

Group 2: Sexual and gender-based violence in conflict

Guiding questions

1. What kind of approaches and activities are necessary to prevent sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in conflict situations?
2. How can the EU work with security actors to prevent SGBV?

Participants' comments and recommendations

- Participants recognised the difficulty of intervening while an armed conflict is ongoing and noted the importance of norms and perceptions in a particular society (including prior to the conflict).
- It is to be assumed that SGBV is always taking place in any given context and that it is exacerbated in conflict.
- The EU should avoid over-focusing on the victimisation of women in the prevention of SGBV by adopting an inclusive approach (i.e. also men, girls, boys and other gender identities) and recognising their agency.
- The impact of EU's actions should be carefully monitored and assessed in order to avoid enhancing SGBV in conflict. This is particularly the case for EU's support to military or security actors, including United Nations peacekeeping operations.
- Gender analysis, gender programming and gender budgeting should be mainstreamed across the EU's policies, programmes and actions.
- The EU should support existing resilience mechanisms developed by local actors, in particular women's organisations and women's rights defenders. The provision of small grants could help to promote and maintain a social fabric which is able to address the consequences of SGBV before, during and after conflicts.
- The EU should support the collection of reliable data and qualitative research in order both to understand the extent of the SGBV phenomena and to address it effectively.
- Education and awareness raising at the grassroots level is necessary to address SGBV. The EU should try to reach beyond policy-makers and elite civil society representatives to grassroots organisations, and youth and religious leaders (in certain specific contexts).
- The EU should support a positive transformational agenda: conflicts or post-conflict situations challenge norms and could be opportunities to support new, positive roles for women and girls.
- EU-financed programmes should be combined with advocacy actions, including at the country level, in order to raise public awareness of SGBV issues, including among local policy-makers.