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Conflict-related sexual violence

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report, which covers the period from January to December 2013, is submitted pursuant to paragraph 22 -41( )-26(p(i)-34(c)-)-37(p).43h [illegible]nflict. This link to conflict may be evid

profile of the victim, rictim

2. The report highlights actions taken and challenges faced by States in conflict and post-conflict situations to protect women, men and children from such sexual violence; the implementation of the monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements; the deployment of women s protection advisers; the work of the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict; the efforts of the United Nations system; and recommendations to strengthen efforts to combat this egregious crime. In the report, appropriate actions are recommended and a list of parties credibly suspected of committing or being responsible for patterns of rape

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A.

agreement explicitly reflect sexual violence considerations, in line with the joint communiqué of the Government of the Central African Republic and the United Nations on the prevention of and response to conflict-related sexual violence of 12 December 2012.

Colombia

28. Armed groups operating in conflict-affected areas effectively condone sexual violence through the encouragement of predatory behaviour. Furthermore, most armed groups in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, such as the Mai-Mai Cheka, the Raia Mutomboki, the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda and

survivors were women and girls from economically and socially disadvantaged backgrounds.

34. With respect to non-State armed actors, several incidents of gang rape by unidentified armed elements were reported in Timbuktu. At least four incidents involving the abduction and gang rape of girls by rebel groups, including Ansar Dine, have been verified by United Nations partners. Some of those cases resulted in pregnancies and associated risks of stigma and abandonment. Other reported incidents include the rape for the purpose of reprisal of a girl by elements of the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) and the rape of a woman in Kidal by members of the Mouvement national pour la libération de l

partners, to work to develop a comprehensive protection and service response for survivors.

Somalia

41. During the reporting period, sexual violence, including rape, remained one of the most serious and recurrent human rights violations in Somalia. Data for 2013 concerning Banadir, Shabelle Dhexe and Juba Dhexe indicate that survivors reported armed men in uniform as the primary perpetrators, including members of the Somali National Army, Al-Shabaab, militias, private actors and organized crime units. The most commonly reported form of sexual violence was rape. Internally displaced persons were particularly vulnerable, often owing to the fact that they have no clan mechanisms to protect and support them. Women from minority clans too were vulnerable. In camps for internally displaced persons, conditions are often unsafe for women and girls because of the proliferation of arms, scarce lighting and limited policing. Continued displacement, including as a result of the forced eviction that took place during 2013 in the Mogadishu area, has increased their vulnerability. In areas of Somalia that are outside the control of the federal Government there have been reports of forced marriage and sexual slavery. Therefore, dialogue with de facto authorities to gain specific commitments and prevention measures is also required.

42. The handling by the federal authorities of several emblematic rape cases reported during 2013 raised serious concerns with respect to due process, freedom of expression, adherence to safe and ethical standards for interviewing survivors of sexual violence crimes and the protection of survivors and journalists who report such crimes. It is therefore welcome that, on 4 December 2013, at an open-day event on women, peace and security, the President of the Federal Republic of Somalia, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, made a commitment to address the issues of investigations and access to services, promising that no more alleged rape victims would be imprisoned and that a specialized crime unit and dedicated clinic would be created to deal with cases of sexual violence. The United Nations and its partners have trained approximately 12,000 police officers on human rights. In addition, concerted efforts have been made to recruit more female police officers; those officers now require support to take substantive and active roles within the police force.

43. Following a visit by my Special Representative in April 2013, a joint communiqué of the Government of the Federal Republic of Somalia and the United Nations on preventing sexual violence in conflict was signed by the President of Somalia and the Deputy Secretary-General at the international conference on Somalia held in London on 7 May 2013. In December 2013, the Team of Experts undertook a technical mission to develop an implementation plan focused on

Recommendation

54. I urge the Government of the Sudan to facilitate access by the United Nations and partners to conflict-affected areas so that they may provide services and carry out monitoring activities. I also encourage the Government to reform national legislation in relation to sexual violence crimes and revise reporting protocols. I encourage the Government to engage with my Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict to develop a framework of cooperation to address conflict-related sexual violence.

Syrian Arab Republic

55. Fear of reprisal, social stigmatization and a lack of safe and confidential response services for survivors have severely limited reporting on sexual violence in the context of the Syrian conflict. Information gathered from displaced civilians outside the Syrian Arab Republic and reported by the independent international commission of inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic indicates that sexual violence has been a persistent feature of the conflict and that the fear of rape has served as a driving motivation for families fleeing the violence (see A/HRC/23/58, para. 91). It has been difficult, however, for the United Nations to verify allegations within the Syrian Arab Republic, largely owing to a lack of access and considerations related to the safety of survivors. Similarly, assessments of the scale and the scope of sexual violence are limited. The United Nations in the Syrian Arab Republic reports that it has provided information and held awareness-raising sessions on protection issues, including sexual and gender-based violence, psychosocial support and first aid to over 38,000 women in connection with the crisis during 2013.

56. The commission of inquiry has reported that government forces and pro-government militias have used sexual violence, including rape, in detention centres and prisons throughout the country, often as part of interrogations by intelligence services (see A/HRC/23/58, para. 92). Former detainees have provided United Nations partners with accounts of sexual harassment and the abuse of women, men and children in overnight detention facilities. The accounts included descriptions of detainees being stripped of their clothes and receiving threats that they or their relatives would be raped, as a tool to intimidate those perceived of being associated with the opposition. The United Nations has also received allegations of rape, including gang rape and other forms of sexual violence, against women and girls, including in the presence of relatives, by government forces at checkpoints, during incursions and during searches of houses of families perceived to be pro-opposition. (See also my report on children and armed conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic (S/2014/31.))

57. With respect to allegations against armed opposition groups, credible information has been provided to the United Nations in Homs, Damascus and Rif Damascus of sexual violence perpetrated against young women and girls in shelters and in some opposition areas. Furthermore, the commission of inquiry has reported accounts of women being segregated during house searches in the city of Aleppo during joint operations by armed groups, with an implication of possible sexual violence (A/HRC/23/58, para. 94). Also in relation to armed opposition groups, the Commission found that, during the assault in Yarmouk, the war crime of sexual violence was committed (A/HRC/23/58, para. 95). Reports of the curtailment of

State actors, may have contributed to a reported reduction in incidents of sexual violence.

Recommendation

64. I encourage the further strengthening of cooperation between the Government

been deployed to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali; it is envisaged

psychosocial, legal, livelihood assistance and other multisectoral services, and to ensure differentiated and appropriate services for children and male survivors.

97. I urge the Security Council to reinforce the key elements of the prevention framework outlined under its resolution 2106 (2013) by:

(a) Supporting United Nations efforts to engage in dialogue with State and non-State parties to elicit commitments to prevent and respond to conflict-related sexual violence

including as they relate to corrections and police capacity, in line with paragraph 16 of Security Council resolution 2106 (2013);

Group of Eight countries and by 140 nations on the sidelines of the General Assembly. I urge those Member States to implement the commitments as a matter of priority.

99. Furthermore, in line with my emphasis on fostering national ownership, leadership and responsibility, I urge Member States to draw upon the expertise of the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict and to support it in strengthening the rule of law and the capacity of civilian and military justice systems, as part of broader efforts to strengthen institutional safeguards against impunity for conflict-related sexual violence. I urge donors to ensure sustainable funding for this valuable resource for the countries concerned.

100. Finally, I urge all Member States to support the efforts of United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict and its Multi-Partner Trust Fund, particularly for the development and implementation of comprehensive national strategies aimed at preventing and addressing conflict-related sexual violence.

VI. Annexed list

101. The annex to the present report, based on currently available information, contains a list of parties credibly suspected of committing or being responsible for patterns of rape and other forms of sexual violence in situations of armed conflict on the Security Council agenda. The annex does not purport to be a comprehensive list of violators, but includes those on whom credible information is currently available. It should be noted that the annex does not list countries as such. The purpose of the list is to identify particular parties to conflict that are credibly suspected of committing or being responsible for patterns of rape and other forms of sexual violence. In that regard, the names of countries are mentioned only in order to indicate the locations or situations where offending parties are committing the violations in question.

Annex

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