



United States Mission to the OSCE

On the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Katherine Brucker
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
July 5, 2024

The United States joins other members of the International Alliance on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict and OSCE participating States in unequivocally condemning all forms of conflict-related sexual violence. We call on the international community to prevent, punish, and end conflict-related sexual violence, and to offer survivors the support they require to heal.

Conflict-related sexual violence is on the rise; the United Nations reported an alarming 50 percent increase in verified cases of sexual violence in conflict in 2023. This is not just a statistic – it's a deadly reality, including for many of the Ukrainian soldiers defending their country from Russia's aggression, as well as for the civilians who've also become victims of such abuse by Russian forces.

These cases have become all too common, according to the testimonies of eyewitnesses and survivors. Ukrainian prosecutors have recorded nearly 300 cases of rape and other forms of sexual violence committed by members of Russian forces against the women, men, and children of Ukraine. This likely is only a fraction of the total number of such crimes: the UN estimates that for each rape documented in connection with a conflict, there are 10 to 20 undocumented cases.

Often the survivors are unable to receive appropriate medical care because Russia's attacks have damaged or destroyed the hospitals and medical facilities in which they would otherwise seek assistance. To respond to the needs of survivors, Ukraine has established eleven survivor relief centers around the country. These relief centers provide survivor-focused, trauma-informed care for persons who have experienced the dual horrors of an unjust and brutal war, and conflict-related sexual violence.

The international community must support Ukraine in holding Russia accountable for conflict-related sexual violence and other crimes, and in providing justice for the victims. The reports published by the OSCE Moscow Mechanism experts' missions, ODIHR, and the UN Office for Human Rights and the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine are critical to the documentation of these crimes.

Conflict-related sexual violence poses immense challenges for the global community. Together, we can and must break the cycle, hold perpetrators accountable, and address the root causes, including gender inequity and inequality and discriminatory norms, that lead to gender-based violence.

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