A research agenda for sexual violence in humanitarian, conflict and post-conflict settings

World Health Organization

STOP RAPE NOW
UN ACTION AGAINST SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT

MRC
SOUTH AFRICA

Sexual Violence Research Initiative

Introduction[1]

Conflict-related sexual violence has been a feature of war for generations, and in many places around the world. In recent years, however, members of the international community including, United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict (UN Action)[2], governments, humanitarian organizations, grassroots movements, and researchers, have challenged the notion that rape and other forms of sexual assault and abuse are an inevitable part of conflict, and that the needs of conflict-related sexual violence survivors are not a priority. There has been growth in the number and scale of programs to address the needs of female sexual violence survivors in humanitarian, conflict and post-conflict situations, as well as increasing efforts aimed at preventing sexual violence. Yet it is a complex issue, and the needs of both women and men, and girls and boys, who live with the health, social, psychological, justice, and economic consequences of sexual violence, and the challenges of preventing conflict-related sexual violence, continue to outstrip available resources.

Agencies working in conflict and post-conflict settings are increasingly undertaking research on sexual violence, either on their own or with the support of academic institutions and researchers. The increase in research on sexual violence in these contexts has been driven by a growing concern about the scale of the problem; as well as the importance for prevention and response of having data on the magnitude and nature of sexual violence in conflict situations; the vulnerabilities of women and children in conflict; the risk factors for perpetration; the short, medium and long term service needs of victims/survivors; and the effectiveness of interventions to prevent and respond to sexual violence. In spite of the clear needs for and increased efforts to collect these data, the evidence base remains scant.

In order to advance the field in a more systematic way, and ensure that research efforts make the best use of limited resources, it is necessary to identify strategic priorities for research over the next five years. This will facilitate resource requests for research on conflict-related sexual violence, and help findings to be better utilized to inform programs and policy. As part of the knowledge building work of UN Action, the World Health Organization (WHO), in collaboration with the Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI) has supported the development of this research agenda on sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict settings.

The process of developing the research agenda was multi-staged and consultative. First, WHO/SVRI created an advisory board consisting of 15 experts from UN agencies, NGOs, and academic bodies to generate ten key themes within conflict-related sexual violence that require additional research. Second, an on-line survey was used to gather the views of a wide variety of practitioners and researchers working on these issues worldwide. The survey was available in both English and French. A total of 176 surveys were completed, 156 in English and 20 in French. Participants in the on-line survey prioritized the ten key research themes, and identified specific research questions within each theme that need to be addressed in order to inform programmatic efforts to prevent and respond to conflict-related sexual violence. At the same time, a review of the existing literature on these issues was undertaken, including both the key themes identified through the consultative process and other issues that have been described in published research findings and other reports. This paper summarizes the key outcomes of this process.

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1 This paper was prepared by Elizabeth Rowley, (independent consultant); Claudia Garcia-Moreno (WHO) and Elizabeth Dartnall (SVRI).

2 UN Action is an internal body within the United Nations (UN) system that unites the work of 13 UN entities with the goal of ending sexual violence in conflict.

Framing the issue: findings from the literature

The literature review looked at published literature available on sexual violence in conflict settings, specifically focusing on: the magnitude of sexual violence in the context of conflict and crisis; forms of rape and sexual violence in conflict; understanding rape as a tactic of war; the impact of conflict-related sexual violence on individuals, families, communities and countries; men and boys as survivors of conflict-related sexual violence; women who become pregnant and children born as a result of rape; and programmatic responses.

The magnitude of sexual violence in the context of conflict and crisis

Measuring the magnitude of sexual violence in conflict and fragile settings is fraught with methodological challenges and ethical concerns. Due to underreporting, figures obtained are estimates at best. As a tactic of war, sexual violence is an international crime, and research on the numbers of individuals affected can quickly become a political issue. Available estimates from surveys and other data sources use varying definitions of sexual violence from study to study, sample from different types of populations and differ greatly according to data collection methods. These types of differences across research studies and other investigations into sexual violence constitute one of the primary challenges in measuring levels of sexual and gender-based violence across settings (Potts, Myer & Roberts, 2011; Lawry, Reis, Kisielewski, Asher, 2011). To date, reliable and comparable cross-country data on the prevalence of conflict-related sexual violence do not exist. Estimates vary greatly and are not directly comparable across locations e.g. estimates of rape in war from studies done in the DRC range from 17.8% to 39.7% women and 23.6% men reporting conflict related sexual violence (Casey, Gallagher, Makanda, Meyers, Vinas & Austin, 2011; Johnson, Scott, Rughita, Kisielewski, Asher, Ong, Lawry, 2010). Many practitioners do not view measuring magnitude as a priority for research and oppose the investment of scarce resources on this question. However others argue that lack of data on magnitude hampers the ability to deliver targeted responses to the areas of greatest need.

Forms of rape and sexual violence in conflict

Although conflict-related sexual violence has become almost synonymous with rape, sexual violence takes a number of different forms in both conflict and post-conflict situations. The forms most frequently described in the research literature include: rape/forced sex (referenced in the literature as rape by armed forces/parties to conflict, and to a lesser extent rape by intimate partners); sexual harassment; sexual exploitation (including sexual coercion for protection and/or basic necessities such as food, perpetrated by armed forces and/or humanitarian staff); sexual slavery; forced marriage or cohabitation, including of minors; and forced pregnancy (resulting from rape perpetrated with the intent of pregnancy and captivity to prevent attempts to abort). Most of the available literature addresses different forms of sexual violence perpetrated specifically against women and girls. Men and boys are rarely included in this body of work.

Understanding rape as a tactic of war

Sexual violence varies greatly in extent and form across different conflict settings. Furthermore while it can safely be assumed that most conflicts experience high levels of sexual violence, not all conflict settings are characterized by such violence, thus challenging the notion that conflict-related violence is inevitable (Wood, 2006). Attempting to understand the circumstances associated with the use of sexual violence in conflict-affected situations and, equally important, its absence can help us better respond to and prevent rape in war (Wood, 2006). The literature on the different forms and motivations of sexual violence in the context of conflict and crisis focuses on theories of power and social constructions. One of the more commonly advanced reasons for rape in war is the use of sexual violence as a military strategy

to displace populations, instil fear and terrorize and control them, underscored by patriarchal attitudes, religious and cultural mores (Card, 1996; Wood, 2006; Maedl, 2011). Wood (2006) recommends more research on gaining a better understanding of the variation in patterns of sexual violence across conflict settings, and what promotes or constrains sexual violence in different settings in order to develop policies and programs for prevention of rape in war.

Impact of conflict-related sexual violence on individuals, families, communities and countries

The impact of sexual abuse and violence during both war and peacetime on survivors' physical and mental health is often substantial and long-lasting. Anecdotally, there is also an impact on the individual through his or her interactions with others, at both the family and community levels. Many of the research reports and published articles identified through this review focus on the adult survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, while a smaller number examine sexual violence as a part of the experiences of child soldiers and/or abducted children, and only one looked at sexual violence against children more generally. Child survivors of sexual violence can experience a host of psychological effects including depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, inappropriate sexual behavior, issues of social competence, cognitive difficulties, body image concerns, and substance abuse (Bosmans, 2007). The apparent bias in the research literature towards documenting the impact on adults may be a reflection of the ethical and methodological challenges involved in research focused on conflict-affected children, especially with regard to sexual violence. In addition, the vast majority of research on the impact of conflict-related sexual violence at the individual, family and community levels refers to sexual violence against women and rather than men and boys. The review identified a limited number of articles and reports documenting the impact of conflict-related sexual violence perpetrated against males.

Men and boys as survivors

Although it is widely recognized that most survivors of conflict-related sexual violence are women, it is also understood that some proportion of survivors are men and boys. After rape, men and boys are likely to experience similar mental health impacts to those faced by women and girls and they will need to navigate the same, or maybe even greater, levels of stigma and shame (Jewkes et al., 2002; Johnson, Asher, Rosborough, Raja, Panjabi, Beadling, et al. 2008; Johnson, Scott, Rughita, Kisielewski, Asher, Ong, & Lawry, 2010). Little is known about the number of men and boys suffering conflict-related sexual violence or how best to address their needs (Carpenter, 2006). Only a small number of articles on this important theme were identified by this review. It is important for researchers and practitioners to consider the plight of male conflict-related sexual violence survivors (Linos, 2009).

Women who fall pregnant and children born as a result of rape

Pregnancy can result from rape. Rates of pregnancy as a result of rape vary greatly across settings. Estimates based on studies from Ethiopia, Mexico and the United States of America (USA) report that between 5% and 18% of rapes result in pregnancy (Muguleta, et. al. 1998; Mexico City, Centro do Apoyo a Mujeres Violadas, 1985; Holmes, et. al., 1996). It is even more difficult to estimate numbers of children born of rape during war and little is known about their experiences. Evidence suggests however that the development of children born during captivity is extremely compromised by lack of food and starvation; lack of basic needs and ill health (Apio, 1999, cited in Carpenter, 2007). Mothers who become pregnant as a result of rape and the children of rape face a number of significant stigma-related challenges, including rejection and negative nicknames: devil's children, children of shame, children of the enemy, monster babies; or actual names, e.g. in Uganda the name "Lugbana Kene" means "Only God knows why this happened to me" (Apio, 1999, cited in Carpenter, 2007). Not all mothers reject children born as a result of rape. Research from Sierra Leone showed that the bond between mother and child was not undermined by the paternity of the children (Baldi &

MacKenzie, in Carpenter, 2007:87). The best way to support women who become pregnant as a result of rape is not well documented in the published literature, nor is it known how best to support and respond to the children born of rape. Although growing, the research in this area remains scant and its quality limited. More research on almost all aspects of this issue is needed.

Programmatic responses

In 1995, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) published some of the earliest specific programmatic guidelines on preventing and responding to conflict-related sexual violence (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 1995). During the past fifteen years or more, community groups, local NGOs and government service providers, as well as the international community have worked steadily to expand the scope and quality of services to address the needs of women and girls affected by conflict with regard to both gender based and sexual violence. Nevertheless, many program professionals, service providers, donors, and researchers identify as a priority the need for more systematic information on the scope and effectiveness of programs that prevent and respond to conflict-related sexual violence. The literature search confirmed that there is a dearth of primary research on programmatic responses, and evaluation is also very limited.

Refining priorities for research on conflict and post-conflict sexual violence: asking the experts and findings from an online survey

The introduction to this report describes a participatory process for setting a research agenda on conflict-related sexual violence. Developing the agenda was a two stage process. First, the WHO/SVRI created an advisory board consisting of 15 experts from UN agencies, NGOs, and academic bodies to generate ten key themes within conflict-related sexual violence that require additional research. Second, an on-line survey was used to gather the views of a wide variety of practitioners and researchers working on these issues worldwide. Participants in the on-line survey prioritized the ten key research themes, and offered additional ideas for research themes as well as specific research questions within each theme that need to be addressed in order to inform programmatic efforts to prevent and respond to conflict-related sexual violence. The on-line survey was available in both English and French and was widely disseminated to professionals working on this issue both in field programs around the world, as well as service providers and other experts working in UN agencies, NGOs, donor agencies and academic institutions in the fields of human rights, health and psychosocial care, international law and justice, peace and conflict studies, and policy. This was complemented by the literature search summarized above which also identified research gaps. The key research themes, and some of the many research questions offered within each of these themes, are presented below.

Online survey participants

Participants were mostly based in Africa, and the majority worked for international NGOs, academic institutions or UN agencies (67.1%). The focus of their work was research or advocacy, and/or they were involved with health programming. Their main source of information for research on conflict related sexual violence was: journal articles; meetings and conferences; colleagues and email listservs.

Priority research themes for research on sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict settings

Together, the literature review and online survey identified and ranked key themes for research on conflict-related sexual violence. The following research themes (in decreasing order of priority according to the results of the online survey) were identified as important areas for research into conflict-related sexual violence:

1. The scope and effectiveness of programs to prevent conflict-related sexual violence;
2. the scope and effectiveness of programs to respond to conflict-related sexual violence;
3. the impact of conflict-related sexual violence on individuals, families, communities and countries;
4. better understanding of the different forms of and motivations for conflict-related sexual violence;
5. integration of sexual assault services in sexual and reproductive health services including emergency contraception, safe abortion services, and family planning;
6. the role of economic empowerment and holistic approaches in the prevention of, and response to, conflict-related sexual violence;
7. how to respond to the needs of women and girls who become pregnant as a result of conflict-related rape and the needs of children born of rape;
8. the needs of ex-combatant sexual violence survivors (men and women) and effective program approaches;
9. men and boys as survivors of conflict-related sexual violence;
10. the impact of conflict on male gender identities and conceptualization of masculinity.

A more detailed list of research priorities is available in the Appendix.

Strengthening research capacity on sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict settings

To strengthen our understanding of rape in war and ultimately prevent it, we need to ensure that the research undertaken is both priority driven and is carried out in such a way that it provides a sound practical and empirical basis for interventions/programs, policy and advocacy on sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict settings. This may be achieved by addressing issues of research methods and definitions; collaboration around research; dissemination and sharing of research findings; advocacy and research funding and supporting evidenced based programming. Research on sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict settings can therefore be strengthened by improvements in the areas presented next.

Research methods, definitions:

- Promoting rigor and consistency in taxonomy to provide a shared understanding of basic concepts for research into conflict-related sexual violence and thus allow for comparability of research findings across settings and contexts.
- Developing consensus on definitions and measurement methodologies for sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict research.
- Ensuring research and the methods used are guided by existing professional standards and guidelines, including the WHO Ethical and Safety Recommendations for Researching, Documenting and Monitoring Sexual Violence in Emergencies (WHO, 2007).
- Developing, adapting and sharing research instruments validated for use with study populations.

Collaboration:

- Encouraging and supporting thoughtful collaborations of research teams that consist of a mix of professionals.
- Strengthening local research capacities.
- Creating a research group for conflict-related sexual violence.

Information sharing:

- Establishing platforms and partnerships for the sharing of conflict-related sexual violence research findings, including sharing both published and grey literature (organization reports), workshops and conferences.
- Ensuring that research information gets back to the field through the use of participatory research methods and other approaches to dissemination.

Advocacy and research funding:

- Assisting donors in shaping funding programs that are based on research gaps and priorities through the dissemination of the research agenda for conflict-related sexual violence to funders/donor agencies, policy makers, service planners, and gender and human rights advocates.

Program related factors:

- The development of programs that are theoretically based.
- Supporting the evaluation and development of evidenced based programs.
- Promotion of responsible reporting of sound research findings by researchers, journalists and advocacy groups.

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Appendix
Research themes and questions to guide research on sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict settings

Together the literature review and online survey identified key themes and specific questions for research on conflict-related sexual violence. Through this process a number of countries experiencing conflict were found to be underrepresented in the literature, with the bulk of the published literature coming from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Rwanda, Serbia and Montenegro, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Uganda. No published research was found from Afghanistan and Somalia, and very few published journal articles or other reports were identified from Burundi, Central African Republic, and Guinea, while Colombia, Congo, Mynamar, Russia (Chechen Republic), South Sudan, and Timor-Leste were also poorly represented in the published literature.

In addition to addressing these geographical gaps in the published literature, the following specific research questions under each theme were identified as priority:

Priority theme 1:
The scope and effectiveness of programs to prevent conflict-related sexual violence

Identification of prevention program approaches (i.e. scope of existing prevention approaches)

- What models exist for community-based prevention of conflict-related sexual violence perpetrated by armed groups and/or non-state actors? What forms of positive collective action exist to prevent (or minimize) conflict-related sexual violence?
- What evidence exists for the effectiveness of community based programs for the prevention of conflict-related sexual violence?
- How can programs to prevent conflict-related sexual violence be adapted to fit best the cultural context of different country settings?
- What are the options for scaling up effective prevention programs? Are programs that have wide reach more or less effective in preventing conflict-related sexual violence than programs that are limited in reach but go deeper into relevant issues?

Identification of key actors in prevention programs (e.g. males, females, perpetrators, beneficiaries, community leaders)

- What successful models exist for effectively engaging men and boys/women/families and schools/religious leaders/social leaders/perpetrators in the prevention of conflict-related sexual violence?
- How do beneficiaries perceive programs to prevent conflict-related sexual violence, and what areas do they typically identify for improvement/modification? What do survivors of conflict-related sexual violence believe are effective prevention approaches? What do combatants believe are effective approaches to prevent conflict-related sexual violence?
- How do national laws and policies impact on the prevention of conflict-related sexual violence at the community level?

Impact and effectiveness of prevention programs (general)

- What are appropriate outcomes and outcome measures for sexual violence prevention programs in conflict? How can they be used to design better evaluations of prevention programs?
- What are the basic components of any effective program to prevent conflict-related sexual violence? (best practices)
- What UN-led initiatives have made a tangible impact on the prevention of conflict-related sexual violence and against which baseline information can this be measured?
- What factors lead to the sustainability or failure of programs to prevent conflict-related sexual violence?

Impact and effectiveness of prevention programs (specific issues)

- Is there evidence that conflict-related sexual violence prevention approaches can be effectively integrated in demobilization, disarmament and rehabilitation (DDR processes in order to prevent future sexual violence?
- Does effective security sector reform contribute to the prevention of conflict-related sexual violence?
- Can military assets be effectively deployed or leveraged to prevent conflict-related sexual violence? How?
- Does the threat of sanctions serve as an effective deterrent in the prevention of conflict-related sexual violence? (national level and individual level)
- What are the possible methods for applying a specific value to the benefits expected from specific prevention approaches (e.g. quality of life, range of the types of violence prevented)?
- Is there evidence that efforts to prevent conflict-related sexual violence may directly or indirectly exacerbate unequal gender relations or sexual violence?

Priority theme 2:
The scope and effectiveness of programs to respond to conflict-related sexual violence

Survivors' perspectives and experiences

- What do the survivors of conflict-related sexual violence identify as their immediate needs?
- What are successful strategies for making services accessible and responsive for men and women survivors of conflict-related sexual violence?
- What are survivors' perceptions about the services they receive in response to conflict-related sexual violence? What services exist for survivors who may be dependent on the perpetrator (e.g. forced marriage) or face stigma from the community?

Identification of program approaches (i.e. scope of existing approaches to respond to conflict-related sexual violence)

- What is the scope of programs that address the needs of conflict-related sexual violence survivors across countries? i.e. inventory of program approaches in conflict-affected countries including all relevant sectors
- How can programs to respond to conflict-related sexual violence be adapted to fit the cultural context of different country settings? Can programs be adapted from one geographic context to another?

- What are the mechanisms available to support children who are survivors of conflict-related sexual violence and to ensure the quality of services available to them?
- What models and best practices exist for programs that respond to conflict-related sexual violence through DDR programs?
- What models and best practices exist for integrating conflict-related sexual violence response services into other care and services (e.g. general health and economic development services)?

Availability and accessibility of clinical services

- What policies/frameworks exist to promote an appropriate response to conflict-related sexual violence as well as integration into reproductive health services and how effective are they?
- What are the most effective approaches to support conflict-related sexual violence survivors to seek care?
- Does routine screening increase the identification of conflict-related sexual violence survivors?
- How can services be improved to respond more effectively to secondary trauma of service providers, families and community members?

Mental health services

- What feasible and effective models of service exist for addressing the mental health repercussions experienced by conflict-related sexual violence survivors? What impact does this support have on survivors' functionality?
- Does utilization of appropriate sexual assault services have a long term impact on conflict-related sexual violence survivors' mental health and well-being?
- How effective are programs that provide psychological support to family members, including male partners, of conflict-related sexual violence survivors?
- What evidence-based methods and best practices exist (or can be developed) to monitor the effectiveness of psychosocial care given to conflict-related sexual violence survivors?

Community-level interventions approaches

- What models and best practices exist for community-based programs that respond to conflict-related sexual violence and reducing stigma?
- To what extent are community members aware of the benefits and location of medical care for conflict-related sexual violence survivors where those services exist?
- What effective approaches exist to use community networks for promoting the timely presentation of conflict-related sexual violence survivors for medical care?
- Is community-based post-rape care for conflict-related sexual violence survivors safe and feasible where facility-based care is not possible?
- What effective methods exist for helping conflict-related sexual violence survivors to reintegrate into their communities, and how is the effectiveness of those methods measured?

Impact and effectiveness of response programs (general)

- Which program approaches have been most effective in addressing the needs of conflict-related sexual violence survivors? What are the key elements of an effective program, what outcome measures are used, and what evidence exists to indicate that the approaches used are effective?

- What is the relative effectiveness of different approaches employed to respond to conflict-related sexual violence (either as individual approaches or in combinations of approaches)? Which multi-sectoral models can be demonstrated to be most effective?

- What are the options for scaling up effective programs that respond to conflict-related sexual violence? Are programs that have wide reach more or less effective in responding to conflict-related sexual violence than programs that are limited in reach but go deeper into relevant issues?

Other

- What are the key obstacles to implementing the sexual violence response components of the minimum initial service package (MISP)?

- What are the factors affecting access and utilization of services by male sexual violence survivors?

- Is there evidence that efforts to respond to conflict-related sexual violence may directly or indirectly exacerbate unequal gender relations or sexual violence?

- What is the effect of reparations programs for survivors of sexual violence on the security of the survivors and the overall security of their communities in a post-conflict setting?

Priority theme 3:
The impact of conflict-related sexual violence on individuals, families, communities and countries

General:

- How does sexual violence impact on individuals, families, communities and countries according to the cultural context?

- In what ways are the impacts at each level gendered and gender-specific?

Impact of conflict-related sexual violence on the individual:

- What relationships do survivors use to face conflict-related sexual violence?

- What are the consequences of stigmatization for victims of sexual violence?

- What are the long-term psychological side effects for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV)?

- What do individuals who have survived sexual violence want in order for justice to be served?

- What are the protective factors (individual, family and community) that influence women's reintegration post-rape?

- Shame and stigma are seen as an inevitable result of sexual violence, is this the case? Are children born of rape discriminated against?

Impact of conflict-related sexual violence on families:

- How does conflict-related sexual violence affect post-conflict family relations (including intimate partner violence, and children born of rape)?

- What are short and long term consequences within the family/community?
- What are the experiences of men who are partners to victims of sexual violence and how does their unaddressed traumatization affect the family unit?

Impact of conflict-related sexual violence on communities:
- How does stigma factor in community recovery from conflict?
- How do communities cope with widespread sexual violence? What are the protective and risk factors?
- Do experiences of sexual violence during conflict have a long term impact on society's view of the role of women?

Priority theme 4:
Better understanding of the different forms and motivations of conflict-related sexual violence

Perpetrators
- What transforms soldiers into sexual violence perpetrators?
- To what extent are members of armed groups forced to take part in this culture of violence?
- What are the perceived alternatives to violence in gaining access to food, money, and sexual contact with women?
- What are the policies, human resources, political will and penalties for perpetrators?

The relationship between conflict-related sexual violence and gender-based violence
- Do other forms of GBV increase as a result of conflict affecting a community/society?
- What is the link between sexual violence by armed groups and sexual violence by civilians?
- Does domestic violence result in or increase as an effect of wider conflict affecting a community/society?
- How does the type of violence change due to conflict-related sexual violence? What are the differences and similarities?

Priority theme 5:
Integration of sexual assault services in sexual and reproductive health services including emergency contraception, safe abortion services, and family planning?

Survivors' needs and behaviours
- Does routine screening increase the identification of rape survivors (in conflict-affected settings)?
- What is the adherence rate to PEP when given for sexual assault (in conflict-affected settings)?
- What is the level of abortion requests due to conflict-affected rape, as opposed to unmet need for contraception?
- What are the factors affecting access/provision/utilization of emergency contraceptives, safe abortion, and family planning?

Health systems structures, capacities and policies

- To what extent are primary health care facilities able to provide sexual violence response services?
- What are the best strategies to ensure the availability of reproductive health commodities in very vulnerable communities such as eastern Democratic Republic of Congo?
- What policies/frameworks exist to promote appropriate responses to sexual violence as well as integration in other reproductive health services?

Priority theme 6:
The role of economic empowerment and holistic approaches in the prevention of, and response to, conflict-related sexual violence

- How does economic empowerment impact long-term recovery from sexual violence?
- How does economic empowerment impact reintegration into the survivors' community after sexual violence?
- What is the effect of a village led microfinance program on reintegration of survivors of sexual violence and their children?
- In a setting where adequate services for survivors are present, what is the effect of women-centred economic empowerment programming on incidence of sexual violence?
- Is community-wide economic empowerment more effective in reducing sexual violence than other approaches?
- What is the effect of a village led microfinance program on individual, family and community resilience outcomes? (decrease in mental health distress, cohesion and self-confidence as examples)

Priority theme 7:
How to respond to the needs of women and girls who become pregnant as a result of conflict-related rape and children born of rape?

Women and girls' experiences and needs

- What are the needs of women and girls that become pregnant as a result of rape? What challenges do they face during pregnancy, child-birth and in raising babies?
- What influences the rejection/acceptance continuum women face when impregnated through rape?

The experiences and needs of children born of rape

- What happens to children born of rape? Who addresses/takes care of the interests of the children born of rape in region/country?
- How have children of rape coped and what are their needs?

Services and policies

- What services and policy frameworks exist that can respond to the needs of the women and girls, and their partners, who are affected by pregnancy as a result of rape?
- What community services/programs have proven useful in de-stigmatizing pregnancy related to rape?
- What are the mechanisms available to support and ensure quality services provided to children who are raped?

Priority theme 8:
The needs of ex-combatant sexual violence survivors (male and female) and effective program approaches

Experiences and needs of ex-combatant sexual violence survivors

- How does the experience of sexual violence, including enforced perpetration, affect the (possibly different) transitions of male and female ex-combatants back to civilian life?
- How does the experience of being an enforced perpetrator of sexual violence affect former combatants at the psychological level, both male and female?
- What services should be provided to ex-combatant survivors?

Program effectiveness

- What are the most effective forms of intervention in DDR processes for meeting the needs of ex-combatant sexual violence survivors?
- What interventions are effective in addressing the psychological needs of ex-combatant sexual violence survivors?
- What is the effect of reparations programs for survivors of sexual violence on the security of the survivors and the overall security of their communities in a post-conflict setting?

Priority theme 9:
Men and boys as survivors of conflict-related sexual violence

Experiences and needs of male conflict-related sexual violence survivors

- What is the prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence among men and boys?
- How can we access the stories of men/boys who are victims of rape/sexual violence and its impact on them?
- What are the community perceptions of male survivors?
- What is the contribution of cultural attitudes about violence to the motivations to violate men?
- What are the different needs of male sexual violence survivors from different cultural and religious backgrounds?
- What are the health, social impact and needs for boys and men who are survivors of sexual violence? Are they different from female survivors?

Services for male conflict-related sexual violence survivors

- How effective are existing programs at recognizing and addressing the existence and needs of male survivors of conflict-related sexual violence?
- What are the factors affecting access and utilization of sexual violence services by male survivors?

Impact of conflict-related sexual violence against males on future violence

- What role does male-directed sexual violence play in the perpetuation of conflicts?

Priority theme 10:
The impact of conflict on male gender identities and conceptualization of masculinity

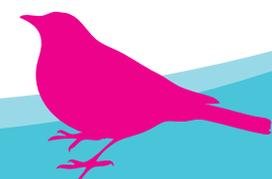*Male gender identities, expectations and relationships*

- Do gender identities change during conflict? How?
- Does participation in conflict change normative ideas about violence and sex?
- How is masculinity conceptualized before and after the conflict by men and by women?
- In a post-conflict situation how does perpetration of sexual violence impact on relationships?
- How can we reduce stigma by focusing on male gender identities around conflict?

Male gender identities and violence

- How do men explain their own violence?
- How is the perpetration of sexual violence in war contingent on male identity construction?
- How do peers influence men's attitude towards sexual violence in a conflict situation?
- Who are the men who other men admire who chose not to take part in sexual violence in conflict and why?
- To what extent does the construct of militarised masculinity affect the growth and development of the adolescent child soldier who himself has been a perpetrator of sexual violence?

Gender and the macro-environment

- What, if any, is the connection between male perpetrators of sexual violence, nationhood and notions of masculinity?
- Which masculinity constructions within military organizations limit sexual violence?
- Power dynamics serve a role in sexual violence perpetration, in what ways have colonial structures contributed to sexual violence? What is the perpetrator communicating?