STRENGTHENING PREVENTION OF CONFLICT-RELATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE (CRSV) WITH NON-STATE ARMED GROUPS (NSAGs)

A project spearheaded by UNICEF/OCHA on behalf of UN Action

Jeanne Ward, representing
Mendy Marsh, UNICEF GBV in Emergencies Specialist
Possible Perpetrators of Sexual Violence in Conflict Situations

Armed Forces & other Security Forces
- National Armed Forces
- Other Security Forces (Police, Gendarmes)
- Foreign Armed Forces
- Private Security Forces

Non-state Armed Groups
- Ideology-driven Civilian-based Groups
- Government Militias
- Foreign NSA Groups

Civilians
- Ex-combatants
- Criminal Gangs
- Others

Known to Victim
Unknown to Victim
Project Overview: Background

- Increased attention to the Women, Peace and Security agenda over the past ten years
- Evolving set of humanitarian tools and approaches for responding to needs of survivors
- Limited primary prevention efforts, particularly in relation to sexual violence committed by armed groups
Project Overview: Key Objectives

- Improve knowledge base about how to prevent armed actors from committing conflict-related sexual violence

- Develop prevention resources that can be used by international and field-based actors to mobilize prevention efforts with armed groups
Project Overview: Three Phases

- Phase One:
  - Completed in 2011
  - Mapping and analyzing research and practice relevant to prevention of CRSV by NSAGs
  - Identification of key ‘influencers’—those at international, regional, national and local levels who might effect change in behavior of armed groups
  - Mission to DRC to solicit field recommendations on working with NSAGs
Project Overview: Three Phases

- Phase Two:
  - Expand focus from NSAGs to state militaries
  - Develop and field-test draft tools and approaches to prevent perpetration of sexual violence by armed actors
  - Link with UNICEF work on social norms

- Phase Three:
  - Finalize practical ‘prevention toolkit’
Phase One: Key Lesson Learned

- Information extensive and difficult to organize
- Required development of an accessible and *preliminary* framework in order to
  - provide a basis for guiding future research and action
  - articulate a structure for tools development
Preliminary Framework

- Public health approach
  - Sexual violence is a preventable problem
  - Focuses on maximum benefit for the largest number of people
  - Interdisciplinary
  - Builds on PRIMARY PREVENTION efforts as they are classified in the public health approach: interventions that take place before violence occurs

- Conflict-management approach
  - Understanding conflict dynamics to determine what brings on destructive behaviors and what processes can build productive options for change

- Ecological model
Ecological Model of Prevention of Sexual Violence

Lori Heise, 1998
Ecological Model of Prevention of Sexual Violence by NSAGs

Overall structures in the social order

Interactions between the NSAGs and communities/social networks in which they live

Group structures, norms, and practices that regulate standards, behavior and interactions of NSAGs

Biological and personal history factors of individual members of NSAGs
Findings: Societal Level Risk Factors

- General breakdown in statutory and traditional law and order with an increase in all forms of violence
- Lack of active presence of peacekeeping troops (poorly trained/unclear mandate)
- Dissatisfaction or failure of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process (DDR)
- Lack of implementation and reinforcement of international laws and standards
Findings: Societal Level Strategies to Address Risks

- Increase, reinforce and engage peacekeepers in CRSV prevention
- Increase support for security sector reform
- Generate commitments to change collective behavior (i.e. reinforce international laws and policies to end impunity)
- Support disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programs
Findings: Community Level Risk Factors

- Vulnerability of the environment (economic stress and upheaval; social marginalization; absence of resources)
- Lack of access by community to media and information about SV (i.e. not informed about perpetrators being brought to justice)
- Community norms that justify violence against women (rape as a weapon of war)
- Mutual reliance by local communities/NSAGs for food, labour, security, etc.
- Natural resource exploitation dimension to the conflict (mine, forestry, agriculture)
Findings: Community Level

Strategies to Address Risks

- Develop early warning and prevention advisory networks to target community vulnerabilities
- Generate new social rules through social norms work
- Engage religious and other groups that can interact and promote dialogue with armed groups
- Review experiences of different humanitarian actors who have historically interacted with NSAGs
- Support efforts to address natural resource exploitation
Findings: Relationship Level Risk Factors

- Male dominance within the NSAG
- Peer pressure connected to military socialization-sexual violence used as a way to increase the bond and cohesion in the group
- Lack of or weak command structures and hierarchy
- Lack of codes of conduct and/or their implementation
- Presence (or absence) of religious/traditional authority within NSAG
Findings: Relationship Level Strategies to Address Risks

- Increase accountability of command structures and enforcement of codes of conduct
- Review bystander interventions and leadership strategies
- Review direct negotiation initiatives with armed groups about their norms and behaviors
- Include prevention of sexual violence in early stages of mediation
Findings: Individual Level Risk Factors

- Young age
- Individual cultural norms, ideas and attitudes toward SV and women and girls
- History of witnessing or experiencing violence
- Sees self as victim
- Forced recruitment into armed group
- Interruption of regular life (school, employment, agriculture, marriage, etc.)
- Heavy alcohol or drug use
- Perception that he will not be brought to justice
Findings: Individual Level Strategies to Address Risk

- Develop psychosocial prevention programs targeting perpetrators
- Draw from existing programs that engage men and boys
Phase I Summary

- There are examples of contact/relationship-building between humanitarian actors and armed groups.
- However, few examples of engagement specifically to prevent SV against civilians.
- Need a better understanding the motivations and behaviour of armed groups.
- Need to learn about and draw upon existing efforts across development and humanitarian actors/sectors to consider strategies for working with armed groups.
Next Steps Phase II

- Research armed groups to better understand motivations
- Refine Ecological Model to identify risks and strategies on all levels
- Develop recommendations for priority areas of intervention
Next Steps Phase III

- Toolkit for interacting with armed groups (1 non-state armed groups; 1 state armed groups) on the prevention of sexual violence
- Piloting of toolkit in a minimum of 2 countries.