

Media Update

19 June 2022

UNITED NATIONS

SECRETARY-GENERAL MESSAGE

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL MESSAGE FOR THE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT 19 June 2022

Sexual violence in conflict is a tactic of war and repression that terrorizes populations, destroys lives and fractures communities.

Perpetrators rarely face the consequences of their actions. Instead, it is the survivors who carry the burden of stigma and trauma throughout their lives, often doubly brutalized by harmful social norms and victim-blaming.

On this International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict, we stand in solidarity with survivors and commit to supporting the most vulnerable women, girls, men and boys as they struggle to live in dignity and peace in the midst of humanitarian crises.

This includes increasing support for victims and displaced women, girls and boys who are vulnerable to trafficking and sexual exploitation, and those from marginalized, remote and rural areas where justice and protection systems are weak.

It means bolstering national justice systems and rule of law capacities, so perpetrators are held accountable for their crimes, and victims receive timely medical and psychosocial support.

It means upholding the rights of survivors, and treating them with respect and understanding, while giving them the opportunity to help mend their fragmented communities.

It means supporting women-led civil society organizations working to break down the social, economic and cultural barriers that deny women and girls their rights to protection, equality and justice.

And it means addressing the underlying causes of sexual violence in conflict — from inequalities, to institutional weaknesses and militarization — and strengthening early warning systems to prevent these crimes from happening in the first place.

With increased political resolve and financial resources, we can match words with action and end the scourge of sexual violence in conflict, once and for all.