

SOUTH SUDAN

Hostilities continue to take place in several parts of South Sudan despite a peace agreement signed in August 2015 by the parties to the non-international armed conflict that broke out in 2013. Despite the peace agreement, sexual violence continues unabated by parties to the conflict. The weakness of the South Sudanese justice system has contributed to a reliance on customary justice to settle sexual violence crimes.

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

- Owing to prevailing violence, lack of awareness of the need for victims to be treated in a timely manner, and absence of adequate and sufficient care, victims of sexual violence are often unable to receive the health services and medical treatment they require. The few health facilities that remain functional lack supplies, equipment and qualified staff.
- Psychosocial care and support mechanisms are particularly insufficient. Victims also face the risk of being rejected or persecuted by their communities.
- Aid agencies have limited access to vulnerable people because of security and logistical constraints.
- Humanitarian agencies often depend on parties involved in conflict/violence to allow them safe access to vulnerable communities.
- In South Sudan it is estimated that 90% of cases are resolved through customary courts, which often require rape victims to marry the perpetrator as a form of settlement.¹
- Rape is considered a taboo in the local communities so many victims shy away from talking about it.
- A family may be reluctant to report or seek treatment for a sexual attack because that would affect the girl's chances of getting married. In the community's eyes she has lost "value" by being the victim.

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

- UK (NGO) reducing SV through the Establishment of community level Women's Peacekeeping Teams in Lakes State. This was funded through the Magna Carta Fund and was implemented by Nonviolence Peaceforce, an international NGO in South Sudan.
- UK (NGO) project towards the prevention of SV in South Sudan. Implemented by Oxfam South Sudan through South Sudan Law society. The project aimed to empower sexual violence survivors in Protection of Civilian camps in the UN compound through awareness and capacity building.

¹ SRSR Report: Conflict Related Sexual Violence 2016

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

- To accelerate implementation of the commitments made under the respective communiqués on CRSV and call for the operationalisation of Special Units on SGBV in the police.²
- Support the Government in developing an implementation plan for the Joint Communiqué and support its implementation; assist the South Sudan People's Liberation Army to develop an action plan around military-related commitments made in the Joint Communiqué and supports its implementation; assist South Sudan National Police Service to develop an action plan around police related commitments made in the Joint Communiqué and support its implementation; support the South Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement-In Opposition in developing an implementation plan for the Unilateral Communiqué and support its implementation.³

² SRSR Report: Conflict Related Sexual Violence 2016

³ Team of Experts: Rule of Law/Sexual Violence in Conflict: Table of Activities 2016-17