

## ABOUT THE TEAM OF EXPERTS

The United Nations (UN) Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict (the “Team”) was created by [Security Council resolution 1888](#) (2009) to assist national authorities in strengthening the rule of law, with the aim of ensuring criminal accountability for perpetrators of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV). This resolution recognized that CRSV is a threat to peace and security, and that Member States affected by conflict need assistance to address impunity in order to prevent and deter future violations.

The Team is the only dedicated Security Council mandated entity to provide this type of support on a global basis.

The Team is based at the UN Headquarters in New York and deploys regularly to the field in some of the world’s most challenging contexts. It has a unique “co-lead” structure that includes members from several UN entities to enable the UN to deliver as one in assisting Member States to address CRSV. The Team is led by a Team Leader who reports to the [Special Representative of](#)

[the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict](#) (SRSG-SVC), Under-Secretary-General Pramila Patten, and currently comprises experts from the [Department of Peace Operations](#) (DPO), the Office of the [United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights](#) (OHCHR), the Office of the SRSG-SVC and the [United Nations Development Programme](#) (UNDP), who each report to both the Team Leader and their respective entities.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR WORK

Since it became operational in 2011, the Team has undertaken missions and deployments to Central African Republic (CAR), Colombia, Côte d’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Guinea, Iraq, Liberia, Mali, Myanmar, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan (Darfur) and Syria. The following are examples of the Team’s work between February and September 2019.

- In the **Central African Republic**, the Team has been working with MINUSCA and UNDP since 2016, in particular to operationalize and provide ongoing support to a specialized unit with the police and gendarmerie that investigates sexual and gender-based violence crimes (known as the UMIRR). The Team carried out a technical mission to CAR in May 2019 in order to assess the UMIRR’s work, as well as to accompany the SRSG-SVC during her high-level mission to the country. During its mission, the Team also advocated for the UMIRR to be sufficiently funded through the national budget and for cases transferred by the UMIRR to be processed by prosecutors in a survivor-sensitive and timely manner. In order to bolster its work in CAR, the Team will deploy a full-time expert based in MINUSCA in autumn 2019 to provide daily mentoring and capacity support to Central African authorities, including investigators of the Special Criminal Court of CAR (SCC). The Team continues to work closely with GFP partners to support the SCC, including on the implementation of the Strategy for the Protection of Victims and Witnesses as well as the Prosecution Strategy. The Team is also supporting the implementation of the justice provisions of the revised Joint Communiqué to address conflict-related

sexual violence (CRSV) signed on 31 May 2019 between the UN and CAR.



THE TEAM OF EXPERTS WITH THE POLICE IN GOMA DRC. PHOTO | THE TEAM OF EXPERTS

- In the **Democratic Republic of the Congo** (DRC), the Team carried out a technical mission in May 2019 to start the implementation of a new project, which will focus on criminal prosecutions for CRSV in the east of the country. The Team had previously engaged in the DRC for several years but had limited engagement due to the lack of sustained project funding during the electoral period. Separately, during this same period, a significant rise in sexual violence occurred in South Kivu province in 2018 and a massive spike of sexual violence is occurring in North Kivu province in 2019, reversing several years of progress. With renewed funding for the DRC, the Team will deploy a full-time expert to support justice authorities on case prioritization,

investigation and prosecution in an effort to address this surge in CRSV in the east of the country.

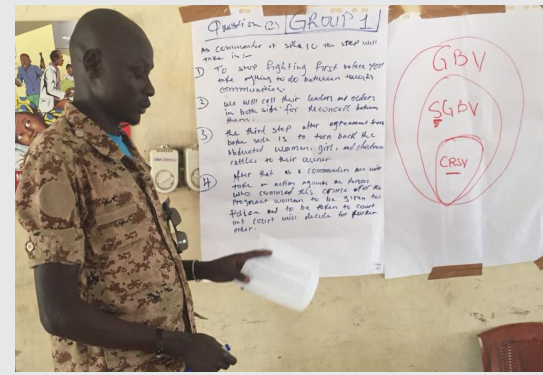
- In **Guinea** (Conakry), the Team continues to deploy a high-level expert as a member of the Steering Committee responsible for organizing the trials of 15 senior military officials, including former President Moussa Dadis Camara, for the killing of at least 157 persons and sexual violence against at least 109 women and girls at the Conakry stadium in September 2009. The Steering Committee was established by the Minister of Justice in April 2018 and includes senior Guinean officials and representatives of the Team, OHCHR, the European Union, France and the United States. To date, the Steering Committee has identified the venue for the trials, conducted a security assessment and mobilized budgetary resources. In 2019, the Team has continued its advocacy at regional and international levels on the importance of holding the trials, including through promoting GFP support to Guinea in these efforts. In August 2019, the Guinean Minister of Justice issued a new decree on the planning and organizations of the trials creating a three-tiered structure. Despite these developments, as the UN Secretary-General has noted, “the fact that the trials have not yet started is a matter of serious concern” (S/2019/280).



- In **Iraq**, the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) committed sexual violence on a massive scale especially against minority religious and ethnic components of the Iraqi state. In the absence of serious international crime legislation, the majority of perpetrators of sexual violence committed by ISIL have been prosecuted for affiliation or membership in a terrorist group rather than for their criminal conduct. The Team has engaged with numerous survivors who have expressed the desire for the crimes against them to be recognized as sexual violence crimes and not solely as terrorist offences. The Team has advised the Government that, pending the adoption of serious international crimes legislation, existing Iraqi law on rape and trafficking in persons could be used to deliver justice to these survivors. In April 2019, Iraq announced to the Security Council that alleged ISIL perpetrators had been charged under its domestic law on trafficking in persons for the purpose of sexually exploiting the victims. Further, the Team has been engaging with third States where significant populations of survivors are located, with the aim of exploring judicial cooperation with Iraqi authorities. In addition to criminal law matters, the Team has provided the Government with tailored advice on a new reparations law for survivors of sexual violence and on the registration of children. The Team remains committed to assisting the Government of Iraq in line with the provisions of the Joint Communiqué on CRSV between Iraq and the UN (2016).
- In **Myanmar**, massive sexual violence has been alleged against the Government by ethnic and religious minorities including the Rohingya population, which fled to Bangladesh in 2017. The Government's continued denial that sexual violence was committed by security forces or armed groups, the lack of access by justice actors to Rakhine State, and the well-founded fears of the Rohingya population owing to the Government's failure to recognize Rohingya as citizens, has made the Team's work in the country extremely limited. In February 2019, the Team accompanied the SRS-G-SVC during her visit to the country to follow up on the signing of the Joint Communiqué

between Myanmar and the UN to prevent and respond to CRSV (2018). The Team has also provided comments on the justice aspects of the draft implementation plan of the Joint Communiqué and the draft Prevention and Protection of Violence Against Women Law. However, until the Government takes credible steps to provide justice to survivors, international entities such as the ICC, the investigative mechanism established by the Human Rights Council, and third States exercising universal jurisdiction will likely be the primary sources of justice for survivors.

- In **Nigeria**, the Team carried out a preliminary assessment in October/November 2018 on the judicial response to sexual violence crimes committed by Boko Haram. The assessment identified various obstacles to addressing the ongoing lack of accountability for these crimes. In 2019, the Team returned to Nigeria to conduct further training within the country on criminal law responses to sexual violence committed by the terrorist group and to discuss these responses with various stakeholders. As a result, the Team has developed a project to assist national authorities to enhance their response to sexual violence by Boko Haram, which will be implemented in 2020 if funding is secured.
- In **South Sudan**, the UN Secretary-General in his annual report on CRSV noted the "alarming increase in the number of incidents and victims of CRSV" in 2018 (S/2019/280). The Team continues to work with UNMISS and the UN Country Team to assist the South Sudanese armed forces and the police to develop and implement action plans in compliance with international humanitarian law and Security Council resolutions on CRSV. In 2019, the Team conducted multiple missions to South Sudan to facilitate the adoption of the South Sudanese armed forces' action plan and matrix of activities on addressing CRSV, resulting in prioritized activities and requests by the South Sudanese to the UN system for strategic support. The Team also facilitated the creation of a draft action plan and matrix of activities on CRSV for the South Sudanese National Police



TRAINING IN SOUTH SUDAN. PHOTO | UNMISS

Service. Both of these action plans include specific initiatives to prevent CRSV and promote accountability for these crimes.

- In addition to the countries listed above, the Team conducted assessments in Côte d'Ivoire and Mali in late 2018 and early 2019 respectively. In **Côte d'Ivoire**, the Team found that despite the significant and genuine progress the country has made on security sector reform in the wake of its post-electoral violence in 2010-2011, there have been no domestic prosecutions for any incidents of CRSV. A new amnesty law adopted on the basis of a presidential order requires clarification that it does not apply to serious international crimes such as CRSV in line with Security Council resolutions 2106 (2013) and 2467 (2019), and customary international law. In **Mali**, the Team conducted a joint assessment with MINUSMA on the backlog of sexual violence cases in the Malian justice system committed by terrorist groups.



THE SRS-G-SVC ON MISSION IN MALI. PHOTO | THE TEAM OF EXPERTS



**TEN YEARS OF THE TEAM OF EXPERTS: LOOKING BACK AND MOVING FORWARD**

To commemorate the 10-year anniversary of its establishment, the Team, in collaboration with the **Journal of International Criminal Justice**, is producing a special issue of the Journal on *Justice and Accountability for Sexual Violence in Conflict: Progress and Challenges in National Efforts to Address Impunity*. The publication aims at bringing together the experiences of practitioners, academics, policymakers and diplomats who have been actively engaged in advancing accountability and justice for victims and survivors of CRSV through national justice institutions. The special issue is scheduled to be published in early 2020.



PHOTO | THE TEAM OF EXPERTS

**THE TEAM OF EXPERTS AND THE SECURITY COUNCIL**

Since the Security Council created the Team in resolution 1888 (2009), it has adopted additional resolutions which have included references to the Team:

- In [resolution 2106 \(2013\)](#), the Security Council “encourages concerned Member States to draw upon the expertise of the United Nations Team of Experts established pursuant to resolution 1888 (2009) as appropriate to strengthen the rule of law and the capacity of civilian and military justice systems to address sexual violence in armed conflict and post-conflict situations as part of broader efforts to strengthen institutional safeguards against impunity.”
- In [resolution 2331 \(2016\)](#), the Security Council “takes note with appreciation of the efforts undertaken by the [...] Team of Experts on Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict to strengthen monitoring and analysis of sexual violence in conflict, including when associated with trafficking in persons in armed conflict and post-conflict situations, used as a tactic of war and also as a tactic by certain terrorist groups”.
- In [resolution 2447 \(2018\)](#), the Security Council “requests the United Nations to emphasize prevention and response to conflict related sexual and gender-based violence and [...] assist national authorities to strengthen the rule of law, for instance through the work of the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict.”
- In [resolution 2467 \(2019\)](#) the Security Council “stresses the critical role of the domestic investigation and judicial systems of Member States to prevent and eliminate sexual violence in conflict and to ensure accountability for those responsible, and requests relevant United Nations entities including the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict established pursuant to resolution 1888 (2009) to support national authorities in their efforts in this regard.”

**THE TEAM OF EXPERTS: "SMALL BUT MIGHTY"**

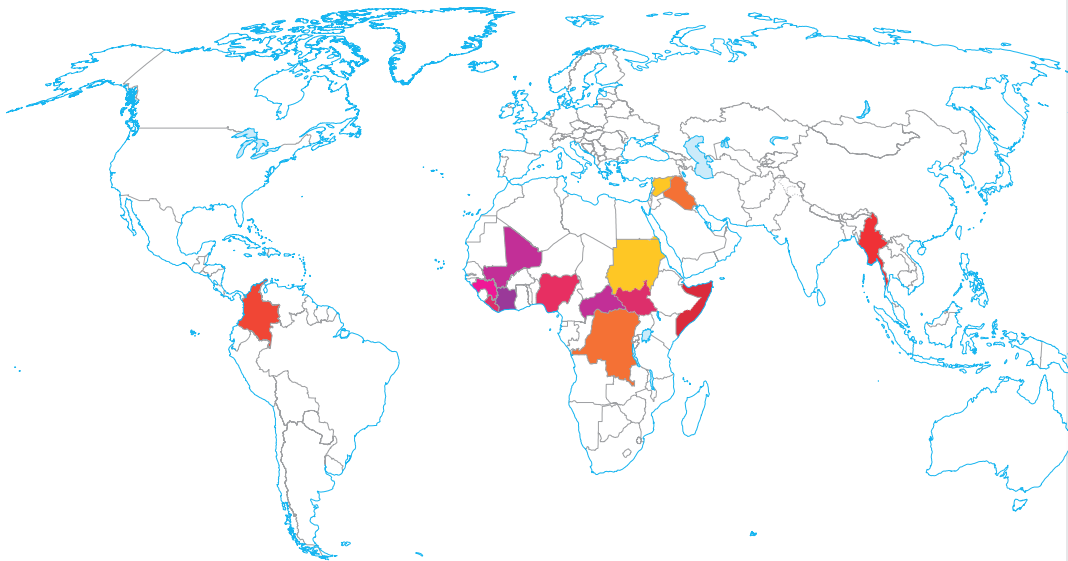
The Team conducts regular reviews of its work to ensure that it is meeting its objective, set by the Security Council, of addressing impunity for CRSV and delivering value to its constituents and its donors. In an independent, mid-term assessment of its work in summer 2018, the evaluator noted that interlocutors described the Team:

"AS A SMALL BUT MIGHTY EXPERT TEAM AND AS A TEAM THAT IN MANY WAYS WAS CLOSER TO THE GROUND THAN MOST IN UN HEADQUARTERS, PARTLY DUE TO THE FACT THAT EACH T[EAM] MEMBER SPENDS A LOT OF TIME IN THE FIELD – A SORT OF NGO WITHIN THE UN, AS ONE INTERLOCUTOR, PUT IT. INTERLOCUTORS OFTEN SAID THEY WERE IMPRESSED WITH THE EXPERTISE OF INDIVIDUAL T[EAM] MEMBERS AND LARGELY AGREED THAT THE T[EAM] CONTRIBUTES TO EXISTING RULE OF LAW INITIATIVES WITH VERY SPECIFIC EXPERTISE ON CONFLICT-RELATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE."



UN PHOTO | MARCO DORMINO

In September 2019, the Team engaged an expert on monitoring and evaluation to strengthen the Team's ability to implement its mandate.



THE BOUNDARIES AND NAMES SHOWN AND THE DESIGNATIONS USED ON THIS MAP DO NOT IMPLY OFFICIAL ENDORSEMENT OR ACCEPTANCE BY THE UNITED NATIONS.

**RESOURCES FOR THE TEAM OF EXPERTS**

The Security Council mandated in resolution 1888 (2009) that the Team make use of existing human resources within the UN system as well as voluntary contributions. Since it became operational in 2011, the Team has been funded exclusively through voluntary contributions. In order to sustain its work, adequate human and financial resources are essential. The Team welcomes contributions from Member States, private philanthropic foundations and individuals.

The Team greatly appreciates the generous contributions currently being provided by Belgium, Estonia, Finland, France, Japan, Sweden and the United Kingdom.



@endrapeinwar



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE TEAM'S ACTIVITIES PLEASE SEE THE 2018 ANNUAL REPORT AT

[HTTP://MPTF.UNDP.ORG/DOCUMENT/DOWNLOAD/22400](http://MPTF.UNDP.ORG/DOCUMENT/DOWNLOAD/22400)

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Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.