

SOMALIA

Somalia has faced chronic insecurity; the destruction of its social, economic, political, security and legal infrastructure; and widespread human rights abuses, including sexual violence. Women remain vulnerable to rape, female genital mutilation (FGM) and other forms of gender based violence. Local and regional insecurity remain major factors and are hindering efforts to tackle SV.

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

- Social norms in Somalia contribute to stigmatisation of survivors of sexual violence and can act as a barrier to accessing critical support services and to obtaining justice
- Survivors often refrain from pursuing their cases in court in part due to the stigma, lack of confidentiality and the negative behavioural attitudes towards them by the legal authorities.
- Individuals seeking redress for SGBV crimes through customary law are considered to be acting outside of traditional norms which are based on collective responsibility and often seek to address SGBV on the basis of reconciliation between communities.
- In many settings, survivors are charged fees by police to open a case-file. They are also charged fees to feed the accused while they are in detention.
- “Restitution” through marriage is widely accepted by victims’ families in order to avoid “shame”.
- The judicial process is complicated by local power dynamics and the politicization of cases.
- Displacement significantly increases vulnerability to SGBV – there are 1.12 million displaced people, 70-80% of which are women.
- Women from internally displaced communities are even more limited in their access to redress on account of their gender and clan and. Fear of stigma and further aggression towards them and their families often compels them to stay silent about SGBV.

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

- **NGO** sponsored gender-based violence crisis hotline.
- **UK (DfID)** work includes supporting women-headed households, maternal and early childhood healthcare, access to justice, economic empowerment and improving women’s political participation.
- **UK (FCO)** will continue to provide financial and political support to authorities to deliver the National Action Plan.

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

- Encourage the Government to adopt the pending Sexual Offences Bill and to implement the commitments made in its National Action Plan to Combat Sexual

Violence in Conflict (2013), including training and accountability measures for the army and police.¹

- Support the consultation process on the Action Plan on Sexual Violence in the regions; support the Special Unit within the Police to address conflict-related sexual violence; support efforts of the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development in its leadership to oversee the implementation of the Action Plan; provide technical assistance to the legislative Drafting Committee of the Ministry of Justice.²
- Given the lack of access and monitoring data, it is difficult to establish a baseline on the levels of SV in Somalia. Data is hard to come by and difficult to verify.

¹SRSR Report: Conflict Related Sexual Violence 2016

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