

ENDING

SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED
VIOLENCE IN HUMANITARIAN CRISES

OUTCOME STATEMENT

**Oslo Conference on
Ending Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Humanitarian Crises
CO-HOST
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The Governments of Norway, Iraq, Somalia and the United Arab Emirates, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), with invaluable support from Norwegian Church Aid, hosted the international conference “Ending Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Humanitarian Crises” in Oslo, Norway on 23-24 May. This is the first time States, the United Nations and the ICRC have come together to end sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in humanitarian crises, in conflict and disaster.

The conference brought together SGBV survivors and specialists, members of 167 national and 76 international civil society organizations, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, representatives from 100 nations, global leaders and regional and international organizations. It was agreed that strengthening SGBV prevention and response must be a humanitarian priority. Participants aimed to mobilize stronger political commitment and raise financial resources to prevent and protect people at risk of SGBV in humanitarian crises. The event re-energized the commitment of all participants to combat gender inequality and scale up prevention and response to SGBV, always taking a survivor-centred approach. It gave visibility and recognition to the key role of national and local organizations, including local women’s organizations.

In addition to the close to 50 actors - States, UN agencies, NGOs and others – which submitted written political, policy and best practice commitments, many others outlined specific measures and political will to end SGBV. The several hundred commitments made relate to standards and legal frameworks, operational support, SGBV prevention and response services, leadership and coordination, and others which are specific to country contexts and areas of work. Particular focus was given to implementation of legal frameworks and strategies, as well as an increase in operational support to ensure that survivor-centred services and care are available in all crises. Media also committed to amplify the voices of women, not only as victims but as agents of change, to avoid sensational reporting.

States committed to provide a total of over US\$ 363 million to SGBV prevention and response in 2019 and beyond. In addition, we take note of generous unearmarked and core funding to humanitarian partners working to prevent and respond to SGBV, as well as funding to the Central Emergency Response Fund and country-based pool funds.

The conference began with a civil society-led day focusing on root causes and gaps, as well as ways and means to address them. Civil society leaders urged the humanitarian community to transform how gender equality and prevention and response to SGBV are prioritized, integrated and coordinated. They encouraged humanitarian decision-makers to include women's NGOs in planning and decision-making processes.

Building on the results of the first day, the second day of the conference was an opportunity to reaffirm and build upon commitments to relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, starting with SC Resolution 1325; the goals of the Road Map of the Call to Action on protection from gender-based violence in emergencies; the UN commitment to the centrality of protection in humanitarian action; the World Humanitarian Summit; and the Resolution of the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent on sexual and gender-based violence adopted by the States Parties to the Geneva Conventions and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in 2015. Participants endorsed a wide range of global and national policy commitments, normative frameworks and best practices to end SGBV. By establishing and enforcing policy norms and legal frameworks, States can promote and sustain the protection of women, men, boys and girls from SGBV. Meanwhile, international organizations, including the United Nations and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, can formulate and influence policy, coordinate multi-organizational plans and leverage resources for SGBV services to meet identified needs. Working together, we can achieve more for survivors and those at risk of SGBV.

The conference took strides towards enhancing partnerships with local civil society organizations, including women's NGOs, to promote and sustain local action to address SGBV.

In order to address gender inequality we acknowledged that:

- Gender inequality and an unequal distribution of power between women and men are root causes of SGBV. A person's risk of SGBV is subject to personal, situational and social factors, including gender dynamics that place individuals, particularly women and girls, at high risk.
- We must make concerted efforts to address gender inequality, ensure that human rights are respected, and include local women and women's organizations in decision-making.
- Governments and international organizations should adopt and implement national and international institutional policies, legal frameworks and standards to strengthen gender equality and prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence.

In order to put survivors at the centre, we agreed that:

- Women and girls are key actors in humanitarian response and must be acknowledged as powerful agents of change in their own lives and communities. Local women are

often the first responders to SGBV in emergencies and are at the forefront of SGBV programming.

- Women and women's organizations may shift power dynamics in communities in positive ways and challenge norms that condone discrimination against women and girls and the violation of their human rights.
- Local women's organizations, including those working with women with disabilities, must be engaged in identifying protection risks, finding solutions, strategic planning and decision-making across all sectors.
- Adolescent girls and women and girls with disabilities are at particularly high risk of sexual and gender-based violence and deserve particular attention. Children born of war often experience discrimination and stigmatization by family and society.
- While the need for continued emphasis on addressing SGBV affecting women and girls cannot be overstated, we also must take into consideration the needs of male survivors of sexual violence, as gaps in services have become more apparent.
- We need to improve access to gender-sensitive, age-appropriate, non-discriminatory and comprehensive healthcare, including sexual and reproductive health and psychosocial support, and we need to ensure the dignity and safety of survivors. The conference stressed the importance of confidentiality and privacy, the need to end the social stigmatization of survivors, and an increased focus on livelihoods.

In order to ensure accountability, we emphasized that:

- The primary responsibility for addressing SGBV lies with States. This responsibility includes strengthening national legislation against SGBV, holding perpetrators to account, and providing adequate services to survivors.
- In order to end SGBV, a collective response is needed - involving States, donors, humanitarian organizations, SGBV experts, clusters and local partners.
- Stronger measures are needed to strengthen system-wide accountability. Humanitarian leaders and actors must prioritize SGBV programming and risk mitigation across all sectors. The use of accountability tools such as the GBV Accountability Framework, adopted by the Call to Action in 2018, was encouraged.
- SGBV is a core responsibility for Humanitarian Coordinators and heads of organizations, along with gender equality, the centrality of protection, accountability to affected populations and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse.
- The GBV Area of Responsibility within the protection cluster, led by UNFPA, has a mandate to ensure that survivors and those at risk receive life-saving, multi-sectoral and timely care.

Security sector responsibilities:

- Commitments were made to ensure that armed groups and security forces, and their detaining authorities, have appropriate internal systems for monitoring and responding to sexual violence.
- It was recognized that security actors can play a critical role in preventing and mitigating SGBV, in part as they may have access to information regarding risks and trends, and the means to protect those at risk.

- It was agreed that security actors would benefit from training and coordination with humanitarian actors to gain broader understanding of SGBV issues and fulfil their role and responsibilities in prevention and response.

To improve financing of SGBV prevention and response, participants were strongly encouraged to:

- Continue to specify funding requirements in humanitarian crises.
- Prioritize funding for SGBV programming, protection, prevention and risk mitigation across all sectors in every humanitarian response right from the beginning.
- Explore practical ways to fund local and women's organizations as directly as possible.
- Work to resource SGBV response capacity through UN-coordinated appeals, NGOs and civil society, and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.
- Provide longer-term and multi-year funding to enable organizations to be more effective in their response.
- Make available, in partnership with affected States, adequate funding for effective coordination, specialized SGBV services, sexual and reproductive health services according to applicable national laws, legal aid, shelter, livelihood and socio-economic and psychosocial support.

Beyond the Oslo conference

Over the last two days we have taken significant steps in the fight against SGBV in humanitarian crises. We now expect States as well as international, regional and local organizations to deliver on their commitments. Affected communities will benefit from increased and improved support for survivors and better protection for those at risk of SGBV.

Informed and inspired by survivors present at the conference and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Dr. Denis Mukwege, we encourage everyone to ensure that the needs and priorities of survivors are at the centre: "Nothing about us without us."

We will collectively work to sustain the momentum of this conference. We will advocate for increased humanitarian support for SGBV response, through both earmarked and core funding. We encourage donors and organizations to report all funding for SGBV to the Financial Tracking Service (FTS) managed by OCHA. To strengthen SGBV response throughout the humanitarian system, we will review the fulfilment of the financial pledges and political, policy and good practice commitments made today. Meanwhile, it will be important to report on implementation of commitments through existing mechanisms such as the Call to Action and the 33rd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (for States Parties to the Geneva Conventions as well as for the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement).

The Oslo Conference is one of many SGBV-related high-level events in 2019, but the only one focusing on humanitarian prevention and response to SGBV. Co-hosts will sustain their engagement by bringing the messages from Oslo Conference to upcoming events. Further, we plan a follow-up meeting in 2020 in the margins of the General Assembly to assess progress in the response to SGBV in humanitarian crises.