

**Submission to the Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation
and guarantees of non-recurrence**

**Achieving the SDGs through people and victim-centred transitional justice measures
in post authoritarian and post conflict settings**

INTRODUCTION

1. In response to the Special Rapporteur's call for inputs on the impact of people and victim-centred transitional justice measures on progress made towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Global Survivors Fund (GSF) makes the present submission addressing question 4 of the questionnaire, notably to illustrate how GSF's unique survivor-centred approach and co-creation model to achieve reparations applied to different initiatives are directly contributing to advancing the SDGs 4, 5, 8, 10 and 16.

2. GSF was launched in October 2019 by Dr Denis Mukwege and Nadia Murad, Nobel Peace Prize laureates 2018. Its mission is to enhance access to reparations for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) around the globe, thus responding to a gap long identified by survivors. GSF works on three interconnected fronts: GSF **acts** to provide interim reparative measures in situations where states or other parties are unable or unwilling to meet their responsibilities; GSF **advocates** for duty bearers as well as the international community to develop reparations programmes; it also **guides** states and civil society by providing expertise and technical support for designing reparations programmes. GSF's survivor-centred approach is the cornerstone of its work, and its novel co-creation model is unique.

3. "Reparations are what survivors want most yet receive least"¹. Despite being often overlooked by states, reparation is the most victim-focused pillar of transitional justice and, as such, provides numerous opportunities to include survivors as key agents in such processes. Numerous UN documents highlight the importance of adopting a survivor-centred approach²,

¹ Pramila Patten, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Opening Statement at the Event to Commemorate the 10-Year Anniversary of the Mandate on Sexual Violence in Conflict, New York, 30 October 2019. <<https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/statement/srsg-svc-pramila-patten-opening-statement-event-to-commemorate-the-anniversary-of-the-mandate/>> accessed 22 April 2022.

² Security Council Resolution, S/RES/2467 (2019), 23 April 2019; Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence, A/HRC/42/45, 11 July 2019; UNSG Guidance Note on Transitional Justice (2010), UNSG Guidance Note on Reparation (2014) and UN Women's "Violence against Women in Conflict, Post-conflict and Emergency Settings" (2013). The 2020 Security Council Open Debate: Sexual Violence in Conflict also paid special attention to the topic, which was included in the event's concept note.

but clear guidance on what this concept means, particularly when transitional justice mechanisms, including reparations, are at stake, is lacking.

4. By sharing our experiences implementing GSF's unique co-creation model and demonstrating how it truly transforms survivors' lives and their communities, we depart from participation as mere consultation and advocate for survivors' full participation in and ownership of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of any reparative process. GSF submits that, when survivors exercise their agency and lead reparation processes, important opportunities to advancing the SDGs can be capitalised upon, as well as fulfilling the goals of transitional justice.

PRESENTING THE MODEL

5. GSF's projects are not only developed *for* survivors, but *co-created with* survivors, enabling them to influence every key decision during the design, implementation and evaluation of reparation processes, either as part of ongoing transitional justice processes or to trigger such processes in the future. Thus, survivors are not considered as mere passive beneficiaries, but as **active participants** and rightsholders³.

6. By ensuring CRSV survivors play a key role throughout the various phases of reparation processes, the exclusion, marginalisation, and stigmatisation they often suffer is effectively challenged. Thus, GSF's co-creation model contributes to SDGs 10 and 16, more specifically to Goals 10.2 (empower and include economically, socially and politically all minorities) and 16.7 (ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels).

7. Thanks to survivors' inputs, our projects are carefully tailored to each context and to each survivor's needs, recognising and strengthening survivors' agency and ensuring the centrality of their interests. To illustrate how our co-creation model is operationalised, as well as its transformative impacts, we are focusing below on the role of survivors in GSF's Interim Reparative Measures (IRM) projects, under our Act pillar.

³ Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence, A/HRC/34/62, 27 December 2016, para. 81.

CO-CREATION OF INTERIM REPARATIVE MEASURES

8. “Survivors know best what they need to heal and recover”⁴, therefore every IRM project⁵ starts with a mapping of survivors’ situation, needs and preferences for individual and/or collective IRM. For instance, in Iraq, GSF and its partners conducted focus groups discussions with survivors in Sinjar, which resulted in a clear understanding of the types of IRM needed, relevant criteria for identifying survivors in the project, and how best to work with them; it also helped identifying project partners trusted by survivors. These discussions were crucial to reorient the focus of the project towards including “survivors of ISIS captivity”, rather than identifying them as survivors of sexual violence, as this was considered too stigmatising by survivors and expected to impede them from coming forward.

9. During the design and implementation of projects, survivors participate through Steering Committees⁶. They elect those who will represent them, through the election modalities of their choice. In Guinea, for example, three survivor representatives, representing the three main ethnic groups included in the project (Soussou, Peuhl and Sarakolé) were elected by acclamation by their peers. Besides presenting survivors views and perspectives on all key project decisions during the Committee’s monthly meetings, they also held frequent restitution meetings with all survivors included in the project.

10. Furthermore, the possible types of individual and collective IRM, as well as the possible support measures to ensure their sustainability, are always discussed and agreed with survivors and the Steering Committee. According to what is chosen, these IRM contribute to advancing different SDGs. For example, in Sinjar, survivors designed their individual IRM package including a monetary compensation or an alternative form of financial IRM (training and grants to scale up or establish a business, or financial support to address their shelter needs); as well as access to medical care, psychosocial support, education, and/or legal and documentation services. While monetary compensations are primarily linked to SDG 10 (reduce inequality), training and grants are directly related to economic growth (SDG 8). Moreover, education, medical care and legal/documentation services contribute towards Goals 4 (education) and 5 (gender equality), especially Goals 5.6 and 5.a.

11. Finally, survivors are also responsible for defining the success criteria that will guide the project’s evaluation. In Guinea, to facilitate their involvement at this stage, GSF and its partner the Netherlands Institute for the Study of Crime and Law Enforcement (NSCR) applied the methods of PhotoVoice and Concept mapping. As part of the methodology, a group of

⁴ Nadia Murad, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate 2018, Speech at UN Security Council Open Debate on Sexual Violence in Conflict, New York, 12 April 2022 <<https://www.nadiainitiative.org/news/nadia-murad-delivers-speech-at-un-security-council-open-debate-on-sexual-violence-in-conflict>> accessed on 22 April 2022.

⁵ Currently, GSF is running IRM projects in Guinea, Democratic Republic of Congo and Iraq. Later in 2022, projects should also start in Central African Republic and Nigeria, where they are expected to have a strong focus on education as a form of reparation.

⁶ These Committees must be composed by at least 30% of survivors, sitting alongside representatives of civil society, survivor associations, experts and, if survivors so decide, national authorities and international organisations.

survivors took pictures of the impact of the project on their lives and discussed the pictures in workshops, forming the basis of the evaluation questionnaire. The activity was so popular that all survivors involved in the project requested to participate, which resulted in the publication of a book⁷ of testimonies based on the photos taken by each of them.

12. This last example is a clear demonstration that the co-creation model is also effective in building a sense of ownership of the reparation process. Direct participation in the process makes survivors more aware of their own rights and connects them to different actors, whether governmental or not, who can support their advocacy efforts for State-provided reparations. Also, interacting as part of the project provides solidarity between survivors and contributes to rebuilding social ties. In Guinea, three survivors who benefited from GSF's IRM partnered up to start a fishing business and a small fabric dying business. One of them, Fatoumata, has described in a powerful video clip⁸ how economic empowerment helped her regain the respect of her community.

CO-CREATION IN OTHER GSF'S PRACTICES

13. In 2020, GSF launched a global reparations study⁹ focusing on the status of and opportunities for reparations for survivors of CRSV in over 20 countries, many of them facing a transition as is the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina¹⁰, Colombia or South Sudan¹¹. The process of conducting the study is aimed to have some reparative value in itself and it has created different opportunities to co-create with survivors, be it on the advocacy front or on the research itself. Among others, survivors participate as researchers or reviewers in the drafting of the reports as in the case of Uganda and Colombia; adapt the methodologies for the focus group discussions and interviews to the local context, act as data-collectors, facilitators, or interviewers, as in the case of Syria, Cambodia and Ivory Coast, shape the reports' recommendations, and lead advocacy campaigns with government entities at the community, national or regional level.

14. In South Sudan, for instance, survivors requested that their participation in the focus group discussions be accompanied by training in advocacy strategies. The South Sudan study team, in collaboration with local organisations and survivor networks, hence organised a workshop

⁷ GSF, AVIPA and OGDH, *Nos Vies d'Après: Témoignages des survivantes de violences sexuelles Stade du 28 Septembre Conakry, Guinée* (December 2021)

⁸ Her testimony is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1fJDldjSOaY&t=88s>.

⁹ More detailed information about the study is available at: <https://www.globalsurvivorsfund.org/guide>.

¹⁰ This country's study is available at:

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5ff7d9f4dd4cdc650b24f9a4/t/621f16cf779a8a25a594c721/1646204640359/GSFReportBiH_ENG_Web.pdf.

¹¹ These country's study is available at:

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5ff7d9f4dd4cdc650b24f9a4/t/62432e06c84cf925f7f02f23/1648569870261/GSFReportSouthSudan_ENG+FINAL.pdf.

focusing on "trauma healing, reparations and advocacy skills". At the end of the workshop, survivors gathered in groups, agreed on their advocacy objectives and prepared a campaign slogan. Subsequently, an advocacy roundtable was organised in which survivors had the opportunity to present their demands to a session with experts, local organisations and country authorities¹² ("*Survivors Speak Out on Reparations for Conflict-Related Sexual Violence*").

15. Within GSF's own governance structure, four survivors of CRSV sit with equal rights at our Board¹³. They were chosen because of their leadership as human rights defenders and their willingness to represent the voices of survivors globally. Their contribution is essential for GSF to remain true to its principles.

FINAL REMARKS

16. GSF's survivor-centred approach and co-creation model maximise the effectiveness of reparations while promoting inclusion and empowerment of victims and communities, thus providing valuable contributions to advancing SDGs 4, 5, 8, 10 and 16. They also give meaning to the promise made by many, including the UN, on what a survivor-centred approach entails.

17. We submit that GSF's methodology can be adapted and replicated to address the needs of different groups of victims in various contexts, always paying special attention to cultural and gender-sensitivity. In our view, a truly survivor-centred approach is the cornerstone of effectively implementing the reparations pillar in transitional justice processes.



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Geneva, 25 April 2022

¹² The event took place in Juba on 24 September 2021. More details at: <https://www.rightsforpeace.org/post/survivors-speak-in-south-sudan> .

¹³ More details available at: <https://www.globalsurvivorsfund.org/our-people> .