



OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON
SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT



**Bibliothèques
Sans Frontières**
Libraries Without Borders

**COOPERATION AGREEMENT
BETWEEN
THE OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY-
GENERAL ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT
AND
BIBLIOTHÈQUES SANS FRONTIÈRES**

The Office of the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (the Office of the Special Representative) and Bibliothèques Sans Frontières, hereinafter referred to collectively as the “Parties”, have agreed to sign this Cooperation Agreement, hereinafter referred to as the “Agreement”, which represents a statement of intent by the Parties to work together and sets out the terms, conditions of the collaboration, and outlines the respective responsibilities and roles of the Parties.

Preamble

- The Office of the Special Representative is an office of the United Nations Secretariat that supports the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, hereinafter referred to as “the Special Representative” whose role is to provide coherent and strategic leadership, to work effectively to strengthen existing United Nations coordination mechanisms, and to engage in advocacy efforts, inter alia with governments, including military and judicial representatives, as well as with all parties to armed conflict and civil society, in order to address, at both headquarters and country level, sexual violence in armed conflict. The Office of the Special Representative was established by United Nations Security Council resolution 1888 (2009), which reaffirms that women and girls are particularly targeted by the use of sexual violence as a tactic of war and emphasises that this crime is a threat to international peace and security.
- The Special Representative chairs the United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict Network, which is comprised of 23 United Nations entities, and functions as an operational arm of the mandate. Her work is also supported by the United Nations Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, which functions another operational arm.
- The Special Representative has established three strategic priorities for the mandate, namely: (i) converting cultures of impunity into cultures of justice and accountability through consistent and effective prosecution; (ii) fostering national ownership and leadership for a sustainable, survivor-centred response; and (iii) addressing the root causes of conflict-related sexual violence with structural gender inequality and discrimination, poverty, and marginalisation as its invisible drivers in times of peace and war.

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- All initiatives, including programmes and advocacy undertaken in pursuit of the mandate, take a survivor-centred approach, which at its core, entails the centering of the needs of survivors of conflict-related sexual violence.
- Bibliothèques Sans Frontières is an international non-governmental organisation based in Paris, France and present in more than 50 countries. Its mission is to strengthen the capacity of people in vulnerable situations by facilitating access to education, culture, and information through innovative means.
- Bibliothèques Sans Frontières' activities include developing and deploying inventive tools¹ and digital libraries that can be accessed offline and which are stocked with useful equipment/knowledge/information, to areas where people are in vulnerable situations, such as in fragile settings and contexts of active conflict, refugee camps, or other hard-to-reach areas.

Recognising that partnerships with civil society organisations is critical in bolstering efforts to prevent and respond to conflict-related sexual violence;

Acknowledging the need to employ innovative tools to modernise methodologies in support of survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, many of whom reside in remote and hard-to-reach areas with limited network connection;

Responding positively to the call of the United Nations Secretary General through the Sustainable Development Goals (Agenda 2030) for multi-stakeholder partnerships (Goal 17) to facilitate the participation of all sectors of society in the process of 'localising' the Sustainable Development Goals;

The Office of the Special Representative seeks to partner with Bibliothèques Sans Frontières to deploy modern technologies in support of the empowerment of survivors of conflict-related sexual violence and in implementing initiatives to prevent and respond to conflict-related sexual violence.

¹ For example, **Ideas Boxes** are a mobile, autonomous, and durable multimedia center and learning hub that provides educational and cultural resources, both physical and digital, to communities in need. The Ideas Box is highly-durable, energy self-sufficient, and can be set up in any kind of context in less than twenty minutes, to accommodate up to 50 people. With its off-line digital server, 25 tablets and laptops, six HD cameras, one large HD screen, the Ideas Box connects users to digital resources (MOOCs, e-learning, administrative and legal information, video documents, films, e-books, applications, etc.), but it also includes hardcover and paperback books, board games, arts and crafts materials, and a stage for music and theatre.

The Context

- As conflicts continue to rage, sexual violence continues to be used as a tactic of war, terrorism, and political repression, designed not only to inflict bodily harm on victims but also to terrify, dominate, humiliate, and degrade them, their families, and communities.
- Sexual violence has serious and multiple health, social, and economic repercussions for survivors, as well as their social networks and communities. Widespread and systematic sexual violence hampers post-conflict recovery by inflicting lasting physical and psychological scars on survivors, marginalizing victims and excluding them from the workforce. It often turns victims into social outcasts, fracturing families and corroding community structures. Stigma and victim-blaming are compounded by a historical absence of accountability.
- Security Council resolution 2467 (2019) recognises the important contribution of civil society organisations to conflict prevention, resolution, and peacebuilding, including preventing and responding to sexual violence in conflict, particularly in helping shift the stigma of sexual violence from victims to the perpetrators, to promote cohesion among community members, and to enhance informal community-level protection mechanisms among vulnerable populations. The development of innovative operational tools can be useful in addressing conflict-related sexual violence.

Key Areas of Collaboration

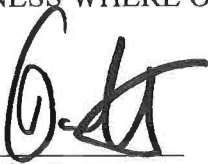
- Bibliothèques Sans Frontières, will, through its **innovative tools**, support the Office of the Special Representative in its efforts to prevent and respond to conflict-related sexual violence, *inter alia*, by:
 - a. Providing mobile multi-media and learning centres equipped with targeted resources on conflict-related sexual violence in communities of vulnerable populations, including survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, such as refugee and internally displaced persons camps and conflict affected areas;
 - b. Serving as safe spaces for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence and their communities to listen and share their perspectives in support of their healing journey and to raise awareness to sensitize community members against the stigma of sexual violence;
 - c. Support survivors, their families, communities, service providers, and others in building resilience and providing psychosocial, skills building, and other forms of support to appropriately meet the needs of survivors and those vulnerable to conflict-related sexual violence;
 - d. Equip communities with relevant knowledge and tools, such as an understanding of early warning indicators, in situations vulnerable to conflict, or in the wake of conflict, to prevent conflict-related sexual violence from happening in the first place.

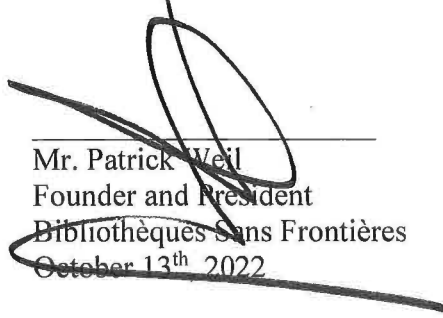
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General Provisions

- The Parties affirm that their collaboration will be in full accordance with the values upheld by the United Nations system.
- Implementation of the areas of cooperation in this Agreement will be subject to the availability of sufficient financial and human resources for that purpose and will be conducted in a gender- and culturally- sensitive manner, in compliance with the Parties' programme of work, priority activities, principles, internal rules, regulations, policies, administrative procedures, and practices.
- The Parties' commit to promoting and communicating joint activities to relevant audiences in a spirit of collaboration and joint ownership.
- As part of this collaboration, intellectual property applicable to each jurisdiction will apply, and issues of intellectual property will be handled on a case-by-case basis, with the basic governing principles: 1) Background Intellectual Property will remain the property of the organisation which owns it, though arrangements may be entered into as part of any project or programme and; 2) Parties will do their best to act in coherence with Bibliothèques Sans Frontières' philosophy to promote free, open, and shared access to knowledge for any Intellectual Property developed for the purpose of this partnership Parties commit to upholding data protection requirements in their jurisdictions and, over and above the legal requirements and ensure "Do No Harm" principles at all times.
- The effective commencement date of this Agreement will be the date of its signing. The working relationship shall remain in force unless either party writes formally to request termination.
- The Agreement is ongoing until terminated by either party in writing. The Agreement can be terminated by any Party following a consultation period of 30 (thirty) calendar days. This Agreement may be amended only by written approval from all participating Parties, and the decision to amend the agreement shall include the date of the amendment, the signatures of appointed representatives of each party, and any new terms and conditions amended or added to this agreement.

IN WITNESS WHERE OF THE PARTIES HERETO EXECUTE THIS AGREEMENT:


Ms. Pramila Patten
Under-Secretary-General and
Special Representative of the Secretary-General
On Sexual Violence in Conflict
October, 13th 2022


Mr. Patrick Weil
Founder and President
Bibliothèques Sans Frontières
October 13th 2022