

Office of the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) on Sexual Violence in Conflict Zainab Hawa Bangura:

Press Release - For Immediate Release

UN Workshop Highlights Plight of Men and Boys as Victims of Sexual Violence in Conflict

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New York - Shame, stigma, devastating health repercussions, criminalization, decreased livelihood opportunities and a lack of services were just a few of the challenges identified during a two-day workshop on combatting conflict-related sexual violence against men and boys.

Representatives of UN agencies and civil society organizations joined legal experts, medical practitioners, researchers and survivors from around the world to discuss what could be done to address the issue of men and boys who are victims of sexual violence in conflict. The workshop identified several issues that require immediate attention in order to combat this problem, including: addressing inadequacies in legal frameworks that ignore or criminalize male victims and allow perpetrators to enjoy impunity; addressing gaps in research to foster a better understanding of the causes, consequences and scope of male-directed sexual violence; and addressing shortcomings in the programmatic response to sexual violence against men and boys to ensure they have access to medical and psychosocial services that take into account their needs and offer survivor-centred assistance.

The Office of UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and the United States Mission to the United Nations co-hosted the meeting, and in opening remarks the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Zainab Hawa Bangura, said that, "The crippling repercussions of rape in war are devastating for women, but our sons and brothers who are victims also suffer in silence. They too experience health complications related to sexual violence in conflict such as physical injuries, sexually transmitted diseases and psychological stress and trauma."

A survivor of sexual violence from Bosnia told workshop participants that there was a dire need for tailored responses for men and boys who were victims of conflict-related sexual violence, and that their voices needed to be heard and their experiences acknowledged.

The phenomenon of men and boys sexually assaulted during conflict is not new. In fact, research shows that male-directed sexual violence has taken place in more than 25 countries in the last few decades and a recent survey in Eastern DRC found that 15 percent of male respondents had been victims of sexual violence in conflict. The most recent Secretary-General's report on Sexual Violence in Conflict also noted that, "More monitoring and information regarding male victims and the types of sexual violence perpetrated against them is required to tailor prevention initiatives, sensitization campaigns, treatment protocols and services for survivors."

The outcome of the conference will be a report that outlines the most pressing needs in the area of sexual violence in conflict against men and boys and how various stakeholders can best address them.

Ambassador Stephen Rapp, United States Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes Issues in the Office of Global Criminal Justice, delivered the conference keynote address, and UN Assistant Secretary General for the Department of Safety and Security, Mbaranga Gasarabwe, also addressed workshop participants at the opening session. Ambassador Rosemary DiCarlo, acting interim United States Permanent

Representative to the United Nations, spoke about the importance of addressing this problem as a peace and security matter as well as a public health issue.

Conference participants came from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, New Zealand, Switzerland, Uganda, the United Kingdom, and the United States. UN staff members from UNHCR, UNFPA, DPKO, UNDP, OHCHR, UN Women, UN Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict and the Office of the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict were also in attendance.

Ms. Bangura concluded the conference by saying, "Acts of sexual violence leave visible and invisible scars that have long lasting and devastating repercussions. Therefore, we must address sexual violence in conflict in all its manifestations and stamp it out in every corner of the globe, stand up for whomever is affected by it and go after anyone who commits it."

Presentations made at the conference containing data and additional information can be found online at:
<<http://www.slideshare.net/osrsgsvc/presentations>>
<http://www.slideshare.net/osrsgsvc/presentations>.

For additional information, please contact:

La Neice Collins at +1 212 963 1160 or <<mailto:collins3@un.org>> collins3@un.org, or Suhail Khan at +1 917 294 8047 or khan30@un.org, with the Office of the SRSG on Sexual Violence in Conflict.

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