



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 international 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 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), 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.

PHOTO | ELENA HERMONA



IMPACT OF COVID-19

However to ensure business continuity and to continue to meet the support needs of survivors and Member States, the Team of Experts is utilizing a variety of approaches, including field based experts and communications technologies to continue to collaborate with colleagues and partners both at headquarters and field levels. The Team of Experts will continue to review the status of its activities regularly, taking into account the health and safety considerations of its members, as well as those of its national partners and communities it supports.

GIVEN THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND MEASURES TAKEN AROUND THE WORLD, INCLUDING WORLDWIDE TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS, THE TEAM, IN LINE WITH THE GUIDANCE OF THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL, AND RELEVANT HOST COUNTRY RESTRICTIONS, HAS SINCE MID-MARCH PUT A HOLD ON ITS TRAVEL.

COUNTRY ENGAGEMENTS



PHOTO | MINUSCA



CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC



With support from the Team of Experts Technical Specialist deployed in country, the investigators and the Director of the Joint Rapid Response and Prevention Unit for Sexual Violence against Women and Children (UMIRR) finalized the reports for two field investigations into incidents in Kaga Bandoro in August 2019 and in Bossangoa in August 2018. The two cases involving 264 and 150 victims of CRSV respectively, are scheduled to be sent shortly to the Prosecutor's Office in Bangui's High Court. A lessons learned exercise will be held by the Team of Experts with the UMIRR and the UN partners to discuss good practices and challenges around the management of these cases in 2021.

On 15 September, a joint workshop was held with the Minister of Justice, UNDP, MINUSCA and the Team of Experts on the challenges limiting the efficient tracking of judicial cases in the High Courts of Bangui and Bimbo. It aimed at addressing the lack of follow-up on judicial files between UMIRR and the relevant jurisdictions, as well as within the responsible courts which delays and negatively impacts accountability for CRSV crimes. The workshop allowed participants to identify the main issues impacting case tracking and corrective actions, including technical trainings and the development of coordination mechanisms under the newly established national justice sector policy.

COLOMBIA



The Team of Experts, alongside colleagues in the Office of the SRSO-SVC, supported the preparation of the SRSO-SVC's meetings with Colombian authorities, women human rights defenders and victims, on the occasion of the Deputy Secretary-General's virtual mission to the Colombia on 28 and 29 October 2020. Noting that the Office of the SRSO-SVC is explicitly named in the peace agreement as accompanying the parties in the implementation of the gender provisions, the SRSO stressed that her Office is currently looking at possibilities for political and technical re-engagement in Colombia, including through the technical support of the Team of Experts. Building on these meetings, and in cooperation with co-lead entities counterparts, the Team of Experts is currently carrying out an internal virtual assessment to identify possible areas of

technical support on the investigation, prosecution and adjudication of CRSV.

Over the past months, the Team has been working with UN WOMEN, UNICEF and OHCHR in Colombia in the development of a document on International Standards on the Prosecution and Adjudication of Conflict-related Sexual Violence, which provides information on the national, regional and international legal framework on the prosecution of CRSV and provides examples of good practices, including by the Team of Experts, with the aim to supporting efforts of the transitional and ordinary justice system in Colombia in addressing these crimes. The document is currently pending finalization and will be published in the first quarter of 2021.



PHOTO | MONUSCO

NTABO NTABERI SHEKA, LEADER OF THE ARMED GROUP NDUMA DEFENSE OF CONGO (NDC) UPON HIS SURRENDER TO MONUSCO ON JULY 26, 2017.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO



On 24 November, the Team of Experts welcomed the decision of the Cour Militaire Opérationnelle of North Kivu in the landmark “Sheka case”. The conviction and sentencing of Ntabo Ntaberi Sheka - part of the Nduma Defence of Congo armed group (NDC-Sheka) - on charges that included rape, sexual slavery and the recruitment of children represents further progress for accountability for sexual violence in conflict in the DRC. He and co-conspirators, including Séraphin Nzitonda Habimana, also known as Lionceau, of the so-called Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), were tried for

mass crimes committed between 2010 and 2017, including the mass rape of 387 civilians. The Team of Experts provided technical assistance to the investigation, prosecution and trial. In the coming weeks the Team of Experts, in close collaboration with MONUSCO will facilitate a consultation to discuss the challenges and opportunities inherent to the enforcement of the decision, especially in relation to the victims. In mid-January, the Team will organize a one-day workshop on lessons learned. Both meetings will bring together national and international partners who, in the last ten years, have worked on this file.

GUINEA



The Team of Experts continued to engage on Guinea, closely following the human rights situation on the ground following the 18 October 2020 presidential election and discussing with partners its impact for the trials of the 28 September 2009 events. The Team continues to

work through the deployment of a senior judicial advisor, who during this period has provided remote advisory support to national authorities, civil society and the UN system on the ground.



PHOTO | UNAMI



IRAQ



In 2019, the Team of Experts provided recommendations to a draft Yazidi Survivors Bill put forward by the President and the Council of Representatives to ensure a holistic and survivor-centered delivery of victims’ assistance to survivors of ISIL’s sexual violence. In the same year, the Team also gave input to the Coalition for Just Reparations, an alliance of Iraqi civil society organizations representing the span of Iraq’s ethnic and religious groups about victims’ assistance and reparations in the wake of ISIL’s crimes.

In late 2020, the Council of Representatives again considered the Yazidi Survivors Bill and draft legislation put forward by civil society. The Team participated remotely in a workshop on the bill in December 2020 in conjunction with members of Iraqi government, the Coalition for Just Reparations, and the United Nations on the ground in Iraq. The Team continues to follow and work with partners to strengthen the bill as it moves forward in the Parliament.

MALI



Following on its 2019 technical assessment, the Team of Experts in close collaboration with MINUSMA, is preparing a workshop on the implementation of its recommendations to prompt the conclusion of the existing cases of CRSV related to the 2012-2013

crisis, still pending before the Malian national courts. The workshop is scheduled for mid-January with the aim to develop an action plan to move forward with the pending cases.

MYANMAR

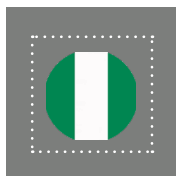


In June, the Team of Experts participated in the UN-wide joint discussions on accountability in Myanmar/Bangladesh. The Team presented on the provisions of the Joint Communiqué with Myanmar and the Framework of Cooperation with Bangladesh. The presentation also highlighted the challenges faced not only in pursuing justice, but also in deploying personnel in country.

The Team of Experts continued to follow justice developments relating to sexual violence in Myanmar through the International Court of Justice, International Criminal Court, the IIMM, and jurisdiction in third states.



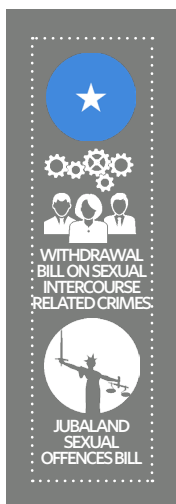
NIGERIA



The Team of Experts contributed to the Train-the-Trainer component of the International Criminal Law course conducted by Wayamo and the International Nuremberg Principles Academy. The Team contribution through a pre-recorded video lecture addressed the investigation and

prosecution of sexual and gender-based violence. Participants included members of the Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, the National Judicial Institute and members of all three branches of the Nigerian Armed Forces.

SOMALIA



In support of UN advocacy efforts with the Federal Government of Somalia, the Team of Experts prepared a preliminary review of the newly presented draft bill on Sexual Intercourse Related Crimes (2020) outlining concerns, including a lack of clearly defined terms; the absence of numerous substantive offences; weak procedural provisions; and inadequate protection of victims, witnesses and the accused. This analysis formed a basis for UNSOM’s advocacy efforts to engage the Parliament to withdraw the draft bill and reintroduce the Sexual Offences Bill (2018) developed with the support of the Team of Experts among others. In further support of

advocacy efforts, the Team of Experts engaged with OHCHR, the Office of the SRSO on Sexual Violence in Conflict, and the Inter-Parliamentary Union regarding the issuance of statements in support of the withdrawal of the draft bill and the reintroduction of the Sexual Offences Bill. The Team of Experts is also in the process of providing feedback to the Ministry of Women, Family Affairs and Human Rights in Jubaland on the draft Jubaland Sexual Offences Bill (2020), which even in early draft form would be a step forward to preventing impunity and protecting victims of sexual and gender-based violence.

SOUTH SUDAN



The Team of Experts continued to work with UNMISS to assist the South Sudan People’s Defence Forces (SSPDF) and SPLA-IO to merge their respective Action Plans on addressing sexual violence in line with the consolidation efforts under the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan. In October, the Government of South Sudan and SPLA-IO established a joint committee to lead the consolidation process. The joint committee is comprised of eleven representatives (six of whom

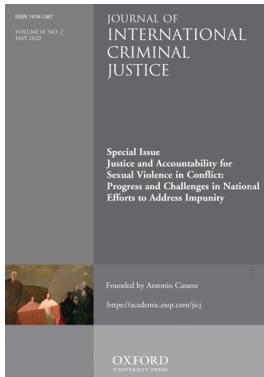
are women), including three from the SSPDF, five from SPLA-IO, two from the Ministry of Defence and Veterans’ Affairs, and one from the South Sudan Opposition Alliance. The Team of Experts will continue to support the review and validation process going forward. The Team of Experts also supported UNMISS with the finalization of a CRSV training manual for SSPDF instructors that was endorsed by the Chief of Defense Force and the Minister of Defence and piloted during a training of 25 SSPDF instructors in October.



Team of Experts

JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE

SPECIAL ISSUE



In July, the Team of Experts and the Journal of International Criminal Justice published a Special Issue on **Justice and Accountability for Sexual Violence in Conflict: Progress and Challenges in National Efforts to Address Impunity**. The Team of Experts edited the volume which brings together 14 articles from leading practitioners and scholars on a range of settings on CRSV including: Argentina, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Central African Republic, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guatemala, Iraq, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, and Syria. Published by Oxford University Press, the Table of Contents of the Special Issue is located here: <https://academic.oup.com/jicj/issue>.

DIGITAL DIALOGUE SERIES

Following the launch of the Special Issue of the Journal of International Criminal Justice on national accountability for sexual violence in conflict, the Team of Experts held four sessions of the [Digital Dialogue Series](#). Each session brought together contributing authors to the Special Issue, academics, and experts to discuss various topics in the articles. The first session, held on 21 July, launched the series and featured Ms. Pramila Patten (SRSG on Sexual Violence in Conflict) and Ms. Margot Wallström (former Foreign Minister of Sweden and former SRSG on Sexual Violence in Conflict). A total of 491 people attended the live event on Zoom and the recording has been viewed 194 times on Vimeo. The second session, on 29 September, explored prosecution and investigation of serious crimes in Latin America, with a focus on Colombia and Guatemala. A total of 508 people registered to attend the live event, and since then, the video recording on YouTube has been watched 1,175 times. The third session, on 27 October, concerned the impact of sexual violence committed in the context of terrorism and was moderated by Ms. Fionnuala Ní Aoláin, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism. A total of 659 people registered to attend the live event and more than 200 watched the Zoom webinar live. The fourth and most recent session, held on 17 November, focused on national accountability for CRSV in the Central African Republic and featured officials from the Special Criminal Court as well as the Ministry of Justice. A total of 250 people watched the event live on Zoom and YouTube. In total the Digital Dialogue Series has reached over 2,500 viewers and has helped highlight the progress and challenges in addressing CRSV at the national level. The recordings may be viewed using the links below.

The poster for the first Digital Dialogue Series session on 21 July 2020 at 11:00. The title is "The Digital Dialogue Series" and the topic is "Justice and Accountability for Sexual Violence in Conflicts: Progress and Challenges in Efforts to Address Impunity in National Jurisdictions". It features a panel of speakers: Ms. Pramila Patten (Under-Secretary-General and Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict), Ms. Margot Wallström (Former Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict), and Mr. Guido Acquaviva (Deputy Registrar of the Bureau, Special Chamber, Journal of International Criminal Justice). The moderator is Ms. Fionnuala Ní Aoláin (Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism). Other speakers include Ms. Kim Thuy Seelinger (Director of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights), Ms. Karen Nalmer (Director of Programs, Physicians for Human Rights), and Mr. Daniele Perissi (Head of the Great Lakes Program, UN Women).

Session 1: <https://vimeo.com/442124066>

Session 3: <https://youtu.be/RvORgoh7odk>

Session 2: <https://youtu.be/f5gJq4eEhml>

Session 4: <https://youtu.be/EchKyElyLjc>

MODEL LEGISLATIVE PROVISIONS

AND ASSOCIATED GUIDANCE ON CRSV

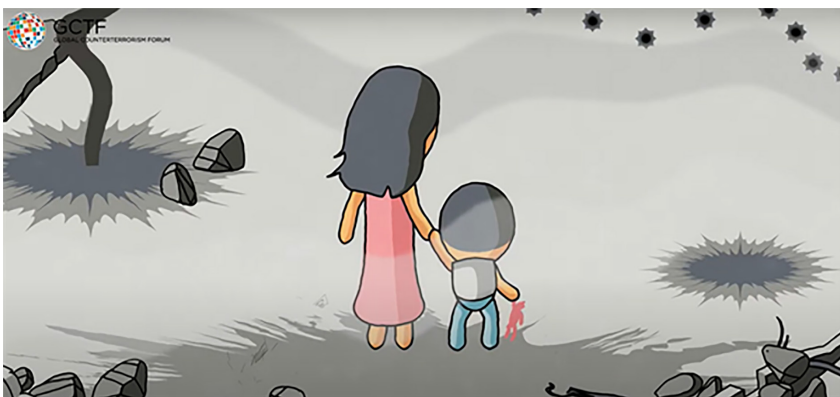
To meet the request of Member States and regional organizations, the Office of the SRSG-SVC, with input from the Team of Experts, developed model legislative provisions and guidance to be used as a basis for survivor-sensitive legal reform of CRSV as a serious international crime. The document has now been shared with the Global Focal Point for Rule of Law and the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women its Causes and Consequences. Subsequent to any feedback received, the Team of Experts will assist with the ultimate publication of the document in conjunction with the Office of the SRSG-SVC.

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT, BUSINESS CONTINUITY, AND BEST PRACTICES/LESSONS LEARNED STRATEGY

Following the Team of Experts last retreat and in line with its previous reviews, the Team has been developing a comprehensive strategy to ensure that it is holistically and comprehensively documenting its work and ensuring the continuity of the Team's functions. Building on this work, the Team aims to have a knowledge management system in place that ensures the Team at both headquarters and project levels can continue functioning

in adverse circumstances and that decisions, positive results and drawbacks, are chronicled from the past decade in every area of operations where the Team has worked. Although the initial aim of these products is for internal use only, the Team could then use these documents for public purposes by publishing best practices/lessons learned documents for a public audience of practitioners.

TERRORISM AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT



responses to the linkages between terrorism, and international crimes, including trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants. On 10 December, the Team of Experts participated in a discussion on Sexual Terrorism hosted by the T.M.C. Asser Institute, focusing on the definition and judicial response to this form of criminality.

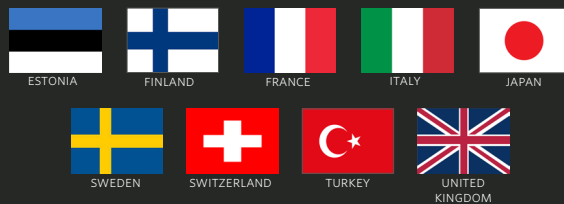
Under the auspices of the Criminal Justice and Rule of Law (CJ-ROL) Working Group of the Global Compact Terrorism Forum, the Team of Experts participated in the Expert Meeting on Criminal Justice Approaches to the Linkages between Terrorism and Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling discussing the Prosecutorial challenges regarding the linkages between terrorism and sexual violence in conflict. The initiative expects to develop a Framework Document on criminal justice

RESOURCES

The Security Council mandated in resolution 1888 (2009) that the Team of Experts 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 Experts welcomes contributions from Member States, private philanthropic foundations and individuals to its five-year joint programme.

The Team Experts greatly appreciates the generous contributions provided to its current joint programme by Estonia, Finland, France, Italy, Japan, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, and the United Kingdom.



The Team constantly seeks to broaden its partnership and support basis. For further information on the Team's activities, please see the 2018 annual report at <https://cutt.ly/MyxVpqb>

To contribute to the work of the Team of Experts, contact directly the Team Leader, Ms. Chloe Marnay-Baszanger marnay-baszanger@un.org and toesvc@un.org

Please follow the Team on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram
[@endrapeinwar](https://twitter.com/endrapeinwar)