

PRESS DOCUMENT

Inauguration of the Global Survivors Fund Geneva, 10 March 2022

Frequently Asked Questions

GENERAL

1. What is the Global Survivors Fund?

The Global Fund for Survivors of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, the Global Survivors Fund (the '**Fund**' or '**GSF**'), is an innovative, survivor-centric organisation founded by Nobel Peace Prize laureates Dr. Denis Mukwege and Ms. Nadia Murad with the purpose of enhancing access to reparations for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence. The Fund was created in 2019, became fully operational in June 2020 and was officially inaugurated in Geneva in March 2022.

With its secretariat in Geneva and governed by a Board composed of both Dr. Mukwege and Ms. Murad, survivors, State representatives, and reparation experts, the Fund builds on the work of the Office of the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, the Mukwege Foundation, Nadia's Initiative, and SEMA, a global network uniting survivors of conflict-related sexual violence.

2. What is Conflict-Related Sexual Violence?

Conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) refers to incidents or patterns of sexual violence against women, men, girls or boys occurring in conflict or post-conflict settings, and that have direct or indirect links with the conflict itself, or that occur in other situations of concern such as a context of political repression. CRSV includes all violations of a person's sexual autonomy and sexual integrity, an expression of discrimination which is exacerbated by the conflict, and is generally characterised by humiliation, domination, and destruction. CRSV can take many forms including but not limited to acts of rape, forced pregnancy, forced sterilisation, forced abortion, forced prostitution, trafficking for sexual purposes, sexual enslavement, forced circumcision, castration, sexual torture, forced nudity or other forms of sexual violence of comparable gravity. CRSV can cause a cascade of consequences, including permanent physical injuries, long-term trauma, stigmatisation, broken family ties and socioeconomic exclusion.

GSF's work has a slightly narrower focus and is aimed at enhancing access to reparations for survivors of sexual violence that has a direct link to a conflict situation and occurs in a widespread or systematic manner.

The link to a conflict may be evident in the profile of the perpetrator, who is often affiliated with a State or non-State armed group; the profile of the victim, who is frequently an actual or perceived member of a persecuted political, ethnic or religious minority, or targeted on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity; the climate of impunity, which is generally associated with State collapse; cross-border consequences, such as displacement or trafficking; and/or violations of the provisions of a ceasefire agreement.

3. Who are the Survivors that GSF works with and for?

CRSV survivors that GSF works with are the women, men and children who have been subjected to sexual violence that has a direct link to a conflict situation and occurs in a widespread or systematic manner within a conflict setting, including children born out of conflict-related sexual violence and the LGBTIQ+ community.

4. Why focus on Survivors of CRSV only?

GSF has made the conscious choice to focus all its work on enhancing reparations for survivors of CRSV, including reproductive violence, as opposed to focusing on victims of atrocities more generally. By deliberately focusing on CRSV we acknowledge the gender dimension of violence. CRSV has been overlooked as a stand-alone type of harm for generations, the status quo is accepted, and it is a status quo that stigmatises, ostracises and silences women, maintaining unequal gender norms and negative masculinities that do not only affect women, but also men - including male survivors - and those with other sexual and gender identities. Focusing on CRSV can help challenge these norms underlying the violence. What is more, survivors of sexual violence are often victims of cumulative violations (displacement, killing of relatives, disappearances) which also gives us insight into the wider harms caused by violence. Focusing on survivors of conflict-related sexual violence can open the door and lead to reparations for victims of other crimes too.

THE NOTION OF REPARATION

5. What is Reparation and who is responsible for it?

Reparation is a right under international law that covers both victims of gross violations of international human rights law and serious violations of international humanitarian law, as well as victims of crimes under international criminal law. It consists of measures that duty-bearers, namely States and other perpetrators (including armed groups), are legally obligated to provide in response to violations or crimes directly committed by them, that were committed with their authorisation or knowledge, or that they failed to prevent. Reparations seek to acknowledge and address the different harms caused to victims and to ensure non-recurrence.

CRSV being considered a gross violation of international human rights and humanitarian laws, as well as in some cases a crime under international criminal law, survivors of CRSV have a right to reparation.

6. What forms can Reparation take?

Different forms of reparation exist under international law, including restitution, compensation, satisfaction, rehabilitation, and guarantees of non-repetition. This is set out in the UN Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law.

Restitution as a form of reparation focuses on restoring survivors' lives to the circumstances they were in prior to the violence, including restoration of enjoyment of human rights including civil status, employment, access to education, land and property.

Compensation typically entails a monetary payment to cover harms that can be economically assessed and quantified, such as continued medical costs and loss of livelihoods, as well as compensating for other damages incurred, including moral damages.

Satisfaction includes different measures such, among others, the recognition of the status of individuals and communities as survivors of violations, actions to end ongoing violations, establishing the truth, fact-finding measures, official declarations restoring the dignity of survivors, commemoration and tributes to the victims, ensuring appropriate sanctions against perpetrators, and public apologies.

Rehabilitation focuses primarily on providing survivors with all essential services required to live their life in a dignified way, including medical and psychological care, legal and social services, housing and economic rehabilitation through education and employment opportunities.

Finally, **guarantees of non-repetition** relate to actions that address the structural causes of the violation(s), including any kind of discrimination, and seek to ensure that others do not suffer in the same way as survivors have suffered, for example through law reform, human rights training for law enforcement officials, or sensitisation campaigns for the broader population. As such, reparations should not only be directed at addressing the consequences of crimes committed in the past, but should also address ongoing social issues and contribute to preventing further violations.

These five forms of reparation are not mutually exclusive, they complement each other by addressing different types of harms that CRSV survivors may have suffered. A combination of all these forms of reparation is necessary to adequately address the spectrum of violations of different fundamental rights which sexual violence gives rise to, and that go beyond harm to physical integrity. Reparation can be individual or collective, material or symbolic.

7. How is Reparation provided?

There are different avenues to access reparation: i) **civil litigation**, through the filing of a compensation claim against the responsible party; ii) **human rights litigation**, through the filing of a civil or constitutional claim, or an individual complaint before a national, international or regional human rights body, against the State; and iii) **criminal prosecution**, which results in compensation and/or restitution being provided as part of criminal proceedings. States should also establish domestic **administrative reparation programmes** once violations have taken or are taking place on a large scale, resulting in a high number of victims, as well as when those responsible are unable or unwilling to provide reparations. These programs should be accessible to all survivors, regardless of whether a perpetrator can be identified or whether they have evidence that could hold in court.

In practice however, only a minute proportion of survivors ever gain access to reparation through these avenues.

8. Does the Global Survivors Fund provide Reparation?

No. Because reparation is a legal term that is premised upon responsibility for a crime that violates human rights or international humanitarian law, reparation can only be provided by duty bearers, be they States, armed groups, or individual perpetrators. As such, reparation cannot be provided by GSF. However, acknowledging that receiving reparation remains theoretical for the vast majority of survivors, the Fund supports the implementation of **interim reparative measures** through specific projects. Such measures do not constitute reparation in the legal sense as they do not involve State recognition of responsibility. However, recognising that the timeframe for accessing State-awarded reparations is often longer than a survivor's life expectancy and that the need for reparative measures is *urgent*, interim reparative measures are intended to acknowledge the harm done to survivors and to provide rehabilitation, compensation and some form of satisfaction allowing survivors to rebuild their lives and avoid some of the irreparable harm associated with the lack of timely reparation.

GSF is however careful to make clear that such projects do not substitute for States or other duty bearers, but address the reality that there is a wide implementation gap between the right to reparations and what survivors receive to address the harm they have endured.

Through its work, the Fund also seeks to enhance access to reparation, making clear that responsibility for reparations lies with duty bearers, advocating and campaigning for States and the international community to meet their responsibilities as regards reparations, as well as supporting States through technical assistance to develop effective and survivor-centred reparation programmes where relevant.

ROLE AND MISSION OF GSF

9. What does the Global Survivors Fund do?

GSF's overarching objective is to enhance access to reparations for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence around the globe. The Fund organises its work in the pursuit of this objective under three core pillars, which work together to provide a comprehensive approach to enhancing access to reparation for CRSV survivors:

Pillar 1: ACT

GSF acts to provide interim reparative measures to CRSV survivors. It supports survivors and civil society organisations in designing survivor-centred projects, which provide individual and collective interim reparative measures. These projects are co-created with survivors, who actively participate in all phases of the project, including mapping, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Interim reparative measures projects involve multiple partners and take a contextualised approach. A wide variety of stakeholders are involved in every project, including survivors, civil society organisations, States and UN representatives, who all provide guidance and strategic orientation.

Interim reparative measures can take the form of financial compensation, livelihood support, coverage of education costs and medical bills, legal support, or any combination of such measures. The measures are determined by survivors based on their own needs.

Throughout the project, survivors receive psychological support to ensure the measures have the best possible impact. Projects also include collective measures such as the construction of survivors' centres, as well as activities oriented towards the preservation of collective memory, public hearing, artistic and commemorative activities.

Pillar 2: ADVOCATE

GSF advocates that the relevant stakeholders, in particular States as duty-bearers, but also the international community take their responsibility to design and implement national reparation programmes. Advocacy takes place both at the international and national level, including through support to civil society.

To ensure GSF's advocacy efforts are built on solid ground, the Fund has embarked on a comprehensive study on the status of and opportunities for reparations around the world. The breadth and depth of the Global Reparation Study goes beyond any research on reparations for CRSV to date, which along with the survivor-centric approach taken and the significant collaboration with local and international partners, makes this study a worldwide first. The output of this Study is intended to inform the Fund's activities in the coming years, both at national and international levels. Some [preliminary findings](#) from the first tranche of this Study were published in Autumn 2021.

Pillar 3: GUIDE

GSF is gathering evidence-based data on reparation for survivors of CRSV, looking at opportunities, challenges, existing experiences, good practice, and lessons learned from different countries around the world, and also from its interim reparative measures' projects. This evidence-base is used by GSF to provide expertise and technical support to States and other key stakeholders including survivors, civil society organisations, international and regional organisations, to develop and implement effective, gender-sensitive national reparation programmes.

GSF carries out its guide work by sharing its expertise with key stakeholders through participation in key fora responsible for reparations or by providing direct advice to people involved in these processes. We also publish different reference materials including books, handbooks and toolkits, as well as providing training. GSF is also in the process of building a repository on reparations for survivors of CRSV to ensure that there is full access to key information and relevant practice worldwide.

10. What makes the Global Survivors Fund unique?

Reparation is a right under international law, but only few survivors ever actually access reparations. The Fund seeks to change this by focusing on pragmatic and just solutions to respond to survivors' urgent and immediate needs, thereby ensuring not only that survivors' suffering is recognised, but that they receive compensation and other interim reparative measures when it is most needed to allow them to rebuild their lives.

The Fund's approach seeking to ensure access to reparations is unique in its survivor-centred, multi-stakeholder and truly contextualised methodology.

A truly survivor-centred approach: Co-creation

Survivors have been at the heart of GSF's work from the very start; the Fund's approach and strategy are shaped by survivors from around the world. Survivors are represented in the Fund's Board and Technical Advisory Panel. GSF also strives to have survivors as members of the project teams.

With the objective of ensuring that the Fund's activities are not only developed for, but are co-created with survivors, each workstream of the Fund is built to ensure that survivors are always at the centre of the decision-making process. It is a requirement that all GSF-supported interim reparative measures projects have survivors participating in all phases of the project and in its different institutional bodies, including the steering committee which provides guidance and strategic orientation, and validates the identification of survivors. Survivors are also actively involved in the Fund's advocacy and guidance initiatives, playing a key role in defining, implementing, and evaluating the work of the Fund.

GSF further advocates for and guides States to develop survivor-centered reparation programmes and policy.

Multi-stakeholder structures

Ensuring access to reparations is a complex process that requires input from a great diversity of stakeholders. Acknowledging this, GSF makes every effort to ensure meaningful participation of all key stakeholders in every area of its activities.

Every interim reparative measures project that GSF supports is required to have a multidisciplinary steering committee composed of survivors, technical experts, civil society representatives, and international community and, where possible, government authorities representatives. This is an integral part of the Fund's methodology. In addition, a wide variety of stakeholders, including both steering committee members and other survivors' groups, civil society organisations, psychologists, legal advisors, national experts and, where possible, representatives of national authorities or international organisations are actively involved at project level, working together to provide advice on or support specific aspects of the interim reparative measures project at different stages of project implementation. This inclusive and collaborative approach among key actors is designed to ensure a comprehensive and workable approach to both interim reparative measures as well as longer term set-ups for official reparations.

The Fund's technical assistance and advocacy work is also built on and seeks to foster collaboration between governments, civil society, UN bodies and survivors.

Contextualised approach

Each conflict or post-conflict context presents a unique set of challenges and opportunities. While some features of CRSV reparations may be universal, others will vary greatly from context to context and require an approach that is tailored to each situation. Fundamental questions such as who is a survivor or what constitutes meaningful reparations and interim reparative measures can only truly be answered with reference to context. Similarly, the most appropriate process for identifying survivors, the measures required to avoid exposing survivors to further harm and victimisation and other key components of a project are all context-sensitive and therefore require a real understanding of context to benefit the people who the projects are designed to serve.

GSF aims to ensure that projects are fully tailored to context for maximum impact by working closely with survivors and a selection of key local stakeholders at every stage of the process.

11. How is reparation different from humanitarian assistance?

Interim reparative measures do not constitute humanitarian assistance. They aim to fulfil the right to reparation based on actual harms caused to survivors, as opposed to humanitarian or other types of assistance that are needs-based. In the reparation process, survivors are rights-holders, being recognised as such through active participation in the process rather than passive beneficiaries. The reparation process contributes to the recognition/acknowledgment of survivors' agency and wrongs suffered, which ultimately helps to address feelings of powerlessness that might derive from the violations. Interim reparative measures also aim to provide holistic reparation packages through a reparative process and are not one-off services.

GSF always combines interim reparative measures with advocacy, and technical assistance if required, for states to take responsibility and engage in the process. This is intended to catalyse State action on reparation.

OUR PROJECTS

12. How are project locations selected?

Four projects are currently running in Guinea, the Democratic Republic of the Congo Iraq and Central African Republic. Preparation for additional projects in Turkey (with Syrian survivors), South Sudan and Nigeria are ongoing. GSF will next explore the possibility of opening new projects in East Timor, Bangladesh, Guatemala, Myanmar, Nepal and Colombia.

Going forward, GSF will select project settings first on the basis of the findings of the Global Reparations Study, and will make decisions against a selection of criteria including:

- Settings where sexual violence has been used in a widespread/systematic manner
- Unmet reparation needs of CRSV survivors
- Relevance to GSF priorities and pillars of work
- Urgency and momentum
- Absence of accessible and effective local remedies and opportunities to support State initiatives
- Geographic diversity
- Availability of a coalition of multiple stakeholders including expert civil society partners
- Presence of or potential for a national survivor network.

13. How does GSF set up new interim reparative measures projects once chosen?

Interim reparative measures projects embody GSF's three core principles: they are co-created with survivors, tailored to the context, and involve multiple stakeholders. These principles are reflected at every step of the project process.

1. Framing the project: The first step of a project is to define the specific country, region(s), time period and event(s) that the project will cover. GSF then engages survivors to map their situation and needs and identifies organisations with relevant expertise to act as project

partners. Through a participatory process, the project coordination team and the project Steering Committee, including survivor representatives, are then established.

2. Identification of survivors: Survivors and the Steering Committee design the process through which survivors are identified to participate in the project and receive interim reparative measures, while minimising any retraumatisation or further stigmatisation.

3. Identification of Interim Reparative Measures: Once identified, survivors design the specific forms of individual and collective interim reparative measures, to best suit their needs, as along with the approach required to ensure a sustainable and transformative impact and mitigate risks. Interim reparative measures generally include financial compensation, support for medical and psychosocial rehabilitation, access to education, financial management training, vocational training, and/or peer-to-peer coaching.

4. Implementation and monitoring of Interim Reparative Measures: a thorough monitoring system must be in place to accompany each survivor and address potential risks while interim reparative measures are being implemented, ensuring that the measures benefit survivors to the full extent possible.

5. Evaluation of impact of Interim Reparative Measures: GSF uses a participatory methodology to evaluate the impact of the interim reparative measures at various points of the project, allowing survivors to define key success criteria and to learn along the way.

6. End of project: To ensure sustainability of impact, interim reparative measures projects generally include a transitional period and advance exit strategy, providing for referrals for long-term needs and a smooth project closing.

In parallel to Interim Reparative Measures, projects also include advocacy and guidance components. In each project, GSF works with survivors and collaborates with relevant stakeholders at national and international level to advocate for and support duty-bearers to implement broader survivor-centric reparation programmes.

This unique methodology aims to maximise impact for survivors, increase ownership by all relevant stakeholders, and foster official reparation programmes on a larger scale to benefit all survivors.

14. How does the Global Survivors Fund make sure its projects have a meaningful impact for survivors?

It is immensely important for us to ensure that the interim reparative measure projects supported by GSF have a meaningful positive impact for survivors and communities that persists over time. As such, we endeavour to have robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place not only throughout the lifecycle of a project, but also in the years that follow project completion. Survivors also participate actively in designing and implementing our monitoring and evaluation frameworks.

We have established a partnership with the **Netherlands Institute for the Study of Crime and Law Enforcement (NSCR)** to develop a rigorous framework for evaluating different types of project supported by the Fund. Using an innovative research method called Photo Voice, survivors determine exactly what they would like to see changed in their lives, which then forms the basis of impact indicators and allows for impact to be measured against a meaningful benchmark as defined by survivors.

For GSF, there is no better monitoring data than that from survivors themselves, and to date, we have been humbled by our performance against that benchmark as can be seen from the following survivor feedback:

"Survivors of conflict-related sexual violence still face the social stigma that accompanies rape, which makes it difficult to access justice, truth and social protection. To prevent this from happening again to other people, perpetrators must be brought to justice." — Behija, survivor of conflict-related sexual violence, Bosnia (June 2020)

"The individual interim reparations allowed us to recognise ourselves, to feel alive among others. We were able to carry out and develop our activities, and those who saw us as losers saw us differently. The trainings allow us to know what we do, how we do it and the need to do it. Today we can send our children to school, we no longer have to choose, we are relieved. Medical support allows us to be in better health and this is also important to work. Psychological support helps us to overcome our sorrows. The individual interim reparative measures have changed our lives." — Saran Cissé, survivor of conflict-related sexual violence, Guinea (2021).

"I would like to highlight the importance of the Global Survivors Fund. GSF projects are designed with the participation of victims which is very important." — Angela, survivor of conflict-related sexual violence and national coordinator of the Network of Women Victims and Professionals in Colombia (November 2019)

"The good reintegration of victims and survivors through holistic care and support from the Global Fund for Survivors, become a gateway to easing our pain, with the hope that our situation will not remain the same as before." — Tatiana Mukanire, survivor of conflict-related sexual violence and National Coordinator of the National Movement for Survivors of Sexual Violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, DRC (November 2020)

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