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**Sexual and gender-based violence in armed conflict and disaster**  
**(Follow-up on recommendations of workshop 9 of the 2013 Council of Delegates)**

**Progress report**

**Document jointly prepared by the International Committee of the Red Cross and  
the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies**

Geneva, October 2015

# Sexual and gender-based violence in armed conflict and disaster

## 1. Executive summary

Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)<sup>i</sup> in armed conflict and disaster is a serious humanitarian issue, which has devastating impacts on those that it affects. The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is deeply concerned by this pressing issue and many of the Movement's components are actively working to respond to the impact it has on those affected and to prevent its future occurrence.

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the principal activities that various Movement components have undertaken recently in this regard. In particular, it outlines activities implemented in follow-up to the recommendations of the workshop on "Movement response to sexual and gender-based violence in armed conflict and disaster" at the 2013 Council of Delegates<sup>ii</sup> and presents recommendations to the Movement in order to continue to enhance its approach to this critically important issue.

At field level, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (International Federation) and a number of National Societies are implementing various activities ranging from prevention, awareness raising, capacity building and humanitarian diplomacy to medical, psychosocial, economic and legal support. Movement-wide, since the 2013 Council of Delegates, common definitions for key terminology have been developed and a survey of Movement initiatives, good practices and challenges and gaps regarding SGBV related to armed conflict and disaster has been undertaken. Research to enhance policy, advocacy and operational activities on sexual violence in armed conflict and on gender-based violence (GBV) in disaster has also been undertaken.

In order to strengthen the Movement's collective efforts to prevent and respond to SGBV in armed conflict and disaster, this report presents seven key recommendations to the Movement, in line with the roles and mandates of its different components.

1. Develop a clear, more holistic strategic approach
2. Enhance and build partnerships within and external to the Movement.
3. Build awareness and capacity within the Movement.
4. Enhance the quality and scope of programming.
5. Expand research and build a stronger evidence base for action.
6. Implement measures to effectively address the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse by Movement staff and volunteers.
7. Further develop and consult about, agree and disseminate the terminology and definitions.

Moreover, this report recommends that this issue be included in the agenda of the 2017 Council of Delegates, at which time progress made on implementing these recommendations can be presented and a way forward for the Movement can be proposed.

## 2. Introduction

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement has been engaged in addressing SGBV in armed conflict and disaster settings since the 1990s, seeking both to prevent its occurrence and respond to its consequences. While occurring at high rates in all settings, armed conflict and disaster heighten the risk and prevalence of SGBV. Despite enhanced understanding, expertise and good practice, gaps and limitations in the Movement's response remain and there is a clear need to do more and to do better to address the full scope of such violence.

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This report provides an overview of SGBV in armed conflict and disaster from a global perspective, highlighting key international developments relevant to the Movement's approach. The report also presents the Movement's approach to this issue historically, the outcomes of the 2013 Council of Delegates workshop on "Movement response to sexual and gender-based violence in armed conflict and disaster," and key activities that have been implemented since the workshop. The report concludes by presenting recommendations and proposing next steps for the Movement in order to maintain momentum in addressing SGBV and enhancing prevention and response to this critical humanitarian issue.

### **3. The humanitarian response from a global perspective**

#### **3.1 Humanitarian concerns**

SGBV is made up of a wide variety of types of violence.<sup>iii</sup> While diverse in scope, acts of SGBV tend to be distinct from other forms of violence because they are often of a personal and intimate nature, interlinked with sensitive social and cultural norms, and rooted in gender inequality and discrimination. SGBV is often a hidden form of violence due to the stigmatization of victims/survivors and the subsequent risk of ostracism and violence they face at the hands of perpetrators, their partners, families and communities. This poses considerable obstacles in determining the extent of the problem and the needs of victims/survivors. While the primary prevention of SGBV requires long-term processes of behavioural change to address its underlying causes, often relatively simple measures can nonetheless be implemented to prevent and mitigate the risk of SGBV.

Acts of SGBV during and in the aftermath of armed conflict and disaster are commonly widespread and have serious impacts on individuals, their families and society as a whole. In these settings, the collapse of protection systems, negative reactions to stress and shifting gender and social norms all contribute to the increase in SGBV. Despite being prohibited by IHL, acts of sexual violence committed by armed actors are also a common feature of armed conflict. Measures to prevent SGBV and to respond to the needs of those affected are recognized as minimum standards in emergency response and must be implemented from the outset of emergencies.<sup>iv</sup>

#### **3.2. International developments**

Understanding of the extent of SGBV in settings such as armed conflict and disaster has grown considerably over the past two decades. During the armed conflicts of the 1990s, a greater consciousness developed of the ways in which civilians were targeted, including through the use of sexual violence.<sup>v</sup> Awareness of the risk of GBV in disasters was also heightened following major disasters in the 2000s, including the tsunami in 2004, Hurricane Katrina in the United States in 2005, the Haiti earthquake, and floods in Pakistan in 2010 and, more recently, Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda) in the Philippines in 2014 and the Ebola crisis in West Africa and the earthquakes in Nepal in 2015. With these developments has come a greater focus on and commitment to addressing SGBV within the international community.<sup>vi</sup> International organizations and NGOs carrying out humanitarian work have also developed coordination mechanisms, policy and guidance in order to support more effective interventions to address this issue.<sup>vii</sup> In addition, civil society, and women's groups in particular, have played a pivotal role in agitating for greater focus on this issue.

#### **3.3 Global challenges and approaches by humanitarian organizations**

Yet, despite these developments, SGBV-prevention and response measures are still not being implemented systematically from the outset of humanitarian responses in settings such as armed

conflict and disaster.<sup>viii</sup> Existing standards and tools are not being used consistently and there are insufficient funding and resources available. Further, there is a lack of personnel with expertise to address this issue<sup>ix</sup> and a need for more training for staff and volunteers across all sectors. Moreover, efforts tend to focus on the response aspect, with limited action on prevention. There is also a lack of data available on the impact and effectiveness of both prevention and response initiatives.

Some recent initiatives have sought to respond to these concerns. The “Call to Action on Protection from Gender-based Violence in Emergencies” – an initiative initially led by the Governments of the United Kingdom and Sweden and now by the United States – seeks to generate increased humanitarian action to mitigate the risk of GBV and provide for the needs of those affected from the onset of emergencies.<sup>x</sup> The Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative (PSVI), also led by the UK Government, puts the focus on prevention and on ending impunity for sexual violence in armed conflict.<sup>xi</sup>

## 4. The Movement’s approach

### 4.1 Background to the Movement’s approach to SGBV in armed conflict and disaster

For more than two decades, the Movement’s components have been stepping up their efforts to address various aspects of SGBV.<sup>xii</sup> The ICRC focuses on those forms of SGBV that intersect with its mission and mandate. These include, in particular, sexual violence in armed conflict prohibited by international humanitarian law (IHL), violations of the special protection afforded to women in armed conflict by IHL, sexualized torture and ill treatment.<sup>xiii</sup> In 1999, the ICRC undertook to act to prevent sexual violence in armed conflict and to address the protection and assistance needs of women and girls<sup>xiv</sup> and launched the *Women Facing War* study.<sup>xv</sup> Stemming from this study, the ICRC implemented several new initiatives in the 2000s. However, in recognition of the limited progress made, in large part due to the invisibility of the phenomenon, in 2013 the ICRC launched a new institutional push to expand and enhance its activities addressing this issue over four years.<sup>xvi</sup> The *Special Appeal on Strengthening the Response to Sexual Violence* acts as a strategy guiding the ICRC’s work in this area. Its four main axes involve: enhancing the ICRC’s holistic and multifaceted response to the needs of victims; reinforcing prevention activities; reinforcing Movement relations; and better equipping and training ICRC staff to address sexual violence.

The International Federation addresses many forms of GBV in natural and man-made disasters in non-conflict settings, and in combination with development work. It first produced guidance on the assistance and protection needs of women in armed conflict and disasters, including those who had experienced sexual violence, in 1991.<sup>xvii</sup> Subsequently, the International Federation’s 1999 *Gender Policy and Strategic Framework on Gender and Diversity Issues 2013-2020* and accompanying explanatory note set out its commitment to addressing gender-related concerns, including SGBV.<sup>xviii</sup> In addition, the International Federation’s approach to violence more broadly is governed by the 2011 *IFRC Strategy on Violence Prevention, Mitigation and Response*.<sup>xix</sup>

National Societies address various forms of SGBV in armed conflict, disaster, development and peacetime settings. From the 1990s onwards, several National Societies began developing activities to address SGBV in both armed conflict and disaster in their own countries, in addition to working internationally, in some cases. The most common types of National Society activities that address this issue include awareness raising, prevention and psychosocial support.

During the 2013 Council of Delegates workshop, various Movement activities addressing SGBV in armed conflict and disaster were presented.<sup>xx</sup> Based on these discussions, the workshop recommended:

- The development of Movement definitions for the terms “gender,” “gender-based violence” and “sexual violence” to bring the Movement toward greater alignment.
- A mapping (survey) of Movement activities related to SGBV in order to develop a clearer picture of existing programmes, good practices and potential gaps and needs in terms of training and tools.
- The inclusion of this issue on the agenda of the Statutory Meetings in 2015 in order to sustain interest and momentum going forward.

A Movement SGBV Coordination Group was established following the workshop to implement these recommendations.<sup>xxi</sup>

#### **4.2 Definitions and language**

A consultation process undertaken during 2014 and 2015 showed that many Movement actors were already using similar definitions of the terms “gender,” “gender-based violence” and “sexual violence.” In order to align different approaches, common definitions (presented below) have been developed in consultation with National Societies.

Some challenges relating to language were identified during this process. In particular, a number of those consulted highlighted the difficulties of using these terms in the contexts in which they work due to certain sensitivities. In practice, it is at times better to find alternative ways of discussing these concepts, such as using the terms “vulnerabilities” or “social inclusion/exclusion” to express the sense of the term “gender.” Further, as the terms listed below and their definitions have been developed in English, there are challenges in translation, as equivalent terms often do not exist in some languages. While there is great value in having Movement definitions for these terms, it is important to recognize the need to develop local solutions to the expression of such concepts that respond to cultural sensitivities and differences in language, and to support National Societies in finding the most appropriate language for their context.

#### ***Common definitions***

This report suggests that the components of the Movement begin using the following definitions and continue refining them through broad consultation.

- **Gender:** A concept that describes the socially constructed differences between females and males throughout their life cycles. Gender – together with factors such as age, race and class – influence, notably, the expected attributes, behaviour, roles, power, needs, resources, constraints and opportunities for people in any culture. Gender is also an analytical tool that enables a better understanding of factors of vulnerability with a view to more appropriately responding to need.
- **Gender-based violence (GBV):** An umbrella term for any harmful act that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to a woman, man, girl or boy on the basis of their gender. GBV is a result of gender inequality and abuse of power. GBV includes but is not limited to sexual violence, domestic violence, trafficking, forced or early marriage, forced prostitution and sexual exploitation and abuse.
- **Sexual violence:** Acts of a sexual nature committed against any person by force, threat of force or coercion. Coercion can be caused by circumstances such as fear of violence, duress, detention, psychological oppression or abuse of power. The force, threat of force or coercion can also be directed against another person. Sexual violence also comprises acts of a sexual nature committed by taking advantage of a coercive environment or a person’s incapacity to give genuine consent. It furthermore includes acts of a sexual nature a person is caused to engage in by force, threat of force or coercion, against that person or another person, or by taking advantage of a coercive environment or the

person's incapacity to give genuine consent. Sexual violence encompasses acts such as rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy or enforced sterilization.

*NB: For sexual violence as defined above to fall under the scope of application of IHL, it needs to take place in the context of and be associated with an armed conflict.*

#### 4.3 Current status of Movement activities

A survey of Movement activities addressing SGBV related to armed conflict and disaster<sup>xxii</sup> was undertaken between October 2014 and April 2015. The data collected revealed that the ICRC, the International Federation and at least 47 of the Movement's 189 National Societies are addressing SGBV related to armed conflict and disaster in some way. Thirty-one projects addressing SGBV related to armed conflict and disaster involving Movement actors were also identified. There was no data available for 114 National Societies and, as such, the survey's findings do not provide an exhaustive picture of all Movement activities and projects. However, they do provide insights into some trends and patterns in terms of the Movement's engagement on this issue.

The survey brought to light some good practices and expertise, as well as evidence of an interest in strengthening these activities among survey respondents. As the data available is limited in scope, it is not possible to make an accurate analysis of the geographical spread of Movement initiatives addressing SGBV. However, projects were identified in all regions, except for the Europe and Central Asia region, with the greatest number identified in Africa. Only around one-third of the 31 projects identified are specifically targeted at addressing SGBV. In the remaining projects, SGBV is integrated into other programming, including gender, violence prevention, psychosocial support and medical assistance. Activities and projects were found to target a broad range of groups, with a focus on women and girls, youth, refugees and internally displaced people. In addition, some projects targeted Movement staff and volunteers for capacity building on this issue.

#### Settings

In terms of the numbers of Movement actors that reported working on these issues and the number of projects undertaken, there appears to be a fairly even distribution of Movement interventions addressing SGBV across armed conflict and disaster settings.

- **Armed conflict:** Both the ICRC and National Societies are implementing projects in armed conflict settings. As the ICRC concentrates on sexual violence, it is important that there is coordination within the Movement in these settings to ensure that other Movement actors work to address other forms of SGBV, and to ensure that their efforts are complementary.
- **Disasters:** The International Federation is increasingly working to support National Societies in integrating GBV into disaster response through its *Minimum standard commitments to gender and diversity in emergency programming*<sup>xxiii</sup> and through the deployment of gender, protection and/or inclusion delegates. Based on the survey data, it appears that GBV is not being consistently integrated in assessment and response from the outset of emergency operations, and there is a need to do more to mainstream SGBV within the planning and management of Movement disaster-response operations.
- **Protracted crisis/displacement:** The survey also revealed that around one-third of identified projects are taking place in protracted crisis or displacement settings.
- **Peace/normal times:** While outside of the scope of the survey, evidence also emerged of the work that National Societies are undertaking in settings other than armed conflict and disasters. There is a need to implement SGBV-preparedness measures in

peacetime/normal settings to ensure that humanitarian actors are prepared to respond should an armed conflict or disaster occur. The long-term needs of victims/survivors of SGBV must also continue to be addressed in peacetime/normal settings. Moreover, the processes of behavioural change required to address the root causes of SGBV should begin in peacetime/normal contexts. The links between these settings could be further enhanced in order to ensure more effective prevention and response to SGBV.

### **Activity types**

The survey identified a wide range of activities, with the most common being awareness raising, prevention and psychosocial support.

- **Awareness raising:** Messages promoted through awareness raising often address the prevention of SGBV and its humanitarian consequences and encourage victims/survivors to access support services. In a recent example, in the aftermath of the Nepal earthquakes in May 2015, the International Federation worked with the National Society to promote awareness of services available for victims/survivors of SGBV by developing and distributing pocket cards containing information on how to seek help and report cases of SGBV that could be distributed by Red Cross volunteers to people affected by the disaster.
- **Prevention:** In several contexts, the prevention of SGBV is addressed through broader violence-prevention activities. For example, a project in Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya seeks to prevent all forms of violence, with a strong focus on sexual violence. The ICRC's approach to prevention involves working with the authorities, armed and security forces and other weapon-bearers to ensure that these actors respect, promote respect for, and include and implement the norms of IHL and other internationally recognized standards, as applicable, relating to sexual violence in armed conflict in their domestic law, doctrine, regulations and operations. Some National Societies also reported implementing primary prevention approaches, which take a long-term perspective – seeking to address the root causes of SGBV and the risk factors that may make it more likely. These aim to address gender-based discrimination and inequalities.
- **Multi-sectoral response:** Many of the projects identified aim to address SGBV through a multi-sectoral approach – including health, psychosocial, economic and legal support – in order to respond to the full range of needs of victims/survivors. This included projects in the Central African Republic, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Lebanon, South Sudan and Uganda.
- **Medical care:** Movement actors help victims/survivors access medical care through direct provision of care, referrals, support for health facilities, training and capacity building, and materials. For example, in Somalia, the Red Crescent received support from the ICRC in the form of staff training on the clinical management of rape, including developing guidelines.
- **Mental health and psychosocial support:** A growing area of focus of SGBV response is psychosocial support. Activities described in the survey include engaging with victims/survivors of violence, as well as their families and communities, in order to improve their understanding of the violence, overcome its effects, fight stigmatization, and promote access to quality integrated health care. As part of the emergency response in the Central African Republic since 2013, National Society volunteers have received training on providing psychosocial support, including a module on SGBV. The ICRC directly addresses the specific mental-health and psychosocial needs of victims/survivors affected by conflict-related sexual violence. It strives to ensure that victims' psychological needs are addressed at the same time as it runs activities that respond to their psychosocial needs. For example, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, victims/survivors' more

specific mental-health (i.e. psychological) needs are addressed by trained key community figures who act as counsellors. Their psychosocial needs are addressed through community-based activities, such as community sensitization, psychoeducation and information sessions.

- **Economic support:** Livelihood activities can help to prevent and mitigate the risk of SGBV and help victims/survivors rebuild their lives. The Jordan National Red Crescent Society runs a vocational training centre for vulnerable Jordanian women and girls and refugees in Jordan who are at relatively higher risk of such violence. In addition to training beneficiaries in new skills, the National Society offers psychosocial support and conducts awareness raising on issues including SGBV.
- **Legal support:** In many places, there are significant barriers to seeking justice for SGBV crimes. Some National Societies help victims/survivors in this regard both directly and through referrals, including in Colombia, Malawi and Papua New Guinea.
- **Humanitarian diplomacy:** National Societies engage in humanitarian diplomacy to encourage authorities to change laws or make legal systems more responsive to the needs of victims/survivors. The ICRC also works closely with governments around the world with a view to providing legal and technical support for developing or enhancing the normative legal framework whereby IHL – including prohibitions related to sexual violence – is codified in domestic legal systems.

#### 4.4 Statutory meetings 2015

In support of the 2013 workshop recommendation to include SGBV in armed conflict and disaster on the agenda of the Statutory Meetings in 2015, the Movement-wide SGBV Coordination Group has provided a forum for discussion and coordination in moving this issue forward. This report, submitted to the Council of Delegates, is one of the outcomes of this process.

Sexual and gender-based violence is one of the main themes of the 32nd International Conference, where the resolution “Sexual and gender-based violence: Joint action on prevention and response” will also be submitted. The draft resolution expresses concern at the persistent prevalence of sexual violence, particularly in armed conflict, and the growing body of evidence of GBV in disasters and other emergencies, and the impacts that these have on victims. It calls on States to enact concrete measures to implement the relevant legal frameworks, as applicable, and to ensure that appropriate measures are in place to respond to the needs of victims by providing protection and support. The draft resolution also calls on the components of the Movement to support national initiatives, to build the capacity of Movement staff and volunteers and to enhance coordination and partnerships internal and external to the Movement.

#### 4.5 Other relevant Movement initiatives

In addition to supporting the implementation of the recommendations of the 2013 workshop, the ICRC and the International Federation have each recently undertaken research that seeks to build a stronger evidence base for humanitarian action addressing SGBV in order to enhance the Movement’s activities in this area.

##### ***ICRC Analytical Framework on Sexual Violence***

The ICRC’s Analytical Framework on Sexual Violence is a research project being undertaken as part of its prevention activities. The objective of the research is to further support States’ efforts to prevent and respond to sexual violence by connecting victims’ needs to States’ obligations and existing infrastructure. The Analytical Framework is based on the assumption that victims require specific remedies in terms of health care and protection as well as broader legal, economic, social



and administrative processes, and it takes account of the specific protection needs of victims. The research is looking at a sample of 20 countries, and specifically an analysis of the following:

- Remedies: How States respond to the specific needs of victims of sexual violence, e.g. through medical care, protection and legal assistance
- Normative frameworks: Key institutional gaps, e.g. sexual violence not being criminalized or a lack of a proper judicial system
- Institutional responses: Short-term protection and assistance responses, e.g. medical care and safety measures, and long-term responses, e.g. reform / capacity development of the judicial system and access to remedies.

### ***International Federation research on GBV in disasters***

While there is growing recognition that sexual violence is a feature of most conflict situations, much less is known about the nature and extent to which GBV occurs in disasters. In order to address this knowledge gap, in 2015 the International Federation embarked on research in nine disaster-affected countries and interviewed a range of stakeholders. Findings from the field research, together with academic and other secondary sources, provided the basis for a global study. Some preliminary findings are given below:

- While there is a substantial amount of information and research on the issue of sexual violence in conflict and, to a lesser degree perhaps, the nature and extent of GBV in “mega disasters,” there is a dearth of data on GBV in small and seasonal disasters. This is partly because reporting and response systems are generally weak and victims/survivors of GBV are generally reluctant to report it to the authorities.
- While many of the countries studied have both national policies on disasters and national legislation on gender, none of those surveyed incorporates GBV prevention and response in their disaster-management policies.
- The prevalence of GBV – or perhaps the recognition of and willingness to talk about GBV – differs significantly from country to country. The strongest evidence base comes from countries such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States, with many solid research studies documenting widespread GBV, particularly against women. However, this research is for the most part on large-scale disasters. An understanding of the nature and extent of GBV in small and seasonal disasters is still lacking and so too is an understanding of how local actors, including local authorities, National Societies and women’s organizations, respond.
- Almost all of the violence reported was directed at women, and domestic violence / intimate partner violence was the most widespread form of violence. Over time, GBV is exacerbated by economic impoverishment and mounting frustration within the family, in some cases leading to transactional sex and early marriage.
- Those displaced by disasters, particularly single women living in temporary shelters, seemed most vulnerable to sexual assault by strangers. Displacement seemed to create risks because people are uprooted from their traditional social networks.
- While awareness of GBV in conflict situations has grown, disaster responders appear to be less attuned to the possibility of such violence in post-disaster situations and often do not know how to respond when it does occur.
- The desk research looked at the relationship between GBV and health emergencies, particularly Ebola and HIV/AIDS. In the case of Ebola, there was an increase in GBV, including sexual assault and rape, transactional sex and domestic violence / intimate partner violence, at the same time that access to services was restricted.

The International Federation is exploring opportunities to expand and deepen its research in this area. The objective of further research is to better inform Movement-wide, mainstreamed action on GBV in disasters, which may be targeted or stand-alone. Such action would include: medical,

psychosocial and legal support; disaster-management policy; disaster-response law and regulation; and advocacy. The focus of further research will be supporting National Societies to prevent and respond to GBV in small and/or seasonal disasters. This is an area that has received very little attention and action to date and one National Societies may be best placed to address.

#### **4.6 Key gaps and challenges for the Movement**

Through these recent initiatives, a number of key gaps and challenges have been identified in the Movement's efforts to address SGBV in armed conflict and disaster settings.

**Strategy and policy:** Several National Societies, the ICRC<sup>xxiv</sup> and the International Federation<sup>xxv</sup> have formulated strategies and made commitments to better address various aspects of SGBV in armed conflict and disaster. However, this needs to be developed further through a more strategic, Movement-wide approach taking account of the respective mandates of its different components. A more coherent strategic framework would boost the Movement's capacity to address SGBV in a more holistic and effective manner, and enhance the complementarity of efforts and accountability.

**Movement coordination:** Over half of the National Societies that responded to the survey identified the need for enhanced coordination within the Movement to better address SGBV. Greater coordination both strategically and operationally would help to avoid the neglect of particular regions and a duplication of efforts in others. It would also promote greater complementarity between different Movement approaches. Moreover, improved coordination could foster a more effective distribution of resources and funding and the sharing of knowledge and expertise.

**Prioritization and funding:** Many National Societies reported that competing priorities affect their ability to address SGBV. There is, therefore, an urgent need to increase staff and volunteers' understanding that addressing SGBV is a life-saving measure that can and must be integrated into humanitarian response in all settings. This requires management buy-in, strategies and frameworks for integrating practical SGBV-prevention and response measures and building accountability for addressing this issue, improved coordination within the Movement, and increased funding from donors.

**Awareness raising, training and capacity building:** A lack of expertise in addressing SGBV represents a key challenge that has prevented some National Societies from engaging with this issue at all, with the lack of trained staff and volunteers commonly cited as obstacles to addressing SGBV, particularly in emergencies. The lack of specialist staff – particularly psychologists – was raised, in addition to the difficulties of recruiting female personnel. Essential to enhancing the Movement's ability to address SGBV is, therefore, more awareness raising, training, capacity building and active recruitment of female first responders. In addition, there is a clear need for more technical support and supervision of staff and volunteers.

**Scope and quality of interventions:** Across the Movement as a whole, the total number of projects identified is low, and only one-third of them are focussed primarily on addressing SGBV. The mainstreaming of SGBV within emergency response appears to occur inconsistently and insufficiently. This must be better addressed in line with relevant Movement and international standards. In addition, there is a need to enhance both targeted and integrated programming. Further, while SGBV is made up of a wide variety of types of violence, the overwhelming focus of activities appears to be on sexual violence and gender-based physical assault, to the neglect of other forms of SGBV, including forced/early marriage, sexual exploitation and abuse and trafficking. Furthermore, the needs of neglected and marginalized groups – particularly male victims/survivors – could be better integrated in programming. There is also a need for more

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evidence of the effectiveness of interventions through enhanced monitoring and evaluation. This is vital to ensuring that a quality, victim/survivor-centred approach is implemented and that the impact of interventions is better understood, consistently evaluated and continually enhanced.

Specific activities that could be further developed include:

- enhanced support for victims/survivors in terms of health care, livelihoods and access to justice;
- a stronger focus on primary prevention, including working to address the underlying, root causes of violence through activities that address gender inequality and discrimination, particularly by working with men and boys; and
- humanitarian diplomacy, including National Societies investigating how they can use their role as auxiliaries to national authorities to promote awareness and the integration of SGBV within emergency planning and response and related legal frameworks.

***Prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse:*** Only around 60 per cent of National Societies that responded to the survey have some form of policy addressing sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) by their staff and volunteers. Where such policies do exist, procedures and processes related to the disclosure, investigation of and redress for such violence are often absent. Moreover, the training of staff and volunteers on their rights and obligations in relation to SEA also appears to be minimal, as does education for beneficiaries on their rights and reporting mechanisms.

## 5. The Movement's added value and recommendations

### 5.1 The added value of the Movement

In light of the gaps highlighted in the previous section, it is clear that the Movement must do more to address SGBV related particularly to armed conflict and disaster. Future directions for the Movement should be determined in line with the areas in which it can have the most added value. The survey identified the important role that National Societies and their volunteers can play in addressing this issue based on their close links to the community and understanding of the underlying norms and values within societies that are the root causes of SGBV. As such, the Movement is well placed to engage on this issue at a local level and support the development of activities through a community-based approach, including working to address the primary prevention of SGBV. National Societies' recognized role as auxiliaries to national authorities and in disaster management also means that they represent key agents of change in terms of advocating for SGBV to be addressed during disasters and supporting authorities in doing so.

The Movement's global reach also means that it is able to address SGBV in a broad range of contexts and in the world's forgotten crises. This global network also fosters strong partnerships, and there is the potential to generate closer ties within the Movement in this regard to provide enhanced technical support and capacity building, and to share expertise, knowledge and resources. Through a clear strategic approach and strong coordination, this could be a strong asset for the Movement.

### 5.2 Recommendations for the Movement

In order to strengthen the Movement's collective efforts to prevent and respond to SGBV in armed conflict and disaster, in line with its Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values and respecting the different roles and mandates of the components of the Movement, this report recommends that the Movement take the following measures:

1. **Develop a clear, more holistic strategic approach:** Through a collaborative process, develop an overarching, Movement-wide strategic framework setting out the Movement's

vision, approach and commitments to addressing SGBV in armed conflict and disaster, taking into account the complementary roles and mandates of the components of the Movement.

2. **Enhance and build partnerships within and external to the Movement:** Strengthen strategic and operational coordination mechanisms within the Movement for addressing SGBV in armed conflict and disaster. Ensure coordination and enhance partnerships with relevant stakeholders, including but not limited to the United Nations, regional organizations, States, humanitarian and development organizations, academia and the private sector.
3. **Build awareness and capacity within the Movement:** The Movement's components make awareness raising and capacity building of staff and volunteers at all levels a priority, develop and disseminate tools and guidance, and exchange experiences and good practices in relation to SGBV.
4. **Enhance the quality and scope of programming:** Bearing in mind the "do no harm" principle and the need to respect confidentiality, systematically include a gender, diversity and SGBV analysis in all needs assessments undertaken by Movement actors. Strive to mainstream SGBV-prevention and response measures into all Movement emergency operations and expand targeted and integrated programming addressing SGBV in settings such as armed conflict and disaster through a victim/survivor-centred and evidence-based approach.
5. **Expand research and build a stronger evidence base for action:** Continue to strengthen research to deepen our understanding of the causes, dynamics and impacts of SGBV in settings such as armed conflict and disaster, thereby fostering more effective programming.
6. **Implement measures to effectively address the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse by Movement staff and volunteers:** Ensure that appropriate policies, reporting mechanisms, screening processes and training are put in place to prevent or address sexual exploitation and abuse by Movement staff and volunteers.
7. **Further develop and consult about, agree and disseminate the terminology and definitions:** Begin using the terminology proposed in this report and continue to refine definitions through consultation across the Movement, with the aim of adopting finalized versions at the 2017 Council of Delegates.

This report moreover recommends that this issue be included in the agenda of the 2017 Council of Delegates in order to report back on the implementation of the recommendations in this report and other relevant activities undertaken to address SGBV in armed conflict and disaster, as well as to propose a way forward for the Movement beyond that date. In support of the implementation of these recommendations, the mandate of the Movement's SGBV Coordination Group should be renewed. Its membership should also be broadened to obtain a more diverse geographical representation.

<sup>i</sup> For definitions, see page 5.

<sup>ii</sup> See *Report on the workshop: Movement response to sexual and gender-based violence in armed conflict and disaster*, available at: [www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/red-cross-crescent-movement/council-delegates-2013/cod13-ws9-sgbv-final-report-eng.pdf](http://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/red-cross-crescent-movement/council-delegates-2013/cod13-ws9-sgbv-final-report-eng.pdf)

<sup>iii</sup> See [www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/1474-terminology-and-definitions.html?next=1475](http://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/1474-terminology-and-definitions.html?next=1475)

<sup>iv</sup> See The Sphere Project, *Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response*, 2004, and Interagency Standing Committee, *Guidelines for Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings*, 2005. The International Federation also signed up to the 12 core principles of the joint communiqué “Keep Her Safe: Protecting girls and women in emergencies,” 2013.

<sup>v</sup> For example, in the Former Yugoslavia, Liberia, Rwanda and Sierra Leone.

<sup>vi</sup> This issue of sexual violence in armed conflict has been addressed in various UN Security Council Resolutions, including 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1960 (2010) and 2106 (2013). In addition, there has been a rise in related international normative frameworks addressing GBV in disasters. See Mireille Le-Ngoc, “Normative frameworks’ role in addressing gender-based violence in disaster settings,” *Disaster Law Working Paper Series*, Paper No. 3, International Federation, 2015.

<sup>vii</sup> For example, the GBV Area of Responsibility brings together a range of organizations working on GBV in emergencies to advocate for comprehensive and coordinated GBV programming. The Interagency Standing Committee *Guidelines for Gender-Based Violence in Humanitarian Settings* provide field-based guidance on multi-sectoral responses to GBV in emergencies.

<sup>viii</sup> See Women’s Refugee Commission, US State Department and USAID, *From Commitments to Collective Action: The Call to Action Road Map: Technical Workshop Report*, 2015, available at: <http://www.state.gov/j/prm/policyissues/issues/c62377.htm>

<sup>ix</sup> See Sarah Martin, *Current State of GBV Response Capacity in Humanitarian Settings: A synthesis of information, resources, and opportunities*, 2014.

<sup>x</sup> The International Federation is an active participant in this initiative. See Women’s Refugee Commission, US State Department and USAID, *From Commitments to Collective Action: The Call to Action Road Map: Technical Workshop Report*, 2015, available at: <http://www.state.gov/j/prm/policyissues/issues/c62377.htm>

<sup>xi</sup> The *International Protocol on the Documentation and Investigation of Sexual Violence in Conflict: Basic Standards of Best Practice on the Documentation of Sexual Violence as a Crime under International Law*, 1st ed., Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 2014, was developed through the PSVI and sets out good practice in investigating sexual violence in line with international criminal law. In September 2013, 155 governments also endorsed a statement at the UN General Assembly committing to act to end sexual violence in armed conflict. A global summit on this issue was held in London in June 2014. See Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *Summit Report: The Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict, London 2014*, 2014.

<sup>xii</sup> See, for example, Resolution 2 of the 26th International Conference, available at: [www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/resolution/26-international-conference-resolution-2-1995.htm](http://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/resolution/26-international-conference-resolution-2-1995.htm); Annex 2 of Resolution 1 of the 27th International Conference: “Plan of Action for the years 2000-2003,” *International Review of the Red Cross*, Vol. 81, No. 836, December 1999, pp. 880-895; Resolution 2 of the 31st International Conference, “4-year action plan for the implementation of international humanitarian law” and its Annex 1, available at: [www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/publications/icrc-002-1130.pdf](http://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/publications/icrc-002-1130.pdf); Resolution 6 of the 31st International Conference, “Health inequities with a focus on women and children,” available at: [www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/publications/icrc-002-1130.pdf](http://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/publications/icrc-002-1130.pdf).

<sup>xiii</sup> The ICRC also uses the concept of gender as an analytical tool when assessing the various risks, needs, and strengths of women, men, girls and boys, to develop programmes that respond effectively to their specific protection, health, economic and other needs.

<sup>xiv</sup> ICRC, *Women and War: Implementation of the ICRC Pledge to the 27th International Conference*, available at: [www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/other/icrcpledgeww\\_final\\_ang.pdf](http://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/other/icrcpledgeww_final_ang.pdf), 2003.

<sup>xv</sup> Charlotte Lindsey, *Women facing war*, ICRC, 2001.

<sup>xvi</sup> ICRC, *Special Appeal: Strengthening the Response to Sexual Violence 2014*, 2013.

<sup>xvii</sup> K. Stoltenberg, *Working with women in emergency relief and rehabilitation programmes*, League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, 1991.

<sup>xviii</sup> International Federation, *Strategic Framework on Gender and Diversity Issues 2013-2020 and Explanatory note to the IFRC Strategic Framework on Gender and Diversity Issues*, 2013.

<sup>xix</sup> International Federation, *IFRC Strategy on Violence Prevention, Mitigation and Response 2011-2020*, 2011.

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<sup>xx</sup> *Report on the workshop: Movement response to sexual and gender-based violence in armed conflict and disaster*, 18 November 2013.

<sup>xxi</sup> The Coordination Group includes representatives of: the ICRC, the International Federation and the National Societies of Australia, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Canada, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Iceland, Ireland, Jordan, the Maldives, Nepal, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States.

<sup>xxii</sup> The phrasing “related to armed conflict and disaster” encapsulates settings requiring preparedness, prevention, relief and recovery efforts, in addition to protracted crisis and displacement.

<sup>xxiii</sup> International Federation, *Minimum standard commitments to gender and diversity in emergency programming*, Pilot Version, 2015.

<sup>xxiv</sup> ICRC, *Special Appeal: Strengthening the Response to Sexual Violence 2014*, 2013.

<sup>xxv</sup> The International Federation is an active participant in the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-based Violence in Emergencies initiative, and is a signatory of the joint communiqué “Keep Her Safe: Protecting girls and women in emergencies,” 2013. The International Federation’s new minimum standard commitments also include guidance and measures to address gender and diversity, including elements of GBV prevention and response, in emergencies.