

Interim reparative measures project with survivors
of conflict-related sexual violence

Guinea

Impact report

January 2026



In memory of the survivors who passed away during the project and of Abdul Gadir Diallo, former president of our partner Organisation Guinéenne de Défense des Droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen (OGDH). His strategic guidance and valuable insights were key to steering this project forward. May this report serve to honour their legacy.

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Acronyms

AVIPA

Association des victimes, parents et amis du 28 septembre 2009 (Association of Victims, Parents, and Friends of 28 September 2009)

CSO

Civil society organisation

GSF

Global Survivors Fund

ICC

International Criminal Court

IRM

Interim reparative measures

OGDH

Organisation Guinéenne de Défense des Droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen (Guinean organisation for human and citizen's rights)

PDSQ

Psychiatric and Diagnostic Screening Questionnaire

PTSD

Post-traumatic stress disorder

NGO

Non-governmental organisation

NSCR

Netherlands Institute for the Study of Crime and Law Enforcement

SEMA

Global Network of Victims and Survivors to End Wartime Sexual Violence

OSRSG-SVC

The Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict

UN

United Nations

UNIIC

United Nations International Investigation Commission

WHO

World Health Organization

WHOQOL-BREF

World Health Organization Quality of Life questionnaire – brief version

Introduction

What are interim reparative measures projects?

The Global Survivors Fund (GSF) was founded in October 2019 by Dr Denis Mukwege and Ms Nadia Murad, 2018 Nobel Peace Prize Laureates. GSF was created in response to the call for reparations made by survivors of conflict-related sexual violence gathered in the Global Network of Victims and Survivors to end Wartime Sexual Violence ([SEMA](#)). GSF aims to improve access to reparation for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence worldwide, seeking to fill a gap long identified by survivors.

GSF and civil society partners implement interim reparative measures (IRM) projects in countries where survivors have not received reparation. The term 'interim reparative measures', coined by GSF, refers to measures designed to respond to the harm caused by conflict-related sexual violence and its impact on survivors' lives.

These projects are built on three main principles:

A. The co-creation

with survivors of every phase of the project, including its framing, implementation, and evaluation: this is a project with, not only for, survivors;

B. A multistakeholder approach

that brings together different actors including survivors, civil society, experts, government and members of the international community. The project is overseen by a Steering Committee (composed of at least 40 per cent survivors) that provides strategic and programmatic guidance;

C. A contextualised approach

ensuring that all measures are adapted to the specific social, cultural, and legal context of each survivor community.

Interim reparative measures projects include a strong advocacy component, aimed at the State and other duty-bearers, to contribute to the development of survivor-centred reparation policies for all survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, and other victims. They show States that providing survivor-centred reparation is urgent, feasible, and affordable, and has a transformative and lasting impact on the lives of survivors.

Conflict-related sexual violence in Guinea

On 28 September 2009, security forces violently repressed a peaceful demonstration against the self-proclaimed military junta at the 28 September Stadium in Conakry, detaining, killing, and raping protesters and committing other acts of sexual violence and torture.

The United Nations' International Investigation Commission (UNIIC), responsible for establishing the facts and circumstances of the events of 28 September 2009, reported that rape and other acts of sexual violence were committed almost immediately after national security forces entered the stadium, and that women were taken from the stadium and held as sexual slaves. The commission concluded that crimes against humanity had been committed by security forces, including rape, sexual slavery, and sexual violence involving sexual mutilation, and identified at least 109 victims.¹ It recommended measures of compensation, rehabilitation and symbolic reparation, highlighting the need of medical and psychological care for victims of sexual violence.²

The International Criminal Court (ICC) opened a preliminary examination. Under its scrutiny, a national criminal investigation was carried out leading to the prosecution of 13 alleged perpetrators, including former president Daddis Camara and other high-ranking officials of the regime.³ Thanks to relentless efforts from victims, their lawyers, some States, human rights organisations such as *Association des victimes, parents et amis du 28 septembre 2009* (AVIPA), *Organisation Guinéenne de Défense des Droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen* (OGDH), and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (OSRSG-SVC), the trial opened on 28 September 2022. It ended on 31 July 2024 with the conviction of most of the accused and a reparation order for civil parties. However, the reparation order has not been fully implemented, with some civil parties still waiting reparations. A presidential pardon for the main defendants has raised legitimate concerns.

Guinea was chosen as GSF's first pilot location for two primary reasons. One was the feasibility of being able to deliver interim reparative measures relatively quickly, working with a small number of survivors. Another reason was the impact of a trip to Guinea by our co-founder, Dr Denis Mukwege, who visited survivors of the 28 September in 2017. Their "extremely fragile state of health" and "the terrible burden" of carrying the scars of conflict-related sexual violence, as described by Dr Mukwege, made clear the need for action for survivors in Guinea.

“

I was outraged because I couldn't understand that attending a rally could lead to deaths and injuries, that women were going to be raped in the open air. I had to see it with my own eyes to understand that it wasn't a film. I was completely traumatised.

- A survivor

¹ Report of the International Commission of Inquiry mandated to establish the facts and circumstances of the events of 28 September 2009 in Guinea, S/2009/693, 18/12/2009, para. 62, <https://www.refworld.org/reference/countryrep/unsct/2009/en/71541>.

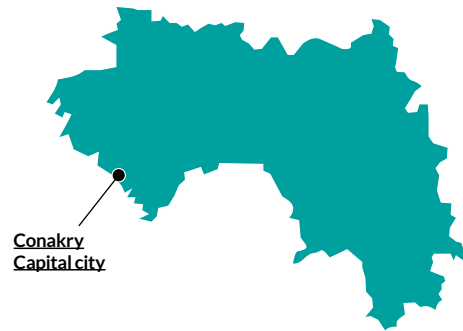
² Op.cit, para 270.

³ The preliminary examination was opened on 14 October 2009, and closed on 23 September 2022, given the opening of the long-awaited trial on these events.

The project

1. Interim reparative measures project

GSF's project in Guinea was the first interim reparative measures pilot project and ran from 2019 to 2023. Since then, GSF, partners and survivors have continued to advocate for comprehensive state-led reparations in the country. Activities were largely held in Conakry, where most survivors live.



GSF held individual meetings with 35 survivors to design the pilot project. The meetings revealed the deeply-rooted stigma they faced, with 34 abandoned by their spouses or spouse's family. All of them lost their jobs and their homes. Most were left alone to raise their children. In some cases, their older children were also taken from them and they were forbidden to see them, leaving survivors only with their children born as a result of conflict-related sexual violence. Survivors also described family members refusing to speak to them, and being cut off from the wider community. One project participant, who was hospitalised for more than two years as a result of sexual violence, said only her sister maintained contact. Another survivor, who had two young children, said members of her community told her husband of the sexual violence she suffered. He since *“says he regrets marrying me,”* she told the project team.

“

My husband kept my two elder children, and forbid me from seeing them. Every day I pay to make sure that my children can eat at school. I wait for them outside to see them, or I call a neighbour to talk to them.

- A survivor

To deliver the project, GSF turned to AVIPA, an organisation created just after the attack on protesters, and OGDH, the only Guinean human rights organisation to provide immediate support to survivors. OGDH and AVIPA co-chaired the coordination team, that included four focal persons accompanying survivors on a regular basis, as well as two psychologists, and two focal points for medical and psychological care. Working with these two organisations, which had long-standing experience with survivors, was key to gaining survivors' trust. Their local expertise was also essential to delivering individual reparative measures during the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2021 military coup d'état.

“

I would like to thank all the project workers who spare no effort to dry our tears. They remind us that despite everything, we still have our place in society.⁴

- A survivor

⁴ GSF, *Nos vies d'après, Témoignages des survivantes de violences sexuelles, Stade du 28 Septembre, Conakry, Guinée, 2021*, p. 153.

An inclusive eight-member Steering Committee was the main decision-making body. It oversaw the design and implementation of the project, providing strategic and technical guidance to the project team. The Committee identified survivors and validated plans for individual and collective interim reparative measures, ensuring the project remained survivor-centred and co-created with them. It included three survivor representatives, the presidents of AVIPA and OGDH, the lead lawyer of the civil parties in ongoing criminal proceedings against perpetrators, and a psychologist with experience in working with survivors. A representative from the UN Team of Experts for Guinea of the OSRSG-SVC sat on the Committee with a consultative status.

Survivors elected three representatives, one for each of the three main ethnic groups in Guinea (Soussou, Poular and Peulh). They rejected the inclusion of authorities on the Committee due to a lack of trust.

The Committee established participants' eligibility criteria. It decided to include survivors residing abroad as well as dependents of survivors who passed away before and during the project.

The Steering Committee identified 158 survivors, six of whom lived abroad (in France, Senegal and Belgium). Thirteen had passed away before the project and eight survivors died during the project. They were represented by a dependent.

Their ages ranged from 20 to 70 years old, with a mean age of around 48 years. More than two thirds were single, divorced, widowed or separated and were also the sole providers and caregivers for their households.⁵ The average family size in Guinea is comprised of at least 6.5 members per household, meaning that 1,027 family members benefited from the project.⁶

Co-creation at the core

Only survivors know what reparation means to them, which interim reparative measures they need to receive, and how. The survivor-centred approach places survivors at the centre of this process by prioritising their rights, needs, and wishes, and ensures they are treated equally with dignity and respect. Co-creation goes even further, enabling survivors to have an effective influence on decision-making and play an active role in conceptualising, designing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the measures they received. Throughout the project, the approach and activities were both discussed in groups and individually with each survivor.

During the initial scoping, the aim was to gather their views on the design of the project and to better understand their living conditions and therefore their needs. Survivors co-designed the interview guide and the methodology to identify participants, as well as defining the interim reparative measures and shaping the composition of the Steering Committee.

Once established, the Steering Committee discussed and validated these protocols. Survivor representatives on the Committee regularly interacted with all survivors participating in the project to make strategic decisions.

Once formally identified as participants, each survivor defined their individual package of interim reparative measures and how to best implement this for them. Suggestions included peer-to-peer support, accompaniment from the project team, and training on how to manage financial compensation.

Survivors also discussed risks and mitigating measures, including to limit pressure or potential threats from acquaintances or former spouses, as well as strategies that aimed to ensure the durable impact of interim reparative measures, such as financial literacy training. To do that, they also reflected on the nature and consequences of conflict-related sexual violence, stigma, their right to reparation, and the importance, purpose, and transformative impact of interim reparative measures.

The whole co-creation process is reparative; seeking, claiming and defining reparative measures is part of the recognition of survivors as rights-holders.

⁵ NSCR internal report. *A research tool to examine the effects of the interim reparative measures of the GSF on survivors of conflict-related sexual violence. Findings Interim report in Guinea, 2021.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

Identification and recognition of survivors

Based on survivors' guidance⁷ and on best practice, the Steering Committee applied the principle of good faith and the presumption of victimhood to identify someone as a survivor of conflict-related sexual violence. The burden for documenting cases and gathering evidence rested with the Steering Committee. The identity of survivors was not known by the Committee at the time of reviewing files.

The identification process was designed to be reparative, survivor-centred, and to do no harm. An identification questionnaire was completed during individual interviews with a psychologist and case worker. Many survivors chose to share their personal stories, sometimes for the first time, feeling safe and secure. Survivors were able to receive psychological care during and after the interviews. If in doubt, the Committee established subcommittees to meet with survivors or any person acting on their behalf. The subcommittee was composed of survivors, the lawyer and the psychologist mentioned above.

The composition of the sub-committee, along with their deep knowledge of the events and the survivors' lives since those events, was decisive in the identification process. Given its expertise, the committee was prompt to find 20 individuals ineligible for interim reparative measures following the submission of false testimonies and documents.

Identification took place between February and June 2020, and was extended until September to include survivors who came forward later. Confidentiality was a cornerstone of the process. Being assured that their participation would remain confidential, even from their husbands, families and communities, survivors who were initially hesitant to submit applications were able to join. Some survivors also needed to see concrete proof of progress to have confidence that interim reparative measures in a survivor-centred manner were possible.

Survivor representatives and leaders played a very active role in raising awareness about the project, reaching out to survivors to explain the project and encourage them to join. They also played a key role in the delivery of financial literacy training, working to support survivors in this process and ensure they could attend sessions.

The Steering Committee designed methodology to identify dependents to receive interim reparative measures on behalf of deceased survivors. They applied national family law but interpreted it in a survivor-centred way, excluding any husband or relative who had rejected or stigmatised survivors. As they were identified, each survivor signed a letter of acknowledgment in the presence of a psychologist, recognising their status as survivors and listing the interim reparative measures they chose. This form of symbolic recognition was crucial for them to mark a new beginning.

⁷ Survivors discussed the following questions:

- How to submit testimonies related to sexual violence?
- Should there be a unified procedure for all survivors, or different procedures for those part of AVIPA or registered as civil parties?
- Should survivors who have supporting document also give their testimony?
- What questions should include the identification protocol?
- What supporting documents could be asked to survivors?
- What should be the process in case of doubt?

2. Individual interim reparative measures



**Yesterday is different from today.
I am a lady now.**

-A survivor⁸

Compensation

All survivors received an equal amount of financial compensation in three instalments, between June 2020 and June 2021. This was paid to their personal account opened with Wakili, a microfinance organisation, which ran financial literacy training sessions in parallel, over the course of a year. This aimed to support the best management of the funds and to protect survivors from exploitation. The training was essential in helping survivors learn how to budget, save, and invest their money. It was tailored to survivors' specific situations, focusing on areas such as agriculture, textiles, and other small business ventures that could provide a sustainable income. It also included sessions on broader topics such as gender-based violence, protection, and how to obtain HIV treatment.

Survivors and the Steering Committee discussed the necessity of having a system to manage financial compensation and protect survivors. Initially, many were confident that they would be able to manage their funding without any support. Some, however, expressed fear of losing control over the funds, and that their confidentiality may not be respected. Others welcomed access to dedicated support to manage and save funds. This was considered a measure to mitigate risks, particularly to protect them against potential pressure from their families or former husbands. After intense discussion, they nominated a survivor representative to meet with Wakili and the project team to share their concerns directly and better understand how it operates. Survivors then asked for a Q&A session with Wakili staff, before agreeing to use the NGO's services. *"The training helped me not to waste my money"*, said one participant⁹, while another described it as the most important part of the project.

For survivors, financial compensation was about reclaiming control over their lives. They started or expanded projects in agriculture, textiles, fishing, and trade. Some decided to buy land or build or renovate their homes. Many of them paid for their children or grandchildren's education. Some took advantage of micro-credit loans to expand their businesses further.



What do I feel after having received the first instalment? A feeling of acknowledgement.

-A survivor



The project has brought a big change for me, especially in the way I can now support my children's education, because before I had a lot of concerns about that.

-A survivor

⁸ GSF, Nos vies d'après, op.cit., p.71.

“

These interim reparative measures allowed me to get back on track. I am truly grateful. It allowed me to restart my soap-making activity by ordering a machine and a table, and thus I was able to make ends meet. I am now able to save money with Wakili.

- A survivor



Survivors make soap as part of their interim reparative measures, Conakry. April 2021 © Gazelle Gaignaire

⁹ ibid p.61.

Psychological care and group sessions

123 survivors received individual (29) and group (94) therapy sessions between June 2020 to September 2021.

Weekly individual meetings addressed severe symptoms such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and depression. Bi-weekly group sessions created a safe space for survivors to share their experiences, reducing stigma and fostering mutual support. Home visits were conducted in and around Conakry, particularly with survivors unable to attend regular sessions, as well as online meetings for those living abroad. Family mediation sessions further aided in repairing relationships strained by trauma and stigma.

In total, the project involved 269 individual therapy sessions, 60 group sessions, and 421 home visits. Different therapy techniques including psychoeducation, cognitive restructuring, and relaxation helped survivors understand and manage their symptoms, rebuild self-worth, and reconnect with their families.

“

Before I didn't even dare to talk to what happened to me at the stadium. Thanks to the therapy, today I can talk about it. This is also the case for most of my friends.

- A survivor

“

The therapy allowed me to be in healing, not just physically, but emotionally. I was able to reconnect with my children, to rebuild the bonds that had been broken.

- A survivor

Medical care

The Steering Committee decided that a medical fund would cover survivors' medical treatment for conditions unrelated to conflict-related sexual violence, as many survivors had a wide range of healthcare needs. It underscored the project's commitment to addressing the holistic healthcare of survivors, which was important given their lack of access to medical care for decades, largely due to financial constraints. It provided a lump sum to survivors, and a staff member facilitated the organisation and financing of medical appointments, transportation arrangements, and follow-up care, ensuring that survivors received comprehensive support throughout their healthcare journey. A total of 150 survivors used the medical fund for consultations or treatment. In addition, the project covered the cost of treatment for all conditions linked to conflict-related sexual violence.

Over the course of the project, 109 survivors had gynecological consultations, 90 survivors received treatment for gynaecological conditions, and six had gynaecological surgeries. Some 91 survivors had also other medical needs, such as diabetes, hypertension, and ophthalmological conditions. 20 survivors started HIV treatment, 12 of whom tested positive after being tested during the project. Eight survivors received Hepatitis B treatment. In total, 629 medical appointments were carried out, mostly from July 2020 to April 2022.

“

It was with these interim reparative measures that I started going to hospital. Before, when I got sick, I would lie down at home and mix Nescafé and paracetamol.

- A survivor¹⁰

¹⁰ *ibid*, p.49.

3. Collective interim reparative measures

All survivors expressed their wishes for collective reparative measures through individual interviews and focus group discussions. A specific day was dedicated to these exchanges on 14 December 2020, when survivors selected two collective measures: a book of testimonies and a safe space.



Cover of the photo-testimony book including testimonies and pictures of survivors participating in the project, launched on 8 December 2021 in Conakry. December 2021 © GSF

Inspired by the Photovoice evaluation, 123 survivors decided to publish their personal stories and portraits as part of their collective interim reparative measures. A Guinean journalist and photographer participated in the production of the book, taking photos of the survivors and helping them to write their testimonies. The images captured the beauty that some survivors said they had lost since the events of 28 September, but had since regained with the project.

This book, with a foreword by Dr Denis Mukwege, is a collective memory tool; it answers the survivors' call to be recognised and shows their resilience and how they were able to rebuild their lives. The launch took place in the presence of government, United Nations (UN) and diplomatic representatives in Conakry on 8 December 2021. This event was organised with the support of the Office of the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. The survivor who presented the book to government authorities explained that this was the first time that she had spoken out about what she suffered. Survivors received individual copies of book in a formal, joyful ceremony.



I want our stories to be known by the entire world.

- A survivor

As not all survivors could take part in the Photovoice workshop¹¹, other participants asked to create a new activity to also be able to express themselves through photos. A project officer accompanied them to take pictures of meaningful events or positive or negative aspects of their lives that they discussed in groups. They were able to show how their lives have changed since 28 September 2009. Survivors felt that this was a unique and reparative activity which created more solidarity between them.



Survivors participate in a Photovoice-style workshop in Conakry. April 2021 © Gazelle Gaignaire

“

For the first time since the events, I was able to go back near the 28 September stadium, and to take a picture. I'm very proud of that, to have taken that step.

- A survivor

¹¹ The methodology used limits the number of Photovoice participants to 25 survivors.

Survivors also created a survivors' centre in Maférinyah, a town in the Kindia region of western Guinea. The centre, as one participant described, was designed to be a place to “gather, organise activities and gatherings, sell products, or simply spend some time with one another.” It was envisaged to welcome other survivors and “give back what we have received, to unite together.

Partners chose the best location for the centre alongside survivors. After buying the land, they built the centre in accordance with survivors' choices of activities. Maférinyah was chosen for both its proximity to survivors and the availability of cheaper land.

The centre was inaugurated on 28 September 2023, in the presence of the Minister of Justice, ambassadors, UN representatives, national authorities, and all survivors and partners, including all four survivor activists on GSF 's board. It provided significant recognition to survivors who presented a call for state-led reparations during the ceremony. The first commemorative plaque bearing the names of those who were killed at the stadium on 28 September 2009 was also unveiled during the event. Following the inauguration, France committed to funding the centre's activities to ensure its sustainability.

The centre serves as a safe space, where survivors continue to carry out their activities. It hosts collective memory exhibitions, visits and public and commemorative events. Survivors remain central to its governance.



Survivors participants and GSF staff plant a mango tree during the inauguration of the survivors' centre in Maférinyah, Guinea. September 2023 © Nell Yacef/GSF

4. Survivor-led advocacy and survivor-centred technical support

The project provided a foundation for survivors to advocate for their rights in other spaces, including engaging with the state on their right to reparation. The co-creation approach strengthened survivors' confidence in their ability to speak with one voice, articulate their needs, and demand their rights. A robust communication strategy also ensured that survivors' voices were highlighted through social media campaigns, videos and press releases.¹² Survivors now have the proof that reparation is possible, feasible, and affordable. They could also personally testify to the impact that reparation can have on their lives. The project's achievements proved that our concept for reparations was feasible, forming the basis of our advocacy, aimed at the State, partners then sought to scale up by persuading the state to adopt a comprehensive reparation policy to benefit many thousands of survivors of human rights violations.

During the project, a series of advocacy initiatives amplified survivors' voices and ensured their priorities were heard by their communities, key stakeholders, such as the UN, embassies, several civil society organisations (CSOs), and the State. Survivors, GSF, AVIPA and OGDH convened a series of meetings with the Minister of Justice, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and embassies to ensure that they understood the principles underlying the project and were made aware of the rights of survivors and the obligations of the State. Survivors expressed their needs and expectations, particularly regarding the organisation of the trial on the 28 September events and the adoption of a comprehensive national reparations policy.¹³ After several meetings with the project Steering Committee, the Ministry of Justice committed to implementing urgent medical reparations. A promise of funding was made and a dedicated account established.¹⁴ GSF also provided technical support to the Trial Steering Committee a joint order adopted in 2024, amending an order from the 2022 trial, to provide urgent compensation for medical and psychological damage to civil parties and, as a priority, to survivors of sexual violence. However, these measures were never implemented.

A meeting between the President of AVIPA, GSF and the Minister of Justice at the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative conference in November 2022 opened the door to a new phase of collaboration. The minister invited GSF to Guinea to convene discussions on the possibility of establishing a national reparation policy. In March 2023, GSF facilitated this event in Conakry. The event brought together the minister, his cabinet and representatives from other ministries with survivors and CSOs. It provided an opportunity for sharing and reflecting on the lessons learnt and best practices from the project, and comparative lessons regarding reparation policies in other countries. These discussions concluded with the minister officially requesting GSF's assistance in developing a draft law on reparation.

Co-creating a reparation law

The first event informing the drafting process was a high-level exchange in September 2023, where Guinean survivors shared their experiences of receiving interim reparative measures and their hopes for what should be included in the law. These discussions made it clear that there was a need for a comprehensive reparation programme reaching beyond the survivors of the 28 September events, to cover all survivors of human rights violations.

Survivors shared their vision for national reparations in a series of workshops organised by GSF, OGDH and AVIPA in April, September, and October 2024. This culminated in a high-level workshop where survivors presented their thoughts to CSOs, the Minister of Justice, and representatives of the ministries of economy, budget, finance, women protection, education, security, and the United Nations Independent Expert on Mali.

Through the co-creation approach, survivors involved in the project gained or strengthened their knowledge on what forms of reparation they needed the most, and how this should be delivered. They successfully made the case for incorporating many of the elements and principles of the pilot into the national reparation law.

¹² Refer to GSF web page on Guinea <https://www.globalsurvivorsfund.org/our-work/guinea>.

¹³ The Minister of Justice established a Steering Committee to organise the trial and set up a compensation fund in 2018. The Expert of the OSRSG-SVC presented a preliminary note concerning reparations following the events in Guinea on 28 September 2009 to the Minister of Justice, on 12 December 2014.

¹⁴ Minister of Justice, Joint Order A/2022/2477/MDJH/MB/MEFP/CAB/SGG on the modalities for the management of the resources and expenses of the special fund for the organisation of the trial of the events of 28 September 2009 and the special fund for the compensation of the victims of the events of 28 September 2009.

Some examples include:

- The law adopted the pilot's simplified survivor identification procedure, which is respectful of survivors' integrity and the principle of good faith. Given the difficulty of obtaining administrative or medical certificates for older offences, the draft law also places more emphasis on testimonies of civil and traditional authorities (such as community leaders), social workers, and members of NGOs that can support survivors' accounts;
- To ensure fairness and transparency in the validation process, the draft law provides an internal appeal process. It also requires authorities to give reasons for refusing a survivor's registration and allows full access to files in a language understood by the survivor;
- The draft law also draws on the solutions provided in the pilot in light of the stigmatisation suffered by survivors when accessing conventional medical care. Survivors are given a choice in the healthcare options and professionals they would like to use. They receive an additional amount of compensation and will be reimbursed for medical costs when they are unable to access free state services.



For us, it's new to participate directly in the writing of a law and a decree. Usually we are not asked, or just to approve a text.

- Asmaou Diallo, President of AVIPA

Active survivor participation was visible throughout, from the initial call for such a law to workshops with stakeholders and technical meetings with legal professionals. This process was sustained by capacity building sessions and debriefings with AVIPA members. These meetings and trainings, as described by AVIPA Project Coordinator Souleymane Camara, were carried out “to improve personal expression, break isolation, and highlight the importance of the involvement of survivors in the drafting process of the draft law on reparation.”

Survivor participation in all stages of the project strengthened AVIPA's ability to explain the particular challenges faced by survivors of sexual violence, and convinced authorities and other victims' associations of the need to treat such cases as a priority. During the workshops with CSOs in October 2024 and then during the public presentation of the draft law in December 2024, all parties were able to reach a consensus on the need to prioritise survivors of sexual violence, especially because of the degree of stigma they face. At the time of writing, the law has not yet been formally passed.. It has been validated by the Ministry of Justice and the Interministerial Council, but must still be submitted to parliament by the prime minister and signed by the president.

It is important to note that the active participation of survivors involved in the project, and their direct role in advancing the proposed legislative framework in collaboration with other victims' associations, marked a turning point in the dynamics within civil society. While previously the survivors of the events of 28 September were sometimes perceived as being unfairly prioritised by the government, the commitment of AVIPA to collective advocacy and an inclusive reparations agenda made it possible to challenge this perception. By ensuring that all survivors had a voice in the policy formation process, they demonstrated their ability to defend an inclusive and united goal. This has reinforced their central role, consolidating their legitimacy with other associations and confirmed that they are now recognised as actors capable of advocating not only for themselves, but also for the benefit of all victims of serious human rights violations.

The impact

The impact evaluation of the interim reparative measures on survivors' lives was developed with and conducted by the Netherlands Institute for the Study of Crime and Law Enforcement (NSCR). The evaluation process began with the Photovoice approach, where survivors answered questions using photographs from their daily lives. The photos were then used in concept mapping sessions with survivors, which helped to define the key themes for them, and concepts that were ultimately integrated into a subsequent survey conducted with more participants. This process ensured that survivors had an active role in participating and guiding the evaluations.

A survey measured several predefined areas, including individual wellbeing, through the World Health Organization Quality of Life Assessment - Brief version (WHOQOL-BREF) and a Psychiatric and Diagnostic Screening Questionnaire (PDSQ) - also referred to as the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder-8 measurement (PTSD-8). Other concepts, such as social relationships, were evaluated through the frequency of social contacts and questions relating to stigma. The survey also assessed survivors' perceptions of their participation in the pilot and their experiences of recognition, justice, and dignity. This innovative approach ensures that the methodology is dynamic and responsive, capturing data on both established and newly identified concepts.

Twenty survivors participated in the Photovoice and concept mapping phase of the impact evaluation, while 98 survivors participated in the survey, in line with NSCR's methodology. The evaluation was structured in three measurements. The same survivors took part in all three rounds of data collection to enable comparisons of changes in their lives over time that may be attributed to the project. The baseline measurement, conducted before survivors received their interim reparative measures, occurred between December 2019 and June 2020. The interim measurement carried out during the implementation of the measures, took place between April and July 2021, and the final measurement, completed after survivors received their interim reparative measures, took place between August and November 2021.



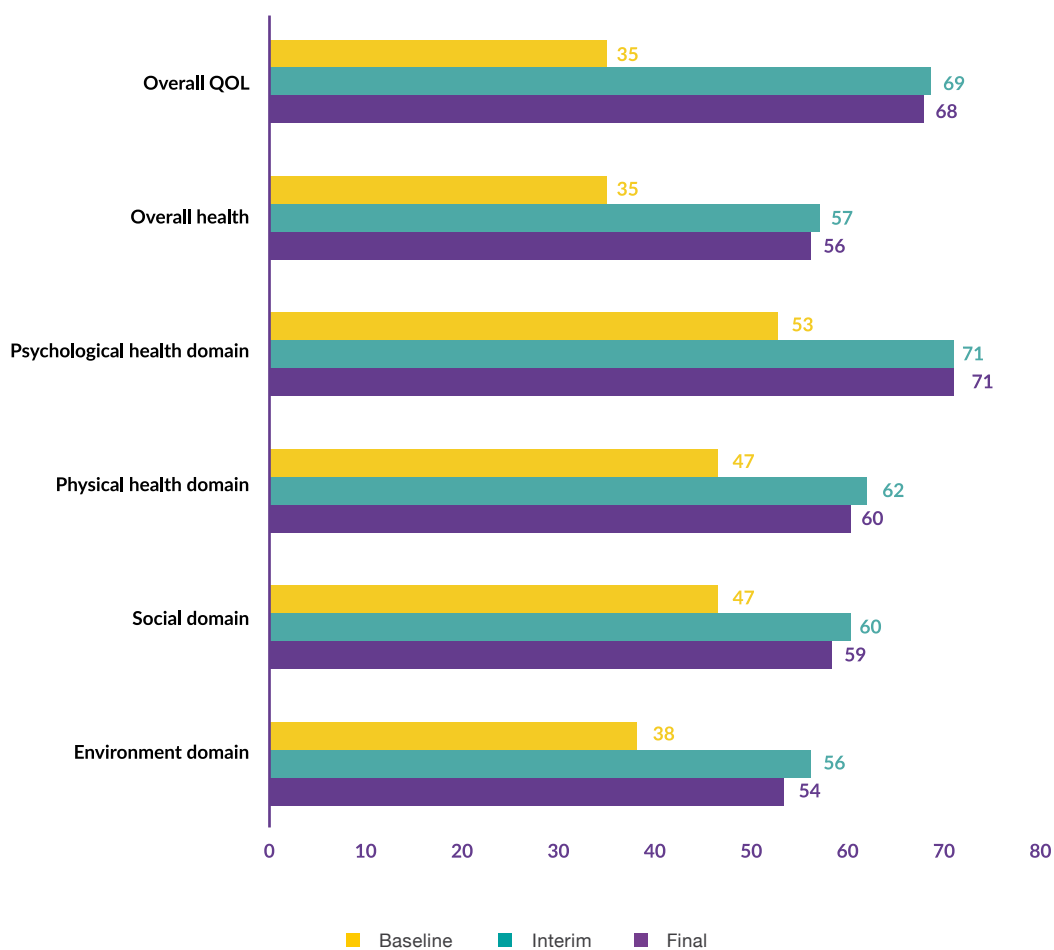
Survivors and a researcher pictured during a Photovoice exercise in Conakry, February 2020 © Karine Bonneau/GSF

1. Individual wellbeing

Changes in individual wellbeing were measured through the WHOQOL assessment. The WHO defines quality of life “as an individual’s perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns.”

The project significantly enhanced participants' overall quality of life, health, environment and social wellbeing. Survivors experienced an improvement in all domains from the baseline to the interim measurement, which was mostly sustained in the final measurement.

FIGURE 1. IMPROVEMENT IN WHOQOL OVERALL SCORE AND DOMAIN SCORES
(on a range of low to high (0-100) between measurements)



2. Family wellbeing

The second element measured in the impact evaluation is people's perception of their family wellbeing after receiving interim reparative measures. In Guinea, this was closely linked to financial wellbeing.

Surveyed survivors reported that their financial status had moderately improved as a result of the financial compensation (a 2.85 score out of 5)¹, and also reported improvements in relation to family wellbeing and social status (Figure 2). Photovoice showed one important issue for survivors was their ability to send their children to school. This ability to provide opportunities for future generations led to feelings of happiness and pride for the survivors. The project also allowed survivors to re-engage with their families by participating in family gatherings and offering both financial and emotional support.

Improvements in their financial situation are attributed to the financial support and budget training provided. However, participants expressed limited confidence in achieving financial independence, with a mean score of 2.3 out of 5.

3. Social support

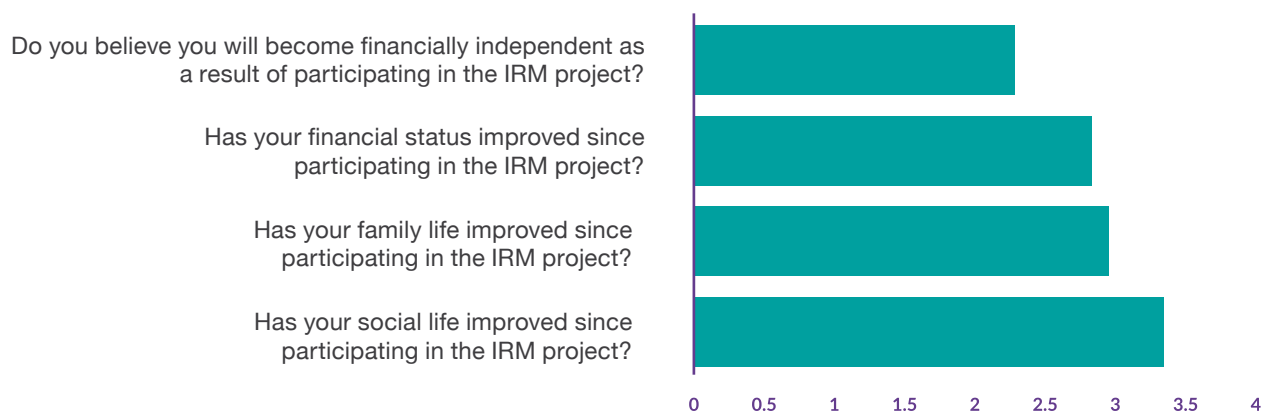
Before the project, survivors mentioned that they had social contact through their families and their participating in AVIPA activities. However, many were also abandoned after suffering conflict-related sexual violence.

Quantitative findings reinforce that contact between survivors and family, friends, and community members alike began to increase significantly during the delivery of interim reparative measures, and kept increasing. For survivors, interacting with family and the community became less negative and anxiety-provoking, and involved more trust than before the implementation of the measures. Survivors also reported experiencing less stigma. Participants reported the highest perceived improvement in social life, with a mean score of 3.35.

The question whether interim reparative measures may lead to further stigmatisation was widely discussed in meetings with survivors. They clearly stated that the project helped improve their social status and reduce stigmatisation. Before the project, they explained that they were so strongly stigmatised, gossiped about, rejected, and therefore impoverished, that their personal situations could not get much worse. On the other hand, they expressed that this project helped them to have a more normal life, to build networks of solidarity, strengthen their self-confidence, and be valued by family and community members. They also highlighted that the project affirmed the harm done to them and educated the community on what they had suffered, and the rights to which they are entitled. For them, this was a form of personal and social acknowledgement.

FIGURE 2. IMPROVEMENTS IN FINANCIAL STATUS, FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL LIFE

(Mean scores (on a scale of 1 = not at all, to 5 = totally))



4. Community acceptance

Due to their experiences, survivors of conflict-related sexual violence often face isolation and stigma from their communities. Consequently, the impact evaluation assessed whether the interim reparative measures affected survivors' perceptions of their surrounding community.

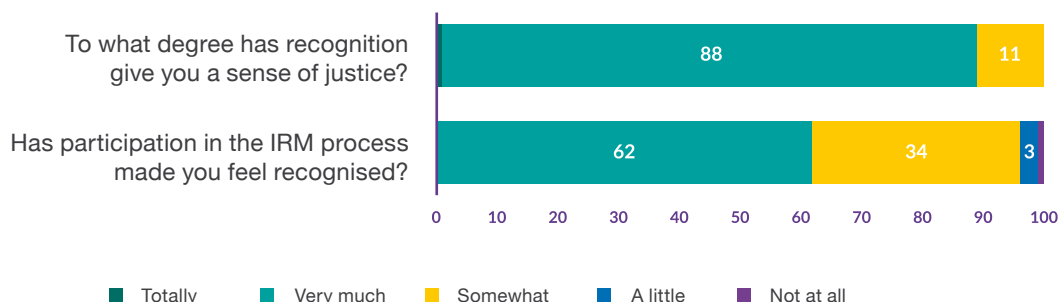
After receiving interim reparative measures, survivors felt they were now seen and approached “as a person” by community members. Their improved individual physical and psychological wellbeing, and the positive changes in their financial situation, made it possible for them to live up to the expectations of attending social events and ceremonies. Survivors mentioned feeling more confident and beautiful, once more investing in the way they look and dress. The sense of beauty emerged strongly during Photovoice. It concluded that feelings of being ashamed could be alleviated when survivors embraced the importance of self-worth and beauty, with the project playing a significant role in restoring their confidence.

5. Justice and recognition

Interim reparative measures, while not the fulfillment of the right to reparation, provide some sense of recognition and justice to survivors of conflict-related sexual violence. The impact evaluation integrated questions to measure whether survivors felt a sense of recognition or justice through their participation.

In Guinea, 62 per cent of respondents involved in the project reported feeling a strong sense of recognition. Furthermore, 88 per cent of respondents felt they had attained a strong sense of justice through their participation in the project.

FIGURE 3. SURVIVORS PERCEPTIONS ON RECOGNITION, JUSTICE AND DIGNITY
(Mean scores (on a scale of 0 = not at all, to 100 = totally))



6. Survivor's co-creation of the project

To assess the extent of co-creation in the pilot, the impact evaluation measures survivor awareness of project details and their involvement. Results show that participants were happy with the opportunities they had to express their opinions throughout the project, as well as the high degree of value and respect afforded to them. Mutual communication was strong, reflected in good awareness of the project from an early stage. A remarkable 99 per cent of participants felt that participating in this process had changed their lives in some way, while 97 per cent expressed satisfaction with the results of the project.

Conclusion

The project in Guinea was GSF's first interim reparative project, and a unique joint effort to implement a new survivor-centred approach.

Co-creation with survivors was the cornerstone of the pilot. It gave them a strong sense of ownership and empowered them to advocate for their rights, enhancing the reparative value of the project.

Survivors valued the improvement of their well-being, mental and physical health, their financial autonomy and capacity to develop activities, support their children and grandchildren, the increased family wellbeing, and new respect and consideration from the community. They felt more beautiful. The project broke their isolation resulting from the stigma and rejection after the events. Collective reparative measures enabled them to consolidate their voices, and express and assert their right to reparation, and are now part of Guinea's collective memory.

Survivors led advocacy alongside technical support from GSF, OGDH and AVIPA also resulted in the co-creation of a national law on reparation that is pending approval, an example of how smaller-scale action can provide the foundation for national systemic change.

Co-created interim reparative measures genuinely delivered with creativity and can transform survivors' lives and trigger State action. They also show that reparation is feasible, urgent and affordable.

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