

## Chapter 1: Violence Against Women

Violence against women in conflict is one of history's great silences. We were completely unprepared for the searing magnitude of what we saw and heard in the conflict and post-conflict areas we visited. We knew the data. We knew that 94 per cent of displaced households surveyed in Sierra Leone had experienced sexual assaults, including rape, torture and sexual slavery.<sup>1</sup> That at least 250,000 – perhaps as many as 500,000 – women were raped during the 1994 genocide in Rwanda.<sup>2</sup> We read reports of sexual violence in the ongoing hostilities in Algeria, Myanmar, Southern Sudan and Uganda. We learned of the dramatic increase in domestic violence in war zones, and of the growing numbers of women trafficked out of war zones to become forced labourers and forced sex workers.<sup>3</sup>

But knowing all this did not prepare us for the horrors women described. Wombs punctured with guns. Women raped and tortured in front of their husbands and children. Rifles forced into vaginas. Pregnant women beaten to induce miscarriages. Foetuses ripped from wombs. Women kidnapped, blindfolded and beaten on their way to work or school. We saw the scars, the pain and the humiliation. We heard accounts of gang rapes, rape camps and mutilation. Of murder and sexual slavery. We saw the scars of brutality so extreme that survival seemed for some a worse fate than death.

On every continent we visited, in refugee camps, bars, brothels, prisons and shantytowns, women survivors shared their stories with us. They told us about their struggles to heal from the physical violence and the enduring psychological pain. And with each survivor whom we met, the numbers simply could not begin to capture the anguish that permeated their lives.

And yet we saw something else as well. Time and again, we met women who had survived trauma and found the courage and the will to recommit to life. They were struggling to rebuild community and remake their lives.

In Freetown, Sierra Leone we entered a ramshackle building on a lush hillside. The house was made up of small rooms that became flooded and mud-filled in the rainy season, the young girls who lived there told us. Photographs of the girls hung on the walls, with their names and positions in the cooperative written on the bottom in coloured marker: 'Miriam, co-chairperson' 'Esther, member.' There were many hand written signs as well, with slogans like, 'Condom is for protection from AIDS – Use it' or 'Respect Yourself and Protect Yourself'.

The girls were all sex workers. They belonged to different religions and ethnic groups, but they all had one thing in common: they had been separated by force from their families during the war. Most had been abducted and forced to stay with the rebels until they escaped or until the cease-fire was signed. They had been raped repeatedly. Many had seen their parents and siblings killed by armed groups. After the war, some had tried to go back to their villages only to find their houses burned and their families gone. Like many other young girls without family or livelihood, they made their way to the city and began earning a living on the streets. We talked to one girl, very small and shy, who was only about 4 1/2 feet tall, perhaps 80 pounds – and pregnant. She was 14 and told us she had been in the bush for several years with the rebels. They forced her to cook for them and raped her regularly.

The girls were matter-of-fact about what they had suffered, and continued to suffer. They have little hope of recapturing even a semblance of their former world. Many will be physically and emotionally scarred for the rest of their lives, which in too many cases will be painfully short, since they often have unprotected sex because men will pay more for it that way.

It is impossible to ignore the desperation of these girls, but at the same time we were moved by their efforts to support and protect each other. Out of nothing they had created a community. They had a 'housemother', a woman with a child who cooked for them, and GOAL, an Irish humanitarian organization, provided literacy classes three days a week.

## **The Continuum of Violence**

Violence against women during conflict has reached epidemic proportions. Civilians have become the primary targets of groups who use terror as a tactic of war. Men and boys as well as women and girls are the victims of this targeting, but women, much more than men, suffer gender-based violence. Their bodies become a battleground over which opposing forces struggle.<sup>4</sup> Women are raped as a way to humiliate the men they are related to, who are often forced to watch the assault. In societies where ethnicity is inherited through the male line, 'enemy' women are raped and forced to bear children. Women who are already pregnant are forced to miscarry through violent attacks. Women are kidnapped and used as sexual slaves to service troops, as well as to cook for them and carry their loads from camp to camp. They are purposely infected with HIV/AIDS, a slow, painful murder.

Certainly the picture of violence against women during conflict is not monochromatic. Women are not always victims. They actively work to improve their situation, and they often actively support one side or another in conflict. Given that many conflicts arise out of social and economic inequality, it is not surprising that women take sides in an effort to better their lives, or to protect themselves and their families. Women become combatants, provide medical help, protect and feed armed groups. But this can put them at even greater risk if they are caught by the opposing side. In South Kivu, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), researchers told us that women in the area had been buried alive by local villagers, ostensibly because they were believed to be witches, but in reality because they were suspected of providing food and medicine to armed groups that the villagers did not support.

The extreme violence that women suffer during conflict does not arise solely out of the conditions of war; it is directly related to the violence that exists in women's lives during peacetime. Throughout the world, women experience violence because they are women, and often because they do not have the same rights or autonomy that men do. They are subjected to gender-based persecution, discrimination and oppression, including sexual violence and slavery. Without political rights or authority, they often have little recourse. The United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women defines this violence as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private".<sup>5</sup>

Because so much of this persecution goes largely unpunished, violence against women comes to be an accepted norm, one which escalates during conflict as violence in general increases. Domestic violence and sexual abuse increase sharply.<sup>6</sup> Militarization and the presence of weapons legitimize new levels of brutality and even greater levels of impunity. Often this escalating violence becomes a new 'norm', which continues into the post-conflict period, where chaos adds to the many frustrations that were not solved by war. The 1999 mass rape of women in East Timor occurred at the time of the independence vote, as pro-Indonesian militia vented their fury before escaping to West Timor.<sup>7</sup>

No woman is exempt from violence and exploitation.<sup>8</sup> During conflict women and girls are attacked because they are related to political adversaries, because they are political leaders themselves, or simply because they were at home when the soldiers arrived. One UN official we spoke to in Goma, in eastern DRC, said violence against women had become pervasive in the area, where as many as eight foreign armies and at least as many militia groups have patrolled the countryside. "People are living through an extraordinary drama here in eastern Congo," he told us. "From Pweto down near the Zambian border right up to Aru on the Sudan/Uganda border, it's a black hole where no one is safe and where no outsider goes. Women take a risk when they go out to the fields or on a road to a market. Any day they can be stripped naked, humiliated and raped in public. Many, many people no longer sleep at home, though sleeping in the bush is equally unsafe. Every night there is another village attacked, burned and emptied. It could be any group, no one knows, but always they take women and girls away."

During conflict, women and girls experience violence at the hands of many others besides armed groups. Women are physically and economically forced or left with little choice but to become sex workers or to exchange sex for food, shelter, safe passage or other needs; their bodies become part of a barter system, a form of exchange that buys the necessities of life. Government officials, aid workers, civilian authorities and their own families have all been complicit in using women in this way.

Police and other civilian officials often take advantage of women's powerlessness even when they are in custody. Women have been raped and tortured as a form of interrogation. In many instances, sex workers are routinely arrested and forced to have sex with police officers. In Freetown the girls we met in the sex workers' collective told us that the police went after them regularly: "They catch us and take our money away and then put us in jail. Then we have to pay even more money to get out and they also force us to have sex with them in the jail. When the police get you, it's a lost night and you have no money to even eat the next day."

While the arrival of peacekeeping personnel has the obvious advantage of providing the local population with an increase sense of security, it may also have some negative repercussions. Sexual violence against women and prostitution, especially child prostitution, may increase with the influx of relatively well-off personnel in situations where local economies have been devastated and women do not have options for employment.<sup>9</sup> In Kisangani and Goma in the DRC, members of local communities told us that peacekeepers were buying sex from young girls and that condoms were visibly scattered in the fields near UN compounds. A local woman told us that girls "just lie down in the fields for the men in full view of people as they are not allowed into the

camps”. In Kinshasa, according to an official we spoke to, women line up at the hour most UN workers go home, hoping a male worker will choose them.

We heard similar stories in the Balkans and about conditions in Cambodia after peacekeepers arrived. Radhika Coomaraswamy, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women, has expressed concern at reports of peacekeepers' involvement in violence against women, and has called on the UN to take measures to prevent it and to punish it when it arises.<sup>10</sup> In response, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations has assured the Special Rapporteur that they take her allegations seriously, that specific allegations will be investigated and appropriate action taken.

### **Trafficking, Sexual Slavery and Exploitation**

Trafficking and sexual slavery are inextricably linked to conflict. Women are trafficked out of one country into another to be used in forced labour schemes that often include forced prostitution. They are pushed into marriage with members of opposing groups either directly, through abduction, or in order to protect their families. They are abducted by armed groups and forced to accompany them on raids and to provide everything from food to sexual services. Many sexual slaves are also used for dangerous work like demining contested areas, forced to risk their lives to make a field or a hillside safe for soldiers.

In East Timor, Kirsty Gusmao, the wife of East Timor President Xanana Gusmao, told us the story of Juliana dos Santos, who had been kidnapped by an Indonesian army officer when she was about 14 years old. She was taken to a camp in West Timor controlled by militia groups and the Indonesian Army. Eventually she married an Indonesian in the camp and bore a child. Kirsty Gusmao campaigned vigorously to have dos Santos and her child returned to her home and her family and, in the process, the girl became a symbol in East Timor of the terrible price women had paid for their country's independence. Gusmao's efforts ultimately failed. Arrangements were made for dos Santos to be turned over to the East Timorese, but on the appointed day she arrived surrounded by a group of armed men and said she did not want to go home.

Trafficking is also on the rise.<sup>11</sup> The breakdown of law and order, police functions and border controls during conflict, combined with globalization's free markets and open borders have contributed to creating an environment in which the trafficking of women has flourished. Although it is difficult to document definitively, most experts believe the majority of trafficked persons are women.<sup>12</sup> Trafficking worldwide grew almost 50 per cent from 1995 to 2000,<sup>13</sup> and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates that as many as 2 million women are trafficked across borders annually.<sup>14</sup> The annual profit from this trade is estimated at somewhere between \$5 and \$7 billion. Traffickers often use routes through countries that have been engulfed by conflict, since border controls and normal policing are reduced. These countries also become sources of trafficked women, either through abduction or because poverty and danger force women to seek work at any cost. The connection between armed conflict and trafficking in women is becoming increasingly apparent as criminal networks involved in the trade of arms and drugs expand to include trafficking in people. Trafficked women may become workers in illegal factories, or virtual slave labour for wealthy families in the countries to which they are brought. A large number of trafficked women and girls are forced into

prostitution; many of them are barely adolescents. In Cambodia a survey conducted in 1995 indicated that about 31 per cent of the sex workers in Phnom Penh and 11 provinces were between the ages of 12 and 17.<sup>15</sup>

We met Lam, a 15-year-old Vietnamese girl, in a women's shelter in Phnom Penh. Her grandmother had sold her for \$200 to a brothel owner who was visiting Lam's home village near Ho Chi Minh City. Lam had no idea that she had been sold or that she was expected to become a prostitute until she arrived at a hotel in Phnom Penh with 10 other Vietnamese girls, and a man was brought into her room. "I hid under the bed, but he pulled me out. The owner was Vietnamese, he gave me food and condoms, but never any money." After about a month, Lam managed to escape and found a police officer who brought her to the Cambodian Women's Crisis Centre (CWCC) where we spoke with her.

In Southeast Asia, young girls such as Lam are bought for as little as \$50 and sold for up to \$700 to organizations that ship them to many western developed countries. The ones who are not sent to developed countries are sold to local brothels. The director of the CWCC told us that Lam's story is not unusual. She estimates that 11 per cent of the girls she cares for were sold by their family or boyfriend; 50 per cent were tricked into prostitution. Data from the Human Rights Task Force on Cambodia estimates that nationwide, 44 per cent of trafficked children under 18 were sold by intermediaries, 23 per cent by family members, 17 per cent by boyfriends, 6 per cent by an employer and 6 per cent by unknown persons.<sup>16</sup> Typically women are forced to service 20 to 30 men every day. Condoms are rarely available.

In Colombia, where a civil war has gone on for decades, the trafficking of young girls and women has risen dramatically. According to the anti-trafficking organization, *Fundación Esperanza*, perhaps as many as 50,000 women are being trafficked annually out of the country. The *Fundación*, which was set up in 1996, works closely with the IOM and the Colombian Ministry of Justice to train government officials in recognizing and stopping trafficking.<sup>17</sup> The *Fundación* also tries to help women who want to return to Colombia, but it is not easy. "The pimps will threaten to tell their families," a spokesperson for the World Health Organization told us. "There are certainly families that close their eyes to where the money the woman sends home is coming from."

Southeast Europe is also a source of trafficked women as well as a major transit route for traffickers. According to the UN mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH), 60 per cent of the women trafficked through these areas are between the ages of 19 and 24, and are from both rural and urban areas. Seventy-five per cent leave home with a false job offer. The rest are kidnapped or agree to be sex workers, but are then forced into sexual slavery. There have been reports of women being stripped naked and forced to walk on a table or platform while brothel owners bid for them. "The stories are monstrous, and the problem is probably even more serious than we know," Macedonia's Public Prosecutor told us.

We met three Ukrainian girls in the UNMIBH office in Sarajevo who had been rescued by a team of local and UN police from a brothel/bar where they were being kept against their will. One, Larissa, said she had been promised work as a dancer, but instead was brought to the brothel with the two other girls. A Danish police officer in the UNMIBH anti-trafficking team visited the bar and inquired about the girls, but the bar owner forced them to say they were fine. Nevertheless, the officer returned to investigate and eventually helped set up a raid on the bar. Since there is no witness protection

programme in Bosnia and Herzegovina, most women will not testify against traffickers because of their fear of reprisals, especially when they are sent back to their home countries. The girls agreed to help identify UN personnel who might be exploiting or trafficking women because, Larissa told us, "We wanted to help the UN as they helped us." Like these three girls, we appreciate the difficulties facing the United Nations, and acknowledge the serious efforts undertaken to address the problem of trafficking in the Balkans. There has been a follow-up investigation into allegations against UN personnel of trafficking in the Balkans but this investigation was unable to substantiate the allegations that UN personnel have been involved in the trafficking of women.

The effects of both sexual slavery and trafficking are profound, especially for young girls. A Bosnian girl who was a sexual slave to Bosnian Serb paramilitary soldiers told the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), "I think for the whole of my life, all my life, I will feel the pain that I felt then."<sup>18</sup> Torn from their homes, women and girls are brutalized by their kidnappers and then often rejected by their families. In Sierra Leone we met many young girls who spent months searching for their family members after escaping from Revolutionary United Front soldiers, only to be turned away in disgrace if they did manage to find someone. Some felt they had no choice but to return to their abductors; others went to Freetown and became sex workers.

In 2001 in Macedonia IOM helped 346 trafficked women and girls between the ages of 13 and 41 to return to their homes. Each was cared for in a shelter provided by the Macedonian government. They were offered English and computer classes, as well as counselling and gynaecological and medical care. Local NGOs have worked with the IOM to reintegrate women into their communities. If a woman chooses not to return, the IOM provides financial support for six months. The IOM director in Belgrade told us he plans to open a similar shelter to assist "the thousands, not hundreds, of women and children who are trafficked through Serbia each year." The Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has issued guidelines on human rights and trafficking in persons that offer wide ranging multidisciplinary recommendations for all relevant actors in the field. These include law enforcement response; research, analysis and evaluation; access to remedies and the obligations of peacekeepers, civilian police, humanitarian and diplomatic personnel.<sup>19</sup>

## **Domestic Violence**

Domestic violence is common during peacetime, but until recently the fact that it increases during or after conflict was generally overlooked. Many things contribute to the increase in domestic violence – the availability of weapons, the violence male family members have experienced or meted out, the lack of jobs, shelter, and basic services.<sup>20</sup> "Men who have witnessed and perpetrated violence during war seem to continually act violently to their families," a Cambodian woman told investigators. "My husband was a Khmer Rouge soldier. I think this has made him broken in some important human way."<sup>21</sup> Psychotherapist Dusika Popadic of the Belgrade Incest Trauma Centre voices similar concerns: "It is early to draw any conclusions," she said, "I only know that the war brought an endless amount of ultimate confrontation with violence of all sorts... I know that war trauma breaks something in people's perceptions of themselves."

Recent research indicates that many combatants have difficulty making the transition to peacetime nonviolent behaviour after returning home.<sup>22</sup> In the United States in 2002, four Special Forces soldiers at Fort Bragg in North Carolina killed their wives within a period of six weeks. Three of the four had recently returned from overseas duty in Afghanistan, although some commentators believe it is not the experience of conflict but the culture of violence and masculinity that permeates military forces that causes soldiers to be violent in civilian life.<sup>23</sup> Studies in Cambodia in the mid-1990s indicated that many women – as many as 75 per cent in one study – were victims of domestic violence, often at the hands of men who have kept the small arms and light weapons they used during the war.<sup>24</sup>

In the occupied Palestinian territories women told us that some men who were detained by Israelis were using the same interrogation tactics against their wives and family members that were used on them in prisons. Since the second Intifada began, Israeli restrictions on movement have led to unemployment and overcrowded living conditions created when homes are bulldozed; these in turn may have contributed to increased levels of domestic violence, incest, rape and suicide, according to one study.<sup>25</sup> The Bisan Centre, an NGO in Ramallah, runs a hotline on domestic violence; staff members estimate that 70 per cent of the calls concern rape within the family. "Women tend to call in the morning when the men have gone out," a social worker told us. "Girls will go to a friend's house after school and call then. We have no safe house, but we can listen and advise. Ours are very small societies in which everyone's families are linked. It is hard to imagine reporting these things to the police, and if you did, there would no doubt be a cousin or an uncle in the police force who would make sure the honour of the family was saved by the complaint being hushed up."

Only 45 countries have legislation protecting women against domestic violence, but many of these laws are not regularly enforced, especially during periods of conflict.<sup>26</sup> Serbia has only recently upgraded its laws on family violence. According to Brankica Grupkovic, Serbia's Assistant Minister for Internal Affairs, "Family violence was not covered in our laws until recently, and although in our legislation there is a declaration of equality, there was no enforcement mechanism. Now, under heavy lobbying from women's groups, some amendments to the criminal code have been passed that deal with violence in the family."<sup>27</sup> In Cambodia women's NGOs are working with lawyers to revise the draft law on domestic violence that is expected to come into force in 2003. Posters telling stories in cartoon style, and proclaiming, "Domestic violence is against the law", are being distributed. "After five years of work, people have begun to understand that domestic violence is not a private issue," said Hor Phally, the Director of the Project Against Domestic Violence.

UN authorities are also just beginning to recognize the problem in conflict and post-conflict situations. The then Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRS) Sergio Vieira de Mello launched a nationwide campaign against domestic violence in January 2002 in East Timor, which he described as "a concerted effort, with the support of all political and civil society leaders of East Timor, alongside law enforcement officials, to put an end to the abhorrent practice [of domestic violence] that is still, unfortunately, prevalent in East Timor and many other countries of the world."<sup>28</sup>

## **Children Born of Rape and Sexual Exploitation**

Sexual exploitation in all its forms, including forced pregnancy, reverberates through generations, most specifically in the children who are born of such exploitation. Forced pregnancy was used as a form of ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Rwanda, and has occurred in Bangladesh, Liberia and Uganda as well. In Bosnia, many women were imprisoned until their children were born to ensure that the pregnancy was not terminated. In many other conflict zones women who have been raped repeatedly and become pregnant have little choice but to continue with the pregnancy. In Liberia and Sierra Leone thousands of babies were born to women and girls who had been abducted and forced to accompany combatants into the bush, where many gave birth without medical help. Up to 20,000 women are believed to have been raped during the fighting in Kosovo, and many of them bore children. In one month alone, January 2000, the International Red Cross estimated that 100 babies conceived in rape were born in Kosovo, and that many other women gave birth to children born of rape but decided not to identify them as such.<sup>29</sup>

In addition many children result from the liaisons of peacekeepers or other international personnel. Liberia registered more than 6,000 children fathered by peacekeepers from the Economic Community of Western African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) between 1990 and 1998, many of whom had been abandoned by both their fathers and their mothers and lived on the streets. In Sierra Leone, when a group of ECOMOG peacekeepers were leaving the country at the end of their tour of duty, women who had borne babies during relationships with the soldiers lined the route to the airport. In many cases children born of these relationships do not have citizenship rights, although Liberia's constitution recognizes them.<sup>30</sup> It is important to distinguish between UN peacekeepers who are subject to the UN code of conduct and other non-UN peacekeepers who are not.

The children born of sexual exploitation and their mothers are in need of social services, medical and psychosocial attention and economic support. But in many countries, the children have become a symbol of the trauma the nation as a whole went through, and society prefers not to acknowledge these needs. In some cases the children are growing up in orphanages or on the streets, although in many countries a large proportion of women have accepted the children and are raising them. In East Timor, 23-year-old Lorenca is raising her son, conceived when she was raped by militia in a refugee camp. "I have to accept the baby," she said. "Because of the war, that's what happened."<sup>31</sup>

## **Towards Ending Impunity**

Although the existing international legal framework clearly prohibits and criminalizes violence against women, Gay J. McDougall, the former Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, recommends that it "must better reflect the experience of women and the true nature of the harms to them, particularly during armed conflict." She calls for the "further development of the legal framework through consistent, gender-responsive practice."<sup>32</sup> The UN Human Rights Committee reaffirmed this view by establishing that the right to gender equality is not merely a right to non-discrimination, but one that requires affirmative action. In March 2000 the Committee called on States to

take special measures to protect women from rape, abduction or other forms of gender-based violence.<sup>33</sup> In its Resolution 1325 on Women and peace and security, the Security Council makes the same call.

And yet the reality is that protection and support for women survivors of violence are woefully inadequate. Their access to protection, services and legal remedies is limited in many ways. The upheaval of war itself makes it nearly impossible for women to seek redress from government entities. But cultural and social stigmas, as well as a woman's status in society, also affect her ability to protect herself or seek protection. When a woman's virtue is linked to her virginity, for example, survivors of rape and other forms of sexual violence become unmarriageable, or are rejected by their husbands, and become a financial burden and a source of lingering shame to their families. In many cases, families force their daughters into marriage with whoever will have them – including the same men who attacked them. According to the International Rescue Committee (IRC), 25 per cent of the marriages of displaced Burundian women in one refugee camp were compelled by shame or by fear of reprisals or further attack.<sup>34</sup>

Survivors of violence need safe places to go for help. They need medical support, resources, protection and security. Some work is being done, but much more is needed. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Serbia, we met dozens of local NGOs who were providing telephone hotlines, shelters, advocacy campaigns and policy research. One group, Medica Zenica, has a mobile clinic that provides obstetrical and gynaecological services to women in remote villages and displaced persons camps. It also trains local institutions in methods of caring for traumatized women. But such informal, ad hoc efforts need to become routine and institutionalized.

These and other projects around the world, such as training for law enforcement officials in Cambodia and Croatia, and political and legal advocacy in Liberia, are aided by UNIFEM's Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence Against Women. But further effort is needed by both international and national groups. States must adopt special legislation incorporating human rights, humanitarian and international criminal law into their own legal systems. Greater specificity is needed in codifying war crimes against women and in recognizing the distinct harm that results from violations like forced pregnancy. Procedures and mechanisms to investigate, report, prosecute and remedy violence against women in war must be strengthened. Otherwise, the historic refusal to acknowledge and punish crimes against women will continue.

## **On Violence Against Women the Experts call for:**

- 1. An international Truth and Reconciliation Commission on violence against women in armed conflict as a step towards ending impunity.** This Commission, to be convened by civil society with support from the international community, will fill the historical gap that has left these crimes unrecorded and unaddressed.
- 2. Targeted sanctions against trafficking of women and girls.** Those complicit must be held accountable for trafficking women and girls in or through conflict areas. Existing international laws on trafficking must be applied in conflict situations and national legislation should criminalize trafficking with strong punitive measures, including such actions as freezing the assets of trafficking rings. Victims of trafficking should be protected from prosecution.
- 3. Domestic violence to be recognized as systematic and widespread in conflict and post-conflict situations and addressed in humanitarian, legal and security responses and training in emergencies and post-conflict reconstruction.**
- 4. The UN, donors and governments to provide long-term financial support for women survivors of violence** through legal, economic, psychosocial and reproductive health services. This should be an essential part of emergency assistance and post-conflict reconstruction.