

# **WOMEN & WAR**

## *Women & Armed Conflicts and the issue of Sexual Violence*

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### **REPORT**

*Colloquium ICRC – EUISS, 30 September 2014*



This report derives from a colloquium on the theme of “Women and Armed Conflicts and the Issue of Sexual Violence” organized jointly by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS) which took place on 30 September 2014 in Brussels.

The proceedings of this colloquium have been written by the speakers or by the Delegation of the ICRC in Brussels on the basis of audio recordings of the colloquium. The opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the EUISS nor the ICRC.

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# INTRODUCTION

Armed conflicts affect women and men differently. Although women are not inherently vulnerable, they frequently face heightened danger in these situations of violence, including the increased risk of sexual violence. Security concerns, the destruction of infrastructure and separation from male relatives can drastically affect women's socio-economic condition and personal safety.

Furthermore, women do not belong to a homogeneous group: depending on the cultural and social context of their country, their religious identities and other factors related to their personal circumstances such as age, level of education and marital status, women will have different needs and vulnerabilities and will be able to deploy different coping mechanisms and display varying levels of resilience. Understanding and taking these specificities into proper consideration, and incorporating them in the design of humanitarian activities, are essential steps when working to respond to their needs and strengthening their abilities in a sustainable manner.

Based on their capacity for resilience, women can also be important actors in conflict and post-conflict situations for their families and communities. Women often play key roles in rebuilding communities and facilitating political and social reconciliation. This is why the role of women in peacebuilding and reconstruction processes is important for the international community to consider.

The issues surrounding women in armed conflict, as well as the specific issue of sexual violence in armed conflict, pose numerous challenges to policy makers and humanitarian actors. In order to properly address them, these challenges require further in-depth analyses that enable the development of more effective and systematic approaches.

# OPENING

## *Introductory remarks*

**Dr Antonio Missiroli**, *Director of the EUISS*

Ladies and Gentlemen, your Excellencies, dear friends and colleagues,

First of all, I would like to welcome you to this amazing venue for the conference on women and armed conflicts that the European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) jointly organize today.

Our institute and the International Committee of the Red Cross now have a record of organising joint events aimed at raising awareness and providing food for thought about issues of global relevance. Women and war is definitely one. News reports from all over the world remind us on a daily basis of the recurrent violent acts and unspeakable atrocities committed against women in conflict situations. Conflicts evolve all the time and change in nature and scope, but some features remain constant and women are part of these recurrent features: as civilian victims in conflicts that are now increasingly embedded in local communities, and as sexual victims through a whole set of appalling practices.

Is it right that the conference on women and war be opened by men? Obviously yes. Whether a lion, a blackbird or a human, it is in the male DNA to be territorial, and the first victims for the search of power or the imposition of an ideology are women and children.

We are here to talk about women as hostages, women as prey, women as trophies, women as blackmail, women as weapons, women paying the ultimate price of conflicts. I hope we will also talk about women as farmers, healthcare workers, mediators and reconciliators. In other words, women as a solution to help rebuild collapsed societies.

Gathered here today are policy makers and people with experience in conflict zones, officials and humanitarian workers. We will all listen to what they have to tell us and take note, in the hope of making progress.

Our co-organizers, the International Committee of the Red Cross, need no introduction. We are all familiar with their Red Cross flag fluttering over every combat zone and every disaster area across the world. I will, however, introduce you to their representative here in Brussels, although most of you know him and his competence and dynamism: François Bellon.



**Mr François Bellon**, *Head of the ICRC Delegation to the EU, NATO and the Kingdom of Belgium*

*Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests,*

It is my pleasure to welcome you for this one-day colloquium, jointly organized with the EUISS.

For the past fourteen years, the International Committee of the Red Cross delegation in Brussels has been facilitating seminars and colloquia on different topics related to international humanitarian law. Notably, every year since 2000 the International Committee of the Red Cross has been organizing with the College of Europe a highly specialized colloquium that discusses a specific legal theme (the 2014 October colloquium will for instance examine the question of detention in armed conflict). Eager however to enlarge the debate beyond strictly legal issues, the International Committee of the Red Cross Delegation in Brussels decided four years ago to also hold debates on thematic humanitarian issues and, to reflect its high-level dialogue with the European Union, the International Committee of the Red Cross approached the EUISS.

Both agreed to organize in June 2010 in Paris a first colloquium dedicated to “Current challenges to humanitarian action in conflict situations”, then pursue the cooperation with a second colloquium in January 2012 in Brussels dedicated to “Urban violence and humanitarian challenges”, and a third one today on “Women and war”.

Three topics will be discussed: the protection of women in armed conflicts, sexual violence in armed conflicts, and the role of women in peacebuilding processes. Although not inherently vulnerable, women frequently face heightened danger in situations of war, including the increased risk of sexual violence. As these questions surrounding women in armed conflict pose numerous challenges to policy makers and humanitarian actors, they require further in-depth analysis in order to develop more effective and systematic approaches.

As a leading humanitarian organisation, the International Committee of the Red Cross is committed to triggering and leading the humanitarian discussion and determined not to lag or react afterwards. It is therefore important to map specific humanitarian dynamics in order to shape the debate towards new horizons. This is the purpose of holding today this colloquium on such sensitive matters.

We need to think ‘out of the box’, and learn from other expert communities, to ensure that the existing knowledge and experience at our disposal can be used by us all to tackle potential violations and crimes, and prevent them. I am convinced that this colloquium can help develop more in-depth thinking and concrete follow-up on the issues surrounding women in armed conflicts, and invite you to actively participate.

I look forward to hearing the presentations and discussions, and wish us all a very fruitful colloquium.

Thank you.

## Keynote Addresses

**Ms Helga Schmid**, Deputy Secretary General of the European External Action Service (EEAS)

A report released by Human Rights Watch (HRW) on 8 September 2014 accuses soldiers from the African Union (AU) peace keeping mission in Somalia (AMISOM) of having raped, sexually abused and exploited Somali women and girls on their bases in Mogadishu.

Despite the adoption of a policy by AMISOM on the prevention and response to sexual exploitation, the report also argues that in practice, only one case, in which the victim was a child, has been brought before a military court.

*Why do I start with this example? We are here today with humanitarian actors, policy makers, NGOs and academics. We each have our own responsibility and tools to address the scourge of sexual violence. While respecting these roles, we also need to approach this from a common perspective and shared values.*

This is particularly relevant in the context of Somalia where the victims of sexual abuse, vulnerable IDP women and girls, were looking for assistance from the soldiers. The crimes described in HRW report must never go unpunished and fighting impunity is a joint priority for all of us.

*The European Union is now the biggest donor in Somalia and funding AMISOM through the African Peacekeeping Facility. We also have a training mission on the ground, EUTM Somalia that since 2010, has contributed to the training of approximately 5000 Somali soldiers. We are actively working together with the AU to ensure that these crimes are not repeated. The Chairperson of the AU Commission, Dr Dlamini Zuma has given her public assurance that a full investigation will be undertaken and that the AU in all its missions needs to adhere to the highest standards.*

We need to pursue vigorously the fight against sexual violence, including in conflict situations. That is why the European Union has supported initiatives in several fora. In the G8, the Declaration on Preventing Sexual Violence adopted in April 2013 by Foreign Ministers and the High Representative underscored the need to tackle impunity for such crimes - including through effective investigation and documentation - and to offer support and rehabilitation to victims. I supported the UK in underlining the need for this priority to be taken forward in subsequent G8/7 presidencies, including at the meeting of G8 Political Directors in Moscow last November. The United Nations, too, has brought attention to bear on the issue, most recently during the UNGA Ministerial Week when Secretary of State Kerry hosted a "Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in emergencies" in which the European External Action Service (EEAS) participated.

*As a longstanding strong partner in the fight against sexual violence in conflict, the European Union works with individual countries, the United Nations, the AU, and others to bring about change: we support systematic inclusion of the prevention of sexual violence in every United Nations peacekeeping mandate, our support to the International Criminal Court (ICC) is crucial as is, for instance, the European Union's support behind the Arms Trade Treaty and has specific provisions on gender. We also fund activities to support victims and to prevent further crimes at national, regional and international level. My colleagues from the Commission will no doubt speak about those later.*

Our practical work is based on *three pillars*:

1. secure universal recognition and end impunity
2. secure access to justice, accountability and redress
3. secure participation of women in mediation, conflict prevention and peace building. I will leave it to my EEAS colleagues Joelle Jenny and Stephan Auer to expand in today's panel discussions.

*It is also part of our everyday work*: you know we have many instruments at our disposal. We regularly meet with representatives of women's organisations, here in Brussels (e.g. Women leaders Sahel 2013) and when travelling. I could share many examples from my trips to Azerbaijan, Iran, Egypt, Pakistan and elsewhere. We raise human rights in political dialogues - because, let's remember, that sexual violence is a human rights issue and it is not a women's issue; delegations have human rights focal points; we are also conscious of the fact that we need to set the example: we have reinforced women leadership at the European Union over the past years, even if we still have a long way to go.

I am convinced that all States, especially those undergoing political transitions, should take proactive measures to address the factors preventing women from participating in politics. Women are also powerful agents for peace but a true challenge remains the inclusion of women at negotiating tables.

No country has achieved full gender equality, but there are lessons we can share. The European Union stands ready to support women's participation in political and social processes. Women in decision-making positions, either in the public or private sector, should become the norm rather than singular exceptions.

*Now, in relation to peacekeeping, we first started our efforts to mainstream International Humanitarian Law, Human Rights and gender throughout our foreign policy and Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) in the same year we deployed our first missions - to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (Bunia) and Bosnia and Herzegovina - namely in 2003. I am glad to report that, more than a decade later, we have made considerable progress: most of our missions and operations now have a human rights and/or gender advisor or trainer as part of their team, and - depending on the mandate - include in their curricula Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law. In some cases, these modules are outsourced, for instance to the United Nations. We are grateful to the International Committee of the Red Cross for sometimes briefing our outgoing Heads of Missions and their core teams.*

Since 2006, the European Union has a policy in place for mainstreaming Human Rights and gender into CSDP and last year's Crisis Management Procedures reconfirm the necessity to mainstream Human Rights into the planning and review of CSDP missions and operations. We have also started to address pre-deployment training requirements in this field with our Member States and are updating our generic standards of behaviour which include disciplinary measures.

The European Union is also very active in *peace building, conflict prevention and mediation* - also here, we need to continuously look for specific ways in which we can ensure a practical impact for women. Peace agreements need to be inclusive to be sustainable. Too often, they are not, and the international community tends to leave too quickly to monitor implementation if they are. Another important topical question to address is the role of women in the violent radicalisation of Islam - both as subjects and as actors. How can we reach out to them and make them agents of positive change?

*Let me try and come to a close.* Most of my days, I spend in rooms filled with men, so normally I rejoice when, on a day like this, I see a majority of women. Now regrettably, that only tends to be the case when the discussion centres on what is perceived as a women's issue. Sexual violence is clearly not a women's issue, if it is anything, it is a male issue, but it is an issue we need to address together. As the retired Major General Patrick Cammaert - today one of the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations' (DPKO) most prominent trainers of peacekeepers, famously said [at Wilton Park in 2008]: "it is perhaps more dangerous to be a woman than a soldier in armed conflict". Sadly, it still has more force when a man raises these issues, than when a woman raises them. If there is one outcome of today's seminar that I would hope for, it would be that it will spark more champions to address the scourge of sexual violence and to find what ever way is in their power to address it.

These are some of my own reflections on today's topic Women and war and why I think this conference and the work that you are carrying out is so important to highlight and advance further. I would like to thank the International Committee of the Red Cross, Peter Maurer and his staff, and the EUISS, Antonio Missiroli and his team, for providing us the opportunity to address this issue together.

**Mr Peter Maurer, President of the ICRC**

Ladies and Gentlemen, dear colleagues, dear friends,

Let me start by saying how much I appreciate being here today. I would like to thank Dr Antonio Missiroli and François Bellon - and their teams - for having made this colloquium possible.

I like coming to Brussels because we have a unique combination of actors present here - organisations and individuals, experts and policy makers.

Without collaboration, cooperation, and exchange with our partners in and around the humanitarian field - what would our work be? It hasn't always been obvious for everyone - and I would have to include the International Committee of the Red Cross here - to engage in such exchange, partnership and cooperation.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our European friends for continued and growing strong cooperation. Especially DG ECHO, but also the EEAS, and the European Union as a whole are important partners for the International Committee of the Red Cross. Let me also mention my gratitude to Belgium, our host country today, and a valued member of the Donor Support Group and its present chair.

We are here today to talk about *women and war*.

Three important perspectives will be at the core of the debates during the day: the protection of women in armed conflict, the issue of sexual violence in armed conflict; and the role of women in peacebuilding.

I hope that by the end of the day, we have a clearer view on the dimensions of these three issues and possibilities to step up our response.

Let me just make a few more general comments at the outset on vulnerabilities and opportunities; on vulnerabilities and protection through the law; and on assistance and protection in practice.

*Regarding vulnerabilities and opportunities:* women are more vulnerable than men. For centuries, in every major catastrophe the first order would be: save the women and children first. But are women really more vulnerable than men? Are they weaker? Are they less resilient?

Without wanting to break into a feminist lecture: certainly not. Women are not more vulnerable than men. They have over centuries, been made more vulnerable. But women are made vulnerable or weaker, first and foremost by *the conditions that are imposed on them, not by their sex*.

*Armed conflict changes conditions*, for all the people it touches. Women in particular may be made more vulnerable to abuse and sexual violence. We will hear more about the issue of sexual violence in this afternoon's roundtable. But it seems already obvious to me that the depth and breadth of today's conflicts and its increasingly de-structured forms of violence represent a particular concern today.

But the conditions of *armed conflict turn women into many more things*. It can make women become not only victims of, but actors within the armed conflict: As bystanders, as witnesses, but also as combatants or peace activists, as humanitarians and of course as actors influencing their families and communities.

During armed conflict, women often have to shoulder the extra burden of being a single parent, with husbands gone missing, into hiding, in detention or off fighting. This means providing - alone - the family's income, deciding - alone - about the children's education. Often, it also means being in charge - alone - of guaranteeing safety for the family, or taking the decision to leave home to seek safety elsewhere.

But greater responsibility does not always result in greater vulnerability. *War, armed conflict, those changing conditions can also lead to opportunities*. Women have seized the opportunity of transformation - and even transformation through conflict - to emancipate themselves across centuries. In the US and the UK, women obtained voting rights as a direct result of their efforts during the First World War.

When the men who traditionally hold economic power are gone - off fighting, detained, killed or in hiding - women may take over businesses and re-invent economic structures.

I am not pretending that wars bring advantages. But we have to acknowledge that women - especially women - have managed in the past and manage in many places today to turn the reality of conflict into an opportunity for improvement of livelihoods. Transformation is both the cause and consequence of women seizing those opportunities. And by seizing those opportunities, women often change societal, cultural, political or economic structures fundamentally, beyond the end of the conflict or war.

Humanitarian organisations, including the International Committee of the Red Cross, contribute to this. Two weeks ago I visited the Nizip refugee camps in Turkey, where prepaid cash cards are used to give people easier access to food and household items. The statistics and the experiences of humanitarian workers show that women manage those cash resources better - more responsibly - than men. So humanitarian organisations prefer to give cash assistance or cash cards to women.

This example illustrates how effective and efficient humanitarian action and innovative tools manage to transform challenges into opportunities.

My first conclusion therefore is that conditions of war make women vulnerable but can offer opportunities for positive change. Minimizing the risks and maximizing opportunities is therefore key.

*Regarding vulnerabilities and the law*: although women are not by definition of their gender vulnerable, armed conflict can - and often does - make them more vulnerable. Indirect victimization

that occurs during armed conflict puts women at greater risk for sexual violence, for economic exploitation, for forced labour, for displacement, detention and sometimes death.

After only two years in the job as ICRC President the examples are legion of women victims of conflict: with daughters and mothers raped in Central African Republic; with children wounded by mines and unexploded devices in Afghanistan; with those displaced multiple times in Bor or Malakal, South Sudan.

And yet international humanitarian law offers all the tools necessary to ensure that women's safety and dignity is maintained, even during armed conflict. It prohibits indiscriminate use of weapons; it protects civilians from violence and offers the basis for impartial and independent assistance.

The International Committee of the Red Cross, as the guardian of international humanitarian law, is present in more than 80 countries, many of them subject to different degrees of armed conflict. It engages with all High Contracting Parties to the Geneva Conventions and numerous armed groups for the respect of international humanitarian law.

The International Committee of the Red Cross is often the first humanitarian interlocutor for women who have been subjected to abuse, physical injury, rape and other forms of sexual violence. ICRC doctors, nurses and delegates across the world are being trained to respond to their specific requirements. Those can be social, psychosocial, medical, economic or protection-related.

The International Committee of the Red Cross also relentlessly reminds parties to the conflict of their obligations under international humanitarian law. We can respond and we can try to mitigate the effects, but ultimately, our goal is the prevention of sexual violence, of exploitation and aggression.

States have a particular responsibility in this regard. As High Contracting Parties to the Geneva Conventions, and as the political entities that ultimately have to respect International Humanitarian Law. We can and we do remind them of this responsibility, but we cannot relieve them of it.

With all the violence and violations of international humanitarian law we have witnessed in armed conflict, we need to step up our efforts to protect and assist - women in war in particular.

*Regarding assistance and protection in practice*, all ICRC operations are carried out in close collaboration with the women affected. In some cultures and communities, women may not traditionally speak out about their suffering, or they may be rejected from their communities or families if they tell their stories, especially when they involve sexual violence.

So the particular challenge for humanitarian workers is to first get to the bottom of things, to obtain a genuine assessment of risks and needs. Trust is a rare commodity in an environment of armed conflict. Yet ICRC delegates have to rely on the trust of women to tell their stories to be able to identify their needs.

The International Committee of the Red Cross addresses these needs in many different ways: material assistance, through food rations and household essentials like blankets, kitchen sets and hygiene kits can help during displacement or to prevent displacement.

Clean drinking water, primary and reproductive healthcare are part of the first public services that tend to become severely restricted or disappear altogether during armed conflict. The International Committee of the Red Cross also trains local nurses, doctors, and midwives, so that women can be treated effectively.

Victims of sexual violence require medical and psychological attention, but they also often need help to regain their ability to earn a living, to become full members of their communities again. Besides micro-economic initiatives for social and economic support, the International Committee of the Red Cross runs information campaigns to raise awareness about and break the taboo surrounding sexual violence. Raising awareness can translate directly into prevention of sexual violence, against women and girls, but also against men and boys.

The topic of today's colloquium is women and armed conflict. But we must not forget that in many instances men and boys are also victims of the same crimes as women and girls. Sexual violence in particular may be subject to even greater taboo when experienced by men and boys.

Protection, assistance, prevention. These are three cornerstones of the ICRC's work with women in armed conflict. But none of it is possible *without listening to them*. We all have to listen to the women, to hear their stories, to understand their needs and really address them. Proximity to victims and perpetrators, understanding the devastating dynamics of violence and designing specific programs to respond are crucial in mitigating the impact of violence.

*Risk reduction* is another fundamental part of the ICRC's work. By reducing the risks for women of falling victim to exploitation, injury and sexual violence, we reduce the numbers of victims in a conflict.

*Resilience* is a term often used in this context. Building and strengthening resilience, the ability to face challenges that arise within armed conflict, is an achievement.

But there is another form of resilience: the silent one. Women who have become victims of sexual violence, or psychological trauma do not always bear scars.

They are still victims, but their pain may go unnoticed. If we can help them overcome their injuries, their suffering, too often their shame for something they did not do - then we can instill resilience not only in those women but through them in their children, their families and communities, and rebuild some of the dignity they were robbed of.

During an armed conflict, *the perspective of time* is often very limited. Food, shelter, and safety are immediate needs. But there is no immediate solution for the long-term impact of armed conflict on communities, on the people affected by it.

We have to keep in mind that the needs we are addressing are the ones we can define in that moment. Beyond what we see and what we are told, the future may hold different needs.

Let me conclude by saying that we all know the essentials: there are many ways women can be made victims in times of armed conflict.

*No woman is a victim by definition, but by condition.*

We have to listen to these women, to go beyond the superficial, to address the real needs they have.

But we also have to learn from each other. Good practices, successful programmes, effective assistance - we have to exchange about those among all humanitarian actors to continue to improve what we do.

Thank you.

# SETTING THE SCENE ON WOMEN AND ARMED CONFLICTS

During the first session moderated by **Dr Antonio Missiroli**, *Director of the EUISS*, **Dr Florika Fink-Hooijer**, *Director for Strategy, Policy and International Cooperation at the European Commission's Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (DG ECHO)*; **Ms Pascale Meige Wagner**, *ICRC Deputy Director of Operations*; and **Ms Emma Bonino**, *Former Italian Foreign Minister*, gave introductory remarks in order to set the scene on the issue of woman and armed conflicts.

While recognizing the specific vulnerabilities of women and girls in conflict situations, **Dr Florika Fink-Hooijer** stressed that women and girls must not be seen only as victims of armed conflicts, but as agents of change and powerful peacebuilders.

Recalling the conflict in Rwanda during which mass rape was used as a tactic of war, Dr Florika Fink-Hooijer stressed that, unfortunately, and even in today's conflicts women's bodies continue to be used as a battleground. While peacemakers and politicians have increasingly focused on sexual violence committed in the context of armed conflict, many other forms of violence affect women and girls in disproportionate or different ways from men. Women and children form the majority of the millions of refugees and displaced people fleeing situations of conflict. Yet refugee camps are often planned and administered in such a way that women living there face discrimination and continued risk of sexual violence. The strains of camp life can also lead to increased domestic violence and frustration at being confined and not knowing what the future will hold. In refugee camps young girls are often forced into early marriages by their families as a way of coping with the lack of economic means.

Given that conflicts are not gender neutral as they have a different impact on women, girls, boys and men, Dr Florika Fink-Hooijer explained that DG ECHO, the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department, has developed a gender policy for humanitarian aid to improve the quality of humanitarian activities in this respect by systematically integrating a gender perspective into European Union humanitarian responses. The integration of a gender strategy is pursued by following a three-track approach: targeted actions, mainstreaming and capacity building. With regard to capacity building, Dr Fink-Hooijer explained that DG ECHO has been trying to address, for example, the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) by humanitarian and development workers by funding a global capacity building project led by the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The project aims to prevent SEA by aid workers by piloting inter-agency community-based complaints mechanisms. As regards targeted actions, Dr Florika Fink-Hooijer referred to DG ECHO's support to the Pangzi Hospital in the DRC as an example. The European Union also finances projects aimed at the protection and education of young women and girls in Syria. Finally, she noted that the European Union's intervention is now mainly focused on mainstreaming. The European Union has developed a "Gender Marker" in order to assess to what extent each humanitarian activity that they fund integrates gender considerations. It is a collaborative tool engaging women at the conceptual stage, monitoring stage and reporting stage.

DG ECHO works with the EEAS on the conceptual phase of European Union military training missions. In this regard, DG ECHO has suggested to include, as part of the training curriculum for



soldiers, a code of conduct to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse in conflict and post-conflict settings. It may not make by itself a big change but it is a stepping stone to greater protection for women during armed conflicts.

Dr Florika Fink-Hooijer concluded on a positive note, by saying that twenty years on from the genocide in Rwanda, during which half a million women were raped and deliberately targeted as a tactic of war and ethnic cleansing, 63% of parliamentary representatives in that country are women. Rwanda also has the highest number of female entrepreneurs all over Africa. This, she noted, can also be achieved in other conflict zones and is what we have to encourage and cater for.

**Ms Pascale Meige Wagner's** intervention focused on the types of problems women face in armed conflicts. She explained that while armed conflicts directly kill, injure and harm more men than women in that combatants are predominantly male, armed conflicts have many negative direct and indirect consequences on women. While men and boys can also suffer abuse, women and girls are the primary targets of sexual violence. In addition, increased insecurity and fear of attack often causes women and children to flee. Women and children consequently form the majority of the world's displaced and refugee populations. Finally, in conflict situations, many women must take on additional roles as sole heads of household providing for their families.

Ms Pascale Meige Wagner then dwelled on the challenges faced by the International Committee of the Red Cross in addressing the needs of women in armed conflicts. Firstly, addressing the needs of women requires having access to women and talking directly to them. Unfortunately, women are often the least accessible members of the resident or displaced community. In displaced or refugee camps, discussions are mainly held with the leaders nominated by the community which are generally men. When community representatives are women, they will not talk as women but as representatives of a community group. She gave the example of a refugee camp in Uganda, where male representatives explained that the main problems faced in the camp were the lack of economic support and food. When talking to the female representatives, they raised exactly the same issues. It is only when the International Committee of the Red Cross managed to sit down with the refugee women and talk directly to them, that they explained that their main problem was the lack of traditional sanitary pads, and that as a consequence they could not go out of their tents three days a month to get food and cook for the family. Secondly, giving the example of Yemen, Ms Pascale Meige Wagner explained that women generally speaking have much less access to health care than men. This, she explained, is partly due to the lack of female health staff in Yemen. As all orthopedic technicians are men, physically impaired women, such as women who have an amputation and are in need of prosthesis, will not go to the orthopedic services because they refuse to be touched by men. This is a huge challenge, she noted and the International Committee of the Red Cross has been trying for years to hire female staff and provide them with training outside of Yemen to become orthopedists or physiotherapists in its orthopedic centers.

Ms Pascale Meige Wagner concluded by pointing to the need to be proactive and always having to go the extra mile in order to understand where the obstacles are and what needs to be done to be able to respond to the needs of women in armed conflicts.

**Ms Emma Bonino** started by noting that while being primarily victims of armed conflicts, women are increasingly participating in war as combatants. She explained that the violence women suffer in conflict is an extreme manifestation of the discrimination and abuse women face in peacetime. Conflicts reinforce and exacerbate existing patterns of discrimination and gender-based violence, including rape, female genital mutilation, forced marriages and domestic violence.

She noted that over the last decade, progress has been made in recognizing the enormity of sexual crimes and their devastating effects on survivors. From the mid-1990's onwards, rape and other forms of sexual violence were increasingly recognized as among the most serious crimes under international law. The adoption of the Rome Statute of the ICC in 1998 underscored the gravity of rape and other crimes of sexual violence. However, the issue of violence against women in conflicts is a complex issue which needs a complex reaction.

Ms Emma Bonino underlined the importance of documentation and accountability, stressing that collecting reliable figures and documentation of violence against women in conflicts is an extremely important tool for accountability and redress. She also stressed the vital importance of including women in peace processes and post-conflict reconstruction efforts.

## DISCUSSION

Moderated by **Dr Antonio Missiroli**, *Director of the EUISS*

During the discussion following the presentations, participants affirmed the importance of *ensuring women's leadership and equal participation in peace processes and conflict prevention*. In this regard, it was noted that women need access to education and training, particularly in the areas of conflict prevention and peacebuilding, to enhance their capacity to participate effectively in negotiations. Only through education can there be women who will build back their country by sitting at the negotiation table.

Despite increasing inclusion of a gender perspective in most aspects of conflict management, it remains largely absent in the pre-conflict context. As early-warning systems can play a significant role in the prevention of conflict, it was argued that a gender perspective should be included in the development and implementation of early warning systems and preventive actions.

Participants agreed that while it is laudable to empower women, one should mind the extra burden this could entail for women already bearing the burden of providing alone for their family. One should also be extremely careful in not making the discourse of women's empowerment a discourse of disempowering men. If, during or after a conflict, men have nothing left for themselves, they will carry on committing violence.

Sexual violence in armed conflict is widespread, yet its *prevalence* and *consequences* are vastly *underestimated*. In addition, *sexual violence remains invisible in many contexts*. In many societies around the world, sexual violence is linked to questions of honour, purity, or virginity, which are fundamental community values. Therefore, by sexually assaulting an individual, the aggressor targets the community as a whole. Victims then face the risk of being doubly victimized: not only have they been personally violated with potentially severe and lasting effects, but they may also be stigmatized and rejected by their family, friends and community. Cultural taboos, feelings of guilt and shame or fear of retaliation frequently prevent victims from coming forward, speaking out and seeking the care they need. This is a serious challenge for those striving to provide effective humanitarian responses. For these reasons, educating communities is vital in order to reduce the risks of stigmatization, rejection and exclusion of victims, and to foster an environment in which victims feel able to seek help. In addition, humanitarian organisations and States must assume that sexual violence occurs in times of armed conflict and respond accordingly.

Finally, discussions pointed to the clear *gap between the rules and regulations on the one hand, and what actually happens on the ground on the other* as the basic principles of international humanitarian law basic principles are often disregarded. In order to bridge this gap, greater dialogue is needed with authorities and weapon bearers who constantly need to be reminded of their obligations under international humanitarian law. Since political entities are ultimately the ones responsible for respecting international humanitarian law, ambassadors and donors should put pressure on the local governments to implement the norms. Finally, it was noted that even if they are often disregarded, it is nonetheless important to have rules and regulations in order to allow for the possibility that those who violate them be held accountable.



# ROUNDTABLE I

## PROTECTING WOMEN IN ARMED CONFLICTS

Panel chaired by **Ms Antonia Potter Prentice**, *Senior Manager for Gender and Inclusivity, Crisis Management Initiative (CMI)*

### *The EU Approach to Women in Armed Conflicts*

**Ms Joelle Jenny**, *Director, Security Policy and Conflict Prevention, EEAS*

How does the European Union turn the commitments that have been made towards addressing gender issues and violence against women in conflicts into measurable impact on the ground? I will outline some of the questions the EU is asking itself when it comes to translating these commitments into action and some of the challenges it is facing.

Before, let me echo some of the points made by Mr Peter Maurer earlier today when he said that no woman is victim by definition but by condition and that those conditions are very often imposed upon them.

Whenever we discuss gender and violence in conflict, it is important to remind ourselves that it is not a dichotomy between men and women as, in many conflicts, men are equally victims. What we need to look at when addressing violence against women in conflict is the full spectrum of structural causes that lead to violence and instability. The fact of the matter is, instability and violence are generally skewed against women. Our responses must take account of this reality. For example, improved rule of law or humanitarian schemes that empower women in their households or give them financial resources can have a huge impact in helping women in situations of conflict. And on that point, I would like to echo again what Mr Peter Maurer said this morning when he underlined the hugely transformative power of conflicts. For all the atrocities and all the violence that happen in conflicts, they are also the single biggest driver of change in human history. When looking at our own history in Europe, much of the process the women's empowerment came about as a result of conflicts. We must do all we can to prevent conflicts, but when they occur, we also need to acknowledge their transformative effects.

This brings me to the question of how we apply the wealth of normative and operational tools, the humanitarian and the development assistance, in a coherent manner that is genuinely targeted at addressing the structural factors that so negatively impact on women?

First, we need to fully understand the context. What is the reality of conflict and insecurity for women? In too many instances, there is a tendency to rush into action. Of course we need to act fast to alleviate humanitarian suffering and to support every avenue to resolve the conflict. But in parallel, we also need to ensure we fully understand the context, the drivers of instability, the main risk factors, bringing a gender perspective in the conflict analysis, and that we tailor our interventions accordingly.

Linked to this is the need to make sure we understand how change happens. We need to better understand who drives change, not only within governments but also within whole societies: who genuinely has power, how will change happen and what changes are critical to addressing the drivers of insecurity and violence. This requires a much more in depth understanding, and we have developed specific analytical tools to help us do that.

In many contexts, few government interlocutors are women. So we need to be able to tap into the full knowledge and experience of civil society in the largest sense to understand the daily reality of women and to take account of their needs both in the assistance programmes we provide and in the diplomatic work we do. We need to guard against the tendency to project our solution to the problems in the environments we work in. When I was in Sarajevo during the war I was struck that, regardless of the degree of misery and horrors, the things you could always find on the black market were lipsticks and stockings. It may sound trivial but it meant that women, as long as they could afford it, were not going to let the war rob them of their dignity.

I remember talking to people who were part of the negotiations in the Northern Ireland peace process. Some of the women had to face massive amounts of abuse from their own community for even daring to be part of the peace negotiations. At enormous personal costs, those women brought to the negotiating table issues such as children's rights or assistance for victims. The outcome of the peace process would not have been the same if it had not been for the fact that women brought many of the key issues to the negotiating table. It is that level of granularity that we need to be able to reach. We need to enable women to be present and to have a voice. They will know better than any of us what will help address the drivers of insecurity and of violence.

So, how well are we doing in our work to tackle the drivers of insecurity and their impact on women? A lot of work is ongoing in the European Union to develop what we call a "comprehensive approach" to crises and conflicts. The objective is to make sure that when the European Union acts in a situation of conflict, it does so in a manner that ensures full consistency between all its instruments, be them humanitarian or development assistance, diplomatic action or the deployment of civil and military missions. Conducting conflict analyses to inform these actions is now fully part of our responses to conflicts. But more work is still needed to ensure that the gender dimension of violence is fully taken into account at every level of our engagement. Collectively, in the work of the whole international community and not just of the European Union, my view is that there is still a long way to go to fully implement the commitments made in UNSC resolution 1325 and other key normative instruments.

I applaud the fact that sexual violence in conflict has been made a real issue that people talk about and are ready to discuss at the policy level. It takes courage and was in many ways unthinkable until not so long ago because sexual violence in conflicts was seen as something that "just happens", or that was too difficult to tackle. The fact that it is on the agenda is very significant and it shows that real progress can be made in the way the international community acknowledges and seeks to address the impact of conflicts on women.

## ***Protection of Women under International Humanitarian Law***

**Mr Stéphane Kolanowski**, *Senior Legal Advisor, ICRC Delegation to the EU, NATO and the Kingdom of Belgium*

As we speak about the legal protection of women caught in armed conflict situations, we mainly speak about the protection international humanitarian law affords to women. International humanitarian law is indeed this part of public international law which is applicable in international and non-international armed conflict and that seeks to protect those who are not or no longer taking a direct part in hostilities. International humanitarian law also regulates the recourses to means and methods of warfare. Interestingly, and contrary to other bodies of public international law, like human rights law, international humanitarian law binds all parties to an armed conflict, so not only States, but also non-State armed groups or multinational forces. That being said, we should underline that international humanitarian law does not work in isolation, and that other norms will also protect the victims of armed conflicts, including women. These can be international human rights law, refugee law and of course the national laws of the countries concerned. But we will here focus on what is called the “*lex specialis*”, the law that has been specifically designed to answer to specific needs of victims of specific situations, i.e. armed conflicts, that is international humanitarian law, also known as the law of armed conflict.

Before discussing the protection afforded by international humanitarian law, it should be recalled that protection applies to everyone without any adverse distinction based on sex, race, nationality, religion, political opinion or any other similar criteria. It means also that any persons taking no active part in hostilities, including members of armed forces who have laid down their weapons, shall be treated humanely whatever his or her gender. And finally, while addressing the issue of protection, one should keep in mind the principle of distinction (between civilians and combatants) as different rules are applicable to these two categories.

Women would benefit, first of all, of the general protection afforded to all civilians or, if they qualify as combatant, the protection rules devoted to this category of persons. To start with the latter, international humanitarian law requires that persons who have laid down their arms must be protected and treated humanely, specifying that it is forbidden to kill or injure an enemy combatant who surrenders or lays down the weapons. Similarly, wounded and sick must be collected and care for (again whatever their sex). For what concerns the conduct of hostilities, there is also the general prohibition on causing superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering that has to be respected.

But most of the time, women will be civilians caught in armed conflict. Among the first protection rules come the prohibition on attacking civilians or the civilian population as well as objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population. International humanitarian law provides for a number of more detailed rules that derive from these provisions.

Beside the general protection that we have briefly mentioned, international humanitarian law contains a number of rules that defines a specific protection for women. This is of course aiming at tackling a few specific vulnerabilities that they may face during an armed conflict. The basic one is to be found in article 14 of the third Geneva Convention which says that “women shall be treated with all regard due to their sex and shall in all cases benefit by treatment as favourable as that granted to men”.

Sexual violence is unfortunately much too common in armed conflict situations. Today, it is not disputed that rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization or any other form of sexual violence may constitute war crimes when they occur in armed conflict. These acts are prohibited by treaties, by customary law as well as by a large number of national laws. We can, as an example, mention the Statute of the ICC which includes rape and other forms of sexual violence in the list of war crimes.

Women can also be particularly vulnerable when they are deprived of their freedom. International humanitarian law therefore provides for some specific protective rules such as accommodating them in quarters separated from the men's ones (except when families are detained together) and under the supervision of female guards. Similarly, international humanitarian law requests to adapt the conditions of detention to women, including, for instance for what concerns disciplinary punishment or labour.

Over the last years, a debate has been quite active on the issue of international humanitarian law and abortion and a so-called "right to abortion" under International Humanitarian Law. Actually, there is no reference to the issue of abortion in humanitarian law treaties. However, there are a number of provisions that are relevant to the humanitarian issue faced by victims of rape and other forms of sexual violence in armed conflict. One of the elementary norms relates to the prohibition of rape and other sexual violence but also, very importantly, there is the obligation for the belligerent to provide medical care to the wounded and sick without discrimination. In countries where it is permitted, abortion may be included within the meaning of medical care under international humanitarian law. This shows the importance of national laws in that matter as it is only there that an answer to the legal possibility or the interdiction of abortion has to be found (leaving here aside the essential questions of the wish of the women, the local traditions, the social acceptability of abortion, the personal security of the women concerned, her religious belief, etc).

Finally, it should be underlined that protection in armed conflict encompasses also the preservation or restoration of family links. International humanitarian law seeks therefore to maintain and restore family unity by aiming at preventing separation and by laying down measures seeking to facilitate the re-establishment of family ties such as correspondence or other kind of transmission of information. One could not forget here to mention the important "right to know" the fate of missing persons. This is humanely highly important but it could also be administratively essential to allow women, often widows, to go on in life.

As we can see, international humanitarian law provides for an adequate protection of women both as combatants and civilians, taking into consideration the specific vulnerabilities affecting women and girls in armed conflict situations. The problem lies not so much in a lack of rules but more in a lack of proper compliance with these rules. This is a feature common to many IHL rules which has lead Switzerland and the ICRC to engage in an important project aiming at examining and possibly strengthening the IHL compliance mechanisms.

Two elements can be identified as a factor leading to the lack of respect of these IHL rules protecting women. The first one is a too frequent sense of impunity. On this specific issue, a lot has been made since the 1990s thanks to the establishment of, and the work done by, *ad hoc* tribunals and today the permanent ICC. But, as we can unfortunately see, a lot remains to be done in that domain. The second element is the general feeling that these kind of violations of women basic right is, in an armed conflict, not so important; that this is acceptable. The feeling that this is a sort of "collateral damage" of armed conflict. This is of course fundamentally wrong. Rape, sexual violence cannot be, by definition, a collateral damage. The unacceptable character of these violence should be, endlessly, recalled, the perpetrators prosecuted, and the victims helped.



# ***Protecting and Empowering Women in Armed Conflicts***

**Ms Catherine Poulton**, *Women's Protection and Empowerment Technical Advisor for Pakistan, Jordan, Mali and CAR, International Rescue Committee (IRC)*

## ***Are we Listening? Responding to Violence against Women and Girls in Emergencies.***

Around the globe, women and girls are threatened by violence. Their safety, mental and physical health, and sense of empowerment are constantly jeopardised.

During and after conflicts and natural disasters, these threats become more acute. Destruction, fight and upheaval erode the scant protections women and girls have even in times of stability, and gender-based violence (GBV) escalates. Attention to violence against women and girls in crisis, particularly during armed conflict, has increased over the past decade. Globally, the Calls to Action, different initiatives such as Safe from the Start or the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative (PSVI) have laid out important goals and guidance for protecting and empowering women and girls. These frameworks are key to enhance accountability and lay the foundation for moving from policy to action, as well as direct investment in the efforts to keep women and girls safe during crisis.

GBV is a challenge not only because it requires action across humanitarian sectors, as we'll see today, but also because there are myriad contextual and cultural obstacles to women and girls' ability to safely access programming and services.

And it can be perceived as a problematic area for donors and policymakers due to the challenges around gathering information and providing an evidence-base for programming, as we will see below.

I am starting with the premise of what we do know: That GBV (or VAWG - violence against women and girls which will be used interchangeably in this contribution) threatens the lives, well-being and livelihoods of half of the population in emergencies, and that the onus is on us as humanitarians to address this violence. It is important to highlight that VAWG includes sexual violence but is not limited to this. We know from experience that women are targeted throughout crises, and are also at higher risks of violence because of a crisis. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) guidelines, internationally agreed upon standards on GBV prevention and response in humanitarian settings, laid this out clearly in 2005:

"Humanitarian personnel should assume that GBV is taking place and that it is a serious and life-threatening protection issue, regardless of the presence or absence of concrete and reliable evidence."<sup>(1)</sup>

Emergency assessments often conclude that because women and girls are not reporting violence, it is not an issue. However, we know from experience that until services are in place, and unless there are safe avenues for women and girls to access those services, women and girls will often not report violence.

## ***So what should action on the ground look like?***

IRC's Women's Protection and Empowerment (WPE) Unit has invested in emergency response and preparedness over the past 15 years, seeking to ensure that women and girls have access to

lifesaving services during and after emergencies. IRC developed an evidence-based *programme model* and *technical resource package*, and has trained and mentored field-based practitioners as they respond in acute emergencies. The GBV Emergency Response Program Model is intended to guide emergency response program design in acute crises (typically during the first 12 weeks of intervention). This tool outlines the concrete actions necessary to minimize risks to women and girls and ensure that GBV-specific services are available and accessible. It also highlights strategies related to coordination and advocacy with the goal of improving GBV response and mobilizing necessary action in other sectors.

Since 2011, IRC has rolled out this model for strengthening emergency preparedness and response at a local level around the world during crises including DRC, Central African Republic (CAR), the Syria region, Mali, South Sudan.

This program model addresses priorities in three core areas:

- Access to services including lifesaving health, case management and psychosocial services;
- Ensuring communities support women and girls, with a specific emphasis on information dissemination around services available, creating safe spaces and working with existing community networks;
- Increasing women and girls' safety through reducing risks, meeting women and girls' specific material needs, and looking at mechanisms to address sexual exploitation and abuse.

Coordination cuts across and is relevant for all of these areas. It should focus on reinforcing referrals and standards across sectors.

All of this programming is survivor-centred. This means it recognises the primacy of survivor safety and security by upholding the rights, dignity and choices of the survivor, protecting confidentiality and ensuring informed consent.

At times it surprises people not to see 'access to justice' or legal services in this model. This is because we are very focused on the acute emergency response here. We know that in the early days of an emergency it is often not feasible to link women with police and courts, in part because justice systems and structures may have disintegrated. Staff and funding may also be very limited, and allocating limited resources to legal services is not appropriate if adequate health and psychosocial services are not available. Access to justice can be very empowering for survivors of violence, when they choose; but ensuring they are first able to begin the physical and psychological healing process sets them up for being able to pursue this option later, when they can make a choice to do so safely.

The referral pathways are key to reinforcing access to services and the survivor-centred approach. There must be multiple entry points for survivors so they are empowered to make choices about where/how they feel safe. A one-size-fits-all view of this - i.e. an approach that assumes health services alone are enough - means that women and girls fall through the cracks.

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<sup>(1)</sup> Inter-Agency Standing Committee Guidelines for GBV Interventions in Humanitarian Settings  
available at [http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/pageloader.aspx?page=content-subsidi-tf\\_gender-gbv](http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/pageloader.aspx?page=content-subsidi-tf_gender-gbv)

### ***Who is responsible for these actions? Standalone specialized programming or mainstreaming***

The answer is *everyone*. Few debates are as alive within the GBV field as the question of whether GBV efforts should be mainstreamed across existing humanitarian sectors in both prevention and response, or specialised through dedicated experts, tools and initiatives focused specifically on GBV. IRC advocates for, and applies a dual approach as mainstreaming approaches are rarely successfully applied without a heavy investment in specialized GBV programs. Both are necessary to keep women and girls safe. Having experts allows for mainstreaming as they inform what needs to be done through the use of an expert lens. Having experts ensures that survivors' access specialized care. Experts also inform what needs to be done through other sectors to reduce the risks faced by the entire population of women and girls. This is the most successful model.

It is important to note that despite specific guidelines advocating for mainstreaming to be in place, it is still not happening today. These guidelines, which are minimum commitments, are not thought of as requirements by the humanitarian community at large. Time and again in emergencies, we notice the same gaps and make the same recommendations regarding how programs endanger or are still not guided by women and girls. We are still not listening.

Another challenge is that we see that nuances of access and barriers to services are still not taken into account. Why are women still being registered under their spouse's name when we know this limits access to services and protection? If we give cash to a family, do we consider whether or not women have any power over that money? Often, listening is equated with a 50% indicator, yet this is not enough.

### **CONCLUSION**

Prioritising the needs and voices of women and girls in emergencies should no longer be an afterthought. We have come a long way, and GBV is increasingly recognized as an essential part of 'lifesaving' emergency response. Many commitments have been made, which now need to be translated into action, action that is possible as our organization has shown and evaluated. We know what the minimum requirements are for all sectors, but we need political will and field capacity to meet them so that women and girls are no longer sidelined in humanitarian responses. While GBV specialists play a critical role, this action cannot sit with specialists alone.

The time has come to stop expecting women to fit into programming that was not designed for them, and start designing programs based on their voices and needs. All sectors in a humanitarian crisis impact women and girls, impact the violence they go through every day, as well as whether their voices are lifted and heard or whether their voices are smothered and lost. It is time to listen.

## DISCUSSION

Moderated by **Ms Antonia Potter Prentice**, *Senior Manager for Gender and Inclusivity, Crisis Management Initiative (CMI)*

The question was raised during the debate whether the *fight against impunity for sexual violence* constitutes an obstacle to disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) and security sector reform (SSR). As DDR and SSR are interrelated, many ex-combatants and perpetrators of sexual violence find employment in the security apparatus that SSR creates. SSR training programmes for ex-combatants who have committed acts of sexual violence should therefore include gender-related issues and emphasize zero tolerance for abuse and misconduct.

Some argued that the question that really goes to the heart of DDR and SSR is not necessarily that of the drive towards fighting impunity but rather how to revisit the assumptions and what quite often have been fairly technocratic approaches to DDR and SSR. Very few DDR and SSR programs have genuinely worked because of a lack of acceptance that these processes are extremely long and complicated. Expecting men to disarm in societies where men have always been armed and thinking that because there has been a conflict one can apply a standard DDR and SSR program are wrong assumptions. DDR and SSR programs need to be undertaken in the long term and tailored to the environment.

The important role of *Truth and Reconciliation Commissions* (TRCs) in addressing sexual violence and other forms of gender violence was also recalled. TRC often emerge in the aftermath of conflicts with the main objectives of providing a space for victims to tell their stories and deal with the causes of the conflict and the human rights abuses committed.

Participants discussed the *fatigue about addressing sexual violence* and the difficulty of working on sexual violence in spite of all the other challenges ahead and the frustrations that the available guidelines and tools are not being used or not properly being used. It was explained that 'sexual violence fatigue' is very often the result of people losing hope because they fail to recognize that they can make a difference and help contribute to the fight against sexual violence. In order to avoid this fatigue, those working on the ground need to be equipped with a proper understanding of the full granularity of what is happening, what the mechanisms are that perpetuate the cycles of violence and what the policies are that actually have an impact. Sexual violence fatigue is also linked to the fact that discussions on sexual violence are often very narrow and do not take into consideration the reality of what women and girls are experiencing. The example was given of the DRC where discussions on sexual violence in conflict focused especially on the question of whether or not sexual violence was used as a method of war. IRC therefore spent a lot of time in the DRC trying to explain that sexual violence was linked to the conflict but that it also existed before the conflict. IRC also widened the discussion to other types of violence that women and girls were facing.

While the changing conditions induced by armed conflicts can lead to opportunities for transformation and positively modify societies, it was argued that this '*transformative power of conflicts*' is not a linear process and is not to be taken for granted. Unless they have an opportunity to heal, it is very difficult to expect victims to take on a transformative agenda.

The importance of involving *gender and human rights advisors* in the phase of conflict analysis and mission planning, as well as deploying them to missions was underlined. Gender advisors play an important role as they can provide a different way of addressing the issues surrounding

women in armed conflicts and make a difference on the ground provided they have sufficient authority and responsibility. In addition to authority, gender advisors need to have the right skills, experience and expertise to know what works.

In order to have more gender and human rights advisors deployed in missions, it was argued that the cost of such posts needs to be calculated as part of the overall cost of a mission. Ultimately, when it comes to having gender experts available and deploying them to missions, NATO and the European Union are depending on contributions from Member States. Member States should therefore be mobilized to contribute to greater gender expertise in their missions and put their best gender experts forward.

One of the participants recalled that the European Union, through its *Battlegroups*, has the capability of deploying military forces in a short time scale in order to protect civilians, including women. He referred as an example to the CAR where the deterioration of the security climate would have been an opportunity to use this capability. While the idea of deploying a Battlegroup quickly collapsed, there was however a relatively fast response through the deployment of a European Union mission in the CAR (EUFOR CAR) which has been critical in securing Bangui and in reestablishing a degree of stability in the capital.

The question of *access to justice* for women during an armed conflict was raised. Justice is an essential component of the response to sexual violence. A fair exercise of justice, including the prosecution of suspected perpetrators in a fair trial, may help victims overcome their trauma and build resilience. However, in some contexts, victim's access to judicial institutions and processes and the possibility of a fair trial may be hampered by several factors. Firstly, by the lack of regularly functioning judicial systems and structures during an armed conflict. Secondly, in some contexts, armed groups make the granting of access and the provision of health care and services to victims conditional upon the absence of access to justice activities. Finally, denunciation of perpetrators or seeking prosecution can expose victims to threats or acts of violence against their integrity and life.

Discussions pointed to the need to develop a *comprehensive approach to combating violence against women in situations of armed conflict*. The question was raised whether beyond humanitarian and development actors, the European Union would consider supporting and reaching out to other actors (such as urban planners, local teachers, private economic actors, intellectuals and journalists) who can have an impact on the issues surrounding women in armed conflicts and help raise women's voices. It was explained that the European Union's ability to think 'out of the box' and to reach other channels - granting it access to women - depends on the design of the development and assistance program. In this regard, the EEAS works hand in hand with DG DEVCO to hold more and more roundtables bringing together European Union military staff, civilian planners and civil society representatives. These roundtables would address the drivers of conflicts and violence and discuss ways in which civil society can contribute to the protection of women in armed conflicts.

Finally, the *European Union Guidelines on Improving Compliance with International Humanitarian Law* were referred to as an important document providing tools to improve the protection of women in armed conflicts, as well as the European Union's training missions which can have an impact on behavior of troops.



# ROUNDTABLE II

## SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN ARMED CONFLICTS

Panel chaired by **Mr Eduardo Fernandez-Zincke**, *Team Leader for Syria Regional Crisis, DG ECHO*

### ***Physical and Psychological Consequences of Sexual Violence in Armed Conflicts***

**Ms Cécile Kamwanya Mulolo**, *Psychologist, Head of Social Service, Panzi Hospital, Bukavu*

Les violences sexuelles constituent une des grandes problématiques du moment. Plusieurs catégories de personnes sont concernées directement ou indirectement par ces violences. Une fois commises, elles peuvent entraîner des conséquences désastreuses sur la santé physique, mentale et les relations sociales. Les violences sexuelles ont potentiellement des conséquences sur toutes les dimensions de la santé de l'individu.

#### ***Les conséquences physiques et psychologiques des violences sexuelles***

*Les conséquences physiques* des violences sexuelles peuvent notamment consister en des blessures, des lésions, des lacérations, le VIH/sida, des grossesses non désirées, des avortements, des fistules, des incontinences, des plaies et hématomes, des infections chroniques et sexuellement transmissibles, des troubles gastro-intestinaux, des brûlures, des lésions oculaires, des fractures, des traumatismes abdominaux et thoraciques, des fausses couches, l'invalidité, voire la mort.

*Les conséquences physiques d'origine psychologique (conséquences psychophysiques)* des violences sexuelles peuvent quant à elles notamment consister en des perturbations gynécologiques (troubles du cycle menstruel, infertilité), un avortement, des symptômes de grossesse nerveuse, des troubles sexuels, des troubles cardio-vasculaires, un gain ou une perte de poids, des troubles digestifs ou encore des douleurs multiples (tels que la dyspareunie ou la paresthésie) et autres troubles psychosomatiques. Elles peuvent aussi entraîner la mort.

*Les conséquences psychologiques* des violences sexuelles sont d'ordre cognitif, affectif ou comportemental. Le premier groupe, celui des conséquences cognitives peut concerner des souvenirs répétitifs, des pensées négatives, des idées et pensées suicidaires, une baisse de performance intellectuelle ou des troubles de la mémoire. Les conséquences affectives des violences sexuelles vont quant à elle des phobies à l'hostilité, en passant par le sentiment de culpabilité et de précarité, voire d'insécurité, la perte de l'estime de soi, l'inquiétude et l'anxiété. Enfin, les conséquences comportementales de ces violences peuvent être des troubles du sommeil, de l'appétit ou consister en de l'agressivité, de l'apathie ou de l'hyperactivité. Elles peuvent également impliquer des phénomènes de repli sur soi, de mutisme, d'hypersexualité, de conduite autopunitive et des tentatives de suicide.

## Illustration

L'histoire d'Espérance L. S., âgée de 25 ans et qui vint nous voir en consultation au printemps 2014, témoigne des conséquences désastreuses du sujet qui nous occupe :

« C'était pendant le trouble armé de Goma en décembre 2012 ; les balles crépitaient dans tous les sens. Je revenais de la faculté car j'étais étudiante en 3<sup>e</sup> graduat Biomédicales à la faculté de Médecine de l'université de Goma. Je m'étais précipitée dans une maison dans le quartier Ndosho. Un homme s'est précipité sur moi, feignant de me protéger. M'introduisant dans une chambre, il a bloqué la porte et a directement commencé à me brutaliser disant qu'il devait avoir un rapport sexuel avec moi. Comme je ne voulais pas, il m'a braqué une arme sur le cou, c'est ainsi qu'il m'a abusée sexuellement. C'était mon premier rapport sexuel, il était horrible, j'avais du sang sur les cuisses et sur la jupe. Après, il m'a jeté dehors où les balles crépitaient. J'avais perdu connaissance ; je me suis ensuite retrouvée dans un centre de santé du quartier où deux jours plus tard, j'ai repris connaissance, voyant ma mère à mes côtés. Depuis lors, mon calvaire a commencé. Je n'avais plus le courage d'aller à la faculté. J'étais honteuse et me culpabilisais car tout le monde en parlait. Je me culpabilisais de m'être rendue à la faculté alors que régnait une telle insécurité en ville. Mon fiancé qui se préparait pour venir célébrer le mariage coutumier s'était résigné. Les voisins, les oncles et tantes paternels infligeaient à mon pauvre père le déshonneur de voir sa fille s'être fait violée, ce qui le poussa à changer de milieu allant s'installer à Béni jusqu'à ce jour. Après 2 mois, je commençais à avoir des hallucinations. Pendant mon sommeil, je faisais des cauchemars où l'on me pourchassait avec des armes. Parfois, pendant la journée, j'avais l'impression que l'événement se répétait. J'avais trop peur, je n'avais plus d'appétit, je souffrais de céphalées. Je perdais connaissance. Un jour j'ai commencé à parler beaucoup..., la logorrhée..., je devenais agressive face à mes petits frères et sœurs..., j'errais ça et là. Alors ma mère m'a amenée à l'hôpital psychiatrique de Goma où je fus admise et soignée pendant environ six mois. Sortie, je suis retournée chez nous où ma mère, abandonnée par mon père, prenait soin de moi et me donnant des psychotropes jusqu'à ce jour ».

Les *conséquences physiques d'origine psychologique* constatées furent des perturbations gynécologiques notamment des troubles menstruels (aménorrhée de 6 mois) et une perte de poids considérable (60 kg avant l'agression, 45 kg après). Espérance souffrait également de céphalées chroniques et prenait de psychotropes.

Par ailleurs, Espérance souffrait de *conséquences psychologiques*. Sur le *plan cognitif*, des souvenirs répétitifs, des pensées négatives, un désespoir quant à l'avenir et des pensées de mort se manifestaient. Au niveau *affectif*, elle avait un sentiment de culpabilité (celui d'avoir fait souffrir sa mère et ses frères en dépensant de l'argent pour ses soins médicaux) et l'impression d'être une charge inutile pour la famille. De plus, elle développa une phobie des hommes et du mariage. S'agissant de son *comportement*, elle souffrait de troubles du sommeil et de l'appétit, accompagnés d'une perte de poids considérable. Son état était également marqué par le repli sur soi et une perte d'estime de soi. Elle témoignait également du refus de se marier, de nouer des relations amoureuses avec les hommes et de reprendre les études.

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<sup>(2)</sup> Manjoo, Rashida. Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences. May 28, 2014. Human Rights Council, 26th session, agenda item 3. A/HRC/26/38.

<sup>(3)</sup> Personal communication with Professor Cynthia Enloe, August 2014.



# Addressing the Causes and Consequences of Sexual Violence in Armed Conflicts

**Dr Nadine Puechguirbal**, Coordinator, United Nations Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict (UN Action)

***“The problem that has no name”: Addressing the Causes and Consequences of Sexual Violence in Armed Conflicts.***

## INTRODUCTION

A lot has been written about the causes and consequences of sexual violence in armed conflicts; however, I believe that we keep analyzing situations of sexual violence in conflict without taking into consideration one big and essential element: *“The problem that has no name.”* Indeed, we keep turning around the subject, running in circles. We keep trying to define this problem, we know what it is but there is a certain hesitation to name it. But without naming it, we will never be able to address the issues pertaining to sexual violence in conflict and we will continue to provide solutions that are not sustainable.

In a related development, we continue to treat sexual violence in conflict as an issue separated from the broader discourse on gender equality. In her 2014 report, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women expressed her concerns about the recent trend in creating hierarchies of violence against women. She writes: “This is particularly evident in the articulation of sexual violence in conflict situations as being different and exceptional, as opposed to it being a continuation of a pattern of discrimination and violence that is exacerbated in times of conflict - as reflected in recent armed conflict situations”<sup>(2)</sup>. Indeed, by dissociating the issue of sexual violence in conflict from the systemic problem of violence against women and violations of women’s rights that have their roots in unequal gender norms/roles, we avoid tackling the origins of the violence. This is exactly why *“the problem that has no name”* can be so deceitful and perpetuate a system that will ensure that we all remain at a superficial level of understanding of the causes of sexual violence in conflict.

So what is *“the problem that has no name”*? Let me give you four main clues.

### **Clue number one: language**

Language is key to understanding prevailing gender norms and the perpetuation of stereotypes. It is of high importance to pay attention to language to be able to understand how our lives have been militarized and how, without being aware of it, we participate and perpetuate the continuum of violence. It is interesting to deconstruct language in United Nations reports, mainstream media, and any sources of information that describe sexual violence. As Professor Cynthia Enloe would comment<sup>(3)</sup>, we talk about “women *being* harassed”; “women *being* victimized”; “women *being* raped”, using the passive tense as if women were mainly passive objects. Why can’t we talk about a man raping? Why can’t we name the perpetrator and highlight his responsibility in this crime? Language is essential to understanding how gender roles are framed because it is very often used to hide gendered relations of power.

In the same vein, I hear United Nations colleagues recurrently talking about “*penetrating* the field to increase efficiency in tackling issues of conflict-related sexual violence”, or “the *imperative of recapturing* the mandate”, or “engaging into sustained efforts to *break the back* of the problem” or even “making sure we *detonate* this issue in all the right and strategic forums”. This metaphoric vocabulary might carry a strong message to the audience but at the same time it validates a very highly masculine and militaristic way of responding to the issue of sexual violence in conflict that reinforces the cycle of violence. Furthermore, language has the power to fossilize a very narrow-minded definition of gender roles that continue to exclude women from the decision-making circles of power.

This is what clue number two will demonstrate.

### **Clue number two: the “women-and-children” syndrome**

Gendered power hierarchies prevailing in societies are taken for granted by male decision-makers and deprive women of their agency. As a result, women keep being associated with children in the private realm and, by extension, their needs are defined similarly according to the needs of girls and boys in conflict areas. Thus, it seems difficult to promote the active participation of women in peace negotiations or conflict resolution, since they are understood primarily as caretakers of children affected by wars, with little room for a different and more dynamic role. As long as women are mainly depicted as victims in need of protection, it will be very difficult to secure their access to the peace talks as independent actors, i.e. not dependent on a male entity. Indeed, who would invite powerless victims?

The stereotyping of women appears to be used to keep them away from the peace negotiating table on the grounds that they did not participate in the fighting. According to Sanam Anderlini: “From Dayton to Rambouillet, Arusha to Colombia, it is predominantly male leaders of the fighting parties who are negotiating an end to war and laying the foundations for peace. The justification often given is that the peace table must bring together those who have taken up arms, because it is up to them to stop the conflict”.<sup>(4)</sup> This short-sightedness prevents an all-inclusive approach that would encompass the different needs and expectations of women and men in the reconstruction of a post-conflict society and efficiently address issues of sexual violence.

This is how we make the link to clue number three.

### **Clue number three: hegemonic masculinity**

Have you noticed how war is gendered? And how wars in Gaza, Syria or Iraq are very masculinized? All Israeli soldiers depicted by the media are men as well as the Hamas fighters. In Iraq, we read stories of men kidnapping women, brutalizing and raping them... in Iraq, where “women are the battlefield”.<sup>(5)</sup>

There was not a single woman in the Israeli negotiating team in Egypt. Last year, at the so-called peace talks about Syria, men gathered around the peace table: men from the United Nations, the US, the Syrian government and the opposition. Does this sound familiar? In 2003, Peace Nobel Prize Leymah Gbowee mobilized women in Liberia to participate in the peace process in Ghana. Although the Liberian women had been instrumental in securing the peace talks, they were not invited. More than ten years later, women are facing the exact same situation for the Syrian peace talks. Why couldn't we make any inroads into the participation of women in political settings within a span of ten year?

There is plenty of evidence that shows how gender is factoring in sexual violence in conflict. Sexual violence is one of the only crimes for which a community's response is more often to stigmatize the victim rather than prosecute the perpetrator. This fact has to do with socially constructed gender norms that give hegemonic masculinity power over any form of femininity. The "*problem that has no name*" has constructed a certain form of masculinity relying on exclusion and hierarchy. As R.W. Connell argues, '[t]here is generally a dominant or "hegemonic" form of masculinity of a class elite, or of a military hierarchy or an ethnic-national leadership... The most powerful groups of men usually have few personal incentives for gender change'.<sup>(6)</sup> So if the men in power have few incentives for change, why do we continue to work within the same system that doesn't allow any results nor any accountability?

That's where clue number four can bring in elements of an answer.

#### **Clue number four: the art of procrastination**

The art of procrastination is a strategy that many international organisations use to delay taking care of gender-related issues that can affect ongoing programmes and activities in the humanitarian field.

Members of different humanitarian organisations always manage to convince their interlocutors that the time is not yet ripe for tackling gender-related issues. Talking about the issue of sexual violence against women, the Director of a well-known organization stresses that "the progress made over these last years is impressive, and this issue becomes more and more part of each of our activities. [However] *we still have a long way to go*." Every single year, humanitarian organizations use this rhetoric when it reaffirms to donors their willingness to support the integration of a gender perspective into their work. According to the senior managers, these organisations are making progress but it takes time to change the mentalities, thus justifying why they cannot allocate more resources to the file now. '*We still have a long way to go*' is the catchphrase used by "*the problem that has no name*" to gain time, justify its opposition to change and lull outside observers into believing that real progress is made. This way of thinking is also taken up by the United Nations in several discourses relating to progress in the promotion of women's rights: "There is a long way to go before the rights of Afghan women are fully protected, says a United Nations report [...]" or elsewhere: "*There is still a long way to go* in ensuring women's voices are heard in decision making," or in another statement: "While we've risen above glass ceilings, *there is still a long way to go*," etc.<sup>(7)</sup>

These sentences have become part of the political landscape of international organisations and women and men repeat it without measuring its impact on the perpetuation of stereotypes and bias that slow down the process towards gender equality. The focus should not be on the long way to go but instead on tackling the structural obstacles and hurdles that prevent women from moving ahead in the assertion of their rights. Gender concerns are pushed aside; they will be taken care of '*later*', at a '*later*' stage, after more pressing political matters will be completed. However, as Cynthia Enloe encapsulates it: "Later is a patriarchal time zone."<sup>(8)</sup>

## CONCLUSION

By now you might have your own idea about “*the problem that has no name*”? You might even remember when this expression was first used: in 1963, American Feminist Betty Friedan wrote her book called “*The Feminine Mystique*” that highlighted the silent but widespread discontent and unhappiness of several housewives in the United States, in spite of the material comfort they enjoyed. In this book, she deconstructed societal expectations imposed on women of becoming a good wife and a good mother, trapped in the patriarchal scheme.

I am using this analogy because “*the problem that has no name*” reminds me of the way we avoid talking about the real issues that perpetuate sexual violence against women; how we avoid linking gender to power and how gender norms, expectations and a rigid sexual division of labor continue to perpetuate discrimination against women and exclude them from the center of decision making and peace negotiations.

Today the problem has a name and we should be brave enough to mention it. It is called *Patriarchy*. As Cynthia Enloe explains it, patriarchy is articulated around prerogatives that “ (1) sustain the privileging of certain forms of masculinity; (2) treat most women as if they naturally lack autonomy, and (3) weigh all things deemed to be feminine as of lesser value than those deemed masculine when the discussion turns to topics that matter”.<sup>(9)</sup>

As a result, if we want to address the causes and consequences of sexual violence in conflict, we will first have to address the root causes that lie in the perpetuation of patriarchy and related attitudes and behaviors; deconstruct relations of power and gender hierarchies; take women seriously as actors and agents of change; and promote their participation in all peace talks. In a nutshell, we will have to drastically change mentalities and offer a new paradigm that would make a direct connection between empowering women and successfully addressing sexual violence in conflict. It is of prime importance to never lose sight of gender equality when tackling issues related to sexual violence in conflict. There cannot be any sustainable solution to this issue if we do not understand the causes and consequences of sexual violence as part of the patriarchal stranglehold that prevents any progress or radical change of societal norms.

This is only the beginning of the conversation and I hope that this presentation will trigger more curiosity into the way patriarchy operates and prevents any progress in challenging conflict-related sexual violence.

We cannot continue to let patriarchy drive the political agenda and impose prevailing gender norms that only perpetuate violence against women, in language and action.

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<sup>(4)</sup> In Puechguirbal, Nadine. April 2010. ‘Discourses on Gender, Patriarchy and Resolution 1325: A Textual Analysis of UN Documents’, in *International Peacekeeping*, Volume 17, no. 2, UK: Routledge, pp. 176-177.

<sup>(5)</sup> Chagmion, Antoine. August, 12, 2014. “In Iraq, women are the battlefield”, in *Women under Siege*, <http://www.womenundersiegeproject.org/blog/entry/in-iraq-women-are-the-battlefield>

<sup>(6)</sup> In Puechguirbal, Nadine. Ibid, page 179

<sup>(7)</sup> In Puechguirbal, Nadine. 2012. “The Cost of Ignoring Gender in Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations: A Feminist Perspective”, *Amsterdam Law Forum*, Vol 4:1, page 15

<sup>(8)</sup> In Puechguirbal, Nadine. Ibid

<sup>(9)</sup> Enloe, Cynthia. 2013. “Seriously! Investigating Crashes and Crises as if Women Mattered”, University of California Press, Berkeley, page 11

## ***Medical Response to Sexual Violence and the issue of Abortion: MSF in action***

**Ms Catrin Schulte-Hillen**, *Sexual and Reproductive Health International Working Group Leader, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)*

MSF is an independent medical humanitarian organization focused on the assistance of population affected by crisis and conflict. Founded in 1971, MSF is today a movement composed of 23 associations. Assistance projects are managed from 5 operational centers (Paris, Brussels, Amsterdam, Geneva and Barcelona); funding is primarily private (89%).

In 2013 the organization managed 387 projects in over 60 countries, 62% in Africa, 28% in Asia, 6% in the Americas and 3% in Europe. The majority of projects are in unstable contexts.

MSF assistance covers a large range of medical areas and as well as non medical needs when necessary (shelter, non food items, water and sanitation). Medical care ranges from basic health care in out-patient facilities, to second level hospital care and specific response to HIV and tuberculosis as well as to nutritional crisis, epidemics (cholera, measles, meningitis, hemorrhagic fever, ...) and neglected diseases (Human African trypanosomiasis-HAT, Kala Agar, Chagas).

MSF's care aims to reduce mortality, prevent morbidity whenever possible, and to alleviate suffering.

Specific care for victims of sexual violence started first in 1999 in Congo Brazzaville and was more systematically implemented following the Mano River scandal (2002). Prior to that, MSF was aware of the problem of rape in conflict (Bosnia-Herzegovina and Rwanda), but, like many other aid organizations, was not able to delineate a clear role for the organization.

Sexual violence, specifically rape, involves significant suffering and ill health; medical care for victims of sexual violence is part of the MSF's priorities; every project is asked to be prepared to offer related assistance. Further, not creating opportunities for sexual violence and abuse is part of MSF general operational concern in both project organization and staff management.

MSF focuses primarily on the medical care for victims of sexual violence, be they women, children or men. Care includes the treatment of injuries, prevention of infection (sexually transmitted diseases, HIV, hepatitis B, tetanus), management of unwanted pregnancy, psychological support and the provision of a medico-legal certificate.

Depending on the context and feasibility, MSF contributes to other forms of support required, namely social and legal support, community awareness and advocacy.

Since 2004, MSF teams have provided assistance close to 118.000 victims of sexual violence. The level of care has stayed relatively stable since 2007; around 25% of all MSF projects report assistance to victims of sexual violence every year. Projects in 10 countries account for 90% of related medical care : DRC (46%), Liberia, Burundi, Zimbabwe, Guatemala, Nigeria, Kenya, Haiti, South Africa and Papua New Guinea.

MSF has a standard medical protocol for the care of victims of sexual violence. The main challenge however is not the treatment itself, but the timely and complete provision of care in the contexts where MSF generally works.

Even when MSF has prepared response capacity, victims do not necessarily come. Reasons are multiple, but from a pragmatic point of view there are a few that stand out: life preserving needs of the population reduce health-care-seeking mainly to life-threatening situation, the lack of awareness about the added value of medical care for victims of sexual violence and the uncertainty about availability and access present further barriers to seeking care. A pro-active strategy is required to encourage victims to come forth, and that requires specific assessment, planning and investment.

Timely care of sexual violence victims is crucial, preventive treatments for HIV infection and unwanted pregnancy must be given within 72 hours after the assault. Emergency contraception has a reduced effectiveness up to 120 hours (5 days). Even in established MSF sexual violence projects, not all and sometimes not even half of the victims come within 72 hours after an assault.

Often victims come only for one visit and this reality as well as the time constraints require starting all medical treatments in that same visit. The “pill load” is considerable and there are interactions of medication (emergency contraception and post exposure prophylaxis for HIV infection) to be considered.

Emergency contraception for the prevention of unwanted pregnancy is requested by a high percentage of women at risk of pregnancy from the assault and basically all countries tolerate its use. The management of unwanted pregnancy, be this result of rape or not, is part of MSF policy. Unsafe abortion is one of the leading causes of maternal mortality and MSF provides safe abortion care as part of the organization’s effort to reduce maternal mortality and suffering. Abortion is a controversial issue and, independently of the legal framework which often makes allowances for specific circumstances (incest, rape, etc.), ensuring safe abortion care to all women and girls in need continues to be a challenge and is still not feasible in all of the contexts where MSF works.

Confidentiality is key in protecting the victim against the social repercussions rape often involves for the victim, and from potential future assaults, or reprisal for having sought assistance. Confidentiality is a long term commitment which goes far beyond the adequate management of personal data and the medico-legal document. It has to be considered in all aspects of the assistance, in communication and advocacy efforts and in the networking with other actors.

MSF teams are increasingly making efforts to be prepared for the care of victims of sexual violence, also in the acute phase of emergencies. There are however competing needs in these situations, which limit both the organization’s capacity to provide care and the victim’s acceptance and capacity to seek care. In many of the projects where sexual violence care is available, MSF teams have the impression that they only see the “tip of the iceberg”.

Victims of sexual violence require more than medical assistance, but MSF challenges an aid response to sexual violence which does not include direct medical assistance to victims.

MSF raises concerns regarding well intended action to end sexual violence and related impunity; these must at all times safeguard the capacity to provide direct, independent and confidential medical care to victims of sexual violence.

# Multidisciplinary Responses to Sexual Violence in Armed Conflicts

**Ms Coline Rapneau**, *Sexual Violence Advisor, ICRC Geneva*

## INTRODUCTION

In 2013, in order to reinforce its activities related to sexual violence, the International Committee of the Red Cross decided to make sexual violence one of its institutional priorities. The International Committee of the Red Cross has a four-year commitment (2013-2016) to “*consolidate, expand and heighten its focus on its actions specifically responding to sexual violence*”. Among its four main objectives, the first one is of particular interest for us today: the “*ICRC endeavours to continuously improve the delivery of an effective, impartial, holistic response to victims of sexual violence in a multidisciplinary way*”.

It is a perfect objective as the ICRC’s main added-value - besides being neutral and independent - is to have several types of expertise, or “*corps de métier*” within the institution that work together: medical doctors, psychosocial advisors, mental health and psychological support (MHPSS) advisors, protection officers, livelihoods experts, communication officers, engineers, armed forces and security staff, etc. This vast range of *métiers* and activities cover all victims’ needs. It should prevent us from working in a siloed fashion and enable us to take a holistic approach in our response.

To be specific, former military, protection and communication staff *address the causes* of sexual violence and violations of international humanitarian law whereas our medical doctors, mental health and psycho-social delegates or economic security delegates usually *address the consequences*. But in both cases, we can talk about “response”.

## I. Multidisciplinary response: Specific requirements

Throughout a series of assessments carried out in 2013-2014 and over the past decade, we have observed two relevant and recurrent points:

1. “*Care, safety and survival*” are the main victims’ needs. The three “s” in French: *Soins, sécurité et survie*. All departments are therefore involved: care relates to the Health Unit (treatment and psycho support), safety to the Protection and Armed and Security Forces Units (who work to try to prevent reprisals and therefore foster an environment in which victims feel safe to talk), and survival to the Economic Security (ECOSEC) Unit (to help them start a new life, etc.).

2. But to seek care, victims must first be identified. As such, we must then identify *key entry points*. We noticed that mental health and psycho-social services are generally an essential component to any effective response to victims of sexual violence (even if we give them Medical/ECOSEC support, they will never really get past the trauma without MHPSS to understand that it’s not their fault, to help them grow stronger, be accepted as victims, etc.) and can act as an effective entry point for victims to seek further care. These services also help to identify new victims of sexual violence. These entry points can take the form of traditional midwives (for example, in

Burundi), volunteers from grassroots associations, nurses, etc.

So, once we have identified victims of sexual violence and can access them, the International Committee of the Red Cross strives to provide a vast range of specific services to effectively and adequately respond to their needs (*care, safety, survival*). *This is where the term “multidisciplinary approach” comes into play.* Four main areas, indispensable for victims of sexual violence, are then covered:

First, *medical care*. We provide direct care - for instance Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) kits containing anti-retroviral and emergency contraception within 72 hours if a rape has occurred - or refer victims to appropriate health structures. For example, in the Central African Republic, we run mobile clinics where we provide direct assistance, while in Colombia, we refer victims to Profamilia, an NGO that provides specialized sexual and reproductive health services.

Second, *psychological counselling and support* to overcome the trauma (both immediate and long-term, by listening to the victims, providing support, help them to develop coping mechanisms, etc) - for example, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, we support “*maisons d’écoute*”, locally-run structures offering counselling and support.

Third, when deemed necessary, *livelihood support*. The provision of this type of support depends on the needs - we first carry out an assessment to determine whether victims are able to access support from elsewhere, and then prioritize those who have been rejected by their communities, and those at risk of reprisals and forced to flee or be relocated, etc. Assistance comes in the form of basic and temporary food and other essential items, so that they can make a living or start a small business.

Fourth, *social support* to assist with the reintegration of victims into their communities with regular outreach work, including campaigns to raise awareness of the issue of sexual violence and that it is not the victims’ fault, the consequences for victims, families and communities, that rape should be treated as an emergency, the services that are available to victims and so on. The ICRC’s protection, health, communication and economic security teams can manage these activities either independently or together. Examples of contexts where we carry out these activities include DRC, the Central African Republic, Colombia, and Burundi.

*Most of these activities are carried out in partnership with local, grassroots associations as they know the context well and can ensure long-term sustainability of the programs. Involvement of local organisations also creates community ownership of the program.*

Another part of the response that we should not forget and that is specific to the International Committee of the Red Cross, is carried out by our protection team often in collaboration with our communication delegates or armed forces delegates. We seek to enhance the protection and safety of at-risk or vulnerable individuals and groups within their own environment through:

*Bilateral dialogue* with the authorities and weapon bearers about international humanitarian law, including prohibition of sexual violence;

*Raising observed/alleged abuses/patterns of violence*, consequences for victims, legal implications and possible measures to decrease future violations through a confidential dialogue with the authorities and arms carriers;

*Joint protection strategies*: working with communities to reduce/minimise the exposure of vulnerable people to risks, for example as we do in Karamoja in Uganda.



## II. A few key challenges

### EXTERNAL

*Insecurity* is the main difficulty hampering the effectiveness of our multidisciplinary response. It may prevent the victims from coming forward, national health staff from providing care because of the danger of being killed, attacked, etc. Insecurity also prevents our teams from going to the field as planned. Furthermore, the International Committee of the Red Cross' Health Care in Danger campaign, illustrates how *insecurity slows down activities and hampers the trust-building efforts that are essential for long-term programs*.

There are several difficulties in identifying *skilled, trustworthy, neutral and impartial partners* that we can train to provide psychological support and refer victims, thus ensuring a long-term approach and sustainability in the response provided to victims (e.g. South Sudan).

*The situation is different* from one context to another within the same country. Sexual violence is not perceived in the same way everywhere, forcing us to implement different responses and programs according to the context, sometimes within a single country.

### INTERNAL

It is a constant challenge to ensure *good coordination among teams* with regular transmission of information when possible. It is not easy, as everybody is taken up with their own activities. *Management plays a key role in ensuring and coordinating a coherent multidisciplinary approach and by taking ownership*.

With regards to human resources, we want to ensure quality over quantity. There are *only a few MHPSS advisors*, and they are essential to understanding the problem and helping to identify and approach victims.

## CONCLUSION

*The important points to bear in mind* are, firstly, that an effective and multidisciplinary response always comes after a *deep multidisciplinary assessment* that permits the identification and understanding of all aspects of the problem: root causes of the phenomenon, specificities of the contexts, the consequences, types of needs, etc.

Secondly, a multidisciplinary response centred around and developed for the victims is fundamental but we should not forget the importance of activities which aim to prevent abuses. It is all very well to respond to victims' needs, *but unless arms carriers understand and stop committing these acts, we will always be trying to catch up rather than ever being able to stop it from happening on a large scale in the first place*.

I will close this contribution as I have started it, by mentioning the final of our four main objectives for 2013-2016: To ensure a strong multidisciplinary response, we need to provide tools and adequate training on the issue of sexual violence to all our staff, without distinction (and not only to our medical teams). It will take time but the International Committee of the Red Cross is committed to equipping its staff beyond to better understand and act on the issue in the field over the next 3 years.

## DISCUSSION

Moderated by **Mr Eduardo Fernandez-Zincke**, *Team Leader for Syria Regional Crisis, DG ECHO*

During the debate, it was noted that *acts of sexual violence rarely occur in isolation*. They often form part of a pattern of abuse and violence which includes, among others, killing, child recruitment, destruction of property and looting. Acts of sexual violence should be viewed within this context. Nevertheless, owing to the specificity and sensitivity of sexual violence and the resulting consequences, efforts to end sexual violence in armed conflict require a specific and targeted response.

The *issue of gender inequality* was referred to as an important factor and as an underlying cause of sexual and gender based violence. Human Rights and gender equality need to be promoted and protected to address sexual and gender based violence in armed conflicts. This requires empowering women by helping them to analyze their situation and understand how their age, social background and gender affect their situation. It also requires giving them access to information on their rights and helping them to increase their participation in decision-making processes. While treating sexual violence is very important, the need to balance the approach of treating women as victims with the approach of empowerment was underlined.

Violence against women is underpinned by widespread acceptance of patriarchal norms and perceptions that support and normalize rape and the everyday subordination of women.

Asked *where Congolese women find the energy to rebound after being raped*, a speaker explained that women are at the center of the community in the DRC. Women are largely responsible for all domestic work, for providing their family with food and for the education of their children. In many instances the distress of the victim's husbands, their feelings of shame, indignity and guilt of having been unable to protect their wife, as well as deep trauma leads to spousal rejection or conjugal separation during or following the conflict. Women are consequently left with the burden of caring alone for themselves and for their children. Given the critical role they play in sustaining their communities and families, Congolese women often have no other choice than to rebound and get back on their feet. Congolese women also draw their energy and strength from their environment. Raped women receive support and courage from their family members and friends who help them cope with the violence perpetrated on them. Finally, Congolese people are often very religious and women's faith can play an important role in their long-term coping strategies.

As part of its four-year commitment to strengthen its response to the problem of sexual violence, the *International Committee of the Red Cross is developing and reinforcing its programmes in countries such as Colombia, the DRC and the CAR*:

In the DRC, the International Committee of the Red Cross has provided support to 40 *maisons d'écoute* (listening houses) in North and South Kivu. Victims of sexual violence can receive counselling and psychological support from these locally run structures, and where necessary are referred to nearby health facilities. The listening houses also seek to raise awareness about the problem of sexual violence, informing communities about the existence of health facilities for victims and the importance of receiving urgent medical treatment within 72 hours of being raped. The ICRC health team trains the counsellors on all these aspects and provides them with material support, in addition to providing technical/material support to medical structures of referral. Protection teams also respond to sexual violence by ensuring regular and confidential dialogue with arms carriers on allegations of sexual violence, carrying out interventions and holding dissemination sessions on international humanitarian law, including the issue of sexual violence.

In addition to supporting some of *Colombia's* health facilities, the International Committee of the Red Cross has formed a partnership with the local NGO Profamilia to provide medical and psychological assistance and legal advice to victims of conflict-related sexual violence. The ICRC teams refer victims in need of medical attention to Profamilia. The International Committee of the Red Cross has also broad Economic Support programmes specifically aimed at women, which may include female victims of sexual violence or those at risk. As in the DRC, protection teams follow up on allegations of sexual violence (notably through dialogue with authorities and arms carriers) upon specific agreement of the victims. They also carry out activities to prevent further occurrence of sexual violence.

In CAR, the International Committee of the Red Cross provides technical support to the hospital of Kaga Bando which offers clinical services to rape survivors. In Northern CAR, the International Committee of the Red Cross has been raise awareness amongst, and train, local health staff with influence in the community on how to identify victims of sexual violence with a non-harm approach, and on how to provide basic mental health support to victims. With four mobile clinics, it has been visiting different villages affected by violence. In the meantime, Protection teams carry out assessments in the field and hold regular talks with authorities and arms carriers to remind them of their obligations under international humanitarian law, including the prohibition of sexual violence.



# ROUNDTABLE III

## WOMEN IN PEACEBUILDING PROCESSES

Panel chaired by **Mr Frank De Wispelaere**, *Director of the Thematic Direction in the Directorate General for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Affairs.*

### ***Women's Participation in Peace Processes***

**Mr Stephan Auer**, *Director, Multilateral Relations and Global Issues, EEAS*

Conflict affects women in a disproportionate manner. Women are more vulnerable during conflict and they are the primary target of war crimes related to sexual violence.

While we need to protect women from becoming victims of conflict specifically, we also need to encourage them to become actors in preventing and resolving conflicts.

Women and men indeed both have their part to play in society. They have specialised knowledge about their communities during conflict, fragility or transitional stages. They each develop specific skills, which can be crucial in addressing a crisis or conflict. Therefore, empowering both men and women to actively contribute to conflict prevention and response to crisis strengthens community resilience.

However, women are significantly under-represented in mediation processes and peace negotiations. Currently only 9% of negotiators in peace talks are women. Women's under-representation in peace processes, as well as the lack of gender expertise in mediation teams, seriously limit the extent to which women's experiences of conflict, and consequent needs for justice and recovery, are addressed in these processes.

Getting women on board is probably not a panacea for ensuring peace. But even if further empirical research is needed, we can assume that more inclusive peace processes lead to more inclusive political settlements.

Increasing women's participation is a lot about reinforcing accountability. When a society agrees to reinforce accountability mechanisms, it weakens impunity. People no longer feel the need to turn to extrajudicial mechanisms get justice. Therefore the drivers for conflict weaken, potential disputes can instead be dealt with in a peaceful manner and peace processes have a better chance of being implemented.

Women's active participation in society - if we give them the opportunity - also contributes to socio-political stability as well as economic recovery, giving societies a better chance of reaching peace and sustainable development.

Let me take the example of agricultural production and food security: gender equality is described as instrumental to ending malnutrition and hunger. Women are more likely to spend their income

on food and their children's needs. They are key players in the farming sector - they supply most of the labour needed to produce food crops, and often control the use or sale of food produce grown on plots they manage. However women own less than 20% of the world's land. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates that, if women had the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms by 20-30%. This could reduce the number of hungry in the world by 100-150 million people.

Reducing poverty and enhancing economic development is, in turn, a major step towards securing peace. As economic development increases, it requires building effective, reliable and accountable security and justice institutions, which in turn help reduce the drivers for conflict and create the conditions for a more stable and peaceful society. There is increasingly global recognition that we must try to create a virtuous cycle of peace and development, if we are serious about ending both extreme poverty and conflict.

For these reasons, the European Union firmly believes in the positive role women can play in conflict-affected societies, and in building lasting peace and security.

Therefore, the European Union has always been and will continue to be an active supporter of the United Nations Women, Peace and Security Agenda (WPS), and of the implementation of UNSC resolution 1325 and its subsequent resolutions. The European Union has set up a Comprehensive Approach to the implementation of these resolutions. The Second Report on the European Union indicators for this Approach, endorsed by the Council in February 2014, announced that one of the European Union's priorities in the next reporting period (2013 - 2015) will be to promote women's involvement in peace processes.

We are committed to promoting women's equal and full participation in the prevention and resolution of conflicts - including local peace initiatives by women -, mediations, peace negotiations, peace-building, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and post-conflict reconstruction.

Mediation processes must adequately account for sexual violence, as well as the need to protect civilians from it and to fight impunity. With the adoption in 2009 of the *Concept on Strengthening European Union Mediation and Dialogue Capacities*, the European Union promotes the representation of women and the availability of adequate resources for dedicated mediation gender expertise from an early stage of mediation processes onwards.

The European Union has been supporting the WPS agenda in various more ways:

*By showing political leadership on the issue:* High representative/Vice-President Ashton makes a point of talking about women's full and equal participation in her speeches wherever possible; she also raises it in political dialogues and meetings with women's groups when on visit to third countries.

*By ensuring training, capacity building and awareness-raising of its own staff.*

*By making funding available to women's organisations*, often in partnership with United Nations bodies, notably UN Women. Let me provide you with some key examples.

- A 'Women Connect across Conflict' action (€1m), financed by the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, targets women's ability to influence and mobilise for dialogues on security and peace.
- The 'Women and Conflict Resolution' project (€1.6m), financed by the Instrument for Stability, aims at generating data and analysis on women's participation. It led to a high-level conference

in 2012, which launched the report 'Equal Power - Lasting Peace: Obstacles for Women's Participation in Peace processes'.

- In partnership with UN Women and UNDP, we are also working on *Enhancing Women's Participation in Peacebuilding and Post-Conflict Planning in Liberia, Timor-Leste and Kosovo*, with a €2m grant.
- Finally the European Resources for Mediation Support (ERMES) project (€3m), financed by the Instrument for Stability, aims - amongst other things - to deliver capacity to address gender issues in mediation processes.

Last but not least, *the European Union is supporting the WPS agenda* by strengthening the gender competency and dimensions of its military and civilian missions in the field.

2015 will be an important year in that the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary review of the implementation of UNSCR 1325 will coincide with the definition of the Post-2015 Development Agenda, but also with the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. We must seize this opportunity to ensure coherence between all these processes and also find the best ways to incorporate the WPS agenda in the Post-2015 framework.

2015 will give us the opportunity to create momentum, to reinforce priorities, to advocate for adequate financing and to fully reflect the role of women in peace and security.

## ***Perception from the Democratic Republic of the Congo***

**Ms Pétronille Vaweka**, *Expert and Advisor, Programme of Stabilization and Reconstruction of Armed Conflict Zones (STAREC), DRC*

### **I. Contexte**

Depuis plus d'une décennie, la République Démocratique du Congo a été confrontée à une situation de guerre, d'insécurité et d'atteinte aux éléments de sa souveraineté et de son intégrité.

Les multiples conflits locaux attisés par des interventions étrangères et les crises politiques internes ont entraîné des pertes en vies humaines et matérielles considérables au pays, provoquant ainsi le déplacement massif de la population, la destruction de son économie et la paupérisation de sa population, situation contrastant avec les richesses naturelles potentielles.

La République Démocratique du Congo a eu plusieurs défis à relever, notamment dans la protection des droits humains. Le gouvernement, la communauté nationale et internationale se sont investis à travers plusieurs projets exécutés sur le terrain, et une avancée significative est observée. Pourtant, dans la pratique, la protection des droits de la femme n'a pas enregistré une amélioration significative.

La Constitution congolaise est garante de l'accès équitable des citoyens aux services et emplois publics. Dès le préambule, il est reconnu que tous les congolais attendent de jouer pleinement leur rôle pour assurer un développement harmonieux et équitable des citoyens congolais.

Cette disposition de la Constitution reste théorique dans la plupart des cas. En effet, l'accès équitable des citoyens aux services publics pose quelques problèmes de fond. Dans la société congolaise, les femmes représentaient 52 % de la population pendant les élections présidentielles et législatives du 28 novembre 2011 ; pourtant, au moment des élections, 47 femmes seulement ont été élues sur l'ensemble du territoire national. Il nous faut absolument trouver des stratégies pour améliorer le taux de la participation des femmes dans tous les secteurs de la vie sociale, politique, économique et culturelle.

De nouvelles lois ont été votées pour un changement vers une nouvelle vision de la femme dans la famille et la société mais les femmes et les filles sont encore livrées à des violences diverses. Le statut juridique, social, politique ou économique de la femme est caractérisé par la discrimination et les coutumes rétrogrades.

## II. Rôle de la femme dans la société congolaise

### A. DANS LA TRADITION

Dans la conception traditionnelle, le rôle de la femme était limité à la maternité, l'éducation des enfants et d'autres travaux contraignants comme la recherche des aliments, du bois de chauffage et autres corvées ménagères pour sa famille. Malgré cela, la culture congolaise a prôné le respect et la sacralité de la femme. Elle est signe de vie et d'espoir.

### B. LA FEMME MÈRE

Elle ne l'est pas seulement pour ses propres enfants, mais pour tout le village. Les femmes ont souvent bénéficié d'une autorité morale en raison de leur rôle de mère. On leur permet d'exprimer des griefs ou toute autre forme de protestation. Même si les femmes sont exclues des dialogues ou négociations publics, elles jouent un rôle important dans les prises des grandes décisions pour la famille, la communauté ou le clan (par exemple, l'implication de la tante paternelle).

Chez nous, les femmes et même les jeunes filles sont, par respect, communément appelées mamans. L'on peut insulter le père de quelqu'un mais l'insulte à la mère n'est pas tolérée.

### C. LA FEMME ÉPOUSE

Elle doit conseiller son mari sur les décisions importantes. Celui-ci est tenu moralement de prendre au sérieux les remarques de son épouse. La femme de chef est régulièrement consultée en tant que détentrice des insignes royaux et de grands secrets du pouvoir de son mari. Elle peut être un agent d'information et de négociation. Dans certaines tribus, quand les hommes se battent et ne veulent pas arrêter la guerre, les femmes se déshabillent, se présentent nues et les hommes honteux, confus, s'arrêtent et font la paix. Des filles données en mariage réconcilient des villages ennemis qui ne pourront plus s'affronter pour ne pas tuer les neveux ou petits enfants communs.

Bien que la femme reste dans l'ombre de son mari, son frère ou ses fils, elle est respectée.



### III. Implication de la femme dans la consolidation de la paix

Avant d'aborder ce sujet, décrivons le contexte où les femmes se sont impliquées dans le processus de paix.

#### A. LE CONFLIT IDENTITAIRE ET LES VIOLENCES ETHNIQUES

Dans l'est de la République Démocratique du Congo, nous avons des conflits destructeurs liés aux ressources naturelles. Il y en a aussi d'autres, meurtriers, que l'on retrouve ailleurs dans le monde. C'est le genre de conflit qui met en présence des individus s'opposant à cause d'éléments d'auto-affirmation ou d'autonomie. Ce sont des rivalités où chaque partie veut à tout prix et par tous les moyens légitimer son auto-affirmation. Ce type de conflit, souvent séculaire, est le plus nocif qui soit. Les écarts et différences culturelles constituent très souvent des zones de nature à provoquer des chocs et des remises en question des uns et des autres.

Par ailleurs, les affinités et la solidarité entre les membres d'une même ethnie créent une proximité tribale ou régionale discriminatoire pour les autres peuples. Ces aspects de la violence ethnique sont réguliers dans l'Est de la République Démocratique du Congo, où souvent se déclenche un cycle de conflits aux conséquences incalculables, démesurées. Ces violences s'expriment de plusieurs manières et revêtent des formes diversifiées. On peut affirmer que les conflits identitaires sont la cause primordiale, sinon principale du cycle des violences. Chaque individu, chaque groupe pense qu'il est légitime de se battre pour son identité, sa survie. Voilà ce qui pousse à l'extrême, les gens qui attaquent ou se défendent avec une violence excessive.

#### B. INCIDENCE DES CONFLITS ET DES VIOLENCES SUR LES FEMMES ET LES ENFANTS

Les conflits violents mettent en exergue les différences façons dont réagissent les femmes et les hommes qui y participent et en sont affectés.

Les femmes et les enfants (filles et garçons) en sont souvent les cibles et les victimes les plus vulnérables. L'hostilité à leur égard se traduit par les tortures, les arrestations arbitraires, les déplacements forcés, les menaces et les intimidations diverses. Les femmes et leurs enfants subissent des fusillades, des bombardements, la famine, des épidémies, et sont confrontés à des chocs psychologiques et à la mort. Lors des violences ethniques, les femmes endurent des traumatismes moraux qui portent atteinte à la dignité humaine. Les violences et exploitations sexuelles sont utilisées comme arme de guerre, quel que soit le statut ou l'âge de la femme ou de la fille. Les femmes blessées ou ayant des complications de maternité subissent des traumatismes psychologiques et psychiques graves, allant de la simple dépression à la névrose et jusqu'à la folie. C'est dans ce contexte que des femmes courageuses se sont impliquées dans le processus pour ramener la paix, souvent dans des situations précaires, même lorsque certaines étaient personnellement victimes. Ces femmes ont une approche simple : celle d'être femme. Je le confirme, elles étaient plus écoutées que les hommes. Intellectuelles ou pas, ces femmes courageuses savent exprimer leur désarroi. On les trouve dans les agences de l'ONU, les affaires civiles, la police, l'armée, les ONG internationales ou toute association de la société civile.

Elles savent trouver le mot juste pour convaincre des chefs de guerres d'empêcher leurs combattants de détruire des villages et de violer des femmes. Convaincre les jeunes combattants hésitant à quitter le maquis et à se désarmer, convaincre une communauté à éradiquer sa haine.

Les femmes savent apaiser des tensions, la main posée sur la tête d'un enfant. Elles savent faire preuve de solidarité, de compassion et de sollicitude. Elles seules pouvaient faire parler les

personnes traumatisées. Ces femmes, par leur simple présence, ont constitué un grand réconfort pour toutes les personnes touchées par le conflit et la guerre.

En 2002, pendant le dialogue inter-congolais à Sun City en Afrique du Sud par exemple, les femmes, toutes tendances confondues, ont su mettre fin au bras de fer opposant les différentes délégations à ces assises et la République Démocratique du Congo a pu accéder à la transition.

Au Nord et au Sud Kivu, au risque de leur vie, les femmes œuvrent pour la paix. D'autres contactent les chefs des guerres qui sèment la terreur au sein de leurs communautés afin qu'ils arrêtent les atrocités. Elles font des plaidoyers au niveau tant national qu'international.

#### **IV. Les femmes impliquées dans la consolidation de la paix**

Au-delà des questions de compétence et de performance, la femme apporte son savoir-faire dans toutes les sociétés par une approche propre à elle et une analyse plus profonde des faits. La véritable force de la femme réside dans sa capacité à faire diminuer le potentiel de violence sans armes. La capacité de la femme consiste en l'aptitude à comprendre une situation donnée, une habilité d'adaptation et à développer une résilience dans des situations difficiles. Elle est ouverte et flexible, capable de s'adapter aux conditions d'existence par une bonne aptitude à communiquer.

La femme possède le talent et le pouvoir d'influencer, de guider et de convaincre. La femme est capable du pire ou du meilleur. Souvent elle incarne la vie, la douceur, la rigueur, plus d'amour et de patience. Dotée de la capacité d'écoute et de compréhension, la femme peut s'avérer être très efficace dans certaines situations, par son intuition et sa sensibilité maternelles dont la sollicitude génère l'audace, le goût du risque et la tendresse qui désarme.

#### **V. Conclusion**

Sans aucun doute, les femmes ont une mission spéciale dans le processus de consolidation de la paix. Dans toutes les sociétés et de tous temps, les femmes réconcilient. Il n'est plus à démontrer que la femme peut être un acteur de changement. Elle peut changer systématiquement les perceptions et les suppositions même des personnes concernées par les conflits et créer des occasions pour une nouvelle manière de vivre et d'agir.

Les femmes peuvent intensifier le changement et faire évoluer l'insécurité vers la confiance, le mépris vers la dignité, la haine vers la réconciliation. Pour y arriver les femmes utilisent la force de persuasion. L'enjeu est désormais de changer la culture de la violence entre individus dans nos communautés humaines et dans le monde qui nous appartient.

L'enjeu est de créer une culture de tolérance où les différends les plus graves sont appréhendés non pas dans un esprit de violence et de contrainte, mais d'intérêt mutuel de coexistence. Il ne s'agit pas d'éliminer nos différences, mais, de rendre les communautés aptes à assumer la paix. Il est essentiel de savoir résoudre ensemble nos conflits.

Il y a la guerre lorsqu'il n'y a plus d'alternative au conflit. Pourtant, si l'on cherche ensemble, il est possible de transformer nos conflits en un dialogue constructif. Le bénéfice serait immense pour tous.

Aujourd'hui, nous devons coopérer, nous sommes de moins en moins capables de contraindre les autres à faire ce que nous voulons, même nos propres enfants. Nous sommes tous responsables, décideurs politiques, chercheurs des universités, experts.

Les femmes en République Démocratique du Congo ont des capacités certes, mais elles ont besoin d'appui afin de changer l'histoire de leurs communautés, de leur pays et, pourquoi pas, l'histoire de l'humanité. Il faut soutenir la contribution de la femme dans le processus de consolidation de la paix et aussi renforcer leurs capacités afin qu'elles interviennent de manière significative dans la reconstruction sociale et le développement intégral de leur milieu de vie. La gestion des conflits est presque exclusivement entre les mains des hommes qui créent les conflits et les guerres.

Nous, les femmes, devons développer un nouveau type de leadership responsable. Nous devons amener les femmes à dépasser le stade de victimes, juguler la souffrance et renforcer notre résilience face à l'environnement hostile, et être des artisans d'un monde meilleur pour la femme et un avenir sécurisé pour nos filles. Nous avons suffisamment de forces en nous, nous devons exprimer cette force à travers notre volonté de façonner la société dans laquelle nous vivons. Nous avons un intérêt fondamental à œuvrer pour la paix au sein de nos communautés à travers une plus grande participation aux initiatives de consolidation de paix.

## ***A Perspective on Afghanistan***

**Ms Sophie Désoulières**, *South Asia Analyst, International Crisis Group (ICG), Islamabad*

*Women in peacebuilding processes: a perspective on Afghanistan*

While the subject of women, peace and security has received much attention notably since the UNSC passed resolution 1325 in 2000, upholding women's rights and participation in mechanisms of conflict resolution is still seldom seen as central to the real business of conflict management. Yet, women's protection and empowerment in conflict and post-conflict situations is not only essential for women's sake but is central to peacebuilding.

Afghanistan's stabilization ultimately rests on the State's accountability to all its citizens, and respect for its constitutional, legal and international commitments, including to human rights and gender equality. There will be no sustainable peace unless there is justice, and justice demands that the State respects and protects the rights of women, half its population. The extent that the significant legal, political and social gains women have made this past decade come under siege now will be an indicator of how much confidence we can have in the Afghan State's prospects in the mid to long-term.

Since the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001, Afghan women have played a major role in efforts to create a more inclusive political order, reverse the impact of decades of conflict and displacement and address the paucity of State services and protection. With international support, donor aid and as a result of their own efforts, women are now an essential part of the post-Taliban order and have played a major role in reconstructing the State and its institutions.

Today 40 per cent of all schoolchildren are girls. They are in the bureaucracy, the judiciary and the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). They are lawyers, entrepreneurs, journalists and civil society activists. Women are more than 27 per cent of parliament. A third of the seven million who voted on 5 April in the presidential and provincial council elections, according to the Afghanistan Independent Election Commission (IEC), were women.

In the last twelve years, parliamentarians, civil society activists and civil servants have pushed major improvements in women's legal status. With their lobbying, the State is now legally bound to protect women from violence. Passed by presidential decree in 2009, the Elimination of Violence against Women (EVAW) law has criminalized "customs, traditions and practices causing violence against women and which are against Islamic Sharia". The 22 listed offences include forced and underage marriage, denial of inheritance and rape.

But women's increased presence in the public sphere remains largely limited to urban areas and uneven implementation of the law undermines the rights and protections they have, acquired - a clear indicator that Afghans are yet to enjoy a substantial degree of physical security in their daily lives or to benefit from fully functioning and accountable State institutions.

Years of prioritizing counter-insurgency over community policing have impeded the emergence of a police force able and willing to protect women from violence and have perpetuated a climate of impunity. Women are a mere 1 per cent of the Afghan National Police (ANP). Female police are marginalized and often incapable of responding effectively to incidents of violence against women. A fraction of the incidents of gender-based violence are tried under the EVAW law. Very few cases even make it to the formal justice system; most are decided by local councils - *jirgas* or *shuras* - mainly dominated by strongmen.

Women in positions of authority are regularly threatened by insurgents but also by pro-government militias; many have been killed. Militants have attacked girls' schools, students and staff. Qualified female teachers and health workers are reluctant to work outside relatively secure urban centers, undermining access to education and basic health services for rural women and girls. Since the formal transfer of the security lead to the Afghan Security Forces in mid-2013, threats to women's security and mobility have increased.

Their rights are also under attack from yesterday's warlords, now powerbrokers both within and outside government. Conservative members of parliament are already threatening to reverse legal protections for women. Many former mujahidin who regained power after the Taliban's downfall may not challenge the political order so long as they have lucrative government positions, but have retained their militias to protect their political and economic interests. Because these private militias are not accountable to the State, they operate with virtual impunity. The more powerful the warlord and his militia, the more likely Human Rights violations will increase, and women's mobility will be restricted - undoing women's fragile gains, notably in access to health, education and justice.

If patchy implementation of the laws that protect and empower women raises doubts of Kabul's commitment, women are as much, if not more concerned about the efforts, with international backing, to broker peace with the Taliban. They have been sidelined in a process that will determine their future and that of their country. The role of female representatives in Kabul's High Peace Council (HPC) and Provincial Peace Councils (PPC), bodies tasked with reaching out to the insurgency, is largely limited to public outreach. It does not extend to talks with the insurgency. Given their exclusion and the opacity of the negotiations, there is reason for concern. The government and parliament may be tempted to backtrack on pro-women constitutional provisions and laws to appease conservative powerbrokers within and outside the armed insurgency. Women activists and parliamentarians are not comforted by rhetoric from Kabul and the international community, including U.S. and European Union assurances that any peace settlement would be based on respect for the constitution and women's rights.

Any peace process must be representative of the Afghan population and based on a broad public consensus on what is and is not for negotiation. Sustaining the past twelve years' gains, including constitutionally-guaranteed gender equality and adherence to laws protecting and empowering women, must be a negotiation prerequisite, not merely a desired outcome. Women's empowerment cannot be fully achieved without peace, but a sell-out on their rights would undermine prospects for a stable, inclusive, democratic post-transition Afghanistan.

It now remains to be seen how the upcoming administration in Kabul includes women in its setup and policies. The right signals from the international community will be essential to ensure that they honor their commitments, reinforce pro-women legislation, and prioritize the approval and implementation of a national action plan for UNSC resolution 1325 on women, peace and security.

Yet it is Afghans themselves that are best placed to ensure that the State be accountable to its citizens. Donors must continue to support Afghan civil society, NGOs and women's rights activists as well as women's presence in the political and economic spheres. Sustainable peace in Afghanistan is contingent on the inclusion of all segments of society, women included. The more empowered women are, through their presence in the public sphere and through a legal framework of rights and protection, the more they will be able to not only defend their rights as women but occupy their full place as citizens who have multiple allegiances be they ethnic, religious, political or professional.

## DISCUSSION

Moderated by **Mr Frank De Wispelaere**, *Director of the Thematic Direction in the Directorate General for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Affairs*

A wide range of questions and remarks followed this last session.

*Women's presence in peacebuilding processes does not necessarily guarantee a strong gender perspective.* Women do not belong to a homogeneous group: there can be many discrepancies and divisions between elite women who end up holding leadership positions and women who have had less access to education and opportunities. Depending on the cultural and social context of their country, their religious identities and other factors related to their personal circumstances such as age, level of education and marital status, women will have different needs and vulnerabilities. Consequently, it is important not only to call for women to take part in peace processes but also to ensure that those involved in such processes understand and take these specificities into proper consideration.

It was noted however that greater presence of women in peacebuilding processes should not necessarily be about having a greater gender perspective. A higher level of gender equality will be reached when women present at the negotiating table will have an authoritative and legitimate voice in the negotiations. It is only by helping women to arrive at these positions of authority and really having something to bring that they will be given a voice.

Participants argued that women who have been victims of violence in armed conflicts have a role to play in consolidating peace and dealing with the aftermath of the conflict because they are so close to the realities on the ground. As wives and mothers, they act as a moderating force in their everyday environment. The example was given of the DRC where women have played important roles in convincing their husbands, sons and brothers to hand in their weapons.

The importance of *involving internally displaced women and refugee women in mediation efforts and peace negotiations* was underlined. Not only would it enhance the legitimacy of these undertakings, but it would also help ensure that such initiatives are more representative of the broad spectrum of war-affected populations.

Recalling both the endemic nature of sexual violence as well as its exacerbation during conflicts, it was noted that *sexual violence may continue or even increase in the aftermath of a conflict*. While sexual violence is often considered as an issue that should be addressed in the context of humanitarian aid, during the transition phase from humanitarian aid to development aid this concern for addressing sexual violence often fades away. Addressing gender-based and sexual violence during this transition phase is vital to achieving sustainable development and peace.

The question was raised about *what can be done to contribute to a change of mentality in societies where women are victims of male domination*. A speaker explained that in its outreach activities, the European Union is not only undertaking development projects and programs mainstreaming gender issues, gender equality, women empowerment, economic empowerment and respect for Human Rights but it is also engaged in public diplomacy. Public diplomacy is an important soft power which can influence changes in mentality. Another possible solution put forward to change attitudes that foster violence against women was the use of traditional values regarding respect for women and for their role. The DRC was referred to as an example where, at some point, men can give power to women and listen to them. As many men are unemployed in the DRC, they

rely on their wives to sustain the family. The indispensable role of women in contributing to food security for the survival and running of the Congolese society brings opportunities for change by recognizing their value and granting them access to economic and social rights.

Finally, the extremely fragile situation of women in Afghanistan was discussed. As women's roles are completely defined by the family setting, women can't do anything in the public sphere without the support of the men in their family. There has however been many reluctance to bring women's issues to the table during peace building and negotiations in Afghanistan for two main reasons repeatedly put forward: the fact that it would be very culturally insensitive and the fact that it would not be realistic to expect peace with the Taliban if the situation of women is brought up during negotiations. These two arguments are very dangerous. In any conflict setting, culture and tradition freeze. Many of the issues referred to when talking about women in Afghanistan are not related to culture, but are part of what a culture of impunity has build over the years of conflict. In addition, raising the topic of women in negotiations with the Taliban would allow for the necessary foundations for durable peace to be posed





# CLOSING

## Concluding remarks

**Mr François Bellon**, *Head of the ICRC Delegation to the EU, NATO and the Kingdom of Belgium*

The Colloquium on Women and war reaches its end. Ladies and Gentlemen, Distinguished guests, debates were very rich and it is a challenge to present conclusions. I would nevertheless like to emphasize some important elements that were evoked.

In her *keynote address*, **Mrs Helga Schmid** described the tools of the European Union to address the issue of sexual violence, and its relentless efforts with partners such as the United Nations and the AU. The European Union also has a policy for mainstreaming gender and Human Rights into its foreign policy instruments.

ICRC **President Mr Peter Maurer**, in the opening, mentioned three possibilities to step up the response to protect women in war:

3. changing conditions in war and armed conflict to lead to opportunities for emancipation
4. reminding political entities of their responsibilities under International Humanitarian Law
5. helping victims overcome their injuries and suffering to instill resilience and rebuild their dignity

*Setting the Scene*, **Dr Florika Fink-Hooijer** underlined the very high number of women among victims of armed conflicts, be they regular civilians, displaced or refugees. The issue needs to be looked at in a comprehensive manner. **Ms Pascale Meige Wagner** reminded us that women can be direct victims in such situations, but also indirect victims when they are left alone with their children after the death or disappearance of their husbands. However, women are often less accessible and their situation less visible. **Ms Emma Bonino** noted that conflicts are extreme situations where existing problems and abuses are exacerbated, and repeated in an even more extreme way. The issue is complex, so is the response. One important aspect is to collect reliable documentation in order to ensure accountability.

In a second panel on *Protection*, **Ms Jenny**, **Mr Kolanowski** and **Ms Poulton** presented complementary views based on policy considerations, legal framework and action. The importance of better understanding the dynamic of conflicts as well as the notion of access came often in these discussions. It was also highlighted that, despite the cruelty of these situations, war has the power to positively modify societies if/when one can grab opportunities. This notably means to include women not only in designing and implementing programs aimed at protecting them, but also to include them in peace processes. As far as the legal framework is concerned, it was recalled that adequate norms are at our disposal, however violations of these rules still occur on a daily basis. We all have to work to modify behavior, get rid of the feeling of impunity and acknowledge that violence against women is not acceptable.

During the roundtable on *sexual violence*, **Ms Cécile Kamwanya Mulolo** showed how these types of violence have serious and multiple psychological and physical consequences. She highlighted the importance to address the issue in a holistic way. But as **Ms Catrin Schulte-Hillen** showed,

many obstacles exist. For instance, ensuring safe abortion care for women and girls in need of such care continues to be a challenge because of practical, social and administrative barriers. As for the International Committee of the Red Cross; **Ms Coline Rapneau** explained the organization's multidisciplinary approach developing and reinforcing its programmes, working with others, changing behaviours and providing life-saving help to abused women, vulnerable girls and the male victims of this crime. Finally, as highlighted by **Dr Nadine Puechguirbal**, women should not anymore be depicted as victims in need of protection, but as actors for change. We can no longer have 'patriarchy' driving the agenda.

*With regard to Women in Peacebuilding Processes*, **Mr Stephan Auer** insisted that women and not only men should be empowered for better prevention and sustainable action. He noted the importance of accountability and fight against impunity, but also the risks of retaliation resulting from these objectives. The Post-2015 Development Agenda will be an opportunity to ensure that women are better positioned in peacebuilding efforts. The impressive experience and courage of **Ms Pétronille Vaweke** reminded us how much women in DRC have suffered in conflict. But in a society where women are above all mothers and wives, some have had the courage and determination to work towards peace and reconciliation. **Ms Sophie Désoulières**, through her perspective on Afghanistan, noted that since the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001, Afghan women have played a major role in efforts to reverse the impact of decades of conflict and displacement. However, women in positions of authority are often marginalised, regularly threatened, and many have been killed. It now remains to be seen how the upcoming administration in Kabul includes women in its setup and policies. Here, the right signals from the international community will be crucial, as well as the donors' support to the Afghan civil society, NGOs, women's rights activists and women's presence in the political and economic spheres.

Sustainable peace in Afghanistan, in DRC and elsewhere is contingent on the inclusion of all segments of society, women included.

Before closing I would like to thank once more the chair and the panelists and all of you for having attended this colloquium as well as the EUISS for organising this joint event. I am looking forward to working on another thematic colloquium.

Thank you.

**Dr Antonio Missiroli**, *Director of the EUISS*

Let us not forget that, even as we speak, acts of violence are taking place and women are being used and abused all over the world.

Let me remind you of a couple of keywords heard here today: the transformative power of conflicts and the transformative power of victims; the new opportunities created by International Humanitarian Law but also the intricacies and the pitfalls of implementation; the discrepancy between good intentions and harsh realities (with the example of latrines in refugee camps as a test case); and the role of women as combatants with equal rights but also as actors, peace-makers and peace-builders.

Today we have heard what happens in the field. We have heard how aid is organized in far-off lands. It is now our duty to think how we can improve our understanding of the situation. The European Union, the International Committee of the Red Cross and most of the NGO organisational representatives have feelers on the ground. We have to use them more and better. We have to think about what sort of responses are required in a given situation and what sort of response is possible. We have to think how we can contain, stabilise and roll back a conflict situation and how we can prevent it from happening again, as conflict is recurrent and it tends to take place all over again in the same areas.

Thank you for your participation and attention.



# ANNEXES

## PROGRAMME

**30 SEPTEMBER 2014, BIBLIOTHÈQUE SOLVAY, BRUSSELS**

## WOMEN & WAR

### *Women & Armed Conflicts and the issue of Sexual Violence*

*A Colloquium organized by the European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)*

08.15-08.45	<b>Registration and Coffee</b>
08.45-09.00	<b>Welcoming Words by Dr Antonio Missiroli</b> , Director of the EUISS; and <b>Mr François Bellon</b> , Head of the ICRC Delegation to the EU, NATO and Kingdom of Belgium
09.00-09.15	<b>Keynote Address by Ms Helga Schmid</b> , Deputy Secretary General of the European External Action Service (EEAS)
09.15-09.30	<b>Keynote Address by Mr Peter Maurer</b> , President of the ICRC
<b>09.30-10.15</b>	<b><i>SETTING THE SCENE ON WOMEN AND ARMED CONFLICTS</i></b>
MODERATOR	<b>Dr Antonio Missiroli</b> , <i>Director of the EUISS</i>
PANELISTS	<b>Dr Florika Fink-Hooijer</b> , <i>Director for Strategy, Policy and International Cooperation, European Commission's Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (DG ECHO)</i> <b>Ms Pascale Meige Wagner</b> , <i>ICRC Deputy Director of Operations</i> <b>Ms Emma Bonino</b> , <i>Former Italian Foreign Minister</i>
10.15-10.45	<b>Coffee break</b>



**10.45-12.30      ROUNDTABLE I - PROTECTING WOMEN IN ARMED CONFLICTS**

CHAIR PERSON      **Ms Antonia Potter Prentice**, Senior Manager for Gender and Inclusivity, Crisis Management Initiative (CMI)

PRESENTATIONS      ***The EU Approach to Women in Armed Conflicts***,  
by **Ms Joelle Jenny**, Director, Conflict Prevention and Security Policy, EEAS

***Protection of Women under International Humanitarian Law***,  
by **Mr Stéphane Kolanowski**, Senior Legal Adviser, ICRC Brussels

***Protecting and Empowering Women in Armed Conflicts***,  
by **Ms Catherine Poulton**, Women's Protection and Empowerment Technical Advisor for Pakistan, Jordan, Mali and CAR, International Rescue Committee (IRC)

***Discussion***

12.30-13.45      **Lunch**

**13.45-15.45      ROUNDTABLE II - SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN ARMED CONFLICTS**

CHAIR PERSON      **Mr Eduardo Fernandez-Zincke**, Team Leader for Syria Regional Crisis, DG ECHO

PRESENTATIONS      ***Physical and Psychological Consequences of Sexual Violence in Armed Conflicts***,

by **Ms Cécile Kamwanya Mulolo**, Psychologist, Head of Social Service, Panzi Hospital, Bukavu

***Addressing the Causes and Consequences of Sexual Violence in Armed Conflicts***,

by **Dr Nadine Puechguirbal**, Coordinator, United Nations Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict (UN Action)

***Medical Response to Sexual Violence and the issue of Abortion***,  
by **Ms Catrin Schulte-Hillen**, Sexual and Reproductive Health International Working Group Leader, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)

***Multidisciplinary Responses to Sexual Violence in Armed Conflicts***,  
by **Ms Coline Rapneau**, Sexual Violence Advisor, ICRC Geneva

***Discussion***

15.45-16.15      **Coffee break**

**16.15-18.00      ROUNDTABLE III - WOMEN IN PEACEBUILDING PROCESSES**

CHAIR PERSON      **Mr Frank De Wispelaere**, Advisor General, Director of the Thematic Direction, Directorate General for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Affairs, Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

- PRESENTATIONS    ***Women's Participation in Peace Processes,***  
by **Mr Stephan Auer**, Director, Multilateral Relations and Global  
Issues, EEAS
- Perception from the Democratic Republic of the Congo,***  
by **Ms Petronille Vaweka**, Expert and Advisor, Programme of  
Stabilization  
and Reconstruction of Armed Conflict Zones (STAREC), DRC
- A Perspective on Afghanistan,***  
by **Ms Sophie Désoulières**, South Asia Analyst, International Crisis  
Group (ICG), Islamabad
- Discussion***

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## CONCLUDING REMARKS

- 18.00-18.15    **Concluding Remarks and Closure by Mr François Bellon**, Head of the ICRC  
Delegation to the EU, NATO and Kingdom of Belgium; and **Dr Antonio  
Missiroli**, Director of the EUISS





# ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Stephan Auer** is Director of Multilateral Relations and Global Issues with specific responsibilities for Multilateral Affairs, in particular UN and the Council of Europe, Development Policy and Development cooperation, Global Issues and Counter-Terrorism, supporting the work of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy at the European External Action Service (EEAS). He started his diplomatic career in the German Foreign Ministry in 1988. Further to assignments in London, Saudi-Arabia and Rome, he covered in the period 2010-2012 the position of Deputy Director General responsible for Globalization, Energy and Climate Policy at the German Federal Foreign Office.

**François Bellon** is the Head of the ICRC Delegation to the European Union, NATO and the Kingdom of Belgium since August 2010. Mr Bellon joined the ICRC in 1984, and has occupied numerous positions within the ICRC. Prior to Brussels, he has been the Head of ICRC Regional Delegation for the Russian Federation (2006-2010), the Head of Delegation in Israël (2002-2005), in Georgia (1999- 2002), in Budapest (1997-99), and in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (1994-97). Before that, Mr Bellon did several ICRC field missions in Azerbaijan (Nagorni Karabakh), Moldova, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Iraq and Lebanon. He also served at the ICRC Headquarters at the Middle East and North Africa Desk as well as in the Legal Division. He holds a Master in Law from the Lausanne University in Switzerland and completed a Postgraduate course in conflict management and emergency response at the Complutense University in Madrid.

**Emma Bonino** is currently a board member of the International Crisis Group (ICG), a Trust Woman Advisory Board Member of the Thomson Reuters Foundation and a Board Member of the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR). She is a former Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs. From 2008 to 2013 Emma Bonino served as Vice-Chair of the Italian Senate. She has been Minister for International Trade and European Affairs. As European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid (1994-1999), Emma Bonino was responsible for managing the European Union's Emergency Aid Program (ECHO) and was confronted to the major man-made crises of the 1990s (including the Great Lakes Region and the Balkans). From 2001 to 2005 she divided her time between Europe and Cairo, Egypt, where she was a Distinguished Visiting Professor at the American University of Cairo. Emma Bonino has also been campaigning for human right through supporting the ratification of the Maputo Protocol on "Women's Rights in Africa" to the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights and by supporting the adoption of UN General Assembly Resolution banning Female Genital Mutilation worldwide. Emma Bonino's other major international commitments have included the European Parliament's 2004 delegation to the Darfur region of Sudan and her November 2002 appointment as Chief Observer of the European Union Election Observation Mission to Ecuador's Presidential Elections. Since 1993, she has led the campaign for the establishment of the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda, and for the establishment of the International Criminal Court. Emma Bonino took part of the creation of the latter as Head of the European Commission Delegation to the Rome Diplomatic Conference in 1998.

**Sophie Désoulières** joined International Crisis Group as an analyst in 2009 with the South Asia project. Focusing on political, security and stability issues primarily in Afghanistan and Pakistan, she conducts field research, prepares reports, draws up policy recommendations and frequently takes part in advocacy efforts. Her areas of expertise include conflict induced displacement, cross-

border population movements, women's rights and international humanitarian and development assistance. Sophie holds a Master II in Social Anthropology from MMSH (Maison Méditerranéenne des Sciences de l'Homme) in Aix-en-Provence (France) and a Bachelor of Arts (BA) in International Development and Political Science from McGill University (Canada).

Following his promotion as Advisor General, **Frank De Wispelaere** was appointed Director of the Thematic Direction in the Directorate General for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Affairs on 11 June 2012. Prior to this appointment, M. De Wispelaere was interim Director of the Civil Society Direction (March - June 2012) and of the former Multilateral Direction (1 September 2011- march 2012). He was Head of the European Union Unit from October 2004. He served as Principal Administrator at the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers of the European Union, where he was in charge of disarmament and non-proliferation issues (1st February 1999- 31 January 2003). Between October 1988 and January 1999, he served as advisor in several Ministerial Cabinets, where he dealt, inter alia, with Central Africa. M. De Wispelaere holds a Master in Psychology from the University of Leuven.

**Eduardo Fernandez Zincke** is leading the Team in charge of the Syrian and Iraq Crisis at the Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection of the European Commission (ECHO). Previously he was in charge of Latin America and the Caribbean region in the same Directorate. Eduardo is medical doctor, specialised in Preventive Medicine and Public Health. Before joining ECHO in 2010, he worked in different roles related to the health sector at the European Commission, and he had previously worked at the Spanish National Transplant organisation (ONT) and at the International Department of the national School of Public Health in Spain.

**Florika Fink-Hooijer**, has spent most of her career in the Commission on foreign external policy matters and in particular on crisis management and conflict prevention. She is currently the Director for Strategy, Policy and International Cooperation at the Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection. Previously she was Head of Cabinet of Commissioner Kristalina Georgieva, who is responsible for humanitarian aid, international cooperation and crisis response. Inside the Commission Dr. Fink-Hooijer had set up the managerial and financial structures for CFSP and crisis management and has been directly involved in initiating numerous EU police, rule of law or protection missions in third countries. Her professional experience includes the design and management of various conflict prevention schemes such as instruments to counter the financing of terrorism as well as the EU's sanctions management in general. Dr. Fink-Hooijer has also been negotiating for the EU the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme to curb the trade in blood diamonds and has been responsible for EU relations with Japan, Korea, Australia and New Zealand. Inside the Secretariat General of the Commission she has been responsible for the Commission's external policy coordination after having advised various Commissioners as member of their cabinet on EU external policies at large as well as on justice and home affairs and internal market matters.

**Joëlle Jenny** is Director for Security Policy and Conflict Prevention at the European External Action Service. Prior to joining the EEAS she worked successively as a Swiss and a British diplomat, covering international security issues, non-proliferation/arms control, conflict prevention and peace building, including at the UN. She has worked for the UK's Department for International Development, the Swiss Foreign Ministry and the International Committee of the Red Cross. She worked extensively in Iraq, Yemen and the Palestinian Territories, and held postings in New York, Angola, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cambodia, Rwanda and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. She was also a research assistant at NATO. She holds a Master in International Security from the

Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in Boston, USA, and is an Honorary Fellow of the University of Exeter.

**Cécile Kamwanya Mulolo** est née le 11 février 1972 à Kabinda. Elle est licenciée en psychologie à la clinique de l'université de Kisangani. Elle est également titulaire de nombreuses formations, notamment en Médiation familiale, en Gestion du syndrome de stress post traumatique (PTSD) et Thérapie NET (Narrative Exposure Therapy), en Counselling psychosocial des femmes porteuses des fistules obstétricales et traumatiques, en Thérapie EMDR (Eyes Mouvement Desensibilisation and Processing) et relaxothérapie. Depuis 2004, Cécile Kamwanya Mulolo est psychologue et chef de service psychosocial au Programme d'Assistance aux femmes et filles victimes de viol et violence sexuelle de l'hôpital Général de Référence de Panzi à Bukavu (Sud-Kivu, RDC). Elle est mariée à Baudouin Mulolo Mandaba et est mère de cinq enfants.

**Stéphane Kolanowski** holds a Law Degree and a Master in Laws (LL.M.) in Public International Law. He joined the ICRC Legal Division (Geneva) in 1997, where he worked on different issues, such as Human Rights as well as on some arms related issues. In 1999, he participated in the build-up of the ICRC Delegation to the EU, NATO and the Kingdom of Belgium, a Delegation in which he is still working today as the Senior Legal Adviser. He is responsible for following relevant legal developments in EU and NATO policies and operations and for promoting and disseminating International Humanitarian Law for several audiences. Since 2013, Stéphane is visiting professor at the College of Europe. He has published articles on International Humanitarian Law, and participated in several conferences and seminars. He is also at the origin of the "Bruges Colloquium" in International Humanitarian Law.

**Peter Maurer** was born in Thun, Switzerland, in 1956. He studied history and international law in Bern, where he was awarded a doctorate. In 1987 he entered the Swiss diplomatic service, where he held various positions in Bern and Pretoria before being transferred to New York in 1996 as deputy permanent observer at the Swiss mission to the United Nations. In 2000 he was appointed ambassador and head of the human security division in the political directorate of the Swiss Department of Foreign Affairs in Bern. In 2004, Mr Maurer was appointed ambassador and permanent representative of Switzerland to the United Nations in New York. In this position, he worked to integrate Switzerland, which had only recently joined the United Nations, into multilateral networks. In June 2009, the UN General Assembly elected Mr Maurer chairman of the Fifth Committee, in charge of administrative and budgetary affairs. In addition, he was elected chairman of the Burundi configuration of the UN Peacebuilding Commission. In January 2010 Mr Maurer was appointed secretary of State for foreign affairs in Bern and took over the reins of the Swiss Department of Foreign Affairs, with its five directorates and some 150 Swiss diplomatic missions around the world. He succeeded Jakob Kellenberger as ICRC president on 1 July 2012. Mr Maurer is married and has two children.

**Pascale Meige Wagner** is Deputy Director of Operations at the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Since 1994, Pascale Meige Wagner has been working for the ICRC. She spent eleven years of humanitarian field work in eight countries (Southern Sudan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, India, Sierra Leone, Georgia, Rwanda, Nepal, Kosovo), focusing on protection and assistance to people affected by armed conflicts and violence. She was nominated "Gender equality adviser" at Geneva in 2005 where she developed ICRC policy relating to gender equality in the workplace and followed up through implementation. From 2008 to 2012, Pascale Meige Wagner took over the post of Head of Operations for Eastern Europe and Central Asia and covered the ICRC humanitarian operations and prevention work in the region's twelve countries. Since 2012, she is Deputy Director

of Operations and is part of the leadership team for ICRC field operations worldwide, overseeing resources and processes related issues (human resources and people management, operational effectiveness and result-based management, organizational efficiency, donors relations). Pascale Meige Wagner also supervises ICRC action on Women and war, and sexual violence. She is Board member of the ICRC Special Fund for the Disabled. This Foundation's aim is to ensure the continuity of former ICRC programmes for populations affected by conflict or war, and support other physical rehabilitation centres in low-income countries. She is also a member of the board of directors for the Center for Education and Research on Humanitarian Action (CERAH), a Geneva-based platform offering training and diplomas and conducting multi-disciplinary research on topics of humanitarian action. Pascale Meige Wagner holds two Master's degrees in International Relations, from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomatic (Massachusetts) in 1992 and the Graduate Institute of International Relations, at the University of Geneva in 1993.

**Antonio Missiroli** has a long career in various research and government institutions. Before becoming the Director of the European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS), he was Adviser at the Bureau of European Policy Advisers (BEPA) of the European Commission, in charge of European outreach, including relations with think tanks and research centres across the Union and beyond. Earlier to that he was Director of Studies at the European Policy Centre in Brussels, Research Fellow and Senior Research Fellow at the W/EU Institute for Security Studies in Paris, and a Visiting Fellow at St Antony's College, Oxford University. As well as being a professional journalist, he has also taught at the Universities of Bath and Trento, as well as Boston University and SAIS/Johns Hopkins (Bologna). He is currently visiting lecturer at the College of Europe (Bruges) and Sciences Po (Paris). Dr Missiroli holds a PhD degree in Contemporary History from the Scuola Normale Superiore (Pisa) and a Master's degree in International Public Policy from SAIS/Johns Hopkins University.

**Antonia Potter Prentice** has wide ranging experience on a range of humanitarian, development, peacemaking and peacebuilding issues. She has lived and worked extensively in, and on, conflict and post-war environments; increasingly specialised in women's empowerment she has worked directly with women and peace process actors in countries including Afghanistan, Cambodia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Libya, Indonesia, Myanmar, Nepal and Philippines, South Sudan, Timor-Leste, Yemen, and at the global policy level. Antonia is Senior Adviser on Mediation Support, Gender and Inclusion for the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI). Undertaking this role in her Athena capacity, Antonia provides strategic and programmatic direction and advice across CMI's operational and policy projects. She also acts as Senior Adviser to the Dialogue Advisory Group. Antonia has been Senior Associate to the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office, Project Manager and Senior Adviser for the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD) project, 'Women at the Peace Table - Asia Pacific' (2010-2013), having initiated HD's work on these issues in 2005 when on staff. She has provided expert support to the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders and Terre des Hommes. She was Country Director for Oxfam GB in Indonesia, its largest programme in South-East Asia, from 2008 to 2010 and has worked for a number of NGOs, mostly in Asia, having been based in Afghanistan, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Switzerland (Geneva), Timor-Leste, the USA (New York) and currently, Belgium (Brussels). She also sits on the board of the Democratic Progress Institute. Antonia has a degree in Classics from Oxford University and a Masters of Science in Voluntary Sector Organisation from the London School of Economics and Political Science. Antonia has published widely on Athena's core issues.

**Catherine Leila Poulton** is a Women's Protection and Empowerment technical adviser for the International Rescue Committee. She is based in Brussels. With over 10 years field experience in

conflict affected settings, including Chad, Darfur, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Catherine has focused her efforts on ensuring women's voices are heard and taken into account in humanitarian responses, as well as setting up and managing lifesaving services for survivors of GBV. Catherine has also been extensively involved in violence against women and girls prevention work, GBV emergency response, and currently provides support to the IRC's WPE programmes in Jordan, Mali, CAR and Pakistan.

**Nadine Puechguirbal** is Coordinator to the UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict in New York (UN Action is a network of 13 UN entities with the goal of ending sexual violence in conflict). Previously Senior Gender Adviser for the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) in New York, Dr Nadine Puechguirbal used to work as the Women and war Adviser for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Dr Nadine Puechguirbal was deployed as the Senior Gender Adviser for the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) and for the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC). She also worked for the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Dr. Puechguirbal is a Senior Fellow and Visiting Professor at the UN-affiliated University for Peace (UPEACE) in Costa Rica where she teaches yearly for the Department of Peace and Conflict Studies.

**Coline Rapneau** is the Sexual Violence Advisor at the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Geneva. She began her career in 2004 as a Legal Assistant in the Chambers and then the Defence Counsel of the International Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia and International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. Coline has worked for the ICRC since 2007. She spent six years as humanitarian field delegate in four countries (Guinea Conakry, DR Congo, Haiti and Cambodia) where she mainly worked on Protection (protection to civilian populations, restoration of family links) and Detention Programs. In 2013, she took up the role of Sexual Violence Advisor in the Directorate of Operations at the ICRC's headquarters in Geneva. As part of the Women and war team, Coline's work has a strong focus on the prevention of conflict-related sexual violence. She also assists and supports delegations in their activities related to sexual violence in the field, ensures better coordination between relevant units at headquarters, and takes part in strengthening ICRC's positioning on this issue in regional and international fora. Coline holds a Master's degree in International Relations with a major in International Law from the Graduate Institute of International Studies (HEI, Geneva) where she specifically focused on the mechanisms of Human Rights, International Humanitarian Law and Criminal Law. Her Master's thesis explored international sexual crimes and their status before the International Criminal Tribunals (topic: "Rapes and forced pregnancies as crimes of International Law before the International Criminal Jurisdictions").

**Helga Schmid** has been Deputy Secretary General for Political Affairs in the European External Action Service since 2011. She was previously Director of the Policy Planning and Early Warning Unit (Policy Unit) of the High Representative for the CFSP in the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union, Brussels. Before that she worked for the Federal Foreign Office in Berlin as Head of the Political Staff and Head of the Minister's Office (2003 - 2005) and Deputy Head (2000 - 2003). Ms Schmid was Political Adviser to Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer and to the Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel. Before that she was the Press and Public Affairs Officer at the German Embassy in Washington (1991 - 1994) and Assistant Private Secretary to the Minister for European Affairs (1990 - 1991). She has studied international and European law, economics, international relations at the Diplomatic Academy and she has an MA in English and Romance languages, literature, history and politics (1980 - 1987) from Munich University (Ludwig Maximilians Universität) and Sorbonne, Paris.

**Catrin Schulte-Hillen** is MSF's reproductive health and sexual violence care working group leader. Starting 1989 Catrin worked with Medecins Sans Frontieres as a midwife, coordinator and project manager in conflict and post conflict situation, mainly in Africa, but also in Latin America and the Balkans. Before becoming MSF's reproductive health and sexual violence care working group leader, Catrin was Program Director in of MSF in New York and worked for years as health advisor and consultant on a number of specific assignments and evaluations, mainly for MSF, but also for other NGOs and the European Commission. As working group leader, Catrin contributes to defining MSF vision, medical policies and strategies and to improving the implementation of MSF assistance in the area of reproductive health and sexual violence care. Catrin is a licenced midwife, holds a Masters of Public Health, a licence in applied epidemiology and statistics and a diploma in business administration.

**Pétronille Vaweka Rutaya** est experte en Gestion des conflits à la Coordination Nationale de Stabilisation et Reconstruction (STAREC) en République Démocratique du Congo (RDC). Pétronille Vaweka Rutaya est née le 18 novembre 1948 à Bunia, Province Orientale (RDC) et est graduée en Développement Rural à l'Institut Supérieur d'Etudes Sociales (ISES) à Bukavu. Après plusieurs années d'administration d'œuvres sociales et territoriales, de centres de formation pour femmes et jeunes filles à l'adduction d'eau, elle devient Animatrice socioculturelle à la radio Candip Bunia. Pétronille Vaweka Rutaya encadre ensuite des enfants mineurs condamnés par la justice et initie la création de centres de nutrition en faveur d'enfants atteints de malnutrition pendant la guerre de l'Ituri. Pétronille Vaweka Rutaya est initiatrice de l'ONG Fondation pour la Paix Durable, convertie en Femmes pour la Paix Durable et l'Environnement (FPDE). Elle est élue Présidente de l'Assemblée Spéciale Intérimaire de l'Ituri (2003-2004) par les notables de l'Ituri et nommée Députée Nationale de la transition par le Président de la République, Joseph KABILA, pour négocier la cessation des hostilités, créer la légitimation et l'appropriation locale et nationale de l'opération « ARTEMIS ». Pétronille Vaweka Rutaya sera Commissaire de District de l'Ituri, après l'occupation ougandaise (2004-2008) pour la restauration des différents organes de l'administration, police, tribunaux civiles et militaires, démobilisation et réinsertion des enfants soldats dans leurs communautés. Elle prépare et conduit le processus de désarmement des groupes armés et communautés, y compris les initiatives de négociations directes avec les chefs de guerre dont certaines ont conduit à la libération des soldats onusiens et certains membres du personnel de l'administration locale, otages des groupes armés. Pétronille Vaweka Rutaya est membre du Comité des Femmes de l'Union Africaine (2004-2010) et membre du Comité de suivi des Accords de Goma (Désarmement des groupes armés du Nord et Sud Kivu). Elle est conférencière dans différents forums multilatéraux sur le maintien de la paix, au pays et à l'étranger. En plus de plusieurs formations en Gestion des conflits, Pétronille Vaweka Rutaya a bénéficié d'une formation sur la bonne gouvernance et la démocratie aux USA, organisée par le « State Department » en 2006.







# ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AMISOM</b>	African Union Mission to Somalia
<b>ANP</b>	Afghan National Police
<b>ANSF</b>	Afghan National Security Forces
<b>AU</b>	African Union
<b>CMI</b>	Crisis Management Initiative
<b>CSDP</b>	Common Security and Defence Policy
<b>DDR</b>	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
<b>DEVCO</b>	European Commission Directorate General for Development and Cooperation
<b>ECHO</b>	European Commission Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid & Civil Protection
<b>EEAS</b>	European External Action Service
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>EUISS</b>	European Union Institute for Security Studies
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization
<b>HRW</b>	Human Rights Watch
<b>IASC</b>	The Inter-Agency Standing Committee
<b>ICC</b>	International Criminal Court
<b>ICG</b>	International Crisis Group
<b>ICRC</b>	International Committee of the Red Cross
<b>IDP</b>	Internally displaced person
<b>IHL</b>	International Humanitarian Law
<b>IOM</b>	International Organisation for Migration
<b>IRC</b>	International Rescue Committee
<b>MSF</b>	Médecins sans Frontières
<b>NATO</b>	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organisation
<b>SSR</b>	Security Sector Reform
<b>TRC</b>	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UN DPKO</b>	United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations
<b>UNGA</b>	United Nations General Assembly
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNSC</b>	United Nations Security Council





