

# The role of international institutions

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The Secretary-General's most recent report on conflict-related sexual violence, regarding 2021, demonstrates that this crime continues to be used as a tactic of war, a means of torture, a terrorist tactic, and a means of political repression. It remains the cheapest and most effective weapon for breaking an individual and their community.

The root causes of conflict-related sexual violence have been exacerbated in recent years by a confluence of humanitarian, health, political, and security crises. These causes include militarisation and the proliferation of weapons, impunity for perpetrators, institutional breakdown, structural gender inequalities, and harmful social norms. The result is the widespread and systematic use of conflict-related sexual violence.

Resolution 2467 adopted by the Security Council in 2019 articulates a survivor-centred approach, calls for a multi-dimensional response and a more comprehensive understanding of justice and accountability. It guides my actions to give voice to victims, understand their needs, and ensure adequate responses are made.

Survivors are not a homogeneous group; they have unique stories and their needs vary. **The cases of children born of rape is particularly worrying in this context**, as without recognition of the initial violations we find that harm can be transmitted across generations. This goes alongside a denial of individual dignity and human rights. The Special Report of the Secretary-General on this subject, mandated by Resolution 2467 and prepared by my Office, has been an opportunity to review and consolidate the UN's latest knowledge and experience.

My mandate is to foster a protective environment that inhibits sexual violence in the first place, and allows for the safe reporting and delivery of appropriate responses. **We must convert an age-old culture of impunity into a culture of accountability, by prioritising deterrence and prevention through justice and the prosecution of crimes.**

The best form of protection is prevention. It is both the driver and the key to this agenda of avoiding having to just perpetually react to the consequences of sexual violence in the absence of preventive diplomacy. As part of this effort, this year my Office and I have developed a Framework at the global level for the prevention of sexual violence in conflict.

Commitments and resolutions must now be honoured. Outrage is not enough, and inaction is not an option.

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