

CÔTE d'IVOIRE

From 2002 to 2007 a civil conflict in Cote d'Ivoire s divided the country along political lines, broadly between North and South. Tensions resurfaced in late 2010 following disputed presidential elections and continuing political unrest and some resurgent armed conflict has led to allegations of human rights abuses. In 2015 the Government established six legal aid clinics and three legal information centres to address conflict-related sexual violence. This launched investigations into sexual violence crimes committed during the 2010-11 election crisis. There have been some encouraging developments in legislative reform – the statute of limitations on the prosecution of crimes listed in the Rome Statute were removed; command responsibility was brought in line with international standards and excluded amnesty of sexual violence crimes.

1. What are the issues surrounding the stigma faced by survivors of sexual violence, their families, communities etc.

- In many settings, survivors are asked to pay for medical certificates.
- Where alleged perpetrators have been prosecuted, sexual violence offences are often reclassified as indecent assault, a lesser charge, so that they can be processed promptly by first instance courts. Serious crimes are normally tried by criminal courts but they face a severe backlog.

2. Who is doing something already in these countries incl. FCO, DFID, Champion countries, local initiatives (NGO, government, leaders)

- The **UN** country team is supporting the national police to establish specialised units and gender desks.

3. Specific activities that need doing e.g. access to legal or medical care, judicial reform, evidence gathering etc.

- The adoption of a National Strategy to Combat GBV signals political will, though its implementation has been stalled by the absence of a budget commensurate with its aims.¹
- Support implementation of the FRCI “Action Plan in Sexual Violence”, including through embedding expertise; support the establishment of special units to address sexual violence within the police and gendarmerie; support the “Cellule d’Execution” in reviewing the legal framework; develop an assistance plan with the Cellule Spéciale d’Enquête et d’Instruction in the Ministry of Justice; provide assistance to the National Judicial Training Institute to review its training curriculum, to include sexual violence.²
- Raise monitoring and awareness to mitigate the possibility of a recurrence of sexual violence.

¹ SRSR Report: Conflict Related Sexual Violence 2016

² Team of Experts: Rule of Law/Sexual Violence in Conflict: Table of Activities 2016-17

- Proposed Team of Experts work includes supporting the Cellule d'Execution in reviewing the legal framework; providing assistance to the National Judicial Training Institute to review its training curriculum, to include sexual violence.
- Advertise the fact that a medical certificate is not required to file a complaint. This misunderstanding, along with the high cost of the certificate, is a barrier to accountability for sexual violence crimes.