RESEARCH PAPER

RECOGNIZING REPRODUCTIVE VIOLENCE WITHIN THE WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA

Global Justice Center
Human Rights Through Rule of Law

UN WOMEN

FOR ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS

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Global Justice Center
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ABOUT UN WOMEN

UN Women exists to advance women's rights, gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. As the lead United Nations entity on gender equality, we shift laws, institutions, social norms and services to close the gender gap and build an equal world for all women and girls.

We keep the rights of women and girls at the centre of global progress – always, everywhere. Because gender equality is not just what we do. It is who we are.

ABOUT GJC

The Global Justice Center (GJC) is a feminist human rights organization dedicated to promoting gender equality through the rule of law, with consultative status to the United Nations. GJC combines international legal interpretation with advocacy to advance a gender-equal world where every person lives free from violence, has full bodily autonomy, and has the power to access justice to protect and promote their human rights. For more information, please visit www.globaljusticecenter.net.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2000, the United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 1325, which initiated the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, setting out a normative framework for addressing and remedying the distinct gendered harms of conflict. The WPS agenda, now including ten resolutions, is structured around four thematic pillars: prevention, protection, participation, and relief and recovery.[1]

While the WPS agenda encompasses a broad range of issues, a central focus has been addressing conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV). This focus has been reflected in WPS Security Council resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1960 (2010), and 2467 (2019), as well as in the Secretary-General's annual reports on CRSV.[2] Resolution 1960 established a comprehensive United Nations architecture to prevent, address, and report on CRSV across all global conflicts, while resolution 2467 affirmed a 'survivor-centred approach' as the guiding framework for these efforts. Together, these developments have contributed to the WPS agenda's robust capacity to address CRSV.

In recent years, WPS and human rights actors have increasingly recognized the need to build stronger response architecture to address all forms of gendered harms in conflict, including gender persecution, targeted violence against women in public life, and reproductive violence.

Increased attention to reproductive violence will better position the WPS agenda to address gendered harms. Reproductive violence is defined as "intentional acts or omissions that cause harm by interfering with reproductive autonomy and rights, or violence directed at people because of their actual or perceived reproductive capacity."[3] It is a distinct form of gender-based violence that violates guarantees of bodily autonomy and which can – but need not – involve a sexual element. Examples of reproductive violence include forced pregnancy, forced abortion, enforced sterilization, forced contraception, interference with autonomy over breastfeeding, and destruction or denial of access to reproductive health needs, including for menstruation.

Reproductive violence can have grave, lifelong consequences. For example, a person's ability to have children may be permanently foreclosed or coerced, and life-long kin relationships may be created or destroyed. Despite these profound impacts, reproductive violence has often been overlooked in conflict or treated as an inevitable side effect of other forms of violence. As a result, victims of reproductive violence have gone un- or under-recognized, which can limit access to vital services, redress for harms, justice for survivors, and appropriate rehabilitation programs, as well as lead to prevention efforts that do not address the risks and inflammatory impacts of reproductive violence.

The documentation of reproductive violence as a distinct harm is an emerging and evolving enterprise. Human rights experts, criminal prosecutors, civil society, and academics are actively engaged in efforts to improve this documentation, as they were a generation ago, when early efforts to document and seek justice for CRSV coalesced. Recent developments in international law and domestic jurisprudence have increasingly acknowledged reproductive violence as a distinct harm.[4] Women human rights defenders have also brought attention to the reproductive harms that women in conflicts and crises are experiencing.[5]

As the WPS agenda moves into its next quarter century and the United Nations prepares for a new Secretary-General in 2027, the WPS agenda will benefit from more consistent, explicit attention to reproductive violence as a distinct harm. This will improve recognition of victims; enable more effective response and prevention efforts; ensure more comprehensive documentation, justice, accountability, and reparations measures; and reduce barriers to participation in public life, including peacemaking, for reproductive violence victims. Greater acknowledgement and integration of reproductive violence in conflict is therefore an essential tool for fulfilling the WPS agenda's goals of preventing, addressing, and remedying the gendered consequences of conflict and expanding women's participation in conflict prevention, peacemaking, and peacebuilding.

Section II of this paper describes reproductive violence and explains why its express recognition in conflict matters. Section III offers a brief overview of the WPS agenda and how reproductive violence has been recognized within it to date. The section then outlines and provides examples demonstrating how each pillar of the WPS agenda would be strengthened by fuller recognition of the role of reproductive violence in conflict. Section IV offers conclusions and recommendations to better combat gender-based harms in conflict and fulfill the promises of the WPS agenda through express attention to reproductive violence.

1

REPRODUCTIVE VIOLENCE: A DISTINCT HARM

A. WHAT IS REPRODUCTIVE VIOLENCE?

Reproductive violence is a distinct form of gender-based violence defined as "intentional acts or omissions that cause harm by interfering with reproductive autonomy and rights, or violence directed at people because of their actual or perceived reproductive capacity."[6]

Reproductive autonomy is a subset of bodily autonomy that refers to the right, power, and agency to make free and informed decisions about reproduction, including whether or not to reproduce and the timing, conditions, and other factors of reproduction.[7] The right to exercise reproductive autonomy is protected under international law.[8]

The concept of reproductive violence recognizes that people's ability to control their own reproductive lives has profound consequences for their overall ability to exercise agency, pursue their life goals, and participate in society.[9] Accordingly, severe violations of reproductive autonomy constitute distinct and serious harms.

Forced pregnancy and enforced sterilization are the most well-recognized forms of reproductive violence because they are expressly prohibited in the statute of the International Criminal Court.[10] But there are myriad other forms, including forcibly preventing births,[11] forced abortion, forced contraception, interference with autonomy over breastfeeding, denial of access to abortion under some circumstances, destruction or denial of access to reproductive health supplies including for menstruation,[12] blocking access to information about sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and healthcare, targeted attacks on reproductive healthcare facilities, torture or other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment that targets reproductive capacity, and targeting of sexual or reproductive organs.[13]

Reproductive violence and sexual violence are both forms of gender-based violence, which may overlap: some acts may constitute both, while others fall within only one category.[14] Sexual violence is defined as "any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, or other act directed against a person's sexuality using coercion or without consent."[15] Non-sexual forms of reproductive violence include, for example, some instances of forced contraception,[16] deprivation of access to sexual and reproductive healthcare, including menstrual hygiene supplies, and the destruction of healthcare facilities.[17]

Reproductive violence is a distinct form of gender-based violence defined as "intentional acts or omissions that cause harm by interfering with reproductive autonomy and rights, or violence directed at people because of their actual or perceived reproductive capacity."

In many cases, reproductive violence forms part of ideological projects that seek to enforce discriminatory and inequitable visions of society. These may include patriarchal norms and pronatalist policies that insist on motherhood as the essential duty of all women and girls,[18] racial supremacist visions that prioritize the reproduction of certain groups while inhibiting or discouraging the reproduction of others,[19] eugenicist projects that seek to limit the reproduction of persons deemed 'unfit,'[20] colonial expansion enabled by inhibiting the fertility of Indigenous populations while accelerating the reproduction of the colonizing group,[21] heteronormative policies that limit parenting to heterosexual and cisgender couples,[22] or misogynistic stereotypes that normalize state and other third-party control of sexual and reproductive autonomy.[23] The ideological and practical significance of reproduction in the lives of both individuals and societies makes measures to control fertility a frequent tactic to marginalize certain groups. At the same time, patriarchal structures across cultures and contexts tend to normalize external control of reproduction, which disproportionately impacts women and girls, rendering these denials of autonomy relatively invisible.

B. RECOGNIZING REPRODUCTIVE VIOLENCE AS A DISTINCT HARM

The impacts of reproductive violence can be unique, profound, and long-lasting. For example, a person's ability to have children may be foreclosed or coerced, derailing the person's life project. This violence can create or destroy kin relationships, leading to expulsion from community or forced integration into another community. Some forms of reproductive violence, such as interference with breastfeeding, including from starvation, or forced separation of children from parents, can also impose physical harm on children or permanently alter the relationships between children and parents. Some forms of reproductive violence, undertaken as part of the attempted or actual destruction of a protected group, can contribute to genocide.[24] The destruction of reproductive healthcare also contributes to steep increases in maternal mortality and morbidity, amplifying the death toll and suffering of conflict.[25]

Historically, reproductive violence in conflict and crisis has been ignored or treated as an inevitable side effect of other forms of violence, including sexual violence. As a result, victims have gone un- or under-recognized, which limits their access to support, redress and rehabilitation. Vital reproductive services may be under-resourced in humanitarian responses, with impacts on maternal mortality, morbidity, and gender equality that last decades.[26] Without adequate documentation, prevention efforts may also fail to address the risks and inflammatory impacts of reproductive violence. Moreover, lack of recognition of the harms leads to incomplete justice for victims, with perpetrators escaping accountability.

Recent developments in international law have acknowledged reproductive violence as a distinct harm. In December 2023, the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court issued an updated Policy on Gender-Based Crimes, which identified reproductive violence as a form of gender-based violence and indicated that gender-based violence can include either sexual or reproductive violence, or both.[27] The November 2022 Kinshasa Declaration on the Rights to Reparation and Co-creation of Survivors and Victims of Conflict-Related Sexual and Gender-Based Violence included forms of reproductive violence in its broad understanding of conflict-related violence.[28] In March 2026, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights held that reproductive violence constitutes a form of gender-based violence that States are required to prevent and punish under the Belem do Para Convention.[29] The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in February 2026 called for increased attention to reproductive violence among other forms of gender-based violence.[30] In July 2026, the Human Rights Council adopted by consensus a resolution on women's and girls' human rights in humanitarian situations – the first time that a UN negotiated outcome document explicitly named

reproductive violence as a distinct category of gender-based violence.[31] Domestic jurisprudence has also interpreted CRSV to include reproductive violence, such as forced abortion and forced contraception use.[32]

The Security Council has also heard testimony from women human rights defenders in recent years outlining the destructive impacts of reproductive violence across multiple conflict settings on the Security Council's agenda. For example, at the Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security in October 2025, a Palestinian women human rights defender briefed the Council on what she described as the four stages of reproductive attacks in Palestine: "on survival and intimacy, pregnancy and gestation, labor and delivery, and childrearing and parenting," intending to curtail "the ability of Palestinians in Gaza to reproduce and continue life."[33] Other country briefings have included discussion of forced marriage, forced pregnancy, and forced reproductive labor in Sudan and targeting of SRH infrastructure in Haiti.[34] On the 25th anniversary of the WPS agenda in October 2025, a Joint Press Statement delivered on behalf of Security Council signatories to the Shared Commitments on WPS affirmed that "reproductive violence constitutes a violation of international law."[35]

By better incorporating, identifying, and documenting the types of reproductive harms that victims and survivors experience in conflict and crisis, the WPS agenda will better reflect their lived realities. Clear and express attention to reproductive violence will improve recognition of victims; enable more effective response and prevention efforts; ensure more comprehensive documentation, justice, accountability, and reparations measures; and reduce barriers to participation in public life, including peacemaking, for the victims of reproductive violence. As the following sections will demonstrate, greater acknowledgement of the complex nature of reproductive violence in conflict is an essential tool for fulfilling the WPS agenda's goals of preventing, addressing, and remedying the gendered consequences of conflict and expanding women's participation in conflict prevention, peacemaking, and peacebuilding.

Clear and express attention to reproductive violence will improve recognition of victims; enable more effective response and prevention efforts; ensure more comprehensive documentation, justice, accountability, and reparations measures; and reduce barriers to participation in public life, including peacemaking, for the victims of reproductive violence.

2

THE WPS AGENDA AND REPRODUCTIVE VIOLENCE

A. OVERVIEW OF THE WPS AGENDA

The WPS agenda originated from the vision and advocacy of women peacebuilders who understood firsthand the distinct gendered impacts of conflict. They advocated that the UN Security Council recognize these disparate impacts and acknowledge that lasting peace was not possible without the full, equal, meaningful, and safe participation of women in all aspects of decision-making.[36] The WPS agenda is organized around four interrelated and mutually reinforcing pillars:

1. The **Prevention Pillar** calls for the prevention of conflict generally, as well as specific steps to "improv[e] intervention strategies in the prevention of violence against women, including by prosecuting those responsible for violations of international law; strengthening women's rights under national law; and supporting local women's peace initiatives and conflict resolution processes;"[37]
2. The **Protection Pillar** requires protecting the legal and physical safety and rights of women and girls, including "protection of women and girls from sexual and gender-based violence" and all other forms of violence in situations of armed conflict;[38]
3. The **Participation Pillar** requires the full, safe, equal and meaningful "participation of women at all levels of decision-making" and conflict resolution;[39]
4. The **Relief & Recovery Pillar** ensures that relief and recovery measures, including humanitarian aid, crisis response, and post-conflict reconstruction, adopt a gendered lens to address the distinct needs of women and girls.[40]

The right of people of all genders, and women in particular, to exercise bodily autonomy is woven throughout these pillars.[41] This includes the right to be protected from gender-based violence, which violates bodily, sexual, and reproductive autonomy.[42] The ability to access protection, participate in peacebuilding, and rebuild lives inherently depends on the capacity to make choices about sexual, reproductive, and other health outcomes and to access essential sexual health and reproductive services.[43] The WPS agenda thus affirms the right to exercise agency over one's own body and health, and to be protected from gender-based violence in both conflict and post-conflict situations.[44]

B. RECOGNITION OF REPRODUCTIVE VIOLENCE IN THE WPS AGENDA THUS FAR

The documentation of reproductive violence as a distinct category of harm is an emerging and evolving enterprise. Human rights experts, criminal prosecutors, civil society, and academics are actively engaged in efforts to improve this documentation, as they were a generation ago when early efforts to document and seek justice for CRSV coalesced. These earlier efforts led to the recognition of rape as a war crime and an act of genocide in the jurisprudence of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), and the enumeration of specific sexual violence crimes in the Rome Statute.[45] The WPS agenda also focused particularly on CRSV over the past two decades. But in recent years, understanding of gendered harms in conflict has begun to broaden to include, for example, gender persecution, targeted violence against women in public life, and, increasingly, reproductive violence.[46]

The current description of CRSV within the WPS agenda already includes some forms of reproductive violence, including those that do not necessarily entail a sexual element. However, they are not identified as reproductive violence explicitly. The United Nations defines the term "conflict-related sexual violence" as including "rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, *forced pregnancy, forced abortion, enforced sterilization*, forced marriage, trafficking in persons when committed in situations of conflict for the purpose of sexual violence/exploitation and any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity perpetrated

against women, men, girls or boys that is directly or indirectly linked to a conflict" [emphasis added].[47] Some of these forms of CRSV can be achieved without involving conduct that is sexual in nature. For example, enforced sterilization can be achieved through medical procedures, radiation, or chemical exposure.[48] Forced pregnancy under international criminal law refers to the *confinement* of a person forcibly made pregnant—but the confinement itself need not have a sexual component.[49] Forced abortion can be achieved without any sexual act, for example through forced consumption of abortifacients.[50]

In recent years the Secretary-General's reports on WPS have increasingly recognized reproductive violence and its impacts, helping to improve its recognition and documentation. By 2024, the Secretary-General used the term "reproductive violence" directly to describe severe violations of reproductive health and rights in Gaza,[51] and in 2025, the Secretary-General's WPS report stated that "women and girls are also affected by high levels of reproductive violence, including forced sterilizations, forced pregnancy and deliberate destruction or blocking of sexual and reproductive healthcare," and identified the "destruction of maternal healthcare and sexual and reproductive health facilities in conflict zones" as a form of reproductive violence.[52] The Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (SRSG-SVC) has also highlighted reproduction and reproductive violence.[53] For example, through a dedicated report prepared by the SRSG-SVC in 2022, the Secretary-General recognized women and girls who become pregnant as a result of sexual violence in conflict, and children born of sexual violence in conflict, as "often invisible victims."[54]

While the UN system has increasingly moved toward recognizing reproductive violence in conflict, the WPS agenda would benefit from a more consistent, express application of a reproductive violence lens. The concept of CRSV has already been used to identify and analyze some forms of reproductive violence. But without a specific category in which to place these violations, and a standardized and systematic practice of looking for them, these harms have not been consistently captured by current documentation efforts.[55] Moreover, the reproductive consequences of documented violations also may not be captured absent a specific focus on reproductive violence.

C. REPRODUCTIVE VIOLENCE ACROSS THE FOUR PILLARS OF THE WPS AGENDA

The concept of reproductive violence offers a key tool to strengthen each of the WPS agenda's four pillars, making them more responsive to the needs of civilians in conflict settings. The following sections provide examples and analysis that demonstrate how applying a reproductive violence lens can better fulfill each pillar of the WPS agenda. Many examples could apply across several pillars. They are presented in relation to certain pillars to illustrate specific points, rather than as a comprehensive assessment of their relevance to the WPS agenda.

Prevention

Under the **prevention** pillar of the WPS agenda, recognizing reproductive violence would help to account for and avert violations of bodily and reproductive autonomy, including those that contribute to conflict. In particular, efforts to control reproduction can be important indicators of unfolding genocide, making these acts significant to early warning efforts to prevent or interrupt genocides.[56] Acknowledging both the reproductive consequences or motives of abuses, as well as specific reproduction-related risks and harms of conflict, also allows for more effective prevention by establishing clear boundaries and behavioral norms and by identifying how violations can be experienced differently depending on reproductive capacity.

In Russia and Ukraine, the Secretary-General's 2023 annual report on sexual violence in conflict, compiled by the Office of the SRSG-SVC, reported violence in

detention involving "electric shocks and beatings to the genitals, electric shocks to the breast, threats of castration (removal of male genitals), [and] genital mutilation" by both Russian and Ukrainian authorities.[57] Ukrainian victims reported that Russian soldiers regularly articulated reproductive motives for the torture, taunting victims that they would subsequently never be able to reproduce.[58] Some victims also reported statements indicating genocidal intent linked to these reproductive impacts.[59]

The SRSG-SVC reported this violence, noting that "[i]n most documented incidents involving adult male victims, sexual violence was used as a method of torture during their captivity...."[60] However, in this case, the reproductive aspects of this sexual torture may also provide crucial warning signs that violence may be escalating, potentially with specific discriminatory intent. If the reproductive motives of these forms of violence are not recognized, prevention efforts may not be triggered in time to avert serious international crimes, including persecution and genocide.

This pattern – in which sexual violence and sexualized torture are carried out with the intention and effect of destroying the reproductive capacity of a targeted group – has been widely documented but often under-analyzed. In the Tigray region of Ethiopia in 2020, for example, the UN documented objects being inserted into women's bodies for the express purpose of stopping them from giving birth.[61] Yet this articulated intent, and the implications for both the scope of crimes committed and the prevention efforts they warranted, were largely overlooked in reporting on the crisis.[62]

In contrast, in Sudan, the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission documented patterns of sexual and reproductive violence directed specifically at particular ethnic groups that were accompanied by racial and ethnic rhetoric, which it found to indicate genocidal intent.[63] Likewise, in Palestine, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel found patterns of reproductive violence accompanied by statements indicating genocidal intent.[64]

Genocide prevention efforts may require an understanding of how kinship is determined in particular societies to anticipate how efforts to destroy a population through reproductive violence would likely manifest: as forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or other means.

In other cases, reproductive violence could be used as a means of genocide or persecution through coerced reproduction, rather than destruction of fertility. For example, an Ethiopian woman was told by members of a regional militia who raped and imprisoned her in 2020 that if she were a man she would have been killed, "but girls can make Amhara babies."[65] Similarly, sexual violence was used deliberately to forcibly impregnate Bosnian Muslim women in the former Yugoslavia.[66] This 'occupation of the womb' was intended to permanently stigmatize victims, prevent them from reproducing voluntarily within their own community, and produce 'Serb' babies, under the perpetrators' logic

that the ethnic identity of the perpetrator would determine the identity of the resulting child, and erase the next generation of the victims' ethnicity.[67]

Documenting and understanding reproductive motivations, although challenging to parse, as well as the reproductive consequences of violations is crucial to developing comprehensive efforts to prevent and stop them. Genocide prevention efforts may require an understanding of how kinship is determined in particular societies to anticipate how efforts to destroy a population through reproductive violence would likely manifest: as forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or other means.[68]

Documentation of reproductive violence can also provide important evidence to enable accountability for, and shape prevention efforts against, other international crimes such as enslavement. For example, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic documented forced contraceptive use and forced abortion used to ensure that Yazidi women and girls enslaved by ISIS were not pregnant when they were slave traded.[69] This practice facilitated repeated slave trading and demonstrated the perpetrators' view of the victims' status as chattel whose bodies were fully subject to the demands of their captors.[70] Indeed, control over reproduction is a frequent goal, consequence, or side effect of enslavement, and the intimacy of this control constitutes a "power[] of ownership".[71] The reproductive violence thus provides indicia of ownership, one of the elements of the international crime of enslavement.[72] Recognizing the role of reproduction in these situations could improve identification of forms of enslavement that might otherwise be overlooked, thereby strengthening accountability for these crimes by facilitating prosecution at the international level and preventing further enslavement by interrupting criminal networks.[73]

Protection

Meanwhile, **protection** from sexual and gender-based violence and all other forms of violence in situations of armed conflict[74] necessarily entails recognizing reproductive violence. Protection efforts cannot comprehensively address, monitor, investigate, or respond to reproductive violence that is not identified, and therefore protection efforts may be ill-suited to achieve their goals. In particular, recognizing that interference with access to SRH services can constitute a form of reproductive violence would strengthen WPS analysis by highlighting the particular protection risks that this interference represents – namely, that the absence of SRH services is not simply a neutral reflection of limited capacity, but often represents a deliberate strategy targeting particular populations.

Armed conflicts obstruct access to SRH services while simultaneously heightening the need for such services by exacerbating the occurrence of gender-based violence.[75] In conflict, these services are frequently destroyed or restricted by law or in practice, despite international human rights law and international humanitarian law guarantees of the right to access the full range of SRH services, including abortion, particularly for rape victims,[76] in line with Security Council resolutions 2122 (2013),[77] 2106 (2013),[78] and 2467 (2019).[79] These conditions contribute to, among other consequences, reproductive violence resulting from the destruction or denial of SRH services. This denial of access to SRH services can be deadly; over 50 percent of maternal deaths occur in humanitarian contexts, with many of these deaths attributable to destruction of or interference with reproductive healthcare and services.[80]

For example, in Myanmar, the UN and others have reported how the military has weaponized menstruation by obstructing access to and banning menstrual products, leaving women to improvise with leaves or newspaper and at heightened risk of infection.[81] The military has also attacked,[82] raided, and occupied healthcare facilities, interfering with access to

reproductive healthcare and negatively impacting maternal health.[83] The Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar has found systematic commission of sexual and gender-based crimes in detention, including "reproductive violence, particularly against women and girls, because of inadequate access to menstrual hygiene, to maternal or postnatal healthcare or to nutrition."[84] These tactics weaponize biological and social aspects of sex, gender, and reproduction to increase the suffering of a target population, with the aim of demoralizing and thereby defeating them.[85] Such a pattern of human rights violations targeting people on the basis of their gender may also constitute gender persecution, among other international crimes.[86]

The Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel also documented a lack of access to water and sanitation due in part to sustained Israeli attacks on water treatment infrastructure and hospitals and the blocking of humanitarian aid, including, specifically, menstrual hygiene products.[87] This deprivation degraded the dignity and psychological well-being of women and girls, put them at risk for infections that can result in infertility and birth complications, and increased risks of sexually transmitted infections. In this instance, the Commission identified reproductive violence expressly, finding that "Israeli targeting and destruction of sexual and reproductive healthcare infrastructure constitutes reproductive violence which has resulted in serious physical and mental harm to pregnant, post-partum and lactating women...."[88]

In February 2026, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan reported that *de facto* officials had ordered health centers and pharmacies not to supply contraceptives, and had confiscated stocks. Health workers had been warned not to provide family planning information or services, and women were also banned from medical training.[89] The report found that "taken together, these measures amount to systematic reproductive violence: a form of gender-based violence that targets reproductive autonomy through acts or omissions that interfere with reproductive rights, bodily integrity, and decision-making capacity."[90] The Special Rapporteur rejected the explanation that these outcomes reflect limited capacity of the *de facto* authorities, finding instead that "the cumulative effect of Taliban policies has been to deliberately design and implement a system that withholds essential healthcare from women and girls."[91]

Effective protection strategies must grapple with targeted attacks on reproduction when designing interventions.

Effective protection strategies must grapple with these targeted attacks on reproduction when designing interventions. This may mean, for example, insisting on the delivery of full packages of humanitarian aid, rather than permitting occupying powers or governments to remove or deny access to reproductive healthcare supplies selectively. It may also mean carefully investigating evidence of the intent behind interference with access to SRH services and information to determine whether it constitutes a policy of discrimination and assessing the impact on affected populations.

Participation

Ensuring women's full, equal, meaningful, and safe **participation** requires recognizing and protecting reproductive autonomy and acknowledging reproductive violence as inhibiting such participation.[92] Having autonomy to decide the number, timing,

and spacing of births, including through access to comprehensive SRH services, enables women and girls to achieve greater economic, social, and political engagement and to support lasting peace, including through economic recovery, social cohesion, and political legitimacy.[93] Reproductive violence, which denies reproductive autonomy, thus presents a barrier to participation. For example, when reproduction is involuntary or coerced, childbearing burdens intensify, often compounded by stigma, which further limits survivors' public engagement.[94] Conversely, because parenthood can confer social status, deprivation of reproductive capacity can undermine legitimacy in community decision-making.[95] The destruction of reproductive capacity, perceived sensitivity around reproduction generally, and stigma specifically accompanying infertility can therefore have direct impacts on victims' ability to speak and be heard.[96]

Recognizing the reproductive motives and consequences of violence is also essential for breaking down other barriers to participation, which may be particularly acute for women and girls who become pregnant as a result of sexual violence in conflict.[97] For example, Bosnian Muslim women subjected to forced pregnancy "told investigators how their lives are shattered and that they are no longer marriageable,"[98] indicating that their ability to participate in public life was gravely impacted.

The recognition in 2022 of these women and girls who become pregnant through CRSV as "often-invisible victims," and publication of a dedicated report on the issues they face was an important development in advancing their ability to reintegrate and participate in society.[99] Likewise, the report recognized children born of CRSV as direct victims in conflict who experience particular barriers to accessing public services and participating in public life as a result of underlying gender inequality, social stigma, restricted access to services, and lack of legal status.[100] Further progress could be made through more consistent identification of these categories of victims and their specific needs, such as better access to official birth registration and public services, thereby helping to reduce barriers to participation for both those who become pregnant from CRSV and their children.[101]

Recognizing the destruction or blocking of access to sexual and reproductive health services as reproductive violence would make these barriers to full, equal, meaningful, and safe participation more visible.

The ability to access SRH services can also affect women's participation in peacemaking processes and broader public life.[102] Untimely or unwanted pregnancies may prevent women from obtaining education or employment and taking on leadership roles.[103] Lack of access to menstruation supplies can result in women and girls being confined to their homes.[104] Recognizing the destruction or blocking of access to SRH services as reproductive violence would make these barriers to full, equal, meaningful, and safe participation more visible.

Conversely, ease of access to contraception and SRH services correlates to greater participation in economic and political leadership.[105] This includes, in

post-conflict settings, their participation in economic recovery, social cohesion, and political legitimacy programs and processes[106] – three factors that are crucial to achieving lasting peace. In a positive feedback cycle, such participation can further advance progress in the health and well-being of women and girls impacted by conflict and crises while strengthening overall civil society, including service provision and democracy promotion.[107]

Thus, tracking – and combating – barriers to women's access to SRH services that amount to reproductive violence can strengthen efforts to enhance women's participation in society, and bolster a post-conflict society's prospects for lasting peace.

Relief and Recovery

Recognizing reproductive violence also directly bolsters the WPS agenda's **relief and recovery** efforts as it allows for the development of plans that can be tailored to the harms that have occurred, and that mitigate barriers to accessing justice mechanisms and health care systems. Failing to recognize reproductive violence can risk excluding some victims from reparations or services, and neglecting individual- and community-level harms that can reignite conflict if not addressed.[108] Further, recognition of reproductive violence must not halt just because the conflict has officially ended: while the "forms and sites of violence change," "all forms of gender-based violence, in particular sexual violence, escalate in the post-conflict setting."[109] It is thus crucial to continue monitoring and responding to reproductive violence in "post-conflict" settings, while including this form of violence in all relief and recovery efforts.

A 2019 decision by the Colombian Constitutional Court in the case *Unidad de Atención y Reparación Integral a las Víctimas* demonstrates the importance of recognizing reproductive violence as a distinct harm within relief and recovery frameworks. Drawing on international human rights law, international humanitarian law, and the jurisprudence of the International Criminal Court, the Colombian Constitutional Court affirmed that forced abortion and forced contraceptive use constitute forms of conflict-related sexual violence.[110] The ruling also broadened access to justice by recognizing that barriers to the acknowledgement of these violations are often rooted in discriminatory gender stereotypes. By explicitly recognizing reproductive violence and its differentiated impacts the decision strengthened the legal basis for effective remedies, comprehensive reparations, and guarantees of non-repetition for women affected by these harms.

Across contexts, omitting reproductive harms from relief and recovery efforts can impede community healing and leave survivors without needed services. For example, medical services tailored to address acute physical harm from torture and sexual violence often lack long-term monitoring and intervention capacity needed to detect and ameliorate reproductive impacts, which may not emerge until years later.[111] Likewise, effective redress and recovery requires acknowledging children born of reproductive violence as direct victims. In both the *Ntaganda* and *Ongwen* cases, the International Criminal Court has held that children born as a result of acts of sexual violence are direct victims entitled to reparation from their perpetrators.[112] Relief and recovery efforts should identify and work to remedy the profound and specific challenges these victims face as well as the underlying factors, such as gender discrimination, legal inequalities, and social stigma, that contribute to these barriers.

Some justice mechanisms have recognized the role that the destruction of reproductive capacity plays in motivating sexual violence, sexualized torture, and other international crimes, thereby laying the groundwork for full relief and recovery efforts. For example, a court in Guatemala dealing with the genocide committed by the Ríos Montt regime on the Indigenous Ixil people recognized that various forms of sexual violence were often motivated by the desire to control reproduction. The court found that sexual and reproductive violence were "measures aimed at preventing births within the group," not only because

of the physical harm to reproductive organs, but also because of the resultant trauma, terror, and ostracism which negatively impacted the group's reproduction.[113] The court likewise recognized that the role of women within the targeted ethnic group meant that the sexual violence committed against them also had profound impacts on individual women and the group as a whole:

> *In the Maya Ixil culture, women play a predominant role both in the maintenance of cultural values and in the social organization, given that they allow the consolidation of the ethnic group's future, providing the children with an education based on the indigenous Maya Ixil worldview, which is the basis of the culture's subsistence. The physical appropriation of women through acts of rape, whether or not they are killed, constitutes an act that demoralizes both men and women, and constitutes one of the aspects that contributed to undermining the foundations of their identity and of the physical reproduction of the members of the Maya Ixil ethnic group.*[114]

This nuanced understanding of the role of reproductive violence in destroying an ethnic group formed a crucial part of the court's finding of genocide.[115] This led in turn to the court's order for reparations, which included a public apology from government officials to "the women of the Maya Ixil People, for the acts of gender violence."[116]

A similar positive example of relief and recovery efforts that (eventually) grappled with reproductive violence can be found in the case of Celia Ramos Durand. In March 2026, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in *Ramos Durand v. Peru* held Peru accountable for the forced sterilization and subsequent death of Celia Ramos, ruling that the State's policy of targeting rural, Indigenous, and economically marginalized women for sterilization and its inadequate informed consent standards constituted a form of reproductive violence.[117] Importantly, the Court also held that reproductive violence constitutes a form of gender-based violence that States are required to prevent and punish under the Belem do Para Convention.

The Celia Ramos case reinforces how all four pillars of the Women, Peace and Security agenda can be strengthened through attention to reproductive violence and demonstrates that enhancing one pillar can positively impact others.

Within the WPS framework, this case underscores the importance of explicitly recognizing reproductive violence as a form of gender-based violence from which all people must be protected. As is often the case for enforced sterilization, Celia Ramos's case did not include sexual conduct. The Peruvian truth and reconciliation process included provisions to recognize victims of sexual violence but not reproductive violence, and therefore excluded the thousands of victims of enforced sterilization from recognition.[118] These victims fought for nearly three decades to be acknowledged and to receive access to reparations.[119]

The Court's decision in *Ramos Durand v. Peru* advances relief and recovery through unique and robust reparations measures, including public recognition of and apologies to victims, many of whom were stigmatized for being unable to bear children, and scholarships and financial compensation for Celia Ramos's daughters and husband. Most notably, the Court ordered reforms to Peru's policies of informed consent to ensure SRH services are delivered in accordance with the patient's human rights, directed Peru to develop a specific curriculum on informed consent for medical students, and required distribution of accessible resources on informed consent and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) to marginalized populations.[120]

This case reinforces how all four pillars of the WPS agenda can be strengthened through attention to reproductive violence and demonstrates that enhancing one pillar can positively impact others. The relief and recovery measures ordered by the Court will reinforce prevention and protection infrastructure to prevent recurrence, while providing public recognition of the victims' suffering and of the wrongfulness of the State's conduct can help reduce barriers to the victims' future participation in public life.[121]

3

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This analysis has demonstrated that adopting a reproductive violence lens improves recognition of victims and survivors, enables more effective response and prevention efforts, ensures more comprehensive documentation and accountability measures, and helps identify and overcome barriers to participation in public life, including peacemaking. Understanding how reproductive violence manifests in conflict and post-conflict settings can also contribute to guarantees of non-recurrence, an essential element of reparations and a goal of transitional justice. Conversely, failing to account for reproductive violence diminishes the visibility of reproductive autonomy, limits protection for survivors, and contributes to gaps in documentation, humanitarian response, and accountability.

Greater acknowledgement and integration of reproductive violence in conflict is therefore an essential tool for fulfilling the WPS agenda's goals. Moving forward, reproductive violence should be explicitly named and clearly defined within WPS policy architecture, and the concept should be used to guide reporting, protection efforts, prevention strategies, survivor-centered service provision, and relief and recovery efforts. Comprehensively incorporating a reproductive violence framework will help ensure that reproductive harms are not overlooked or treated as incidental consequences of sexual violence, but as central protection concerns in their own right, thereby strengthening the ability of the WPS agenda to address the full spectrum of gendered harms in conflict.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Recognize Reproductive Violence as a Distinct Form of Harm in the WPS Policy Architecture:** UN Member States, the Security Council, the Secretary-General and UN entities should include reproductive violence as a distinct category of gender-based harm across pillars and mandates relating to the WPS agenda, and work toward a common definition of the term. This paper recommends the definition: "intentional acts or omissions that cause harm by interfering with reproductive autonomy and rights, or violence directed at people because of their actual or perceived reproductive capacity."[122]
2. **Embed a Reproductive Violence Lens into Early Warning and Conflict Prevention Systems and Document Ongoing Violence (Prevention Pillar):** Member States and policymakers should incorporate a focus on reproductive motives and consequences into conflict prevention strategies and early warning systems. To prevent impunity that could foster the recurrence of violence, investigative bodies and prosecutors should collect and analyze reproductive violence as a distinct form of gendered harm and should be equipped with adequate technical expertise and resources to do so.[123]
3. **Protect Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare Infrastructure and Ensure Full Humanitarian Access (Protection Pillar):** Member States and the United Nations, including UN investigative bodies, should treat targeted attacks on maternal healthcare facilities, obstruction of reproductive health supplies, and legal restrictions on care as reproductive violence and as violations of international law, and ensure the unhindered and non-discriminatory delivery of full packages of SRH in crisis settings.
4. **Eliminate Reproductive Barriers to Participation and Support Victims and Survivors (Participation Pillar):** Peacebuilding, peacemaking and governance initiatives should include efforts to address the reproductive violence-related barriers to women's participation, including social stigma, forced pregnancy, and lack of SRH supplies—while securing targeted protection, legal status, and services for survivors of reproductive violence, including those pregnant from CRSV, and children born of CRSV.

5. **Establish Survivor-Centered Relief, Long-Term Healthcare, and Holistic Post-Conflict Reparations and Recovery (Relief and Recovery Pillar):** Transitional justice processes and institutions, including administrative reparations programs, domestic courts, and post-conflict relief and recovery programs should expand criteria to explicitly provide comprehensive reparations for reproductive harms, ensure long-term health monitoring for victims and survivors of reproductive violence, and support legislative reforms to advance reproductive rights and autonomy, such as informed consent standards.

ENDNOTES

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2 UN Security Council, Resolution 1325, S/RES/1325, ¶ 10 (Oct. 31, 2000) ("Calls on all parties to armed conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, and all other forms of violence in situations of armed conflict").

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4 See, e.g., Office of the Prosecutor: Policy on Gender-Based Crimes, INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT 2 (Dec. 4, 2023), https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/policy-gender-based-crimes; *Ramos Durand y otros v. Peru*, Case 13.752, Judgment, ¶¶ 174-76 (Nov. 25, 2025); *Trujillo v. UARIV*, Sentence SU599/19 (Dec. 11, 2019), https://www.corteconstitucional.gov.co/Relatoria/2019/SU599-19.htm.

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8 *Prosecutor v. Dominic Ongwen*, ICC-02/04-01/15, Judgement on Appeal, Appeals Chamber, ¶ 1055, fn. 2334 (Dec. 15, 2022). See also Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 1249 UNTS 13, Arts. 10, 11, 12, 14, 16 (1981); Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee), General Recommendation No. 24 on Art. 12 of the Convention (Women and Health), A/54/38/ Rev.1 (Aug. 20, 1999); CEDAW Committee, General Recommendation No. 19 on

violence against women, A/47/38 (Feb. 1, 1992); CEDAW Committee, General Recommendation No. 35 on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19, CEDAW/C/GC/35 (Jul. 14, 2017); International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), 993 UNTS 3, Art. 12 (1976); Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) Committee, General Comment No. 14 on Art. 12: the right to the highest attainable standard of health, E/C.12/2000/4 (Aug. 11, 2000); CESCR Committee, General Comment No. 22 on the right to sexual and reproductive health on Art. 12 of the Covenant, UN Doc. E/C/12/GC/22 (May 1, 2016); Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), 1577 UNTS 3, Art. 24 (1989); Committee on the Rights of the Child , General Comment No. 13 on the right of the child to freedom from all forms of violence, CRC/C/GC/13 (Apr. 18, 2011); Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), 2515 UNTS 3, Arts. 23(1)(b)-(c), 25 (2006); Committee Against Torture (CAT Committee), Conclusions and Recommendations: Chile (Jun. 14, 2004), CAT/C/CR/32/5; CAT Committee, Conclusions and Recommendations: Peru (Jul. 25, 2006), CAT/C/PER/CO/4; CAT Committee, General Comment No. 2: Implementation of Art. 2 by States Parties, CAT/C/GC/2 (2008); Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995); Human Rights Council, Resolution on Accelerating Efforts to Eliminate all Forms of Violence Against Women, A/HRC/29/L.16/Rev.1 (Jul. 1, 2015); Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 28 on the equality of rights between men and women, CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.10 (Mar. 29, 2000); African Union, Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, Art. 14 (2003).

9 See Shining a Light on Reproductive Violence: A Contribution to understanding all forms of Gender-Based Violence Against Women and Girls, UNFPA & MSI 21 (Apr. 2026), https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Web_Shining%20a%20Light%20on%20Reproductive%20Violence%20UNFPA.pdf.pdf.

10 Rome Statute of the ICC, 2187 UNTS 90, Art. 7(1)(g), Art. 8(2)(b)(xxii) (adopted Jul. 17, 1998, entered into force Jul. 1, 2002).

11 Also criminalized under the Rome Statute, when accompanied by genocidal intent. See Rome Statute of the ICC, 2187 UNTS 90, Art. 6(d) (adopted Jul. 17, 1998, entered into force Jul. 1, 2002).

12 International human rights law (IHRL) guarantees to non-discrimination and freedom from torture, read together with the international humanitarian law (IHL) prohibition on adverse distinction, obligates States to provide SRH services in conflict and post-conflict settings. See Christine Zampas, Rebecca Brown, & Onyema Afulukwe, Interpreting International Humanitarian Law to Guarantee Abortion and Other Sexual and Reproductive Health Services in Armed Conflict, 26 HARVARD HEALTH AND HUMAN RIGHTS JOURNAL 31, 31-32 (Jun. 2024). This includes guaranteeing the availability of abortion, particularly for rape victims. See Akila Radhakrishnan, Elena Sarver, & Grant Shubin, Protecting Safe Abortion in Humanitarian Settings: Overcoming Legal and Policy Barriers, 25 REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH MATTERS 40, 40-41 (2017). This is in line with Security Council Resolution 2122 (2013) and Security Council Resolution 2467 (2019), which both call for States to provide safe abortion services. The European Commission has likewise stated that IHRL and IHL justify abortion when a pregnancy threatens a woman's or a girl's life or causes unbearable suffering. International Humanitarian Law and Access to Abortion, GLOBAL JUSTICE CENTER 5 (Apr. 2019), https://www.globaljusticecenter.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Compilation_of_Citations_Abortion_and_IHL.pdf; Briefing to the European Commission and Members of the European Parliament, GLOBAL JUSTICE CENTER 1-2 (Sep. 19, 2016), https://www.globaljusticecenter.net/briefing-to-the-european-commission-and-members-of-the-european-parliament.

13 See Documenting Reproductive Violence in Conflict and Crisis, GLOBAL JUSTICE CENTER 1 (Jul. 2025), https://www.globaljusticecenter.net/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Repro-Violence-QA_FINAL.pdf.

14 See Reproductive Violence, WOMEN'S INITIATIVES FOR GENDER JUSTICE, https://4genderjustice.org/gender-justice/reproductive-violence. CRSV is defined as sexual violence that is "directly or indirectly linked to a conflict," as evidenced by the profile of the perpetrator, the profile of the victim, the climate of impunity, or violations of a ceasefire agreement. UN Security Council, Conflict-related sexual violence, Report of the Secretary-General, S/2023/413, ¶ 5 (Jun. 22, 2023). Overlap between violations of sexual and reproductive autonomy include, for example, cases in which a victim of rape that results in pregnancy is forced to carry the pregnancy to term.

15 Documenting Reproductive Violence, UN WOMEN & GLOBAL JUSTICE CENTER 8 (Sep. 2024), https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2024/09/research-paper-documenting-reproductive-violence-unveiling-opportunities-challenges-and-legal-pathways-for-un-investigative-mechanisms (citing Violence against Women, WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION, https://www.who.int/health-topics/violence-against-women (stating an act can be "sexual" even without physical contact, such as psychological violence that arises from threats of rape or genital mutilation).) An act may also be sexual regardless of whether sexual gratification was part of the intent or result. See The Civil Society Declaration on Sexual Violence, THE HAGUE PRINCIPLES ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE 25 (Jun. 2013), https://thehagueprinciples.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/The-Hague-Principles-on-Sexual-Violence-1.pdf. Sexual violence can be committed by and against any person regardless of sex or gender. See Office of the Prosecutor: Policy on Gender-Based Crimes, INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT, ¶¶ 31-34 (Dec. 2023).

16 Reproductive Violence, WOMEN'S INITIATIVES FOR GENDER JUSTICE, https://4genderjustice.org/gender-justice/reproductive-violence.

17 Human Rights Council, "More than a human can bear": Israel's systematic use of sexual, reproductive and other forms of gender-based violence since 7 October 2023, Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, A/HRC/58/CRP.6, ¶ 218 (Mar. 13, 2025); Destroying Hope for the Future: Reproductive Violence in Gaza, PHYSICIANS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS & GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS CLINIC 17 (Jan. 2026), https://phr.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/Destroying-Hope-for-the-Future_Reproductive-Violence-in-Gaza_PHR-Report_Jan-2026.pdf ("Israeli forces directly struck and rendered inoperable the Al-Basma in vitro fertilization (IVF) clinic," "which resulted in the destruction of 4,000 embryos and 1,000 sperm samples and unfertilized eggs," and that the clinic had served 2,000 to 3,000 patients and performed 70 to 100 IVF procedures per month.); UN Security Council, Women and peace and security, Report of the Secretary-General, S/2025/556, ¶ 41 (Sep. 5, 2025) ("The destruction of maternal healthcare and sexual and reproductive health facilities in conflict zones is a form of reproductive violence and can be a tactic of genocide, as they jeopardize women and children's lives and can be 'intended to prevent births within the group'.").

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24 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 78 UNTS 277, Art. 2(d) (Dec. 9, 1948); Rome Statute of the ICC, 2187 UNTS 90, Art. 6(d) (adopted Jul. 17, 1998, entered into force Jul. 1, 2002).

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26 Documenting Reproductive Violence, UN WOMEN & GLOBAL JUSTICE CENTER 4, 17 (Sep. 2024), https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2024/09/research-paper-documenting-reproductive-violence-unveiling-opportunities-challenges-and-legal-pathways-for-un-investigative-mechanisms.

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They constitute a pattern of reproductive violence. Today, I urge that we treat reproductive violence as a distinct category of harm and hold perpetrators accountable.").

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32 *Trujillo v. UARIV*, Sentence SU599/19, 78 (Dec. 11, 2019), https://www.corteconstitucional.gov.co/Relatoria/2019/SU599-19.htm ("From the international position it can be concluded that forced contraceptive use and forced abortion constitute a form of a violation of women's sexual and reproductive rights, as well as sexual and gender violence within the framework of IHL.") (Authors' translation).

33 Statement by Ms. Noura Erakat at the UN Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security, NGO WORKING GROUP ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY (Oct. 6, 2025), https://www.womenpeacesecurity.org/resource/statement-noura-erakat-security-council-open-debate-women-peace-security.

34 UN Security Council Briefing on Sudan by Dr. Eva Khair, NGO WORKING GROUP ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY (Aug. 24, 2026), https://www.womenpeacesecurity.org/resource/un-security-council-briefing-sudan-eva-khair; UN Security Council Briefing on Sudan by Hala Alkarib, NGO WORKING GROUP ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY (Feb. 19, 2026), https://www.womenpeacesecurity.org/resource/un-security-council-briefing-sudan-hala-alkarib; Statement by Ms. Carine Jocelyn at the UN Security Council Open Debate on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, NGO WORKING GROUP ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY (Jul. 8, 2026), https://www.womenpeacesecurity.org/resource/statement-carine-jocelyn-open-debate-conflict-related-sexual-violence.

35 Joint Statement on the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, ¶ 11 (Oct. 6, 2025), https://buildingtrust.si/statement/joint-statement-on-the-women-peace-and-security-agenda/ ("Affirm that reproductive violence constitutes a violation of international law, commit to ending impunity, and call for immediate and non-discriminatory access to medical support to victims and survivors of war, including access to sexual and reproductive health and rights services and psychosocial support for victims and survivors of sexual violence").

36 Radhika Coomaraswamy, Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, UN WOMEN 30 (Oct. 12, 2015), https://wps.unwomen.org/pdf/en/GlobalStudy_EN_Web.pdf.

37 UN Security Council, Resolution 1325, S/RES/1325, ¶¶ 8(b), 11 (Oct. 31, 2000).

38 UN Security Council, Resolution 1325, S/RES/1325, ¶¶ 10, 11 (Oct. 31, 2000).

39 UN Security Council. Resolution 1325, S/RES/1325, ¶ 1 (Oct. 31, 2000). See also Parliaments as Partners Supporting the Women Peace and Security Agenda: A Global Handbook, UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 5 (2019), https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/publications/Parliament_as_partners_supporting_the_Women_Peace_and_Security_Agenda_-_A_Global_Handbook.pdf ("Women's equal participation and gender equality in peace and security decision-making processes at all levels.").

40 UN Security Council, Resolution 1325, S/RES/1325, ¶ 8(a) (Oct. 31, 2000). See UN Security Council, Women, Peace and Security, Report of the Secretary-General, S/2010/498, annex (Sep. 28, 2010).

41 Bodily autonomy refers to the power and agency to make choices over one's own body and future, without violence or coercion. What is bodily autonomy?, UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND, https://www.unfpa.org/sowp-2021/autonomy. See also UN Security Council, Women, Peace and Security, Report of the Secretary-General, S/2024/671, ¶ 103(b) (Sep. 24, 2024) (urging Member States to repeal "laws and policies that undermine the right of diverse women and girls to participate in all spheres of life or their bodily autonomy").

42 Mariagiulia Masiero & Arianna Vettorel, Non/Motherhood and Reproductive Violence in International Criminal Law, VOLKERRECHTSBLOG (Mar. 3, 2026), https://voelkerrechtsblog.org/non-motherhood-and-reproductive-violence-in-international-criminal-law. See UN Security Council, Resolution 2467, S/RES/2467, ¶¶ 16(a), 18 (Apr. 23, 2019) (calling for survivors, including "women and girls who become pregnant as a result of sexual violence in armed conflict," to "receive the care required by their specific needs and without any discrimination").

43 Nicola Popovic, Bodily Autonomy in Times of Crisis, OXFAM DENMARK 3 (Apr. 2026), https://oxfam.dk/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/Learning_Brief_SRHR_WPS_ONLINE.pdf. See also UN Security Council, Resolution 1889, S/RES/1889, ¶ 10 (Oct. 5, 2009), https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/666733 (encouraging Member States to design strategies covering "access to basic services, in particular health services, including sexual and reproductive health"); UN Security Council, Resolution 2122, S/RES/2122, preamble (Oct. 18, 2013) (noting "the need for access to the full range of sexual and reproductive health services, including regarding pregnancies resulting from rape, without discrimination"); UN Security Council, Women, Peace and Security, Report of the Secretary-General, S/2019/800, ¶ 34 (Oct. 9, 2019) ("The provision of access to sexual and reproductive health in conflict and humanitarian emergencies must be acknowledged as life-saving.").

44 See UN Security Council, Women, Peace and Security, Report of the Secretary-General, S/2024/671, ¶ 103(g) (Sep. 24, 2024) (calling on Member States to "[e]nsure an enabling environment and non-discriminatory access for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence to sexual and reproductive rights and services, including emergency care regarding pregnancies resulting from rape"); UN Security Council, Conflict-related sexual violence, Report of the Secretary-General, S/2025/389, ¶ 87(a) (Jul. 15, 2025) (recommending "scaled-up funding for gender-based violence services, including HIV prevention, healthcare, safe termination of pregnancy, psychosocial and legal services and reintegration measures").

45 Rosemary Grey, The ICC's First 'Forced Pregnancy' Case in Historical Perspective, 15 JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE 905, 906 (Dec. 2, 2017).

46 See, e.g., Situation in Afghanistan, ICC-02/17, Warrants of Arrest for Haibatullah Akhundzada and Abdul Hakim Haqqani, INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT (Jul. 8, 2025), https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/situation-afghanistan-icc-pre-trial-chamber-ii-issues-arrest-warrants-haibatullah-akhundzada. Pre-Trial Chamber II found reasonable grounds to believe that the Taliban Supreme Leader and Chief Justice bear responsibility for the crime against humanity of persecution on gender grounds under art. 7(1)(h) of the Rome Statute.

47 Our Mandate, Office of the Special Representative of the Security-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/our-work/our-mandate/https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/our-work/our-mandate; United Nations Field Missions: Preventing and Responding to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, UNITED NATIONS ET AL. 19 (Jan. 1, 2020), https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/DPO-DPPA-SRSG-SVC-OHCHR-Policy-on-Field-Missions-Preventing-and-Responding-to-CRSV-2020.pdf.

48 See, e.g., United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Forced Sterilization: A Form of Nazi Persecution, HOLOCAUST ENCYCLOPEDIA, https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/forced-sterilization-a-form-of-nazi-persecution.

49 Rosemary Grey, The ICC's First 'Forced Pregnancy' Case in Historical Perspective, JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE 905, 926 (Dec. 2, 2017).

50 See, e.g., Ciara Laverty & Dieneke de Vos, Forced Abortion as an International Crime: Recent Reports from Northern Nigeria, JUST SECURITY (Dec. 23, 2022), https://www.justsecurity.org/84524/forced-abortion-as-an-international-crime-recent-reports-from-northern-nigeria. See also *Prosecutor v. Alex Tamba Brima*, SCSL-04-16-T, Judgement, Trial Chamber II, ¶¶ 52-53 at 592 (Jun. 20, 2007), https://www.rscsl.org/Documents/Decisions/AFRC/613/SCSL-04-16-T-613s.pdf (Doherty, J., partly dissenting on count 7 (sexual slavery) and count 8 ('forced marriages')) ("the conduct contemplated as 'forced marriage' does not necessarily involve elements of physical violence such as abduction, enslavement or rape," that "[t]he crime is concerned primarily with the mental and moral suffering of the victim," and that its "crucial element is the the imposition, by threat or physical force . . . of a forced conjugal association by the perpetrator over the victim").

51 UN Security Council, Women and peace and security, Report of the Secretary-General, S/2024/671, ¶ 41 (Sep. 24, 2024).

52 UN Security Council, Women and peace and security, Report of the Secretary-General, S/2025/556, ¶ 41 (Sep. 5, 2025).

53 Pramila Patten, Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Keynote Speech at the High-level International Conference marking the 25th anniversary of the WPS agenda: Women as Agents for Security and Peace (Feb. 9, 2026), https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/statement/

keynote-speech-of-srsg-patten-at-the-high-level-international-conference-marking-the-25th-anniversary-of-the-wps-agenda-women-as-agents-for-security-and-peace-9-february-2026-vienn. The Special Representative's statement highlighted access to kits preventing unwanted pregnancies and gaps in care. See also Annual Progress Report: UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict, UNITED NATIONS 7, 25, 38 (Oct. 17, 2023), https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/report/un-action-annual-progress-report-2022.

54 UN Security Council, Women and girls who become pregnant as a result of sexual violence in conflict and children born of sexual violence in conflict, Report of the Secretary-General, S/2022/77, ¶ 3 (Jan. 31, 2022). Though the Secretary-General did not use the term "reproductive violence" in annual WPS reports prior to 2023, some forms of reproductive violence documented by UN fact-finders were recognized by the Secretary-General as CRSV (and as potentially contributing to genocide) as early as 2016. UN Security Council, Women and peace and security, Report of the Secretary-General, S/2016/822, ¶ 63 (Sep. 29, 2016). The term "reproductive violence" first appeared in the Secretary-General's annual WPS report, in reference to the opening of Macro-Case 11 in the Colombian Special Jurisdiction for Peace, which concerned "sexual violence, reproductive violence and other crimes committed out of prejudice, hate and discrimination on the basis of gender, sex, identity and diverse sexual orientation." See UN Security Council, Women and peace and security, Report of the Secretary-General, S/2023/725, ¶ 63 (Sep. 28, 2023).

55 For example, the 2022 report on CRSV noted that some cases of sexual violence in Ethiopia were motivated by victims' actual or perceived affiliation with conflict parties, but makes no mention of the potential use of forced pregnancy to alter the ethnic composition of the population. See UN Security Council, Conflict-related sexual violence, Report of the Secretary-General, S/2022/272, ¶ 69 (Mar. 29, 2022); Ethiopia: I Don't Know If They Realized I Was a Person: Rape and Other Sexual Violence in the Conflict in Tigray, AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL 19-20 (Aug. 11, 2021), https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr25/4569/2021/en. Similarly, in the 2023 report, "abductions of over 160 women and girls held in captivity, including reports of women and girls being raped and kept in slave-like conditions" in Sudan are described, but the crime of forced pregnancy is not mentioned. UN Security Council, Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, Report of the Secretary-General, S/2024/292, ¶ 65 (Apr. 4, 2024).

56 See, e.g., Outline of the mandate for the Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide, OFFICE OF GENOCIDE PREVENTION AND RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT, https://www.un.org/en/genocide-prevention/mandate; Burma: Revoke 'Two Child Policy' for Rohingya, HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH (May 28, 2013), https://www.hrw.org/news/2013/05/28/burma-revoke-two-child-policy-rohingya; Human Rights Council, Report of the independent international fact-finding mission on Myanmar, A/HRC/39/64, ¶¶ 20-23, 84-87 (Sep. 12, 2018).

57 UN Security Council, Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, Report of the Secretary-General, S/2024/292, ¶ 71 (Apr. 4, 2024).

58 Leo C. Nwoye, Mantraya Analysis #97, Mantraya Institute for Strategic Studies (May 8, 2026), https://miss.org.in/the-invisible-crime-has-a-gender; Roman Baklazhov, Reparative Justice VIII: Heeding Male Survivors of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence [Webinar] (Jun. 18, 2026), https://icmglt.org/reparative-justice-viii-heeding-male-survivors-of-conflict-related-sexual-violence-webinar; General Assembly, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine, Note by the Secretary-General, A/79/549, ¶¶ 47-49 (Oct. 25, 2024).

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61 Human Rights Council, Report of the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia, A/HRC/54/CRP.3, ¶¶ 138-139 (Oct. 13, 2023); "You Will Never Be Able to Give Birth": Conflict-Related Sexual and Reproductive Violence in Ethiopia, PHYSICIANS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS & ORGANIZATION FOR JUSTICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE HORN OF AFRICA 3 (Jul. 31, 2025), https://phr.org/our-work/resources/you-will-never-be-able-to-give-birth-conflict-related-sexual-and-reproductive-violence-in-ethiopia.

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66 Report of Experts Established Pursuant to United Nations Security Council Resolution 780 (1992), S/1994/674, ¶ 248 (May 27, 1994).

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68 For example, in societies where group membership is determined entirely be the identity of the biological father, such as in the former Yugoslavia, a policy of forced pregnancy may be a tactic of genocide (encompassing acts of both preventing births 'within' the group, because babies born of non-member fathers will not be group members, and the acts of severe bodily or mental harm and creating conditions of life calculated to destroy the group). In societies where group membership is determined by both parents' identities, such as Jewish identity during the Holocaust, genocidal reproductive violence is more likely to take the form of enforced sterilization or enforced separation of the sexes. See Siobhan K. Fisher, Occupation of the Womb: Forced Impregnation as Genocide, 46 DUKE LAW JOURNAL 91, 114 (1996).

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publications/2024/09/research-paper-documenting-reproductive-violence-unveiling-opportunities-challenges-and-legal-pathways-for-un-investigative-mechanisms; Kenneth Roth, Slavery: The ISIS Rules, HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH (Sep. 15, 2015), https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/09/05/slavery-isis-rules.

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78 UN Security Council, Resolution 2106, S/RES/2106, ¶ 19 (Jun. 24, 2013).

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24 June - 07 July 2026, RELIEFWEB (Jul. 17, 2026), https://reliefweb.int/report/myanmar/attacks-health-care-myanmar-24-june-07-july-2026.

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