

On the 17th of July during the annual Open Debate, UN Member States will reflect on the progress that has been made to prevent and end sexual violence in conflict. In the 20 years since UNSC Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security was adopted, progress has been made in recognizing conflict-related sexual violence as a war crime, crime against humanity and genocide, in pushing for accountability and justice, and in listening to survivors' testimonies and needs. With the global push back on women's rights such as sexual and reproductive health and rights, and the current COVID-19 global pandemic there is a high risk that this progress is rolled back.

The Netherlands has always been a strong advocate for the full implementation of the WPS agenda. There is an urgent need to translate UNSCR 1325 and other related resolutions into actions to create real change on the ground. Time is running. The Dutch Signatories of the National Action Plan 1325 Mukwege Foundation, Impact Center against Human Trafficking and Sexual Violence in Conflict, Mukomeze Foundation, Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice, together with members of WO=MEN Dutch Gender Platform, ao CARE Netherlands and het Grote Midden-Oosten Platform, therefore jointly call on the Netherlands to support the following:

1. Ensure a holistic survivor-centered approach in care, support, reintegration and access to justice

- **Ensure sustained and concrete actions to ensure that access to holistic, survivor-centered care is available to all victims and survivors of CRSV globally.** By this we mean a system of care encompassing medical and psychological care, socio-economic support and reintegration, and access to justice. This system must be organized around the survivor, offering a personalized response according to her or his individual needs. Such as one stop centers.
- **Put access to sexual and reproductive health and rights at the forefront of CRSV response.** The Dutch government has taken the lead in championing access to sexual and reproductive health services, and more recently access to mental health and psychosocial services in conflict settings. We encourage it to continue and strengthen its demand for this essential response to survivors of CRSV.
- **Ensure aid is provided in a methodical way that spans multiple areas of life and that includes the disrupted community of which the victims of CRSV are part of.** Fe by using community-based psychosocial therapy.
- Holistic care enables victims to become survivors, and for survivors to become activists in their own right. **Ensure survivors have a seat at the table at every opportunity where policies and programs affecting them are being decided**, including humanitarian and (food)security programming, SRHR programming, peace and reconciliation processes, and transitional justice processes.

2. Ensure international, national and local accountability

- **Existing impunity of perpetrators must end.** Impunity is a main driver of CRSV. Accelerate the implementation of all former commitments made by the UN Security Council and non-elected UN Member States to end impunity.
- **Ensure holistic justice which genuinely addresses the harms survivors have suffered, and which centers them in its design and delivery.** In the design of justice structures, we argue for a survivor-centered approach which gives survivors access to all forms of transitional justice, and the choice about what best meets their needs. Justice mechanisms should be designed together with survivors, and measures taken to ensure the processes are sensitive to

their specific needs (e.g. providing mental healthcare during the process). The Dutch government has a leading role as the host state for the ICC, and in championing peace and justice. We further argue that **holistic justice and redress for survivors has a strategic role in preventing further crimes of this nature, by tackling the impunity and denial which fuel the cycle of violence.**

- Next to the international accountability mechanisms - such as (ad hoc) international criminal tribunals, ICC - **ensure a greater focus on survivor-centred national and local justice mechanisms, and if needed gender sensitive transformation of these systems, for the prosecution of CRSV.** National and local prosecution is close and accessible to the people who survived and/or witnessed the crimes and where the bulk of the perpetrators (often still) are.
- **Ensure a long-term process guidance for psychosocial support and empowerment for witnesses, starting when statements and testimonies are being made and collected** (before a case is taken on board in court). Witness testimonies are only possible when no existential worries exist and when there is a protected, safe space available around the survivors themselves.
- **Ensure better recognition of, and ways to address the nexus between CRSV and other crimes,** such as human trafficking and terrorism (so called 'sexual terrorism'), as also requested by the UN in several resolutions.
- **Recognize Hiv-infection through rape as a weapon of war.** There are multiple cases of CRSV where victims were purposely infected with HIV/AIDS. This needs to be addressed and recognized as a weapon of war.

3. Ensure long-term support to CRSV survivors and their communities

- **Keep track of, recognize, address and respond to the long-term consequences of CRSV.** CRSV response often focuses on the short-term consequences, whilst many survivors and their communities deal with consequences over the long-term. This includes so-called 'secondary diseases' (e.g. cancer, TBC, AIDS) that may develop years later when CRSV victims are infected with HIV/AIDS and their immune system is severely compromised. These women and men need lifelong high-quality healthcare, to enable them to participate fully in society. Aging women and men often need a social support system to take care of their basic needs. If parents die, children that are left behind need basic care, education, etc. Often survivors need ongoing counselling (e.g. community-based psychosocial therapy).
- **Provide structural attention and support to children born out of CRSV.** The children, as well as their mothers, need support to accept or to deal with the challenges given to them. The relationship between mother and child is often vulnerable and strained. The relationship with their community can be problematic and can lead to stigmatization and exclusion. Both the children and their mothers need socio-economic support and empowerment to make a living and better future.
- **Ensure – as part of a holistic survivor-centered approach - that women and girls are supported to become leaders/agents of change within their community or beyond.**