO NOT** ask anyone if they have experienced GBV, have been raped, or have been hit etc. You must not seek survivors out. They must come to you.

**DO NOT** overreact.

**DO NOT** pressure the survivor to share more information than they feel comfortable sharing.

### LISTEN



**DO** treat all information confidentially. Ask for the survivor's permission before seeking advice from a GBV specialist.

**DO** let the survivor know the limits of your confidentiality. Check with your GBV specialist for instances where you are required to report.

**DO** manage expectations about your role and capacity.

**DO** try to comfort the survivor, and reinforce that what has happened to them is not their fault.

**DO NOT** write anything down, take photos of the survivor, record the conversation, or inform others.

**DO NOT** ask questions about what happened. Instead, let the survivor choose what to share. Listen and ask what you can do to support them.

**DO NOT** suggest the experience is "not a big deal".

**DO NOT** doubt or contradict what someone tells you. Your role is to listen without judgement.

# LINK



**DO** respect the survivor's right to make decisions.

**DO** share information on all GBV and other services that they may find helpful.

**DO** reassure the survivor that they do not need to make any decisions now and that they can change their mind in the future.

**DO** encourage the survivor to find someone they trust to go to for support.

**DO** offer the survivor access to a phone or other communication device, if you feel safe doing so, so that the survivor can contact a trusted person.

**DO** ask the survivor's permission before acting.

**DO** end the conversation supportively

**DO NOT** provide false information, make false promises, or exaggerate your skills.

**DO NOT** offer personal advice or opinions on the best course of action.

**DO NOT** assume you know what someone wants or needs or what is best for them. Some actions may put them at further risk of harm.

**DO NOT** discriminate against the survivor based on any feature e.g. gender, race, sexuality etc.

**DO NOT** try to resolve the situation between the person who experienced GBV and anyone else, including the perpetrator.

**DO NOT** share the details of the incident with anyone.

**DO NOT** contact the survivor after your conversation.

