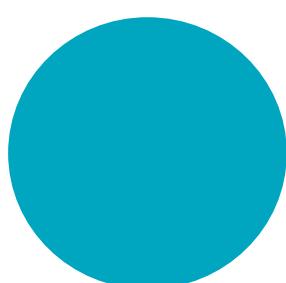
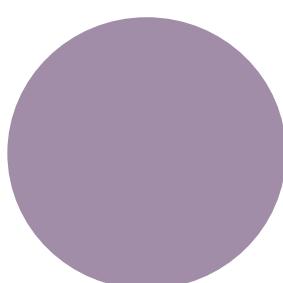
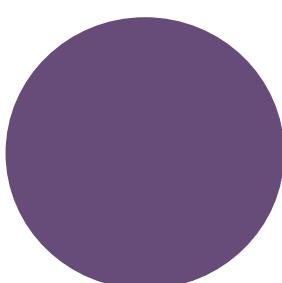
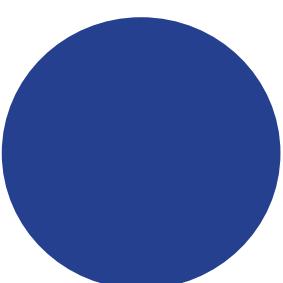




Gender-Based Violence AoR  
Global Protection Cluster

# STRATEGY 2021-25



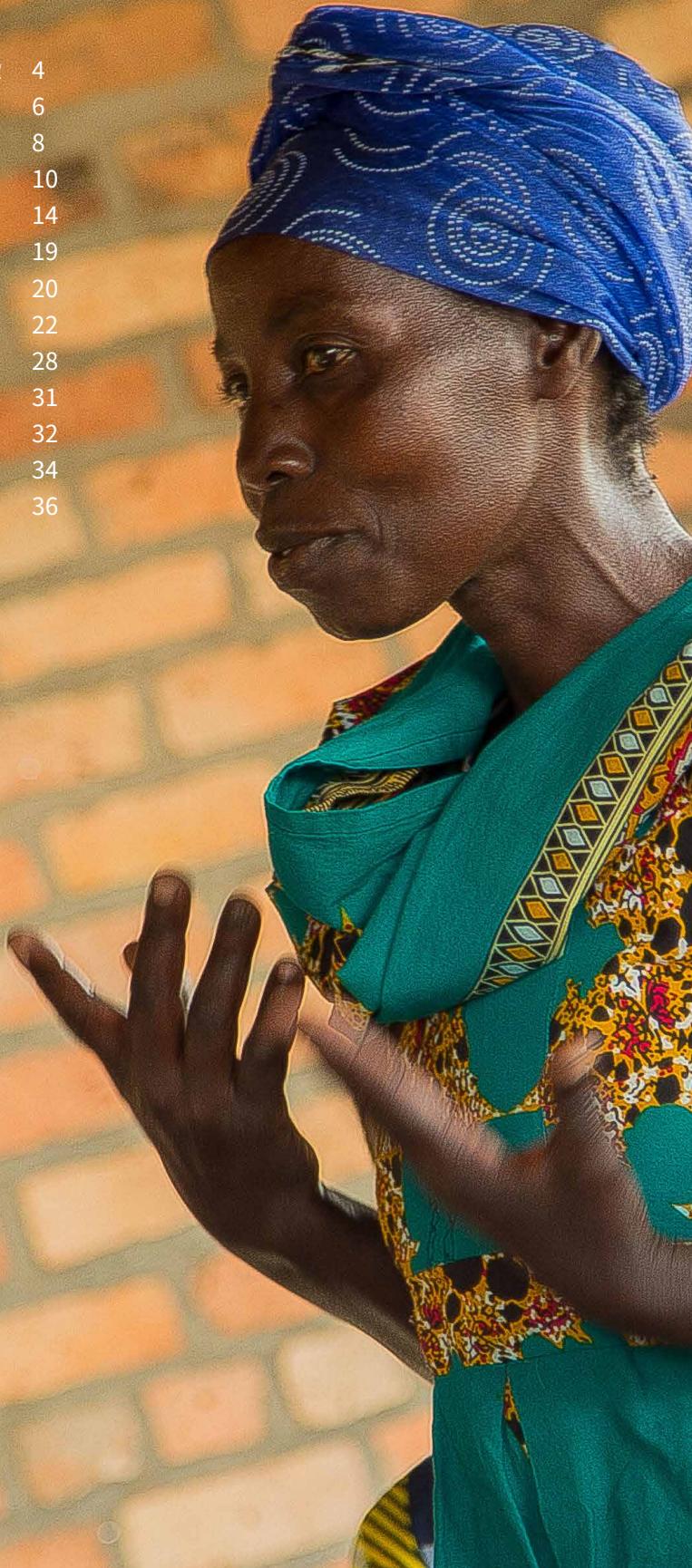
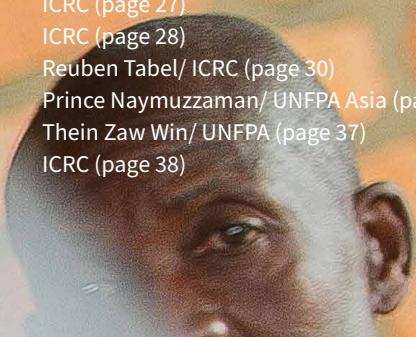
# CONTENTS



FOREWORD FROM THE UNFPA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	4
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	6
SUMMARY OF GBV AOR STRATEGY	8
ROLE OF THE GBV AOR	10
RISING TO THE CHALLENGE	14
VISION AND MISSION	19
OPERATIONAL PRINCIPLES AND APPROACHES	20
STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	22
ENABLING FACTORS	28
MONITORING AND EVALUATION	31
STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS	32
CONTEXTS WHERE THE GBV AOR IS ACTIVE	34
GLOSSARY	36

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Gender-Based Violence AoR  
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# FOREWORD

## FROM THE UNFPA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



We share a powerful vision - to end gender-based violence in humanitarian crises. We want a world where women and girls everywhere live healthy, safe and dignified lives.

A record 235 million people will need humanitarian assistance and protection in 2021, an increase of nearly 40% since 2020. Amidst already unprecedented humanitarian needs, the COVID-19 pandemic has made matters worse, exacerbating gender inequalities and fanning the flames of violence.

A critical concern around the world is the alarming rise in reports of intimate partner violence, as movement restrictions leave survivors trapped inside with perpetrators. Conflict, climate change, displacement, poverty, food

insecurity, urbanization and digitalization are creating stark inequalities, contributing to an increase in gender-based violence (GBV), including harmful practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation. Gaps in services leave many survivors without support, sometimes with fatal consequences.

Bold, urgent action is needed to advance gender equality and end all forms of gender-based violence. We have a collective responsibility to hold ourselves accountable to women and girls as we work together to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is a moral and human rights imperative, and our success depends upon it.

This strategy - centered on the agency, capacity and dignity of survivors - will guide collective, transformative action to scale up protection, prevention, and access to life-saving services.

Under the strategy, our efforts will focus on women's participation, localized leadership, and strengthened response capacity, adopting innovation to reinforce results. We will work in partnership across humanitarian, development and peacebuilding efforts to achieve lasting impact.

Local actors, as first and frontline responders, are best placed to design solutions, provide leadership and strengthen community engagement to end GBV in emergencies. We have therefore set ambitious new targets for representation by local actors, including governments, women-led and civil society organizations.

Mandated by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee as the lead agency for GBV coordination, UNFPA is committed to driving joint action, reinforced by our partnerships in the Call to Action on Protection against Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies.

UNFPA commits to deploying dedicated GBV coordinators to lead a coherent, comprehensive and harmonized approach to preparedness, prevention, risk mitigation and response. We will also increase investment in data and analysis to strengthen our evidence base and facilitate resource mobilization.

We firmly believe that our longstanding work in development, humanitarian and peacebuilding contexts to end GBV and other harmful practices and promote gender equality will enhance the collective reach and impact of all GBV Area of Responsibility members.

UNFPA is proud to hold the IASC Championship on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment in 2021. While our coordination mechanisms may be different, survivors of sexual exploitation and abuse are survivors of gender-based violence and entitled to the same support and services and to coherent prevention and response efforts. I count on your support, as fellow champions, to remain vigilant and to question, interrupt and report any instances of abuse.

Women and girls everywhere have a right to peace in the home and to live free from violence and the fear of it. Ending gender-based violence is a matter of dignity, but it's also a matter of power. Let us use our power and our partnership to prevent violence. And until we end it, let's ensure that those affected have access to the information, support and services they need to survive, heal and recover.

This Strategy will guide collective action towards a world where every woman and girl can dream of a better future and live to see it, a world of peace, sustainable development, and human rights for all.



**Dr. Natalia Kanem**

United Nations Under-Secretary-General  
and Executive Director of UNFPA



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



The Gender-Based Violence Area of Responsibility (GBV AoR) would like to thank all organizations and individuals who contributed their knowledge and expertise to the development of this strategy.

Thank you to all of those who joined remote and in-person consultations, participating in open and constructive discussions on what is needed to enhance impact and further progress on addressing GBV in humanitarian crises.

Thank you to the GBV coordinators who provided valuable contextual and detailed knowledge on priorities and challenges in their operational contexts as well as expertise and strategic



thinking on what is needed to improve GBV coordination, prevention, risk mitigation and response.

Thank you to the actors working on GBV in crises around the world who shared their operational challenges, innovations and successes in improving humanitarian response for survivors of GBV, and who reflected on changes to ways of working leading up to the development of this strategy.

Thank you to the representatives of the GBV AoR core and associate members who introduced the perspectives and voices of many of their colleagues, sharing their expertise and specialized knowledge in many areas of GBV prevention, risk mitigation and response and continuing to shape the GBV AoR.

We would like to express our appreciation to our partners in the donor community who continue to engage actively with the GBV AoR and champion the need to address GBV in humanitarian crises.

# SUMMARY OF GBV AOR STRATEGY



## Vision

Gender-based violence is eliminated in all humanitarian crises.

## Mission

The GBV AoR applies a feminist perspective in promoting collective action to improve the effectiveness and accountability of humanitarian action for the prevention and mitigation of and response to all forms of gender-based violence, to ensure that the agency and capacity of survivors in all their diversities is recognized and reinforced, and that prevention efforts are effectively employed to address and transform underlying gender inequality.

## Strategic priorities

### Strategic priority 1

Support strong and effective coordination of GBV action in humanitarian contexts.

### Strategic priority 2

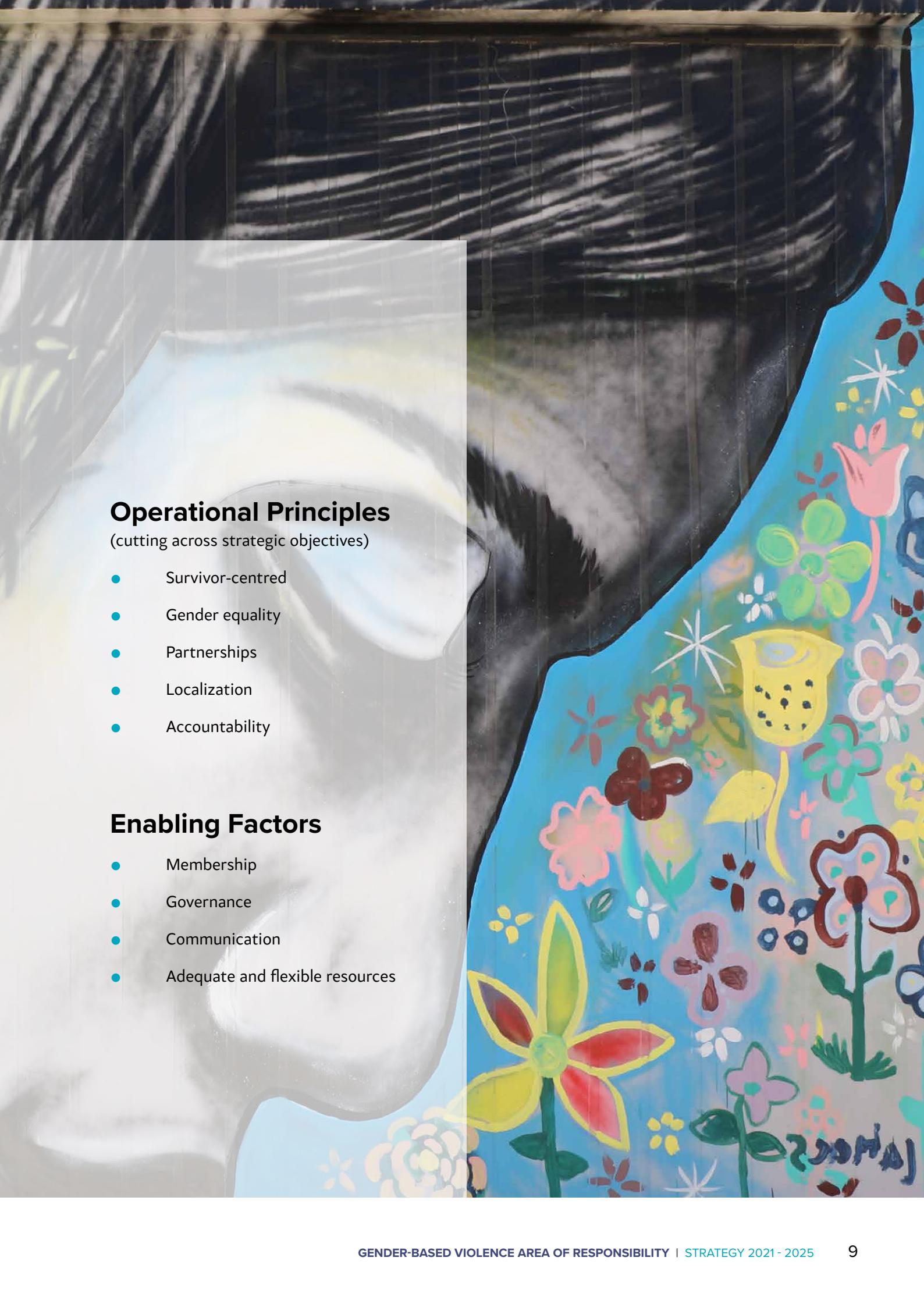
Strengthen partnerships and facilitate joint advocacy to ensure that action on GBV is integrated into all humanitarian response efforts and is central to humanitarian action.

### Strategic priority 3

Promote learning, set standards and communicate good practice and inclusive approaches for GBV prevention, risk mitigation and response services.

### Strategic priority 4

Support a strong, diverse and inclusive GBV community that continues to innovate and work in partnership across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.



## Operational Principles

(cutting across strategic objectives)

- Survivor-centred
- Gender equality
- Partnerships
- Localization
- Accountability

## Enabling Factors

- Membership
- Governance
- Communication
- Adequate and flexible resources

# ROLE OF THE GBV AOR



The Gender-Based Violence Area of Responsibility (GBV AoR) is the global-level forum for coordination and collaboration on GBV prevention and response and advancing risk mitigation in humanitarian settings under the Cluster System. The GBV AoR constitutes a focus area within the Global Protection Cluster (GPC). The GBV AoR works to strengthen system-wide preparedness and technical capacity to respond to humanitarian crises, bringing together non-governmental organizations, United Nations agencies, academics and others under the shared objective of ensuring life-saving, predictable, accountable and effective action on GBV.<sup>1</sup> UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, co-coordinated the GBV AoR with UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund, until 2017, when UNFPA took on the role as sole lead agency and provider of last-resort.

The GBV AoR applies the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) definition of gender-based violence: "Gender-based violence is an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will, and that is based on socially ascribed (gender) differences between males and females."<sup>2</sup> It includes threats of such violence and acts both in the public and private spaces.

The term GBV is used to underscore how systemic gender inequality acts as a foundational characteristic of most forms of violence perpetrated against women and girls in all their diversities. The term is a reflection of unequal power relations and that violence is often used to maintain and reinforce gender inequalities. Gender discrimination is a cause of many forms of violence against women, girls and people of diverse sexual orientation and gender identity, but it also has a wider impact. Gender discrimination contributes to the widespread acceptance and invisibility of such violence, so that perpetrators are not held accountable, and survivors are discouraged from speaking out and accessing support.

- 
- 1 Note on refugee contexts and mixed situations: With its mandated responsibilities, UNHCR is the lead agency accountable for refugee protection and seeking solutions within the United Nations system and engaging a wider array of stakeholders in these contexts. The Joint UNHCR-OCHA Note on Mixed Situations: Coordination in Practice of 24 April 2014 clarifies leadership and coordination in situations where a Humanitarian Coordinator has been appointed, and a UNHCR-led refugee operation is also underway. See: [www.unhcr.org/53679e679.pdf](http://www.unhcr.org/53679e679.pdf).
  - 2 IASC (2015). Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action: Reducing risk, promoting resilience and aiding recovery. Geneva, Switzerland: Inter-Agency Standing Committee. Available from the GBV Guidelines Implementation Support Team website: <http://gbvguidelines.org/en/>.

This strategy outlines the vision, mission and strategic objectives for the GBV AoR and details the work needed to achieve these goals over the next five years (2021-2025). The GBV AoR will carry out the following core functions:

- Global leadership and coordination
- Support to field level coordination mechanisms
- Advocacy, communications and partner engagement
- Learning, development and capacity building<sup>3</sup>
- Policy and standard setting

Under this strategy, the GBV AoR will support flexible and inclusive humanitarian coordination structures that adapt to the unique needs of the population and the often-unpredictable nature of a humanitarian crisis as it evolves. Coordination functions will be fit for purpose for the context in which humanitarian crisis occurs and will look to support or build upon local capacity and leadership.

## *MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT*

Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) is an essential component of multisectoral response services for survivors of GBV. Survivors of GBV may experience ongoing, long-lasting psychological and social effects due to the violence, silence and stigma surrounding GBV, a lack of family and community support and appropriate response services, internalized shame and a lack of power and resources to secure safety for themselves or their children. As psychosocial impacts of GBV are systemic, it is essential that support for MHPSS is systemic in nature and informed by an in-depth understanding of experiences of gender inequality, violence, discrimination and safety risks. Quality MHPSS services for GBV survivors are survivor-centred, age-appropriate, build individual and collective community resilience and support positive coping mechanisms. Such support may be provided through women's and girls' safe spaces, GBV case management, focused psychosocial support and clinical care for survivors of GBV.

3 The GBV AoR will continue to collaborate with UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to ensure the adequate reflection of respective mandate responsibilities and the specific requirements and experiences of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in all relevant guidance, tools and other materials, as appropriate. GBV AoR products relating to standards and tools, such as the GBV Minimum Standards, are also of relevance for practitioners working in refugee settings and migration settings. UNHCR and IOM will ensure continued coordination with the GBV AoR and will ensure dissemination and continued capacity development of members of the workforce on agreed guidance and tools.

## *WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY*

The Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda is comprised of 10 United Nations Security Council resolutions, beginning with UNSCR 1325 and three subsequent General Assembly resolutions, forming the framework for addressing and understanding the differentiated impact of conflict on women and girls.

The work of the GBV AoR is closely aligned with actions under the pillars of "Protection" and "Relief and Recovery" in the WPS agenda. Countries that have made commitments under the WPS agenda, and in particular those with National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security, have pledged to implement key actions that protect women and girls from GBV in humanitarian contexts.

The GBV AoR adheres to the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence and does not engage in the political aspects of the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolutions; however, the GBV AoR recognizes that there are often important partnerships and intersections between work at the global, regional and country level with WPS actors.



# RISING TO THE CHALLENGE



In 2021, some 235 million people will need humanitarian assistance and protection. This number has risen to 1 in 33 people worldwide - a significant increase from 1 in 45 at the beginning of 2020, a figure which was already the highest in decades.<sup>4</sup> In all humanitarian crises around the world, women and girls continue to be disproportionately affected.

The changing climate is increasing both the frequency and intensity of disasters around the world, exacerbating hazards with slow-onset effects such as droughts and sea level rise, and sudden-onset disasters such as cyclones, floods and wildfires. Alongside the increasing impact of climate-driven disasters, protracted conflicts continue to present complicated and overlapping consequences for those affected. Rates of displacement worldwide are at an all-time high; in 2019 alone, disasters caused 24.9 million new displacements, while 8.5 million people were newly displaced by conflict and violence.<sup>5</sup>

The global COVID-19 pandemic has severely disrupted the functioning of almost all societies, exacerbating inequalities, worsening barriers to accessing key services for vulnerable groups and magnifying existing structural violence. For many, the pandemic is another hardship layered on top of protracted conflicts, political crises, the impacts of natural hazards and the worsening fall-out from climate change.





The pandemic has the potential to halt or even reverse gains made in the empowerment of women and girls and efforts towards achieving gender equality. The very measures taken to protect populations and keep health systems afloat leave women and girls especially vulnerable to violence. A surge in reports of intimate partner and family violence has been recorded by governments and service providers around the world, with women and girls confined in homes with their abusers. School closures and disruptions to education have pushed more girls out of school, many of whom will never return. Girls' absence from school, coupled with the economic fall-out of the pandemic, has the potential to drive higher rates of child, early and forced marriage. Restrictions on access to health facilities and services, limitations on movement, and increased poverty have limited women and girls' access to sexual and reproductive health services.

Not only has the pandemic exacerbated existing risks for GBV, it has simultaneously eroded the space for effective delivery of quality and specialized support services for those at risk and survivors of GBV.<sup>6</sup> The delivery of GBV services quickly shifted to remote and online delivery in the face of lock-downs and restrictions on movement. In many contexts, however, this modality created additional barriers to accessing services for survivors because it relied on their access to technology and often the Internet, as well as their ability to find privacy to use these resources.

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4 UN OCHA (2020). Global Humanitarian Overview 2021. Available from: <https://gho.unocha.org/>

5 See "Section one: Global Trends" on the Global Humanitarian Overview 2021 available from: <https://gho.unocha.org/>

6 United Nations (2020). United Nations Secretary-General's Policy Brief: The Impact of Covid-19 on Women. Available from: [www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/report/policy-brief-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-women/policy-brief-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-women-en-1.pdf](http://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/report/policy-brief-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-women/policy-brief-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-women-en-1.pdf).

The gendered data gap that remains pervasive throughout the world is particularly acute in crisis- affected contexts and inhibits the ability to ensure humanitarian response is effectively meeting the needs of women and girls. It affects what we know about the experiences of women and girls in humanitarian crises, their perspectives, strengths and needs, stifling their inclusion in crucial decision-making forums at all levels.

A false belief that evidence must precede addressing GBV persists in many humanitarian contexts, hindering prompt response. Stakeholders and decision makers do not need evidence of GBV occurring before taking action. GBV is under-reported worldwide and data on incidences does not accurately convey the true scale and depth of the situation. Humanitarian systems and processes often call for a narrow type of quantitative information that limits the space and capacity for GBV actors to communicate the breadth and depth of GBV risks and needs among the population. There is a continued need to communicate a key message: the first priority is to establish prevention, risk mitigation and response measures then, as conditions allow, establish safe and ethical data systems.

The humanitarian community must forge partnerships and innovate new ways of working to support affected communities across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. Effective and sustainable action requires strengthening the resilience of locally-owned GBV systems, supporting women-led organizations in their fight against GBV, and empowering women and girls in all their diversities as stakeholders and agents of change.



Current levels of funding for GBV in humanitarian crises are substantially less than what is needed to prevent GBV and support the healing and care of survivors. Life-saving GBV services, such as clinical care for GBV survivors and psychosocial support services, continue to be underfunded and deprioritized across humanitarian crises around the world. Estimates suggest only one third of GBV funding requests are resourced, meaning the needs of millions of GBV survivors caught in crises are not being met and resources are spread thinly for the rest.<sup>7</sup> This funding gap also restricts the implementation of risk mitigation and prevention measures, meaning many more women and girls continue to be exposed to GBV in humanitarian crises.

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7 IRC (2019). Where is the Money? How the humanitarian system is failing in its commitments to end violence against women and girls. New York, USA: International Rescue Committee. Available from: <https://gbvaor.net/sites/default/files/2021-09/whereisthemoneyfinal.pdf>

In the face of the unprecedented global need and the current volatile global context, the GBV AoR will continue to advocate for increased attention to life-saving action for preventing, mitigating and responding to all forms of GBV in humanitarian crises. The right for women and girls to be free from violence in their homes, families and communities is a humanitarian imperative.

## CHILD AND ADOLESCENT SURVIVORS

Child and adolescent survivors<sup>8</sup> of GBV have a need for specialized care and treatment that is appropriate to their age and developmental stage, gender, cultural context, psychological needs and trauma, as well as the specific type of abuse. Consideration for the living and/or family situation should be made with particular emphasis on children separated from their primary caregiver(s).

In humanitarian settings, children and youth are rarely exposed to only one type of GBV risk. Due to their age, gender and social status, adolescent girls are one of the groups most at risk for experiencing GBV, including child, early and forced marriage. Globally, girls who marry before the age of 15 are 50 per cent more likely to face physical or sexual violence from an intimate partner, and married girls are more likely to describe their first sexual experience as forced.<sup>9</sup> While girls are up to three times more likely to experience sexual violence, boys may also be targeted for abuse because of reduced power and status based on age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and other intersecting qualities.<sup>10</sup>

Age considerations must be included in all GBV needs assessments and analysis, including appropriate consultations, to capture the needs of child and adolescent survivors and to ensure that services are tailored to meet their specific needs.

Meeting the needs of child and adolescent survivors of GBV in humanitarian settings requires technical expertise and coordination across GBV and Child Protection (CP) coordination mechanisms and actors at country and global level. The GBV AoR continues to work in partnership with the CP AoR to strengthen the approach to child and adolescent survivors of GBV at both global and country level.



<sup>8</sup> It is recognized that children's brains continue to develop until their early 20s; therefore the category of adolescents extends beyond 18 years of age.

<sup>9</sup> UNICEF (2014), *Hidden in Plain Sight: A statistical analysis of violence against children*, New York, USA: United Nations Children's Fund. Available from: [www.unicef.org/reports/hidden-plain-sight](http://www.unicef.org/reports/hidden-plain-sight).

<sup>10</sup> International Rescue Committee and UNICEF (2012). *Caring for Child Survivors of Sexual Abuse*. New York, USA: IRC. Available from: [www.unicef.org/media/73591/file/IRC-CSS-Guide-2012.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/media/73591/file/IRC-CSS-Guide-2012.pdf).

## *INTERSECTIONALITY*

"Intersectionality" in the context of GBV situates a person's experiences within an understanding of the ways in which multiple forms of power and oppression influence exposure to GBV and access to services in relation to violence.<sup>11</sup>

An effective response to GBV must take into account the diverse and intersecting forms of structural oppression, discrimination, privileges and inequality that people experience in a given context. Intersecting inequalities that affect those at risk of experiencing GBV include but are not limited to age, race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation and gender identity, civil status, disability and religious affiliation. This will vary from context to context and change within a given setting over time.

Partnerships with local organizations addressing GBV that represent and/or are led by women and girls who are affected by intersecting inequalities are a key aspect of ensuring the effectiveness of GBV prevention and response activities. Intersectional inequalities should be considered in the design, development and roll-out of needs assessments and gender assessments, included in analysis that informs humanitarian planning, and considered in monitoring and evaluation systems. Such measures enable more effective GBV prevention and response programming and inform risk mitigation interventions. Representatives from diverse communities should be an integral part of prevention, risk mitigation and response starting with preparedness and anticipatory action and support any assessment or programme design.

11 GBV AoR (2019). The Inter-Agency Minimum Standards for Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies Programming. New York, USA: GBV AoR. Available from: <https://gbvaor.net/gbviems/> (also available in other languages)



## VISION AND MISSION

### OF THE GBV AOR



#### Vision

Gender-based violence is eliminated in all humanitarian crises.

#### Mission

The GBV AoR applies a feminist perspective in promoting collective action to improve the effectiveness and accountability of humanitarian action for the prevention and mitigation of and response to all forms of gender-based violence, to ensure that the agency and capacity of survivors in all their diversities is recognized and reinforced, and that prevention efforts are effectively employed to address and transform underlying gender inequality.

# OPERATIONAL PRINCIPLES AND APPROACHES



## Accountability

In all of its work, the GBV AoR seeks to be accountable to the community it serves, specifically survivors and those at risk of GBV. The GBV AoR is field-driven, responds to the needs of those in crisis, and ensures that global guidance and leadership is reflective of these needs and can be easily applied. Furthermore, the principle of accountability reflects the commitments made under the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), the primary coordination body of the humanitarian system.

## Survivor-centred

A survivor-centred approach creates a supportive environment in which survivors' rights and wishes are respected, their safety is ensured and they are treated with dignity and respect. Recognizing that experiences of GBV often affect survivors' sense of control, the survivor-centred approach aims to acknowledge and respect the survivor's agency and autonomy by ensuring that she is the primary actor and decision maker throughout the helping process. This approach underpins and directs all that the GBV AoR does. There are clear linkages between concrete, accessible and quality health, protection and social services for GBV survivors and success in advancing gender equality.

## Gender equality

Gender equality is at the heart of addressing GBV and is central to the work of the GBV AoR. The GBV AoR acknowledges that systemic gender inequality and patriarchal power structures are a root cause of violence perpetrated against women and girls. Survivor-centred GBV programming is not only about recovering and rebuilding, but also about empowerment and creating a space where women and girls can thrive and reach their full potential free from violence. Our work explicitly addresses systemic disadvantages of women and girls with the aim to redress unequal power dynamics and structures that serve to reinforce gender inequalities.

## Partnerships

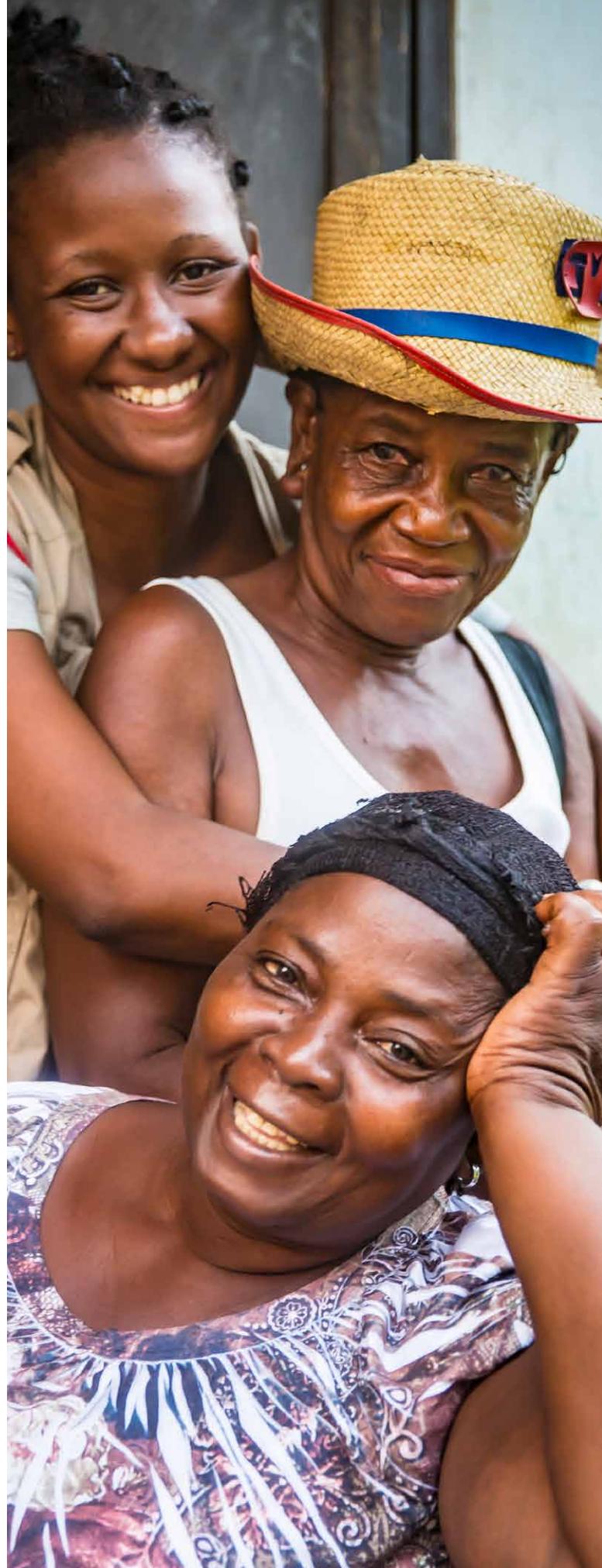
The GBV AoR acknowledges the need to strengthen existing relationships and foster new ones to improve coordination and collaboration thereby contributing to more cohesive management of the needs of survivors and those at risk, throughout the entire humanitarian cycle. We must build partnerships and systems that facilitate improved multisectoral response for the needs of GBV survivors and those at risk during crises and to address emerging issues in a timely manner.

## Localization

The GBV AoR will apply the Principles of Partnership<sup>12</sup> and seek to build upon and amplify local and national capacities for GBV prevention and response through women-led organizations, line ministries, non-governmental organizations, service providers and community-based organizations, ensuring that humanitarian principles are upheld and the needs and wishes of survivors are always prioritized. Efforts towards localization require sustained and dedicated activities. It is also necessary to apply the principle across all areas of work and at all levels of engagement, from membership and leadership structures at subnational and national levels to participation, influence and decision-making at the global level. The GBV AoR recognizes that to meaningfully work on prevention, risk mitigation and response to GBV in humanitarian contexts, it must take an active role in centring women and girl's voices and shifting power to women and girls from affected communities.

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12 The Principles of Partnership as endorsed by the Global Humanitarian Platform in July 2007 are: Equality, Transparency, Results-Oriented Approach, Responsibility and Complementarity. Available from: <https://www.icanetwork.org/principles-partnership-statement-commitment>





## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



1

Support strong and effective coordination of GBV action in humanitarian contexts

2

Strengthen partnerships and facilitate joint advocacy to ensure that action on GBV is integrated into all humanitarian response efforts and is central to humanitarian action

3

Promote learning, set standards and communicate good practice and inclusive approaches for GBV prevention, risk mitigation and response services

4

Support a strong, diverse and inclusive GBV community that continues to innovate and work in partnership across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus

## Strategic Priority 1

Support strong and effective coordination of GBV action in humanitarian contexts

- Support and build the capacity of GBV coordination mechanisms to deliver effectively and consistently on the core functions of coordination, including supporting and building the capacity of locally owned and led coordination mechanisms.
- Strengthen the quality of GBV information management with particular emphasis on the identification, analysis and monitoring of GBV risks and needs to enhance the quality, timeliness and effectiveness of GBV response.
- Support GBV coordination mechanisms to strengthen multisectoral response to GBV in partnerships with protection, child protection, health, gender equality and other relevant actors.
- Increase support for strengthening GBV systems and services that are better prepared for and able to respond to humanitarian crises. Document what works for GBV preparedness and advocate for increased funding for this work.



## Strategic Priority 2

Strengthen partnerships and facilitate joint advocacy to ensure that action on GBV is integrated into all humanitarian response efforts and is central to humanitarian action

- Drive global-level advocacy for the effective, safe and ethical inclusion of GBV prevention, risk mitigation and response throughout the humanitarian programme cycle.
- Support GBV coordination mechanisms to advocate for the effective inclusion of GBV priorities within Humanitarian Needs Overviews, Humanitarian Response Plans and other key strategic documents.
- Advocate for and support action on the integration of GBV risk mitigation in humanitarian response across all clusters and sectors.
- Advocate for prioritization, improved visibility, transparency, tracking and coding of funding for GBV in all humanitarian settings.
- Strengthen partnerships and communication with the donor community to increase funding for addressing GBV in humanitarian crises, with a particular emphasis on funds for longer-term programming, access to forecast-based financing and funding for women-led organizations and women's rights organizations.
- Continue to partner and engage with priority global forums to ensure that action and commitments for GBV in emergencies are coherent, mutually reinforcing and non-duplicative.



## Strategic Priority 3

Promote learning, set standards and communicate good practice and inclusive approaches for GBV prevention, risk mitigation and response services<sup>13</sup>

- Continue to support evidence-building on what works and lessons learned for GBV prevention, risk mitigation and response for all forms of GBV, with a particular focus on strengthening services, accessibility and reach to the most vulnerable survivors and those at risk.
- Promote the institutionalization of improved ways of working based on learning from ongoing and past initiatives that increase access and promote inclusive services for GBV survivors in all their diversities.
- Collectively identify priority areas for learning for the gender-based violence in emergencies (GBViE) workforce and support collaborative learning and capacity building initiatives.
- Disseminate and promote the Inter-Agency Minimum Standards for Gender-based Violence in Emergencies Programming, and design accountability mechanisms to ensure that GBV prevention, risk mitigation and response meets or exceeds these standards.
- Design and facilitate streamlined communications platforms and channels to ensure that technical resources, guidance materials, good practice examples and other relevant resources are accessible to all relevant actors.
- Invest in new and alternative methodologies to effectively capture and communicate the needs, types and scope of GBV in humanitarian crises and advocate for greater recognition and space in humanitarian systems and strategic documents for quality and accurate GBV information and analysis.

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13 The GBV AoR will continue to collaborate with UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to ensure the adequate reflection of respective mandate responsibilities and the specific requirements and experiences of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in all relevant guidance, tools and other materials, as appropriate. GBV AoR products relating to standards and tools, such as the GBV Minimum Standards, are also of relevance for practitioners working in refugee settings and migration settings. UNHCR and IOM will ensure continued coordination with the GBV AoR and will ensure dissemination and continued capacity development of members of the workforce on agreed guidance and tools.

## Strategic Priority 4

Support a strong, diverse and inclusive GBV community that continues to innovate and work in partnership across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus

- Increase the accessibility of the GBV AoR to national and local actors through support for the active involvement of local organizations in the membership and activities of the GBV AoR, with particular emphasis on women-led organizations.
- Invest in and support greater representation and influence on global forums and decision-making by local and national organizations, with a particular emphasis on women-led organizations and those centring the experience and promoting the voice of women and girls in all their diversities.
- Seek synergies and engage with development, human rights, peace and security actors in particular women's rights and gender equality actors, to advance prevention efforts, prepare for and recover from crises and achieve collective action, while acknowledging and respecting our various roles, mandates, identities and principles.
- Promote equal partnerships and increased access to funding for national and local organizations with a particular emphasis on women-led organizations and those centring the experience and promoting the voice of women and girls in all their diversities.
- Facilitate collaboration and partnerships to identify gaps and opportunities for innovation in prevention, risk mitigation and response to GBV in humanitarian crises.





# ENABLING FACTORS



## Membership

An engaged and active membership is vital to a strong and effective GBV AoR. Members represent a diverse number of organizations with their own mandates and areas of expertise, coming together to pursue collective action, collaboration and partnership. Members bring specific areas of expertise to further the work and impact of the task teams and reference groups. The GBV AoR commits to supporting the meaningful and active membership of women-led organizations working on addressing GBV at the global, regional and country levels.

## Governance

Responsive and representative decision-making is crucial to the timeliness of action and ensuring the GBV AoR is able to operate in a streamlined and flexible manner. Effective decision-making will allow the GBV AoR to respond to crises and emerging priorities. The GBV AoR will conduct a review of governance structures and decision-making procedures at the outset of this strategy to ensure they are fit for purpose.

## **Effective communication**

The GBV AoR recognizes the importance of strong, clear and consistent internal and external communications. Effective communication to members, donors, humanitarian partners, field-level coordination mechanisms and other relevant actors is crucial to achieving the core objectives of this strategy. The GBV AoR will seek to increase the accessibility of its communications through ensuring documents are available and forums are conducted in a variety of languages. The GBV AoR will take stock of communications and develop and implement a communications plan to ensure systematic practices and clear and accessible communications for all stakeholders.

## **Adequate and flexible resources**

To achieve the objectives of this strategic plan the GBV AoR must have adequate and appropriately flexible resources. Ensuring the sustained funding of key human resources and expanding the funding base for activities, are essential to the full implementation of this strategic plan.

The GBV AoR Coordination Team sits in the UNFPA Humanitarian Office. UNFPA as lead agency commits core resources to staff and supports the operations of the GBV AoR coordination team. GBV AoR core members also provide in-kind human resources, including in support of Task Teams and GBV AoR work streams. The GBV AoR will seek to maintain the current positions within the Coordination Team, as well as expanding in key areas of need.

The strategic partnership between UNFPA, NORCAP and the GBV AoR on the Regional Emergency GBV Advisors (REGA)<sup>14</sup> mechanism, managed by the global GBV AoR Coordination Team<sup>15</sup>, has enabled the scale up of regional technical support to GBV subclusters. The regional GBV AoR support teams' contribution to regional advocacy and inter-agency positioning, and broader capacity building efforts anchored in regional academic institutions, is well recognized. The ongoing remote and in-country technical support on GBV core coordination functions, including information management, underpins the implementation of this strategy. UNFPA is committed to continuing management support, facilitation, and hosting of regional GBV AoR support teams.

As lead agency, UNFPA commits to putting in place dedicated GBV coordinators to lead effective and inclusive coordination mechanisms across IASC cluster settings. Such mechanisms promote a coherent, comprehensive and coordinated approach to GBV; they also aim to increase investment in data and analysis in order to support evidence-based advocacy and resource mobilization.

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14 The regional GBV AoR support teams are composed of REGA team leads, regional GBV in Emergencies Coordination and Information Management Specialists, as well as Academic Partnership Coordinators. They are based in Bangkok, Cairo, Dakar, Nairobi and Panama.

15 The Deputy GBV AoR Coordinator supervises the regional GBV AoR support teams and manages the REGA project on behalf of the GBV AoR. GBV AoR members and coordinators are consulted on mission TORs, resulting in quality, senior inter-agency technical support anchored in IASC and GBV subcluster priorities. NORCAP is responsible for all aspects related to roster management. Programme management including Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning is a shared responsibility between UNFPA, NORCAP and the GBV AoR.



# MONITORING AND EVALUATION



The GBV AoR commits to strengthening monitoring and evaluation capacities and learning from its implementation experience, in line with the strategic priorities and outcomes outlined in this strategy. A set of key performance indicators and relevant data collection tools will capture key results that are directly linked to the strategic priorities on an ongoing basis.

This strategic plan is accompanied by a three-year workplan that will capture key outputs from agreed areas of work, inclusive of time frames and assigned responsibilities. The GBV AoR will regularly track progress against the workplan and the key performance indicators.

At the end of the three-year workplan, the core membership will come together to formulate a two-year workplan for implementation and realization of the strategy objectives in 2024-2025. At the same time, the key performance indicators will be undergoing a re-validation exercise, along with relevant data collection tools.

Finally, the GBV AoR Coordination Team and REGA teams will also be guided by a Theory of Change, with clear indicators for results, at output and outcome level, as part of a Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework. An independent outcome level evaluation is recommended in 2025.

## MALE SURVIVORS

The GBV AoR recognizes the importance of ensuring that referral pathways, standard operating procedures and needs assessments include and address the needs of male survivors of sexual violence, and that all relevant humanitarian sectors are engaged in meeting these needs. To that end, the GBV AoR has developed a guidance to ensure that male survivors have safe access to support and services that they need without compromising the safety of or reducing access to GBV services for women and girls.

The GBV AoR recognizes and respects that its members have differing target demographics and varying approaches in their respective prevention, risk mitigation and response to GBV in line with individual agency mandates and technical specializations.

# STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS



This strategy was developed following a review of implementation of the 2018-2020 strategy and extensive consultations with and contributions from the GBV community and membership of the GBV AoR.

The strategy development process was led by an independent consultant and guided by an advisory group consisting of representatives of; core members, the REGA, GBV coordinators, members of the GBV AoR Coordination Team and the Global Protection Cluster. Through this collaborative process, the GBV AoR strategy reflects the needs and ambitions of the whole GBV AoR including the lead agency, core members and those engaged in GBV prevention, risk mitigation and response work at the operational level in IDP settings. Donors also shared their reflections. Consultations took place from September through March 2021 and included 15 focus group discussions, 32 key informant interviews and two surveys.

## Foundational documents

This five-year strategy for the GBV AoR was developed to align with the key documents of the Global Protection Cluster Strategic Framework 2020-2024<sup>16</sup> and the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies Road Map and Action Plan 2021-2025.<sup>17</sup>

The Call to Action is a multi-stakeholder initiative launched in 2013 to fundamentally transform the way GBV is addressed in humanitarian emergencies. The aim is to drive change and foster accountability so that every humanitarian effort, from the earliest stage of a crisis, includes the policies, systems and mechanisms to mitigate gender-based violence risks, especially violence against women and girls, and to provide safe and comprehensive services to those affected by GBV. Unlike the GBV AoR, which focuses on IDP settings, the Call to Action is inclusive of GBV in refugee and migrant settings.

Many members of the GBV AoR are also partners of the Call to Action and have made commitments under the Road Map and Action Plan. The two endeavours are synchronized and mutually support similar goals and objectives.

<sup>16</sup> Global Protection Cluster (2019). Protection in Climate of Change: Strategic Framework 2020-2024. Available from: [www.globalprotectioncluster.org/wp-content/uploads/GPC-Strategic-Framework\\_digital\\_version-1.pdf](http://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/wp-content/uploads/GPC-Strategic-Framework_digital_version-1.pdf).

<sup>17</sup> Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies: Road Map 2021-2025. Available from the Call to Action website ([www.caltoactiongbv.com/what-we-do](http://www.caltoactiongbv.com/what-we-do)).



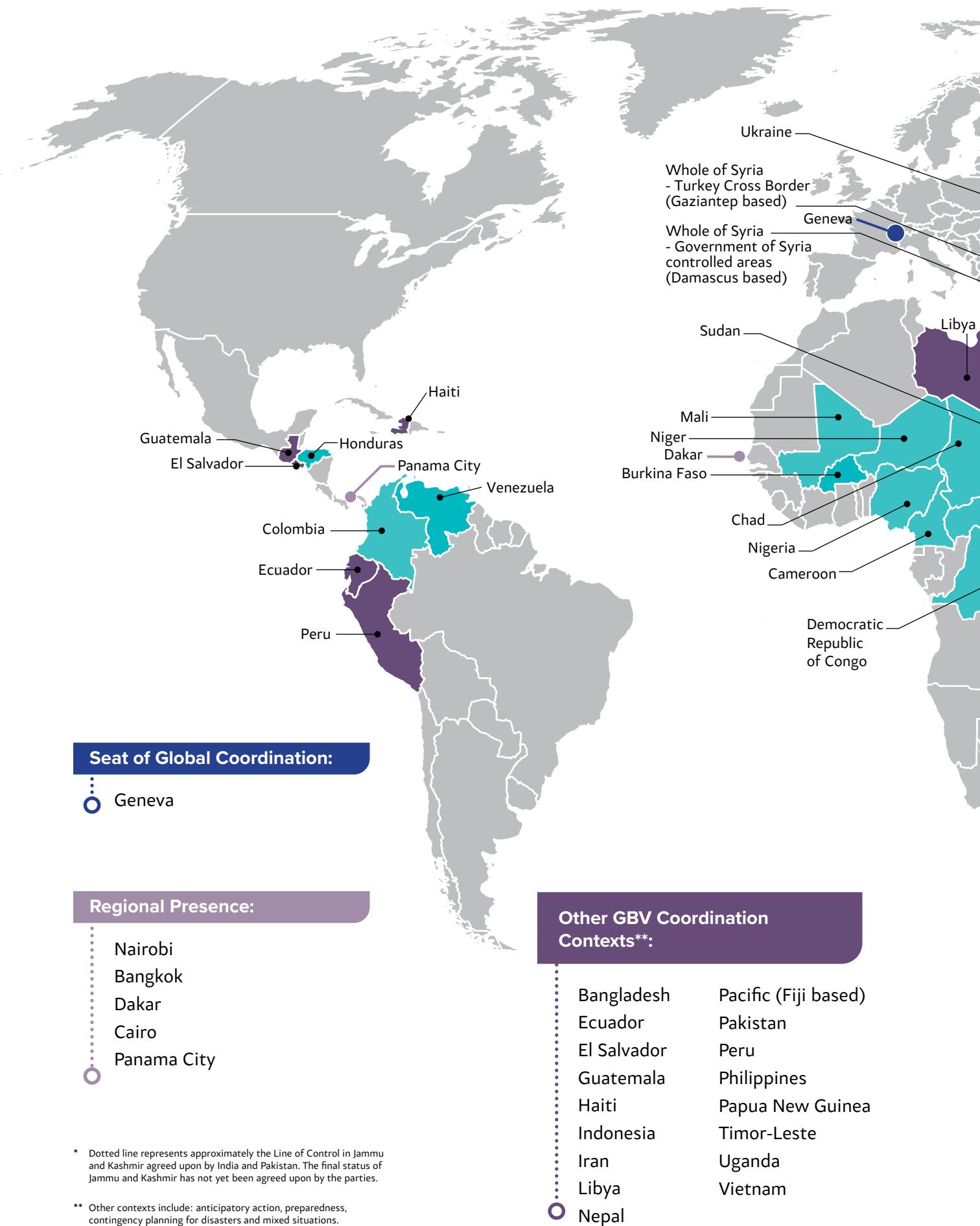
## CASH AND VOUCHER ASSISTANCE

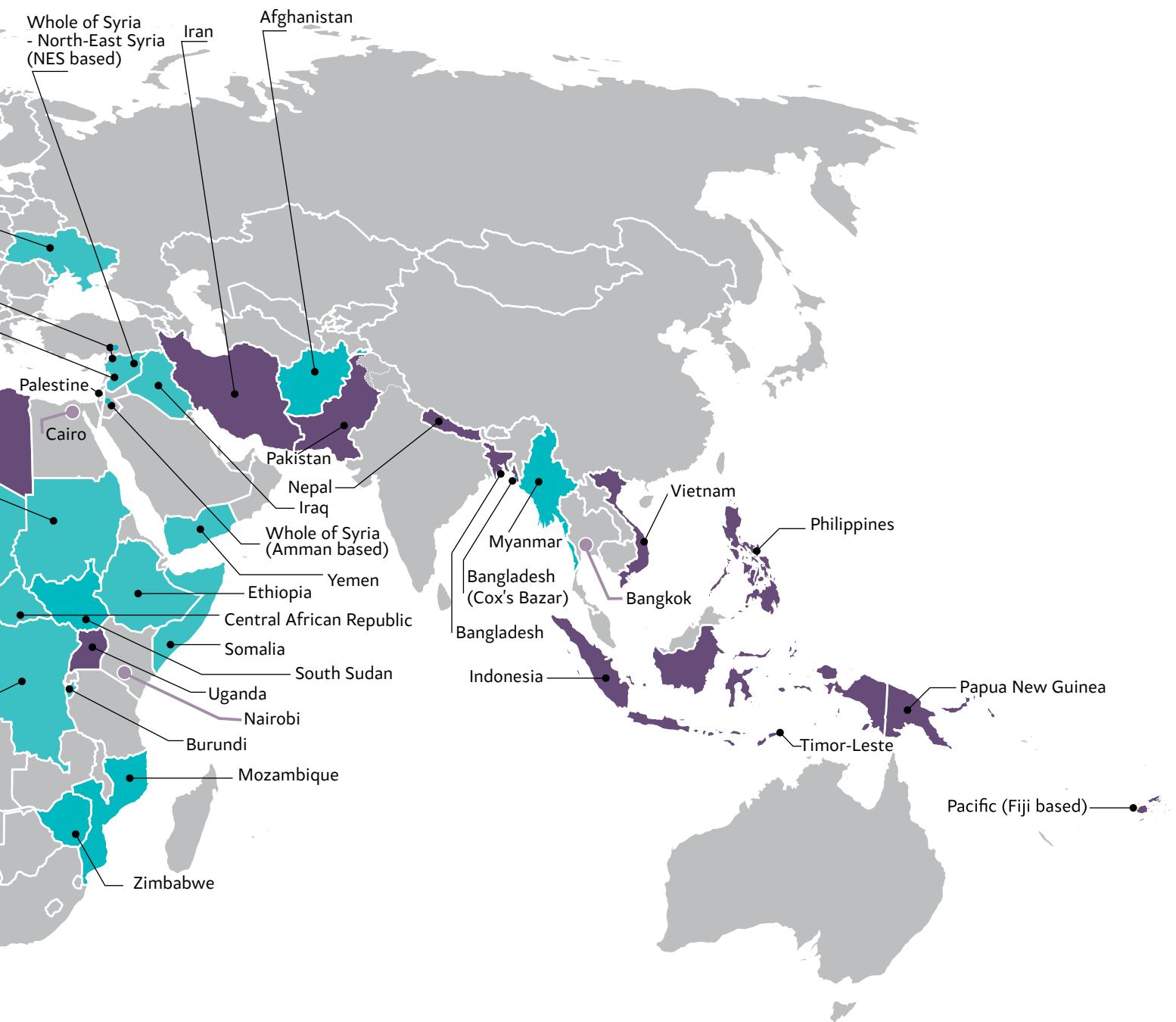
Cash and voucher assistance (CVA) can cover the immediate life-saving needs of GBV survivors, such as emergency medical treatment and transport costs, as part of a safe and confidential GBV Case Management process. CVA can offer discretion and flexibility compared to in-kind assistance, which can be particularly helpful for those who may be at greater risk of GBV and loss of income due to intersectional inequalities.<sup>18</sup>

As of 2019, CVA was the preferred modality in nearly one fifth of humanitarian assistance worldwide.<sup>19</sup> In order to maximize the effectiveness of CVA, humanitarian actors must establish GBV risk mitigation measures. This will help to ensure that CVA design and delivery is safe and appropriate to the context and that the CVA modality does not create or exacerbate tensions or create violence for recipients.<sup>20</sup>

The GBV AoR, on behalf of national GBV coordination groups, has committed to advocating for GBV risk prevention and mitigation across all CVA, and for the application of a GBV and protection lens in multipurpose cash assistance.

- .....
- 18 Available from the Gender and Inclusion section of the Cash Learning Partnership website ([www.calpnetwork.org/themes/gender-and-inclusion/](http://www.calpnetwork.org/themes/gender-and-inclusion/)).
  - 19 CaLP (2020). The State of the World's Cash 2020: Cash and Voucher Assistance in Humanitarian Aid. The Cash Learning Partnership. Available from: <https://www.calpnetwork.org/resources/collections/state-of-the-worlds-cash-2020/>
  - 20 UNFPA (2020). Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA): Your Role as a GBV Coordinator. Geneva, Switzerland: UNFPA Humanitarian Office. Available from: [https://gbvaor.net/sites/default/files/2021-04/ENG\\_CVA%20Your%20Role%20as%20a%20GBV%20Coordinator\\_3.pdf](https://gbvaor.net/sites/default/files/2021-04/ENG_CVA%20Your%20Role%20as%20a%20GBV%20Coordinator_3.pdf)





#### Cluster / Sector / Cluster-like Context:

Afghanistan	Honduras	Sudan
Bangladesh (Cox's Bazar)	Iraq	Ukraine
Burkina Faso	Mali	Venezuela
Burundi	Mozambique	Whole of Syria (Amman based)
Cameroon	Myanmar	Whole of Syria - Government of Syria controlled areas (Damascus based)
Central African Republic	Niger	Whole of Syria - Turkey Cross Border (Gaziantep based)
Chad	Nigeria	Whole of Syria - North-East Syria (NES based)
Colombia	Palestine	Yemen
Congo, Dem. Rep.	Somalia	Zimbabwe
Ethiopia	South Sudan	

# GLOSSARY



## Gender-based violence

Gender-based violence (GBV) is an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will, and that is based on socially ascribed (i.e. gender) differences between males and females. It includes acts that inflict physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty. These acts can occur in public or in private.<sup>21</sup>

## Prevention

Prevention refers to taking action to stop GBV from first occurring.<sup>22</sup> Primary prevention aims to tackle the root causes of GBV - gender inequality, exclusion and discrimination. Prevention approaches focus on behavioural modification and attitudinal change in addressing harmful social norms and also structural issues related to gender inequality. GBV prevention approaches can be integrated into the design of GBV response services (e.g. health, psychosocial support

and case management). Long-term social norm and structural change is in particular central to protracted and recovery stages of humanitarian crises.

## Risk mitigation

GBV risk mitigation comprises a range of activities within humanitarian response that aim to first identify GBV risks and then take specific actions to reduce those risks. GBV-related risks can exist in the general environment, within families and communities, and in humanitarian service provision. In practical terms, GBV risk mitigation means taking actions to: (a) avoid causing or increasing the risk of GBV associated with humanitarian programming; (b) facilitate and monitor vulnerable populations' safe access to and use of humanitarian services; and (c) identify and actively reduce the risks of GBV in the environment and in delivery of programming and services.<sup>23</sup>

21 IASC (2015).

22 GBV AoR (2019). GBV Minimum Standards. See pages 101-102 on primary, secondary and tertiary prevention.

23 GBV Guidelines (2021): What is Gender-based Violence Risk Mitigation? Available from: <http://gbvguidelines.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/What-is-GBV-Risk-Mitigation.pdf>



## Response

Emergency response involves the provision of emergency services and public assistance during or immediately after a humanitarian crisis to save lives, reduce health impacts, ensure public safety and protection, and meet the basic needs of women, girls, boys and men in the affected population. This stage can range from a few days or weeks to many months and even years, particularly in protracted insecurity and displacement contexts.<sup>24</sup> GBV multisectoral response services comprise health care, psychosocial support, GBV case management, referral, women and girls' safe spaces, and justice and legal aid. Furthermore, provision of dignity kits, cash and voucher assistance, as well as economic empowerment and livelihoods are integral to a robust GBV response.

## Preparedness

Given the increased frequency of complex emergencies and their capacity to destabilize societies, preparedness is critical to ensure response is quick and functional across settings. Many essential actions must be undertaken in a coordinated manner from the earliest stages of emergency preparedness. Emergency preparedness efforts should focus on ensuring adequate capacity and knowledge, while reinforcing the ability to anticipate, respond and recover from the impact of emergency situations.<sup>25</sup>

24 GBV AoR (2019). GBV Minimum Standards.

25 GBV AoR (2019). GBV Minimum Standards.



## Recovery

Recovery is the process following relief and supports the transition into long-term reconstruction and development. Recovery actions are most effective if anticipated and facilitated from the very outset of a humanitarian response. Recovery involves the restoration and improvement of facilities, livelihoods and living conditions of crisis-affected communities, including efforts to reduce risks brought on by the crisis.<sup>26</sup>

## Survivor-centred

A survivor-centred approach creates a supportive environment in which survivors'

rights and wishes are respected, their safety is ensured and they are treated with dignity and respect.<sup>27</sup>

## Women's rights and women-led organizations

A women's rights organization is: (a) an organization that self-identifies as a woman's rights organization with the primary focus of advancing gender equality, women's empowerment and human rights; or (b) an organization that has, as part of its mission statement, the advancement of women's and girls' interests and rights (or where "women", "girls", "gender" or local language equivalents are prominent in their mission statement); or (c) an organization that has, as part of its mission statement or objectives, to challenge and transform gender inequalities (unjust rules), unequal power relations and to promote positive social norms.<sup>28,29</sup>

A women-led organization is an organization with a humanitarian mandate and/or mission that is: (a) governed or directed by women; or (b) whose leadership is principally made up of women, demonstrated by 50 per cent or more occupying senior leadership positions.<sup>30</sup>

26 GBV AoR (2019). GBV Minimum Standards.

27 GBV AoR (2019). GBV Minimum Standards.

28 Grand Bargain (2019). The Grand Bargain: Workstream 2: Localisation. Available from the Localisation Workstream website. Available from: <https://gblocalisation.ifrc.org/grand-bargain-localisation-workstream-2/>.

29 The GBV AoR recognizes there is currently no formal Inter-Agency Standing Committee definition of women's rights organization or women-led organization. The GBV AoR will use the terminology "women-led organization" in this strategy document in an inclusive way encompassing both women-led and girl-led organizations, as well as women's rights organizations.

30 Grand Bargain (2019). For tracking purposes, UNFPA and the UN Partner Portal use the following definition: "A women-led organization is one whose leadership is principally made up of women, demonstrated by 50% or more occupying senior leadership positions at both board and staff levels." Please note that the IASC Gender Reference Group (GRG) and the GBV AoR are working on a definition that integrates key concepts of WLOs and WROs to be used by humanitarian actors. Once there is an agreed upon definition that can be tracked, it will be adopted for use in this strategy and the workplan.

## Feminist perspective

A feminist perspective emphasizes individual and collective empowerment of women and girls and transformation of the social and structural dimensions of women and girls' inequality and subordination. A feminist perspective is essential for understanding and dismantling the underpinning systems of power, especially gender inequality, that produce, reinforce and perpetuate GBV.<sup>31</sup> While there are many models of feminism, fundamentally all models seek to define, establish and achieve

political, economic, personal and social equality between the sexes and increase respect for women and girls, in all their diversities, their rights, voices, access and opportunities.<sup>32</sup>

## Intersectionality

Intersectionality in the context of GBV situates a person's experiences within an understanding of the ways in which multiple forms of power and oppression influence exposure to GBV and access to services in relation to violence.<sup>33</sup>

### *PROTECTION FROM SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE*

Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) refers to actions to protect people in communities affected by emergencies or who receive humanitarian or development assistance from sexual exploitation and abuse<sup>34</sup> perpetrated by humanitarian actors and other duty bearers. While the coordination of PSEA is separate from GBV coordination mechanisms, survivors of sexual exploitation and abuse are survivors of GBV and should be referred for support to existing GBV services; no parallel referral pathways should be established.<sup>35</sup>

At the country level, Humanitarian Country Teams with leadership from Humanitarian Coordinators are responsible for ensuring that effective systems are in place to prevent and respond to acts of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA). The role of the GBV AoR in addressing SEA includes strengthening collaboration with PSEA mechanisms for the appropriate referral and access to GBV services for survivors of SEA.<sup>36</sup> The GBV coordination mechanisms should provide guidance to PSEA networks when GBV specialized services are not available and integrate SEA risk factors in GBV risk-mitigation activities (such as safety audits) in coordination with PSEA actors.

- 31 Coalition of Feminists for Social Change (2018). COFEM Feminist Pocketbook. Available from: <https://cofemsocialchange.org/feminist-pocketbook/>
- 32 GBV AoR (2019). GBV Minimum Standards.
- 33 GBV AoR (2019). GBV Minimum Standards.
- 34 Survivors of sexual exploitation and abuse are survivors of GBV and should be referred to existing GBV services; no parallel referral pathway should be established. GBV AoR (2019). GBV Minimum Standards, p.23.
- 35 GBV AoR (2019). Handbook for Coordinating Gender-based Violence Interventions in Emergencies. Available from: [https://gbvaor.net/sites/default/files/2019-07/Handbook%20for%20Coordinating%20GBV%20in%20Emergencies\\_fin.pdf](https://gbvaor.net/sites/default/files/2019-07/Handbook%20for%20Coordinating%20GBV%20in%20Emergencies_fin.pdf)
- 36 IASC (2017). Inter-Agency Standing Committee Standard Terms of Reference for Humanitarian Country Teams. Available from: [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/iasc\\_tor\\_for\\_hcts\\_final\\_0.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/iasc_tor_for_hcts_final_0.pdf).



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THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY



This Strategy was developed with generous funding from the Government of Switzerland.



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