

Guiding Principles Addressing and Preventing Sexual Violence amounting to International Crimes: War Crimes, Crimes Against Humanity, Genocide

[SHORT NAME: Guiding Principles on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence/Guiding Principles on CRSV]

"The wrongs which we seek to condemn and punish have been so calculated, so malignant, and so devastating, that civilization cannot tolerate their being ignored, because it cannot survive their being repeated"

(Robert Jackson, US Chief Prosecutor, Opening Statement, Trial Against the Major Nazi War Criminals, International Military Tribunal, Nuremberg, 20 November 1945 – marking 80 years)



Preamble

Recognizing the grave and enduring impact of sexual violence in conflict, and acknowledging that despite international prohibitions, impunity remains the norm; Affirming that accountability to survivors, their families and communities, and to those who did not survive, is deserved, urgent, and possible under international principles and jurisprudence;

Recognizing that, in order to effectively address and prevent sexual violence amounting to core international crimes—namely war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide—it is necessary that all stakeholders act proactively and in concert, united around shared values, to effectively prohibit and prevent such crimes within their jurisdictions, military ranks, and corporate human rights due diligence frameworks; and to act constructively to implement victims’ rights before, during, and in the long term where such crimes are committed;

Dedicated to the courage of survivors and victims, preserving with respect their integrity, humanity, and choices;



Building on the legacies of Professor Catharine A. MacKinnon in Bosnia, Herzegovina and Croatia; Dr. Denis Mukwege in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and for victims worldwide; and Nadia Murad for the Yazidi community and for all those who seek to ensure that no person endures similar atrocities anywhere on Earth—whose longstanding efforts have paved and continue to advance justice for survivors;

Acknowledging all advocates and organizations who have fought and continue to fight tirelessly against impunity for perpetrators and accessories—through advocacy, policy, direct victim representation, investigation, prosecution, fair adjudication, and protection and service to survivors and victims;

Hereby commit, and invite others to commit, to the Guiding Principles on Addressing and Preventing Sexual Violence amounting to International Crimes (“Guiding Principles on CRSV”), and to engage in an inclusive judicial and policy dialogue aimed at their effective implementation within respective jurisdictions and institutions—whether through *National Action Plans (NAPs); in military and militia ranks and corporate entities, through codes of conduct, monitoring, and training; or within communities, through education, resilience, and support for victims’ rights and for the prevention of such crimes;*



All along the lines of the Guiding Principles on CRSV set out below, divided into three pillars: **Pillar I – State Obligations**, to aspire to making effective and improving existing legislation, enforcement, and victim protection mechanisms; **Pillar II – Non-State Actors** (armed and corporate), to implement; and **Pillar III – Victims’ Rights**, to uphold. These follow the model of the *United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights* and other bottom-up, civil-society-led initiatives that have informed the drafting of international treaties, National Action Plans, domestic legislation, enforcement mechanisms, and codes of conduct—including within non-state armed groups—and other instruments.

The Guiding Principles on CRSV also draw on *emergency-response models*, recognizing that such crimes often, though not exclusively, occur in situations of mass atrocity and complex emergencies. Accordingly, each of the three pillars is structured around the phases of **Preparedness and Prevention, Response, and Aftermath or Long-Term Impact**, to ensure comprehensive, coordinated, and sustained implementation.

Pillar I: Obligations of States

- 1.1. States shall effectively criminalize, prevent, investigate, and prosecute sexual violence in conflict, toward deterring its repetition and preventing its reoccurrence, in line with their obligations under international law.

1.1.1. THIS INCLUDES RECOGNITION OF AND RESPONSE TO NEW AND EVOLVING FORMS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE, SUCH AS *SEXUAL VIOLENCE DISSEMINATED in the DIGITAL SPACE*, ENSURING THAT DIGITAL



- INVESTIGATIONS ARE RESOURCED AND EVIDENCE COLLECTED IS ADMISSIBLE IN NATIONAL JURISDICTIONS IN LINE WITH DUE PROCESS.
- 1.2. States shall refrain from committing, directly and by proxies, sexual violence amounting to international crimes.
 - 1.3. States shall aim to apply a multilayered approach, including preparedness and prevention; response; and aftermath and monitoring commitments, to ensure an optimal chance of reaching the goals of the Guiding Principles to address and prevent sexual violence amounting to international crimes.
 - 1.4. Preparedness and Prevention**
 - 1.4.1. Ratify and implement relevant international treaties, including the Istanbul Convention and the Ljubljana Mutual Legal Assistance (MLA) Treaty on International Crimes.
 - 1.4.2. Enact domestic laws to criminalize sexual violence in conflict and sexual crimes as defined under the ICC Rome Statute.
 - 1.4.3. Train First Responders and investigators to collect and preserve evidence of sexual violence, consistent with their own safety
 - 1.4.3.1. FIRST RESPONDERS SHOULD INCLUDE: FIRST RESPONDERS IN EMERGENCIES, INCLUDING MEDICAL, SECURITY AND RELIEF, AND IN ANY CASE, POLICE, MILITARY, PEACEKEEPERS, PROSECUTORS, JUDGES, HEALTH WORKERS, HUMANITARIAN STAFF, CORPORATE SECURITY, COMPLIANCE, JOURNALISTS, AND COMMUNITY LEADERS.
 - 1.4.4. TRAINING SHALL INCLUDE RECOGNITION OF *INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA*, *AN INTERSECTIONAL APPROACH* AND SPECIFIC VULNERABILITIES OF CHILDREN BORN OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE.



- 1.4.5. Integrate prevention into military codes, training, and national action plans that include monitoring mechanisms, possibly implemented through a National Ombudsman on Human Rights.

1.5. Response

- 1.5.1. Investigate and prosecute perpetrators, accomplices, and anyone bearing criminal responsibility, in line with the highest international criminal law standards, including the obligation of reparations.
- 1.5.2. Ensure judicial cooperation including through MLA, and organisations such as Europol, Interpol, and the Eurojust Genocide Network.
- 1.5.3. Train first responders to collect and preserve evidence of sexual violence, consistent with their safety.
 - 1.5.3.1. JUDICIAL AND INVESTIGATIVE AUTHORITIES SHALL BALANCE A *BELIEVE-THE-VICTIM* STANDARD WITH RIGOROUS, ANALYTICAL TRUTH-FINDING, ENSURING CREDIBILITY IS ASSESSED WITHOUT STIGMA OR RETRAUMATIZATION.
 - 1.5.3.2. Judicial and Investigative authorities should also be trained to help them recognize the specific evidentiary challenges these crimes present, while avoiding biases that lead to the application of disproportionately strict standards.

1.6. Aftermath and Monitoring

- 1.6.1. Provide survivor-centered reparations, community and family repair, psychosocial support, and long-term reintegration programs.
 - 1.6.1.1. REPARATIONS SHALL RECOGNIZE AND ADDRESS *INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA*, AND ENSURE TAILORED SUPPORT FOR *CHILDREN BORN OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE*.



- 1.6.1.2. REPARATIONS RELATED TO CHILDREN SEXUAL VIOLENCE WILL INCLUDE REPARATION ELIGIBILITY FOR CHILDREN AND CAREGIVERS, CONFIDENTIAL PROCEDURES.
- 1.6.1.3. FAMILY REPAIR SHALL INCLUDE PRESERVING FAMILY UNITY IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD, AVOIDING FORCED SEPARATIONS, AND PROVIDING TRAUMA-INFORMED SUPPORT TO CHILDREN BORN OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE, THROUGH ADOLESCENCE.
- 1.6.2. Non-discrimination and status for children born of CRSV: States shall provide automatic birth registration and nationality; access to education and health; protection from stigma, to children born of CRSV.
- 1.6.3. Consider building judicial alliances with like-minded states or international organisations to enhance State capacity to investigate and prosecute sexual violence committed as international crimes, and assist in meeting their commitments to ending impunity and victim-centered justice, and aspirations under this Charter.
- 1.6.4. Assist other states to end impunity for sexual violence as international crime and for victim, survivor and community justice, by sharing their knowledge and any other resource agreed between states, in accordance with international law.
- 1.6.5. Establish long-term monitoring and peer review mechanisms.

Pillar II: Obligations of Non-State Actors

Section A: Corporations

Corporate entities, across all sectors including finance, investment, extractives, digital platforms, and private security, as examples, and throughout all their supply chain, shall:



A.1. Refrain from committing, aiding and abetting, or contributing to sexual violence amounting to international crimes in any way

A.2. Act lawfully at all times according to the national laws in which they are based, act, or

partner with or have any staff, including volunteers and contractors, as consistent with international law;

A.3. Apply a multilayered approach, including preparedness and prevention; response; and aftermath and monitoring commitments, to ensure an optimal chance of reaching the goals of this Charter to address and prevent sexual violence amounting to international crimes.

A.4. Preparedness and Prevention

A.4.1. Conduct due diligence to ensure non-complicity in sexual violence in conflict and nonparticipation in creating conditions for such sexual violence.

A.4.2. Adopt zero-tolerance policies on complicity in sexual violence.

A.4.3. DIGITAL PLATFORMS SHALL ADOPT SAFEGUARDS AGAINST *DIGITAL SEXUAL VIOLENCE*, INCLUDING REMOVAL OF HARMFUL CONTENT, PROTECTION OF VICTIM IDENTITIES, AND RESPONSIBLE COOPERATION WITH JUDICIAL AUTHORITIES.

A.5. Response

A.5.1. Respond to, and remediate gross human rights abuses of a sexual nature in line with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

A.3.2. Proactively support accountability and cooperate with lawful investigations, including sharing records responsibly.

A.3.3. Support emergency survivor services and response networks.



A.4. Aftermath and Monitoring

A.4.1. Invest in survivor rehabilitation, education, and livelihoods; and contribute to accountability mechanisms and survivor-led initiatives.

A.4.2. Proactively support accountability, education, survivor rehabilitation, and long-term impact programs under a ‘profit 4 humanity’ rationale.

A.4.3. Adapt monitoring and reporting mechanisms to include preventing and addressing sexual violence amounting to international crimes.

Section B: Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs)

NSAGs, including any non-state armed groups/militia/terrorist group and private military contractors (PMCs), shall:

B.1. Refrain from committing sexual violence as a weapon or tactic of war or internal to the group, or commit any form of sexual violence recognized as an international crime.

B.2. Recognize that sexual violence, including rape, forced marriage or pregnancy, abduction of women and girls as a tactic in war, and other forms of sexual violence can constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity, and acts of genocide, as well as gross human rights violations;

B.3. Preparedness and Prevention

B.3.1. Publicly and internally renounce sexual violence as a tactic of war.

B.3.2. Institute Codes of Conduct within the group explicitly prohibiting, sanctioning and installing monitoring and accountability mechanisms against sexual violence as international crimes;

B.3.3. Insert prohibition of sexual violence as an international crime in their training and chain of command rules or traditions;



B.3.4. Proactively abide by any legal framework applicable in the territory of their activity and of their nationalities that opposes sexual violence.

B.3.5. NSAGS SHALL RENOUNCE AND REFRAIN FROM PERPETRATING *DIGITAL SEXUAL VIOLENCE*, INCLUDING DISSEMINATION OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE IMAGERY, FORCED EXPOSURE, OR ONLINE HARASSMENT, RECOGNIZING SUCH ACTS AS INTERNATIONAL CRIMES.

B.4. Response

B.4.1. Cease ongoing acts of sexual violence and hold members accountable.

B.4.2. Facilitate accountability for perpetrators of sexual crimes through cooperation with international and domestic mechanisms;

B.4. Aftermath and Monitoring

B.4.1. Commit to disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programs addressing survivors' needs.

B.4.2. Engage in transitional justice and reparations processes.

B.4.3. Apply periodic education, training, and monitoring sessions with the members of the group.

B.4.4. REINTEGRATION PROGRAMS SHALL ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF *CHILDREN BORN OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE* AND MITIGATE *INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA* THROUGH PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT AND EDUCATION.

Pillar III: Rights of Victims and Survivors

Victims and survivors of sexual violence in conflict have the right to:

3.1. Prevention

3.1.1. Right to protection from threats, intimidation, and retaliation.



3.1.2. Right to be informed of risks and preventive measures.

3.2. Response

3.2.1. Right to emergency medical, psychosocial, and legal services.

3.3. The right to Truth: including:

3.3.1. the right to *know the truth*, including by:

3.3.1.1. receiving full information from State authorities and nonstate groups relating to the harms they suffered and the individual and organizational identity of perpetrators.

3.3.1.2. They have the right to know before the public is informed of their injuries.

3.3.1.3. Any information published must take account of victim's permission, dignity, and privacy- or of the victim is not able to provide permission- that of the victim's family; and,

3.3.3. the *right for the truth* of what was done to them *to be recognized*.

3.3.4. Victims have the right to digital dignity, including protection from *digital sexual violence* and erasure of unauthorized images, recordings, or online traces related to their victimization.

3.4. **The right to Justice:** participation in judicial processes and respect for their dignity, protection of their identity if requested, and realistic measures to safeguard their safety and that of their families. Special provisions and support should be implemented taking into account social realities, so as to ensure inclusive participation of vulnerable groups, and especially of women.

3.5. Aftermath and Long-Term Impact

3.5.1. **The right to Reparation:** including restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction, **and guarantees of non-repetition**, together with related such support for their communities.

3.5.2. Long-term support: access to education, livelihoods, and social reintegration.



- 3.5.3. Recognition of the effects of trauma, post-trauma, and intergenerational trauma as well as stigma and contextual inequalities on survivors and their credibility to be countered by authorities, including through experts.
- 3.5.4. Recognition of the effects of trauma shall explicitly include *intergenerational trauma* and stigma experienced by children born of sexual violence.
- 3.5.5. **The right to cease being a victim**, be able to choose the course of her future, the right to have any digital trace of record of the harm the victim suffered, erased.

Commitment of Signatories and Partners

All signatories and partners commit to **engaging constructively, and in a spirit of solidarity**, with relevant stakeholders **to promote and enhance** the effective implementation of these Guiding Principles and their practical development.

They engage not for the purpose of attributing blame, but to apply a forward-looking, multidisciplinary, and inclusive approach—centered on victims’ rights as a moral and legal compass, and grounded in existing international law—to address, prevent, and eradicate sexual violence amounting to international crimes, including war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide.

Signatories and partners shall use their power and influence to mobilize their respective internal and external networks to promote progress under the Guiding Principles on CRSV. This includes engagement with United Nations and regional mechanisms and procedures; States; non-State armed groups (NSAGs); private military and security companies; civil society and non-governmental organizations; international, global, and domestic justice entities—such as judges, prosecutors, investigators, and victim legal representatives; communities; regional, local, and traditional leaders; as well as individuals, victims, and survivors.

Such engagement also extends to actors relevant in both peacetime and armed conflict, working across disciplines including armed conflict and humanitarian law, law



enforcement, counter-terrorism, first response and disaster management, human trafficking, women's and children's rights, the digital sphere and advanced technologies, business and human rights, transitional justice, education, policy, justice and accountability, fact-finding and investigations, and other related fields.

Monitoring shall be carried out through survivor-led oversight, peer review, and civil-society participation. Accountability requires consolidated efforts by States, corporations, non-State armed groups, and international organizations.

Signatories and partners will work collaboratively to identify achievements, gaps, and challenges, and to focus on priority themes requiring targeted attention within their respective jurisdictions and communities, regionally and internationally. These include, as an example: *Sexual violence committed by non-State armed groups; Corporate responsibility, due diligence, and redress for CRSV; Digital and technology-facilitated sexual violence, and digital investigations; Balancing victim-centred evidentiary approaches with the need to establish truth through rigorous analysis; Judicial cooperation and accountability; Children born of sexual violence; Training and support for first responders; and Intergenerational trauma caused by sexual violence in conflict.*

All stakeholders shall cooperate to ensure accountability, prevention, protection, and redress for victims of conflict-related sexual violence.

Signature

Signed at Paris, on 10 November 2025

October 7 Justice Without Borders (07J) in partnership with We are Not Weapons of War (WWOW),

Lead Author, Att. Yael Vias Gvirsman, recognizing the contribution of Ms Agathe Sarfati, Consultant for 07J, lead author of UN CTED November 2023 report on Counter-terrorism



and SGBV; and valuable inputs from Ms. Paula Silva (Colombia), Celine Bardet (France), additional partners and anonymous contributors, experts in their field.

Launched in Paris, 10 November 2025, in an International Conference organized in partnership between MK Shelli Tal Mairone, founder Global Coalition of Women Against Sexual Violence in Conflict and ELNET.

Projected inclusive, multi-stakeholder dialogue(s) divided to geographic and thematic working groups will take place remotely or in-person.