

# Preventing and Responding to Conflict-related Sexual Violence

2023



Annual summaries of activities and good practices by  
United Nations peacekeeping operations

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Final boundary between the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan has not yet been determined. Final status of the Abyei area is not yet determined.

**Cover photos:** *Left:* The United Nations peacekeeping mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) training 40 women in conflict prevention and mitigation in Djugu and Irumu, Ituri province, Democratic Republic of the Congo. Photo: MONUSCO.  
*Right:* A contingent member from India in MONUSCO, asking women and children sheltering in a camp for internally displaced persons about their needs. Photo: MONUSCO

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## ■ INTRODUCTION

The annual report, in its fourth edition, presents activities and good practices carried out in 2023 by United Nations peacekeeping missions to prevent and respond to conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV). The report focuses on the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).

In June 2023, following a request from the Transition Government of Mali to the Security Council for the immediate withdrawal of MINUSMA, the Security Council terminated MINUSMA's mandate under resolution 2640 (2022). The present report illustrates activities, good practices and lessons learned from MINUSMA during its operations between 2013 and 2023 regarding CRSV, and specifically captures efforts by the Mission in concluding its mandate and ensuring the effective transfer of key activities and projects on CRSV during the withdrawal from Mali.

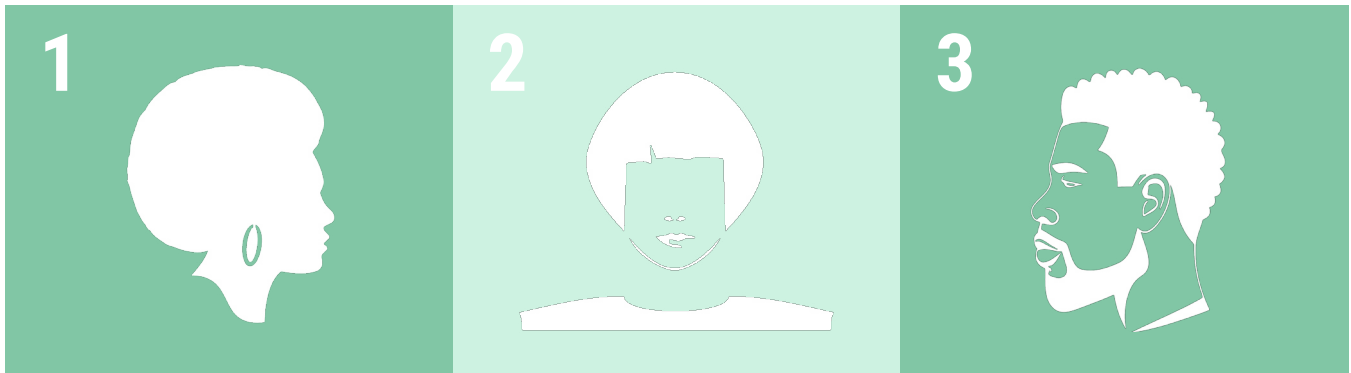
The impact examples presented in this report are based on the five priority objectives from the [Policy on United Nations field missions: preventing and responding to conflict-related sexual violence](#).



In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, MONUSCO supports women by mapping protection threats and risks, thus enhancing gender-responsive protection efforts. Photo: MONUSCO

# ■ THE SURVIVOR-CENTRED APPROACH

The survivor-centred approach is an ethical requirement for United Nations personnel and respects the call made by survivors of CRSV around the world to be a part of interventions that concern them. The Security Council explicitly recognized the need to adopt a survivor-centred approach in preventing and responding to CRSV in its resolution 2467 (2019). The following are five key points about the approach:



**The survivor-centred approach promotes the protection, rights and agency of survivors of CRSV in all interventions.**

It implies placing the rights, needs and choices of CRSV survivors, as identified by them, at the centre of all efforts to address CRSV. Ultimately, this promotes survivors' empowerment so they can enjoy their fundamental rights and regain control of their lives.

**Survivors are rights-holders and entitled to holistic care, including justice and reparations.**

Survivor-centred interventions guarantee survivors' human rights, including protection, safety and access to services, justice and reparations, while treating all survivors with respect and dignity.

**Survivors of CRSV are unique and have individual needs, choices and wishes.**

CRSV affects individuals of all genders, ages, religions and ethnic groups, social and economic backgrounds, and sexual orientation, among other characteristics. Interventions should be adapted to each survivor's unique journey.

4



**Survivors of CRSV will know best their own needs and the solutions they want in order to heal and recover from CRSV.**

A survivor-centred approach implies the provision of appropriate information to survivors to empower them to make their own informed decisions and choices regarding their recovery. Informed consent must always be sought from survivors regarding the use of information provided by them, including for follow-up action and reporting.

5



**Personnel in United Nations peacekeeping missions have adopted the survivor-centred approach in CRSV prevention and response efforts.**

All personnel in peacekeeping missions are required to uphold the survivor-centred approach in all efforts to prevent and respond to CRSV, including monitoring and reporting of CRSV, physical protection and interventions related to the fight against impunity, among other efforts. Other guiding principles include confidentiality, informed consent and the best interest of the child. Personnel are also required to facilitate the referral of survivors to relevant service providers as quickly as possible, subject to obtaining informed consent from the survivors.

Protect and promote the human rights of CRSV survivors, including access to holistic care

Respect survivors' individual needs and choices

**Recommendations for adopting a survivor-centred approach**

Promote the empowerment of survivors through their own agency and decision-making

Treat all survivors equally, with respect and dignity



## United Nations Action Network (UN Action)

### Exhibition: “A conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) survivor’s journey”



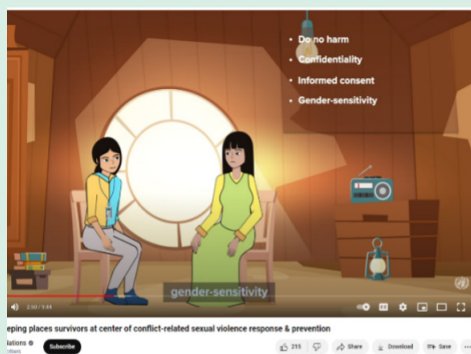
Photo: UN Exhibition, Mary Catherine Wells

In 2023, the **United Nations Action Network (UN Action)** – of which the Department of Peace Operations (DPO) is an active member – presented a public exhibition at United Nations Headquarters, in New York, entitled “A conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) survivor’s journey”. The exhibition notably featured stories and testimonies from survivors from around the world as a way to share their messages with United Nations personnel and Member States and the broader public, as well as providing information about the CRSV mandate of the United Nations. To highlight the critical work of Senior Women’s Protection Advisers and DPO’s response

to CRSV, the exhibition showcased **DPO’s animated video** on a survivor’s journey. It also featured UN Action’s recent projects implemented by MONUSCO in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) in Somalia. The exhibition brought in more than 50,000 visitors and was developed with various collaborators and sponsors, including the SEMA Network, the Dr. Denis Mukwege Foundation and Bibliothèques Sans Frontières.



Click [here to watch](#) SEMA’s video “Little bird”, which was featured in the exhibition. The SEMA Network is a global network of survivors of wartime sexual violence and is rooted in survivor-led, activist networks at the local and national levels.



Click [here to watch](#) DPO’s animated video, which shows how United Nations peacekeeping places survivors at the centre of CRSV prevention and response.



## ■ OVERVIEW OF CRSV TRENDS IN 2023 IN CONTEXTS HOSTING PEACEKEEPING MISSIONS WITH A CRSV MANDATE



**Central African Republic:** In the Central African Republic, sexual violence perpetrated mainly by armed actors remained persistent and widespread in 2023, often as a strategy to control, displace or punish the civilian population. Conflict-affected areas of the country were the most impacted, with high risks of CRSV along transhumance corridors and mining sites, or against the backdrop of concentration or movements of armed groups and military operations. The main perpetrators of CRSV were armed groups, including some signatories of the 2019 Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic. National armed forces and other security personnel were also identified as perpetrators in some cases. During the violence that emerged in the east of the country in April 2023, sexual violence was used as a form of retaliation during attacks against rival communities. Despite multiple allegations, the extent of forced marriage and sexual slavery remains unknown, as survivors remain in captivity owing to deeply entrenched discrimination at all levels against women and girls.



**Democratic Republic of the Congo:** In the context of a deteriorating security situation and unprecedented internal displacement, particularly in North Kivu province, high levels of CRSV perpetrated by non-State armed groups and State actors (such as the Congolese armed forces) were recorded, with rape being the most common form of CRSV documented. Most recorded cases occurred during attacks on civilians by armed groups, often on political or ethnic grounds, and in the context of clashes with the national armed forces. Displaced women and girls, including in and around displaced person sites, and women and girls in rural areas were the most frequently targeted. Instances of forced marriage and sexual slavery perpetrated by armed groups, such as the Allied Democratic Forces, led to pregnancies as a result of rape in North Kivu and Ituri. Acts of sexual violence against victims and their families involved other brutalities, including executions in several cases. Alarming, the perpetration of CRSV against human rights defenders emerged as an increasing trend, for instance by the Raia Mutomboki Kafuma faction in South Kivu.



**Mali:** Reports of CRSV emerged in Mali against the backdrop of a deepening security crisis, accompanied by massive population displacement and a significant presence of armed actors throughout the regions. Attacks by non-State armed groups, including terrorist groups, on the Malian population exposed civilians to protection risks, including sexual violence. Armed group members reportedly threatened community members against reporting gender-based violence, thereby limiting access for survivors to various assistance services. While the majority of CRSV cases were attributed to non-State armed groups, the involvement of the Malian armed forces in sexual violence cases perpetrated in 2022 during military operations in central Mali was reported in 2023.



**South Sudan:** CRSV continued to be recorded across all states in South Sudan in the context of displacement, inter-community violence and humanitarian crisis exacerbated by climate shocks. The proximity between State actors and the civilian population in regions such as Yei increased sexual violence risks, including near checkpoints and barracks. Sexual violence was used as a tactic to inflict revenge, terrorize and displace civilians from their communities and homes, including in the form of rape, sexual slavery and forced marriages. Perpetrators included civil defence groups and community-based militias affiliated with the main parties to the conflict, the national armed forces and national police. Abduction of women and girls frequently occurred in the context of inter-communal violence. The outbreak of conflict in the Sudan in April 2023 led to large-scale movements of populations into South Sudan, among which female returnees reported sexual violence by armed groups in the Sudan.

Information on country-specific CRSV situations in 2023 is detailed in the [Secretary-General's annual report on conflict-related sexual violence](#) (S/2024/292).



Women, youth and community leaders denounce rising violence against women, at a march organized by the Organization of Women of the Central African Republic and MINUSCA in Vakaga prefecture. Photo: MINUSCA



## ■ FULFILLING OUR OBJECTIVES: STORIES

The following are some of the activities and best practices documented from peacekeeping missions in preventing and responding to CRSV, organized according to the five priority objectives of United Nations field missions in addressing CRSV.

### OBJECTIVE 1 – Prevention and protection of persons facing the risk of CRSV

Missions should focus their work on preventing incidents of CRSV. Working closely with concerned communities, including women’s groups, field missions must proactively identify CRSV risks, provide early warning and prioritize preventive actions. Field missions should engage in dialogue with parties to conflict to elicit formal commitments from their leaders on preventing and addressing CRSV.

#### STORY 1 Central African Republic takes concrete steps to end CRSV with MINUSCA support

In the context of continued dialogue and advocacy by MINUSCA’s Human Rights Division and Women’s Protection Section, the Government of the Central African Republic has adopted a series of concrete measures related to ending CRSV in line with the Joint Communiqué on the Prevention of and Response to CRSV signed by the Government and the United Nations in 2019.<sup>1</sup> MINUSCA continued to support the Strategic Committee to combat gender-based sexual violence in conflict. In September 2023, following the presentation of the first report of the Strategic Committee, the President of the Central African Republic, Faustin Archange Touadera, extended the national Action Plan to address CRSV until 2026 (formerly adopted in 2022). The President also tasked the government and the Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation Commission with establishing a memorial and a reparations fund for CRSV victims and survivors. A deputy prosecutor for sexual violence in conflict and human trafficking was appointed in October 2023. In November, the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and MINUSCA supported a high-level round table on accountability, which paved the way for a road map to fight against impunity for CRSV crimes and to strengthen judicial responses.

<sup>1</sup> *Communiqué conjoint entre la République centrafricaine et l’Organisation des Nations Unies : Prévention et lutte contre les violences sexuelles liées au conflit.*

## STORY 2

### MONUSCO and United Nations agencies launch a comprehensive protection response to surging CRSV cases in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

In response to the alarming surge in sexual violence cases, the civilian and uniformed components of MONUSCO joined forces with members of the United Nations country team in support of the system-wide scale-up, set in June 2023 by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, focusing on protection and humanitarian responses in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. Through existing protection planning mechanisms, MONUSCO and key partners developed a joint plan for strengthening the protection of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in and around displacement sites in Goma (North Kivu) and surrounding territories. As part of its implementation, MONUSCO forces carried out area domination patrols in places where women and girls were particularly at risk of facing CRSV (e.g. firewood and water-collection route patrols and field or market patrols), as well as long-range patrols to secure the main supply routes along which humanitarian aid was moved, reducing in turn the need for IDPs to venture outside IDP sites for food and water. In addition, MONUSCO led a female-engagement dialogue in an “open doors” initiative involving MONUSCO civilian and uniformed engagement teams, a network of women mediators, ambassadors for peace, displaced people and the Congolese National Police, to strengthen synergies with local actors and identify preventive and remedial actions. Among other efforts, Quick Impact Projects supported the installation of solar streetlights in Nyiragongo territory, just north of Goma, as well as other locations, to support the resilience of internally displaced survivors and to improve security in several displaced sites.



A contingent member speaks with women leaders in Kanyabayonga, North Kivu, on the security situation and the efforts by women leaders to foster peace.  
Photo: MONUSCO

### STORY 3

## MINUSMA organizes sociopolitical campaign in northern Mali with women leaders on CRSV prevention and protection



Women leaders in an awareness-raising session organized by MINUSMA in Kidal, Mali. Photo: MINUSMA

With the objective of preventing CRSV in close cooperation with communities, the Office of the Senior Women's Protection Adviser in MINUSMA facilitated an awareness-raising campaign in Kidal (one of the CRSV hotspots in northern Mali) on the promotion and protection of women's rights. The campaign targeted local political leaders and 237 women leaders from Kidal, as well as representatives of women and youth organizations. Sessions were conducted in collaboration with a local non-governmental organization (NGO) – Consortium émergence des femmes et des jeunes – dedicated to training leaders of women's organization on women's rights and on the prevention of and response to gender-

based violence, and to reinforce their capacities in advocating for women's rights in the peace process. The launching ceremony was chaired by the administrative and de facto military authorities of Kidal (at the time, Kidal was under the control of a coalition of armed groups), as well as presidents of civil society organizations in Kidal. After sensitization sessions, the women leaders visited the IDP camp of Infkoi town, on the outskirts of Kidal, for an outreach session targeting displaced populations, camp managers and local authorities, to discuss preventive measures and responses to sexual violence cases, including the availability of referral pathways.

### STORY 4

## MINUSCA raises awareness of forced marriage by armed groups in the Central African Republic

MINUSCA's Human Rights Division, Women's Protection Section and Child Protection Unit, in partnership with the Government of the Central African Republic, organized in Bria, Haute-Kotto prefecture, an awareness-raising activity on early and forced marriages, attended by 80 ex-combatants, local authorities and civil society (including 30 women). Despite multiple allegations, forced marriage perpetrated by armed group elements is a form of CRSV crime that remained frequently invisible owing to the underreporting of cases, in part explained by security risks faced by survivors and the normalization of such practices among certain



A Women's Protection Adviser from MINUSCA raises awareness among community members on forced marriage in Bria, Central African Republic. Photo: MINUSCA



communities. MINUSCA encouraged local peace and reconciliation committees to address the issue, including through mediation and promoting the specific investigation and prosecution of such cases. Due to the positive outcome of this activity in Bria, MINUSCA seeks to expand this project to other geographical areas to increase awareness of the topic.

## STORY 5

### Local protection committees in the Democratic Republic of the Congo identify actions to monitor threats against women and girls more effectively

MONUSCO, led by its Civil Affairs Section, supported local protection committees in 12 localities (including Beni, Goma, Uvira and Bukavu) to update community protection plans and to plan and implement specific actions to protect women and girls. The updated elements included protection against threats related to CRSV, including rape and torture by armed groups, forced prostitution of minors, early pregnancy and forced marriage. Other actions that were identified in the community protection plans included enhanced monitoring and reporting through the community alert networks and the local protection committees; sensitizing communities regarding CRSV prevention and response; referring survivors to medical, psychosocial and legal support by NGOs and other relevant actors; enhancing collaboration between communities and all protection actors; advocating for more patrols in areas frequented by women; and improving the skills of community leaders, including women's organizations.



A contingent member asks women and children sheltering in an IDP camp about their needs. Photo: MONUSCO

## STORY 6

### MINUSCA ensures the protection of women and children associated with armed groups, during repatriation in Haut-Mbomou

At the request of the Government of the Central African Republic, MINUSCA provided logistical and security-related support to the voluntary repatriation of ex-members of the Lord's Resistance Army along with their families, while ensuring a gender-sensitive approach and that CRSV survivors received assistance and socio-professional integration with the help of a local NGO. During three exercises that took place from July to September 2023, a total of 144 ex-combatants and members of the armed group were repatriated to Uganda from Zemio and Mboki, Haut-Mbomou prefecture. A screening process was developed between the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and MINUSCA's Child Protection Unit and Women's Protection Section, with the Ministry of Gender, Women, Family and Child Protection, to ensure the voluntary nature of the process (critical for ensuring that women and girls could make an informed choice to either follow the combatants in Uganda or stay in the Central African Republic). At least 27 women and 35 children were screened and profiled during the exercises, several of whom were nationals of the Central African Republic, and made the decision to remain in the country, where some could be reunited with their families. MINUSCA also advocated for the mainstreaming of CRSV considerations and a survivor-centred approach in this process by deploying experts on the ground to help to mediate with those involved and ensuring that CRSV survivors received assistance and socio-professional integration with the help of an NGO (PAX-APRU).

## STORY 7

### MONUSCO supports the Congolese National Police in implementing its Action Plan and secures commanders' commitments against CRSV

MONUSCO supported the Congolese National Police in revising its 2019 Action Plan on CRSV, a key component of the road map for the implementation of the 2013 Joint Communiqué on CRSV Prevention and Response signed by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations,<sup>2</sup> along with its 2019 addendum. A technical-level workshop held in Kinshasa concluded with the signature of a declaration of commitments by the newly appointed Commissioner General of the national police, after which the revised plan was submitted for endorsement by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior, Security, Decentralization and Customary Affairs. To date, through MONUSCO engagement, 317 police commanders in the provinces of North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri have signed the declaration of commitments to combat sexual violence.



MONUSCO supports a technical workshop to revise the 2019 Action Plan.  
Photo: Schweizer

<sup>2</sup> Communiqué conjoint entre le Gouvernement de la République Démocratique du Congo et les Nations Unies sur la lutte contre les violences sexuelles en conflit.



MONUSCO also supported the training of 234 Congolese police officers from across the country on the issues of CRSV, sexual and gender-based violence, international human rights and humanitarian law, and child protection. Additionally, 49 future inspectors of the General Inspectorate of the Congolese National Police, including 12 women, received training as part of a 10-week course for the fifth promotion of its technical staff. Participants received training on the guiding principles on CRSV, the referral of survivors, access to justice and the Congolese National Police's Action Plan on CRSV.



MONUSCO supports a technical training for future inspectors of the Congolese National Police. Photo: United Nations Joint Human Rights Office





## The Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict discusses CRSV concerns with national and international partners during visits to countries hosting United Nations peacekeeping missions

During a visit to the Central African Republic in November 2023, the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Pramila Patten, and the leadership of MINUSCA engaged with national authorities on the commitments made under the 2019 Joint Communiqué on CRSV Prevention and Response, signed by the Central African Republic and the United Nations. The Government made several positive commitments as a result of the visit, including enhancing the provision of holistic support for CRSV survivors by allocating additional resources from the national budget to the Joint Rapid Response and Prevention Unit for Sexual Violence against Women and Children (UMIRR) – established in 2015 and supported by the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, MINUSCA and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). During the visit, Ms. Patten also participated in a high-level round table on accountability for CRSV crimes, which was organized by the Team of Experts, MINUSCA and other partners. The round table brought together stakeholders including national and local authorities, survivors' associations, civil society organizations and experts in the diplomatic community. Recommendations to strengthen the judicial and non-judicial response to CRSV were identified to serve as a road map for further engagement by the United Nations and the international community to support the advancement of accountability for CRSV in the Central African Republic.



Ms. Patten launches a high-level round table on accountability for crimes of CRSV. Photo: Office of the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict



In June, MONUSCO facilitated an official visit from Ms. Patten, who engaged with senior government officials through a series of meetings and consultations, alongside the Special Representative for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Head of MONUSCO, Bintou Keita. The aim was to revitalize the Government's implementation of the 2013 Joint Communiqué on CRSV Prevention and Response signed with the United Nations and its 2019 addendum. Ms. Patten's visit also helped to bring national and international attention to the alarming surge in sexual violence in and around displacement sites in North Kivu



Ms. Patten engages with the national authorities and the United Nations country team during her visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Photo: Office of the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict

between 2022 and 2023, and to explore operational solutions to protect civilians from such violence. With MONUSCO support, Ms. Patten visited the Bulengo IDP camp in Goma, where the forced prostitution of displaced women and girls emerged as a concerning trend, highlighting the link between conflict, food insecurity and sexual violence. Echoing calls by MONUSCO, Ms. Patten urged the Government to secure displacement sites in line with its obligations to protect civilians, and called on the relevant authorities to work closely with the United Nations to ensure the safety of civilians fleeing conflict.



Ms. Patten visits the Bulengo IDP camp with humanitarian actors. Photo: Office of the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict



## OBJECTIVE 2 – Ending impunity for CRSV

Field missions should advocate for credible investigations and prosecutions of CRSV cases and promote safe and effective remedies, including reparations for survivors, taking due consideration of a survivor-centred approach. They should provide support to strengthen national capacities to address impunity for CRSV crimes by strengthening national criminal justice mechanisms, promoting safe and effective remedies for victims, promoting the respect of due process and fair trial standards, as well as supporting a legislative and policy reform.

### STORY 8

#### MINUSCA supports the revitalization of the sexual and gender-based violence focal point system in the judiciary of the Central African Republic

MINUSCA's Justice and Corrections Section supported the Director-General of Judicial Services of the Ministry of Justice in the revitalization of the coordination framework of 32 focal points for sexual and gender-based violence. These focal points serve at the Bangui and Bimbo courts as judges, prosecutors, clerks and other functions, and are tasked with identifying obstacles to the prosecution of sexual violence and proposing solutions to improve the judicial response to cases within their respective jurisdictions. The technical support provided to focal points by MINUSCA aimed to ensure that issues such as the implementation of a survivor-centred approach, as well as the compilation of judicial statistics on sexual and gender-based cases, including CRSV cases, were considered in the judicial response process. Following MINUSCA's advocacy, the focal points were also given the mandate to assist the protection of victims and witnesses. In this regard, MINUSCA, jointly with the Ministry of Justice, organized a training session in May on the protection of victims and witnesses during criminal proceedings, with 36 participants, including 7 women. Such protection measures are critical to securing the participation of victims and witnesses, given the high risk of reprisals, intimidation and stigmatization in the context of sexual violence trials, especially when perpetrators are State officials or prominent figures in their community.

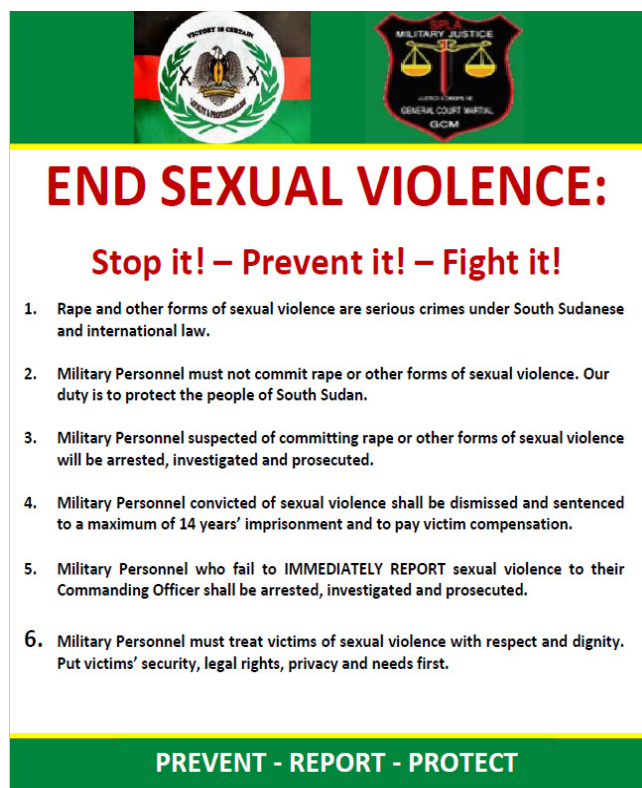


Awareness-raising session in Bour with United Nations police officers serving in MINUSCA. Photo: MINUSCA

## STORY 9

### South Sudan sees new condemnations and measures by military justice for sexual violence crimes, with UNMISS support

As part of a commitment from the armed forces to promote accountability, in line with the 2014 Joint Communiqué of the Republic of South Sudan and the United Nations on Addressing Conflict-related Sexual Violence, the national defence forces deployed a general court martial in Yei, Central Equatoria. Of the 14 cases, 4 related to sexual violence were heard in closed sessions and prosecuted (3 resulted in convictions of up to seven years and an order to pay compensation to the victims). In a region where CRSV perpetrated by national armed forces is rife, these sentences marked a step forward in accountability, sending a strong message of deterrence. All victims and witnesses of sexual violence received psychosocial support before, during and after trial, as well as language interpretation, food, accommodation and transportation provided by local civil society organizations. In a parallel development, the “Six key messages on sexual violence”, developed in 2019 by judge advocates with support from UNMISS, was finalized in January 2023 and enacted as a standing order in May 2023, becoming legally binding on all military personnel. Following the general court martial in Yei, pocket-sized cards containing the key messages were distributed to all military personnel at the Yei garrison to raise awareness.



**END SEXUAL VIOLENCE:**

**Stop it! – Prevent it! – Fight it!**

1. Rape and other forms of sexual violence are serious crimes under South Sudanese and international law.
2. Military Personnel must not commit rape or other forms of sexual violence. Our duty is to protect the people of South Sudan.
3. Military Personnel suspected of committing rape or other forms of sexual violence will be arrested, investigated and prosecuted.
4. Military Personnel convicted of sexual violence shall be dismissed and sentenced to a maximum of 14 years' imprisonment and to pay victim compensation.
5. Military Personnel who fail to IMMEDIATELY REPORT sexual violence to their Commanding Officer shall be arrested, investigated and prosecuted.
6. Military Personnel must treat victims of sexual violence with respect and dignity. Put victims' security, legal rights, privacy and needs first.

**PREVENT - REPORT - PROTECT**



*Left:* A pocket-sized card containing key messages on sexual violence prevention and response distributed to military personnel. Photo: UNMISS  
*Right:* General court martial in session, at the Yei garrison. Photo: UNMISS



## STORY 10

### National court convicts an armed group leader for forced pregnancy in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

MONUSCO, through efforts led by the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office (UNJHRO), in cooperation with the Mission's Justice Support Section, continued to provide technical assistance and financial support to national authorities to fight impunity for CRSV. Eleven joint investigation missions were conducted, together with judicial authorities in conflict-affected areas, on cases involving CRSV. During the missions, MONUSCO advised on procedural matters, assisted in the gathering of information for CRSV cases, supported interviews with victims and implemented protection mechanisms for victims and witnesses during the trials. With MONUSCO financial and logistical support, the Congolese justice authorities organized 20 mobile courts that involved charges related to CRSV, including those involving a Congolese army colonel and 16 members of armed groups. During the year, the Congolese justice system convicted 36 Congolese soldiers, three Congolese police officers, as well as 26 members of armed groups (including one woman) for sexual violence crimes.



A mobile court hearing in South Kivu province. Photo: MONUSCO

In a global first, the crime of forced pregnancy was successfully prosecuted by a national court in May 2023, resulting in the conviction of a former leader of a faction of the Raia Mutomboki in a hearing held at the Uvira garrison's military court. Munyololo Mbao was sentenced to life imprisonment for crimes against humanity, including forced pregnancy and sexual slavery.

## STORY 11

### MINUSCA technical support leads to improved protection for victims and witnesses of sexual violence in court cases in Bangui

The Government of the Central African Republic and MINUSCA collaborated to increase the number of sexual violence cases heard and tried, including those of CRSV, during the criminal sessions before the Bangui Court of Appeal held in 2023, and to improve the protection of witnesses and victims during the sessions. As a result of advocacy and technical support led by MINUSCA, there was a noticeable improvement in the protection of victims and witnesses of sexual violence. For instance, all cases of sexual violence were heard behind closed doors to ensure confidentiality and avoid potential reprisal and stigmatization of victims and witnesses.

## OBJECTIVE 3 – Awareness and condemnation of CRSV

Field missions must work to raise society’s awareness of CRSV at all levels, to condemn its perpetration and to cease any stigmatization or ostracization of victims. Missions will engage in advocacy and dialogue with parties to conflict, national authorities and civil society, as well as reporting and strategic communication to increase awareness and end the culture of acceptance of CRSV. In country situations in which CRSV is a concern, missions must establish the monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements (MARA), in line with Security Council resolution 1960 (2010).



### Raising public awareness about UNMISS and MONUSCO mandates to address CRSV

Communications specialists in peacekeeping missions regularly promoted awareness of their respective missions’ mandates to prevent and respond to CRSV and advocated for a shift in attitudes to condemn sexual violence and promote gender equality, including by calling attention to the issue on International Women’s Day, International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict and the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence.

In South Sudan in March 2023, Radio Miraya’s “Kalam Niswan” episode hosted a member of the Joint Implementation Committee to discuss the Action Plan for the Armed Forces on Addressing Conflict-related Sexual Violence in South Sudan. [Click here](#) to listen to the full programme.



Recording an episode of Radio Miraya dedicated to CRSV. Photo: UNMISS

The Senior Women’s Protection Adviser in UNMISS discussed challenges in addressing CRSV in South Sudan to commemorate the International Day on the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict. [Click here](#) to listen to the programme.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Radio Okapi featured an interactive broadcast in front of a live audience, joined by the CRSV Unit of UNJHRO. It discussed key progress and challenges in advancing women’s rights in the country. [Click here](#) to listen to the broadcast.



Left: The UNMISS Senior Women’s Protection Adviser during the radio programme. Photo: UNMISS



Right: MONUSCO Women’s Protection and Gender Advisers raise awareness on CRSV at the United Nations village in Kinshasa on United Nations Day. Photo: MONUSCO

## STORY 12

### International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict raises awareness and engages communities and youth in Mali and South Sudan

In Mali, a flagship activity of the 2023 commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict was a slam competition titled “Let’s slam for peace, let’s slam to end CRSV in Mali”. The event, organized by MINUSMA, sought to leverage the power of language and of slam in Mali, particularly among youths to express their grievances and to work with civil society organizations in awareness-raising on CRSV. As part of this activity, 40 youths, including 19 competition contestants, were trained by MINUSMA on CRSV and human rights. The training also helped to enhance participants’ writing and advocacy skills, specifically in relation to the situation of impunity for CRSV in Mali. Out of a group of 54 contestants, the strongest slammers stepped onto the stage for the finals of the competition, showcasing not only their poetic skills, but also an unwavering commitment to challenging the status quo on sexual violence. The top three contestants, two men and one woman, received congratulations from the jury and prizes handed by MINUSMA, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and representatives from the ministries for justice and for women, family and children.



Participants at the slam poetry competition. Photo: MINUSMA



A capacity-building activity on CRSV organized by UNMISS in South Sudan. Photo: UNMISS

In South Sudan, UNMISS organized seven capacity-building activities on CRSV prevention and response in the states of Central Equatoria and Lakes State, participated by nearly 200 individuals as part of the commemoration of the 2023 International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict. The target groups for the capacity-building activities were community workers, women’s groups, students, religious leaders, community leaders, the national defence forces and police, the general public, state governments, local musicians, youths, associations for persons with disabilities and survivors of CRSV, as well as various mission components. As one participant at a workshop organized in Jonglei State and the Greater

Pibor Administrative Area said, “We need to stand up for the rights of women and children by reporting any instances of sexual violence and supporting survivors fully. Traditional ways of handling these matters can no longer protect us”. Four radio talk shows and four public events were organized in Western Equatoria, Lakes State and Central Equatoria, with the aim of reaching as many people as possible to raise awareness.



Throughout 2023, peacekeeping missions continued to monitor, analyse and report on trends and patterns of CRSV despite considerable security and access-related challenges. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, MONUSCO supported the United Nations' system-wide scale-up of humanitarian and protection operations in the east of the country by dedicating women's protection and human rights personnel, as well as financial resources, to strengthen the documentation of sexual violence around displaced person sites in North Kivu. Enhanced coordination between MONUSCO and humanitarian actors helped to ensure the availability of services for survivors and identified crucial gaps, especially regarding legal support. These efforts to document CRSV were critical, as insecurity and anti-MONUSCO sentiment made it more difficult for the Mission to deploy to locations affected by CRSV to conduct monitoring and investigations.

Although the MARA Working Group could not meet regularly in 2023, MONUSCO organized a joint consultation forum on CRSV in Kinshasa in December 2023, which was attended in person and virtually by 168 participants, including international NGOs and civil society representatives from Kinshasa and the five provinces covered by MARA. The forum enabled government entities – including the Prime Minister's Office, the National Agency to Combat Violence against Women and Girls (AVIFEM), the National Fund for Reparations for Victims of Sexual Violence (FONAREV), the Coordination Office for Integrated Multisectoral Services Centres (CISM) and representatives of the national armed forces and police – to provide information on their efforts to combat sexual violence. Discussions focused on the fight against sexual violence committed by State actors and how civil society, United Nations agencies and MONUSCO report violence and support prevention and redress mechanisms, on the analysis of perpetrators of CRSV to fight impunity, and on efforts towards the implementation of the 2013 Joint Communiqué on CRSV Prevention and Response and its 2019 addendum.

In the Central African Republic, MINUSCA and UNFPA co-chaired a total of six MARA technical-level Working Group meetings in 2023, convening MINUSCA civilian and uniformed sections and United Nations agencies, funds and programmes. The Working Group meetings served to carry out a number of joint initiatives including to analyse CRSV hotspots and patterns; to identify approaches to raise awareness on CRSV with different audiences; to plan United Nations support to the National Strategic Committee to combat sexual and gender-based violence in conflict; to enhance the role of the Gender-based Violence Information Management System (GBVIMS) in data collection; and to promote mainstreaming of a survivor-centred approach in response efforts. MARA Working Group meetings were also used to identify and address CRSV-related challenges, including gaps in the provision of post-rape kits and support to survivors in some remote areas.



Joint consultation forum on CRSV held in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in December 2023. Photo: MONUSCO

## OBJECTIVE 4 – Enhancing the capacity of national actors to effectively address CRSV

United Nations field missions should work closely with justice, law enforcement and military authorities, and civil society organizations to support (a) national ownership of CRSV prevention and response strategies; (b) strong national legal and policy frameworks, including terrorism-related legislation; (c) sustainable implementation capacities, including independent, impartial, prompt, effective and appropriately transparent investigations and prosecutions; and (d) effective and gender-sensitive mechanisms to protect and support survivors and witnesses, as well as access for the accused to legal aid. Where applicable, field missions should also support parties to conflict, including non-State armed actors, to prevent and respond to CRSV, including by implementing commitments made through joint or unilateral communiqués on CRSV.

### STORY 14

#### MINUSCA implements multifaceted strategy to mainstream CRSV concerns in security sector programming

To effectively prevent and respond to CRSV, MINUSCA's Security Sector Reform Section, in close collaboration with the General Inspectorate of the National Army, held awareness-raising sessions on CRSV in Obo, Paoua, Bouar, Bangassou, Ndélé, Bambari and Berberati. The Human Rights Division, including the Child Protection Unit, trained more than 3,500 elements of the national armed and security forces on international humanitarian law and international human rights law, including CRSV, and the protection of children during armed conflict. MINUSCA also provided support in creating the framework for a gender-responsive border service throughout the development of an action plan implementing the national border management policy. The action plan and its terms of reference specifically address the promotion of equal rights for women and men, as well as preventing and addressing CRSV and gender discrimination to enhance the operational effectiveness of the National Border Agency. These efforts aim to promote an understanding of CRSV dynamics, strengthen legal frameworks and foster a culture of accountability. MINUSCA also provided technical support to the Ministry of Defence in the establishment of a dedicated gender directorate within its structure, as well as in the review and update of its organizational charts and regulatory documents as a means of advancing gender equality and increasing efforts to investigate and prosecute CRSV cases.



A Human Rights Officer speaks to the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic on CRSV in Bangui. Photo: MINUSCA



An awareness-raising session by MINUSCA police for the national armed forces in Paoua during the 16 Days of Activism. Photo: MINUSCA



## STORY 15

### UNMISS builds the capacities of the national police and military to implement their respective action plans for addressing CRSV

UNMISS conducted a refresher workshop relating to the Action Plan on addressing CRSV for the members of the Steering Committee of the South Sudan National Police Service and for their focal points in the 10 states and the three administrative areas of South Sudan. The objectives of the workshop were to strengthen participants' knowledge of national and international legal frameworks related to CRSV, to develop strategies to better implement the Action Plan and to foster a better understanding of focal points' roles and responsibilities in its effective implementation. In addition, as part of UNMISS technical support to the implementation of the Action Plan for the Armed Forces on Addressing Conflict-related Sexual Violence in South Sudan, a three-day baseline training for military officers was conducted for the three components of the Joint Implementation Committee (the South Sudan People's Defence Forces, the Sudan People's Liberation Army In Opposition and the South Sudan Opposition Alliance) in Central Equatoria, targeting 34 participants, including 10 women. The training aimed to identify trainers, develop training plans and expose participants to issues such as accountability and survivor-centred approaches for them to replicate in their respective units, contributing to the call for zero tolerance against impunity for sexual violence crimes in South Sudan.



UNMISS holds a workshop for the national police on preventing and ending CRSV. Photo: UNMISS



From January to June 2023, a series of workshops for judge advocates were convened by the Rule of Law and Security Institutions Section of UNMISS, with support from the Women's Protection Advisory Unit and the International Organization for Migration, to enhance the capacity of the South Sudan Military Justice Directorate to handle sexual violence cases. The training programme, in most part facilitated by national experts, aimed to equip judge advocates with practical skills to effectively investigate, prosecute and adjudicate serious crimes, including CRSV and sexual and gender-based violence, using a survivor-centred approach. During one of the workshops in January, the judge advocates revised an earlier version of the "Key messages to end sexual violence". Other workshops addressed technical aspects related to the investigation and prosecution of crimes against children, management and preservation of evidence, the role of the victim's counsel, and trial advocacy, among other topics, with a focus on CRSV.



At a workshop for civil and military magistrates and members of the security and defence forces in Bukavu, organized by MONUSCO and UNDP. Photo: UNJHRO

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, MONUSCO collaborated with UNDP to train 30 civil and military magistrates and members of the security and defence forces in Bukavu, South Kivu, through an intensive workshop on international law, the prosecution of war crimes and crimes against humanity, the protection of victims and witnesses and the monitoring of priority cases. Workshop participants were trained on the application of the recently adopted law on the protection of and reparation for victims of CRSV. Together with the participants, MONUSCO and UNDP assisted in the evaluation of efforts by judicial authorities in South Kivu to prosecute priority CRSV cases, efforts which were supported through a joint United Nations project.

## OBJECTIVE 5 – Empowerment of victims/survivors through political processes and their referral for support

Peace and national reconciliation processes should address the needs of CRSV survivors and, to the extent possible, provide suitable avenues for survivor support organizations to participate. Field missions must promptly refer survivors to national or international actors that can provide the necessary medical, psychosocial, legal and economic support or physical protection.

### STORY 17 MINUSCA collaborates with national civil society to support CRSV survivors receiving reparations

MINUSCA provided support to the Global Survivor Fund and the Dr. Denis Mukwege Foundation in the implementation of a reparations project in the Central African Republic. The Women’s Protection Section supported this project as a member of the Steering Committee, together with survivors’ associations, UNICEF, the Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation Commission, and national legal personnel responsible for making decisions related to the project and its beneficiaries. MINUSCA particularly helped with the screening and validation of cases committed by armed elements in Dekoa, Kémo prefecture. The Mission also promoted full respect for the fundamental principles of “do no harm”, confidentiality and the survivor-centred approach, in all stages of the registration and screening of cases. In total, 604 CRSV survivors were identified (50 men and 554 women) and are in the process of being validated to be included as beneficiaries of the reparation project, which will comprise medical, psychosocial and socioeconomic assistance.

### STORY 18 UNMISS brings to the fore survivors’ voices on economic empowerment and accountability

A consultation on economic empowerment with survivors of CRSV was organized by the Women’s Protection Advisory Unit of UNMISS, in collaboration with a national organization, the Centre for Inclusive Governance, Peace and Justice, and UNFPA. The consultation brought together 15 survivors from the Survivors Network South Sudan, from Bor, Yei, Juba protection-of-civilian site, Gumbo-Juba and Gudele-Juba. The event aimed at gathering the views of CRSV survivors on economic empowerment and sought their recommendations in relation to two transitional justice-related bills, namely on the Commission of Truth, Reconciliation and Healing and on the Compensation and Reparation Authority. The bills notably called for gender-sensitive and transformative measures to be considered from the outset of the establishment of the statutory mechanisms envisaged. Additionally, key recommendations from the consultation also informed the development of a new project entitled “Building socioeconomic resilience for survivors of CRSV in South Sudan”, funded in 2023 by the Conflict-related Sexual Violence Multi-Partner Trust Fund, managed by UN Action.



Consultation with survivors of CRSV. Photo: UNMISS

## STORY 19

### MONUSCO supports the successful establishment of free legal assistance and a reparations fund for survivors

MONUSCO, led through UNJHRO and the Senior Women's Protection Adviser, assisted the revision of national legislation on gender-based violence through technical support to the Office of the Coordinator for youth, the fight against violence against women and human trafficking, within the office of the Head of State and its partners. The provided technical expertise informed the development and adoption of two ordinance-laws in September 2023 strengthening the legal framework on the prevention of and response to gender-based violence. The law now enshrines the right to free legal assistance for survivors of gender-based violence, including CRSV, and includes more acts under the legal definition of sexual and gender-based violence. Furthermore, UNJHRO supported the newly established national reparations fund (FONAREV) with the development of survivor-centred reparation programmes informed by international human rights standards. This included providing technical advice regarding the process of identifying survivors to benefit from the fund, their protection and the forms of reparation.



In North Kivu, women peacekeepers from the Indian contingent provide safety and security assistance to women and children in conflict-affected areas. Their presence in IDP sites helps to ensure a protective environment. Photo: MONUSCO

## MINUSMA'S LEGACY IN PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO CRSV

Preventing and responding to CRSV was one of the priorities of MINUSMA when it operated in Mali in 2013–2023 to support the restoration of peace and security and the protection of civilians. What has been MINUSMA's legacy with regard to addressing CRSV in Mali? And what efforts were made during the fast withdrawal, in the second half of 2023, to safeguard the Mission's gains?

### MINUSMA's specialized mandate to prevent and respond to CRSV in Mali

CRSV has been an important, though often underestimated, feature of the conflict in Mali. In the past 10 years, the United Nations has continuously documented trends and patterns of sexual violence, primarily affecting women and girls and perpetrated by armed combatants, including members of armed groups, militias, self-defence groups, the Malian Defence and Security Forces and foreign security personnel operating in certain parts of the country. Owing to the deeply entrenched conservative social and religious norms towards gender, sexual and gender-based violence of all forms has historically been surrounded by stigma against survivors, while perpetrators have mostly enjoyed impunity from judicial accountability or sanctions.

In this context, MINUSMA was specifically tasked by the Security Council to provide specific protection and assistance for women and children affected by armed conflict, including through the deployment of Women's Protection Advisers and of civilian and uniformed Gender Advisers and focal points, and to address the needs of victims and survivors of CRSV.

### Key achievements in preventing CRSV and assisting survivors

Concrete progress in CRSV prevention and response in Mali was made owing to MINUSMA activities and projects, in partnership with local and international partners. The following are some examples:

- Ongoing dialogue with parties to conflict by MINUSMA led to the adoption of concrete commitments and action plans to prevent and respond to CRSV by State actors and non-State armed groups, in line with their obligations under international human rights and humanitarian law. For instance, in 2019 the Government of Mali adopted a Joint



Communiqué to Address Prevention of and Response to CRSV, which continues to be implemented today through an action plan, with the support of the United Nations. Signatory armed groups of the Algiers Peace Agreement also signed two Unilateral Communiqués outlining their obligations to ending CRSV.

- Partnerships between MINUSMA and civil society groups, including religious, youth and women’s organizations, resulted in an enhanced awareness of CRSV and survivors’ rights. This was notably illustrated by the adoption of a fatwa (Islamic law) in January 2023, denouncing CRSV and calling to put an end to the stigmatization of survivors.
- MINUSMA also provided training on CRSV to the national authorities, especially the national police, through the development and inclusion of dedicated CRSV modules in the curriculum of Mali’s National Police Academy, in 2019.
- MINUSMA led the documentation of CRSV trends and patterns through operationalization of MARA. Although limited by access barriers and factors contributing to underreporting, such information and analysis facilitated high-level advocacy, the referral of survivors to appropriate care service providers and the preparation of case files to be presented before the Malian courts.
- In a context where impunity for CRSV crimes remained the norm, MINUSMA advocated for the prosecution of grave CRSV cases and provided technical support to Mali’s judicial authorities.



Photo: MINUSMA



### Testimony

While working with MINUSMA, I was driven by the desire to end CRSV and improve the situation for survivors of this violence in Mali. With the tireless support of my team of Women's Protection Advisers and fruitful collaboration with MINUSMA civilian, police and military components and international partners, I am proud that significant achievements were made.



[Click here](#) to read the full testimony by a former Women's Protection Adviser in MINUSMA.

## A challenging and high-risk withdrawal process

At the request of the Transition Government of Mali, the Security Council adopted resolution 2690 (2023) on 30 June 2023, which terminated MINUSMA's mandate in Mali at the end of 2023. The abrupt and extremely short timeline for the withdrawal of the Mission did not allow for the gradual drawdown process and progressive transition of the Mission's mandated tasks, which have historically guided the withdrawal of peacekeeping operations. MINUSMA departed from Mali in a context of enduring insecurity and risks to the protection of civilians, including ongoing CRSV by armed actors. Moreover, the environment characterized by political upheaval and a deteriorating security situation further complicated the collaboration between MINUSMA and the national authorities, and the physical and logistical withdrawal of personnel and the handover of equipment. Overall, this context raised several risks with regard to the protection of the Malian population from CRSV after the departure and the continuation of efforts to end CRSV and assist survivors in Mali.

## Safeguarding gains made

In such a challenging context, it was essential for MINUSMA to effectively close and hand over core information and projects to actors remaining in the country to preserve gains made and efforts to prevent and respond to CRSV. Keeping CRSV high on the agenda during the exit process was also essential to ensure such concerns would be integrated into discussions on the future configuration of the United Nations in Mali. Under the leadership of the Office of the Senior Women's Protection Adviser, MINUSMA promptly responded to the announcement of imminent withdrawal by identifying ongoing projects that needed to be completed and the priority tasks that needed to be handed over to other host institutions, civil society and international partners.

Thanks to internal support from MINUSMA leadership and guidance provided by DPO's CRSV Team, at Headquarters in New York, MINUSMA developed a comprehensive concept note outlining the main tasks and projects on CRSV to be continued after its departure, while conducting ongoing engagement with partners.

MINUSMA engaged with all United Nations country team members to continue supporting the Malian Government in addressing CRSV issues and absorbing some of its former responsibilities under the national Action Plan to implement the 2019 Joint Communiqué to address CRSV. In parallel, MINUSMA prepared the handover of special projects to the Transition Government and closed projects that could not be easily transferred to other stakeholders. Regular interactions and reporting on CRSV developments ensured smooth coordination and collaboration between MINUSMA and United Nations Headquarters to identify solutions to ensure continued attention and resources for CRSV work in Mali. Regarding data and knowledge, relevant files and documents were archived and shared with Headquarters and relevant partners to retain institutional memory and learning.

### Lessons learned

Several factors have contributed to ensuring the continuity of MINUSMA efforts in preventing and responding to CRSV in Mali, despite significant challenges during the mission withdrawal.

01

**Ongoing engagement and capacity-building of the Malian Government and national institutions on the issue of CRSV helped to promote national solutions and durable ownership of efforts towards CRSV prevention and response**, as illustrated, for instance, through collaboration with five government ministries on the development of the national Action Plan to implement the 2019 Joint Communiqué to address CRSV and the training partnership with Mali's National Police Academy.

02

**The long-term partnership and collaboration established over the years between MINUSMA and United Nations agencies, funds and programmes facilitated the effective identification of partners** that could continue efforts to address CRSV after MINUSMA's withdrawal. Long-term collaboration with UNFPA as MINUSMA's main partner and co-facilitator of the MARA Technical Working Group was essential. The colocation of two former Women's Protection Advisers from MINUSMA within UNFPA during the final months before the Mission's closure, including one who was subsequently recruited temporarily by UNFPA, minimized the loss of knowledge in the United Nations family and facilitated the transition period. The formal collaboration established between MINUSMA, UNFPA, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-WOMEN), UNICEF and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), among other partners, in the framework of support to the Malian Government in the implementation of the Joint Communiqué also paved the way for continuity and ownership of CRSV tasks by United Nations agencies, funds and programmes.

03

**Empowering and assisting civil society was a key approach to ensuring sustainability.**

MINUSMA's ongoing technical support to civil society organizations and local communities in CRSV prevention and response during the Mission's presence in Mali had increased these actors' capacity to take forward efforts to change attitudes on CRSV and advocate for adequate responses for survivors. These efforts were delivered by MINUSMA through training, awareness-raising efforts and capacity-strengthening projects on various aspects of CRSV prevention and response, such as monitoring and reporting.

In conclusion, MINUSMA contributed significantly to advancing CRSV prevention and response in Mali. Upon its departure from the country, the Mission left behind critical foundations for the Government, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, civil society and other stakeholders to carry on efforts to end CRSV and ensure justice for survivors in Mali.



## HIGHLIGHTS OF DPO AND MISSION COLLABORATION

Throughout 2023, DPO collaborated with peacekeeping missions towards the effective implementation of mandates to prevent and respond to CRSV. The following highlights some of the activities, including the facilitation of capacity-building, peer-to-peer learning and provision of technical advice on priority issues, such as in the context of mission withdrawal and transition.

### Training of CRSV focal points in MINUSCA

In May 2023, a specialized training course on CRSV prevention and response was organized by MINUSCA, with DPO support, for 35 civilian and uniformed CRSV focal points from Bangui and field offices in the Central African Republic. Through presentations, experience-sharing and practical scenario-based exercises, the course enhanced participants' knowledge and capacity to effectively prevent and respond to CRSV in a coordinated manner. The MINUSCA Police Commissioner, the Human Rights Division Director and representatives from the Ministry of Gender, the Special Criminal Court, UNFPA and a network of CRSV survivors were among the guest speakers. Following the course, the majority of participants assessed that they had acquired the essential knowledge of the CRSV mandate, which also strengthened in-mission collaboration and coordination on CRSV by enabling networking between focal points and Women's Protection Advisers.



Participants make a presentation during the training for CRSV focal points held in MINUSCA in May. Photo: Salim



[Click here](#) to watch a video produced by the Strategic Communications Section of MINUSCA to raise awareness of the Mission's efforts to address CRSV.

### Surge capacity to MINUSCA

DPO's CRSV Team was deployed on an eight-week surge capacity assignment, between April and June 2023, to provide hands-on support to the Senior Women's Protection Adviser in MINUSCA, with internal mainstreaming, capacity-building of personnel and strengthening the implementation of MARA on CRSV, among others. The CRSV Team Leader engaged with more than 150 MINUSCA personnel in Bangui and various field offices through a series of bilateral meetings, group work

and training sessions. These activities enabled the provision of technical support and guidance on the implementation of MINUSCA's mandate on CRSV and resulted in enhanced awareness of the roles and responsibilities of respective components to prevent and respond to CRSV. Short trips to the Bangassou and Bossangoa field offices also facilitated interactions with around 60 members of NGOs, United Nations agencies and civil society organizations, effectively leading to increased understanding of MINUSCA's mandate on CRSV and greater commitment to coordination and collaboration.

### Biennial retreat for Senior Women's Protection Advisers

In November, DPO collaborated with the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the Office of the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to organize the biennial retreat on CRSV, at United Nations Headquarters. The event brought together Senior Women's Protection Advisers from the Central African Republic, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, South Sudan and the Sudan, former Women's Protection Advisers from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mali, alongside CRSV Leads from select United Nations country presences such as Colombia, Haiti, Myanmar and Ukraine, and from the United Nations Office to the African Union. The event enhanced cross-situational experience-sharing, strengthened relationships between the field and Headquarters and increased participants' knowledge on priority thematic areas, such as monitoring and reporting on CRSV and transitions.



Awareness-raising on CRSV for members of the Cameroonian contingent based in Bossangoa, led by the Military Gender Adviser and the CRSV Team Leader. Photo: MINUSCA



Participants from field presences and Headquarters during the Senior Women's Protection Advisers retreat in New York. Photo: DPO

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