CÔTE D’IVOIRE STUDY ON THE STATUS OF AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR REPARATIONS FOR SURVIVORS OF CONFLICT-RELATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE

To live well again
CÔTE D’IVOIRE STUDY ON THE STATUS OF AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR REPARATIONS FOR SURVIVORS OF CONFLICT-RELATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE

To live well again
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## ACRONYMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## I. BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Background</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1. Côte d’Ivoire Reparations Study</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.2. Study partners</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.3. The author</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.4. Acknowledgements</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2. Methodology</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.1. Aim of the Côte d’Ivoire Reparations Study</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.2. Specific objectives of the Côte d’Ivoire Study</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.3. Study methods</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.4. Study limitations</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## II. INTRODUCTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## III. HISTORY OF THE CONFLICT AND PATTERNS OF CONFLICT-RELATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CÔTE D’IVOIRE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1. Origins of the conflict</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2. Timeline and patterns of sexual violence during the conflict</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.1. 2000 election</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.2. 2002–2004 civil war</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.3 Era of ‘neither peace nor war’</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.4. Post-election crisis, 2010–2011</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.5. Patterns and estimated number of CRSV survivors</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3. Gender equality in Côte d’Ivoire and its influence on CRSV</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.1. Gender roles and norms</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.2. Gender norms and patterns of sexual violence</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## IV. SURVIVORS’ PERCEPTIONS AND PRIORITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1. Survivors’ perceptions on the right to reparation</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2. Impacts of sexual violence and survivors’ needs</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.1. Physical and psychological impacts and needs</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.2. Impacts on family and children</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.3. Economic impacts and needs</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.4. Social and community impacts and needs</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3. Survivors’ views and priorities on forms and modalities of reparations</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.1. Individual reparations</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.2. Collective reparations</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.3. Justice and apology as dimensions of reparation</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.4. Measures from non-duty bearers</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## V. ACCESS TO ASSISTANCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1. Access to healthcare during the conflict period</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2. Access to care services post-conflict</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.1. Post-conflict government response</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.2. Post-conflict international response</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3. Contemporary support to CRSV survivors</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.1. Multisectoral assistance framework</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.2. Medical bonds</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.3. Police and gendarme services</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.4. Legal aid</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## VI. AVENUES FOR REPARATIONS 65

6.1. International framework for judicial reparations 65
   6.1.1. The ICC as an avenue to reparations for CRSV survivors 67
   6.1.2. ICC Trust Fund for Victims 67

6.2. Domestic framework for judicial reparations 68
   6.2.1. Sexual violence in domestic law 69
   6.2.2. Special Investigation and Examination Unit 69
   6.2.3. Military tribunal 70

6.3. Domestic framework for non-judicial reparations 71
   6.3.1. Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission 71
   6.3.2. Security-sector reform as guarantee of non-repetition 71
   6.3.3. National reparations programme 73
   6.3.4 Reparations law 74

## VII. IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF REPARATIONS 77

7.1. Judicial reparations 77
   7.1.1. Special Investigation and Examination Unit 77
   7.1.2. Amadé Ouérémi trial 77

7.2. Non-judicial reparations 78
   7.2.1. Interim reparations 78
   7.2.2. Reparations programmes 78

## VIII. ACCESSING REMEDIES: OBSTACLES, BARRIERS, AND RISKS 80

8.1. Judicial reparations 80
   8.1.1. Structural obstacles to accessing justice 80
   8.1.2. Judicial independence 81
   8.1.3. Amnesties 82

8.2. Non-judicial reparations 83
   8.2.1. Lack of communication, accessibility, and protection 83
   8.2.2. Lack of clarity on qualification eligibility 85
   8.2.3. Lack of information on the status of claims 86

8.3. Overarching concerns 88
   8.3.1. Isolation and poverty 88
   8.3.2 Security risks 88
   8.3.3. Lack of transparency 88
   8.3.4. Reconciliation prioritised over remedy 89

## IX. ADVANCING REPARATIONS FOR CRSV SURVIVORS 93

9.1. Role of state actors 93
   9.1.1. Budgeting 93
   9.1.2. Survivor participation and consultation 94
   9.1.3. Strengthen coordination and engage local actors 94

9.2. Role of international organisations 95
   9.2.1. Survivor support 95
   9.2.2. Multi-level mandate 95

9.3. Role of civil society: Advocacy strategies going forward 96

## X. RECOMMENDATIONS 98

## XI. CONCLUSION 102

BIBLIOGRAPHY 104
ACRONYMS

AfDB  African Development Bank
AFJ-CI  Association des femmes juristes du Côte d’Ivoire
APWE  Alliance patriotique de l’ethnie Wé
CDVR  Commission dialogue, vérité et réconciliation
CEDAW  Comité pour l’élimination de la discrimination à l’égard des femmes / Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CFA  Central African Franc
CNDH-CI  Conseil national des droits de l’homme de Côte d’Ivoire
CNE  Commission nationale d’enquête
CNLVFE  Comité national pour la lutte contre la violence faite aux femmes et aux enfants
CNLVSC  Comité national de lutte contre les violences sexuelles liées aux conflits
CNS  Conseil national de sécurité
COJEP  Congrès panafricain des jeunes et des patriotes
CONARIV  Commission nationale pour la réconciliation et l’indemnisation des victimes des crises survenues en Côte d’Ivoire
COVICI  Confédération des organisations des victimes des crises en Côte d’Ivoire
CRSV  Conflict-related sexual violence
CSE  Cellule spéciale d’enquête
CSEI  Cellule spéciale d’enquête et d’instruction
CSO  Civil society organisation
DAV  Direction d’assistance aux victimes
DDR  Disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration
DEPG  Direction de l’égalité et de la promotion du genre
DEPS  Direction des études, de la planification et des statistiques
ECOWAS  Economic Community of West African States
ENSEA  Ecole nationale supérieure de statistique et d’économie appliquée d’Abidjan
EPU  Examen périodique universel
GBV  Gender-based violence
GSF  Global Survivors Fund
GTGD  Groupe thématique genre et développement
FDS  Forces de défense et de sécurité
FESCI  Fédération estudiantine et scolaire de Côte d’Ivoire
FIDH  Fédération internationale des droits de l’homme
FN  Forces nouvelles
FPI  Front populaire ivoirien
FRCI  Forces républicaines de Côte d’Ivoire
ICC  International Criminal Court
ICRC  International Committee for the Red Cross
ICTJ  International Center for Transitional Justice
IDP  Internally displaced person
IMF  International Monetary Fund
HRW  Human Rights Watch
HIV/AIDS  Human immunodeficiency virus / Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
LGBTQ+  Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and others
LIDHO  Ligue ivoirienne des droits de l’homme
MACA  Maison d’arrêt et de correction d’Abidjan
MEASS  Ministère de l’Emploi, des affaires sociales et de la solidarité
MFFAS  Ministère de la Famille, de la femme et des affaires sociales
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MFFE</td>
<td>Ministère de la Famille, de la femme et de l’enfant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIDH</td>
<td>Mouvement ivoirien des droits de l’homme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MINUCI</td>
<td>Mission des Nations unies en Côte d’Ivoire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MJDHL</td>
<td>Ministère de la Justice, des droits de l’homme et des libertés publiques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MJP</td>
<td>Mouvement pour la justice et la paix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPCI</td>
<td>Mouvement patriotique de Côte d’Ivoire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPFFPE</td>
<td>Ministère de la Promotion de la femme, de la famille et de la protection de l’enfant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPIGO</td>
<td>Mouvement populaire ivoirien du Grand Ouest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRCN</td>
<td>Ministère de la Réconciliation et cohésion nationale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSCSIV</td>
<td>Ministre de la Solidarité, cohésion social et indemnisation des victimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSF</td>
<td>Médecins sans frontières</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSLP</td>
<td>Ministère de la Solidarité et lutte contre le pauvreté</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OHCHR</td>
<td>Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OIDH</td>
<td>Observatoire ivoirien des droits de l’homme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ONUCI</td>
<td>Opérations des Nations unies en Côte d’Ivoire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTP</td>
<td>Office of the Prosecutor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PALAJ</td>
<td>Projet d’appui à l’amélioration de l’accès au droit et à la justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAVVLOS</td>
<td>Centre de prévention pour le soutien et l’assistance aux victimes de violences sexuelles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDCI</td>
<td>Parti démocratique de Côte d’Ivoire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PNCS</td>
<td>Programme national pour la cohésion sociale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RDR</td>
<td>Rassemblement des républicains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SGBV</td>
<td>Sexual and gender-based violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNLVBG</td>
<td>Stratégie nationale pour la lutte contre la violence basée sur le genre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TFV</td>
<td>Trust Fund for Victims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNFPA</td>
<td>United Nations Population Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNHRC</td>
<td>United Nations Human Rights Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNSC</td>
<td>United Nations Security Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNSG</td>
<td>United Nations Secretary-General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPLTCI</td>
<td>Union pour la libération totale de la Côte d’Ivoire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USD</td>
<td>United States Dollar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VBG</td>
<td>Violence basée sur le genre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WARO</td>
<td>West Africa Regional Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Côte d’Ivoire is a multi-ethnic country with a long history of accommodation, alliances and cooperation uniting its diverse communities. Given this context, the origins of the Ivorian conflict are complex and rooted in long simmering political and economic unrest, enflamed by leaders from all sides as they sought personal gain and political power.1 These politics initiated a decade of conflict, from 2000–2011, during which time more than 21,000 persons were killed or disappeared.2 Conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) was used by all parties to the conflict from the earliest phases of the fighting, initially to humiliate politically engaged persons and their family members, and later as part of wider patterns of violence targeting perceived enemies as a way to punish or terrorise individuals, families and communities.3 This violence included rapes, gang rapes, sexual slavery and other forms of sexual violence during attacks on villages, towns and as part of house-to-house searches.4 Sexual violence was used as a weapon of war to systematically target civilians, inflict pain on communities and punish persons perceived to be political enemies.5

Sexual violence had a devastating impact on the individuals and communities targeted. All CRSV survivors interviewed for this GSF Study continue to experience severe impacts from the violations suffered, and none have benefited from adequate assistance or reparation. Study participants described themselves as living through cycles of harms, where each impact of CRSV deepens others. Stigma, poverty, rejection by family and community, medical needs and psychological traumas have all contributed to an inability to work and participate in community and family life, which in turn has deepened isolation, economic hardship, and health problems.

Study participants defined reparations as the means to live in dignity, gain an adequate livelihood, access reliable medical care and moral support, and assure their children’s care and education. Reweaving family and community bonds were imperative to repairing the harm caused by CRSV. This calls for individual support with reintegration, but also collective reparations aimed at reshaping the context where they live. Interviewees shared the consensus that while the state of Côte d’Ivoire is responsible for providing reparations, they were also practical in their thinking. They welcomed the possibility of interim reparations from non-state actors and requested that international organisations take a central role in supporting survivors.

The Ivorian legal code allows victims to join court proceedings as civil parties, thus permitting them to claim damages against the accused.6 Although this legal avenue exists, judicial mechanisms have thus far not proven a path to reparations for CRSV survivors.7 Impunity remains the overwhelming response to serious crimes committed during the conflict period, including with the Special Investigation and Examination Unit (Cellule spéciale d’enquête et d’instruction, CSEI).

Despite government promises of redress and reparations for CRSV, progress has been limited

1 Jean-Noël Loucou, La Côte d’Ivoire coloniale (Abidjan, CERAP, 2012), p. 112.
by a lack of political will, bureaucratic complexity, and the social stigma survivors face. After the 2015–2017 National Commission for Reconciliation and Compensation of Victims (Commission nationale pour la réconciliation et l’indemnisation des victimes des crises survenues en Côte d’Ivoire, CONARIV) that produced a consolidated list of all registered victims of conflict-related human rights violations and damages committed between 1990 and 2012 and a draft law on reparations,8 the Ministry of Reconciliation (ministère de la Réconciliation et de la cohésion nationale, MRCN) and the Ministry of Solidarity (ministère de la Solidarité et de la lutte contre la pauvreté, MSLP) now share the task of implementing Côte d’Ivoire’s national reparations programme.

Frustrations amongst the Ivorian victim community with the slow pace of the programme as well as the minimal forms of reparations received to date are compounded by the absence of law-defining minimal standards of reparations and the guarantee of reparations as a right.9 In their critiques, victims’ associations and civil society organisation (CSO) partners emphasise that the reparation process is non-transparent, non-inclusive and lacks special accessibility measures for more vulnerable groups, most notably CRSV survivors and children.10 Moreover, failures to deliver on promised reparations for CRSV survivors falls into a boarder pattern of the Ivorian government, along with its international partners, of responding to CRSV with ambitious plans and promises but without securing the personnel, capacities and finances to implement them. Study participants thus expressed a preference for future advocacy and assistance work conducted through civil society and international actors rather than working directly with state agencies. In particular, Study participants felt they did not have the means or knowledge to navigate complex support services or government bureaucracies and requested assistance from non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and in particular international NGOs, in helping improve access to support services and in provisioning interim reparations.

That said, the Ivorian state remains responsible for providing services to its citizens and reparations to conflict victims. For CRSV survivors to access reparations as well as much needed public services over the long term, it is necessary to find ways for the government to work with, and for, survivors. Accordingly, this Study details a range of recommendations to state actors, but also to civil society and international community, to overcome the inadequacies of the national framework for reparations and for assistance to survivors of sexual and gender-based violence in general, based on existing state structures at national, regional, and local levels engaged in providing some form of reparations as well as general support to survivors. Full and detailed recommendations can be found at the end of this Study.

10 COVICI, ONG Bonne Action, FDPCI and RAJP, ‘La situation des femmes, enfants et jeunes dans le processus de réparation en Côte d’Ivoire: rapport de monitoring’ (July 2019), pp. 33, 36.
I. BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

1.1. Background

1.1.1. Côte d’Ivoire Reparations Study

As part of its Global Reparations Study, the Global Survivors Fund (GSF), in collaboration with the Confederation of Organisations of Victims of the Ivorian Crisis (Confédération des organisations de victimes de la crise ivoirienne, COVICI), conducted this study to identify the reparations needs of survivors of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) in Côte d’Ivoire, as well as the opportunities for delivering reparations to survivors through judicial and administrative processes. This Study presents and analyses survivors’ perceptions of and expectations for reparations, and offers practical, concrete and context-specific recommendations to policymakers and other relevant actors at national and global levels to inform the design and delivery of survivor-centred reparations in Côte d’Ivoire. This Côte d’Ivoire Study also seeks to establish the extent to which survivors of CRSV have already received any form of assistance or reparation through government programmes or from civil society initiatives, and if so, what lessons can be learned from these experiences to inform the design and delivery of comprehensive reparations in the future, including the potential delivery of interim reparative measures by GSF. As an objective in itself, the Côte d’Ivoire Study process further aimed to increase the understanding and awareness of survivors’ right to reparation and to create further momentum for the delivery of meaningful survivor-centred reparations to CRSV survivors in Côte d’Ivoire.

The Côte d’Ivoire Study is part of a global study on reparations (the “Global Reparations Study”) launched by GSF in 2020, which focuses on the status of and opportunities for reparations for survivors of CRSV in over 20 countries. The Global Reparations Study is a multi-actor effort led by GSF in collaboration with over 40 local and international partners, including survivors’ networks and groups. It seeks to make recommendations for further action based on survivors’ needs and aspirations and to identify potential support available among key actors and concrete action to enhance access to reparations for CRSV survivors around the world.

1.1.2. Study Partners

Global Survivors Fund (GSF) was launched in October 2019 by Dr Denis Mukwege and Ms Nadia Murad, Nobel Peace Prize laureates 2018. Its mission is to enhance access to reparations for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence around the globe, thus seeking to fill a gap long identified by survivors. GSF acts to provide interim reparative measures in situations where states or other parties are unable or unwilling to meet their responsibilities. GSF advocates also for duty bearers, as well as the international community, to develop reparations programmes, and provides expertise and technical support to guide states and civil society in the design of reparations programmes. GSF’s survivor-centric approach is the cornerstone of its work. For more information, visit www.globalsurvivorsfund.org.

Confédération des organisations de victimes de la crise ivoirienne (COVICI) is a network of victims’ organisations and federations created in August 2013 with the goal of coordinating victims’ groups to make their voices heard and assert their rights to reparation. COVICI is composed of 99 organisations including federations, associations, and collectives from across Côte d’Ivoire and represents approximately 150,000 victims. For more information, visit https://www.facebook.com/covici.cacoord.

1.1.3. The author

Dr Joanna Rice is a Canadian political scientist whose work supports civil society and state-led transitional justice initiatives, with a specialisation in providing technical support to truth commissions. Joanna brings special expertise on integrating women’s rights and on child and youth engagement in transitional justice processes. Joanna served as the International Center
for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) Representative in The Gambia and as a technical expert for transitional justice processes in Côte d’Ivoire, Mali, Sudan, DRC, Canada and with indigenous rights initiatives globally. Prior to this, Joanna worked as a Truth-Seeking Program Associate at the ICTJ.

1.1.4. Acknowledgements

This Study was conducted in partnership with COVICI and its regional partners. It is the result of hard work by all members of those national and regional teams. The author would especially like to acknowledge the major contributions of Ahoua Dagnogo, Edwige Brin and COVICI’s president Kanté Lassina, as well as regional team leaders Diomande Adama, Kéi Léonard, Loua Serge and Yao Anne Marie, and regional social workers Biassi Charles, Dan Justin, Kone Naboudou and Yao Justine. Most importantly, this work is built on the contribution of eight survivor-researchers who helped lead the Study, and 34 survivor-participants who took part in interviews and focus groups. Their dedication and insight are the foundation of this project. The author would also like to acknowledge the many contributions of GSF colleagues who supported the writing and reviewing of this Study: Danae van des Straten Ponthoz, Delia Sánchez del Ángel, Vishnu Varatharajan, Andrea Leiva, Yasmine Sarr, Berta Fernández Rosón, Julie Guillerot, Elizabeth Sturley, Johanna Amaya Panche and Simon Paul Chrislett, as well as Aude Le Goff from the Trust Fund for Victims. Finally, thank you to external reviewer Cristian Correa, whose critical analysis, insightful suggestions, and extensive experience enormously improved this report.

1.2. Methodology

1.2.1. Aim of the Côte d’Ivoire Reparations Study

This Study aims to identify what current avenues are available in Côte d’Ivoire for accessing reparations for CRSV, what gaps exist between access and survivors’ needs and how such gaps can be mitigated to ensure timely access to reparations for all survivors of CRSV.

1.2.2. Specific objectives of the Côte d’Ivoire Study

1. Document the scope and extent of sexual violence committed during or related to the conflict period.
2. Identify and assess legal and administrative remedies in place for awarding reparations to CRSV survivors.
3. Identify and analyse survivors’ perspectives, needs and expectations in relation to reparation and interim reparative measures.
4. Identify gaps between current access to reparations and survivors’ needs, and determine opportunities for, as well as possible challenges to, accessing reparations in Côte d’Ivoire.
5. Provide contextual recommendations for ensuring that reparations and interim reparative measures are provided to survivors of CRSV in Côte d’Ivoire.

1.2.3. Study methods

This Country Study is a mixed-methods research study involving both quantitative and qualitative field research using a participatory and co-creation approach and incorporating extensive desk research. The Study is designed with the goals of conducting survivor-led research and providing reparative value to research participants. With those objectives in mind, CRSV survivors themselves were trained to lead data collection. This method was chosen based on our understanding that survivors are best placed to document their own experiences and views. The Study was carried out in the following stages.

DESK REVIEW AND PLANNING

An open-source document review was undertaken to inform the field work and identify gaps to be addressed in data collection. A series of internal meetings and meetings with partners were held to discuss the scope of the Study, obtain input on trauma-sensitive data collection methods, and set a timeframe. Seven remote interviews with victims’ leaders, service providers and national experts in Côte d’Ivoire were conducted to further inform Study design.
I. STUDY CONTEXT AND METHODOLOGY

COVICI staff members leaving a GSF workshop, Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire, November 2021. © Joanna Rice
Field work began by identifying four research sites and forming local research teams. Our selected research sites were the western towns of Man and Duékoué, the central town of Bouaké and the Ivorian metropole, Abidjan. These sites were selected as representative of the regional and political diversity of communities affected by CRSV.

Four research teams were formed, each comprising a team leader, two researchers and a social worker. As the national partner co-leading this study, COVICI identified an experienced team leader for each research site. The team leaders were selected from COVICI’s membership of victims’ associations as persons especially engaged on work with CRSV survivors. Team leaders then selected two CRSV survivors from their local network to be trained as researchers. The survivors selected had some experience in victim activism or peer support in their community, as well as French and local language skills. Despite efforts to include male survivors, all researchers were female. Finally, each team included a state social worker from the local community centre. The involvement of social workers ensured professional assistance was available as needed and was part of the reparative value our research offered participants. Researchers, team leaders and social workers were all paid an honorarium, at a competitive rate, for the hours worked on this Study.

RESEARCH TEAM TRAINING WORKSHOPS

The Study lead travelled to each research site and trained the four teams in interviewing and reporting. Trainings consisted of two-day workshops aimed at teaching practical skills in trauma-informed, semi-structured interviewing. The workshops were also an opportunity to work closely with each team on developing a context-specific research plan. The research plans covered topics such as confidentiality, security concerns, how to communicate with survivors, participant-selection guidelines, how to recognise and respond to signs of distress, etc. Teams were taught how to conduct an informed consent process and developed a consent process script. Each team also created a context-specific risk assessment and mitigation strategy. Trainings further covered basic psychological first aid techniques.

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

Individual interviews with CRSV survivors were conducted by survivor-researchers, under supervision from team leaders. Study participants were selected from the team leader’s local membership and represented a diverse group (i.e. ages, gender, political affiliations, period of conflict affected, ethnic background, etc.). Ensuring gender diversity was a challenge, with only one male survivor interviewed. Out of concern for the privacy and security of survivors, we did not contact participants unknown to the team leaders, and survivors were contacted by persons with whom they already had a relationship. Reaching out to participants included an initial assessment of whether their circumstances (i.e. mental, emotional, familial, security, etc.) would allow them to participate in this research. The fact that all participants had some prior relationship with a regional victims’ organisation could be seen as a limitation of the study, as that affiliation may have influenced their thinking about reparation. In the view of the author, any possible costs were outweighed by the gains in terms of participant safety and wellbeing.

11 Although our initial team included one male survivor as a researcher, the individual chose not to continue with the project.
Each research team conducted approximately 10 interviews within a three-week window; 42 interviews conducted overall. The number of interviews was flexible to ensure that quality and security were prioritised over quantity. Survivor-researchers from each team began by interviewing one another as an opportunity to practise and receive feedback. Interviews were semi-structured in format. Questions focused on the impacts of sexual violence on the participant’s life as well as her or his perceptions of and expectations for reparations. Survivors were not asked about the experience of sexual violence itself, although some participants chose to discuss these experiences. Interviews were conducted one-on-one, unless otherwise requested by the interviewee. A social worker was nearby to provide support, as needed. In some cases, a second researcher or team leader was present during the interview as a translator. To facilitate their participation, travel costs and phone credit were provided to interviewees. An emergency fund was also available to each research team in case of unforeseen security risks or other urgent needs.

Each interviewee met with the research team at least three times at a local community centre. First, prospective interviewees were invited to an initial discussion introducing them to the project and its goals. Informed consent was discussed in this first meeting to avoid being rushed on the interview day and to ensure survivors had sufficient time to reflect on the decision to participate. Survivors wishing to participate were then invited back for a semi-structured individual interview in the coming days (see above). Finally, interviewees were invited to a follow-up psychosocial support counselling session with the team social worker. All interviewees chose to attend the offered counselling session, and some continued to return to the community centres for further care. Researchers further followed up with participants through phone calls at least twice in the following weeks to check in and to ensure no security risks or other related concerns had arisen.

FOCUS GROUPS

All interview participants were invited to attend a focus group workshop, held a few weeks after the individual interviews. The decision to divide research between individual interviews and focus group discussions reflected our understanding that differing methods are more appropriate for differing research aims. Interviews were an effective format for discussing more personal matters such as the impacts of sexual violence. Questions related to expectations for reparations and advocacy goals were better suited to a guided group discussion as nearly all participants had limited knowledge of these topics prior to joining the Study. All focus group discussions were conducted with a social worker present.

Each focus group workshop began with an ‘ice breaker’ activity and a discussion about confidentiality, security risks and anonymity. While a few survivors knew one another, most participants were meeting each other for the first time. To help protect their identities, survivors were asked not to share their names and instead chose a pseudonym for the day. This was followed with a short presentation by GSF moderator about the Study as well as an introduction to reparations. The rest of the session consisted of a guided discussion, lasting for approximately two hours, and covering topics such as defining reparations, expectations for reparations, sources of support, advocacy goals and possible ways forward. The sessions ended with a catered group lunch.

These graphs describe some features of the survivors interviewed in focus groups and individual semi-structured interviews during the fieldwork. The data was collected through Kobo Forms and analysed using descriptive statistics with RStudio.

FOLLOW-UP

As a final activity, Study participants were invited to a ‘feedback and next steps’ group discussion one month later. COVICI moderators returned to each research site and presented Study participants with a summary of the research findings gathered during interviews and focus group discussions. Survivors were given the opportunity to share their feedback and recommendations. In an effort to provide participants with something of reparative value, the feedback sessions were incorporated into a larger repair-oriented activity. These activities were selected based on the expressed interests of the participants during interviews and focus group discussions. The activities included a workshop on access to justice, a session on victims’ rights, music and dancing, and peer support groups.
**CÔTE D’IVOIRE**

**Distribution of Survivor Participants’ Age**

Number of survivor participants (total = 46)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age in years</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own elaboration based on demographic profiles collected.

**Distribution of Survivor Participants’ Gender**

- Female (incl. transgender women)
- Male (incl. transgender male)
- Prefer not to answer

Number of survivor participants (total = 46)

Source: Own elaboration based on demographic profiles collected.
DATA AND ANALYSIS

Legal and policy documents were gathered and reviewed by the author and supplemented by input from select representatives of NGOs and government. The responses from interview and focus group discussion transcripts were uploaded to a secure server where they were analysed. The data was also subjected to theme recurrence and word frequency analysis, using NVivo software. The data from the survivors’ demographic profiles was gathered and entered into the online surveying software Kobo.

1.2.4. Study limitations

Our research methods navigated the tension between putting CRSV survivors in a leading role, while recognising that most of these colleagues were learning challenging skills for the first time. Trauma-informed, semi-structured interviews are complex and sensitive work, and doing this work well requires significant experience. The two-day trainings provided had a notable impact but were not sufficient to develop the skills needed to conduct thorough semi-structured interviews.

This challenge was in part mitigated by investing significant time and financial resources in ensuring our research teams had readily available support. Survivors-researchers worked closely with local team leaders and dedicated social workers, all of whom had experience in interviewing survivors of sexual violence.

Nevertheless, a tension remained between the challenges posed by our researchers’ limited experience and the benefits of a survivor-led model. Ultimately, the author feels that the benefits outweighed the difficulties. In particular, feedback from Study participants showed that our methods had a higher-than-expected reparative impact on participants and contributed significantly to community-building amongst the survivors involved. We also saw notable skills transfer to our survivor-researchers, as well as feedback that they found the experience healing and self-actualising.

One challenge that was not fully mitigated was the very reasonable expectation expressed by Study participants for direct benefits beyond the small forms of compensation provided (i.e. travel funds, phone credit, counselling sessions). All interactions and communications with survivors emphasised that this Study was research focused and reminded participants that no direct benefits could be expected to follow. High expectations nevertheless remained. Other challenges were related to the withdrawal of some researchers from the project, low levels of literacy amongst participants, and communication challenges related to interviews taking place in remote areas.
II. INTRODUCTION

In Côte d’Ivoire, as in many other conflict settings, sexual violence was used as a weapon of war to systematically target civilians, inflict pain on communities and punish persons perceived as political enemies. Women, men and children experienced rape, gang rape, sexual slavery, sexual assault in custody and sexual violence committed in front of family, amongst other forms of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV). These acts were often connected to wider attacks and atrocities such as massacres, torture, land expulsions, abduction and pillaging. Sexual violence has grave physical, psychological and socioeconomic impacts for survivors. In Côte d’Ivoire, despite government promises of redress and reparation for CRSV survivors, progress towards those aims is limited by a lack of political will, bureaucratic complexity, security risks and social stigma, amongst other factors.

This Study seeks to better understand the needs of CRSV survivors, and how they can be met. All survivors involved in this Study struggled to meet basic health and sustenance needs for themselves, their children, and their wider families. Urgent medical and material needs were deemed a first priority in the expectations for reparations voiced by survivors interviewed. While material needs were a shared priority amongst interviewees, Study participants equally felt that meaningful and effective reparations must include measures aimed at recognition, apology, and redress. Interviewees shared the consensus that the government of Côte d’Ivoire is responsible for providing reparations, but past experiences with broken promises have led to low levels of trust in state initiatives. Many survivors expressed feelings of powerlessness before an opaque bureaucracy and stalled justice system. “There is no one there for us,” explained a survivor, “we have no state. It has forgotten us. For us, it is like the state does not even exist here in Côte d’Ivoire.” Study participants ultimately felt the more difficult question was ‘how’ survivors might access reparations rather than ‘what’ reparations might entail. As a possible way forward, survivors asked for assistance from international NGOs and actors to provide interim assistance, to bridge their relationship with the state, and to help pressure or incentivise the state into meetings its obligations.

This report is divided into seven main sections, the first of which provides an overview of CRSV perpetrated in Côte d’Ivoire. The second section examines the impacts of CRSV on survivors and the wider community, and presents survivors’ perceptions, needs and priorities for reparations, as well as the associated challenges of making such priorities a reality. The third section explores past and current access to interim assistance and relief and examines gaps in available services. The fourth section analyses the normative frameworks for judicial and non-judicial reparations in Côte d’Ivoire, looking at both international and domestic avenues to reparation. The fifth section examines the status of implementation of the ongoing reparations programme in Côte d’Ivoire, focusing on the gaps and challenges that have resulted in very limited reparations reaching CRSV survivors. The sixth section explores both opportunities for, and possible challenges to, accessing reparations in Côte d’Ivoire. A final section looks at concrete policy and programmatic changes that could advance reparations for survivors of CRSV, concluding with a set of recommendations for ensuring that survivors of CRSV obtain reparations.

14 A noted pattern of targeting pregnant women and forcing miscarriages suggests an intention to commit abominating acts against a bloodline and rob the community of future generation. The CNE emphasised patterns of raping and harming pregnant women (CNE 2012 ‘Rapport d’enquête’, p. 11). For the 2002–2004 conflict, HRW documented similar patterns amongst rebel forces of targeting pregnant women with especially egregious forms of sexual violence and violence that appears aimed at provoking miscarriages (i.e. beating their stomachs) (HRW 2007 ‘My heart is cut’, pp. 28–30).
15 Semi-structured interview with MANSV04 (Man, 8 December 2021).
III. HISTORY OF THE CONFLICT AND PATTERNS OF CONFLICT-RELATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CÔTE D’IVOIRE

3.1. Origins of the conflict

Côte d’Ivoire is a multi-ethnic country with a long history of accommodation, alliances, and cooperation between its diverse communities. The origins of the Ivorian conflict are complex and cannot be captured with the simplistic characterisation of an ‘ethnic war’. Ethnicity became a key dynamic of the war because, for personal and political gains, Ivorian leaders readily enflamed and exploited tenuous relationships created by colonial and post-colonial policies that assigned social and economic significance to ethnic categories.

Colonial and post-colonial land and labour policies, in particular, played a central role constructing and giving political salience to contemporary ethnic identities. The western region of Côte d’Ivoire is the heart of the cocoa, coffee and rubber industries, and the traditional homeland of the Krou: an ethnic group including Bété, Dida, Wê, Kroumen and Guéré peoples. To maximise potential revenue, French colonial administrators and later the post-colonial authorities established plantations throughout the fertile west by importing migrant labour from the arid north and from Upper Volta (today’s Burkina Faso, Guinea and Mali, and northern Côte d’Ivoire).


As a frequently cited source, this figure has led to the common misconception that Côte d’Ivoire experienced a short 2011 crisis rather than what was in actuality, a decade-long civil conflict.

Based on a review of government and civil society victims’ registers, the 2016 National Commission for Reconciliation and the Compensation of Victims (Commission nationale pour la réconciliation et l’indemnisation des victimes des crises survenues en Côte d’Ivoire, CONARIV) reported more than 21,000 persons killed or disappeared during the decade of conflict from 2000–2011.

At the height of the civil conflict, in the mid-2000s, between 500,000 and 1,705,000 persons were displaced, the majority (60%) of them women and girls.

The December 2010–April 2011 crisis that surrounded the election of current Ivorian President Alassane Ouattara was in fact the culmination of political conflicts that spanned decades.

This section of the report examines (1) the origins of the conflict and (2) a timeline of the conflict, highlighting patterns of sexual violence perpetrated during each conflict period. These patterns are (3) contextualised within the broader context of gender equality in Côte d’Ivoire.

---

17 The Commission itself notes its scope was limited to the 2010–2011 post-electoral period and that, even within that window, the figures provided are an underestimate (ibid.).
18 The CONARIV identified 21,516 civilians murdered or disappeared during the conflict period of 2000–2011, with the highest concentration in the central western region. Note that this figure is limited to persons who registered the deaths of friends and loved ones with a CSO, state agencies or the Commission. It also excludes non-violent conflict deaths of those who died after being cut from basic services (CONARIV 2016 ‘Rapport d’activités’, p. 30).
Northerners from within and outside the country’s borders are often collectively referred to as ‘Dioula’, though they represent diverse ethnic or language groups. This policy meant both Dioula labour and Krou land were exploited for the purpose of reaping profits for a small industrial ruling class. Dioula migrant labourers were recruited into precarious, low-income work while Krou customary landowners lost access to their lands under policies pressuring its conversion into farmland for agri-business.21

In the decades since, that policy framework has become the background to a complex web of local land disputes in the west. Legal land deeds are rare in Côte d’Ivoire. In the west, land usage rights are often governed by tutorat relationships: a debt system binding the offspring of former migrant labourers to the Krou communities on whose traditional lands they live and work.22 Under the tutorat tradition, ownership of land cultivated by hollagènes (the so-called ‘northerners’) depends on continually meeting an ill-defined set of obligations to the local allochtone (‘host community’). When these tenancy bonds were made by the grandparents of the current occupants, the agreements may have been tenable and even beneficial to both sides. In the decades since, these arrangements have given rise to complex land disputes in which both sides have legitimate grievances.

The prosperity Côte d’Ivoire knew throughout the 1960s and 1970s meant simmering land disputes remained largely mollified due to the younger generation simply leaving rural areas for well-paid jobs in Abidjan. This changed in the 1990s when the economy collapsed, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) responded with strict austerity reforms in exchange for debt relief. This stripped the independence-era president, Félix Houphouët-Boigny, of the economic leverage that had secured his 30-year one-party rule. Prior to the crash, the country’s significant financial resources had maintained a relatively high standard of living while also allowing Houphouët-Boigny to co-opt potential opponents into an expansive civil service. This was all stripped away under IMF austerity. The first signs of unrest began in the form of an urban bi-partisan, pro-democracy student movement aimed at bringing an end to the one-party state.23 On 31 May 1990, after failing to quell the movement with heavy-handed police action, Houphouët-Boigny declared Côte d’Ivoire a multi-party democracy. Marking the occasion, one of the youth movement’s most vocal leaders, history professor Dr Laurent Gbagbo, founded the Ivorian Popular Front (Front populaire ivoirien, FPI) as the country’s first legal opposition party. The ‘Gathering of Republicans’ party (Rassemblement des républicains, RDR), the party that would later form current President Alassane Ouattara’s political base, was founded a year later.24 In the years that followed, the once united youth movement that brought an end to one-party rule would divide into camps along these party lines.

President Houphouët-Boigny died on 5 December 1993, and the kingpins of Ivoirian politics clashed over the power vacuum he left behind. This created the context where growing resentment in the rural west linked into youth factions in the urban centre. The linchpin came in the form of citizenship debates deployed by political elites aimed at delegitimising their opponents in the new democracy. Amongst those vying for power, neither Laurent Gbagbo nor Alassane Ouattara were dominant players. It was the President of the National Assembly, Henri Konan Bédié, who assumed the presidency. Bédié was the protégé of Houphouët-Boigny and leader of his Democratic Party of Côte d’Ivoire (Parti démocratique de Côte d’Ivoire, PDCI) up until his death in August

21 In 1960, when the French transferred authority to the Ivorian people, they handed power directly to the Democratic Party of Côte d’Ivoire (Parti démocratique de Côte d’Ivoire, PDCI) (Jean-Pierre Chauveau, ‘Question foncière et construction nationale en Côte d’Ivoire: les enjeux silencieux d’un coup d’État’ (2000) 78(2) Politique africaine 94 [https://doi.org/10.3917/polaf.078.009]). The Houphouët-Boigny government continued colonial-era policies aimed at growing the agricultural sector. In a 1962 declaration, President Houphouët-Boigny announced his own version of the colonial land law proclaiming, “la terre appartient à celui qui la met en valeur”. In a second famous decree, Houphouët-Boigny declared his pan-Africanist platform, welcoming ‘brothers’ from all other French West African states to Côte d’Ivoire to come to cut western forests and cultivate the land (Armando Cutolo, ‘Modernity, autochthony and the Ivorian nation: the end of a century in Côte d’Ivoire’ (2010) 8(4) Africa 527 [http://dx.doi.org/10.3366/af.2010.0103]).


23 This formidable pro-democracy movement grew from post-colonial era President Houphouët-Boigny’s impressive record of developing higher education in Côte d’Ivoire. His success produced a generation of leftist-oriented students and professors who demanded a new kind of nationalism divorced from what they considered the colonial mimicry of the Houphouët-Boigny era. In 1950, there were only 1,268 students in secondary schools. Thirty years later, the figure had grown nearly twenty-fold. At the end of the 1980s, the number of students at the University of Abidjan exceeded the 6,000 places available by three times (Dwayne Woods, ‘The politicization of teachers’ associations in Côte d’Ivoire’ (1996) 39(3) African Studies Review 113, p. 129 [https://doi.org/10.2307/520445]).

24 The RDR opposition party was founded under the leadership of Djeni Kobena. As a friend of Kobena’s, Laurent Gbagbo helped draft the founding statute of the RDR. In the first years of democracy, the two opposition parties – the FPI and RDR— worked together to weaken the PDCI.
2023. In a bid to solidify his claim to the presidency, Bédié introduced the concept of ‘Ivoirité’; politicising the idea of a ‘true’ Ivorian citizenship. He amended the Constitution, adding a requirement that all presidential candidates have a father and mother born on Ivorian soil. Though not the original target of the amendment, Ouattara was disqualified due to detractors’ claims that his father was Burkina born.

During his rise to notoriety, Dr Gbagbo began incorporating Ivoirité into the anti-colonial discourse of Abidjan’s increasingly bellicose youth movement. Alluding to growing land conflicts in the rural West, he constructed the idea of allochtone ‘Ivorianness’ as something that stood in contrast to the purported ‘foreignness’ of hallogènes (northerners).

The result was a claim that neo-colonial economic domination from outside the country and a supposed ‘flood of foreigners’ inside was one and the same. In this way, citizenship debates folded the urban youth movement into the rural land crisis. From here, it was a short step to begin describing anyone of northern descent as an unwelcome burden on the crumbling economy. Suddenly the anti-colonial discourse of what was, originally, a united pro-democratic youth movement transformed into anti-immigrant rhetoric. The result was political polarisation with no neutral space.

3.2. Timeline and patterns of sexual violence during the conflict

Vicims’ testimony suggests that a pattern of sexual violence was deployed from the earliest phases of the conflict to control and humiliate politically engaged persons and their family members. By the end of the conflict, ethnicity and political affiliation were collapsed into one and the same thing, meaning any person – whether politically or militarily active or not – might be targeted with sexual violence as a way to punish or terrorise her or his community. The often public and degrading way sexual violence was committed during the Ivorian conflict suggests perpetrators used these acts to harm the victims’ standing in their communities and break social and family bonds.

### Timeline of the Conflict

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>ELECTION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>CIVIL WAR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>NEITHER PEACE NO WAR PERIOD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>POST-ELECTION CRISIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

25 Definitions of ‘Ivoirité’ vary depending on where the speaker sits politically. Proponents of the movement claim it was intended to promote Ivorian industry and culture against European dominance. Detractors, however, insist Ivoirité is a xenophobic principle used to legislate and legitimise the exclusion of northerners from political and economic life. (Ruth Marshall-Fratani, ‘The war of “who is who”: Autochthony, nationalism, and citizenship in the Ivorian Crisis’, in Sara Dorman, Daniel Hammett and Paul Hugentobler (Eds.), Making nations, creating strangers: States and citizenship in Africa. African Social Studies Series, Vol. 16 (Boston, Brill, 2007), p. 45.

26 This legislation originally targeted then RDR leader Djeni Kobena, whom opponents claimed was Ghanaian. Note there is no birth certificate or registry supporting the claim that Ouattara’s father was foreign born. More to the point, neither Côte d’Ivoire nor Burkina Faso existed as the countries they are today at the time of his father’s birth. It should also be noted that many FPI supporters interpret the 1993 Constitution as also blocking the presidency from anyone who has represented a foreign country in an official government post. This provision, they argue, would bar Ouattara given he served Burkina Faso as president of the West African Regional Bank, claiming he only officiated his Ivorian citizenship when he became prime minister of Côte d’Ivoire.

27 Gbagbo fuelled his support base with talk of ‘noble’ western farmers reduced to poverty by ‘opportunist northerners occupying their land’ (Marshall-Fratani 2007 ‘The war of “who is who”’, pp. 52–53–54.


29 Marshall-Fratani 2007 ‘The war of “who is who”’, p. 64.


The 2002–2004 conflict, in particular, saw a pattern of rape in front of family members as well as acts of forced incest. Children were especially targeted for rape in front of family members. The way sexual violence mapped onto land expulsions and, in the final days of the war, the massacre of Guéré men and boys, also suggests that rape was deployed as part of campaigns to expel or eliminate perceived ‘enemy’ communities. Not all patterns of sexual violence during the conflict map onto military objectives. While many survivors describe attackers citing political or ethnic affiliation as the motivation for an attack, others describe rape with no clear military motivation, at times targeting the same population perpetrators claimed to protect or liberate. This ‘opportunistic’ sexual violence was extensive throughout the country, but most notable in patterns of gangs or militia groups attacking public transport vehicles, roadways, and private homes.

### 3.2.1. 2000 election

On Christmas Eve 1999, former army Staff Sergeant Ibrahim Coulibaly (known as IB) and his comrades (a group including the future rebel commandants du zones, or ComZones), led a coup d'état against President Bédié, placing their former general, Robert Guéï, in charge of a caretaker government. While initially reluctant to take power, Guéï soon became determined to hold onto the presidency. In the run-up to the 2000 election, President Guéï believed Alassane Ouattara was his only real threat in a general election. In a bid to secure his win, Guéï organised a dubious yet successful referendum on candidacy. In protest, both the RDR and PDCI parties boycotted the 2000 election, pitting the incumbent Guéï against a relatively minor player: FPI leader Dr Laurent Gbagbo. The professor won, sparking brutal street fighting and police violence that led to the death of at least 400 Ivorians. Guéï eventually conceded and Gbagbo was confirmed as the new president.

### SEXUAL VIOLENCE DURING THE 2000 ELECTION PERIOD

The 2000 election saw the beginnings of what would become a pattern of sexual violence targeting perceived members of the political opposition by police and gendarmes. Survivor testimony describes mobs of FPI supporters collaborating with police, including senior officers, in the sexual assault of RDR supporters as well as acts of sexual violence by police while in detention. In one incident recorded by Amnesty International, women presumed to be RDR supporters were handed over by security forces to members of a mob who publicly raped them. The RDR leadership further reported that some of its female members were raped and gang raped as punishment for their political involvement or that of their husbands, fathers and other relatives. In December 2000, just two months after the election, members of the security forces committed numerous sexual assaults and rapes against RDR supporters involved in protests against Ouattara’s exclusion from legislative elections. The victims included Dioula women with no political affiliation, accused of being RDR supporters simply because of their ethnic identity. These early episodes set a precedent both for the central role that sexual violence would play in the dynamics of the coming civil war as well as the impunity that, to this day, surrounds these crimes.

32 HRW documented several cases from rebel camps during the 2002 conflict of family members being severely beaten or even killed for refusing to torture or rape sisters, wives, daughters, and other relatives (HRW 2007 ‘My heart is cut’, pp. 31–32).
33 HRW documented numerous testimonies featuring husbands, fathers, mothers, and children being forced to watch sexual assault against their wives, children, and other family members (HRW 2007 ‘My heart is cut’, pp. 32–35). Also see Roth 2013 ‘Gender-based violence, conflicts and the political transition’, p. 18–20.
34 A noted pattern of targeting pregnant women and forcing miscarriages suggests an intention to commit abominable acts against a bloodline and rob the community of future generations. The 2011 National Commission of Inquiry emphasised patterns of raping and harming pregnant women (CNE 2012 ‘Rapport d’enquête’, p. 11). For the 2002–2004 conflict, HRW documented similar patterns amongst rebel forces of targeting pregnant women with especially egregious forms of sexual violence and violence that appears aimed at provoking miscarriages (i.e. beating their stomachs) (HRW 2007 ‘My heart is cut’, pp. 28–30).
35 Bouaké focus group discussion (Bouaké, 25 November 2021); Duékoué focus group discussion (Duékoué, 1 December 2021).
37 Despite documentation of and an investigation into the rape of Dioula women detained in the Abidjan Police Training School during the December attacks, no judicial process followed (ibid., pp. 6–8).
38 Ibid., p. 7.
III. HISTORY OF THE CONFLICT AND PATTERNS OF CONFLICT-RELATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CÔTE D’IVOIRE

3.2.2. 2002–2004 civil war

On 19 September 2002, under the command of former youth leader Soro Guillaume, the rebel group the Patriotic Movement of Côte d’Ivoire (Mouvement patriotique de Côte d’Ivoire, MPCI) launched three simultaneous attacks across Côte d’Ivoire.41 French forces intervened to push the rebels back, creating a partition between the rebel-controlled north and state-controlled south that would last nearly a decade.42 Residents recount summary executions, sexual violence and slavery, murder of community leaders, and looting of homes and businesses.43 A cease-fire was signed on 17 October 2002. Then, a month later on 26 November 2002, two additional allied rebel movements, the Popular Movement of the Ivorian Grand West (Mouvement populaire ivoirien du Grand Ouest, MPIGO) and the Movement for Justice and Peace (Mouvement pour la justice et la paix, MJP), captured the western towns of Man and Danané.

The three rebel groups later joined together as the Forces nouvelles. Government Defence and Security Forces (Forces de défense et de sécurité, FDS), with support from Liberian mercenaries and local militia groups, fought fierce battles in the next months to recapture the west. Meanwhile, in Abidjan, Gbagbo’s government responded to the rebellion by launching a reign of terror targeting real and perceived RDR supporters. The period is characterised by the ‘masked death squads’ (escadrons de la mort) who roamed Abidjan, assassinating political opponents.44 The Ivorian Movement for Human Rights (Mouvement ivoirien des droits de l’homme, MIDH) documented at least 300 murders of RDR activists during this period.45

**SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE DURING THE 2002–2004 CIVIL WAR**

The atrocities committed by the rebel forces are notable for the widespread sexual violence and sexual slavery committed.46 The leaked report of the United Nations (UN) 2004 Independent Commission of Inquiry into atrocities during the 2002–2004 civil war documented widespread rape of women and children, noting these acts tended to accompany other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment such as rape in the presence of family, forced incest, abduction and sexual slavery.47 In urban areas in the state-controlled south, security forces committed politically motivated sexual violence, targeting women and girls perceived to be affiliated with the RDR or rebel movement.48 RDR women leaders documented systematic use of strip searches, sexual humiliation and vaginal searches by security forces at checkpoints in predominantly Muslim neighbourhoods.49 RDR leaders also reported that ‘death squad’ attacks on members’ homes were sometimes accompanied by sexual assaults against

---

41 One attack was in the arid northern capital, Korhogo; one in Bouaké, the trading hub that connects Sahel traders to tropical industries in the south; and one in Abidjan, the lagoon-bound southern metropolis.
42 Decades before, at the time of independence, Côte d’Ivoire and France signed an accord of mutual protection that would ensure French military support to the Ivorians in the event of an external armed threat. Under the claim that the war was a domestic affair, French President Chirac refused to honour the accords of mutual defence and crush the rebellion. For reasons that remain fiercely debated inside Côte d’Ivoire, France nevertheless stepped in to push the rebels back, saving the regime from a coup d’état (Jean-Christophe Notin, Le crocodile et le scorpion: la France et la Côte d’Ivoire 1999–2003 (Paris, Rocher, 2013). Within the first days of the conflict in September 2002, the initial unilateral French military intervention, Opération Licorne, was joined by forces of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The United Nations Mission in Côte d’Ivoire (Mission des Nations unies en Côte d’Ivoire, MINUCI) was established a few months later in May 2003 and was succeeded the following year by the United Nations Operation in Côte d’Ivoire (Opération des Nations unies en Côte d’Ivoire, UNOCI).
43 At least one hundred police and gendarmes, with their families, were taken prisoner in Bouaké as the rebel forces took the town. Unknown ‘dozens’ of those detained were then executed. This was followed by a larger manhunt for police, gendarmes, military personnel and forest rangers as the rebels consolidated control over of the central and northern regions (Amnesty International, ‘Côte d’Ivoire: une série de crimes impunis’ (27 February 2003), pp. 5–14, [https://www.amnesty.org/fr/our-work/IVO/IVO30004520030227.pdf], accessed 25 March. Between 90 and 131 people were found in a mass grave one week later (HRW 2007 ‘My heart is cut’, p. 54). For testimony on targeting important female community leaders, see (RAIDH 2013 ‘Rapport sur les violations des droits humains’, pp. 38–39). On reported professionalism of the rebel forces, see Notin 2013 Le crocodile et le scorpion.
44 The unpublished Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) fact-finding report (December 2003) on the escadrons claimed that elements close to the government, the presidential guard and militia groups of the President’s ethnicity comprised ‘death squads’ (Élimane Fall and Cheikh Yerim Seyck, ‘Qui est derrière les escadrons de la mort?’ (Jeune Afrique, 12 March 2003), para 4, [https://www.jeuneafrique.com/120419/archives-thematique/qui-est-derriere-les-escadrons-de-la-mort/], accessed 17 June 2022).
45 HRW 2007 ‘My heart is cut’, p. 75.
46 Ibid., pp. 53–57.
48 HRW 2007 ‘My heart is cut’, p. 66.
female family members.\textsuperscript{50} In the weeks that followed the September 2002 attack, women were raped and sexually assaulted by government security forces during raids on Dioula neighbourhoods. This was often during operations aimed at destroying urban shanty towns accused of hiding rebels.\textsuperscript{51}

As a self-proclaimed liberating force, the Forces nouvelles rebels initially promised to leave the local population untouched. Nonetheless, the wives, daughters, and other female relatives of state officials, FPI party members and security service personnel were targets of sexual violence. Several CRSV survivors interviewed by Human Rights Watch (HRW) reported being told that the assault was punishment for their family member’s position in government.\textsuperscript{52} Moreover, as the occupation dragged on and resources dwindled, rebel forces began attacking civilians.\textsuperscript{53} In Bouaké, survivor accounts suggest rape was often part of pillaging campaigns on houses and villages, with reports of rebels treating women as ‘property’ that could be ‘looted’ alongside other possessions.\textsuperscript{54} In some cases, rebels occupied homes and detained female residents as sex slaves.\textsuperscript{55} The situation was worst in the western zone where MPIGO and MJP controlled the region in coordination with local militias and with mercenaries from Liberia and Sierra Leone. In the words of a resident, “there [was] so much rape, it’s normal, we don’t even talk about it”.\textsuperscript{56} In this region, in particular, the rebels organised periodic raids on villages to abduct women and girls, often holding them for ransom until the family paid for their return.\textsuperscript{57} ‘Opportunistic’ sexual violence by rebel forces was also reported in the rebel-held far North, an area far from active fighting.\textsuperscript{58}

### SEXUAL SLAVERY

Survivors of sexual slavery describe being forced to live with their captors for periods ranging from several days to over a year.\textsuperscript{59} Amnesty International documented numerous cases of women held as sex slaves also being forcibly enrolled as combatants in the ranks of the MPCI and other rebel groups.\textsuperscript{60} Some survivors reported being indiscriminately raped by many captors, while others were ‘allocated’ to a specific combatant.\textsuperscript{61} Abduction was sometimes followed by forced marriage or forced polygamous marriage to a rebel.\textsuperscript{62} Traditional gender norms mapped onto sexual violence in the forced labour that sex slaves and ‘rebel wives’ were required to perform in the camps, such as carrying water, cooking, cleaning and other household chores.\textsuperscript{63} Other survivors describe being imprisoned in confined spaces or tied up in the woods, where they were held exclusively for the purpose of rape and gang rape.\textsuperscript{64} Some testimony from survivors of sexual slavery includes other horrific and overlapping abuses such as periodic raids on villages to abduct women and girls, often holding them for ransom until the family paid for their return.\textsuperscript{57} ‘Opportunistic’ sexual violence by rebel forces was also reported in the rebel-held far North, an area far from active fighting.\textsuperscript{58}

---

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., p. 66.


\textsuperscript{53} HRW 2007 ‘My heart is cut’, p. 54.


\textsuperscript{55} HRW 2007 ‘My heart is cut’, p. 56.


\textsuperscript{57} See HRW 2007 ‘My heart is cut’, p. 43. In one such case, a woman abducted by the MPIGO in 2002 told Amnesty International, “I stayed with them for a month and 10 days. On the first day, 40 men had sex with me; at night, when they came back from the fighting … I can’t even count how many men had sex with me” (Amnesty International 2007 ‘The forgotten victims of the conflict’, p. 16).

\textsuperscript{58} HRW 2007 ‘My heart is cut’, p. 5.

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., p. 41.

\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., p. 56.

\textsuperscript{61} Ibid., p. 41, p. 56.

\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., p. 41.

\textsuperscript{63} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{64} Ibid.
This same period saw patterns of sexual violence by government security forces and pro-government militias and mercenaries. Following the recapture of Man in December 2002, a local women’s group recorded 30 sexual assaults by pro-government troops, but estimated that over a hundred rapes took place during the operation. In the south-west, over 100 sexual assaults targeting Burkinabé women and girls were documented in the context of ‘body searches’ by security services. Liberian mercenaries were particularly implicated in sexual violence, including egregious incidents committed alongside massacres, torture, mutilation and the forced recruitment of children. In the western region, where land disputes are concentrated, pro-government militias committed acts of sexual violence within wider attacks aimed at driving ‘northerners’ off the land.

3.2.3 Era of ‘neither peace nor war’

The French brokered Linas-Marcoussis Peace Accord was signed in 2003, officially ending the civil war. The country remained partitioned, however, and all regions continued to see violence and repression at the hands of state forces, rebels, militias, and mercenaries. The period is often referred to as a time of ‘neither peace nor war’. In the west and north, Forces nouvelles leadership established lucrative extortion and smuggling networks while the population struggled under the collapse of public services (see section 5.1 Access to healthcare during the conflict). Open fighting had ended, but armed groups continued to operate as criminal gangs, extorting and looting the population. In the parts of the west reoccupied by state forces, state-aligned militias forced ‘northerners’ to flee. In Abidjan, police forces repressed opposition groups, with security forces killing at least 100 protestors on 25 March 2004 alone. From 2004, seven internationally brokered peace deals failed to reunite Côte d’Ivoire. In March 2007, the Forces nouvelles and the government negotiated a homegrown agreement that reunited the country, dissolved the ‘zone de confiance’ and created a new joint central command. Former rebel leader Guillaume Soro was made prime minister and placed in charge of organising presidential elections. Those elections would not take place until December 2010.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE DURING THE INTERWAR PERIOD

Though hostilities officially ended, members of rebels and pro-government forces operated as criminal gangs during the interwar period. These gangs were responsible for widespread acts of rape, gang rape, abduction, and sexual assault, often linked to looting homes or extorting travellers. For many survivors, it was unclear which armed group or criminal gang attacked them or what authority they could turn to for assistance.
The most commonly associated violence with this period is that of ad hoc youth militias. The term ‘Galaxie patriotique’ refers to a coalition of Gbagbo-aligned militant – and later also militarised – youth movements responsible for large-scale political action in support of the regime. The Galaxie patriotique fostered a climate of violent vigilantism in Abidjan, mobilising massive protests that often descended into street violence, and included acts of sexual violence. 

Within this context, the Student and School Federation of Côte d’Ivoire (Fédération estudiantine et scolaire de Côte d’Ivoire, FESCI) established mafia-like control over the Abidjan University campus. As close allies to the FDS, FESCI had unchecked authority on campus, allowing its members to sexually assault, harass and exploit female students with impunity. 

In rural areas, women and girls must travel to earn an income. Bringing products to market, tending fields and foraging for wood all require leaving one’s immediate community, and armed elements exploited this vulnerability. ‘Les barrages’ refers to a roadblock network set up by pro-Gbagbo rural youths claiming to protect their community from rebels, while also serving as a rural war economy for a younger generation with few prospects. In rebel occupied areas, rebel forces had their own system of roadblocks and checkpoints that served the same purposes. Checkpoints and roadblocks were sites of systemic sexual violence from the 2002 civil war through the 2011 crisis, and into the post-war period. Public transit drivers recall ‘attractive young female passengers’ routinely taken from vehicles by armed groups. In 2009, three quarters of all sexual violence cases documented by HRW in the centre-west were perpetrated by ‘coupeurs de route’ (highway robbers) on transport vehicles.

3.2.4. Post-election crisis, 2010–2011

On 28 November 2010, Ivorians turned out in high numbers to vote in a run-off election between the incumbent Laurent Gbagbo and his leading opponent Alassane Ouattara. Despite praise from UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, the election launched one of the bloodiest episodes in Ivorian history. UN election observers stood by the credibility of the process, but

---


78. During the war years, the Secretary-General of FESCI circulated the campus with a full escort of bodyguards. FESCI were further accused of running prisons inside the university and of attacking anyone who challenged their authority on campus (Konaté 2003 ‘Les enfants de la balle’, p. 25; HRW 2008 ‘Student violence’, p. 39).

79. On 25 March 2004, a PDCI student activist was raped by two members of FESCI following her participation in an anti-government protest (HRW 2007 ‘My heart is cut’ pp. 80–81). A similar event occurred in June 2005 when a student distributing pamphlets for an opposition event was detained and gang raped by FESCI members (Amnesty 2007 ‘The forgotten victims of the conflict’, p. 19). FESCI’s power on campus was also underlined by apolitical sexual exploitation and violence. Female students described being forced or pressured into sexual acts with FESCI members to avoid losing access to housing or classes, or other similar threats (HRW 2008 ‘Student violence’, p. 47). Incidents of sexual violence by FESCI and other Galaxie patriotique members are likely underreported given the risk of reprisal victims faced when seeking help. As government-aligned groups, the Galaxie patriotique could count on impunity from the judicial system and inaction from the university (ibid., pp. 46, 48).

80. HRW 2010 ‘Afraid and forgotten’, p. 5.


82. According to HRW, “hundreds of women and girls” were sexually assaulted, raped, and gang raped at checkpoints, citing a pattern of systematically pulling them from transport vehicles to be “marched into the bush where they are raped while other bandits stand guard”. In their investigation, the youngest identified victims where infants and the oldest were women over 70 years old. Most incidents involved multiple victims, with as many as 20 women and girls raped in a single attack (HRW 2010 ‘Afraid and forgotten’, p. 5).

83. Ibid., p. 32.

national observers and the African Union mission reported widespread fraud and irregularities. In this climate of uncertainty, a combination of missed deadlines and political brinkmanship allowed the Gbagbo-aligned President of the Constitutional Council to cancel results he deemed fraudulent in 13 departments, shifting the count in Gbagbo’s favour. The United Nations Operation in Côte d’Ivoire (Opération des Nations unies en Côte d’Ivoire, ONUCI) and the Ouattara camp refused these results and, on 8 January 2010, declared Alassane Ouattara as President. In response, Gbagbo declared himself the winner. Though Ouattara enjoyed the support of the international community, Gbagbo still marshalled a devoted base. The country entered into a grid of siege zones, keeping real and imagined enemies cloistered in their quarters. Urban militias executed perceived opponents, often by immolation, while protests organised by Ouattara supporters met with indiscriminate violence from the FDS. Two months into the fighting, Gbagbo still controlled the state media, the army, the main urban centres, and a significant civilian support base. In February, in an effort to break the deadlock, the Forces nouvelles launched a military campaign to take the country’s western region, town by town. Now renamed the Republican Forces of Côte d’Ivoire (Forces républicaines de Côte d’Ivoire, FRCI) and claiming authority as the new national army, the campaign brought new waves of civilian massacres across the west. The 29 March massacre at Duékoué’s ‘Coca Cola Carrefour’ marks the deadliest of these attacks.

As the pro-Gbagbo forces retreated ahead of the rebel forces, they also committed atrocities against civilians. Ouattara’s forces launched an offensive on Abidjan in April 2011. Under Gbagbo’s orders, the FDS retreated to the presidential palace leaving Abidjan’s civilian population unprotected against the incoming FRCI. Retreating pro-Gbagbo militias and the FDS murdered ‘northerners’. The FRCI equally committed extrajudicial executions as it entered neighbourhoods considered loyal to Gbagbo. The FDS looted what they could, soon to be followed by more looting from the FRCI and profiteering civilians. Gbagbo was arrested in his residence on 11 April 2011 and, on 30 November 2011, transferred to the International Criminal Court (ICC).

**SEXUAL VIOLENCE DURING THE POST-ELECTORAL CRISIS**

The United Nations Secretary-General (UNSG) Independent Expert Report on CRSV documented 248 cases of rape between December 2011 to September

---

85 Quoting the observer mission report: “After sharing information with other national and international election observers, we hereby state that the second round of the presidential elections in Côte d’Ivoire was held amidst major problems in various northern regions ... These problems were stealing of ballot boxes, arrestings of candidates’ representatives, multiple voting, refusal to admit international observers to witness counting of ballots, and the murder of representatives of candidates. To that effect, we hereby declare that the second round of voting was not free, fair and transparent in these localities” (Thabo Mbeki, ‘What the world got wrong in Côte d’Ivoire’ (Foreign Policy, 29 April 2011), https://foreignpolicy.com/2011/04/29/what-the-world-was-wrong-in-cote-d-ivoire/, accessed 17 June 2022).

86 Hand-counting votes and numerous fraud investigations delayed the announcement of the results beyond the constitutionally mandated three-day deadline. Paul Yao N’Dré, President of the Constitutional Council and an ally of Laurent Gbagbo, declared that, according to the electoral code, missing the deadline left it to the courts to declare a winner. With over 20,000 polling stations to review in a week, the courts also inevitably missed their deadline, thus handing decision-making powers to the Constitutional Council (Thomas Basset, ‘Winning coalition, sore loser: Côte d’Ivoire’s 2010 presidential election’ (2011) 110(440) African Affairs 469, p. 470, http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/afraf/adr027).


90 For example, more than one hundred men and women children were massacred in Bloléquin on 28 March, and 10 more killed the following day in Guiglo (HRW, ‘Côte d’Ivoire: West African immigrants massacred’ (15 March 2011), p. 8, https://www.hrw.org/news/2011/03/15/cote-divoire-west-african-immigrants-massacred, accessed 25 March 2023); HRW 2011 ‘They killed them like it was nothing’, pp. 69–71.

91 HRW 2011 ‘They killed them like it was nothing’, pp. 69–71.

92 Nearly 5,500 prisoners escaped Abidjan’s maximum-security prison, Maison d’arrêt et de correction d’Abidjan (MACA), many of whom also joined the looting (OFPRA, ‘Rapport de mission en République de Côte d’Ivoire’ (May 2013), p. 23).
2012, 80% of which were perpetrated by armed men. This figure includes only cases verified by a UN agent, making it a significant underestimate. Sexual violence was perpetrated by pro-Gbagbo street militias and security forces manning barricades and attacking RDR protesters. In the RDR stronghold of Abobo, HRW documented 14 gang rapes of women perceived to be Ouattara supporters. On 19 December, more than 300 women marched in Grand Bassam demanding the release of detained Alassane Ouattara supporters. Demonstrators reported being sexually assaulted by police, who beat them, tore their underwear, and put their hands on their vaginas and breasts. In the Gbagboist stronghold of Yopougon, pro-Gbagbo militias perpetrated rapes against ‘northerner’ neighbours. The FRCI retaliated with similar acts when they took over the town in April 2011.

During the western invasion, HRW documented sexual violence by the FRCI targeting Guéré women and girls. Witnesses report that combatants seized women and girls while launching attacks on villages. Some women were then forced into the surrounding forests where they were raped, while others were held captive in houses for one or several days and repeatedly raped before the unit moved on. Pro-Gbagbo forces also committed rapes while retreating from the region. In one especially egregious attack on 4 January 2011, at least 17 women, including a six-year-old child, were gang raped in Duékoué by armed men from the government aligned militia group, the Patriotic Alliance of the Wé (Alliance patriotique de l’ethnie Wé, APWE). In early February, in Danané, nine women and girls, including pregnant women and a child, were raped by FDS elements.

### SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN THE POST-WAR PERIOD

Hostilities officially ended in spring of 2011, but patterns of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) connected to the conflict lingered into the post-war period. Insurgent victory is a relatively rare outcome of civil war and brings with it the challenge of transitioning from a rebel movement into a legitimate government. Over the next decade, President Ouattara continued to depend on the FRCI to maintain the security situation, leaving him reluctant to rein in the significant power still wielded by the ComZones and their elements. This has had important implications for CRSV. As noted in the 2013 UNSG’s report on CRSV, the slow pace of disarmament and demobilisation and reintegration (DDR), the failure to dismantle war-era criminal networks and ongoing impunity for sexual violence committed by former combatants all contributed to continued patterns of CRSV in the post-war era. In the present day, the Ouattara regime is generally seen as democratic reformers in the eyes of international and national onlookers, but that image has begun to waver in light of his controversial decision to run and win the 2020 election – an election boycotted by all main opposition parties.

---

94 HRW 2011 ‘They killed them like it was nothing’, p. 28.
98 One woman from Bakoubli, near Toulepleu, said the FRCI forces raped her in front of her children, then killed her husband, who had tried to intervene. In Bloléquin, after being captured by the FRCI on 20 March, eight Guéré women, including several children, were held captive in a villa where they were repeatedly raped. During the 29 March massacre in Duékoué, at least eight women were taken from their homes and repeatedly raped (Amnesty International, ‘Côte D’Ivoire: Briefing to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women – 50th Session, October 2011’, 20 September 2011), pp. 9, 11. [https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr31/009/2011/en/], accessed 25 March 2023.
100 From 1 January 2012 through 31 December 2015, CNUCI documented 1,129 rape cases affecting 1,146 victims, 66% targeting children (CNUCI, ‘Rapport sur les viols et leur répression en Côte d’Ivoire’, July 2016), p. 5).
103 For instance, the 2013 UNSG report documented armed robberies and rapes continuing in the Guémon and Moyen-Cavally regions through July 2012 (UNSG 2013 ‘Sexual violence in conflict’, para 34).
III. HISTORY OF THE CONFLICT AND PATTERNS OF CONFLICT-RELATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CÔTE D’IVOIRE

SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN DETENTION

Côte d’Ivoire’s prison system reached more than double capacity at the end of the conflict. That population included hundreds of detainees rounded up in connection with the electoral crisis, often waiting years before being charged. In some cases, prisons failed to separate juveniles from adult detainees. Although data on sexual violence in the Ivorian prisons was not found, wider research on this topic shows overcrowding, poor living conditions and inadequate staff make prisons high-risk sites for sexual violence and sexual exploitation, particularly where minors are not given special protection.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE AFFECTING DISPLACED PERSONS AND REFUGEES

UN and NGO estimates suggest internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees were those most gravely affected by CRSV, with this trend continuing into the post-war period. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) found the highest rates of CRSV reported during the civil war years were amongst IDPs. This pattern was repeated during the 2010–2011 crisis, with reports showing IDPs were twice as likely to be sexually assaulted by armed groups. In 2016, the UNSC report warned of the grave risks still posed to displaced women and girls, particularly when attempting to travel. As a United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) representative in Côte d’Ivoire warned, large numbers of IDPs found themselves forced into situations of sexual exploitation or survival sex, both during and after the war. Many displaced women and girls reported exchanging sex for very small amounts of money (1,000 CFA, or USD 2) or for food as minimal as a packet of biscuits or a plate of dinner. In the aftermath of the 2011 crisis, approximately 150,000 Ivorian refugees fled to Liberia, including 6,000 girls and 35,000 women. HRW reported on a crisis of women and girls being forced to engage in sex in order to secure food, shelter or other basic survival needs for themselves and their families, as well as many cases of rape and other forms of gender-based violence targeting refugees.

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Rejection by family and community is compounded by disadvantages women face in property ownership and employment, forcing many CRSV survivors into precarious means of survival. A 2005 study captured the extent of the problem, reporting that three out of five survivors were rejected by family or community, with only a third reporting that they received support from family and friends. Sexual exploitation resulting from conflict-related harms and traumas is not a problem limited to survivors. The war undermined family and community networks that once protected more vulnerable groups. The loss of family breadwinners, jobs, land and property left many women to support families alone, and many children orphaned, some as household heads caring for younger siblings. A crisis of sexual exploitation and survival sex has grown from the poverty,

110 HRW 2007 ‘My heart is cut’, p. 84.
111 Ibid., p. 84.
113 Ibid., paras 1, 11–13, 18–19.
114 HRW 2007 ‘My heart is cut’, p. 94.
displacement and isolation brought by the conflict. Children’s rights organisations, in particular, have seen an increase in child sex work post-war, with a 2016 study finding that nearly 60% of interviewed child sex workers cited basic survival as their motivation.

### 3.2.5. Patterns and estimated number of CRSV survivors

#### SEXUAL VIOLENCE TARGETING CHILDREN

Children are a particularly vulnerable to CRSV owing to their dependence on others for care, their physical size, and their low status in society. The 2008 UNFPA report on the crisis of gender-based violence found that 81% of survivors of all reported sexual violence were children. Children are targeted with CRSV because they are especially vulnerable, but also because it is especially devastating for them, their families, and communities. When interviewed about violence at roadblocks, public transport drivers emphasised that armed groups targeted the ‘youngest girls’. Sexual abuse and exploitation targeting children also mapped onto forced recruitment, abduction and sexual slavery.

International observers recounted that in the MPIGO rebel area in particular, every Liberian unit of five or six fighters included at least one child, often under 12 years old. HRW interviewed numerous survivors of sexual slavery who reported being abducted while still children, many of whom experienced forced participation in combat as an overlapping violation.

It is notable that children were also reported to be involved in or facilitators of sexual violence, suggesting some children were at once perpetrators and victims.

More research is needed on the topic of children born of rape. Anecdotal evidence suggests a high incidence of children born from CRSV during the Ivorian conflict. For example, in western villages during the mid-2000s, local CSOs attributed an extremely high proportion of teen mothers in the region (28–75% of all mothers) to widespread rape committed by armed groups. What information is available suggests that children born of conflict-related rape endure extremely difficult life situations. Human Rights Watch reported that many women and girls who became mothers through rape could not return to their families, leading some to remain with captors as their only means of caring for these children.

---

119 The report found that the average age of victims of sexual violence was 12.7 years, with data showing a peak in the age group of 10–14, a demographic representing 36% of all sexual violence cases (UNFPA 2008 ‘Crise et VBG’, p. 10). Supporting this finding, a large-scale survey conducted in 2020 by the Ministry for Women, the Family and Children found that one in five women (19.2% of respondents) experienced sexual violence in childhood (MFFE, ‘Violence faite aux enfants et aux jeunes en Côte d’Ivoire’ (Republic of Côte d’Ivoire, March 2020), p. 147).
120 HRW also documented the rape of very young children and infants, including a victim who was just seven months old (HRW 2010 ‘Afraid and forgotten’, pp. 5, 21, 29, 34, 38).
123 A 2005 study with 147 children formerly associated with armed groups found 47% of sexual violence cases in the camps targeted children 12 or under (HRW 20007 ‘My heart is cut’, p. 23).
125 HRW 2007 ‘My heart is cut’, p. 23.
126 Ibid., p. 44.
SEXUAL VIOLENCE TARGETING MEN AND BOYS

The 2011 National Commission of Inquiry (CNE) defined sexual violence as a crime only affecting women.\(^\text{127}\) This view is repeated in other national and international investigations and reports from the conflict period, as well as in the design of Côte d’Ivoire’s survivor assistance programmes.\(^\text{128}\) Despite a lack of support and recognition, 40% of all gender-based violence cases verified by the CONARIV (1,196 cases), were committed against male victims.\(^\text{129}\) A relatively high rate of sexual violence targeting men was also reported by the UNFPA in its landmark 2008 study, which found 5% of male respondents (compared to 10% of females) had experienced sexual violence in the 12 months prior to the research.\(^\text{130}\) CRSV targeting men is underreported due to cultural taboos surrounding the topic and the unavailability of services supporting male survivors.\(^\text{131}\) Male survivors involved in a 2022 study by the International


\(^{128}\) For example, a 2013 civil society-led investigation into the post-electoral crisis reported that “0% of sexual violence targeted men” (RAIDH 2013 ‘Rapport sur les violations des droits humains’, p. 30).

\(^{129}\) Note that the CONARIV report does not give details on patterns of GBV affecting men or explain whether GBV is referred to interchangeably with sexual violence (CONARIV 2016 ‘Rapport d’activités’, pp. 31–32).

\(^{130}\) UNFPA 2008 ‘Crise et VBG’, p. 10.

\(^{131}\) FIDH 2022 ‘On va régler ça en famille’, p. 18.
Commission forced to have intercourse

Some survivor testimony nonetheless discusses sexual assault and humiliation of men. Prison detainees, in particular, reported sexual torture such as having their genitals beaten or burned, and being ordered to rape other detainees.

ESTIMATING THE NUMBER OF SURVIVORS

The 2011 CNE identified 196 cases of conflict-related rape and sexual assault during the post-election period. The authors emphasised this is “lower than the real number given all evidence”, but do not attempt to give a closer estimate. Other transitional justice mechanisms looked at the full conflict period and produced larger estimates: the Commission on Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation (Commission dialogue, vérité et réconciliation, CDVR) identified 1,359 cases of sexual violence while CONARIV verified 2,969 cases of gender-based violence.

During the conflict years, a 2008 UNFPA report based on extensive survey and interview data sounded the alarm of a ‘gender-based violence crisis’ in Côte d’Ivoire, estimating that 25% of women and 14% of men had experienced sexual violence in their lives. Eleven percent of study respondents – a total of 130,337 people – reported being “forced to have intercourse and/or raped” in the last 12 months alone. Note that these figures represent all sexual violence during the period in question, and are not limited to incidents directly connected to the conflict. As is the case in the majority of conflict zones, most sexual violence was perpetrated by persons in the victims’ family or close community (noting this distinction does not, however, preclude that sexual violence may be both conflict-related and perpetrated by a close relation). Further evidence from the same study suggests that CRSV was nonetheless an important factor in the elevated numbers. Firstly, the highest rates of sexual violence were reported during the 2000–2007 conflict period, and the highest number of incidents occurred in areas that saw heavy fighting or served as major transit centres for armed groups. What is more, a separate UNFPA study based on medical records found that 20% of sexual violence reported to health authorities was perpetrated by men in uniform. Similarly high numbers are found in the results of the 2011–2012 Demographic and National Health Survey conducted by the National Institute of Statistics (Institut national de statistiques, INS). The INS reported a national average of 5.8% of women having experienced sexual violence during the year of the post-electoral crisis. That number reached 8% in the west where

---

132. Ibid.
133. In one example, an NGO worker described rape of men in her village following an attack by Liberian forces: “Many men were mistreated. The rebels forced them to work like slaves and also raped some of the men... we had to come to the village to get food when we were hiding in the bush. Some men went for us and five of six of them were raped. Some of the men died. Others are still here” (HRW 2007 ‘My heart is cut’, p. 33).
134. Ibid., pp. 74–75.
135. CEDAW, ‘Fourth periodic report submitted by Côte d’Ivoire under article 18 of the Convention, due in 2015’ (11 July 2018) CEDAW/C/CIV/4, para 13, Table 2. The CEDAW report cites data collected from the International Rescue Committee: 2010 and 2011 (January–September), 2012–2014 (with UNFPA support for the implementation of the Gender-Based Violence Information Management System); Studies and Documentation Planning Directorate, Ministry for the Advancement of Women and the Family and the Protection of Children: data for gender-based violence for 2015 (data still being consolidated); and Côte d’Ivoire Gender-Based Violence Information Management System: partial data on gender-based violence for 2016 (January–September), data still being processed.
136. To give a sense of how low the official estimates are, we can look at the figures seen in the post-war period once reporting functional systems were established. The UN GBV Sub-Cluster provided support to 335 sexual violence survivors between February 2011 and March 2012. Between 2012–2016, ONUCI documented 1,129 cases of rape in Côte d’Ivoire (ONUCI 2016 ‘Rapport sur les viols’, p. 5). In 2018, the MFFE gave assistance to 2,744 survivors. While these figures do not help us understand the scope of CRSV, the fact that post-conflict sexual violence far outpaces CRSV estimates does give a sense of how low estimates gathered by the national transitional justice processes likely are (MFFE and DEPS, ‘Rapport d’analyse statistique 2018 sur les violences basées sur le genre’, Republic of Côte d’Ivoire, 2018, p. 21).
137. The CDVR number is based on statements received from 28,024 females and 43,276 survivors, totalling 72,483 conflict victims (CDVR, ‘Rapport final’, Republic of Côte d’Ivoire, December 2014, p. 75). Note that the CDVR differentiated between sexual and gender-based violence in its report, while the CONARIV Commission grouped all sexual violence under the wider term ‘gender-based violence’ (CONARIV 2016 ‘Rapport d’activités’, p. 30).
139. This 11% figure represents 10% of female respondents and 5% of male respondents (Ibid., p. 10).
141. These figures were based on 846 cases of sexual violence recorded in the 58 health facilities across the country, with the highest concentration found in Bouaké (21%), Daloa (21%), Yamoussoukro (17%) and Danané (12%). Similarly, the highest rates of sexual violence reported by interview respondents were in the rebel-occupied zones of Man (41%), Duékoué (35%) and Korhogo (29%) (UNFPA 2008 ‘Crisis et VBG’, p. 10).
142. Ibid., p. 99.
the fighting was most intense.\textsuperscript{143} We cannot devise concrete rates of CRSV from these figures, as too many unknown factors remain.

While significant numbers, these figures are also underestimates. In addition to being socially, culturally, and logistically difficult, reporting sexual violence involved grave security risks during the conflict and its aftermath. In both state- and rebel-held areas, armed combatants took on the roles of security forces, police and gendarmes.\textsuperscript{144} This rendered reporting CRSV largely impossible, given the authorities were often connected to, or themselves, the perpetrators.\textsuperscript{145} Even for survivors ready to risk reprisal, few lived in proximity to functioning police, judicial or social services, let alone had the financial means to pay for this assistance, or enjoyed a familial situation that would enable them to risk being exposed as a survivor.\textsuperscript{146} Today, though the security situation has improved, the ongoing influence of former armed actors as well as the stigma surrounding sexual violence remain deterrents against speaking out about conflict-era sexual violence.\textsuperscript{147} Given this context, it is impossible to give an accurate estimate of the full extent of sexual violence committed during the conflict period, though available figures portray CRSV as both widespread and systematic throughout every phase of the Ivorian conflict.

\section*{3.3. Gender equality in Côte d’Ivoire and its influence on CRSV}

Patterns of CRSV in Côte d’Ivoire, as well as state, family and community responses to this violence, are connected to longstanding conditions of gender inequality and discrimination in the country.

\subsection*{3.3.1. Gender roles and norms}

Legal and constitutional guarantees of women’s rights are relatively strong in Côte d’Ivoire, yet this robust framework too often fails to translate into an improved social and economic reality for Ivorian women and girls. Not only are Ivorian women disproportionately burdened by unpaid work such as care for children, relatives and the household, they also tend to bear the burden of generating household income while having little control over family finances.\textsuperscript{148} Although gross enrolment of girls in elementary school reached 98% in 2020, the direct and indirect costs of education disproportionately harm girls, contributing to a girls’ secondary completion rate of 52% nationally, and just 2% in rural areas.\textsuperscript{149} These inequalities continue as women enter the workforce, where women find themselves at a major disadvantage accessing technologies, formalising land ownership or receiving bank credit.\textsuperscript{150}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{144} HRW 2010 ‘Afraid and forgotten’, pp. 41, 43.
  \item \textsuperscript{145} Ibid., pp. 31, 43.
  \item \textsuperscript{146} For example, the UNFPA report found that proximity of one’s residence to a health facility was a determining factor in reporting, with 81% of the victims surveyed living within 5 km of a health facility (UNFPA 2008 ‘Crise et VBG’, p. 11).
  \item \textsuperscript{147} For example, during consultations by the ICTJ in Duékoué, Bangolo and Bouaké in 2014–2015, interviewers not only perceived hesitancy of women to speak about sexual violence, but also some resistance of men in the victim’s community to give voice to women or to listen to them (author discussion with an ICTJ representative, November 2022).
  \item \textsuperscript{150} CEDAW 2019 ‘Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report’.
\end{itemize}
Overall, Côte d’Ivoire’s global gender equity ranking score is 30 out of 35 in the sub-Saharan region, and 134 out of 156 countries assessed.151

This puts it amongst the least equal countries in the world, ranking amongst much poorer regional neighbours such as Mauritania, The Gambia and Benin.152 This surprisingly low score in one of the wealthiest nations in the region points to economic inequality as an important lens for analysing gender in Côte d’Ivoire. Under the Ouattara government, the country’s economic growth has outperformed even the most optimistic predictions; however, the benefits of that growth have not reached the low-income majority.153 For gender equity, the implication has been that post-conflict reforms creating significant improvements in the legislative and policy framework upholding women’s rights remain disconnected from the social and economic realities facing a majority of women and girls.

The post-war regime made important revisions to once discriminatory legislation related to nationality, employment, income tax, marriage, inheritance, and land ownership, and has passed a series of presidential ordinances fostering gender equity.154 The 2016 Ivorian Constitution expressly commits to fighting gender-based discrimination and inequality.155 While significant, the impacts for a low-income majority are limited. In a stark example, the labour code was revised to address gender inequities in employment opportunities.156 In practice, however, the reforms only impact a privileged minority of women. Most women and girls work in the informal sector or do domestic work, where they experience a high prevalence of harassment, unfair wages, and poor or dangerous working conditions.157 The same dynamic repeats in matters related to reproductive health. Ivorian law protects an individual’s right to plan childbirth and maternal care;158 however, in practice, contraceptives and skilled obstetric care are generally only available to families in urban areas, who can afford the high cost.159

This same pattern then repeats again in matters related to inheritance, marriage and land ownership.160 In 2020, the Marriage Law (No. 64-379 of 7 October 1964) was revised to recognise women as possible heads of households (art. 58) and to end discriminatory inheritance laws that passed property to the husband’s male relatives instead of widows (arts 22, 23 and 25).161 Yet low-income women and those living in rural areas tend to live in communities or families governed by customary law. The recent reforms do not cover customary or religious marriages, or long-time common-law partnerships.

161 Ibid., para 11, CEDAW 2019 ‘Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report’, para 34.
These unions have no right to inheritance or marital property ownership under Ivorian law and, in many cases, women will lose their claim to joint property should their husband die or the union end.\textsuperscript{162}

Likewise, although the 1998 law recognising rural land ownership formally grants women and men equal rights to title, in practice few women can secure land through the reform process, largely because tradition rarely allows for women to be considered customary landowners.\textsuperscript{163} Women are also more likely to lose property to conflict-related land disputes and less likely to benefit from settlements.\textsuperscript{164}

High rates of SGBV are ongoing problems in Côte d’Ivoire. In 2020, sexual violence comprised approximately one third of all violations reported to the National Council on Human Rights in Côte d’Ivoire (Conseil national des droits de l’homme de Côte d’Ivoire, CNDH-CI).\textsuperscript{165} Children are especially targeted with sexual violence, making up 73% of reported cases in 2018.\textsuperscript{166} Intimate-partner violence is another indicator of these trends, with a 2014 study finding that almost half of Ivorian women (49.8%) reported experiencing physical or sexual violence from a partner during their lifetime.\textsuperscript{167} These numbers are especially stark when considering that SGBV remains an underreported crime.\textsuperscript{168} Fear of being rejected by their husbands, relatives or community, and the threat of being unable to marry if identified as a survivor, are strong barriers to seeking assistance and justice. Moreover, when survivors do speak out, impunity is the most common outcome.\textsuperscript{169} Cultural taboos mean that sexual violence is said to ‘ruin’ the victim in the eyes of the community, and yet sexual violence as a crime is too often treated as unserious or ‘just a women’s problem’ by local and state authorities.\textsuperscript{170} So-called ‘amicable’ settlements mediated by community leaders remain common in rape cases, further trivialising the seriousness of the crime.\textsuperscript{171}

\subsection*{3.3.2. Gender norms and patterns of sexual violence}

Looking towards the wider discussion of this report, these trends map onto comparative research into CRSV. Large-scale studies across conflict contexts have shown that sexual violence is not inevitable in war. The strength of social and formal obstacles that combatants face when engaging in these acts are strong predictors of the extent that CRSV is seen in a given context.\textsuperscript{172} This finding points to a possible factor in the high incidence of CRSV during the Ivorian conflict. As seen, in Côte d’Ivoire, sexual violence at once has a devastating impact on the individuals and communities targeted, yet in a context where the perpetrators face few cultural or legal barriers or consequences.

Traditional gendered roles and norms in Côte d’Ivoire map onto patterns of CRSV by deepening both the vulnerabilities to and impacts of these assaults. Attitudes about the role of women in maintaining the honour of community and family are reflected in patterns of CRSV deployed as a form of community and family humiliation, such as in public rapes, rape

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{162} Outside legal unions, inheritance practices vary by region. Some traditions grant widows of a customary marriage the right to remain on their deceased husband’s property while, in other regions, property returns to the husband’s family, often forcing widows into dependency on relatives from their family of birth (GI-ESCR and AFJ-CD 2015 ‘Rapport alternatif’, paras 11, 12).
\item \textsuperscript{163} The establishment by Decree No. 2016-590 of 9 August 2016 of the Rural Land Agency, which has issued land certificates to 277 women (CEDAW 2018 ‘Fourth periodic report’, para 14).
\item \textsuperscript{164} Kevin Croke and Emilie Rees Smith, ‘Côte d’Ivoire gender background note’ (LOGiCA Background Note, World Bank, August 2013), p. 9.
\item \textsuperscript{166} MFFE and DEPS 2018 ‘Rapport d’analyse statistique sur les VBG’, p. 21.
\item \textsuperscript{168} MFFE and DEPS 2018 ‘Rapport d’analyse statistique sur les VBG’, p. 23.
\item \textsuperscript{169} FIDH 2022 ‘On va régler ça en famille’, p. 12.
\item \textsuperscript{170} HRW 2007 ‘My heart is cut’, p. 117.
\item \textsuperscript{171} FIDH 2022 ‘On va régler ça en famille’, p. 32; on trivialising rape through community settlement, see ONUCI 2016 ‘Rapport sur les viols’, p. 38.
\item \textsuperscript{172} Elisabeth Jean Wood, ‘Rape during war is not inevitable: Variation in wartime sexual violence’, in Morten Bergsmo, Alf B. Skre and Elisabeth Jean Wood (Eds.), \textit{Understanding and proving international sex crimes}, pp. 389–419 (Oslo, Torkel Opsahl, 2014).
\end{itemize}
in front of family and forced incest.\textsuperscript{173} Rape is an especially cruel weapon for its ability to undermine community cohesion and break, sometimes irreparably, social, and familial bonds. Likewise, attitudes about male’s traditional roles as leaders and protectors are linked to strong cultural taboos about male rape. This is reflected in instances of men being targeted with sexual humiliation and rape in front of their families and communities.\textsuperscript{174} Tragically, these same cultural attitudes also deepen the impacts of CRSV. In a 2017 study, focus group participants felt rape ‘tarnished’ or ‘destroyed’ victims.\textsuperscript{175} This stigma means survivors often find themselves abandoned by partners, families, and communities, facing secondary crises of poverty, and lost social standing.

As seen before, poverty is gendered in Côte d’Ivoire. The widespread nature of CRSV meant that gendered income-generating activities, vital to many Ivorian families’ survival, involved grave risk. Many women lost their livelihood out of fear to move along roads, while others continued working for lack of other options and simply lived in fear of attack.\textsuperscript{176} For many rural and low-income Ivorian women, farming, tending crops, foraging for food or wood, and selling in markets constitute important parts of their role in family and community life. Market women were particularly vulnerable as their work required travel on long dangerous stretches of road. Survivor statements suggest that market women were systematically extorted at roadblocks and checkpoints, with some testimony describing sexual violence used as punishment for those unable to pay bribes demanded by armed elements.\textsuperscript{177} In order to continue these activities, women were forced to negotiate between checkpoints, armed bandits, and attacks on fields and homes. Militia and rebel groups took advantage of women’s relative vulnerability by particularly targeting their market stalls, businesses, homes and farmlands for looting and repossession, with sexual violence often mapping onto these attacks.\textsuperscript{178}

\textsuperscript{173} The National Commission of Inquiry report (CNE 2012 ‘Rapport d’enquête’, p. 14) included the following statement of sexual violence: ‘Rape is a weapon of war, it is a way of expressing contempt for the adversary who is humiliated in several ways: the woman is humiliated in her dignity, her flesh and her soul; her husband, her children, her parents in their honour.’ These words, and particularly the emphasis placed on the harm done to family honour, speak to cultural attitudes about rape in Côte d’Ivoire. Human Rights Watch found that, when describing rape in local languages, most interviewees chose words that emphasised not only violence or humiliation but also the destructive impact on family and community. Many francophone Ivorians refer to ‘ruining the child’ (gâter’, as in ‘to destroy’). Guéré women used the term ‘O Kôhô’ which means ‘ruined’ or ‘dirtied’. In Yacouba in the Dix-Huit (18) Montagnes region, the term used was ‘Yanshiyi’ when a child was raped, and ‘Yene Whompi’ when a woman was raped, both terms alluding to destruction and violence (HRW 2007 ‘My heart is cut’, p. 96). For other examples, see HRW 2007 ‘My heart is cut’, pp. 5, 31–35, Roth 2013 ‘Gender-based violence, conflicts and the political transition’, p. 18, and Amnesty International 2007 ‘The forgotten victims of the conflict’, p. 10.

\textsuperscript{174} HRW 2007 ‘My heart is cut’, p. 35.
\textsuperscript{175} Medie 2017 ‘Rape reporting in post-conflict Côte d’Ivoire’, p. 425.
\textsuperscript{176} HRW 2010 ‘Afraid and forgotten’, pp. 5, 21, 26.
\textsuperscript{178} RAIDH 2013 ‘Rapport sur les violations des droits humains’, p. 33.
4.1. Survivors’ perceptions on the right to reparation

Amongst survivors interviewed for this Study, only half had heard the term ‘reparations’ prior to participating and just one quarter had any further knowledge of what ‘reparations’ means. Even fewer knew Côte d’Ivoire had an ongoing national reparations process (15%). Two Study participants had registered with the reparations commission (CONARIV), but both had only limited knowledge of its purpose or outcomes. This lack of technical knowledge or training did not, however, represent a lack of insight amongst Study participants on these themes. Interviewees shared perceptive and nuanced ideas on what ‘reparations’ means to them, and what would be required to restore ‘right relations’ in their family, community, social and political lives.

In one focus group, participants converged on a definition of reparations as “putting back together the things that have been destroyed in one’s life.”

Other participants wished to qualify this definition, explaining that the consequences of the harms suffered are so severe, it is impossible to conceive of being ‘repaired’ to one’s previous state. This group found it more appropriate to think of reparations as the support needed to “forget the past and move forward”.

What, then, in the view of these survivors, would it mean to ‘put one’s life back together’ or, alternatively, ‘forget the past and move forward’? Study participants described themselves as living in cycles of harm, where each harm then deepened others. Stigma, isolation, medical needs, and psychological traumas led to an inability to work and participate in community life. These impacts, in turn, compounded the economic hardships suffered due to abandonment by one’s husband, rejection by family, or the destruction and pillaging of property. Likewise, abandonment placed the full burden of caring for children on survivors such that education and other childcare costs compete with medical bills, food, and shelter. In this context, ‘forgetting’ did not mean indifference to acknowledgement and accountability for the harms suffered but rather a wish not to be forever bound by the consequences of sexual violence.

All survivors interviewed continue to experience severe impacts from the violations suffered and none have benefited from adequate assistance or reparation. When survivors speak about the experience of sexual violence, they are speaking of ongoing harm both in the way past violations still shape their daily lives and in the negation of state responsibility to provide adequate care. Study participants thus saw reparations as the support needed to overcome the consequences of the past such that they and their children might live with dignity and enjoy a basic standard of wellbeing. Notably, this view invites programme designers and administrators to devise forward-looking reparations based on survivors’ current situations rather than linking compensation to past experiences.

179 See Bouaké focus group discussion (Bouaké, 25 November 2021); Man focus group discussion (Man, 29 November 2021); Dukoué focus group discussion (Dukoué, 1 December 2021).

180 Semi-structured interview with CGABJ05 (Abidjan, 18 November 2021).
Survivor study participant at a GSE focus group workshop, Côte d’Ivoire, November 2021.
© Joanna Rice
4.2. Impacts of sexual violence and survivors’ needs

Understanding CRSV survivors as experiencing ongoing harm is instructive when analysing their priorities for reparations. Survivors interviewed spoke first of urgent basic needs such as food, shelter, and education for their children, and only later spoke about justice or community-oriented initiatives. Rather than a statement that justice or community reintegration are less important, this is a plea to first stop an ongoing violation; namely, the denial of basic rights to life, health, education, and dignity. It follows that demanding an end to ongoing violation before speaking of redress or rehabilitation in no way means the latter is unimportant. Reparations, in the view of survivors interviewed, included being heard and acknowledged.

“I want a place to speak so that I can be heard by the government. I want them to hear me say they have done us wrong,” explained one interviewee.181

Prioritising material reparations is, rather, a reflection of the sentiment that the path towards reparation and justice begins with — but certainly does not end by – putting an end to ongoing harms.

4.2.1. Physical and psychological impacts and needs

Few survivors interviewed received any professional medical care, let alone the long-term care and surgeries many require. None had received care from a professional mental health worker prior to participating in this Study. Many survivors lost their livelihood during the conflict, others were rejected by or lost their family, resulting in economic hardship that makes it very difficult to access medical care.182

PHYSICAL HEALTH IMPACTS

Amongst the 42 survivors interviewed, 30 experienced ongoing physical harms because of sexual violence. Survivors listed many forms of past and ongoing harm related to the physical impacts of sexual violence. Those most cited were fibrosis and other damage to the stomach and reproductive organs, infertility, miscarriage, and HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases or infections.

Two interviewees were partially paralysed because of sexual violence. Many of the physical harms suffered require expensive surgery that survivors cannot afford, meaning the majority of those interviewed have lived a decade or more with severe pain, illness, and disability. In some cases, unreliable access to medication or resorting to cheaper local options (‘indigénat’ medicines) have worsened medical problems. Survivors spoke of infertility and HIV infection as especially harmful, citing these as reasons for abandonment by a partner or the inability to find a partner in the years since.

On paper, government policy promises comprehensive care for survivors of sexual violence. As detailed in a later section, however, these commitments are not matched with budgetary means or institutional capacity (see V.2 Access to care services post-conflict).183 None of the Study interviewees knew of free or low-cost health services accessible to them.184 As one survivor explained:

“It’s like this: you are full of sickness. You don’t even know what kinds of diseases [the rapist] put in your body. And you know no one who’ll say to you ‘ok, come on, let’s go to the hospital, I’ll come with you.’ You just don’t have that support.”185

181 Semi-structured interview with CGABJ06 (Abidjan, 12 November 2021).
182 A 2011 International Rescue Committee assessment of sexual violence case management cited the most common obstacles to care is stigma, on one hand, and lack financial means to pay transport and medical bills on the other. Reports by international and state agencies confirm the very low number of CRSV survivors accessing medical and mental health services. In a rare project aimed specifically at helping survivors of conflict-era sexual violence, UN-Women and the MFFE supported a total of 67 survivors by sending their files to the Special Commission of Inquiry and provided 54 of them with specialised medical attention and counselling (CEDAW 2018 ‘Fourth periodic report’, para 135). Also see Coke and Rees Smith 2013 ‘Côte d’Ivoire gender background notes’, p. 17.
185 Semi-structured interview with MANSV04 (Man, 8 November 2021).
A further obstacle to medical care for CRSV survivors is the government’s primary focus on improving case management in the immediate aftermath of assault.\(^{186}\)

While an important topic, this prioritisation means state services tend to fall outside the needs of CRSV survivors (see section 5.3 Contemporary support to CRSV survivors). Donors have also shifted focus in recent years. A decade after the war, donors have redirected their SGBV programmes away from CRSV and towards topics such as human trafficking.\(^{187}\)

MENTAL HEALTH IMPACTS

Past and ongoing traumas resulting from CRSV have translated into severe psychological impacts for survivors. These impacts are especially grave once compounded by a near total lack of professional support; by feelings of rejection and stigmatisation in family and community; and by high levels of stress caused by poverty, isolation, and related anxieties. In particular, the inability to care for oneself and one’s family was cited as a central cause of distress:

“We are so helpless, it is like we have been made into children again,” said one interviewee.

Survivors also spoke of anxiety so crippling it was impossible to leave the house, go to work, or even speak to former friends and neighbours. As one young woman explained: “I can’t speak in front of people anymore. I have a lot to offer, but I just do nothing. I cannot say a word. I used to have a strong voice, but today I find I am constantly hiding. Hiding is the only way I can preserve my [mental] health.”\(^{188}\)

Another explained: “When I try to go out, my legs start to shake.” “We stay locked inside,” said another, “thinking about everything we experienced.”\(^{189}\)

Survivors also spoke of severe depression as well as suicidal thoughts. “They tore away my whole life,” explained an interviewee. “I lay there sick for years. I asked God to please take me, even despite my children,” said another. One woman explained how she does not recognise herself anymore:

“This, what you see here, this is not my own self that you are seeing. I am constantly thinking of it. Constantly, constantly. It is too much to handle.”

The psychological impacts of sexual violence also interfered with current and future intimate relationships, leaving some participants unable to feel physical intimacy. “When I sleep with a man, all of it returns to me,” said one interviewee, while another explained: “I am frightened the moment I am with a man ... I can’t find myself; I don’t feel any pleasure.”\(^{190}\)

4.2.2. Impacts on family and children

Study participants returned often to the theme of isolation. This was particularly strong when discussing family life, as survivors spoke of being forced to hide suffering and illness from families and partners. Survivors equally spoke of the heavy burden they bear caring for children, younger siblings, ageing parents and elderly relatives.\(^{191}\) This burden, in many cases, was compounded by the death of husbands or other adult family members during the conflict, or abandonment by a husband or family. With work options limited by health problems as well as psychological or social struggles, survivors felt the stress of caring for dependents even more severely.

---

186 In its 2019 reply to the CEDAW Committee, the Ivorian delegation described reforms to security services as its response to the ongoing crisis of sexual violence (CEDAW, ‘ Replies of Côte d’Ivoire to the list of issues and questions’, 20 June 2019, CEDAW/C/CIV/Q/4/Add.1, para 34).

187 Focus group discussions revealed that the ICRC and Doctors without Borders (Médecins sans frontières, MSF) were important service providers in the periods directly after the conflict, as were a handful of other smaller international NGOs. These organisations are now concentrated in other regions. Man focus group discussion (Man, 29 November 2021); Duékoué, focus group discussion (Duékoué, 1 December 2021).

188 Semi-structured interview with MANSV06 (Man, 8 December 2021).

189 Semi-structured interview with CGBKE05 (Bouaké, November 2021).

190 Semi-structured interview with MANSV10 (Man, 7 December 2021).

191 A 2015 study on GBV in the post-conflict period found that women tend to bear the burden of caring for children and generating income yet have little control over family finances. This situation is especially grave for war widows, a demographic that includes many survivors (Blay-Tofey and Lee 2015 ‘Preventing gender-based violence engendered by conflict’), p. 347.
IMPACTS ON MARRIAGE AND INTIMATE PARTNERSHIPS

The stigma attached to survivors of sexual violence in Ivorian society has resulted in many of those interviewed being abandoned by former partners or unable to find intimate partners in the years since.

“Perhaps you want to be with a man, but in the end, one day he’ll discover what happened to you ... I just prefer to stay alone, to live my life as it is, with all my problems, with all the tears I carry in my heart.”

Many reported being unable to have children as a consequence of sexual violence. Infertility not only denied these survivors the experience of motherhood, but it was also the most commonly cited reason for divorce or rejection by partners as well as the inability to find future partners. “I’ll find a man ... but the moment will come when I have not had a child. He’ll speak to others about this, he’ll give up on me and he’ll leave. It’s happened a number of times.”

Being denied the ability to have children is also a source of stigmatisation in the wider social and cultural context of Côte d’Ivoire, where a woman’s worth is commonly linked to her role as a mother.

IMPACTS ON CHILDREN AND DEPENDENTS

Civil society actors estimate that a majority of all CRSV survivors were children at the time of violation. Most of those persons are now young adults, though not all, as very young children were also targeted with sexual violence. In addition, young children were forced to watch sexual violence targeting their mothers and other family members.

Even for child survivors who are now adults, the impacts of sexual violence experienced during childhood are distinct from those affecting adults.

Children can face devastating and long-lasting impacts to their physical, social and mental development, as well as ruptures to family life and support networks. Child survivors are less likely than adults to seek assistance, less likely to receive medical and psychosocial care, and are at greater risk of sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy and gynaecological complications. Child survivors are also at risk of rejection by caregivers, socioeconomic marginalisation, trauma and other interruptions to their cognitive and social development. These impacts can have compounding and long-term effects, and without specialised care, former child survivors may find themselves in cycles of harm and disadvantage that endure throughout their lives.

Relatedly, more than any other familial or social concern, survivors spoke of their children. Children are pushed into the same experience of isolation, stigmatisation, and economic hardship as a parent. Interviewees deemed the wellbeing and education of children as extremely urgent, with many prioritising their children’s wellbeing and education over their own health. Interviewees described feeling unbearable pain watching their children stay home or work menial jobs while other children in the community went to school. As one survivor explained:

“When our children don’t go to school, it weighs on us very heavily. We can never find our way again when the children are at home, doing nothing ... We’ll never recover like this, with all that weighing on our heart, we’ll never get past it.”

For parents who did manage to keep their children in school, paying the direct and indirect costs of education was an unmanageable drain on limited resources. Lack of means often meant their children were not able to advance to higher education, had their education interrupted or left school early.
Children experienced stigma and harassment due to their parents’ status as CRSV survivors. One mother recounted how her son was bullied at school:

“When he tried to speak up, the others would say ‘get out of here! Who are you to speak, with a raped mother?’ ... you see, it is no honour here to be a raped woman.”

Interviewees feared that their children were also traumatised by a parent’s experience of sexual violence. As one mother explained:

“I had a son who was four years old [at the time of the attack]. One morning he came to me and asked, ‘Mama, that day we were in the field, what did those men do to you? They took you and tied you up, then what is it they did to you?’ What am I to explain to him? Now he is 14. What do I tell him? Should a mother expose her whole life in front of her child? This [experience] was traumatising for my child.”

Another mother explained that after she told her adult son about her experience of rape, he left the country and has ended all contact. In her words,

“He cannot even bear to look at me anymore, he doesn’t know what to do.”

The inability to meet familial obligations, and subsequent feelings of guilt and shame, were common themes in interviewee statements. While most testimony focused on the need to care for and educate children, these feelings extended to younger siblings, parents, and wider family. One survivor described how her mother died because, as a survivor, she was unable to work and thus could not pay for her mother’s medical bills. Another spoke of her struggle to pay her mother’s medical expenses while she herself was in poor health and could only find work selling water packets on the roadside. Still another described the deep guilt she feels for having buried her deceased mother rapidly during the conflict, in an unmarked grave. Though she has tried for many years, she has not been able to save enough money in the decade since for the dignified burial she had promised to her mother before her death.

### 4.2.3. Economic impacts and needs

In survivor testimony, economic hardship is a direct result of sexual violence. Rejection by or loss of family; abandonment by a partner; providing for children alone; health and psychological problems that prevent survivors from working; the high cost of medical care: all these struggles represent and deepen economic burdens, with many survivors bearing those burdens alone. Survivors spoke of urgent economic needs. Many regularly went without sufficient food and decent shelter. As one explained: “When you go a day without eating, it’s painful, we suffer … our lives cannot be left to continue like that.”

Focus group participants found consensus on the need for employment assistance, either in the form of financial aid to start a business or through an employment programme. Survivors struggle to find work, often due to ongoing health problems. Notably, Study participants did not merely discuss employment assistance as an urgently needed remedy for poverty. They emphasised that regular, decent work was an important part of their emotional and social rehabilitation. Employment, one survivor explained, would fill her days with an activity and

---

203 Semi-structured interview with MANSV2 (Man, 7 December 2021).
204 Semi-structured interview with MANSV4 (Man, 8 December 2021).
205 Semi-structured interview with CGABJ03 (Abidjan, 7 December 2021).
206 Abidjan focus group discussion (Abidjan, 3 December 2021), participant CGABJ05.
207 Ibid., participant CGABJ07.
208 Semi-structured interview with MANSV03 (Man, 7 December 2021).
209 Semi-structured interview with MANSV04 (Man, 8 December 2021).
210 One survivor explained that she was in such severe pain that she was unable to attend work regularly. One day, taking advantage of her absence, a colleague disappeared with all the goods from her market stall. Another explained that she could not work in the market at all due to poor health, and instead maintained her family by selling coal on the road when she was well enough. Man focus group discussion (Man, 29 November 2021), participant MANSV04.
211 Man, Abidjan and Bouaké focus group discussions.
allow her to focus on the future. Another said employment would help her feel respected and included in her community. Still others felt that earning an income to support their children would not only remedy a major stress but would also give them a sense of satisfaction and help them restore self-confidence.

4.2.4. Social and community impacts and needs

In their focus groups, participants discussed isolation and stigmatisation at length, as well as the possible reparative impact of community reintegration measures. Survivors described being frightened of leaving the house or speaking with neighbours, feeling those around them were likely to comment on their past.

“I cannot even walk [through the neighbourhood],” one explained, “people point their fingers at me and talk the moment I look away. I know what they are saying. Maybe they don’t speak loud enough that I hear, but I know.”

For many interviewees, the experience of neighbours “talking, talking, talking … and shaming” led to their leaving to live alone in other cities or towns – a choice that could bring some relief, but equally brought further isolation and economic hardship. Family or community rejection is compounded by disadvantages women face accessing education and employment, thus forcing some survivors into precarious means of survival.

A common theme throughout interviews was the feeling of being alone in one’s suffering. Survivors explained that the stigma they felt made it very difficult to find friends or seek support, even from community or religious groups. As one woman explained: “We cannot simply ask them [for support]. It will travel from ear to mouth, [then the people in this town] will insult and tease you.” Even well-meaning family or peers often left survivors feeling isolated. With stigma so engrained in social dynamics, well-intended words could be hurtful: “Once [your community] understands that you have been raped, there’s nothing that can be done. They find it difficult, even if they want to help. So, we stay isolated, we don’t talk to anyone about it.” Echoing these words, a 2019 study by a coalition of victims’ rights NGOs found that victim-shaming was so ingrained in many Ivorian communities that survivors tended to self-stigmatise and self-isolate, even where no explicit negative acts or words were directed at them. Such patterns confirm that, in the absence of active efforts to reintegrate and heal community ties, survivors will remain isolated on the margins of family and community life.

4.3. Survivors’ views and priorities on forms and modalities of reparations

In formulating a reparations policy, survivors themselves know best about their needs and what will bring meaningful change in their lives. This section reflects the words of survivors interviewed for this Study regarding their needs and expectations for reparations. Not all proposals here will translate directly into a feasible reparations policy. A reparations policy cannot, after all, rely solely on victims’ views. These must be mitigated against what is realistic in the Ivorian context in which state resources face competing priorities, and tens of thousands of victims still await reparations. While the current section does not yet take the step of balancing survivor expectations against these realities, the final section of this report offers some recommendations on possible ways forward (see section XI Advancing reparations for CRSV survivors).

212 Semi-structured interview with CGABJ06 (Abidjan, 12 November 2021).
213 Semi-structured interview with MANSV06 (Man, 8 December 2021).
214 Semi-structured interview with MANSV02 (Man, 7 December 2021); semi-structured interview with MANSV04 (Man, 8 December 2021); semi-structured interview with CGABJ08 (Abidjan, 8 December 2021); semi-structured interview with CGBKE08 (Bouake, 7 January 2022).
215 Semi-structured interview with CGBKE08 (Bouaké, 7 December 2021).
216 See Man focus group discussions (Man, 29 November 2021).
217 See Abidjan focus group discussion (Abidjan, 3 December 2021).
218 Semi-structured interview with MANSV05 (Man, 8 December 2021).
219 Semi-structured interview with CGABJ05 (Abidjan, 18 December 2021).
4.3.1. Individual reparations

Survivors interviewed for this Study sought the means to live their lives with dignity. It follows that, in the face of isolation and economic hardship, participants prioritised individual material reparations, defined as the means to gain an adequate livelihood, access reliable medical care, and support one’s family. Interviewees preferred direct financial support due to concerns that reparations channelled through state services risked repeating past programmes where few benefits had reached survivors.

DIRECT FINANCIAL AND MATERIAL SUPPORT

Survivors preferred the option of direct financial and material support rather than having their needs met through assistance programmes, for example medical bonds through the National Programme of Social Cohesion (Programme national pour la cohésion sociale, PNCS). Survivors expressed low levels of trust in the government. In the past, survivors found it impossible to benefit from state-administered programmes, citing obstacles such as complex bureaucracies; lack of clear communication and outreach efforts; burdensome documentation and verification requirements; and the perceived biases of programme administrators (see section VIII. Accessing remedies: Obstacles, barriers and risks). Survivors also cited the diversity amongst them as a reason to prioritise direct financial and material support. Though they shared common experiences, survivors felt their differing communities, ages, genders, and familial situations meant they faced quite different daily challenges and that programmes well-tailored to some might exclude others.

Compensation and pension: Interviewees did not propose a sum for their requested financial support. The 2015 interim reparations programme set a minimum standard of one million CFA (approx. USD 1,550) delivered to the family of deceased
persons. To be effective, reparations should deliver significantly more to victims of grave violations, including CRSV survivors. Recipients of the one million CFA lump sums found it made no meaningful change in their lives. The amount disappeared immediately under cultural expectations to hold large funerals, the demands of an extended family and repaying debts.

Study participants welcomed the idea of a pension programme but feared the practical obstacles such a system might entail. Under ideal conditions, this would be a preferred option; however, low trust in the Ivorian government meant survivors did not wish to leave its administration in the hands of state officials. Survivors feared this would lead to endless red tape or that funds would be preferentially distributed to those close to the regime. Survivors also worried they could spend years fighting for a pension only to have it cut off the moment government priorities changed, or a new regime was elected. It should nonetheless be emphasised that a pension, given in the form of a modest lifetime monthly payment, has many benefits over a lump sum. A pension serves as a lifetime protection against destitution.

Large lump sum payments, in contrast, put survivors at risk of losing everything to fraud, predatory or desperate relatives, failed investments or other misfortunes. Whatever mechanism is used to distribute financial compensation, it must be easily accessible to survivors, overseen by an independent mechanism and funded by a legally guaranteed budget.

Employment assistance: The ability to independently care for one’s children and family was an important aspect of interviewees’ reflections on the themes of ‘reparation and recovery’. It follows that a majority (approx. 70%) of interviewees requested help accessing decent employment. Depending on the individual, this could mean funds for establishing or improving a small business or help with job training and placement. As one explained: ‘If the state can help me [to earn money], at least this way I can take care of my children – my children will go to school. That would work for me. Because we can’t know what the state will do later on. Today, maybe they will do something [to support us] but what about tomorrow? Would it really be forever? But if they did something now so that I could take care of myself, of my children, that would work for me.’

SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN

Assistance in ensuring children can be educated and well cared for was the most commonly cited reparations request. Survivors described feelings of intense stress and helplessness due to the inability to afford schooling and other basic needs for their children.

“Every start of the school semester, I am crying,” explained a survivor, “my children in school: there, that is my reparation.”

As seen, children of survivors are pushed into the same isolation and economic hardship as their parents. It follows that each of the medical, psychological, social and community measures comprising survivors’ reparations should extend to their children. Effectively bringing children into reparations would mean linking with child focused services such as paediatricians, child

222 Duhem 2016 ‘CONARIV a remis son rapport’.
224 Semi-structured interview with MANSV02 (Man, 7 December 2021).
225 Semi-structured interview with MANSV04 (Man, 8 December 2021).
226 Amaya Panche 2022 ‘Word frequency analysis (GSF)’, p. 11.
227 Semi-structured interview with MANSV05 (Man, 8 December 2021).
psychologists (or other psychosocial support services) and socio-educative activities such as summer camps, sports teams, arts programmes, and after-school groups. Above all, effective reparations will include bursaries covering school fees as well as kits covering indirect expenses such as school supplies, uniforms, and books. Educational support should extend to technical training for those seeking it. Effective education support would also include free access to tutors or equivalent education programmes for children who were forced to drop out of school or who are behind in their education.

**MEDICAL ASSISTANCE**

Study participants spoke of restoring health as central to reparations. Ending physical pain is necessary to begin forgetting the past, and this would facilitate their reintegration into employment and community life. Overall, survivors preferred the option of receiving direct funds to cover their medical costs. This is, in part, a reflection of the fact that health needs are not limited to paying medical bills. Transport, overnight stays, childcare and lost wages, funds to pay a support person, phone credit and various other indirect costs are needed for medical assistance to be truly accessible to survivors, particularly those living in remote areas. Survivors also preferred to receive direct funds because they distrusted state-administered programmes. Past experiences with PNCS medical bonds left Study participants strongly opposed to a voucher system or other similar programmes (see section 5.3.2 Medical bonds).

There are complications in defining medical assistance as a reparation. Health services are a human right that should be accessible to all citizens and not offered merely as a compensation in the exceptional case of a grave violation. What is more, survivors of sexual violence in Côte d’Ivoire already, in theory, have access to free medical care. In practice, however, this care is inaccessible and expensive (see section 5.3 Contemporary support to CRSV survivors). It follows that recommending free medical care as a reparation aligns with neither practical reality nor the principle of a human right to health. As an alternative approach, reparations can aim to operationalise access to healthcare. This approach would start by first forming an understanding of all the obstacles survivors face accessing medical services and then designing a programme that includes all measures and services required by CRSV survivors so they could actually benefit from the right to medical assistance. This would include the provision of funds to individual survivors but would also equip medical centres in conflict-affected areas with the staff and resources necessary to meet the needs of CRSV survivors.

One focus group participant suggested that medical reparations could come in the form of a dedicated clinic where survivors were guaranteed free, quality care and specialised treatment for gynaecological and related illnesses. The option of a dedicated space was supported by other participants as many have experienced stigma when seeking medical aid and fear situations where it is necessary to explain their health problems to non-supportive medical personnel. To ensure remote areas were also covered, a similar scaled-down solution might entail equipping local clinics in conflict-affected areas with a dedicated staff member specialised in supporting CRSV survivors through their treatment and referrals. Note that expecting already busy healthcare professionals to take on new responsibilities’ risks creating services that only exist on paper. Dedicated personnel need to be hired and trained for these services to be effective. Another benefit of this approach is its collective nature. Dedicated health services would ensure that some reparative measures are accessible to the potentially thousands of CRSV survivors who wish to remain unidentified and will not register with a reparations programme.

**MORAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT**

When seeking ways to ‘forget and move on’, survivors felt reliable, accessible, and discreet moral support would make an important difference. Interviewees were open to various forms of moral support, including one-on-one counselling from psychologists or social workers, as well as joining peer support groups.

Although religious and community leaders play an important role in the lives of those interviewed, focus group participants felt these leaders were too closely involved in their community and family life, and preferred that they were not involved in counselling programmes. On the other hand, survivors felt community and religious leaders have an important potential role in community education addressing stigma (see section IX. Advancing reparations for CRSV survivors).

Amaya Panche 2022 ‘Word frequency analysis (GSF)’, pp. 11, 12.
Survivors felt that peer support activities were important healing opportunities, particularly for those living in rural villages. These sentiments are captured in the following response:

“The thought that we could come together sometimes, this gives me a lot of ideas ... My problem, it’s the same as her problem. When we share together, we feel some joy. [Before this] she was alone in her corner, I was alone in mine. I had no idea what she was living. I told myself, ‘my problems, it’s only me alone who feels this way’. But when we’re together, I can say to her ‘I’m living the same thing. These problems we have, let’s forget them.’”

Participants in this research Study overwhelmingly (39/42) expressed support for continuing to meet in peer support groups, having discovered the benefits of such opportunities through the project.

As one explained, meeting as peers “allows us at least to breathe again”.

LEGAL ASSISTANCE

Survivors did not share consensus on what justice means, nor on the extent to which justice was intrinsic to reparations (see below, section IV.3.3 Justice and apology as dimensions of reparations). That said, for

---

229 Duékoué focus group discussion (Duékoué, 29 November 2021), participant CGDKE05.
230 Author correspondence with COVICI representative, April 2022.
those survivors who did seek criminal justice, legal assistance is necessary. Survivors lack the knowledge needed to navigate the judicial system and have no funds to hire lawyers or travel to places where free legal assistance might be available. As one survivor explained:

“No, in theory, we could approach the judiciary. But in actual reality, we cannot ask the justice system for anything at all because we don’t even know how something like that is done. What are the procedures to follow? What are the steps we need to take, and even beyond that — where would we actually go? Would we just walk into the police station? The fact is, if you don’t understand every single step and you try to go to the justice system here, they are just going to send you in circles. They will say ‘ok, meet tomorrow’, then it will be the day after tomorrow, then the day after that. Eventually you’ll be exhausted and give up.”

As this response suggests, where criminal justice is deemed an important element of reparations, legal assistance must be included.

### 4.3.2. Collective reparations

Collective reparations for the crime of CRSV aim to address the harms survivors suffer as members of families and communities. This can be framed by understanding reparations as collective in three ways: “(i) the right violated was a collective right that impacted on a community; (ii) the beneficiaries of the reparation are a group; and (iii) the type of good given or the way that it is distributed is collective in nature.”

Given the cultural context of Côte d’Ivoire and the patterns of sexual violence seen during the conflict, there are indeed collective dimensions to both the rights violated and the groups harmed. As seen, sexual violence was actively deployed to destroy the fabric of communities and to undermine family bonds (see section 3.3.1 Gender roles and norms). Unpacking what kind of reparation could or should come to the family and community to which CRSV survivors belong is a complex question, especially as those actors are, at times, complicit in deepening the harm suffered through stigmatising acts and words. Yet reweaving family and community bonds is imperative for repairing the harm of CRSV. In interview data, the rupture of social ties survivors experienced continued to be a main factor preventing them from restarting work, connecting with friends, and re-establishing themselves psychologically.

With that in mind, one way to think of possible collective reparations for CRSV survivors is to design measures aimed at transforming the context around these survivors. All grave violations have ongoing dimensions, but sexual violence stands out in the ways CRSV survivors again and again find themselves in renewed cycles of harm. This calls for collective measures aimed at shaping their context such that those cycles of harm finally end. Such measures would contribute to strengthening community life and, in so doing, also help ensure individual reparations have a transformative impact on survivors’ lives rather than serving as a stopgap until the next revictimisation.

### COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Survivors supported the idea of community outreach programmes aimed at de-stigmatising sexual violence. Focus group participants felt involving community and religious leaders in anti-stigma advocacy efforts could be impactful, without requiring that any individual survivors be identified or exposed. In particular, interviewees asked that local leaders work with husbands and other male community members to understand survivors’ violations of the right to family, the right to childhood, and the rights to participate in social, political and community life. Moreover, attacks aimed at damaging the identity and social status of members of a collective are also attacks on that community itself, especially in a cultural context that places high value on traditional gender roles and socially punishes persons deemed in violation of these norms (see section 3.3.1 Gender roles and norms).

231 Semi-structured interview with CGDKE10 (Duékoué, October 2021).


experiences and learn how to support them. Survivors further proposed local radio programming as a way to combat stigma in their communities, noting that radio can reach a wide audience while posing a low risk of exposing individual survivors. Note that education and outreach programmes can go further than a baseline message of ‘don’t discriminate’. These measures can contribute to transforming the context around survivors by promoting positive messages about reintegration and support for those who suffered during the conflict.

INITIATIVES AIMED AT ‘REWEAVING’ COMMUNITY BONDS

Reparations programmes can contribute to the aim of ‘reweaving’ community bonds by including initiatives aimed at rebuilding community life, and survivors’ roles therein. Community reintegration of CRSV survivors would mean building conditions at the community level that would permit survivors to be full participants in the social, cultural, and economic life of their communities. As one interviewee explained:

“Here is what reparations means to me: that the state recognises our situation, that we can live well again with our sisters [in the village] and with our families.”

What that means in practice would differ depending on the circumstances in a given community and the relationships between specific survivors and their neighbours. Public education campaigns aimed at addressing stigmatisation, creating peer support groups, opportunities for survivors’ membership in clubs or associations, or identifying and removing barriers to their participation in community events or organisations are all programmes that might contribute towards this goal. Mothers’ clubs, small business collectives, cultural clubs, sports, dance and music associations, gardening, and cooking clubs: these are all ways community life begins recovering from conflict, as well as places where survivors can reconnect with peers.

Reparations that help reweave community fabric could also include creating opportunities for survivors, specifically, or local women, more generally, to participate in community management. This could, for example, take the form of creating peacebuilding clubs that connect survivors from opposing sides of the conflict, thus giving them an important role in rebuilding community life. It might also include participating in women’s councils, or using seed funds to develop a small community initiative (e.g. a vegetable garden or a small income generating programme).

Survivors also expressed interest in forming support networks that could facilitate access to state services, NGOs, and other potential assistance. One survivor described a network linking persons in her community living with HIV. Through such structures, she said, members advocated together for their rights and needs, and gained access to service providers. Proposing a different possible model, another focus group participant described a women’s collective in her community. Members receive mutual support for their small businesses and the collective serves as a channel for financial aid from the state.

It is not necessary to expose the status of CRSV survivors to support their participation in community life. That said, where the status of survivors is already publicly known, collective measures that support community associations may foster positive attitudes amongst their peers about survivors’ reintegration. Relatedly, collective measures can help prevent the opposite scenario where individual reparations expose survivors to further stigmatisation or reprisal from community members who are also facing hardship but are not eligible for reparations. Including collective components in a reparations programme helps prevent the singling out individual survivors by providing their wider group with some benefit. Some examples include providing free school kits to all children at the community school, not just the children of CRSV survivors; or by providing specialised maternal healthcare to all women in conflict-affected areas.

234 Semi-structured interview with MANSV05 (Man, 8 December 2021).
235 Duékoué focus group discussion (Duékoué, 1 December 2021), participant CGDKE05.
Although requests for community reintegration were less pronounced than material reparations in interview data, this should not be read as a consensus that social and community needs are unimportant to survivors. Material needs are interrelated with survivors’ struggles in community life. Illustrating this, one survivor defined material reparations as the support that would allow her to feel part of society again, to “live well amongst peers again”.236

STRENGTHENING PUBLIC SERVICES

Arguably, CRSV in Côte d’Ivoire is also a collective harm in its wider impacts on all Ivorian women and girls. As seen, CRSV was so widespread, and the state response so derelict of duty, that the lives of all women and girls are impacted. Patterns of sexual violence targeting roads, public transport and markets meant many women lost their livelihood, while others continued working in constant fear of attack for lack of other options. 237 We have also seen how widespread CRSV led to impunity becoming a normalised response to the crime both during the conflict and into the aftermath. These experiences speak to the relevance of strengthening public services as a form of collective reparations.

Another reason to include collective reparations aimed at strengthening public services is that Study participants, themselves, valued this approach. As one focus group participant explained, the group was a small vanguard representing thousands more unnamed survivors.

Collective reparations would mean something was done “for the many of us hidden in the dark, the many who would never come forward.”238

By requesting collective reparations in the form of improved state services, they felt they could contribute to supporting those who cannot speak out, and in doing so also give some meaning to their own suffering.

4.3.3. Justice and apology as dimensions of reparation

Study participants spoke of recognition, apologies, and accountability as important components of effective reparations. Money alone cannot suffice, they felt, without recognition of the harm those funds are intended to repair.

JUSTICE AS A COMPONENT OF REPARATION

Criminal justice was a complex topic for Study participants. Interviewees did not share consensus on the role justice should play in reparations and they did not agree on what might be ‘just’ in the place of criminal trials, where penal justice proves impossible. Some interviewees considered punishing those directly responsible for sexual violence paramount to repair; however, criminal prosecution was not a first priority for the majority. This is because most felt there was little to say on the topic when trials for CRSV appear impossible in Côte d’Ivoire (see section 6.2 Domestic framework for judicial reparations). Survivors noted that direct perpetrators are largely unknown or have disappeared. Secondly, and more to the point, the Ivorian government has proven itself unwilling to pursue criminal justice.

Amongst survivors seeking justice as a core component of reparations, most prioritised punishment of their direct perpetrators, persons who, in most cases, were low-level soldiers, rebels or bandits (15% of respondents compared to 8% who preferred high-level trials). These interviewees sought the chance to “look [the individuals] in the eye” and “see him pay”. 239 A minority of focus group participants expressed support for high-level criminal trials of those who bear the greatest responsibility for grave violations. This could, for example, take the form of renewed International Criminal Court (ICC) trials or could involve further domestic trials, like that of the militia leader Amadé Ouérémi. As one survivor from Abidjan explained:

“While [the ICC trial] was ongoing, we felt that someone was there, actually fighting for the victims.”

236 Semi-structured interview with MANSV05 (Man, 8 December 2021).
238 Man focus group discussion (Man, 29 November 2021), participant MANSV03.
239 Amaya Panche 2022 ‘Word frequency analysis (GSF)’, p. 12. Note that a CSO in a victims’ perception study also found that victims’ primary focus was on individual perpetrators facing punishment and not high-level trials (OSIWA and COVICI 2020 ‘La reconnaissance et la redevabilité relatives aux cas de VBG’, p. 18).
Others felt high-level convictions can only bring partial relief and would not replace the hope for justice with a direct connection to their own experiences. Overall, their statements suggested that a lack of knowledge about past high-level trials, as well as the distance—both physical and metaphorical—between survivors’ lives and these processes, have limited the satisfaction that such trials bring survivors.

It was not obvious to interviewees what alternative measures in the place of prosecutions could deliver another form of justice. Survivors asked for assistance from experts in this field to help them devise possible non-judicial justice-seeking initiatives.

As one possible measure, survivors felt that improving laws and judicial practices related to sexual violence might be a form of justice by “ensuring tomorrow women don’t experience the same thing.”

APOLOGY

Survivors prioritised public apology as a symbolic form of reparation, so long as it entailed sincere recognition by the state of the harms they have suffered and the state’s own role in that suffering. Many survivors felt that the government has ignored them in the post-conflict period: that despite many promises for transitional justice, there have been no meaningful efforts to understand or address the harms done to sexual violence survivors. One participant referred to CRSV survivors as the forgotten conflict victims (“les laissées-pour-compte”). This is reflected in the following response:

“I want the state to help me, to give me something so my children can go forward in their lives. If today they send me such a letter [asking forgiveness] then, oh well, we know all that. I’d just say, ‘alright, I understand.’ What I want is something, whether its money or otherwise, I want something so I can put my children in school.”

Survivors were clear, however, that a state apology alone would not suffice. This is particularly the case given that the past harms suffered have been compounded by state negligence in providing basic care. This is expressed in the following response:

“We see reconciliation all over the newspapers,” voiced a focus group participant, “but there has never been a newspaper reporting an apology for victims of rape.”

If the Ivorian state asked them for pardon, it would be a means of showing that the state, and by extension wider society, acknowledges that sexual violence was widespread, that it has had devastating impacts on the survivors, and that those survivors have not been given the support and care they need—and to which they have a right. On the question of who should ask for pardon, survivors shared consensus that the conflict had two sides, and that the leadership of both factions must apologise.

After many years of being pushed by the current regime towards reconciliation, but without the provision of justice or reparation, pardon alone would feel empty to survivors.

240 Man focus group discussion (Man, 29 November 2021), participant MANSV03.
241 Semi structured interview with CGABJ06 (Abidjan, 8 December 2021).
242 Semi structured interview with CGABJ02 (Abidjan, 8 December 2021).
243 Semi structured interview with MANSV05 (Abidjan, 8 December 2021).
4.3.4. Measures from non-duty bearers

Survivors strongly felt that the state was responsible for providing reparations, but equally emphasised that they did not have the luxury of waiting for the Ivorian government to meet its responsibility. Survivors have spent a decade or more waiting for political will to manifest for meaningful steps towards repair and justice. Given the urgency of their needs, survivors welcomed interim assistance from non-duty bearers. Citing a lack of trust in the state, focus group participants also expressed a desire for independent and, specifically, international actors to play a central role in the provision of reparations.

“Where is the state?”, a focus group participant exclaimed, “there is no state here! I have no state. You [as a representative of an international NGO] are my state … you are the one facing me today, so you are the state, and it is you who I am asking.”
Hospital in Côte d’Ivoire
© Adobe Stock
Although care for survivors of sexual violence, in general, has improved over the last decade, the support framework lacks specialised services for addressing the specific needs of CRSV survivors. During the conflict period, CRSV survivors — and Ivorian society more generally — faced an almost complete collapse of medical and social services. From 2002 through 2010, no national plan or formal referral system existed to assist survivors with medical, psychological, or legal needs. Post-conflict, the Ivorian government declared combating sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) as a national priority. This is done almost only through initiatives aimed at addressing current cases of SGBV or preventing them in the future. Improving general SGBV assistance could benefit CRSV survivors through the increased availability of help centres and trained professionals, or through changing cultural attitudes, but the specific needs of CRSV survivors are not met within this framework. Moreover, insufficient budgets, poor coordination and other related challenges mean even general SGBV assistance services leave major gaps in care.

5.1. Access to healthcare during the conflict period

During the conflict period, healthcare providers reported that a large majority of survivors of sexual violence received inadequate or no medical treatment. According to medical personnel, survivors generally only sought treatment in the case of a medical emergency and otherwise preferred to remain silent or seek help from traditional healers. In a 2008 assessment, the UNFPA found that even amongst the minority of survivors who did access medical assistance, two thirds (67%) received only minimal care and just 8% had access to more complete tests (i.e. pregnancy, HIV, syphilis and hepatitis tests). Psychotherapeutic care for survivors of sexual violence was extremely limited throughout the country, and effectively non-existent in rebel occupied and rural regions. In Forces nouvelles-controlled areas, even the most basic health and social services were difficult to access. The region was cut off from national public health and social services, with limited emergency care and counselling available through NGOs. In Duékoué, during the 2011 crisis, the Red Cross and Doctors without Borders (Médecins sans frontières, MSF) provided emergency care to survivors, but long-term follow-up care was unavailable.

“Without MSF I would have been left for dead on the pavement.”

She went on to say that there was no possibility of surgery until after the conflict, and even then, it was impossible to save enough money for the operation. Few survivors were tested for sexually
transmitted infections and post-exposure prophylaxis treatments were effectively non-existent. This was especially grave as, in 2003, Côte d’Ivoire had West Africa’s highest rates of HIV/AIDS, at 7% of the adult population.\textsuperscript{233} Though accurate data is missing, health practitioners believe that high rates of CRSV in part drove the HIV/AIDS crisis, noting that HIV rates were highest in conflict-affected regions.\textsuperscript{234}

Medical assistance was more accessible in the state-controlled south, where a network of social centres endured throughout the conflict period. Abidjan had two centres dedicated to addressing SGBV.\textsuperscript{235} Listening centres (bureaux d’écoutes) were established by the Ministry of the Family, Women and Social Affairs (ministère de la Famille, de la femme et des affaires sociales, MFFAS) in select local town halls.\textsuperscript{236} Support was also available through 68 countrywide MFFAS Social Centres. Although primarily dedicated to facilitating community activities, some served as reception centres for survivors.\textsuperscript{237}

5.2. Access to care services post-conflict

5.2.1. Post-conflict government response

In the post-conflict period, the Ivorian government has launched a series of ambitious national initiatives aimed at a multisectoral response to the country’s high rates of SGBV. Going back to the pre-war period, in 2000, the Ivorian government has demonstrated a pattern of launching ambitious policies and coordination bodies for addressing SGBV, only to find itself unable or unwilling to implement them. This is not to say there is no positive impacts from recent reform efforts. Civil society groups report notable improvement in case management as well as shifts in cultural attitudes away from stigmatising SGBV.\textsuperscript{238} A pattern continues, however, of announcing new plans or coordination bodies, but failing to match those commitments with the funding, personnel and policies needed to fully implement them.

In 2000, the year of President Gbagbo’s inauguration, Côte d’Ivoire established the National Committee for the Fight to End Violence Against Women and Children (Comité national pour la lutte contre la violence faite aux femmes et aux enfants, CNLVEF). The CNLVEF is mandated to lead national efforts to support survivors of sexual violence, with members from the state, civil society, national and international NGOs, and the UN.\textsuperscript{239} In 2008, Côte d’Ivoire launched its National Strategy for the Implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women Peace and Security, making it the first African country to do so. The strategy has been criticised, however, for making vague promises, unmatched by a budget that would allow it to fully operate.\textsuperscript{240} Then, in 2009, the National Strategy for the Fight against Gender-Based Violence (Stratégie nationale pour la lutte contre la violence basée sur la genre, SNLVBG) was launched, under the CNLVEF’s direction, as a multisectoral plan aimed at coordinating all SGBV response efforts.\textsuperscript{241} The CNLVEF was reportedly only minimally functional from 2002 to 2012, leading to minimal results from these national


\textsuperscript{234} From interviews collected by Amnesty International (see Amnesty International 2007 ‘The forgotten victims of the conflict’, p. 30). Should this assessment be correct, the UNAIDS found that in these regions 1/10 pregnant women were HIV-positive gives further evidence of widespread sexual violence (UNAIDS and WHO 2003 ‘Aids epidemic update’, p. 12).

\textsuperscript{235} These are the PAVVIOS Centre in Attécoubé and the Wildaf Help Centre in Treichville. Created in December 2009, the PAVVIOS Centre for Prevention and Assistance for Victims of Sexual Violence is dedicated to provide care for survivors of sexual violence as well as prevention and awareness-raising activities. The PAVVIOS Centre offers services well beyond its regional counterparts, including short-term accommodation, protection from retaliation and mediation with relatives to help prevent rejection or stigmatisation (see UN-Women 2015 ‘Évaluation des VBG’, p. 30). In 2022, PAVVIOS was the only centre offering accommodation to women or children escaping violence (FIDH 2022 ‘On va régler ça en famille’, p. 61).

\textsuperscript{236} These were found in the Abidjan neighbourhoods of Abobo, Treichville and Yopougon. Note that without a dedicated private space to operate, these services were often not confidential and could not offer secure support to survivors (UNFPA 2008 ‘Crise et VBG’, pp. 110–112).


\textsuperscript{238} Assessment given by international experts in interviews. One interview was with a UNFPA staff member in May 2019, and another with a senior staff member at an international NGO in October 2022.

\textsuperscript{239} UN-Women ‘Global database on violence against women Côte d’Ivoire’.


\textsuperscript{241} The Coordination Unit of the CNLVEF has been in place since July 2012. It is directed by a Central Supervisory Committee chaired by the Directorate of Equality and Promotion of Gender (Direction de l’Égalité et de la promotion du genre, DEPG). It is composed of the sectoral groups led by the ministries in charge of Justice, Human Rights and Public Freedoms, Interior and Security, and Health and the Fight against AIDS (UN-Women 2015 ‘Évaluation des VBG, p. 9).
initiatives. From 2012, the CNLVFE built a national SGBV response strategy around a multisectoral network of service provider platforms (see below, section V.3.1 Multisectoral assistance framework).

With the departure of the ONUCI in June 2017, monitoring and reporting of CRSV has primarily fallen to the National Human Rights Commission (Conseil national des droits de l’homme, CNDH-CI) and the CNLVFE. Since its founding in 2018, SGBV has been a main focus of the CNDH-CI’s work. In 2020, the CNDH-CI reported that nearly one third of civil and political rights complaints received that year related to sexual violence (300 out of 950), approximately half of which resulted from action in the Council. The CNDH-CI has coordinated with conflict victims on wider questions of reparation and accountability, though CRSV does not appear to be a specific focus. Although the CNDH-CI’s possible actions are limited to issuing opinions, recommendations and non-judicial inquiries, it is, nonetheless, an independent actor with strong investigation powers and the ability to call on any state actor for questioning. Given these powers, the CNDH-CI could be a strong ally in advancing the right to reparation for CRSV survivors.

Overall, the Ivorian government has overcommitted and underperformed in its efforts to address SGBV. This is in part due to the extent and complexities of the SGBV crisis in Côte d’Ivoire, but it also reflects a lack of political will to truly prioritise the issue. This is most clearly illustrated in a pattern of failing to adequately fund commitments. Without a dedicated budget, SGBV response structures cannot properly function and only cover limited parts of the national territory, meaning many services exist only on paper. The problem is then worsened by the operational burden of running numerous parallel structures. In its 2017 final mission report, the ONUCI warned of a lack of “adequate resources for the implementation of all ongoing initiatives and various commitments taken by Côte d’Ivoire in the fight against sexual violence”. This critique is well placed; however, it is worth acknowledging that the UNOCI and other UN agencies were central partners in designing and implementing Côte d’Ivoire’s current SGBV response strategy. As such, this critique also points to the importance of international agencies and actors learning from the experience of designing a ‘gold standard’ approach, but one ultimately delinked from what the government was realistically able and willing to implement.

5.2.2. Post-conflict international response

During the civil war years, responding to sexual violence was central to the UN’s peacekeeping mandate in Côte d’Ivoire. UN Security Council Resolution 1528 (2004) authorised the deployment of the ONUCI, the country’s peacekeeping mission, under a mandate with a stated focus on “promotion and protection of human rights in Côte d’Ivoire with special attention to violence committed against women and girls”. The ONUCI regularly reported on cases of violence against
women, while its Gender Unit, in collaboration with the UNFPA, UNHCHR and UNDP, supported legal aid, awareness campaigns, psychosocial and medical care, and trainings on strengthening the SGBV response of state and civil society partners.273 In 2004, the Gender and Development Thematic Group (Groupe thématique genre et développement, GTGD) was created under the leadership of UN-Women to coordinate all international interventions related to gender.274 From 2011, this included a joint action plan to address CRSV through the newly activated GBV Sub Cluster; under the leadership of the UNFPA,275 UN agencies were also key actors in developing, implementing and monitoring the SNLVBG.276 Amongst the UN agencies that remained in Côte d'Ivoire after the ONUCI left in 2017, the UNFPA leads sexual violence response work, in partnership with UNICEF and UN-Women, while the UNDP took over supporting the transitional justice process.277

Strong commitments made by the international community to addressing CRSV have been dampened by practical and political barriers to action. The fact that an international intervention actually supported a rebel movement in securing Ouattara’s victory is, by global standards, quite a rare feature of the Ivorian context.278 One of the implications is a tendency for the Ouattara regime and its partners in the international community to focus on forward-looking policies and economic development while downplaying the need to address the ongoing impacts of the conflict.279 One of the clearest measures of the limited capacity of UN bodies to report on and support efforts to address conflict-era atrocities was the refusal of the Ivorian government to accept the presence in the country of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) when the ONUCI left. Follow-up was instead left to the UNDP and to the West Africa Regional Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (WARO-OHCHR) at the regional level. Focusing on technical support and forward-looking initiatives rather than monitoring human rights left UN actors with little leverage to change the way the Ivorian government has addressed CRSV. One notable example is seen in the outcomes of the 2012 report of the UN Secretary-General (UNSG) on CRSV, placing Côte d’Ivoire under observation by the UN Security Council.280 In the years since, there has been no conviction of any prominent leader of an armed group listed in the report’s annex, and only one conviction of any person for CRSV (see section 7.1.2 Amadé Ouérémi trial).281 Although some security-sector reforms took place, there are no meaningful steps towards accountability within the armed forces (see section 6.2.3 Military tribunal) and only limited security-sector vetting (see section 6.3.2 Security-sector reform as a guarantee of non-repetition). Yet, in 2017, before any conviction and though only a handful of survivors had received reparations, Côte d’Ivoire was delisted.282 The following year, in 2018, the amnesty decree effectively closed all investigations into serious conflict-era crimes (see section 8.1.3 Amnesties).

5.3. Contemporary support to CRSV survivors

Though SGBV is a stated priority of the Ivorian government and its international partners, their focus is on contemporary GBV response and referrals, and not on supporting survivors of conflict-era sexual violence. There are some exceptions. For example, the African Development Bank’s project, Assistance and Social Reintegration of Women Victims of Violence in Conflict Situations in Côte d’Ivoire (Assistance et réinsertion sociale des femmes victimes de violences liées au conflit en Côte d’Ivoire) (2008–2013), was designed to strengthen support

275 UNFPA led the GBV Sub Cluster, with the Deputy Special Representative for UNOCI, United Nations Resident Coordinator, Humanitarian Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative designated as the senior officer in charge of monitoring and reporting on GBV issues (ONUCI, ‘Violence basée sur le genre en Côte d’Ivoire’, December 2014, 4(6) La Force de la Paix, p. 3).
276 ONUCI 2016 ‘Rapport sur les viols’, para 69. Some notable interventions include the creation of a sub-working group called MARA59 to track and monitor CRSV in 2014 (ibid.; para 63). In 2015, a coordination mechanism was established between the FRCI forces and ONUCI to better monitor and prevent sexual violence within military ranks (ibid.; para 62).
277 Author interview with an international expert in the GVB sector, August 2022.
278 Piccolino 2018 ‘A victor’s peace’.
279 Ibid.
to survivors from former Forces nouvelles-occupied regions.\textsuperscript{283} More generally speaking, the design and scope of the national SGBV response framework does not examine or respond to the specific needs of CRSV survivors. The Department of Equality and Promotion of Gender (Département de l'Égalité et de la Promotion du Genre, DEPG) is an inter-ministerial oversight body responsible for coordinating state and civil society programmes related to gender and GBV.\textsuperscript{284} According to the government’s own self-evaluation, neither the core responsibilities nor self-reported activities of the DEPG include efforts to end impunity for CRSV, or support survivors in seeking accountability or reparation.\textsuperscript{285} Taking the DEPG mandate as illustrative of government priorities in the sector, the Ivorian government is future-oriented and focused on prevention, awareness-raising and strengthening the response to present-day sexual violence. As these goals illustrate, the national framework for addressing sexual violence is oriented away from examining or addressing the consequences of CRSV, particularly when it comes to accountability for these crimes.

Coordination challenges undermine the effectiveness of the national SGBV response framework.\textsuperscript{286} Sector actors often do not know what other services are available outside their own domain, causing survivors to be sent in circles or left unaware of possible assistance.\textsuperscript{287} In its 2019 review, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (Comité pour l’élimination de la discrimination à l’égard des femmes, CEDAW) Committee expressed concern at the number of actors intervening in the sphere of SGBV, noting a complex and often non-transparent system that crosses multiple ministries and national coordination groups, as well as a large number of decentralised platforms and various levels of the judiciary and security services.\textsuperscript{288} All community- and state-level protection mechanisms were damaged by the conflict, then further interrupted by the departure of 17,135 public servants and social services employees when the government changed in 2011.\textsuperscript{289} During the conflict’s aftermath, Côte d’Ivoire underwent three government reorganisations between 2012 and 2016, during which time responsibility for SGBV and women’s affairs shifted between three different ministries.\textsuperscript{290} Each new minister needed time to take ownership of her or his mandate, and important institutional memory was lost with each staff turnover.\textsuperscript{291} The repeated role reallocations have created significant coordination challenges. For instance, the Ministry of Family, Women and Children (ministère de la Femme, de la famille et de l’enfant, MFFE) is the designated lead on matters related to SGBV, yet the social and community centres providing direct services to survivors remains under the Ministry of Employment, Social Affairs and Solidarity (ministère de l’Emploi, des affaires sociales et de la solidarité, MEASS).\textsuperscript{292}

5.3.1. Multisectoral assistance framework

Post-war programmes and services aimed at supporting survivors of SGBV are organised around a multisectoral assistance framework.\textsuperscript{293} SGBV platforms are local-level prevention, coordination and case management structures established through state, NGO and UN collaboration.\textsuperscript{294} In 2022, 79 platforms existed nationally.\textsuperscript{295} Five ‘peace huts’ offering counselling and assistance framework.

\textsuperscript{283} For overview of the programme, see AfDB, ‘Côte d’Ivoire: sortir du conflit - Projet d’appui multisectoriel (composante basée sur le genre)’ (2013), pp. 6–7. The initiative supported 399 survivors, or 87%, of the 457 project-identified cases of rape in the selected regions, namely Bouaké, Dabakala, Danané, Duékoué, Guiglo, Korhogo, M, Odienné and Sakassou, as well as M’Bahiakro (CEDAW 2018 ‘Fourth periodic report’, paras 130–131).

\textsuperscript{284} Decree No. 2006-41 of 15 March 2006.


\textsuperscript{286} FIDH 2022 ‘On va régler ça en famille’, p. 67.

\textsuperscript{287} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{288} CEDAW 2019 ‘Observations finales concernant le quatrième rapport périodique de la Côte d’Ivoire’, para 29(d).

\textsuperscript{289} AfDB 2013 ‘Projet d’appui multisectoriel’, p. 7.

\textsuperscript{290} CEDAW 2018 ‘Fourth periodic report’, paras 273–274.

\textsuperscript{291} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{292} Croke and Rees Smith 2013 ‘Côte d’Ivoire gender background note’, p. 6.

\textsuperscript{293} MFFE and CNLVBG, ‘Présentation du CNLVBG’ (undated), https://famille.gouv.ci/mffe/?page_id=4753, accessed 1 April 2023.

\textsuperscript{294} The platforms are under the direct responsibility of the local prefectural authorities and coordinated by the Regional Direction of the MFFE. At the national level, the CNLVBG facilitates the work of these structures by serving as a central coordinating point between the various state organs involved in providing multisectoral care to survivors (UN-Women 2015 ‘Évaluation des VBG mechanisms’, pp. 9, 23).

referrals were established in areas particularly affected by the conflict: the towns of Danané, Duékoué and Man, and the Abidjan neighbourhoods of Abobo and Yopougon. The Prevention Centre for Support and Assistance to Victims of Sexual Violence (Centre de prévention pour le soutien et l’assistance aux victimes de violences sexuelles; PAVVIOs) in Abidjan is the only centre in the country offering refuge to persons fleeing abuse; however, plans exist to build three more in Man, Korhogo and Bouaké. Though not specific to sexual violence survivors, support services are also available through ‘social and educational complexes’ and social centres. When fully functioning, this approach provides survivors with integrated care that includes medical, psychosocial, legal and socioeconomic support.

Self-evaluations and international assessments highlight that coordination and funding challenges have undermined the success of the multisectoral approach. For the overall system to be effective, each entity must attract sufficient funding and manage all internal affairs while engaging in excellent cross-sectoral coordination. In practice, the complexity and expense of this model has limited the quality and accessibility of care. UN-Women found in its 2015 assessment that nearly all GBV platforms lacked necessary equipment and personnel. Moreover, none of the structures reviewed had the capacity to manage logistical challenges such as transport, communication, and urgent shelter arrangements for survivors.

In its 2019 oral declaration to the Universal Periodic Review (Examen périodique universel, EPU) pre-session, the Association of Women Jurists of Côte d’Ivoire (Association des femmes juristes de Côte d’Ivoire, AFJ-CI) reported that only two of the country’s GBV response structures were fully operational. Additionally, outreach about support opportunities is limited and the red tape involved can be unwieldy, especially for persons with low literacy or who lack official documentation. The survivors interviewed for this Study had almost no knowledge of services available to them, highlighting the need to simplify procedures, and increase visibility and accessibility.

5.3.2. Medical bonds

The National Programme for Social Cohesion (Programme national pour la cohésion sociale, PNCS) has provided a limited number of CRSV survivors with ‘medical bonds’ which, on paper, grant free medical care to conflict victims. The selection criteria for recipients are non-transparent, with the PNCS giving no guidelines on why some cases are prioritised over others. Of the 42 survivors interviewed, three had received a bond, but only one was able to use it to access medical care. Even in this case, the care was limited by its one-year deadline and the high cost of transport needed to reach the few medical centres willing to accept the bond. Although the bonds include a 150,000 CFA (USD 240) grant for travel and other expenses, with only a handful of locations accepting them, these funds quickly disappeared. Overall, the survivors and victims’ leaders interviewed for this Study concur that the medical bonds are effectively not usable. The most common complaint was that doctors, pharmacies and hospitals simply refused to accept them. It seems medical personnel often cite bureaucratic reasons, such as a missing signature, to explain their refusal. One survivor explained that in the months required to secure a missing signature from a Ministry of Solidarity (ministère de la Solidarité et de la lutte contre la pauvreté, MSLP) official, the bond expired before ever being used. In another case, it took months to process paperwork required to issue the bond, resulting in that bond being just a few weeks away from expiration once finally approved.

298 For example, social centres recently received state funding to support persons with urgent medical needs, with up to 3 million CFA (approximately USD 4,700) for especially grave cases. See Bouaké focus group discussion (Bouaké, 25 November 2021), statement by social worker.
299 UN-Women 2015 ‘Évaluation des VBG’, p. 32.
300 AFJ-CI, ‘Déclaration orale: Présentation des VBGs’, p. 32.
301 Bouaké focus group discussion (Bouaké, 25 November 2021); statement by social worker.
302 Amaya Panche 2022 ‘Word frequency analysis (GSF)’, p. 9; Bouaké focus group discussion (Bouaké, 25 November 2021); Man focus group discussion (Man, 1 December 2021); Duékoué focus group discussion (Duékoué, 29 November 2021).
303 Abidjan focus group discussion (Abidjan, 3 December 2021), COVICI representative.
304 Ibid., participant CGA06.
5.3.3. Police and gendarme services

SGBV should receive priority attention from police and judicial services in Côte d’Ivoire. This principle was encoded in a 2012 ordinance on police reception as well as in a series of inter-ministerial bulletins from the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights and Public Freedoms (ministère de la Justice, des droits de l’homme et des libertés publiques, MJDHLP) on improving responses to GBV complaints.\(^{305}\) In the first five years after the transition, 200 judges, prosecutors, lawyers and clerks were trained on GBV response.\(^{306}\) Police and gendarmes also underwent retraining on combating sexual violence, and gender focal points are now found at many police stations. These measures have produced notable improvements. According to a victims’ leader from Bouaké,

“Before when a woman was sent to the police to report sexual violence, they would say ‘Well, what did you do in order to get raped? What were you wearing?’ … today the police at least know about women’s rights … there is an accompaniment.”\(^{307}\)

In 2018, the ONUCI found that police files were opened in 90% of sexual violence cases documented by the UN Human Rights Division.\(^{308}\) That said, an opened file does not speak to how survivors were received by police, to whether high quality investigations were conducted, nor to whether convictions followed. In 2022, there were 403 focal points in 135 commissariats and police bureaus, as well as 44 ‘gender offices’ in police and gendarme stations. In practice, however, the FIDH found that many focal points were not readily available, and less than a quarter of the gender offices were operational.\(^{309}\) The FIDH further reported that gender offices, where they do exist, consistently fail to coordinate with other actors in the multisectoral SGBV response framework.\(^{310}\)

Study participants considered the police and others responsible for investigating crimes to be slow, inaccessible, biased in favour of perpetrators and more likely to shame survivors than help them.\(^{311}\) Likewise, NGOs report corrupt practices by police and judicial personnel who demand payments to ensure cases move forward.\(^{312}\) In some situations, victims or their family may be taken to face a perpetrator, or even told to catch the perpetrator themselves before the police will act.\(^{313}\) Moreover, many ex-rebels were incorporated into the police, security and the civil services, meaning CRSV survivors may face associates of their former abusers when seeking assistance from police or judicial services.

5.3.4. Legal aid

Few legal services are designed to meet the specific needs of CRSV survivors. UN-Women and the Ministry for the Promotion of Women, the Family and the Protection of Children (ministère de la Promotion de la femme, de la famille et de la protection de l’enfant, MPFFPE) supported 67 CRSV survivors by sending their files to the Special Commission of Inquiry, additionally providing 54 of them with specialised medical attention and counselling.\(^{314}\) The Support Project for Improving Access to Rights and Justice (Projet d’appui

---

305  MJDHLP, Circular No. 005 of 18 March 2014; Also see Inter-Ministerial Circular No. 016/MJ/MEMIS/MPRD of 4 August 2016 relating to the receipt of complaints concerning incidents of GBV, making provision for the first level of reporting of GBV cases.
307  Bouaké focus group discussion (Bouaké, 25 November 2021), statement by victims’ association representative.
310  Ibid., p. 67.
311  Bouaké focus group discussion (Bouaké, 25 November 2021), Man focus group discussion (Man, 29 November 2021), Duékoué focus group discussion (Duékoué, 1 December 2021).
312  FIDH 2022 ‘On va régler ça en famille’, p. 53.
313  Ibid., p. 54.
à l’amélioration de l’accès au droit et à la justice (PALAJ) was launched in May 2013, in the post-war context, with a focus on access to justice for survivors of sexual violence. The project included six legal clinics, established by the AFJ-CI and the MJDHLP. Between May 2013 and July 2018, 746 sexual violence survivors received legal counselling or assistance. As discussed later in this report, this is also an area where national NGOs have stepped in, with the Ivorian Human Rights League (Ligue ivoirienne des droits de l’homme, LIHDO) and the Ivorian Human Rights Movement (Mouvement ivoirien des droits humains, MIDH) supporting CRSV in mounting civil cases (see section 8.1.3 Amnesties, para 3).

Legal aid services for SGBV survivors, in general, exist in Côte d’Ivoire, but access is limited by practical and financial barriers. An October 2016 governmental decree promised free legal services to anyone who could not afford a lawyer or the cost of approaching judicial services. Officially, SGBV survivors can access free legal aid through a designated unit (Cellule pour la lutte contre la violence faite aux femmes et aux enfants) within the MJDHLP, through the Association of Volunteer Lawyers, or through the GBV Centre in Attiécoubé and the Wildaf Centre. GBV platforms and ‘centres of excellence’ are mandated to help connect survivors with these programmes. In practice, however, it is difficult for survivors to benefit from state-mandated free legal aid. In order to apply, the victim must first secure a costly court statement and identify a lawyer willing to take the case. Few survivors have access to a pool of possible lawyers. Even if they did, few lawyers are willing to take these cases, as state reimbursement is slow and paperwork intensive. As an alternative to the state-supported options, free legal aid is also available through 12 legal clinics (cliniques juridiques) run by the AFJ-CI and based throughout the country, providing free legal counsel for survivors and covering court fees. These clinics are one of the few services available to CRSV survivors, yet funding cuts mean half of the clinics were projected to close in 2022. Even where support is available, many survivors cannot afford to give up work in order to attend court proceedings.

---

315 The legal clinics were established in Bondoukou, Bouaké, Guiglo, Korhogo, Man and San Pedro (ONUCI 2016 ‘Rapport sur les viols’, para 71). See also IBCR (Bureau international des droits des enfants), ‘Atelier bilan du PALAJ: vers une reconduction du projet d’accès au droit et à la justice?’ (ICBR, 15 August, 2018), accessed 1 April 2023.


317 UN Women ‘Global database on violence against women: Côte d’Ivoire’.


319 Ibid., p. 59.

320 Ibid., p. 58.

321 ONUCI 2016 ‘Rapport sur les viols’.
VI. AVENUES FOR REPARATIONS

6.1. International framework for judicial reparations

Côte d’Ivoire did not ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) until 2013, despite signing it more than a decade earlier in 1998. On 18 April 2003, after the partition of the country into rebel- and state-led zones, President Laurent Gbagbo issued a declaration recognising the ad hoc jurisdiction of the ICC and allowing the Prosecutor’s Office to open an investigation into alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in the context of post-electoral violence.322

On 23 November 2011, the ICC issued an arrest warrant for President Laurent Gbagbo and, on 30 November 2011, he was transferred to The Hague. The ICC also issued an arrest warrant against his former youth minister and leader of the ‘Congrès panafricain des jeunes et des patriotes’ (COJEP), Charles Blé Goudé, in 2011 (made public on 1 October 2013) and against former First Lady Simone Gbagbo in November 2012 as indirect co-perpetrators for four counts of crimes against humanity, listed as rape and other sexual violence, murder, persecution and other inhumane acts.323 Goudé was transferred to The Hague in March 2014, while Ms Gbagbo remains in Côte d’Ivoire.

Although the investigation was eventually extended to include events from September 2002 onwards, the charges only reflected incidents committed in Abidjan, from November 2010. The Office of the Prosecutor (OTP) followed a policy of ‘focused investigations’ in the Goudé-Gbagbo trial, meaning that the case was built on four specific incidents that took place in Abidjan during a window of a few months.324 Consequently, the case only looked at a narrow picture of the conflict in terms of timeline, geography, alleged perpetrators and types of harm committed.325 In August 2018, the defence submitted a ‘no case to answer motion’ that was granted by the court, leading to the acquittal of Gbagbo and Goudé on 15 January 2019.326 The acquittal was confirmed in appeals on 31 March 2021, allowing Laurent Gbagbo to return to Côte d’Ivoire on 17 June 2021 at the invitation of President Ouattara.327


324 These included two attacks on opposition marches, one of the Radiodiffusion-télévision ivoirienne (RTI) building on 16–19 December 2010, and a second attack on women demonstrators in Abobo on 3 March 2011 (ICC Pre-trial Chamber I, ‘Situation in the Republic of Côte d’Ivoire in the case of the Prosecutor v. Laurent Gbagbo’ (12 June 2014) ICC-02/11-01/11, https://www.icc-cpi.int/sites/default/files/CourtRecords/CRI/2015_A477727SD, accessed 2 April 2023). The third incident was the shelling of an Abobo marketplace on 17 March 2011, and a massacre and act of collective rape of 22 women by FDS forces (ibid., para 63). The prosecution also cited 32 other incidents in Abidjan as evidence of the contextual elements of an ‘attack’, as required to secure a conviction for crimes against humanity (ibid., para 77).


326 On 3 June 2013, the Pre-trial Chamber closed the confirmation hearing in Gbagbo’s case, deciding there were no ‘substantial grounds to believe’ the alleged crimes had been committed. After an extension allowing the Prosecutor to strengthen her case, the trial was allowed to proceed (FIDH, LIDHO and MIDH, ‘Ivory Coast: The fight against impunity at a crossroads’, 2013), p. 11, https://www.fidh.org/en/documents/af/11/00113/2013/en/, accessed 25 March 2023.

The ICC arrest warrant for Simone Gbagbo was rescinded in July 2021 on the grounds that the charges against her were largely the same as those which the court had definitively dismissed in the Gbagbo-Goudé case.328 Blé Goudé returned to Côte d’Ivoire on 26 November 2022.329

To date, the ICC has only charged alleged perpetrators of crimes committed by Gbagbo and his senior officials. While independent, the OTP nonetheless relies on the cooperation of national governments to investigate crimes allegedly committed within a given territory, and is thus at times constrained to work within the interests of a ruling regime.330 The OTP has communicated its commitment to a ‘sequenced’ approach in Côte d’Ivoire, stating that beginning with more accessible cases against the Gbagbo camp is not a sign of impartiality but a choice based on expedience.331 This statement is, indeed, in line with a Rome Statute requirement that effectiveness and efficiency guide ICC operations, directing the Prosecutor to take the ‘reasonable prospect of conviction’ into account in case prioritisation.332 These procedural directives can conflict with the role of the ICC as an important arbiter of moral authority both globally and in the countries where it operates. The OTP’s ‘sequential approach’ has shaped the political landscape of Côte d’Ivoire. As of yet, the ICC has not interceded in the case of alleged war criminals who remain in prominent roles of the Ouattara regime’s administration and security forces. Arguably, in its omission to act, the Court has inadvertently played a part in condoning this status quo.

6.1.1. The ICC as an avenue to reparations for CRSV survivors

The acquittal of Gbagbo and Blé Goudé closed the door to reparations for victims directly connected to the case.333 The ICC Registry’s Victims’ Participation and Reparations Section has had a field-based staff member in Abidjan since early 2012, representing 726 individuals at the Court. This total includes survivors of CRSV, although the office cannot disclose how many.334 Even with a conviction, the narrow scope of crimes addressed in the Goudé-Gbagbo trial would have translated to a limited avenue for CRSV survivors to access reparations. This is because under the Court’s case law, only victims with a link to the specific incidents identified in the charges are represented in proceedings, limiting reparations to victims directly involved in incidents under review.335 As an underreported and often hidden crime, survivors of sexual violence are at a particular disadvantage within this judicial reparations’ framework.

6.1.2. ICC Trust Fund for Victims

Independent of the Gbagbo-Goudé trial, the Trust Fund for Victims (TFV) of the ICC is implementing a non-judicial assistance programme to address the harms suffered by individual victims and communities resulting from crimes committed between 2002 and 2011. In 2017, the TFV conducted an initial assessment, and, finding an important reparative gap, the

331 Ibid.
332 Ibid.
336 The ICC Registry’s Victims’ Participation and Reparations Section has had a field-based staff member in Abidjan since early 2012, representing 726 individuals at the Court. This total includes survivors of CRSV, although the office cannot disclose how many.334 Even with a conviction, the narrow scope of crimes addressed in the Goudé-Gbagbo trial would have translated to a limited avenue for CRSV survivors to access reparations. This is because under the Court’s case law, only victims with a link to the specific incidents identified in the charges are represented in proceedings, limiting reparations to victims directly involved in incidents under review.335 As an underreported and often hidden crime, survivors of sexual violence are at a particular disadvantage within this judicial reparations’ framework.
333 The ICC Registry’s Victims’ Participation and Reparations Section has had a field-based staff member in Abidjan since early 2012, representing 726 individuals at the Court. This total includes survivors of CRSV, although the office cannot disclose how many.334 Even with a conviction, the narrow scope of crimes addressed in the Goudé-Gbagbo trial would have translated to a limited avenue for CRSV survivors to access reparations. This is because under the Court’s case law, only victims with a link to the specific incidents identified in the charges are represented in proceedings, limiting reparations to victims directly involved in incidents under review.335 As an underreported and often hidden crime, survivors of sexual violence are at a particular disadvantage within this judicial reparations’ framework.

TVF Board opened its assistance programme as a complementary initiative to national reparations. The programme aims to address harms resulting from specific ‘emblematic’ events, where those events are qualifiable as war crimes or crimes against humanity. On August 2020, following a consultative process with CSOs and victims’ associations, 13 incidents committed between 2002 and 2011 were selected. The incidents chosen are well known to the Ivorian population and have a strong symbolic dimension. Gender criteria were also used to ensure crimes committed on a gender basis, including CRSV, were considered. An Advisory Committee of key civil society partners was then established.

The TFV programme launched in 2021 in four regions with an initial budget of 800,000 euros for its first three-year phase. During its first year of operations, the TFV consulted extensively with communities and victims. All consulted communities called for recognition of harms, prompting the TFV to initiate its programming with symbolic community-based actions. Large community consultations were held, then proceeded by extensive follow-up consultations. Regarding individual reparations, the large number of victims and the limited availability of funds means the TFV has prioritised those most in need. The list of selected individuals was being finalised at the time of writing. The TFV listened to hundreds of pre-identified victims and selected recipients based on a transparent prioritisation methodology, including gender diversity. Once the list is finalised, an individualised rehabilitation process including psychological rehabilitation, medical care and socioeconomic support will be designed with each victim.

The TFV’s collaborative approach puts high priority on consultation and ownership of the programme by the victim community. This is a strength of the TFV approach; however, it comes at a cost. Four years of preparatory consultations and groundwork require significant expense, particularly given the relatively small number of beneficiaries who will receive reparations through the TFV. As a model for wider reparations programmes, particularly those with national reach, the strengths of the TFV approach must be considered against the cost required in terms of time and resources.

### VI. AVENUES FOR REPARATIONS

6.2. Domestic framework for judicial reparations

In Côte d’Ivoire, judicial reparations can be granted in criminal cases against private individuals, and victims can join court proceedings as civil parties, permitting them to claim damages against the accused. The state or select government officials can also be ordered by a court to pay reparations where criminal acts were committed in the course of official duties or where the state failed to meet its obligation to protect citizens from grave harm. Although these legal avenues exist, they have not proven a path to reparations for CRSV survivors. Impunity remains the overwhelming response to serious crimes committed.

---

336 Author correspondence with Côte d’Ivoire TFV representative, August 2022.
337 These incidents are: In Haut-Sassandra, the executions at Monoko-Zohi, 28 and 29 November 2002, and attacks of Vavoua, Dania, Pelezi and Fiekon Borombo in November/December 2002. In Abidjan, the repression of the Women’s March in Abobo, 3 March 2011; the attack of the village of Aankanoua-Koué, 6 and 7 March 2011; the bombing of the market in Abobo, 17 March 2011; attacks on the districts of Doukoué and Mami Fata, 11–13 March 2011; and attacks on the district of Yao Sehi, 11–13 April 2011. In the Moyen-Cavally region, executions in Doké in March 2011; the attack of Pélé, March 2011; the attack of Bedy-Goazon, 22 March 2011; and executions at the Prefecture of Biolequin, 28 and 29 March 2011. Finally, in the Guémon region, the murder of Duékoué’s Imam, 29 March 2011; and the attack on the quarter Carrefour in Duékoué, 29–30 March 2011 (ibid.).
338 The incidents were further selected based on criteria including: (i) the typology and severity of the harm; (ii) a coherent and non-discriminatory community distribution of victims; (iii) documentation of the incidents by the National Commission of Enquiry (CNE), the Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission (CDVR) or by other recognised national or international organisations (thus making it possible to qualify the harm suffered as falling within the scope of the Rome Statute and to ensure the eligibility of victims for assistance measures); and (iv) the geographical location of the incidents, given accessibility to the Fund’s implementing partners, etc. (ibid.).
339 Ibid.
340 Ibid.
341 Ibid.
342 As an example, in Biolequin, the community agreed to the erection of a stele in memory of those killed during the attack. In Duékoué, the community indicated that the re-building of two classrooms destroyed during the attack would be recognition of the collective harms suffered. In Abidjan, the urban habitat of the victims, the specificity of the incidents and the dismantling of the targeted areas made it more difficult to agree on a symbolic action; affected communities finally gathered for ecumenical prayers as a first step of symbolic actions (ibid.).
343 Ibid.
345 Ibid., arts 109, 238.
during the conflict period.\textsuperscript{346} If a conviction is secured, perpetrators are often unable to pay and there are no public funds guaranteeing survivors receive court-mandated reparations.\textsuperscript{347} It follows that the FIDH has not documented a single instance of a sexual violence survivor receiving judicial reparations.\textsuperscript{348}

6.2.1. Sexual violence in domestic law

Trials pertaining to sexual violence are rare in Côte d’Ivoire. When these cases do advance to court, they are regularly thrown out due to poor investigations (see section 8.1 Judicial reparations).\textsuperscript{349} All conflict-era sexual violence occurred prior to the 2020 legislative reforms, meaning it falls under the former penal code. Though that code included rape as a serious crime, it lacked a legal definition, contributing to a tendency from prosecutors to drop charges or reclassify rape as ‘indecent assault’.\textsuperscript{350}

CRSV survivors have an additional recourse to justice through the application of international law in domestic courts. The Ivorian Constitution gives international treaties authority above domestic laws.\textsuperscript{351} In practice, this means the ratification process of any international treaty requires that domestic law is revised to reflect its content.\textsuperscript{352} The Rome Statute was domesticket into the Ivorian penal code in 2020, resulting in the addition of crimes against humanity and war crimes. Given that domestication occurred after the 2011 transition, those provisions are not retroactively applicable to conflict-era crimes.\textsuperscript{353} Côte d’Ivoire had, however, ratified other international treaties relevant to protecting civilians from the war crimes and crimes against humanity at that time (see 1998 Penal Code, arts 137, 138 and 139).\textsuperscript{354} Even still, when applying international laws and conventions found in the 1998 Penal Code to cases of CRSV, a contemporary court will likely need to understand sexual violence as it was defined in Ivorian law at the time the crime was committed. It is thus possible to prosecute CRSV as an international crime domestically, but it would be based on the limited definition of sexual violence found in the former penal code.

6.2.2. Special Investigation and Examination Unit

The Special Investigation Unit (Cellule spéciale d’enquête, CSE) was created within the Tribunal of First Instance in Abidjan by a special ministerial order issued 24 June 2011. The CSE was later expanded to become the permanent Special Investigation and Examination Unit (Cellule spéciale d’enquête et d’instruction, CSEI).\textsuperscript{355} The CSEI was tasked with ‘investigations into

\textsuperscript{346} UNOCI and OHCHR 2016 ‘Summary report on rape crimes and their prosecution in Côte d’Ivoire’.
\textsuperscript{347} FIDH 2022 ‘On va régler ça en famille’, p. 56.
\textsuperscript{348} Ibid., p. 65.
\textsuperscript{349} Ibid., pp. 55–56.
\textsuperscript{350} The legal framework for prosecuting sexual violence has been significantly strengthened with the 2020 revision of the Ivorian Penal Code including, for the first time, a definition of rape. The revised code defines rape as "all acts of penetration whether vaginal, anal, oral, or of another nature with a sexual purpose, imposed on another person without consent by a part of the human body or an object, through violence, threat, coercion, or surprise" (Penal Code 2021, section 1, art. 403). What is more, that definition includes marital rape as a crime under Ivorian law, with section 1, art. 403 of the 2021 Penal Code specifying that the above definition of rape applies "regardless of the nature of the relationship between the perpetrators and victims. Even if married". Rape is punishable by five to 20 years in prison, and life if it results in grave harm, depending on the situation of vulnerability of the victim. The new code maintains a distinction between rape and other acts of sexual violence, which are instead charged as "indecent assault" or "sexual harassment". Indecent assault is listed as a separate crime, comprising "all sexual assaults without penetration", and receives the much lighter sentence of one to three years in prison, with sentences reaching up to 10 years depending on the vulnerability of the victim (i.e. minors or persons under the authority of the perpetrator) (Penal Code 2021, section 1, art. 405).
\textsuperscript{351} The new Constitution of the Republic of Côte d’Ivoire came into effect on 8 November 2016 (Act No. 2016-886). Chapter 2, art. 123 establishes that duly ratified treaties have "authority superior to that of domestic law". This was also true under the previous Constitution (Constitution of Côte d’Ivoire 2000, Title 5, art. 87), meaning the same principles would apply to conflict-era crimes.
\textsuperscript{352} Author correspondence with a lawyer representing CRSV survivors in Côte d’Ivoire, August 2022.
\textsuperscript{353} For example, see the Hissène Habré trial at the Extraordinary African Chambers in Senegal for a discussion on the invalidity of retroactively applying international treaties in domestic courts. See: 25. What is the significance of Habré’s prosecution under universal jurisdiction? and 26. How does this trial fit into critiques of the role of international justice in Africa and claims that universal jurisdiction cases target Africans? in HRW, ‘Q&A: The Case of Hissène Habré before the Extraordinary African Chambers in Senegal’ (3 May 2016), [https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/05/03/qanda-case-hissene-habre-extraordinary-african-chambers-senegal2016], accessed 3 April 2023.
\textsuperscript{354} Namely, the Geneva Conventions (ratified 1961) and Additional Protocols I and II (ratified 1977); The Hague Conventions (ratified 1980 and 1999); the Convention of the Rights of the Child (1997), the International Covenants on Human Rights (ratified 1992); the Genocide Convention (ratified 1995); the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (1995), and the Convention against Torture (ratified 1998).
\textsuperscript{355} The termination of the CSEI was announced in September 2013, under pressure from civil society groups, before a single trial was scheduled. The Presidency agreed to renew and expand the unit into the now permanent CSEI (ICTI 2016 ‘Disappointed hope’, p. 10).
serious crimes and major offences committed at the time of the crisis following the presidential election of 2010 and all offences connected with or related to those serious crimes and major offences.”

The work of the CSEI has been slowed by operational difficulties. In its early days, the Public Prosecutor’s Office submitted investigations en masse, without first mapping potential cases or creating an overarching prosecutorial strategy. CSEI investigators found themselves with a huge docket of cases and an overly broad mandate. Without guidelines for prioritising or ordering investigations, the CSEI has struggled to structure and classify cases. The CSEI is further challenged by the lack of a permanent court tasked with handling conflict-era cases. Crimes that were committed during the conflict by persons non-affiliated with the military are tried by courts of ordinary law, with grave crimes including sexual violence exclusively under the jurisdiction of the assize court. Between 2001 and 2014, the assize court did not hold any sessions, and has only met irregularly since 2014. What is more, the CSEI does not exclusively investigate conflict-related crimes, adding to its backlog and further overstretching staff.

In addition, although the criminal code and the code of criminal procedure were amended on 14 January 2015 to end the statute of limitations for international crimes, when asked whether the new statute of limitations applied to cases before the CSEI, the Prosecutor-General said conflict-era international crimes would continue to be prosecuted under the former criminal code. In the case of rape, the former code extended the statute of limitations to 10 years from the time the act was committed, or 10 years from the first investigative act.

It is now 10 years since the end of the conflict period, and eight years since the CSEI began its work, meaning open cases could be thrown out and new cases blocked due to an expiring statute of limitations. That said, the expiring statute of limitations appears a moot concern in the face of the 2018 amnesty ordinance, which has frozen nearly all investigations into conflict-era crimes.

6.2.3. Military tribunal

The military court has jurisdiction over sexual violence committed by members of the FRCI, gendarmes and police while on duty. With only one military tribunal for the entire country, its proceedings are rare and often delayed. The military tribunal has been criticised for lack of independence from the political executive, with all orders for prosecution first requiring permission from the ministry to which the accused is assigned (i.e. the Ministry of Defence or the Ministry of the Interior). Prosecution of military or security personnel is thus dependent on the approval of political leadership.

In 2011, a military prosecutor charged former Gbagboist military leaders with crimes including rape, murder and the concealment of bodies. By 2014, nine cases were brought to trial, but no convictions for sexual violence were handed down for conflict-era sexual violence crimes. Indeed, in

356 Ibid.
358 The Public Prosecutor submitted all cases to investigating judges without prioritising cases or grouping related events. Cases were then added to open investigations without connection to the facts of the case, resulting in files at the CSEI that contain up to 15 sub-cases and more than 100 defendants. Eventually, the Prosecutor classed all conflict-era CSEI investigations into four categories: (i) violent crimes involving death or bodily injury, including rape and other grave crimes against civilians; (ii) economic crimes such as looting; (iii) crimes involving the security of the state such as treason and conspiracy; and (iv) crimes identified by the 2011 CNE. This fourth category was opened in the CSEI’s 9th Investigation Section, where crimes against the state were being investigated, and includes the handful of sexual violence cases opened by the investigating judges (ICTJ 2016 “Disappointed hope”, p. 14).
359 Ibid., p. 16.
362 ICTJ 2016 ‘Disappointed hope’, p. 7; author correspondence with Ivorian lawyer representing CRSV survivors, August 2022.
365 Law No. 74-350 of 24 July 1974 relative to the institution of a Military Procedure Code, arts 9, 10.
366 ONUCI 2016 ‘Rapport sur les viols’, para 47.
367 The ministers communicate their decision to the military prosecutor in confidence, with no requirement that such decisions be justified or made public. In practical terms, this rule bars the possibility of appeals (ONUCI 2016 ‘Rapport sur les viols’, para 47).
368 HRW 2011 ‘They killed them like it was nothing’, p. 6.
369 ICTJ 2016 ‘Disappointed hope’, p. 2.
the case of conflict-era sexual violence by armed forces, the military tribunal made a blanket decision that it could not establish a chain of command for holding perpetrators of rape accountable and was therefore unable to prosecute CRSV cases. The security forces instead committed to better monitoring cases of sexual violence within their ranks and adopted the National Committee to Combat Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CNLVSC).373

However, the military tribunal did prosecute and convict 15 cases of sexual violence by military personnel committed in the post-conflict period.371

6.3. Domestic framework for non-judicial reparations

The post-war period in Côte d’Ivoire is characterised by far-reaching economic and political reforms as well as an extensive transitional justice programme. CSEI investigations were complemented by non-judicial measures including a national truth commission, a new Constitution, security-sector reforms, a large-scale demobilisation programme and the promise of a national reparations programme.

6.3.1. Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Just days after assuming office, on 27 April 2011, President Ouattara announced his intention to create a truth commission, promising that transitional justice would be a "major focus of [his] presidency."372 The Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Commission dialogue, vérité et réconciliation, CDVR) was established by presidential decree on 13 July 2011 with the stated goal of achieving "reconciliation and reinforcing social cohesion in Ivorian communities".373 Though the CDVR’s composition included sections dedicated to work on gender and children’s rights, its mandate did not specify a focus on sexual violence.374 Despite collecting more than 70,000 victim statements, including 1,359 related to SGBV, the CDVR’s final report places surprisingly little emphasis on investigations or truth-seeking more generally. In the end, the report was little more than a summary of activities and quantitative data on the testimonies received.375 This failure to analyse testimony was a lost opportunity, not least from the perspective of addressing CRSV. The CDVR documented 151 cases of sexual slavery, 170 forced abortions, 747 rapes, 27 instances of forced incest, 83 forced marriages and 35 forced sterilisations.376 If analysed and used to inform post-war reform and recovery measures, these testimonies could have served as an important source for understanding CRSV and designing effective support and justice measures.377

6.3.2. Security-sector reform as guarantee of non-repetition

In September 2012, Côte d’Ivoire adopted a National Strategy for Security-Sector Reform aimed at rebuilding the security forces “in a framework that respects democratic principles and rules of good governance”.378 The framework continued a process already under way of transitioning the Forces nouvelles into the new national army, the Forces

372 HRW 2011 ‘They killed them like it was nothing’, p. 89.
373 Ordinance 2011-167 of 13 July 2011, art. 5.
375 On critiques of community outreach, see Hélène Calame Joël Hubrecht, ‘La Commission dialogue, vérité et réconciliation ivoirienne: une belle coquille vide?’ (Institut des Hautes études sur la justice, October 2015), p. 5, https://the.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/la-Commission-Dialogue-V%C3%A9rit%C3%A9-et-%C3%A9-rification-ivoirienne-une-belle-coquille-vide_.pdf, accessed 12 April 2023, including a study by the Ivorian Coalition for the International Criminal Court that found only 60% of Ivorians surveyed knew about the CDVR and 28% took part in a CDVR-related activity. On the limited scope of the report, see CDVR 2014 ‘Rapport final’, where the discussion of results begins on page 96 and files only 8 pages in total. The rest of the report covers methodology, a summary of activities and recommendations. The final report was only published two years after its completion, with major sections of an original draft deleted (Piccolino 2018 ‘A victor’s peace’, p. 501).
376 Women gave 39% of statements collected, or 28,024 in total (CDVR 2014 ‘Rapport final’, p. 73).
377 This amounted to 1,359 CRSV cases in total (Ibid., p. 75).
378 The programme included a resocialisation process, payment of a transitional safety allowance as well as support for job training, along with other financial and vocational assistance (HRW 2015 ‘To consolidate this peace’, p. 52). The reform framework built on a process under way since the signing of the Ouagadougou Accord in 2007 of merging the Forces nouvelles into the FDS as a single national army, the FRCI (UNSC, ‘Ouagadougou Agreement’, 4 March 2007, S/3007/144, para 3(2)).
républicaines de Côte d’Ivoire (FRCI). The armed forces adopted a National Action Plan Against Sexual Violence (NAP) as a central focus of security-sector reform efforts (validated in 2014 and adopted in July 2017). Rather than accountability measures, the NAP focuses on awareness-raising and training activities aimed at preventing future cases of sexual violence within the armed forces.\(^{379}\) The plan followed a 2014 pledge by the FRCI leadership to end sexual violence within their ranks and adopt a zero-tolerance policy in the security sector.\(^{380}\) By the end of 2015, more than 900 members of the FRCI and 300 police officers and gendarmes had received training on GBV.\(^{381}\) Additionally, 120 local monitoring committees were established and tasked with ensuring sexual violence cases be transmitted to the correct authorities, and survivors given access to medical and legal care.\(^{382}\)

Security-sector reforms included a national disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR) programme attended by 69,506 former combatants, including 6,105 women, between 2012 and 2015.\(^{383}\) The DDR programme is criticised for its slow pace, for disproportionately benefiting Ouattara supporters and for the influence ComZones wielded over the process. ComZones had a central role determining who received generous transitional allowances, trainings, and job assistance, as well as several thousand highly coveted jobs in the security and public sectors.\(^{384}\) Indeed, the ComZone influence over the DDR process speaks to a wider dynamic. As a former insurgent movement consolidating into a central government, the Ouattara regime found itself highly dependent on the FRCI to maintain the security situation.\(^{385}\) This has left President Ouattara unwilling to rein in the power still held by the ComZones and their elements. Ex-combatants have leveraged this power to demand further benefits from the DDR programme. Most notably, on 18 November 2014 and again from 6 to 7 January 2017, former DDR programme recipients staged violent uprisings, effectively holding the country hostage until their demands for further payments were met.\(^{386}\) All this demonstrates the weaknesses of the process.

### 6.3.3. National reparations programme

On 15 December 2014, President Ouattara declared that the government of Côte d’Ivoire would commit 10 billion CFA (approximately USD 16.2 million) to reparations for victims. Ouattara established the National Commission for Reconciliation and the Compensation of Victims (Commission nationale pour la réconciliation et l’indemnisation des victimes des crises survenues en Côte d’Ivoire, CONARIV) to lead the reparations process.\(^{387}\) Ordinance No. 2015-174 of 4 March 2015 gave CONARIV its official mandate: the Commission would produce a single consolidated list of victims of attacks, including CRSV, and harms committed from 1990 to 2012, and propose a reparations programme according to their needs and expectations.\(^{388}\) President Ouattara characterised CONARIV as a continuation of the CDVR’s work, responsible for consolidating existing

---

379 To implement the NAP, a National Committee to Combat Conflict-related Sexual Violence (Comité national de lutte contre les violences sexuelles liées aux conflits, CNLVSC) was created in June 2016 by presidential decree (Decree No. 2016-373 of 3 June 2016). Established within the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Interior, the CNLVSC coordinates training of the defence and security services in view of eradicating CRSV and monitors ongoing efforts to end sexual violence within the armed forces.

380 The pledge was made at the London ‘Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict’. The NAP was further backed by personal commitments signed by 30 FRCI officials and eight commanders of the Gendarmerie nationale, promising to take action against sexual violence in their ranks and collaborate with justice-seeking efforts (CEDAW 2018 ‘Fourth periodic report’, para 126).

381 HRW 2015 ‘To consolidate this peace’, p. 47.


383 At the time the Ouagadougou Agreement was signed, 110,000 fighters were destined to benefit from the UN demobilisation programme, with the number shrinking to 74,000 by the end of the post-electoral crisis and 69,506 actually participating in the programme (UNSC, ‘Final progress report of the Secretary General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d’Ivoire’ (31 January 2017, S/2017/89, para 29).


385 HRW 2015 ‘To consolidate this peace’, p. 57.


387 HRW 2015 ‘To consolidate this peace’, p. 9.

victims files and identifying those not yet registered by a state or civil society body.389 While Commission President Paul Siméon Ahouana, archbishop of Bouaké, was a new appointment, seven of CONARIV’s nine commissioners were carried over from the CDVR.390 As one victims’ leader explained, this meant that victims disappointed by the truth commission now transferred their feelings to the reparations process.391

CONARIV explicitly includes ‘victims of sexual violence’ within its definition of eligible victims, but the definition of sexual violence itself is left open. On one hand, an open definition allows survivors to self-identify; on the other, one might surmise it was also a source of exclusion. Given social attitudes that tend to diminish the severity of rape or pass doubt on survivors’ stories, a clear definition of sexual violence in line with international standards would have protected survivors from bias.392

In March 2016, CONARIV handed a consolidated list of victims as well as a proposed national reparations policy to President Ouattara. During the course of its mandate, CONARIV validated 316,954 of the 874,056 files it received, totalling 36% of victims registered or identified by the various organisations that contributed files.393 The final CONARIV list included 2,969 survivors of GBV, with 40% male survivors, 60% female and 13% children.394 In the end, 557,102 files, nearly two thirds of the total received, were not validated. Of these, 216,712 (38.95%) were found to be duplicates, 203,342 (36%) were rejected for lack of the required proof of alleged violations, 68,525 (12%) were deemed fraudulent, 56,824 (10%) concerned persons deemed ‘unreachable’ for verification and 11,699 (2%) were deemed incorrectly filled out or otherwise unreadable.395

389 Ibid.
391 Author interview with leader of San Pedro Victims’ Association, May 2021.
393 Ibid., p. 27.
394 Duhem 2016 ‘La CONARIV a remis son rapport.’
Persons who were in refugee and displacement camps or otherwise in exile when CONARIV conducted its field missions could not register with the Commission. To its credit, CONARIV included a recommendation to the government in its final report that those still in refugee camps during the Commission’s operational period should be given the opportunity to register. This provision also speaks to the more complex question of how CRSV should be defined and eligibility for reparations determined. Should persons who experienced sexual violence in refugee and IDP camps, in particular those who experienced violations outside the country or after the 2011 cut-off date, be included in reparations programmes?

Although CONARIV was mandated to create and validate a list of victims and propose a national reparations plan, this independent commission did not have the authority to make a final decision on the programme design or recipients, or to manage the actual implementation of the reparations programme. These responsibilities remain within the executive branch of government. Initially, this responsibility was held under the auspices of the Ministry of Solidarity, Social Cohesion and Compensation of Victims (ministère de la Solidarité, cohésion sociale et indemnisation des victimes, MSCSIV), to be implemented through its National Programme for Social Cohesion (Programme national de cohésion sociale, PNCS). During an April 2021 government reshuffle, this ministry was split into the Ministry of Solidarity and the Ministry of Reconciliation (ministère de la Réconciliation et la cohésion nationale, MRSC). Responsibility for national reparations was divided between the two bodies. The Ministry of Solidarity now holds the list of eligible victims and state funding intended to pay for reparations, while the Ministry of Reconciliation is responsible for the actual issuing of reparations. The division has stalled reparations as the two ministries attempt the difficult task of coordinating between the one who holds the budget and the other who holds the mandate. Together, the ministries are responsible for delivering individual reparations based on the consolidated list created by CONARIV and then validated by the President of the Republic. In practice, however, it appears the Ministry of Solidarity does not rely on the list submitted by CONARIV (see section 8.2. Non-judicial reparations).

6.3.4 Reparations law

Distrust amongst the victim community is compounded by the absence of law defining and guaranteeing reparations. In its final months, CONARIV drafted a law on the forms of reparations that it determined should be available to the victims of a given category of crime, including CRSV. The draft reparations law gives a detailed framework for proposed compensation including lump sum and pension payments, psychological and medical rehabilitation, socioeconomic assistance, and collective reparations (see below). The draft reparations law lists widows, orphans and those who suffered sexual violence as priority reparations recipients and places a duty on the state to make ‘every effort’ to ensure medical and psychosocial services are accessible. Civil society groups are pushing strongly for the adoption of the law, arguing that without a legal framework, reparations depend on the goodwill of...
The CONARIV draft law reflects a major improvement on the individual reparations CRSV survivors have received to date, making it a good starting point for advocacy demanding a more comprehensive and effective programme. It nonetheless has limitations, not least being the minimal involvement of victims in its drafting. Also notable is a lack of provisions for the children of survivors such as education bursaries. Perhaps the most notable shortcoming is the limited timeline of a proposed pension which the draft law describes as a 36-installment ‘pension’ payment. This is not only confusing but, arguably, a manipulation of the term ‘pension’ in order to appear in line with global best practices. When delivered as a reparation, a pension is more than a form of compensation for past violations, it is a recognition that the consequences of CRSV make it impossible for many survivors to earn a living or benefit from the support of family and community. A pension is thus an effective reparation when it serves as a lifelong bulwark against destitution. It is also unclear why the drafters have limited the provision of pensions to female survivors of sexual violence.

COLLECTIVE REPARATIONS

The reparations framework presented by CONARIV also includes the provision of collective and symbolic reparations. The Commission proposed interventions “that will support care and solidarity at the community level”, with three main focuses on (i) conflict prevention; (ii) increased accessibility of social services; and (iii) projects supporting economic recovery. The second and third focus could be particularly beneficial to CRSV survivors if designed in ways that respond to their specific needs and ensure safe and meaningful inclusion. That said, the proposed CONARIV collective reparations framework includes no special provisions for a gender-sensitive approach, nor any project or activity specific to the gendered impacts of the conflict or the root causes and consequences of sexual violence.

CONARIV drafted a repatriations law proposing a framework for and legal guarantees of reparations. As of yet, this law has not been passed. The framework proposed by CONARIV includes the following for CRSV survivors:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEASURES</th>
<th>BENEFICIARIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compensation, lump sum of 1,000,000 CFA (USD 1,550)</td>
<td>Victims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly pension of 60,000 CFA (USD 93) over 36 months</td>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological care</td>
<td>Victims and their spouses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical care (i.e. gynaecological, surgery, etc.)</td>
<td>Victims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical and psychological care</td>
<td>Child survivors of rape and abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialised follow-up care</td>
<td>Victims living with HIV/AIDS, including their children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialised follow-up</td>
<td>Child victims living with HIV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological care</td>
<td>Children born of rape</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The CONARIV draft law reflects a major improvement on the individual reparations CRSV survivors have received to date, making it a good starting point for advocacy demanding a more comprehensive and effective programme. It nonetheless has limitations, not least being the minimal involvement of victims in its drafting. Also notable is a lack of provisions for the children of survivors such as education bursaries. Perhaps the most notable shortcoming is the limited timeline of a proposed pension which the draft law describes as a 36-installment ‘pension’ payment. This is not only confusing but, arguably, a manipulation of the term ‘pension’ in order to appear in line with global best practices. When delivered as a reparation, a pension is more than a form of compensation for past violations, it is a recognition that the consequences of CRSV make it impossible for many survivors to earn a living or benefit from the support of family and community. A pension is thus an effective reparation when it serves as a lifelong bulwark against destitution. It is also unclear why the drafters have limited the provision of pensions to female survivors of sexual violence.

COLLECTIVE REPARATIONS

The reparations framework presented by CONARIV also includes the provision of collective and symbolic reparations. The Commission proposed interventions “that will support care and solidarity at the community level”, with three main focuses on (i) conflict prevention; (ii) increased accessibility of social services; and (iii) projects supporting economic recovery. The second and third focus could be particularly beneficial to CRSV survivors if designed in ways that respond to their specific needs and ensure safe and meaningful inclusion. That said, the proposed CONARIV collective reparations framework includes no special provisions for a gender-sensitive approach, nor any project or activity specific to the gendered impacts of the conflict or the root causes and consequences of sexual violence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEASURES</th>
<th>BENEFICIARIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compensation, lump sum of 1,000,000 CFA (USD 1,550)</td>
<td>Victims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly pension of 60,000 CFA (USD 93) over 36 months</td>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological care</td>
<td>Victims and their spouses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical care (i.e. gynaecological, surgery, etc.)</td>
<td>Victims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical and psychological care</td>
<td>Child survivors of rape and abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialised follow-up care</td>
<td>Victims living with HIV/AIDS, including their children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialised follow-up</td>
<td>Child victims living with HIV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological care</td>
<td>Children born of rape</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

405 It is unclear why survivors of sexual violence do not have the cost of transport to medical and psychosocial support included in their compensation package, as provided for victims of serious injury.
406 The framework has been taken from CONARIV 2016 ‘Rapport d’activités’, p. 43 (author’s translation).
407 Article 50 of the draft reparations law clarifies that a person who has suffered multiple serious violations will receive a pension for each of these grave harms. Presumably, this provision would account for the reality that sexual violence is often accompanied by grave physical harms that should, in practice, qualify under the separate category of ‘debilitating injury’ (CONARIV 2016 ‘Rapport d’activités’, Draft Reparations Law 2016, p. 188).
409 Ibid., pp. 51–53.
In 2021, the Ministry of Reconciliation launched the national community reparations programme aimed at supporting local development projects proposed by selected conflict-affected communities. At the time of writing, ministry officials had completed an outreach phase started five years before, in 2017, that involved field missions to select areas and were now reviewing applications. The author could not find information describing the programme or its application process on a website or other public source, making it difficult for communities to apply if not selected by the Ministry of Reconciliation for outreach. Without transparent information on such opportunities and equitable access in applying, the perception persists that reparations are not a right but a government benefit, and one distributed at the discretion of state agents.

VI. AVENUES FOR REPARATIONS

410 Author interview with the Director at the Ministry of Reconciliation, December 2021.
7.1. Judicial reparations

7.1.1. Special Investigation and Examination Unit

In its first four years, the CSEI opened 61 investigations and charged 1,038 individuals.\(^{412}\) Of these, only three cases have progressed to trial. The first brought Simone Gbagbo and 82 associates to trial in 2015 for crimes against the security of the state. Simone Gbagbo was sentenced to 20 years in prison.\(^{413}\) The second process, starting 31 May 2016, was also against Simone Gbagbo, this time for ‘crimes de sang’ (blood crimes) including sexual violence.\(^{414}\) The trial was rushed into session following Côte d’Ivoire’s refusal to send Ms Gbagbo to The Hague. Citing the ICC’s ‘complimentary principle’, Côte d’Ivoire put her on trial for similar charges as those she would face at the ICC. This process was marred by significant problems including lack of evidence, poor investigations, and the court’s refusal to bring key witnesses.\(^{415}\) Simone Gbagbo was unanimously acquitted by the jury.\(^{416}\) A third trial against Amande Wuermi, known as Amadé Ouérémi, is the only conflict-era trial to result in a conviction for serious crimes against civilians.

7.1.2. Amadé Ouérémi trial

On 15 April 2021, the Criminal Tribunal of Abidjan sentenced Amadé Ouérémi to life in prison for crimes committed in Duékoué between 28 and 29 March 2011. Ouérémi was charged with 24 accounts of ‘crimes against the population’, including rape, genocide, pillaging, kidnapping, assault and battery and destruction of property – acts qualified by the court as crimes against humanity.\(^{417}\) Thirty-four witness statements described Ouérémi committing summary executions, rapes, mutilations, and immolation.\(^{418}\) He is the first pro-Ouattara element to appear in court, making the case an important step towards more balanced justice-seeking. Ouérémi was not, however, from the FRCI. He led an independent militia which supported the rebels from 2000 onwards.\(^{419}\) Ouérémi’s defence repeatedly reiterated that high-ranking members of the FRCI ordered the atrocities committed in Duékoué and thus bear the most responsibility.\(^{420}\) At the time of writing, none of those commanders were arrested. In January 2023, the Ivorian judiciary ruled that the appeal lodged by Amadé Ouérémi was inadmissible.\(^{421}\)

412 ICTJ 2016 ‘Disappointed hope’, p. 15.
413 For a list of all the accused, the charges against them and the court’s decisions pertaining to them, see OIDH, MIDH and LIDHO, ‘Rapport de suivi des procès de la crise post-électorale 2010 en Côte d’Ivoire. Procès des pro-Gbagbo: un justice aux ordres?’ (Trust Africa, 2015), pp. 4–5.
418 Richard 2021 ‘Massacre de Duékoué’.
419 Ibid.
420 Senior FRCI leaders, and most notably the CornZone Losséni Fofana (known as ‘Lous’), were identified by Ouérémi as those primarily responsible for grave crimes committed in Duékoué. As the FIDH discovered, Ouérémi did not merely explain the actions of his own elements to investigators, but also laid out instructions received from the FRCI hierarchy (FIDH 2015 ‘43 women who suffered sexual violence’, pp. 6, 19–21). Also see, Christelle Pire, ‘Côte d’Ivoire: prison à vie pour Amadé Ouérémi, le seul coupable pour le massacre de Duékoué’ (TV5 Monde, 16 April 2021), https://informationtv5monde.com/video/cote-d-ivoire-prison-voie-pour-amade-oueremi-le-seul-coublable-pour-le-massacre-de-dukekoue, accessed 3 April 2023.
As the first conviction for conflict-era crimes to include rape, the Amadé Ouérémi trial is also the first meaningful act towards prosecuting CRSV in Côte d’Ivoire. Eighty-four victims joined the case as civil parties, including at least two survivors of sexual violence. The CRSV survivors were granted reparations; however, these are yet to be received. Ouérémi does not have the funds to pay, and the case judge has ruled that the Ivorian state would not be held responsible for compensating victims in his stead.

7.2. Non-judicial reparations

7.2.1. Interim reparations

In August 2015, before CONARIV had finished its work, President Ouattara ordered an initial interim reparations programme to be led by the Ministry of Solidarity, Social Cohesion, and the Compensation of Victims (ministère de la Solidarité, cohésion sociale et indemnisation des victimes, MSCSIV) through its National Social Cohesion Programme (PNCS). This initial programme had a projected cost of between six and eight billion CFA (approximately USD 9.5–12.7 million). President Ouattara presided over the 4 August 2015 ceremony marking the first payments. The event drew criticism from international and national onlookers for coinciding the once-off interim reparations payments with the run-up to the 2015 presidential election and for his cynical remarks about forgiveness, without apologising himself.

The interim reparations benefited a total of 4,500 persons, including 3,500 people who lost a close family member during the conflict and 1,000 who were seriously injured. If survivors of sexual violence received interim reparations, it was as a consequence of also being a victim of these harms. Recipients were given a lump sum payment of one million FCA (approximately USD 1,000) for each deceased relative, while seriously injured victims received a voucher for free medical assistance, including 150,000 CFA (USD 235) for expenses. The effectiveness of the vouchers were criticised by victims who received them (see section 5.3.2 Medical bonds).

Overall, interim reparations remain a source of confusion within the victim community. Recipients lament that one-off payments disappeared almost immediately, and many are unclear whether they will receive additional reparations and, if so, in what form. As one recipient expressed:

"The State has deceived us. They told us that this million was for the funerals ... To our great surprise, we are told that this is our compensation."

Art. 86 of the draft reparations law presented in CONARIV’s final report appears to confirm his concern, reading: "victims who have already benefited from reparation measures for a specific loss within the framework of the various compensation operations throughout the country prior to the promulgation of this law are not concerned by the compensation process governed by this law".

Civil society groups report diminishing political will to continue delivering reparations, making the need for a law defining and guaranteeing victims’ right to reparation all the more pressing.

7.2.2. Reparations programmes

The Côte d’Ivoire individual reparations programmes officially launched on 30 October 2017. This process, called Operation ‘Yako’, delivered a second round of individual reparations in the form of renewed medical
bonds for severely injured persons, including some CRSV survivors; school fees for children orphaned during the conflict (278 in total); access to microcredits for more vulnerable victims; and collective reparations in the form of socio-community construction or rehabilitation projects. In March 2019, the Ivorian government reported on its progress in delivering these reparations. At that time, an estimated 9,400 of the approximately 49,000 listed victims of grave crimes had received some form of reparation. For beneficiaries of those killed during the conflict, out of 19,018 prospective recipients, 63% had not received reparations. Amongst the gravely injured, 91% of the 26,783 prospective recipients were still waiting for reparations.

Only 150 of the reparation recipients were sexual violence survivors, representing 5% of the GBV cases listed by CONARIV. Unclear criteria used to prioritise recipients as well as non-transparent selection processes make it difficult to determine whether these survivors were granted reparations specifically because of the experience of sexual violence or because they suffered severe injury to which CRSV was incidental. According to a COVICI representative, reparations received by CRSV survivors to date only include a voucher for medical and other expenses, and not the wider forms of reparations once proposed by CONARIV, including psychological care, lump sum payments and a short-term ‘pension’. COVICI believes that the number of CRSV survivor recipients has only increased by a handful of individuals since 2019, but no new official figures are available.

The funding structure of the national reparations programme speaks to the likelihood that the Ivorian government will meet its commitment to victims within the current framework. In 2015, President Alassane Ouattara set up an initial fund of 10 billion CFA (USD 16,053,000) and, in 2017, the government announced it had increased this amount by 10 billion CFA each year, and would continue to do so. According to the publicly available figures, this would represent approximately 0.1% of the annual government budget. While seemingly significant, this equals approximately USD 327 per year for each of the approximately 49,000 identified eligible victims of grave human rights violations. Seen in this regard, the budget is unrealistic for delivering even basic compensation to these victims within a reasonable timeframe, let alone delivering the more comprehensive reparations promised in the CONARIV draft law. This is especially true assuming the budget also covers administrative expenses and the cost of improving or provisioning services needed to deliver effective reparations (i.e. doctors, medical care, support workers, legal aid, education, etc.) as well as some community reparations.
In Côte d’Ivoire, claiming one’s right to reparation requires time, knowledge and funds, and risks exposing oneself to stigma. Survivors must navigate a complex bureaucracy and spend money and time applying for documentation and travelling to Abidjan. Survivors interviewed for this study spoke of feeling demoralised and helpless when it came to accessing justice and reparations. “And me, how would I know what to do or where to go?” one survivor asked.

“And to speak with who, even? What would I say when I got there; ‘I’ve been raped, who should I speak with?’ Something like that will expose me for nothing in return, no one is going to just appear to take care of me.”

8.1. Judicial reparations

8.1.1. Structural obstacles to accessing justice

The judicial system was near collapse in most regions during the conflict and effectively non-existent in rebel-controlled areas. Between 2000 and 2007, only 43 cases of sexual violence were recorded in the legal system. This is at a time when government surveys recorded staggering rates of sexual violence, particularly in conflict-affected regions (see section 3.2.5 Patterns and estimated number of CRSV survivors).

In the north, no rebel group took meaningful steps to sanction sexual violence. With the Forces nouvelles acting as once as occupiers, security forces and de facto governing authorities, there was nowhere to report sexual violence committed by the rebels or their associates. In this climate of impunity, survivors were at times forced to live in proximity to perpetrators, where threats and intimidation made it impossible to seek justice and, in some cases, medical assistance.

Even in state-controlled areas, police and gendarmes were reportedly unwilling to take minimal measures to address sexual violence. Survivor statements include instances of police intimidating survivors into not filing complaints, protecting or releasing perpetrators, or themselves perpetrating sexual violence. Others recalled going to police for help, only to be abused by the security forces, while others were handed over to youth mobs, who then perpetrated acts of sexual violence. Survivors and legal professionals attempting to pursue criminal cases against FDS forces or pro-government militant groups (e.g. FESCI) faced intimidation and harassment by security forces.

Even where police were willing to assist CRSV survivors, many refused to open a case without a medical certificate from a doctor that confirmed...
Sexual violence survivors were further blocked from accessing justice by a proclivity, past and present, towards out-of-court settlements. Out-of-court settlements are generally brokered by a traditional chief or religious leader and entail the families of the victim and perpetrator agreeing on a compensation payment (often the cost of the victim’s medical care). Survivors and their families may face considerable pressure to avoid formal justice channels as relatives, neighbours and local leaders seek to “preserve social cohesion and community reputation” by resorting to amicable settlements. Police officers are at times complicit, themselves pressuring victims to withdraw a claim and seek an ‘amicable’ solution, or by referring sexual violence directly to traditional leaders rather than filing a case. Out-of-court settlements must still be viewed within the wider context of breakdown, discrimination and inaccessibility that survivors faced—and still face—in the formal Ivorian justice system. For many survivors of sexual violence, community-based settlements were—and still are—the sole means of seeking some form of redress and funds to pay for medical care.

8.1.2. Judicial independence

Criminal accountability in Côte d’Ivoire is undermined by the perception that prosecutions are one-sided and lack independence from the executive government. The Public Prosecutor has prioritised investigating and trying members of the Gbagbo camp. In 2015, the Ivorian Special Investigation Unit opened cases against eight ‘ComZones’ (rebel leaders, or commandants de zones) for alleged war crimes, but no action followed, and these men remain in senior government offices or military ranks, with some receiving major promotions in the years since. Given the inaction that followed, these investigations could be interpreted as a manoeuvre to forestall a possible ICC investigation rather than a genuine step towards justice.

A perception of judicial bias is further reinforced by the executive’s strong oversight powers in the judiciary. The President of the Republic has supervisory powers over the justice sector, including a lead role in the appointment and promotion of judges, as well as disciplinary actions against judges or prosecutors. The Public Prosecutor, under whose authority the CSEI falls, is appointed by presidential decree on the recommendation of the Minister of Justice. Judicial officials interviewed by the ICTJ confided that they follow the instructions given by the overseeing ministry, explaining that career advancement depends on obeying orders from the executive.
As one defence attorney explained, the investigating judges are “mere caretakers of cases, since the decisions are made by the executive”.461

8.1.3. Amnesties

The Ivorian Constitution includes provisions allowing for amnesties and presidential pardons, even in the case of grave crimes against civilians. Those provisions were used in connection with peace agreements ending the 2002–2003 conflict, during negotiations to end the national partition in 2007, and again in the context of the 2010–2011 conflict.462 Although the 2003 amnesty, on paper, excludes grave human rights violations, the Gbagbo regime brought no one to justice for the grave crimes committed during the civil war or its aftermath.463 The 2007 Ouagadougou Agreement then extended the 2003 amnesty. Like the 2003 law before it, the terms of the Ouagadougou peace accord explicitly excluded war crimes and crimes against humanity from amnesty but has nonetheless effectively blocked all prosecutions.464

On 8 August 2018, a presidential ordinance granted amnesty “to those individuals prosecuted or convicted for offences related to the post-electoral crisis of 2010–2011”.465 President Ouattara publicly stated that perpetrators of international crimes were not included and that the amnesty was instead intended to pardon those charged with treason or other offences against the state.466 Yet, the ordinance does not explicitly exclude perpetrators of serious crimes.467 A list containing approximately 800 names covered by the amnesty accompanied the ordinance, but was never made public, causing confusion regarding whether certain alleged perpetrators were officially pardoned or simply left to go free.468 Confusion also persists regarding the extent to which the amnesty applies beyond this list, or to persons investigated for multiple crimes, including both crimes against the state and crimes du sang (as was the case against Simone Gbagbo).469 Ongoing investigations and judicial proceedings were halted, despite the accused’s alleged role in serious human rights violations.470

The Ivorian Human Rights Movement (Mouvement ivoirien des droits humains, MIDH), the Ivorian Human Rights League (Ligue ivoirienne des droits de l’homme, LIDHO) and the Ivorian chapter of the International Human Rights Federation (Fédération internationale des droits de l’homme, FIDH) have worked directly with CRSV survivors to bring forward criminal and civil lawsuits on their behalf. In 2006, the MIDH brought 25 cases of sexual violence to the Public Prosecutor for investigation, none of which went to trial.471 In 2015, the FIDH, with the MIDH and LIDHO, filed a civil lawsuit with the CSEI on behalf of 43 survivors of sexual violence committed during the post-election violence, but again no trials followed.472 These efforts continued until the amnesty ordinance was issued in 2018. Although, in principle, the amnesty should not apply to grave crimes such as CRSV, the cases have, nonetheless remained inactive. The FIDH and MIDH decided it was impossible to continue pressuring directly for CRSV trials and, instead, adopted a new strategy of challenging the legality of the amnesty’s application to grave crimes.473 Soon after the amnesty was passed by

460 Ibid., p. 22.
461 Ibid.
464 UNSC 2007 ‘Ouagadougou Agreement’, art. 6(3).
466 OSWA and COVICI 2020 ‘La reconnaissance et la redevabilité relatives aux cas de VBG’, p. 35.
467 CEDAW 2019 ‘Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report’, para 9(b).
470 On releases, see CEDAW 2019 ‘Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report’. On halted cases, see Duhem 2018 ‘L’amnistie contestée par plusieurs ONG’.
471 HRW 2007 ‘My heart is cut’, p. 110.
473 OSWA and COVICI 2020 ‘La reconnaissance et la redevabilité relatives aux cas de VBG’, p. 34.
the presidential ordinance in August 2018, the MIDH and LIDHO presented a complaint against it based on its formal unconstitutionality (namely, that the amnesty was originally an ordinance and not a law) and for its substantive unconstitutionality (that it did not comply with the obligation, recognised by Côte d’Ivoire, to investigate crimes that constitute serious violations of international human rights law). When the National Assembly later adopted the ordinance as law, the formal complaint was dismissed as moot, but the substantive complaint remained. As of this writing, the NGO coalition is still waiting for a response from the Supreme Court. In parallel to these actions, the coalition plans to take their case representing 43 survivors of CRSV to the Court of Justice of the regional Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), citing the failure of the Ivorian justice system.

Ultimately the unclear scope of the amnesty appears to serve a political purpose by protecting perpetrators while also leaving enough vagueness for selective prosecutions. Again, all three amnesties officially exclude grave human rights violations. Strictly speaking, prosecutions of serious crimes including CRSV are not blocked by the amnesty laws.

8.2. Non-judicial reparations

Interviewees did not know where to start when it came to accessing remedies, and the barriers they face along the way feel insurmountable on top of the daily challenges of keeping themselves and their children going. Reaching out to authorities for help was hopeless, they said. Were they to take on the effort and expense of identifying and visiting the correct authorities, they would be met with indifference or even hostility. As one said:

“How would an individual woman just walk into [a ministry] office? No one would even open the door for me, or I’d just wait at the secretary’s office until they throw me out.”

8.2.1. Lack of communication, accessibility, and protection

The CONARIV’s final report listed CRSV survivors as priority recipients of reparations, yet the majority of survivors interviewed for this Study (90%) had no knowledge of an existing reparations programme in Côte d’Ivoire or of any interim assistance options. Survivors also voiced the complaint that those with close ties to the current regime seemed to receive preferential treatment. The reparations process became especially complex when divided between the Ministry of Reconciliation and the Ministry of Solidarity. When interviewed, even officials from the ministries themselves were unable to clarify who held which responsibilities for which matters, and how coordination worked between the two entities.

The UN basic principles on the right to remedy include communication as a core component of reparations. CONARIV had a communication component; however, its impact was limited by its short tenure. Participants in this Study felt the national conversation on reparations was focused on less stigmatising harms such as property damage or theft. Indeed, in the west, CONARIV was known to interviewees as “la commission des biens perdus” (the “lost property” commission). Participants in the Duékoué focus group only knew CONARIV by this name and were unaware that it had a function beyond registering looted and destroyed property.

---

474 Author interview with a lawyer representing CRSV survivors, August 2022.
475 Man focus group discussion (Man, 29 November 2021), participant MANSV02.
476 For example, victims’ organisations complain areas dominated by Gbagbo supporters have received less reparation, such as the south-western region surrounding San Pedro, where victims’ groups say no one has benefited (COVICI et al. 2019 ‘Rapport de monitoring’, p. 29); Man focus group discussion (Man, 29 November 2021), participant MANSV02.
477 Author interview with the Director of the Ministry of Reconciliation, December 2021; author correspondence with the Regional Director of the Ministry of Solidarity.
478 OHCHR, ‘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’ (UNGA ‘Resolution 60/147’ (16 December 2005), para 24.
479 Bouaké focus group discussion (Bouaké, 25 November 2021), Bouaké victims’ leader.
480 Man focus group, specifically see statement of participant MANSV054. This is also relevant to a wider Duékoué focus group discussion on the term ‘commission des biens perdus’.
481 Abidjan focus group discussion (Abidjan, 3 December 2021), COVICI representative.
A 2018 assessment conducted by COVICI found that victims’ preferred means of communication were local radios, local governance structures such as sub-prefectures and community centres, and community leaders such as traditional chiefs.\footnote{482} The absence of effective outreach in Côte d’Ivoire has left victims with little knowledge of their rights or the status of their claims, and thus vulnerable to misinformation or fraud.\footnote{483} CRSV survivors are particularly at risk of exclusion and misinformation. As one survivor explained:

“[the government] does not know us because we are always hidden, we are ashamed to come out and say ‘this is what I’ve lived’”.\footnote{484}

Effective communication with CRSV survivors requires a longstanding, dedicated effort, done in coordination with local structures and tailored to the specific vulnerabilities survivors face. As seen, most survivors interviewed were unaware of CONARIV, the national reparations commission. A related problem persisted even for those who did understand that CONARIV, in principle, also applied to CRSV survivors. As an interviewee from Abidjan explained, she had arrived with the intention of registering as a CRSV survivor but found she was not given the opportunity to speak about the experience of sexual violence:

“When they came here, they had these questions. They asked me ‘so, what happened to you?’ Well, honestly, I couldn’t just explain it like that. I said, ‘Well they arrived at the house – and then they pillaged’ … You see, the questions [about sexual violence] just weren’t there, they didn’t ask about my case. They wanted my name, they photocopied my papers … They asked many questions like, ‘so what did they do?’, ‘The things they stole, what were they worth?’ I answered as best I could. They gave me a paper and said I shouldn’t lose it, that they would come back. Well, they never came back.”\footnote{485}

As this account suggests, the CONARIV statement-taker did not block her from speaking about sexual violence; however, it appears the Commission did not develop a statement-taking methodology that would allow CRSV survivors to speak freely about a traumatic past.\footnote{486}

Amongst the minority who did attempt to register with CONARIV, these words shed light on how CRSV survivors experienced the registration procedures:

“When [CONARIV] assembled people here at the prefecture, I went. When I arrived, I didn’t know to whom I should tell my problems. There were just too many people there … There are women [who have experienced CRSV] who could not even go near the place. You are meant to arrive before all these people and just say ‘I’ve been raped? It’s not that easy! We are forced to step aside. People were making a line outside, but I could not put myself in that line, there’s too much shame. These are people you don’t know, people you’ve never seen in your life, and we are supposed to just walk up to them one day and say ‘here’s what they did to me!’ No, that’s just not possible.”\footnote{487}

The CONARIV report indicates special efforts were made to protect the confidentiality of CRSV survivors by conducting private interviews; however, the statement above suggests that such privacy was not always available or not accessible. The CONARIV report makes no mention of other protections or security measures facilitating CRSV survivors’ participation. Survivor reflections on their experiences with CONARIV confirm the lack of such measures. Statement-taking centres were in public locations such as town halls.\footnote{488} In such a setting, it would have been difficult for a CRSV survivor to enter without being seen by community members, and possibly by former perpetrators. One interviewee spoke of risking

\begin{flushleft}482\ COVICI, ‘Regagner la confiance des victimes: l’information, premier pas vers une réparation effective: Rapport de monitoring’ (July 2018), p. 15; Abidjan focus group discussion (Abidjan, 3 December 2021).
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}483\ Ibid., pp. 16–17. For example, numerous self-proclaimed ‘non-profits’ charge victims significant fees to ‘assist’ with their reparations claims (see Abidjan focus group discussion, 3 December 2021).
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}484\ Dukéoué focus group discussion (Dukéoué, 1 December 2021), participant CGIDK10; also see Man focus group discussion (Man, 29 November 2021), participant MANSV02.
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}485\ Semi-structured interview with CGABJ06 (Abidjan, October 2021).
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}486\ A similar statement was given in the Man focus group discussion (Man, 29 November 2021) by participant MANSV03.
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}487\ Semi-structured interview with MANSV04 (Man, 8 December 2021).
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}488\ CONARIV 2016 ‘Rapport d’activités’, Annexes II: Liste des centres d’audition, pp. 81–82.
\end{flushleft}
exposure before her community by registering, only to feel deep disappointment when no assistance ever followed.\textsuperscript{489} Another decided she could not register at all when she saw the setting:

“I went thinking I’d find a place for women who were raped to speak, but it wasn’t the case. I just left.”\textsuperscript{490}

In addition, mobile CONARIV teams were supported by local teams that included a representative of a women’s associations, but also religious, customary and community leaders.\textsuperscript{491} It would thus have been difficult for survivors to disclose to CONARIV agents without risking being exposed before local leaders. Moreover, mobile teams collected testimony during a short window of time, with the entire country covered between 18 May and 30 June 2015.\textsuperscript{492} As one victims’ leader explained:

“Even we [the local victims’ association] did not realise CONARIV had come to town. I was at a meeting when I heard they were there, and by the time I finished the meeting and ran [to register] they were already gone.”\textsuperscript{493}

In practice, a minority of the survivors interviewed for this Study registered with CONARIV, and all but one still awaits follow-up.\textsuperscript{494}

8.2.2. Lack of clarity on eligibility

Amongst the bureaucratic obstacles to reparation, survivors found that obtaining the official documentation required was especially burdensome. In order to qualify for reparations, CONARIV required that all case files include some form of official proof beyond the victims’ statements.\textsuperscript{495} In the case of sexual violence, survivors were required to provide either a medical certificate, a psychological or medical file, or collaborating testimony from a religious or community leader.\textsuperscript{496} As discussed, few CRSV survivors received medical or psychological care, let alone obtained a costly medical certificate. Even in areas where such services were available during the conflict, the risk of stigma and family rejection meant many survivors avoided seeking assistance (see section 5.1. Access to healthcare during the conflict). These realities make verification through official documentation an unrealistic standard of proof for all victims, and particularly for CRSV survivors.\textsuperscript{497}

During the conflict period, identity documents were lost and destroyed, and government offices or police stations where victims would, in theory, obtain official certifications or file complaints did not function or were themselves a source of threat. Today, replacing or obtaining official documentation is expensive and can involve circling through extensive bureaucratic red tape. One survivor from Bouaké described spending all the money she had to stay in Abidjan, trying to meet the correct official to submit documentation required to claim her medical bond. After two months, her savings ran out and she went home empty-handed.

“We have absolutely no power before [these agents],” she said, “It is a country where we don’t even know the name of the government office [we need].”\textsuperscript{498}

The Commission allowed for verification without documentation where community or religious leaders (‘reliable’ witnesses) could confirm a victim’s statement. In the case of sexual violence, it is unlikely that survivors disclosed such events to community leaders. Indeed, survivors interviewed for this Study said they especially avoided confiding in local leaders given the central role these persons play in community and family life. In its discussion of fraud, CONARIV reports that many false statements were

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{489} Man focus group (Man, 29 November 2021), participant MANSV04.
  \item \textsuperscript{490} Man focus group discussion (Man, 29 November 2021), participant MANSV03.
  \item \textsuperscript{491} CONARIV 2016 ‘Rapport d’activités’, p. 124.
  \item \textsuperscript{492} Ibid, p. 9.
  \item \textsuperscript{493} Author interview with the leader of the San Pedro victims’ association, May 2021.
  \item \textsuperscript{494} Duékoué focus group discussion (Duékoué, 1 December 2021), participant CGDUK10 received a response from the PNCS.
  \item \textsuperscript{496} The CONARIV report lists possible proof of sexual violence as: A medical certificate, a patient file indicating psychological or medical treatment, a statement from a religious or community leader …” (ellipses part of the original text, CONARIV 2016 ‘Rapport d’activités’, p. 21).
  \item \textsuperscript{497} ICTJ 2016 ‘Recommandations pour la réparation des victimes’, p. 7.
  \item \textsuperscript{498} Bouaké focus group discussion (Bouaké, 25 November 2021), participant CGBKE04.
\end{itemize}
identified during its field survey, writing that "very often, the facts alleged by the victim during his or her statement were denied by the witnesses, community leaders and other knowledgeable people". Although this point does not specifically reference sexual violence, it illustrates a methodology in which the testimony of local leaders is prioritised over a victim’s own words. Although deferring to community leaders may have been a well-intended effort to make the verification process more flexible, in the case of CRSV, such a policy tends towards doubting and shaming survivors rather than supporting their claims.

The standard of proof required by the Ivorian reparations programme is closer to that used in a court than to the standards used in other large-scale national reparations programmes. Applying court-like standards to a national-scale reparations programme is hugely burdensome in the expense and administration required for all actors, not just victims. Such a standard of proof is also prone to error and unfair exclusion, especially of more vulnerable groups who have less access to official documents and the state officials issuing them.

A sufficient standard of proof for a non-judicial process may be met by reviewing survivor statements against other testimony by the same victim or by witnesses of the same events, such as those documented by the CDVR, by national and international NGOs, and by UN agencies. In some cases, it may be sufficient to assess the viability of a statement against known events or patterns of violations in a given location and time period. Moreover, in large-scale reparations programmes, it is accepted practice to default towards believing the testimony of survivors. This can mean giving survivors the benefit of the doubt or, alternatively, reversing the burden of proof onto administrative institutions.

Failing to align verification processes with the economic and social realities facing more vulnerable victims has resulted in another logistical obstacle for CRSV survivors; namely, all persons registering with CONARIV were required to list a working phone number so ministry agents could reach them to verify their claims. At a 2019 conference, a representative of the Victims’ Assistance Department (Direction de l’aide aux victimes, DAV) within the Ministry of Solidarity (MSCSIV) admitted that the Ministry’s policy of phone verification was a primary reason why so few CRSV survivors had received reparations. As he explained, ministry agents would phone those registered as GBV survivors to confirm their statements, only to have the person deny it was true. It should be unsurprising that survivors are not able or willing to give details of their abuse to an unknown person over the phone, particularly as many survivors share a phone with a partner or other family members. While acknowledging that a phone-based verification process did not work for sexual violence cases, the official insisted that survivors’ statements nonetheless needed to pass this process.

8.2.3. Lack of information on the status of claims

In principle, CONARIV’s mandate offered a wide window of eligibility. It was open to victims from unrest in the 1990s to the coup d’état of 24 December 1999; then the period from the rebellion of 19 September 2002 up until the post-election crisis of November 2010; and finally, it then extended a year past the crisis to 31 December 2012. No information is available, however, on which distribution of reparation recipients come from which period of conflict, sparking claims from victims’ groups that persons who experienced violations outside the 2010 post-electoral crisis period are, in practice, excluded. Putting the cut-off date in 2012 also has consequences for the country’s large post-conflict prison population, a group that may contain a high number of survivors of sexual violence.
As already discussed, only one third of victims who registered with CONARIV had their names retained on the list of eligible recipients. The ministries implementing reparations, the Ministry of Reconciliation and the Ministry of Solidarity, have no official process for communicating with victims regarding their status. For the minority of survivors who did register, there is no accessible way to seek information on the status of their claims.

Today most victims, even amongst the minority of CRSV survivors who did register with the Commission, do not know whether their files were approved or rejected by CONARIV and, if rejected, on what grounds. According to the MSLP, the Ministry of Solidarity did not receive a list of rejected files from CONARIV, meaning the agency does not have those names and thus cannot communicate with those victims. This has resulted in many victims preparing the documentation required to claim reparations, only to discover they are not eligible. This is especially problematic as preparing these documents is expensive, costing approximately 50,000 CFA (USD 80) per person.

Civil society groups criticise the Ministry of Solidarity for its lack of transparency surrounding the final validated list and for its unwillingness to accommodate unregistered conflict victims. Since 2018, COVICI has advocated before the Ministry of Solidarity for the publication of a list of the victims deemed eligible for reparations. In response to these advocacy efforts, the Ministry maintains that the names of eligible victims must remain confidential for the listed persons’ own protection. An open publication of the list would indeed entail risks, particularly in the case of CRSV survivors. Although the list would not include information on specific violations suffered, family and community members often have insight into conflict-era events and may reach conclusions on their own about what CRSV survivors experienced. That said, publishing a list of eligible names would increase accessibility, remove bureaucratic burdens and save limited time and money for all involved. These reasons were, for example, behind decisions in Peru and Chile to publish lists of names.

There is no review process for those who did not register with CONARIV and those deemed ineligible. Amongst the survivors interviewed, lack of knowledge about the process, lack of access to officials, security risks and fear of stigma were cited as the primary reasons for not registering. These reasons suggest that problems with both the registration and verification processes of CONARIV resulted in many instances of exclusion of victims of grave violations, in particular CRSV as a more hidden and stigmatised violation. This situation merits an appeal process and the possibility of rolling registration, and that such new provisions be designed with the goal of being accessible to more vulnerable groups.

507 FIDH, LIDHO and MIDH 2022 ‘La justice sacrifi ée’, p. 11.
509 Author interview with COVICI representative, May 2021.
510 Abidjan focus group (Abidjan, 3 December 2021), COVICI representative.
513 For example, most names could be published, but those who registered as sexual violence survivors (and other high-risk groups such as victims of child recruitment) could benefit from dedicated and confidential outreach measures. The task would be less unwieldy as it would require privately contacting a few thousand people rather than more than three hundred thousand.
agencies could have an open-door policy allowing victims to meet with a local representative able to verify their status. Another option would be communicating with applicants through the NGO or victims’ association that submitted a file on their behalf. Although this would apply to only 67% of applicants (362,537 files), that is still a significant percentage. The task can again be made less daunting if outreach efforts are limited to victims of serious crimes – CRSV, killings, disappearance, and serious bodily harm – totalling approximately 54,000 persons in CONARIV’s registry.

A small number of CRSV survivors originally excluded from CONARIV have received some assistance on a case-by-case basis from the Ministry of Solidarity. This was possible through support from COVICI, thanks to the organisation’s persistence and knowledge of government procedures and personnel. As such, the cases represent exceptional circumstances and are not an opportunity open to all survivors. On one hand, these cases show goodwill on the part of the Ministry of Solidarity. On the other, this is an example of reparations being granted at the discretion of government officials, delinked from a concrete policy that recognises reparations as a right.

8.3. Overarching concerns

8.3.1. Isolation and poverty

Isolation from family and community combine with a lack of economic means to create an interlinked set of barriers to accessing reparations. Isolation is a cause of and a compounding factor in poverty, which in turn makes it difficult for survivors to pay for travel to government offices or take time away from work and childcare. There is also a social and psychological component to these challenges. Managing day-to-day is already a challenge for many persons living with the consequences of grave physical and mental trauma. It is thus unrealistic to expect that such persons take the initiative, in the face of so many barriers and stigma, to organise and petition unresponsive state institutions for their rights.

8.3.2 Security risks

Survivors in all four localities included in this Study expressed very low trust in the police and armed forces. Interviewees considered them biased, apt to stigmatise or expose survivors, and more likely to protect perpetrators – some of whom are their friends or associates – than help survivors. Interviewees from the country’s interior, in particular, felt advocacy efforts entailed a high risk of repression. As a survivor previously involved in victims’ advocacy efforts explained: “If we agreed on an [advocacy] plan ... the minute you assemble, they will see there is something happening and, immediately, the national forces will be warned. They’ll ask why you’re here and if they don’t like it, they call the mayor, saying ‘there’s women here, looking to make demands on you’. The mayor won’t like it, he’ll say stop them, and immediately you are surrounded. If you resist, they will use force, they will use tear gas and the guns they carry are real. If we do activism here, we’ll end up victims again and again. Do you understand? Activism is very dangerous.”

Even those who did not feel security forces posed a threat of violence, did not trust the police to protect them or act discreetly should they go to them for help.

8.3.3. Lack of transparency

These obstacles reinforce an overall sense that national reparations are delivered as a benefit that depends on the willingness of officials to assist a given individual or group rather than as a right that victims are entitled to and can claim.

Study participants felt partiality on the part of state officials meant some conflict victims received assistance while CRSV survivors did not. Interviewees explained that persons with ties to the ruling party seemed more likely to receive compensation, even when they suffered less debilitating harms. These claims of impartiality cannot be substantiated without analysing the profiles of reparations recipients to

514 Author interview with COVICI representative, May 2021.
515 Man focus group discussion (Man, 29 November 2021), participant MANSV04.
516 Bouaké focus group discussion (Bouaké, 25 November 2021), participant CGBKE01.
517 Man focus group discussion (Man, 29 November 2021), participant MANSV3.
date, and that information is not publicly available. It is nonetheless clear that a lack of transparency regarding how reparations are distributed, and the criteria used for prioritisation, is a major source of frustration and resentment amongst victims.

8.3.4. Reconciliation prioritised over remedy

In the view of survivors, the Ivorian government has moved on from the conflict era and is deaf to calls for justice from the conflict victim community, if not openly hostile. While those interviewed strongly supported community reconciliation efforts, survivors felt that the language of ‘national reconciliation’ had been co-opted by some politicians as a way to block conflict victims’ advocacy efforts. “After the ‘national reconciliation’”, explained a Study participant, “We can’t just go to [the state] and say ‘you have harmed me and must compensate me.’ They will respond, ‘so you’re against Côte d’Ivoire?’ It’s part of the risk that we face, it’s something that is blocking our rights. It blocks us because the big men, the leaders of the country, they say ‘there has been reconciliation already, so now it’s time for you to pardon’. What can we say after that? Are we going to say back to them, ‘it’s my right!’ They will say, ‘so you are against reconciliation?’ It’s a barrier for us, this ‘national reconciliation’.”

As her words make clear, when victims’ groups make demands on the state to meet their rights to justice and repair, state representatives tend to respond with statements that imply – or directly accuse – the victim community of inhibiting national reconciliation and thus undermining peace.

518 Man focus group discussion (Man, 29 November 2021), participant MANSW02.
VII. IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF REPARATIONS
Village in Côte d’Ivoire.
Making reparations available and accessible is not only about assessing needs, but also about assessing what is possible. Turning survivors’ expectations and needs into policy requires finding feasible ways to recognise the right to reparations, on a large scale, within a reasonable timeframe and budget, and without placing insurmountable administrative burdens on survivors, CSOs or on the state itself.

9.1. Role of state actors

In a December 2021 statement, Belmonde Dogo, the Minister of Solidarity, reaffirmed that the government of Côte d’Ivoire considers reparation a right of conflict victims and that President Ouattara continues to hold reparations as a priority of his administration. Contradicting this statement, discussions between civil society leaders and representatives of the Ministries for Reconciliation and Solidarity have unofficially revealed that the government has abandoned individual reparations and instead will henceforth focus only on community reparations.

Study participants were clear that past experiences with government-led initiatives have led to a loss of trust in the state and a preference for future engagements through civil society and international actors. The state nonetheless remains responsible for providing services to citizens, and reparations to conflict victims. International agencies and national civil society have a role in this work, but for CRSV survivors to access reparations as well as much needed public services over the long term, it is necessary to find ways for the government to work with, and for, survivors. For policymakers in Côte d’Ivoire, that way forward starts by defining a reparations policy that recognises reparation as a right, not a benefit.

9.1.1. Budgeting

To be effective, a reparations policy must include the provision of funding for all necessary resources and personnel, as well as a clearly defined system and timeline for delivering and monitoring reparations. All tasks, programmes, and initiatives to be implemented must be budgeted and scheduled at the time of planning, as duties assigned to already busy state agents or underfunded local structures risk not happening. The timeline needed to implement a national-scale reparations programme extends beyond a single budgetary cycle. A successful reparations programme thus requires a long-term financial commitment from the state, which in turn should be backed by legislation to ensure funding is not dependent on the political will or priorities of a given administration.

Securing the funds needed for effective reparations in Côte d’Ivoire means increasing the current budget, but also improving the efficiency with which existing funds are used. According to the publicly available numbers, the reparations programme to date has received USD 50 million in state funds and delivered minimal reparations to fewer than 10,000 victims (in the form of small lump sum payments, education bursaries or medical bonds). Côte d’Ivoire has approved a list of approximately 54,000 victims of grave human rights violations for reparations. The cost and complexity of this task is enormous, but Côte d’Ivoire and its international partners have already demonstrated it is within their financial and technical capacities. The national DDR programme benefited almost 70,000 former combatants and comprised a package of benefits including job trainings, employment placements and seed funds, as well as other financial assistance and community reinsertion programmes.
9.1.2. Survivor participation and consultation

Difficult prioritisation and decision-making are needed to define a feasible and effective reparations policy. Those hard decisions are unlikely to be acceptable to victims if they are denied a seat at the discussion table. Conversely, meaningful opportunities to participate in crafting solutions give victims’ groups the chance to understand constraints and become partners in finding a way forward. Reparations that are imposed will likely never feel sufficient, whereas when authorities demonstrate a sincere effort to consult with survivors’ and meet their needs, that process itself can be reparative. For most survivors, such a process would be a first positive interaction with state officials. This alone may mark an important step towards reintegration into civic life and the restitution of survivors’ social standing.\(^{523}\)

Consultations that do not bring reparative value risk taking victims’ time and raising expectations without the guarantee that something meaningful will follow. As was done in this Study, survivor participation can be linked to counselling services, trainings, or other opportunities to help survivors immediately access benefits or gain new skills. That said, even victims’ participation must be balanced with other priorities if a reparations programme is to remain feasible. Victims are not a homogenous group and creating meaningful and secure opportunities for broad victim participation takes time and resources. The extent and thoroughness of victim consultations must be balanced against the imperatives of having resources left to implement, and of getting to implementation with minimal delay.

9.1.3. Strengthen coordination and engage local actors

As seen in earlier sections of this report, coordination challenges undermine the efficacy of public services in Côte d’Ivoire and have contributed to stalling the reparations programme. Whereas basic care from public services is a right and not itself a reparation, effective reparations for CRSV survivors in the Ivorian context must include measures ensuring the accessibility and effectiveness of public services.

This requires engaging service providers on their roles and responsibilities in supporting CRSV survivors, as well as ensuring the division of duties are understood within all relevant state agencies and at all levels of government. An effective reparations policy should thus clarify who is responsible for which aspects of addressing victims’ needs and rights within each relevant state ministry and programme and include a coordination process engaging all necessary actors (including state agencies, but also victims’ associations, local NGOs, specialised medical staff, legal assistance, etc.).

In particular, this work requires that coordination efforts reach the local and regional levels. Study participants were opposed to future government engagements, describing their past experiences with state initiatives as sources of isolation and frustration. One possible way forward is to start at the local level, where there is some trust and a willingness to engage with state actors. Social centres (often embedded within community centres and known as ‘les centres socio-éducatifs’ in Côte d’Ivoire) were an exception to the generally low levels of trust survivors felt for government services. Interviewees spoke of receiving reliable and caring support from social workers at local community centres. One interviewee recalled receiving help navigating governmental red tape for food assistance, while another explained how social workers intervened to stop harassment by local youths.\(^{524}\)

Lack of knowledge about the services available at social centres as well as limited resources within the centres were cited as obstacles to assistance. Nevertheless, survivors expressed trust in and appreciation of community social workers and a desire to continue receiving assistance through these services.

---


\(^{524}\) One survivor in Dúékoué recalled having a problem with a youth who repeatedly insulted her in public, citing the sexual violence she had experienced during the conflict. The police refused to intervene, whereas social workers from the community centre worked with local leaders and the family of the youth to find a resolution and secure an apology (Dúékoué focus group discussion, 1 December 2021).
9.2. Role of international organisations

9.2.1. Survivor support

Study participants shared consensus on a request for assistance from international agencies and NGOs that could advocate on their behalf before state institutions. As seen, participants described feeling invisible before the state, and shared the certainty that no one would believe them if they approached government offices alone. They felt that support from international intermediaries would give legitimacy to their cause, and would be difficult for the state to brush aside or ignore.

"Maybe if international organisations, those that truly wish to support victims of sexual violence, come to help us. If they bring lawyers from outside this country, perhaps then it might be possible to push forward the cause of Côte d’Ivoire’s victims."

As low-income persons largely deprived of education, interviewees lacked the knowhow to navigate complex state structures. They requested assistance from those with expertise and influence in this work.

9.2.2. Multi-level mandate

These survivor perspectives translate into a multi-pronged mandate for international intermediaries intervening on the issue of justice, support, and reparations for CRSV survivors. Firstly, as requested by the survivors interviewed, international organisations have a role as advocates and in providing interim support on specific needs. Beyond merely helping to remove specific obstacles to reparations, international bodies also have a role in addressing the overall ineffectiveness and insensitivity of public services towards conflict victims, and CRSV survivors in particular. The civil service requires an overall revision of the way ministries communicate with victims, respond to their requests, and recognise the right to remedy. Without addressing this underlying reality of inaccessible and disinterested state officials, removing specific barriers to reparations can only have short-term impacts. Finally, taking yet another step back, meeting survivors’ request for international intermediaries requires that foreign actors combine short-term support for conflict victims with long-term efforts to strengthen democratic institutions and state policies. This is because an effective international intervention is done with constant awareness that there will be an exit, and that national institutions must not only be equipped but also committed to taking that work forward. In the Ivorian case, this means securing buy-in from state actors who, at best, have shown inconsistency in their commitment to recognising and addressing the right to reparation.

It would be no small feat to secure genuine government commitment, especially on a topic where so many other international actors have achieved limited success. Nevertheless, without government actors prepared to follow through on implementation and consolidation, the impact of international interventions will be short lived. As a possible way forward, international intermediaries might approach this challenge with the aim of building bridges between state services and survivors, such that government actors respond effectively to both requirements and become incentivised to respond to victims’ rights. On one side, this might entail helping tilt the power balance in favour of survivors by equipping their organisations to be strong partners vis-a-vis state institutions. On the other side, international actors have a role partnering with the state in efforts to strengthen its democratic institutions. This work could take many forms: partnering with good governance monitoring bodies such as the CNDH- CI; supporting the National Assembly in passing

525 Bouaké focus group discussion (Bouaké, 25 November 2021); Man focus group discussion (Man, 29 November 2021); Abidjan focus group discussion (Abidjan, 3 December 2021).
526 Man focus group discussion (Man, 29 November2021); Duékoué focus group discussion (Duékoué, 1 December 2021); Bouaké focus group discussion (Bouaké, 25 November 2021).
527 Man focus group discussion (Man, 29 November 2021), participant MANSVO3.
528 Abidjan focus group discussion (Abidjan, 3 December 2021), participant CGABJ11.
529 Man focus group discussion (Man, 29 November 2021), participant MANSVO2.
legislation protecting victims’ rights and a reparations law in particular; and promoting the independence and accessibility of the courts, to name just a few examples. Whatever the means, the goal would be to ensure institutions and policies are in place such that Ivorians in general and conflict victims in particular have access to reliable avenues for exercising their rights over the long term.

9.3. Role of civil society: Advocacy strategies going forward

Given the low levels of trust felt towards the state, a reparations programme in Côte d’Ivoire will remain inaccessible to survivors if they have no option but to work directly through state institutions to access reparations or support services. As one interviewee expressed:

“The state has no interest in us. The people working there, they make their programmes, but in reality, they have done nothing for us. Nothing at all for us. If you are asking what we see as the way towards a tomorrow where we could prosper, it will be through the NGOs.”

Survivor-led networks or local associations with a longstanding, trusted relationship to survivors are well placed to help identify CRSV survivors and support their engagement with reparations programmes and wider support services. As organisations embedded in their respective communities, these actors provide survivors with crucial information about services and programmes, as well as help link them to actors and agencies at the national and international level. Local NGOs and community organisations are also able to provide discreet and long-term support. In particular, survivors benefit from the ongoing presence of local organisations, as compared to the often-short timeline of projects led by international organisations. That said, local organisations cannot dedicate the time and resources needed to provide reliable, safe and long-term assistance to CRSV survivors without funding and training. This too must be budgeted and planned in a national reparations policy if reparations are to be accessible to survivors.

Study participants who had participated in advocacy efforts in the past found it required much effort yet brought little hope of success. Some survivors even faced security risks when joining advocacy initiatives. The survivors and victims’ group leaders interviewed primarily spoke of advocacy through demonstrations. Notwithstanding that it is wrong to repress peaceful protest and this itself might be an important topic for future civil society advocacy initiatives, there may be other options that entail less risk and are more likely to succeed in the specific aim of advancing reparations for CRSV survivors. Recall that COVICI effectively petitioned the Ministry of Solidarity to deliver reparations on an exceptional basis to formerly excluded CRSV survivors. Though limited, the state response still demonstrated that there is some space in which to move forward on survivors’ rights.

Identifying this space and maximising its potential requires strategic thinking, particularly if we hope to move away from a case-by-case approach towards meaningful policy change and an overall reform of the national reparations programme. Such work starts by studying the constraints survivors and their CSO partners must work within and by thinking strategically about what avenues might still be open. Open letters, press conferences and brokering meetings with key government authorities are all strategies for bringing issues into the public light. Forging relationships with journalists and other media figures can further help reignite reparations as a national issue, particularly when those journalists represent all sides of the conflict. Furthermore, there may still be space for advocacy through judicial avenues in Côte d’Ivoire. As seen, there are CRSV-related cases under investigation at the CSEI. Though stalled since the 2018 amnesty, these cases,

530 Man focus group discussion (Man, 29 November 2021), participant MANSV02.
531 Ibid.
532 Bouaké focus group discussion (Bouaké, 25 November 2021).
in principle, do not fall under the amnesty. CSOs can go before a trial judge and ascertain if a given case is open or closed, and if it is closed, whether it is under amnesty or just stalled, and if it is under amnesty, whether it has been appealed, and so on. Even if it means a dogged process of going case-by-case, there is still room to exhaust domestic remedies, and these avenues should be tested.

Building alliances within the government can also be an effective strategy as long as it does not require becoming subservient to the authorities or exchanging goodwill and withholding critique in return for minimal benefits. Approaching authorities as potential allies allows the possibility of identifying shared interests and joining forces in removing common obstacles. For example, CSOs might find common cause at the sub-prefecture level with local state officials also frustrated by the lack of resources needed to provide effective public services. Where CSOs and local actors jointly make claims to higher levels of authority, both parties gain legitimacy and weight in their demands. Strategic allies might also be found in the upper ranks of institutions such as the National Human Rights Council (CNDH-CI) or a partner ministry, where officials may wish to support reparations but are themselves blocked by some of the same challenges facing CSOs.
X. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Recommendations for state actors

Approach reparations as a right and not a benefit

Design new and revise existing programmes, legislation, and policies to reflect the recognition of reparations as the right of all victims of grave conflict-era violations and not a merely a benefit delivered at the discretion of state officials. Reparations policies further require special measures aimed at ensuring the full inclusion of CRSV survivors.

Including survivors, draft and pass a reparations law

Hold consultations on a draft reparations law design and implementation procedures with victims’ organisations and civil society partners, including special measures to ensure the inclusion of more vulnerable victims’ groups, noting that meaningful inclusion may require financial assistance, training, and other support. The CONARIV draft reparations law could serve as the basis for these consultations.

Pass the draft reparations law, guaranteeing that reparations will be delivered in an equitable manner and meet a minimum standard. At a minimum, such a law should codify (i) eligibility criteria; (ii) an implementation plan; (iii) a budget and guarantees of state funding; (iv) a rubric for reparations accorded to victims of given prejudices; (v) the procedures laying out registration processes; how files will be reviewed and decisions communicated, and an appeals procedure; (vi) measures required to ensure an equitable process; (vii) special provisions to ensure the inclusion and protection of more vulnerable persons, particularly CRSV survivors and child victims; (viii) a timeline for the distribution of national reparations; and (ix) a definition of the registration and implementation body, including its governing structure and location inside the state administration, and a supervisory board with victim and civil society representatives amongst the members.

Establish special measures for children and for persons who were children at the time of violation

Design programmes and services to reflect the centrality of children in patterns of CRSV in Côte d’Ivoire, ensuring services respond to the distinct and devastating impacts of childhood CRSV that are often carried into adulthood (i.e. loss of educational opportunities, impacts to physical and cognitive development, breakdown of family and community ties, abandonment, etc.).

Design programmes and support services to be inclusive of the full diversity of CRSV survivors

Correct an ongoing tendency of donor, government, and civil society initiatives to approach CRSV as a problem affecting only women and girls, leaving important gaps in support available to male survivors as well as those from the LGBTQ+ community.

Establish additional reparation enrolment opportunities

Open additional enrolment periods for excluded cases, as well as the possibility of ongoing enrolment and appeals. To the extent possible, ongoing enrolment should be permanently available to CRSV survivors (and others likely to be excluded or blocked from past enrolment opportunities). If registration deadlines cannot be avoided, the window of opportunity for registration should be as wide as possible and accompanied by outreach efforts ensuring CRSV survivors are fully informed and have access to assistance for overcoming any barriers to registration.

Clarify and simplify the standards and burden of proof

To the fullest extent possible, remove administrative burdens from survivors in all programmes and procedures necessary to access reparations and
interim assistance. All actors should streamline and simplify their procedures and processes such that the minimum possible burden falls on beneficiaries. This means ensuring the accessibility of applications, renewals, documents, state offices, interactions with officials and communications, to name a few examples.

Clarify and simplify procedures related to registration and renewal of applications for reparations as well as any documentation required to do so.

Where identity documents are required, obtaining these documents must be free, accessible and require minimal administrative effort, and assistance must be available when needed.

Revise the Ivorian reparations programme’s standard of proof of violation to be in line with those used in similar large-scale national reparations programmes. In particular, lack of official documentation should never be a reason to reject a conflict victim’s reparations claim. The requirement of official documentation should be minimised and, where unavoidable, those documents (i.e. court decisions, death certificates, medical certificates, etc.) should be available free of charge and representatives must be available at the local level to facilitate processing.

**Match planned reparations programmes and related activities with realistic budgets and timelines**

All tasks, programmes and initiatives related to implementing reparations must be budgeted and a timeline set at the time of planning. Budgets must include financial commitments to all actors involved in the delivery of reparations including local administrators and public services as well as victims’ associations, local NGOs, specialised medical staff, legal assistance, etc.

Establish and publish a timeline of milestones and deadlines for the distribution of the full national reparations programme. Regularly publish updates on progress towards these milestones and the reasons for any delays.

**Establish a network for local focal points**

Establish a network of accessible offices able to receive victims throughout the country. Offices should ensure that designated, well-informed and regularly up-dated focal points are available to survivors to answer questions, assist with applications and renewals, confirm eligibility status and refer survivors to service providers (such as clinics, community centres, judicial assistance, etc.). In areas where the responsible ministry does not have representation, representatives from partner ministries, agencies or CSOs could serve as focal points.

**Make communication transparent, accessible, and inclusive of those hardest to reach**

Ensure that information on processes and programmes is available in clear, easy to understand language, and communicated in ways that are accessible to those most vulnerable to exclusion, namely through regular updates on local radios and to local administrators, community centres, victims’ organisations and community representatives (i.e. traditional and religious leadership, women’s and youth organisations, etc.). Written media is not accessible to many conflict victims, highlighting the importance of a network of designated local focal points (as recommended above).

Information on processes and programmes should also be available and regularly up-dated on government websites and in local/regional offices (i.e. townhalls, community centres, sub-prefectures, regional department offices, etc.), and sent to victims’ associations and NGO partners.

**Communicate eligibility status to registered victims**

Without jeopardising survivors’ confidentiality, communicate with all CONARIV- and PNCS-registered victims regarding the status of their application for reparations, giving priority to eligible victims of the most serious harms.

**Strengthen coordination within and between ministries and states services**

Clarify who is responsible for what aspects of addressing victims’ needs and rights within ministries and programmes and focus the responsibility for delivering reparations within one single ministry.
Ensure the division of duties necessary to fulfil victims’ right to reparation are understood internally within all relevant state agencies and at all levels involved in the provision of reparations, recalling the importance of budgeting for the time and resources required from all partners.

Map, engage and equip partners in the implementation of reparation programmes

Map referral pathways available at the community and regional levels, including medical centres, social welfare services, judicial clinics, schools and child welfare services, police and gendarmes, etc. NGOs that fill gaps in or compliment state services should also be included.

Equip service providers involved in the provision of reparations with the skills and resources to effectively meet the specific needs of CRSV survivors (i.e. with specialised medication, equipment or staff; by paying salaries for additional staff hours needed; by paying legal fees; with trained psychosocial support workers specialised in supporting sexual violence survivors, etc.).

Partner with and support local victims’ organisations and networks

Rebuild trust in and improve accessibility to state services by partnering with local victims’ networks and associations, including by provisioning them with financial support and trainings.

Increase access to free legal services and establish a security-sector complaints mechanism

Strengthen the availability of free legal services for sexual violence survivors, particularly in more remote areas, for example by expanding existing ‘cliniques juridiques’.

Establish an independent, accessible, and secure complaints mechanism in the police and security services, ensuring the anonymity and safety of survivors. To be effective, the mechanism must ensure complaints related to the treatment of sexual violence survivors are taken seriously and acted on immediately.

Take meaningful action towards bringing those responsible for grave conflict-era crimes to justice

Reopen cases related to grave human rights violations and international crimes during the conflict period, noting that the 2018 amnesty does not apply to these cases. This requires the provision of special measures ensuring CRSV survivors have safe and accessible opportunities to participate in trials as civil parties.

Take measures to strengthen the independence of national courts and the military tribunal, starting by removing the strong oversight powers held by the executive government.

Increase outreach aimed at making criminal trials more accessible and justice more meaningful to conflict victims, and to CRSV survivors in particular.

2. Recommendations for civil society

Think strategically about advocacy opportunities

Seek out and create strategic opportunities for bringing the issue of reparations into the public eye (i.e. by partnering with journalists, writing open letters, holding press conferences, pushing judicial authorities to provide information on stalled CSEI cases, etc.). As a starting point, identifying and working towards removing specific, smaller obstacles may be more effective than more general demands for reparations or reforms.

Form strategic alliances with government offices and actors on shared objectives

Identify shared interests with state actors and build alliances around pushing these issues forward.

Lead civic education and outreach initiatives

Lead public education campaigns, particularly regarding addressing the stigma surrounding sexual violence. CSOs are also well placed to lead outreach campaigns aimed at filling knowledge gaps related to reparations programmes and other support services.
Help bridge coordination and communication gaps amongst support services

Help address ongoing coordination and outreach challenges amongst support services by mapping and bridging service providers, and by linking survivors to these services.

Help strengthen community-level support to survivors

Partner with and support community structures that provide safe spaces and moral support to survivors. In addition to financial and logistical assistance, such structures may also need specialised training to meet effectively and safely the psychosocial and protection needs of survivors in their memberships.

Bridge communication between local structures and state service providers. Local actors often have important understanding of survivors’ needs and expectations but limited knowledge about available services or programmes. Civil society actors are well placed to bridge that gap.

Empower survivors to become advocates in their own right

When serving as advocates for CRSV survivors, work in ways that empower survivors with opportunities to articulate their own needs, to be decision-makers in matters affecting them and to build skills to become effective advocates in their own right.

Commit to long-term support for survivors, extending beyond regular budgetary cycles. The short timeline of donor cycles can lead to the repetition of similar smaller projects and trainings, or projects that end before the benefits reach survivors.

Increase advocacy for justice and reparations with state counterparts

Increase incentives for the government of Côte d’Ivoire to meet its responsibility and commitments to justice and reparations for conflict victims and CRSV survivors in particular. This could, for example, mean including recommendations on reparations for CRSV survivors as part of the next Universal Periodic Review, as well as seeking more informal opportunities to advocate for fulfilling past promises related to reparations.

Support the democratic institutions necessary for strengthening justice and human rights

Advocate for or directly support efforts to strengthen key institutions such as the CNDH-CI, the courts, the legislature, or any other democratic mechanism. International actors can contribute to these institutions by supporting improvements on independence, effectiveness, accessibility, and geographical coverage, and by helping revise procedures, structures, budgets, and powers.

Support interim reparations

Survivors have urgent needs that cannot wait for the Ivorian state to deliver reparations. The international community has a role in the provision of interim assistance.

Ensure high standards in own operations and support national counterparts in doing the same

Design operations to regularly take stock of impacts on CRSV survivors, particularly regarding safety, security, inclusion, equity, and non-discrimination. This includes building meaningful opportunities for survivors to participate and give feedback on programme design.
XI. CONCLUSIONS

As we currently find the Ivorian national reparations programme, state agencies approach reparations not as a right that survivors of grave violations are entitled to and can claim, but as a benefit that depends on the willingness of government officials to respond to a given survivor’s request for assistance. The problem is not merely that survivors do not know whether they qualify for reparations, but that there is no known plan regarding how and when all persons deemed eligible for reparations will learn their eligibility status, let alone receive such reparations. The situation is made worse by the Ministry of Solidarity’s practice of creating partial recipient lists, without explanation of why some victims are favoured over others. What is more, without a legal framework, reparations depend on the goodwill of the executive government. A legal framework is needed to guarantee that reparations will be delivered in an equitable manner and meet a minimum standard, and that the programme will not be abandoned when government priorities change. Failures to deliver on promised reparations for CRSV survivors also fall into a broader pattern of the Ivorian government, along with its international partners, of responding to CRSV with ambitious plans and promises but without first securing the ability and finances to implement them.

This Study has shown a complex of obstacles spanning government policy and practice and community and family life that together block survivors of CRSV from accessing effective remedies. Study participants have described how insurmountable these obstacles feel, especially to someone struggling day-to-day just to survive and care for family. The feelings of hopelessness and disillusionment expressed by Study participants are well founded, and the severity of the wrongs they and their dependents continue to suffer due to the ongoing denial of their right to remedy, and their basic rights to life, health, and dignity, cannot be understated. Within this bleak assessment, we have nonetheless identified some opportunities to advance the right to reparations for CRSV survivors. This is not a context where delivering effective reparations means building from nothing or convincing a government that has refused all responsibility for remediying past wrongs to change its position. The government of Côte d’Ivoire has made public commitments to delivering reparations to conflict victims, to doing justice for the past and to making survivors of sexual violence a priority in transitional justice measures, specifically, and in post-war reforms, more generally.

Though demonstrably inadequate, a national framework is in place for delivering reparations to survivors and bringing justice to perpetrators of grave conflict-era crimes. There is also a national framework in place providing assistance to survivors of SGBV more generally. Even while policy trends are moving away from the government’s willingness to address the past, there are some state actors showing readiness to work with CRSV survivors towards delivering effective reparations. This Study has given a detailed analysis of the shortcomings of these policies and programmes, and the barriers faced by CRSV survivors in accessing them. Nevertheless, the fact that a framework for transitional justice as well as wider SGBV assistance exists in Côte d’Ivoire creates the opportunity to recommend concrete steps to advance the right to remedy and provide meaningful support to CRSV survivors. As described above, this work starts by codifying the right to reparations in law; by streamlining and simplifying procedures; and by improving coordination and clearly delegating duties between responsible state agencies. There is a further need to identify and mobilise a network of the local, regional, and national service providers needed to implement effective reparations, as well as build accessible outreach and communication programmes. To truly reach CRSV survivors, all these reforms must include special measures to meet the specific needs and constraints facing survivors. Perhaps most importantly, to be effective, reparations in Côte d’Ivoire need a realistic budget that is guaranteed by law.

This Study asked survivors of CRSV what would be required to repair the grave harms they have suffered. They answered that meeting their needs and expectations required an extensive programme...
delivering comprehensive, multifaceted, and long-term reparations. Survivors interviewed urgently need assistance to address an ongoing denial of the basic rights to life, health, education, and dignity. Interviewees were also committed to holding the state and direct perpetrators responsible for conflict-era crimes. Despite citing many barriers, interviewees agreed that it is necessary to continue demanding some form of justice. Even if criminal prosecutions ultimately prove impossible in Côte d’Ivoire, apology and other symbolic forms of recognition are integral to effective reparations. As one participant explained:

“[W]e need to speak about the pain that we carry in our hearts, the pain that is wearing us down. [Without that] we can never be at peace; we could never go towards reconciliation. They must ask for our pardon.”

Survivors understood that the government was bound to deliver reparations by “obligation of their own laws”, but also felt that without political will, this requirement was just hollow words. Consensus that it is the government’s responsibility to repair past harms did not translate into insistence that reparations come from the state. As one survivor expressed: “they asked war victims to come register. Sure, we can register. So, we give our names, but for what purpose? What can they actually do for us? They can do nothing.” The urgency of survivors’ needs and their lack of trust in state mechanisms meant participants sought interim reparations from international agencies and NGOs.

“We’ve tried with the government”, a survivor explained, “but it’s led to nothing. So now we want to try with other organisations.”

Above all else, Study participants sought support that comes within a reasonable timeframe. Participants ultimately felt the more important question was not what reparations entail or who delivers them, but rather how such reparations would come into their hands. “What are reparations to us? Sure, we can answer that question,” explained one participant, “but it is not the main question. The main question is how. How do we actually receive reparations?” As she so clearly understands, what is needed to repair the past is not the same question as what can be done in a timely way to respond meaningfully to extensive harm. This is particularly true where tens of thousands have suffered grave harms, and where the state has shown reluctance to fulfill its promise to remedy these wrongs. Turning survivors’ expectations and needs into policy means devising a feasible programme; a programme that applies on a large scale, within a workable budget and timeframe, that does not place insurmountable administrative burdens on officials or survivors, and that ensures government follows through over the long term.

534 Duékoué focus group discussion (Duékoué, 1 December 2021), participant CGDKE06. 535 Semi-structured interview with CGABJ06 (Abidjan, October 2021). 536 Man focus group discussion (Man, 29 November 2021), participant MANSV02. 537 Bouaké focus group discussion (Bouaké, 25 November 2021), participant CGBKE07.
DOMESTIC DECREES, LAWS, AND ORDINANCES

Decree No. 2006-41 of 15 March 2006, establishing the Department of Equality and Promotion of Gender (Direction de l’égalité et de la promotion du genre, DEPG).

Decree No. 2016-373 of 3 June 2016, establishing the National Committee to Combat Conflict-related Sexual Violence (Comité national de lutte contre les violences sexuelles liées aux conflits, CNLVSC).

Decree No. 15/MJ/CAB of 13 July 2016, establishing that all means of investigation and the duty to investigate all complaints are required in all circumstances during the national reparations commission (Commission nationale pour la réconciliation et l’indemnisation des victimes des crises survenues en Côte d’Ivoire, CONARIV).

Decree No. 016/MJ/MEMIS/MPRD of 4 August 2016, establishing that medical certificates are not required for CONARIV registration.

Decree No. 2016-590 of 9 August 2016, issuing land certificates to women.

Decree No. 2016-781 of 12 October 2016, announcing free legal services for survivor reparations claims.

Law No. 61-415 of 14 December 1961 – Nationality.

Law No. 64-379 of 7 October 1964 – Civil Status.


Ordinance No. 2011-167 of 13 July 2011, establishing the truth and reconciliation commission (Commission dialogue, vérité et réconciliation, CDVR).


GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS


Ministries of State and Foreign Affairs. ‘Déclaration de reconnaissance de la compétence de la Cour pénale internationale’ (Republic of Côte d’Ivoire, 1 April 2003).


INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION DOCUMENTS AND WEBPAGES


CEDAW. ‘Replies of Côte d’Ivoire to the list of issues and questions’ (20 June 2019) CEDAW/C/CIV/Q/4/Add.1.


CÔTE D’IVOIRE

104

OHCHR (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights). ‘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’ (General Assembly resolution 60/147, 16 December 2005).


ONUCI. ‘Violence basée sur le genre en Côte d’Ivoire’ (December 2014) 4(6) La Force de la Paix.

ONUCI. ‘Rapport sur les viols et leur répression en Côte d’Ivoire’ (July 2016).


UN-Women. ‘Rapport final: évaluation des mécanismes nationaux de lutte contre les violences basées sur le genre’ (July 2015).


CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATION DOCUMENTS AND REPORTS


Amaya Panche, Johanna. ‘Word frequency analysis with NVIVO and the victim’s demographic profile’ (Global Survivors Fund, unpublished, 2022).


COVICI (Confédération des organisations des victimes des crises en Côte d’Ivoire). ‘Regagner la confiance des victimes: l’information, premier pas vers une réparation effective: rapport de monitoring’ (July 2018).

COVICI. ‘Déclaration du Président de la COVICI, pris à part à un atelier de renforcement de la stratégie des OSC ivoiriennes pour améliorer la protection et le soutien des victimes de violences sexuelles en Côte d’Ivoire’ (COVICI, 10 October 2019).


CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATION DOCUMENTS AND REPORTS


HRW. ‘‘They killed them like it was nothing’: The need for justice for Côte d’Ivoire’s post-election crimes’ (October 2011) https://www.hrw.org/reports/2011/10/22/they-killed-them-like-it-was-nothing-the-need-for-justice-cote-divoire-s-post, accessed 25 March 2023.


BOOKS AND JOURNAL ARTICLES


Chauveau, Jean-Pierre and Koffi, Samuel Bobo. ‘La situation de guerre dans l’arène villageoise’ (2003/1) 89 Politique africaine 12 http://dx.doi.org/10.3917/polaf.089.0012.

Croke, Kevin and Rees Smith, Emilie. ‘Côte d’Ivoire gender background note’ (LOGiCA Background Note, World Bank, August 2013).


Hossain, Mazeda, Zimmerman, Cathy, Kiss, Ligia, Kone, Drissa, Bakayoko-Topolksla, Monica, Manan, David, and Charlotte Watts. ‘Men’s and women’s experiences of violence and traumatic events in rural Côte d’Ivoire before, during and after a period of armed conflict’ (2014) 42(B) British Medical Journal Open e003644 https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2013-003644.


Loucou, Jean-Noël. La Côte d’Ivoire coloniale (Abidjan, CERAP, 2012).


NEWS ARTICLES


Lassina, Kanté. ‘Déclaration du Président de la COVICI, pris à part à un atelier de renforcement de la stratégie des OSC ivoiriennes pour améliorer la protection et le soutien des victimes de violence sexuelles en Côte d’Ivoire’ (COVICI, 10 October 2019).


Quenum, Fréjus. ‘Amadé Ourérémi condamné à perpétuité’ (DW, 15 April 2021). https://www.dw.com/fr/amad%C3%A9-ou%C3%A9r%C3%A9mi-condamn%C3%A9-%C3%A0-la-perp%C3%A9uit%C3%A9/a-57215002, accessed 3 April 2023


**INTERVIEWS, FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS, AND AUTHOR COMMUNICATIONS**

**Semi-structured interviews**

- Semi-structured interview with MANSV02 (Man, October 2021).
- Semi-structured interview with MANSV03 (Man, October 2021).
- Semi-structured interview with MANSV02 (Man, 7 December 2021).
- Semi-structured interview with MANSV03 (Man, 7 December 2021).
- Semi-structured interview with MANSV10 (Man, 7 December 2021).
- Semi-structured interview with MANSV04 (Man, 8 December 2021).
- Semi-structured interview with MANSV05 (Man, 8 December 2021).
- Semi-structured interview with MANSV06 (Man, 8 December 2021).
- Semi-structured interview with CGDKE10 (Duékoué, October 2021).
- Semi-structured interview with CGDKE01 (Duékoué, 7 December 2021).
- Semi-structured interview with CGDKE06 (Duékoué, 8 December 2021).
- Semi-structured interview with CGDKE07 (Duékoué, 8 December 2021).
- Semi-structured interview with CGABJ06 (Abidjan, 12 November 2021).
- Semi-structured interview with CGABJ05 (Abidjan, 18 November 2021).
- Semi-structured interview with CGABJ03 (Abidjan, 7 December 2021).
- Semi-structured interview with CGABJ02 (Abidjan, 8 December 2021).
- Semi-structured interview with CGABJ06 (Abidjan, 8 December 2021).
- Semi-structured interview with CGBKE07 (Bouaké, October 2021).
- Semi-structured interview with CGBKE05 (Bouaké, November 2021).
Focus group discussions
Bouaké focus group discussion, 25 November 2021.
Man focus group discussion, 29 November 2021.
Duékoué focus group discussion, 1 December 2021
Abidjan focus group discussion, 3 December 2021.

Author correspondence
Author correspondence with AFJ-CDI representative, May 2021.
Author correspondence with COVICI representative, August 2021.
Author correspondence with COVICI representative, April 2022.
Author correspondence with Ivorian lawyer representing CRSV survivors, August 2022.
Author correspondence with the Regional Director of the Ministry of Solidarity.
Author correspondence with TFV representative, August 2022.
Author interviews and discussions
Author interview with a UNFPA staff member, May 2019.
Author interview with COVICI representative, May 2021.
Author interview with leader of San Pedro Victims’ Association, May 2021.
Author discussion with COVICI representatives, October 2021.
Author interview with director-level official at the Ministry for Reconciliation, November 2021.
Author interview with ICC official in Côte d’Ivoire, December 2021.
Author interview with the Director at the Ministry of Reconciliation, December 2021.
Author interview with an international expert in the GBV sector, August 2022.
Author discussion with an ICTJ representative, November 2022.
Author interview with a senior staff member at an international NGO, October 2022.