The Global Survivors Fund was founded 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.

This report is a descriptive overview of the Global Survivors Fund’s activities between January and December 2023. The key figures used in the Contexts in Focus pertain to the opening of a project up until December 2023. Figures within the text are applicable only to 2023 when described as such.

The places, names, and boundaries used in the texts or maps in this report do not reflect any position by the Global Survivors Fund on their legal status.

This activity report serves as a performance report and was produced in accordance with the recommendations of Swiss GAAP FER/RPC 21 on accounting for charitable non-profit organisations.

For more information on our activities, please visit www.globalsurvivorsfund.org

Foreword

2023 was yet another year of tragedy for civilians in war zones around the globe. People continued to suffer immeasurable harms like torture, slavery, and rape – all of which a person has a right to reparation for.

As the year went on, more and more survivors of conflict-related sexual violence came forward to share their stories with the world. In places like the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Sudan, and Colombia this meant new voices adding to a chorus of testimonies, generations old. Every crime of sexual violence that the Global Survivors Fund (GSF) learns of, either committed by State or non-State actors, fortifies our devotion and urgency in supporting survivors to claim their right to reparation.

GSF took time to reflect and carefully consider our progress as an organisation in 2023. We asked ourselves, and our community of collaborators, how may we increase our impact, scale up our efforts, and reach more survivors in the coming years. Each interaction, each story shared, built our knowledge and sharpened our strategies. This is now captured in a refined theory of change, available in our Strategic Plan (2024-2030).

The impact we have witnessed in GSF’s first interim reparative measures projects in Iraq, the DRC, Guinea, and Türkiye, serve as evidence that repair is possible. Though many survivors will never feel like they have returned to the person they were before, the transformation is evident, expressed in collected data and the words of survivors. As one survivor put it, “I feel human again”. Our partners and teams worked diligently on new interim reparative measures projects with survivors in Timor-Leste, Nepal, Nigeria, South Sudan, and Cambodia. Our hope is that these new projects will attain similar impact. And it already looks promising.

In 2023, GSF placed additional emphasis on pushing and supporting governments to take up their responsibility for setting up administrative reparation programmes. We are encouraged by the momentum in Ukraine, where we are working with survivor-led networks, the government, and civil society in providing urgent interim reparation while the war is ongoing. This entirely unprecedented approach demonstrates that survivors should not and must not wait for a conflict to end to receive reparation from their government.

As we look back on the journey of our organisation over the past four years, we are filled with gratitude towards the extensive network of civil society organisations and survivor networks around the world who carry out inspirational work in the fight to make reparation a reality. Since our founding we have worked with over 44 organisations across 25 countries.

We also extend our sincere thanks to everyone else who has walked this path with us thus far – survivors, our donors, board members, Technical Advisory Panel, and our staff.

Now, we move onwards, always led by survivors.
ADMINISTRATIVE REMEDIES
Non-judicial mechanisms or procedures that survivors can use to access their right to reparation and/or to prevent violations. These procedures have the potential of being more timely, inclusive, and accessible than courts. The usual administrative remedy for reparation is an administrative reparation programme.

CO-CREATION
Co-creation is a set of processes whereby survivors, as rights-holders, have an effective influence on decision making and play an active role in conceptualising, designing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating reparation and its related measures.

CONFLICT-RELATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE
Any act, including attempted or threatened, that is sexual in nature and is carried out without the consent of the victim that is directly or indirectly linked to a conflict. Conflict-related sexual violence can take many forms, including acts of rape, forced abduction, sexual enslavement, sexual torture, forced nudity, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity.

INTERIM REPARATIVE MEASURES
Measures provided to survivors by non-duty-bearers, such as non-governmental organisations and civil society organisations, to support their process of healing and rebuilding in circumstances where States or other duty-bearers have yet to comply with their obligation to provide reparations and where the need is urgent. Interim reparative measures are inspired by administrative reparation programmes. While they aim to have a transformative and sustainable impact on survivors’ lives, they cannot and do not constitute comprehensive reparation. Receiving such measures does not substitute the obligations that States, or other responsible parties, have to provide full reparation.

KINSHASA DECLARATION
During a Survivors’ Hearing on Reparations from 22-24 November 2021 held in Kinshasa, the DRC, survivors and victims of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence issued the Kinshasa Principles which have been developed into this Declaration.

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION
The process of involving and encouraging collaboration among multiple stakeholders such as victims/survivors, international or civil society organisations, experts, and government bodies, in an activity. This approach aims to encourage a better appropriation by relevant stakeholders and further scaling up of efforts to fulfil the right to reparation.

REPARATION (THE RIGHT TO)
The legal right that victims of international wrongful acts have to be repaired for all harms they have suffered as a direct consequence of those violations. This right is recognised under international, and many domestic laws.

REPARATIONS MEASURES
The measures that victims of wrongful acts are entitled to from the State or other duty-bearers in fulfilment of their right to reparation. Such measures have been defined by international standards and may include restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction, and guarantees of non-repetition. These measures are not mutually exclusive but complement each other as each addresses different needs. Reparations measures can be individual (owed to individuals) and/or collective (owed to a group of people).

SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (SGBV, OR GBV)
Any act, including attempted or threatened, that is sexual in nature and is carried out without the consent of the victim because of his/her/their sex, gender, or lack thereof.

SURVIVOR / VICTIM
A person who individually or collectively suffered harm, including physical or mental injury, emotional suffering, economic loss, or substantial impairment of their fundamental rights, through acts or omissions that constitute a gross violation of international human rights law and/or serious violations of international humanitarian law. The term “victim” could refer to direct or indirect victims. In the work of GSF, direct victims are those who suffered an act of conflict-related sexual violence, as well as children born of conflict-related sexual violence. Indirect victims are those who suffered a violation and harm because of what happened to a direct victim, such as a child whose mother suffered rape. The term “survivor” is a non-legal term, preferred by many as it emphasises strength and resilience instead of focusing on suffering. However, survivor as a term does not include deceased victims, children born of conflict-related sexual violence, or indirect victims. GSF uses both terms, depending on the context and wishes of those who suffered harm.

SURVIVOR-CENTRED APPROACH
An approach that places survivors at the centre of the process by prioritising their rights, needs, and wishes and ensures they are treated with dignity and respect. Often, the term survivor-centred refers to the actual approach of working with victims/survivors. The term survivor-centric refers to the policies, procedures, and broad responses that prioritise the rights, needs, and wishes of survivors. A survivor-centred approach is key to promoting survivors’ recovery and agency, also reducing the risk of further harm and re-traumatisation.

Definitions
In 2023, our work revolved around:


- **The provision of interim reparative measures** in Central African Republic, Cambodia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Iraq, South Sudan, Nepal, Nigeria, Timor-Leste, and Türkiye (for Syrian survivors);

- **Advocacy at national level** in Central African Republic, Colombia, Côte d’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, The Gambia, Guinea, Iraq, Kenya, Nepal, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda, Ukraine and at **international level** in Syria and Ukraine;

- **Technical support** in Central African Republic, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Iraq, South Sudan, Sudan and Ukraine.
At the Global Survivors Fund (GSF), we seek to fulfil the right to reparation for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence around the world. This is done through our three core pillars of work: ACT, ADVOCATE, and GUIDE.

We ACT by showing that the harms caused to survivors of conflict-related sexual violence must be urgently addressed through the right to reparation. We recognise that satisfaction, rehabilitation, restitution, compensation, and guarantees of non-recurrence as reparation are key for survivors to rebuild their lives. However, where States are unwilling or unable to meet their responsibilities to provide this reparation, we work with survivors in countries by co-creating projects that provide interim reparative measures. Interim in nature, our projects are not taking away the obligation of States to fulfil the right to reparation. Not only do we address the immediate needs of survivors in our projects, but we also show States that reparation programmes can be operationalised and resourced, even whilst conflict is ongoing. We also ADVOCATE at local, regional, and international levels to influence policy agendas to prioritise reparation.

Policy conversations traditionally happen without survivors, and through our survivor-centred approach we ensure that there is a seat for them at every table. Survivors’ voices must be heard.

We GUIDE by providing expertise and technical support to governments and other stakeholders that are willing to develop and implement reparation programmes. To this end, we work to ensure that laws and national programmes are survivor-centred. We identify and create best practice through knowledge sharing and convening communities of practice.

However possible, we seek to combine activities under these three pillars to achieve greater transformative impact for survivors. Our work in countries is underpinned by the Global Reparations Study, which is carried out with a wide network of partners and survivors, allowing us to make informed decisions in our programmes.

Reparation must be adequate, prompt and effective. This is accomplished through co-creation with survivors.

A survivor-centred approach is possible and the most effective way to go.
Discovering co-creation with Syrian survivors

By Sabreen Shalabi, Senior Project Officer for Türkiye

Here at GSF, we speak about co-creation with passion. The idea is simple enough: survivors can and must be actively involved in conceptualising, designing, and evaluating all elements of our interim reparative measures projects. Survivors are the heart of every discussion held and every action taken.

Co-creation is unique in every context. Every group of survivors, and every survivor, takes the action of co-creation differently. Discovering what co-creation is for Syrian survivors in Türkiye, along with our partners, the Association for the Missing and Detained of Sednaya Prison (ADMSP) and the Center for Victims of Torture (CVT), has only deepened my belief in the concept.

FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

Since its establishment, GSF’s team for interim reparative measures projects has developed methodologies to bring co-creation from theory to a practical approach. Too often, the norm is not to involve survivors in decision-making processes. Co-creation goes far beyond this; survivors make decisions.

At times, our partners are sceptical about the extent to which we urge survivors to take charge. In the fast-paced world of humanitarian and human rights organisations, who are understaffed and just trying to survive, the call for co-creation, along with the additional efforts required to co-create, is sometimes met with resistance.

Soon after GSF’s establishment, we learned that adaptability and flexibility are needed for co-creation to succeed. Our interim reparative measures projects are consistently evolving to respond to survivors’ wishes because they are the leaders. To that end, GSF and our partners cannot propose a pre-set list of measures.

Survivors have full autonomy in selecting the package of individual measures that they will receive. And in the case of the project in Türkiye, survivors did not want measures for only themselves. They wanted their children to be included too. Each person then curated their own reparative package from the possibilities proposed according to what was most meaningful to them. For some, this meant using their compensation to pay for their child’s education.

WORKING FOR TRUST

Trust is a difficult but beautiful thing to earn. It is the cornerstone of a true partnership. Through the interim reparative measures, GSF works to establish this foundation of trust with our partners and with survivors.

In Türkiye, we gained trust by being with survivors during a devastating moment. On 6 February 2023, earthquakes struck northern Syria and southern Türkiye. Survivors had already lost so much to begin new lives in Türkiye, and now they had to begin again. At the time of the earthquake, over 500 survivors had joined our project, and we provided an emergency payment to all. Survivors have expressed to me that they did not fully believe in the project until the emergency payment. Then, they began to trust.

After the earthquake, in May, the project truly kicked off with the last survivor identified. As survivors received their chosen individual measures, co-creation continued. Debrief sessions with survivors, project staff, and the Steering Committee were held at the end of each project phase. By encouraging reflection, we probe into the efficacy of co-creation.

We may have gained trust after the earthquake but trust also takes work to sustain. It is in these sessions that we sustain trust. Co-creation means learning from survivors as the project goes on to ensure that it adapts.

At a group discussion in Reyhanlı, a survivor said to me, “This project is work for us as survivors. This is the first time someone has built trust”.

TRANSFORMATIVE IMPACT

Survivors travelled from across southern Türkiye to Gaziantep to join the launch of our Syria Global Reparations Study in December. The study was developed with survivors to understand the challenges of, and opportunities for, providing reparation in Syria. At the conference, people stood, one after another, to speak about how the interim reparative measures project impacted their lives.

What they expressed is that the process of co-creation changed their outlook on reparation and their future. Survivors found a sense of ownership and community. Seeing their words translate into tangible action through the realisation of the project provided recognition for the harm done to them.

Toward the end of the day, Riyad said to me, “We need to talk to survivors. How will we know what they want if we don’t?”

When we started thinking of an interim reparative measures project for Syrian survivors living in Türkiye, the co-founder of ADMSP, Riyad Avlar, said to me, “We are survivors ourselves and we already understand the needs.”

Riyad Avlar is a journalist by training and spent 21 years in detention in Syria. ADMSP is truly an organisation for and by survivors, making them the best partner for the project. Many of Riyad’s assumptions about the needs of survivors were correct, as is often the case. Afterall, our partner organisations know their communities. But we needed to hear survivors say it.

Co-creation is more than a process of finding out needs to deliver material reparations. Co-creation is the process of survivors acting autonomously and reclaiming the dignity that the Syrian regime tried to take from them. This moral reparation of taking the decision is what makes co-creation stand out as a truly reparative practice. So, in response to Riyad, I asked, “How can we begin to plan a project with survivors, without survivors?”

Turning the methodology of co-creation into practice comes at this moment. A project with survivors means with survivors, even from the first step. ADMSP began hosting focus group discussions across southern Türkiye, starting our horizontal knowledge exchange, where we learn from survivors just as much as they learn from us.

ACTIVE LISTENING

“The survivors made me think about things we had not considered before,” Riyad said after our first focus group discussions. “Now, how will we use this?” This is a common question at GSF, and the answer is: through being flexible and adaptable.
Getting to know the Steering Committee

By Karine Bonneau, Head of Projects for Interim Reparative Measures

Fulfilling the right to reparation is the obligation of a State. But they should not –and I would argue, cannot- do it alone. A State does not have all the answers of what reparation is. Only the people who have suffered harms do.

Victims must develop reparation policies, along with people interested in the satisfaction of their rights, like civil society organisations, academics, United Nations (UN) agencies, and international organisations. With this pooled expertise, governments can gather lessons learnt and create a programme that is context specific and reparative for all victims, including survivors of conflict-related sexual violence.

This is the multi-stakeholder approach that we take in our projects. We want to gather a group and strengthen their capacity for collaboration. By using our projects as a learning opportunity for all the people needed to make reparation happen, we hope our approach is taken forward in any future administrative reparation programme.

The spirit of collaboration materialises in our interim reparative measures projects through the formation of a Steering Committee. In countries without an administrative reparation programme, these projects lay the ground for developing national reparation policies and are overseen and guided by this multi-stakeholder Steering Committee.

CREATING A STEERING COMMITTEE

In every interim reparative measures project, at least 40 per cent of the Steering Committee members are survivors of conflict-related sexual violence. The survivors who become members are sometimes elected by their fellow survivors to serve.

Other times, they are already members of well-established survivors’ movements. In our project with Syrian survivors of detention living in Türkiye, 60 per cent of the Steering Committee members are survivors.

The remaining members are selected according to the expertise and technical support needed for the project. In the Central African Republic (CAR), the women protection expert of the UN mission and the child protection expert of UNICEF joined the Steering Committee to help design survivor and child-centred protocols for the project. In Timor-Leste, people from the Centro Nacional-Cegal (CNC) sit on the Steering Committee. The CNC was created in 2016 to execute recommendations from the Timorese Commission for Reception, Truth, and Reconciliation. By bringing people from the CNC to our Steering Committee, they can use their experience with the interim reparative measures project to make informed proposals for a national policy in Timor-Leste.

Because survivors’ needs are central to the project, their interests must be protected in the Steering Committee. While people from a government body are invited to join the Steering Committee in Timor-Leste, survivors in Iraq decided their Steering Committee should not have any government representatives. Survivors come to these decisions during group discussions on the Steering Committee’s composition.

GUIDING PROJECT STRATEGIES

The Steering Committee is charged with the strategic development and implementation of the interim reparative measures project, while falling within boundaries set by GSF. From framing the scope, to identifying survivors, and validating the chosen reparative measures, the Steering Committee members are advising and following the project in its entirety.

In Timor-Leste, the Steering Committee decided the list of 104 villages that will participate in the project. Based on their knowledge of conflict-related sexual violence and the living conditions of survivors across the country, they chose 31 villages for the initial rollout of the project to address more urgent needs.

To identify survivors to participate in the project, the Timorese Steering Committee prioritised participatory methods such as body mapping and collective storytelling, when appropriate. These methods intend to follow the Do No Harm principle while adapting to the specific culture and experience of survivors in Timor-Leste. The presence of survivors on the Steering Committee was key in this decision.

The Steering Committee has to adapt as a project goes on. The security contexts we work in, as well as the principle of co-creation, call for it.

In the DRC, this meant expanding the project to a new region of the country. The project in DRC began with two provinces in 2020, but the Steering Committee decided the project had to include survivors from Kasai. Systematic conflict-related sexual violence happened some years before in the province, and survivors felt abandoned. The project then came to cover different periods of violence in DRC. As such, the composition of the Steering Committee itself had to change to include members from Kasai-Central going forward.

STEERING ADVOCACY FOR REPARATION

The active participation and leadership of survivors in the Steering Committees is integral to our interim reparative measures projects. With survivors at the centre of this project governing body, the Steering Committee is an embodiment of co-creation.

Working together, the variety of stakeholders that participate in GSF’s Steering Committees can advance the right to reparation for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence. With the knowledge that reparation is feasible, and most reparative when concern other survivors. I accompany them before, during and after each stage. It’s an approach that allows me to co-create the project with them, the way they want it.

- Myriam Fall, MOSUCA Coordinator and member of the Steering Committee of CAR

My role as a survivor is to share my experiences, to participate in the decisions that concern other survivors. I accompany them before, during and after each stage. It’s an approach that allows me to co-create the project with them, the way they want it.
Central African Republic

People in the Central African Republic (CAR) have been caught in armed conflicts since 2002. Sexual violence has been used throughout the country and by all parties to the conflict, including foreign, government, and paramilitary armed forces. Impunity largely prevails.

GSF began working in CAR in 2021 with a Global Reparations Study. The Global Reparations Study laid the foundation for the project for interim reparative measures, as we saw that survivors have urgent needs which have not been addressed since the beginning of the conflict.

In 2023, a partnership agreement was signed by GSF, the Dr. Denis Mukwege Foundation and the Association des Femmes Juristes de Centrafrique (AFJC) to begin the interim process. The project for interim reparative measures in Dekoa was carried out with a survivor-centred approach. Six of its 15 members are survivors, and the remaining members represent civil society organisations, national institutions, and international organisations.

The Steering Committee designed the process for identifying survivors to participate based on known best practice of administrative procedures. During various visits in Dekoa, members were able to interview local stakeholders and survivors. By the end of 2023, 285 survivors of conflict-related sexual violence were identified to participate in the project.

Advocacy and support to the government

Two bodies were created to design a reparation programme for victims of the most serious crimes: the Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation Commission (CUPR) in 2020 and the Strategic Committee to Combat Sexual Gender-Based Violence in 2021, which is linked to the Armed Conflicts in Central African Republic Strategic Committee. GSF collaborated with these two institutions, supporting their strategic planning and sharing lessons learnt from reparation programmes in other countries. GSF ensured the active participation of survivor activists in dialogues to support the effort for designing survivor-centred policies.

I survived by telling myself that one day, the whole world will know what happened to me. I survived by telling myself that one day, I would come before you to testify, and that day has arrived, Mr. President of the Republic.

A survivor addressing the President of the Central African Republic during an event in Bangui in June 2023

In August 2023, GSF collaborated with Professor Ruth Rubio, a member of our Board of Directors, to organise a workshop on the right to reparation for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence. The workshop was attended by representatives from the CUPR and other authorities within the Strategic Committee, as well as survivors, and different civil society organisations.

Guaranteeing participation of survivors

JEP is a special system for justice created to provide restorative justice for large-scale violations. Crimes, such as massacres, torture, and conflict-related sexual violence, are investigated as macro-cases that cover multiple crimes committed in a given area by different armed groups or State security forces, or certain types of crimes committed by a group in multiple places.

In 2023, GSF started working with JEP to develop a participatory mechanism for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence. GSF is currently using this study to help define policy changes for improving the delivery of reparations.

Today, many were able to let go of those tears. They were able to let go of their pain, because they were listened to.

- A survivor

COLOMBIA

Conflict-related sexual violence committed in the context of a 60-year-long internal armed conflict has devastated tens of thousands of lives in Colombia. Perpetrated by all actors, including the State and non-State armed groups, more than 37,000 survivors of conflict-related sexual and reproductive violence are registered with the Single Registry of Victims (RSA; Registro Único de Víctimas).

Another obstacle identified was the inadequate implementation and low satisfaction among survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, as well as other victims, regarding the reparations mandated by a 2011 law, which was supposed to be a comprehensive administrative reparation policy.

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- A survivor

Image credit: © Dejusticia / Diana Bravo Rubio (Reparations expert). Colombia, October 2023

Dejusticia

Images: Dejusticia, Bogota. Paola Molano (Transitional Justice Coordinator of Dejusticia). Colombia, October 2023

Dejusticia

Images: Dejusticia, Bogota. Diana Bravo Rubio (Reparations expert). Colombia, October 2023

Dejusticia
Conflict-related sexual violence has been used on a massive scale and systematically in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) since the 1990s. In 2023, the UN learned that the use of sexual violence was on the rise once more, as the unrelenting conflict in the east raged on. It is an exceptional case if a victim ever sees justice. While judicial reparations are theoretically available, they are entirely inaccessible for survivors, with procedural and financial obstacles. Recognition and comprehensive reparation are sorely lacking for the estimated hundreds of thousands of survivors.

Individual and collective measures

Initiated in 2020 by GSF and the Parol Foundation, the Interim reparative measures project in DRC was entirely co-created with survivors. The goal of this project was to show that reparation is urgent and feasible; adopting a national survivor-centred reparation policy is possible.

In 2023, all survivors received their final financial payment. Other measures also continued in 2023, with 100 survivors receiving a psychiatric consultation included in the overall 634 survivors who received psychological care, and 27 survivors accessing medical care. Another 78 survivors completed their vocational training.

Judgments were obtained to establish birth certificates for 98 children born of conflict-related sexual violence. With birth certificates, these children now have legal recognition of their existence and will be able to enjoy all that citizenship offers, like access to social services.

One of my children was born as a result of these rapes... The community could not accept this child born of rape. But thanks to this project, she is being looked after and now she has her birth certificate. She is acknowledged and treated like any other child in the house.

Martin Kalenda, a survivor

In 2023, GSF’s project in Guinea, our first interim reparative measures project, came to a close. This project, which began in 2015, was co-created with survivors of the 28 September massacre and carried out by the Organisation Guinéenne de Défense des Droits de l’Homme et du Citoyen (OGDH) and the Association des victimes, parents et amis du 28 septembre (AVIPA).

After the identification process, survivors received their individual interim reparative measures in 2020 and 2021: financial awards, medical care, and psychological support. In 2023, the project culminated in the opening of a centre created for and by survivors.

Interim reparative measures co-created

As their collective interim reparative measure, survivors chose to establish four survivors’ centres in their project locations. For each centre, the site selection, purchasing of land, and design was done in accordance with the wishes of survivors and their communities. Each centre will offer specific activities. Construction of the three centres located in the Kinshasa was completed in 2023, with their inauguration planned for 2024.

A new national law

In December 2022, Law 22/095 on the protection and reparation of victims of conflict-related sexual violence and victims of crimes against the peace and security of humanity was adopted. As a result, GSF’s advocacy and technical support in 2023 focused on the implementation of the law.

In February 2023, the National Advocacy Alliance for Reparations was established following our call to set up a working group on reparations made up of civil society organisations, victims’ groups and other key actors. The Alliance has since become a key group in advocating to the FONAREV and the government of DRC by acting as an informal tool for information exchange and advocacy planning.

Our advocacy activities sought to secure improvements in the law around the definition and determination of victim status and the roles that FONAREV and the judicial system will play in the registration of victims. GSF called for these difficulties to be remedied by the FONAREV so that the legislation follows international obligations and standards, and so that reparations are harmonised with other transitional justice measures enacted in the country.

GSF built close relations with the Mouvemant National des Survivants de l’Armée de la Famine (MNASAF), the Famine Solidarity for Peace and Development, and SOS Multisector. Juridical Information, three partners within the National Alliance for Reparations, in 2023. Our joint work seeks to enhance the technical capacity of survivors, so that they can better participate in the design and implementation of reparation policies.

This day of celebration was facilitated by survivors and included musical performances, as well as speeches from Guinean officials and members of the international community. Survivors presented their call for the establishment of a national reparation programme in Guinea. A significant moment of the inauguration was the presentation of the commemorative monument to victims of the 28 September massacre, the only of its kind in the country. The inauguration was attended by four survivor activists on GSF’s Board of Directors. This gave them an opportunity to exchange with Guinean survivors and partners and witness the impact of GSF’s interim reparative measures project.

This centre is the embodiment of the work of survivors. It is the indelible mark that we are living here in Guinea, a symbol of the persistence and heroism of the survivors.

Assmaou Dialo, AVIPA founder

Survivors participated in a training that strengthened their advocacy skills, coaching them on how to articulate their experiences and demands for justice. Through participatory methodology, like body mapping, survivors drafted their call for an administrative reparation programme. This technique, in which a person tells a story through a life-sized drawing of their own body, provides an alternate language for survivors to convey the traumas of their experiences. At the inauguration of their centre, survivors presented this call for reparation.

There was also progress on the establishment of an administrative reparation programme by the Guinean authorities. In March, GSF organised the first of two roundtables in Conakry, where we shared lessons learnt from the interim reparative measures project in Guinea with the Minister of Justice and Human Rights. The second roundtable, a high-level exchange, took place in September 2023. A comprehensive national reparation law was drafted as an outcome of the roundtable and was shared with the Minister of Justice and Human Rights. The draft covers all survivors’ human rights violations in Guinea, from 1950 to today, while giving the priority to survivors of the 28 September massacre.

Advocating for an administrative reparation programme

2023 saw the start of AVIPA’s advocacy project, funded by GSF, to promote the Enshara Declaration in Guinea.

Six survivors live in France, Belgium and Senegal.
In 2021, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) initiated a genocidal campaign against the Yazidi, an ethno-religious minority living in northern Iraq. In 2020, GSF and Nadia’s Initiative developed an interim reparative measures project with survivors of ISIL captivity, in Sinjar and Duhok. This project addressed their urgent needs and will continue to advocate for survivor-centered implementation of the Yazidi Survivors’ Law, adopted in 2021.

In 2023, 65 survivors who wanted to go back to school but faced challenges in accessing formal education were offered English classes by Jesuit Worldwide Learning during the summer. With this, the individual interim reparative measures component of the project came to an end.

Survivors co-created their collective interim reparative measure, a monument in Sinjar, in 2023. During focus group discussions, 119 survivors shared their perspectives, preferences, and wishes, and collectively decided for the construction of a memorial statue. Still in construction at the end of 2023, this monument will serve to give up, and live freely again.

The technical support on the Yazidi Survivors Law since the adoption of the Yazidi Survivors Law, survivors have encountered various challenges, including obstacles in filing their claims, and difficulties accessing promised forms of reparations such as education support and psychological care. In May, GSF and Nadia’s Initiative began a collaborative project to assist survivors in Sinjar and Duhok with advocating for their rights. Male survivors, who have generally been neglected and excluded from reparative projects and activities, were also included in the project.

The 10-year armed conflict in Iraq from 1996-2006 devastated the country, with over 13,000 lives lost, 1,300 individuals missing or forcibly disappeared, and 10,000 to 20,000 people displaced.1 Sexual violence was used as a weapon of war, but there is no data on the extent of such violations, and the government has not formally acknowledged that they were committed. Survivors of conflict-related sexual violence have not received any form of interim relief or reparations like other victims of war.

GSF started working in Nepal in 2021, through the Nepal Global Reparations Study. The study was conducted by our partners, Nagarjuk Aawaz and the International Center for Transitional Justice. The outcomes of the study showed the difficult situation survivors live in, as they continue to wait for justice. Based on these findings, GSF decided, in 2023, to continue our partnership with Nagarjuk Aawaz and design an interim reparative measures project with and for Nepali survivors of conflict-related sexual violence.

The planning phase started in January 2023 with a workshop attended by survivors, Nagarjuk Aawaz, and other partners located in Kathmandu. The GSF methodology on co-creation and a multi-stakeholder approach was presented.

Based on specific criterion, such as conflict intensity, number of survivors, capacity of local partners, and geographical proximity, five districts were identified for the project in Lumbini and Sudurpashchim provinces.

In March and April, focus group discussions with survivors and consultations with local stakeholders were organised in the districts. Key elements of the project such as its geographical scope, types and modalities of potential interim reparative measures, and methodologies for survivor identification were discussed. From this, we developed the project’s implementation plan. With the information collected during the preparatory phase we expect that 300 survivors will be identified to participate in the five districts in 2024.

A significant challenge to the interim reparative measures project is the reluctance of survivors to identify themselves. The social stigma surrounding sexual violence is staunchly intense, making it difficult for survivors to come forward. To address this challenge, we are finding safe and low-profile ways of working with survivors and protecting their confidentiality. This is in line with the Do No Harm principle that is applied in all our projects.

If my husband comes to find out that I am getting these services because I am a sexual violence survivor my family will break.

- A survivor

To complement the interim reparative measures project, a project on advocacy was developed in partnership with the International Commission of Jurists and Advocacy Forum, with the aim to enhance coordination among civil society and survivor organisations. This collaborative effort, which began at the end of 2023, seeks to influence government policy at the provincial level in Lumbini and the national level in Kathmandu through engaging policy makers, increasing public awareness, and strengthening survivor voices in policy spaces. This initiative also seeks to address gaps related to sexual violence in the country’s stalled truth commission legislation and implementation.
In 2009, Boko Haram’s terrorist insurgency broke out in Nigeria’s northeast, leading to the displacement of 2.1 million people inside the country. Sexual violence against women and youth has been used as a tactic of terror by the armed group, alongside kidnappings, abductions, and suicide bombings.

GSF began scoping for an interim reparative measures project in 2022 with our partner organisations; the Centre for Girls Education (CGE) in Adamawa, the Grassroots Researchers Association (GRA) in Borno, and the Youth Initiative Against Terrorism (YIAT) in Yobe. We began assessing survivors’ needs in the three states, engaging with local actors on the potential project and identified potential locations for its implementation.

In January 2023, we met with partners, survivors, host communities, and other stakeholders to understand their views on the project. In August 2023, the project started in Adamawa and Yobe states in partnership with CGE and GRA. The framing of the project in Borno continued with the Neem Foundation.

Like in other interim reparative measures projects, the project in Nigeria is overseen by a Steering Committee. For the Nigeria project, the Steering Committee is made up of survivors, members of civil society organisations, representatives from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and UNICEF, religious leaders, and local authorities.

With their own unique landscapes, it was decided that each state should have its own Steering Committee to better address the specificities of each context.

Between August and December, 397 survivors were identified to participate in the project, 181 from Yobe and 216 from Adamawa. All survivors have been presented with cards affirming their participation and status as a survivor. This document was developed as an interim reparative measure to recognise survivors and acknowledge their right to reparation.

Survivors are leading in almost every aspect of the project. They serve on the Steering Committee, and six are employed as community mobilisers for accompanying participants throughout the project.

We are already seeing the results of co-creation. Survivors have shared that being part of the Steering Committee has changed their status and recognition within their communities.

In 2023, GSF began working on the Nigerian Global Reparations Study with the Development Research and Projects Centre, GRA, and the Ford Foundation. This study will allow us to increase awareness and understanding on the right to reparation for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, as well as frame the needs, perceptions, and expectations of survivors on individual and collective reparations. From the study, we will develop advocacy initiatives complemented by the lessons learnt that are already available from the interim reparative measures project.

So far, data collection activities, including desk reviews and interviews, have taken place. We have also held meetings with personnel from the federal and state ministries of education, justice, and youth and women development.

The decades of Indonesian occupation in Timor-Leste, from 1975–1999, that followed independence from Portuguese colonisation, were marred by extreme forms of violence and destruction. The sexual violence used included sexual slavery, sexualised torture, rape, and gang rape by Indonesian military personnel and others in positions of power.

The urgent need for reparations in Timor-Leste was highlighted in the Timorese Global Reparations Study, initiated in 2022 by Asia Justice and Rights (AJAR) and GSF. A participatory action research method devised by AJAR was used to complete the study. Survivors participated, expressed their needs, and made recommendations towards the development of a survivor-centred reparation policy. This resulted in the formation of a survivor group called Pirilampu (firedhe) Forum.

The role of Pirilampu Forum was instrumental in co-creating the interim reparative measures project by providing crucial input on key elements of the project, such as identification and the interim measures to be prioritised.

In March 2023, Pirilampu members reaffirmed their recommendations and identified 30 community mobilisers to work on the project team. Community mobilisers are survivors themselves and responsible for outreach to other survivors in their communities.

From March to October, the project was planned with survivors, and in October 2023, following the partnership agreement with AJAR and Asosiasaun Chega! Ba Ita (ACbit), its implementation began. The partnership with AJAR and ACbit is crucial for the project because of the trusting relationship they have built with survivors.

The project is expected to include 450 survivors from all 13 of Timor-Leste’s municipalities, and includes women, men and LGBTQI+ survivors of sexual violence, survivors who were “stolen children,” and former boy logistics assistants.

The project will also include children born from conflict-related sexual violence and the rights holders of deceased survivors.

The project is run by a Steering Committee of eight members, including four survivors, and a programme team involving the 30 community mobilisers and 13 municipality coordinators.

In November, the whole team came together for a workshop in Dili and discussed the modalities of the interim reparative measures project.

The workshop included sessions on different roles in the project team, co-creation, and the importance of a contextualised and multi-stakeholder approach. Trainings on psychosocial support and data management were also provided. Inputs on expected challenges from community mobilisers were considered and discussed by the Steering Committee for the finalisation of the implementation plan.

As a result of community level awareness sessions in December, as well as due to survivors already knowing the project team, several survivors have come forward to be a part of the project and share their stories.

We want to be like a candle for all survivors in the country. Our light can reach them and light their candles as well. - A survivor
During the earthquake, not even my relatives were asking about me. But my caseworker was speaking to me every day. She made us feel present and supported. She made me feel human. This was different.

Completing phase I: identification, validation, and defining individual measures

The process of identifying survivors was completed in May. A team of 16 caseworkers collaborated with survivors to finalise their individual plans and to choose their measures. All survivors were offered psychological care and had autonomy in choosing their financial award for their livelihood (to initiate or expand a project, or use it as a basic financial support), education, and medical needs.

Start of phase II: survivors receive their individual measures

After finalising and committing to their plans with their caseworkers, survivors received their initial payment. Remarkably, over 60% of survivors opted to use this money to start or expand a project. Given their living conditions after the earthquake and the economic conditions in southern Turkey, there were no expectations that they would have the means to start a project, but rather they would have to address urgent needs. The response from survivors upon receiving their first individual payment was overwhelming. Many conveyed feelings of validation and recognition, sharing how the project was transforming their lives.

At the end of 2023, the project completed its first individual payment, with a second payment planned for January 2024.

Launch of the Syria Global Reparations Study

On December 7 2023, GSF and ADMSP launched the Global Reparations Study for Syria. Taken place in Gaziantep, the launch was attended by survivors from all project locations. The event shared the findings and recommendations of the study and was an opportunity for survivors to express how the impact of the project has had thus far on their lives.

Discussions to define the collective interim reparative measures and advocacy strategy for the project will continue into 2024.

In 2022, Russia launched a full-scale invasion in Ukraine, characterized by indiscriminate attacks against civilians, including the frequent use of conflict-related sexual violence. While the war continues, so does this type of violence. During 2023, GSF’s work in Ukraine focused on providing technical support on reparation for conflict-related sexual violence to policymakers, civil society, and SJBAN UK. With them, GSF worked on national legislation that advanced urgent interim reparations, the registration of victims, and explored additional sources for financing reparation.

GSF further supported the enactment of the legislation framework by proposing to introduce the definition of conflict-related sexual violence and urgent interim reparations into another law related to the establishment of a national registry of victims. We also supported the Ministry of Social Policy on how to word both definitions. Both draft laws were filed with parliament in October 2023.

A first in the world

Following this visit in Geneva, GSF was invited to Kyiv in September to meet with the Deputy Prime Minister of Europe and Euro-Atlantic Integration, the Government Commissioner for Gender Equality Policy, and other high-level actors.

To develop a survivor-centred registration process (in parallel with the establishment of a registry of victims), GSF worked to design a survivor-centred compensation scheme for the establishment of the survivor-reparations registry. We have been making an important stride towards comprehensive reparative measures.

Exploring avenues for affordability

In 2023, GSF went deeper into the topic of financing reparations for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, particularly through the repurposing of assets. In the case of Ukraine, as a result of Russian aggression, we have been working on this dossier.

This very topic was discussed during the GSF side event to the 78th UN General Assembly in New York, in September titled “Reparations are affordable: Innovative solutions to finance reparations owed to survivors of conflict-related sexual violence”. During this event, Ukrainian government representatives called for the exploration of all avenues to finance reparation in Ukraine, including through repurposing assets.

Together with REDRESS, GSF has also been working closely on an advocacy campaign which targets specific assets, like the $2.5 billion frozen Russian assets from the sale of Chelsea Football Club, which belonged to Roman Abramovich and are being used to fund reconstruction efforts. This has been an important stride towards comprehensive reparative measures.

Since 1971, the Assad regimes have used sexual violence as a means of oppression and control in detention centres in Syria. With the outbreak of the Syrian revolution in 2011, and the subsequent displacement into war, these tactics expanded in scale and frequency. Similar practices were adopted by armed groups in their own detention settings.

The interim reparative measures project for Syrian survivors was developed in response to the initial findings of the Syria Global Reparations Study, which highlighted the widespread use of sexual violence and sexualised torture in detention facilities. Given the difficulties of tracing such a project in the country, GSF opted to work with Syrian survivors who have fled to Turkey. This project is carried out in partnership with the Syrian Women’s Union, and international civil society organisations, and survivor networks.

Nestle serves coffee to his clients. Türkiye, December 2023. © Katie van der Werf / GSF

Victims of Torture.

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Nestle serves coffee to his clients. Türkiye, December 2023. © Katie van der Werf / GSF

Victims of Torture.
The Global Reparations Study (GRS) provides an in-depth analysis of the nature and scope of conflict-related sexual violence in various countries, evaluates existing reparation pathways, and identifies both opportunities and challenges in securing reparation. It is rooted in the belief that survivors of conflict-related sexual violence must take the lead in determining the most appropriate forms of reparation for the harms they have endured; a principle that is actively realised through the study’s methodology, which places the participation of survivors at its core.

Since its launch in 2020, and in collaboration with more than 40 local and international partners, the GRS team has conducted studies across 25 different countries. To date, 15 have been published. It provides crucial evidence that informs GSF’s work, whether for initiating new interim reparative measures projects or supporting advocacy efforts at a national or international level.

2023 was a significant year for the GRS. The publication of seven country studies - Chad, Côte d’Ivoire, Kenya, Myanmar, Nepal, Sudan, and Syria - and the completion of the Timor-Leste study shed light on the complex challenges faced by survivors and emphasised potential avenues for reparation, providing GSF and other stakeholders with the evidence to act.

The Global Reparations Study recommends State actors draft and pass a reparations law in collaboration with survivors and civil society organisations, and the Myanmar GRS recommends humanitarian and development actors prioritise survivors in their initiatives, mainstreaming their needs while being cautious not to reinforce stigma.

2023 was a significant year for the GRS. The publication of seven country studies - Chad, Côte d’Ivoire, Kenya, Myanmar, Nepal, Sudan, and Syria - and the completion of the Timor-Leste study shed light on the complex challenges faced by survivors and emphasised potential avenues for reparation, providing GSF and other stakeholders with the evidence to act. Recommendations are broad and inevitably vary according to the context. For instance, the Syria GRS calls donors and the international community to repurpose seized assets from perpetrators to finance reparations, while the Côte d’Ivoire GRS recommends State actors draft and pass a reparations law in collaboration with survivors and civil society organisations, and the Myanmar GRS recommends humanitarian and development actors prioritise survivors in their initiatives, mainstreaming their needs while being cautious not to reinforce stigma.

In 2023, due to the extensive information collected from the countries covered by the GRS, there was a concerted effort to continue systematising and analysing the data gathered through interviews, focus group discussions, and other participatory research methods. Given that the vast amount of information could not always be fully integrated into the country studies, GSF initiated the preparation of thematic research briefings. These briefings focus on key issues relevant to survivors and the right to reparation and will begin in 2024.

A validation workshop in Kananga, during which survivors who participated in the Global Reparations Study reviewed and gave feedback on its final version before publication. Democratic Republic of the Congo, November 2023 © Jean Jacques Nsibula / Panzi Foundation

It is wrong for an organisation to come up with a project on reparations before conducting a preliminary study on reparations. We cannot decide on behalf of survivors. We should gather information, study and analyse it, and identify commonalities.

- A survivor

A validation workshop in Kananga, during which survivors who participated in the Global Reparations Study reviewed and gave feedback on its final version before publication. Democratic Republic of the Congo, November 2023 © Jean Jacques Nsibula / Panzi Foundation
We see the transformative nature of co-creation with survivors in every country where we are present. The general appreciation and positive impact come across strongly and are echoed in the monitoring we carry out during the four phases of interim reparative measures projects (scoping, identification, implementation, and accommodation).

A wider socio-economic impact is also seen when survivors are capable of sending their children to school, or when they set up businesses that provide work for people in their communities. While these projects create strong links between survivors, they also contribute to restoring dignity.

Less obvious to capture with traditional impact indicators is our immense work done around national, regional, and international advocacy. Four years since the creation of GSF, our targeted approach to advocating for the right to reparation is beginning to deliver results.
Grant making and working with partners

Working with national partners is a core approach to the work of GSF. This localisation, through organisations that are already operational in country and are closest to survivors, is what ensures that projects are contextualised and relevant, and that interim reparative measures will meet the real needs of survivors.

However, GSF does not consider itself to be a remote “donor”. We support our partners throughout the project implementation, including by providing reference documents and tools, organising regular meetings with key partner staff, and visiting projects at key moments to provide feedback, training, expert advice, and support as needed. We share the common objective of reaching the highest impact for survivors. Our supportive and flexible approach strengthens the capacity of partners and contributes to their sustainability.

The grants awarded to partners are managed by the regional and country teams, which include both dedicated senior programmes and finance coordinators, with advice from the relevant thematic experts depending on the project type. They closely support each partner, ensuring not only that they follow the GSF approach, but interact in full transparency on the challenges and reality of carrying out each activity.

Fifty-six per cent of GSF’s programmatic work in 2023 was delivered by civil society partners, through the awarding of grants to implement projects.

GSF awarded 31 new grants in 2023 (12 for advocacy & events projects, 11 for interim reparative measures projects, and 8 for the Global Reparations Study), bringing the total cumulated number since 2020 to 88 grants awarded to 45 different partners, and covering 26 countries.

GSF disbursed nearly 5 million CHF to its partners in 2023. The total cumulated amount disbursed by GSF to its partners since its creation reached 12 million CHF at the end of 2023.8

The increase is mostly related to the multi-year interim reparative measures projects, several of which started in 2021 and 2022, which in 2023 were in phases two and three. These project phases are more expensive as they include the payment of the financial compensation to survivors, as well as the implementation other forms of individual and collective measures. This includes the project for Syrian survivors in Türkiye (2.6 million CHF disbursed), survivors in CAR (0.6 million CHF), and the DRC (0.4 million CHF). Some smaller grants were also awarded to local partners in three new countries, for the development of an interim reparative measures project implementation plan in Cambodia, Nepal, and South Sudan.

For the Global Reparations Study, new awards were granted in 2023 for El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nigeria. In 2023, the overall volume of the Global Reparations Study grants decreased. The novelty in 2023 is the significant increase of the number of small grants awarded to local partner civil society organisations to contribute to the ADVOCATE and GUIDE pillars, particularly in six new countries: Nepal, Iraq, Guinea, Sudan, Côte d’Ivoire, and Türkiye. This includes both the organisation of launch events for Global Reparations Study reports and advocacy initiatives towards national governments. In addition, trainings and technical support were provided to civil society organisations and governments on the introduction of draft reparation laws and decrees that are survivor-centred.

For more details, please refer to the separate 2023 Annual Financial Accounts Report.

The ANNUAL and CUMULATED @ YEAR-END numbers below show the comparison of the number of grants, focus countries, and implementing partners for the years 2022 and 2023:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ANNUAL</th>
<th>CUMULATED @ YEAR-END</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NUMBER OF GRANTS</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>31 (+24%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUMBER OF FOCUS COUNTRIES</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23 (+8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUMBER OF IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>33 (+10%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GSF disbursed nearly 5 million CHF to its partners in 2023. The total cumulated amount disbursed by GSF to its partners since its creation reached 12 million CHF at the end of 2023.8

* An overall increase of 68 per cent compared to the end 2022.
Human resources

2023 marked an important year for the Human Resources (HR) team at GSF, with the establishment of new tools and policies for our dynamic and growing organisation.

We conducted our first staff survey to capture how GSF employees connect with each other, their work, and the organisation. The results indicate that the organisation has managed, even in its early stages, to foster a culture of integrity, respect, accountability, and commitment. These are the core values that we decided our organisation’s work ethics should be guided by after a process with staff. The survey also showed the incredible commitment of our staff to our social mission.

The survey helped us identify key areas for improvement. To ensure that we acted on the recommendations that came out, we created a staff survey committee and thematic sub-committees on internal communications, healthy ways of working, and learning and development.

An external HR consultant supported us with the finalisation and implementation of key HR policies. The salary and function scales were presented and shared across the organisation for greater transparency.

Implementation of key HR policies. The salary and function scales were finalised and shared across the organisation for greater transparency.

Finally, we invested in our staff mental health and wellbeing by organising workshops facilitated by external experts on stress management and grounding techniques. The overall integrity framework at GSF was reinforced by the identification of an external person of trust who is available to all staff members over the phone, and the introduction of policies on protection from sexual exploitation and harassment in the workplace which complement trainings and briefings already in place.

The security framework was also formalised with the addition of a new Security Policy, the completion of a dedicated security training for project visits. The security framework was also formalised with the addition of a new Security Policy, the completion of a dedicated security training for project visits. The security framework was also formalised with the addition of a new Security Policy, the completion of a dedicated security training for project visits. The security framework was also formalised with the addition of a new Security Policy, the completion of a dedicated security training for project visits.

The breakdown of social mission spend between our pillars in 2023 showed a higher level of spending for the ACT pillar (62%) through our interim reparative measures projects, which include direct individual benefits to survivors. This is followed by the ADVOCATE pillar (12%), which included numerous advocacy events and initiatives at the regional or global level. The GUIDE pillar reached 8% of social mission spend in providing technical support to governments. The Global Reparations Study amounted to 10%. Finally, 8% of the social mission spend was related to transversal Programmes management.

In terms of geographic scope, our focus was the Middle East & North Africa region this year, which represented 40% (0.84 million CHF) of spending. This was mostly in Türkiye for Syrian survivors of detention (2.75 million CHF) and in Iraq for survivors of ISIS (0.16 million CHF).

Sub-Saharan Africa was also significant this year, representing 39% of our spending (0.84 million CHF) across 12 countries, with the greatest spend in CAR (0.82 million CHF), then the DRC (0.69 million CHF), followed by Nigeria (0.21 million CHF), and South Sudan (0.25 million CHF).

We increased our spend in Asia which reached 8% (with 0.24 million CHF in Timor-Leste and 0.14 million CHF in Nepal). The spend in Europe represented 5%, which was exclusively for Ukraine (0.32 million CHF). The novelty in 2023 is the increased weight of The Americas, which represented 3% of spending (including 0.14 million CHF for continuing activities in Colombia, as well as new activities in Guatemala and El Salvador).

Last year was also a year of growth for GSF as we grew to 50 staff members at the end of December 2023. This came with challenges and opportunities. Our decentralised way of working and tripartite agreements with universities worldwide allowed us to welcome 10 interns throughout the year in person and remotely internships. Our team also became more international, working in 21 countries and bringing together at least 20 nationalities. During work weeks in January and October, staff met in Geneva to discuss the next phases for the organisation, in line with the 2024-2030 Strategic Plan.

2023 marked an important year for the Human Resources (HR) team at GSF, with the establishment of new tools and policies for our dynamic and growing organisation.
Communications

In 2023, communications took a more prominent role within GSF as the team provided sustained support to develop a clear and impactful public position for the organisation. We also transformed our visual identity and ways of storytelling.

OUR POSITIONING

Our communications revolved around the core message that our unique co-creation approach is a game changer in a sector where fast-paced interventions with a pre-set list of activities are often the norm. We wrapped up the year with 50 media mentions from news outlets around the globe. Relations with journalists are expanding and our efforts in this realm will continue into 2024.

EXPERIMENTING AND LEARNING ON SOCIAL

We also explored new ways of posting on social media to reach a wider audience. We used simple evergreen content to explain legal concepts and tested new methods of storytelling through testimonies, photos, explainer videos, and infographics.

By following best practice for posting on each platform in 2023 we had almost doubled our followers across Facebook, Instagram, X, and LinkedIn—going from 6,800 to 11,000 followers. The communications team also developed the LinkedIn profile of GSF’s Executive Director to deliver public messaging.

NEW LOOK, NEW TONE

In September, we launched a re-designed website to reflect GSF’s growing authoritative voice on reparation for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence.

The creation of the GSF brand book allowed us to define precisely how we want to portray our work and which tone and terminology we want to use to ensure our social mission is well understood by the public. Following the creation of this new tool, GSF started to organise its audio-visual assets to ensure better management, data protection, and use of our photos and videos.

A WEALTH OF NEW TOOLS

Key tools were developed by the communications team to help GSF improve its coordination on communications including a strategy framework, guidance on public positioning, and an exhaustive guideline around inclusive writing. The official GSF glossary was also revised and is available in four languages.

The communications team continued to provide unwavering support to our colleagues and partners for event management, audio-visual commissions, and publications through in-house editing and design services.

FINANCE

RESULTS

In 2023, the total annual expenses were slightly lower than contributions, with an annual surplus of 85,000 CHF.

Summary 2023 annual accounts (CHF)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2023</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annual contributions from board member governments</td>
<td>8,675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilateral grants from governments and public institutions</td>
<td>1,161</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multilateral grants</td>
<td>1,189</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foundations and private organisations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Corporations</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other income</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total income</strong></td>
<td>11,844</td>
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<tr>
<td>of which restricted</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>of which unrestricted</td>
<td>3,792</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff costs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Third-party service providers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Travel costs</td>
<td>444</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grants to partners</td>
<td>4,842</td>
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<tr>
<td>Office running costs</td>
<td>118</td>
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<tr>
<td>Events &amp; communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other expenses</td>
<td>64</td>
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<tr>
<td>Depreciation</td>
<td>64</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total operational expenses</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>EBIT</strong></td>
<td>860</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial expenses</td>
<td>827</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial income</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total financial result</strong></td>
<td>775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total expenses (including financial result)</strong></td>
<td>11,759</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Result before changes in restricted funds and capital</strong></td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more details, please refer to the separate 2023 Annual Financial Accounts Report.
**Data protection**

GSF took significant steps to enhance its data protection practices in 2023, whilst also recognising the need to strengthen its overall risk management strategy in response to evolving challenges across our work.

We emphasised the safeguarding of sensitive information and the privacy of survivors and GSF staff through the reinforcement of our data protection framework. This included enforcing comprehensive policies, procedures, and controls to uphold the highest standards of data privacy and security. Notable achievements included providing staff training on cybersecurity and consent, conducting Data Protection Impact Assessments and data mapping for new projects, and establishing a registry of data processing activities in compliance with relevant laws on data protection.

While data protection remains an important focus, we understand that effective risk management is essential for the security and success of our programmes. Considering this, we created a position of Risk and Compliance senior focal point. This position will focus on risk management both at the project and institutional level.

We will continue to coordinate our risk management efforts by looking at security, safeguarding, financial, and regulatory compliance risks. GSF will conduct comprehensive risk assessments, craft tailored risk management strategies, and collaborate with our partners, external referral pathways for reporting, and experienced trainers to carry out proactive measures and contingency plans.

This underscores our commitment to integrated risk management, emphasising informed decision-making, organisational accountability, and safeguarding the interests of survivors. Through this approach we aim to enhance our resilience, proactively address challenges, uphold privacy standards, and safeguard sensitive data to affirm the positive impacts of our programmes.

**Governance**

GSF’s Board of Directors is composed of a group of diverse stakeholders including survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, government and civil society representatives, and reparation experts. It oversees the strategy, policy guidance, and accountability of GSF’s work. The board is composed of 16 members. In 2023, three board meetings were held, with one in-person in Geneva and two online.

In October 2023, Dr Denis Mukwege stepped down from his function as Chair of the Board following the announcement of his candidacy for the Presidency of the DRC. Co-chair, Norbert Wühler, assumed the responsibilities of the Chair until the end of the year.

**CHAMPIONING OUR VISION**

The inauguration of the survivors’ centre in Materra, Guinea in September 2023, was attended by four board members. They expressed their deep appreciation of the work carried out after witnessing the impact the project had on survivors’ lives.

Board members represent an important support to our social mission. Their participation to high-level events around the world, including the UN General Assembly in New York, ensures a greater visibility for the right to reparation for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence. We are grateful to our board members for their ambassadorship.

By Esther Dingemans, Executive Director

With the inspiration and leadership of survivors, the dedication of our partners, and the passion of our own team, as well as the solid support of our community of donors and board members, GSF is ready for its next phase as an organisation.

In 2024, we will begin to put in motion our new Strategic Plan (2024-2030). This plan was developed entirely in the spirit of co-creation, through consultations with all our collaborators. We identified four strategic priorities for GSF in the coming years to expand our reach and impact.

**CO-CREATION AT THE CORE**

Central to our approach is the concept of co-creation, wherein projects are actively designed and implemented with survivors. Our research has shown that the process of co-creation is reparative, while enhancing the effectiveness of our programming through alignment with survivors’ lived experiences and needs. Moving forward, we will work to further integrate co-creation into our ACT, ADVocate, and GUIDE pillars.

**SCALING UP INTERIM REPARATIVE MEASURES**

The call from survivors that have yet to receive reparation remains urgent. We know that the impact of interim reparative measures, both personally for survivors and through the ripple effect on their families and communities, is immense. We will explore different strategies in our interim reparative measures projects that could enable us to reach a larger number of survivors, while preserving our ethos of co-creation.

**INNOVATIVE FINANCING OF REPARATION**

With the known transformative impact of reparations, they ought to be financed. Alongside conventional funding avenues, we are exploring and advocating for innovative channels to finance reparations. We will investigate innovative financing mechanisms for government-led initiatives and our own interim reparative measures.

**CHILDREN AS RIGHTS-HOLDERS**

Children affected by conflict-related sexual violence are often overlooked and underserved in conversations on reparation. We will prioritise children, both in our programmatic and advocacy work. Central to our efforts in this realm is the recognition that education is a fundamental aspect of reparation for children.

Advancing the right to reparation for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence is not something that GSF can do alone. Realising the right to reparation is a process that requires a wider effort where survivors, governments, activists, the private sector, and international organisations all contribute.

Through our three pillars of ACT, ADVocate, and GUIDE, we want to provide a community of changemakers with the necessary tools to fight for the fulfilment of the right to reparation.
Implementing partners

Asociación Chega! Ba Ita (ACBIT), Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST), Center for Inclusive Governance Peace and Justice (COGPI), Crown the Woman (CREW), Cristosal, Jesuit Worldwide Learning (JWL), Justice Center Iraq, Kutupalong, Mission East (ME), Naripokkho, Network of South Sudanese Survivors in Uganda (NoSSSU), South Sudanese Network of Survivors (SSNS), Steward Women (STW), and Youth Initiative Against Terrorism (YIAT).

Coalition Nationale des Associations de Victimes (CNAV), CSO Network, Grace Agenda, Mouvement des Survivantes de Centrafrique (MOSUCA), LIMPAL, Mouvement National des Survivantes de Viols et violences Sexuelles en RDC (MNSVS-RDC), SEMA, Survivors’ Voices Network, Utu Wetu.

Donors

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Front cover photo: Sawsa and Aliye at the salon they opened together in Reyhanlı, Türkiye, December 2023 ©Katie van der Werf / GSF

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