



**A GRIM PORTRAIT OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT  
ZONES IN THE HORN OF AFRICA (SUDAN, SOUTH SUDAN  
AND SOMALIA)**



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## **ABOUT SIHA NETWORK**

The Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA) is a Horn of Africa network of civil society organizations from Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, Somaliland, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, and Uganda. Established in 1995, SIHA advocates for social change and gender equality in the Horn of Africa and works specifically on challenging all forms of violence against women and girls. After more than 20 years of working to advance women's human rights in highly patriarchal contexts frequently characterized by insecurity, SIHA's expertise is rooted in its familiarity with the socio-political situations around the Horn and the grassroots work of its members. SIHA's membership continues to grow steadily, evidencing SIHA's enduring relevance and effectiveness, and the ongoing urgency of advancing women's human rights in the region.

Since 2016, SIHA has been strengthening the capacity of community-based services and building in-country networks in Sudan, South Sudan and Somalia. Our mandate in the region is to break the silence on sexual violence and to empower young people, men and women to realize their rights. With the support of grassroots-based coalitions, we are strengthening the capacity of local CSOs in the Horn of Africa sub-region, in order to build regional solidarity for advocacy and protection against sexual Violence.

This paper highlights the plight of women in the 3 countries of Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan where SIHA is currently running a sexual violence project.

## INTRODUCTION

The Horn of Africa has for decades struggled with chronic occurrences of civil conflict, fragile state structures and tribal and ethnic affiliation is opposed to states' modern obligations. The situation for women and girls in the Horn of Africa continues to be characterized by systematic victimization, subordination and their unfortunate subjection to violence. The picture of this has been grim for a very long time. It is important to note that there is an absence of justice, impunity for perpetrators and challenges encountered by men and women in the Horn region. Un-interrupted conflict in the area since the 1980s through to the mid-1990s, there has been an apparent break-down of social norms and institutions. Extremely high levels of surveillance by oppressive regimes characterize many Horn countries.

Women and children, who were traditionally immune from violence, are now targeted in a direct and systematic way.

### **CASE 1: Raped by military security forces in Mogadishu, Somalia**

*20 year-old Halima (not her real name) was on her way to KM13 hospital located on the outskirts of Mogadishu where she had an appointment with doctor, considering that patients usually have to go there early morning to avoid any delays in the long line. On her way to the hospital after she got off the bus, she was stopped by two men dressed with government military uniformed; who asked questions such as why she was walking alone at that time, where she was coming from, why she was there at that specific time. After probing her with a series of questions, she was harassed verbally, eventually forcing her to undress even with persistent resistance even being beaten with the butt of AK47.*

*They raped her and left her under a tree.*

*She was taken to the hospital by other people who saw her laying there. Thereafter, she was taken back to the town and thereon referred to MCH. We provided her a PEP kit and contraceptive pills.*

*Her family reached the center soon after they found out what had happened to their daughter. We tried to link them up with legal aid providers but unfortunately the victim could not recognize the perpetrators other than their uniform.*

*The family reported the case to the police station but they were told that there was nothing that could be done for them since the perpetrator was unknown.*

### **Information gathered by SIHA partner in Mogadishu - March 2018**

With this persistent, systematic crime, horrendous accounts of atrocities have been documented and reported where survivors have spoken out about their experiences of gang rape, rape in camps, rape slavery and subsequently unplanned pregnancies with the entire emotional and mental trauma pertaining to that. These accounts continue to fuel global outrage and condemnation, but also spurring the international community to define the issue of sexual violence in conflict as a serious threat to peace and security.

## **IMPACT ON WOMEN AND GIRLS**

Sexual and gender-based violence continues to be persistent in the Horn of Africa particularly in Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan. There are various types of violence and abuse experienced by women and children during conflict and post conflict. They include; sexual, emotional/psychological, physical, and economic violence. The impact of sexual and gender based violence happens on a multi-dimensional level; from individuals, families, community, and even affecting the national economy.

Sexual and Gender Based Violence seriously affects all aspects of women's health-physical, sexual and reproductive, mental and behavioral health. Health consequences of Gender Based Violence can be immediate and acute as well as long lasting and chronic and persist long after the violence has stopped.

Health consequences range from being infected with HIV/AIDS and other related sexually transmitted and pelvic inflammatory diseases, irritable bowels, unwanted pregnancies, miscarriages, deformities such as ruptured uterus as a result of gang rape, chronic deformities, psychological disorders such as post trauma stress, depression, fear, suicidal tendencies, low self esteem among others.

Physical consequences involve injuries, functional impairments, and permanent disabilities.

In terms of the impact to national economies, SGBV causes loss of incomes through non productivity of the women who spend much more time nursing themselves as a result of the injuries both physical and psychological instead of being directly engaged to work. The cost of treatment and investment in terms of government expenditures to treat survivors is another window how resources could be saved if SGBV is prevented and stopped.

Death is the most fatal consequence which could come as a result of being killed by the perpetrator or as result of immediate consequences such as exhaustion after rape, bleeding to death and long term adverse effects such as mental illness, alcohol and drug abuse among others.

## **SOMALIA**

Somalia has endured a protracted conflict for over twenty years with numerous competing forces seeking control territory and in the process placing the lives of ordinary civilians at risk of violence, starvation, forced marriage, rape and subsequent death. The escalation of conflict has created a precarious security environment with an absence of functioning accountability structures within which human rights abuses and sexual violence have been able to flourish.

There are reports of increased sexual violence in Somalia due to an increased number of internally displaced women and girls fleeing from the on-going fighting in the south and central regions. According to UN reports, the rate of Gender-Based Violence was very high in 2017 compared to 2016. These crimes are often attributed to armed men including government security forces, militia members as well as members.

The government adopted some measures to tackle impunity for sexual violence such as setting up gender desk office within the police forces and presenting the new sexual office bill to the cabinet which has since been approved.

However, both measures seem less contributory in the reduction of SGBV since the implementation has not recorded much success.

*Sarah, a young woman was at home asleep with her family when five TFG soldiers armed with machine guns entered, woke her up and forced her at gun point to a disused building close to her family home. The soldiers took their turns and she was gang-raped till the morning. As an unmarried young woman, she has been alienated by her family and community.*

### **Information gathered by SIHA's partner agency in Mogadishu**

The customary law which is currently used for most SGBV cases is another major challenge for the victims. This process which is often headed by the traditional elders in the clans only benefits the perpetrators demanding them to pay a small compensation fee. In some regions of the country, the use of this traditional mechanism sometimes forces the victims to marry their perpetrators to eliminate the “crime” and to protect the clan’s honor and reputation. There is no respect all for the rights and dignity of the victim who faces double victimization.

### **Abuse by Al Shabab**

Several brutal acts of violence have been committed against hundreds of innocent individuals. This merciless brutality against humans has, and continues to destabilize communities, violate human rights and threaten the well-being of the inhabitants of Somalia. Studies have shown a spontaneous increase in Somalia’s 1.1 million internally displaced people to many more, primarily women and children who remain extremely vulnerable and subject to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence.



Al Shabab has repeatedly been accused of committing similar and worse crimes against young girls and women. On 26th October 2017, the militant group stoned a mother of 8 children to death after accusing her of committing adultery. The woman identified as Habiba Ali Isaq was accused of marrying a second man while already married to another man and as a result was convicted for adultery. The execution took place in public place and residents were ordered to watch as it happens. According to reports learned from local residents, it is stated that Ishaq's marriage to her original husband was in dispute. One account says she left Ali after complaining about a lack of support. Sources also told the local media that Ishaq visited one of her children, who was ill, and got into a heated argument with Ali before Al-Shabab arrested her.

Non-discreetly, Al-Shabab runs its own court

system as part of its effort to impose a strict form of Islamic law in Somalia. Court proceedings are not public, making it hard to verify confessions and testimony.

With this, it is clear that a culture of impunity still exists around sexual and gender-based violence in conflict areas like Somalia.

Currently, there are laws on gender violence that are outdated. Women and girls who are often victims of conflict are edged out of these laws, therefore there is need for members of parliament to quickly approve the Sexual Offences Bill to punish perpetrators of the crime, which has left many of the victims traumatized and stigmatized

### **Recommendations to the African Commission**

- The African Commission should lobby for less stringent restrictions on humanitarian organizations where there are no health services or other support mechanisms for the survivors of rape and sexual violence. Some of the survivors have to endure a dangerous journey through war-torn Somalia to reach overcrowded Somali refugee camps;
- The African Commission should implore the Somali government to address the militarization of civilians, spreading militant militias, and stand firm against sexual and gender-based violence, while working to provide employment and training opportunities for youth males and females to end the situation of disparity and random violence;
- The African Commission should investigate all perpetrated war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, most especially through the use of sexual violence, and prosecute them as appropriate;
- The African Commission should urge the Somali government to put mechanisms to concretize stakeholders including citizens, military and armed forces, medical workers and lawyers to be receptive to prevent, protect and respond to survivors and stop stigma towards the survivors.
- The African Commission should implore the Somali government to hasten the approval of the Sexual Offences Bill to punish perpetrators of the sexual violence which has left countless victims traumatized and stigmatized;

### **SOUTH SUDAN**

According to the first comprehensive report released by the International Rescue Committee and George Washington University's Global Women's Institute on the magnitude, frequency and brutality of violence against women in South Sudan, it is stipulated that the magnitude currently stands at double the global average. For the world's youngest nation, rape and other forms of violence against women continue to be used by both government and opposition forces.

There was hope that the independence of South Sudan would carry great opportunities for the South Sudanese people and give hope for finally restoring human rights inside the long suffering country, however – that has not been the case. Just two years after the state gaining independence, a new conflict emerged when two political rivals – Dr. Riak Machar and President Salva Kiir clashed, and saw a crisis debilitate the nation in December 2013. Amidst this situation, inter-communal conflicts have escalated involving kidnap of girls and young women for marriage, cattle raiding, which has

exacerbated the situation on Violence against Women and Girls. South Sudanese multiple armed actors have, and continue to be responsible a large proportion of rapes, sexual assaults, harassment and detention.

*“UNMISS in 2017 documented 196 cases of conflict-related sexual violence including rape (88), gang rape (63), abduction for the purpose of sexual assault (31) UNMISS and attempted rape (14).*

*The peacekeeping mission 577 verified cases in 2016”.*

**Information shared by UNMISS, South Sudan (2018)**

The conflict has also significantly increased transactional/ survival sex by both displaced and non-displaced women and girls. With such a grim picture, the country’s structures have broken down which has created a huge gap in all the relevant sectors and services responsible to address Sexual and Gender-Based Violence.

In a recent report by What Works, it is stipulated that during the political clashes that ensued in South Sudan, tens of thousands were killed, and almost three million displaced from their homes, including more than 200,000 who were forced to flee to United Nations (UN) PoC sites across South Sudan. The global prevalence of sexual violence among refugees and displaced persons in humanitarian crises is estimated to be 21.4%, suggesting that approximately one in five women who are refugees or displaced by an emergency experience sexual violence.

*Maria Arkangelo, a married 26 year-old woman was attacked and raped by five armed men in her home*

*At the time of reporting the incident, it reported that the survivor was emotionally depressed and therefore was referred to Women Development Group for psychosocial support services. The perpetrators have not been found yet.*

**Information gathered by SIHA Area Office in Wau, South Sudan (2018)**

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is a grim human rights violation and a significant global health and security issue. Several studies conducted by SIHA Network as part of a larger civil society suggest that the rates, perpetrators and types of VAWG fluctuate during conflict; and there is evidence that sexual violence against both women and men increases during conflict.

Recent studies indicate that intimate partner violence (IPV) may be more common than conflict-related sexual assault. However, both IPV and conflict-related violence are under-reported in these settings. Though several studies have collected robust data on VAWG in humanitarian settings, many experts argue that our overall understanding of the issue remains limited. The global overview highlights both similarities and differences in the forms and settings of sexual violence in conflict, in the profiles of the perpetrators and their victims, and in the motives for and the consequences of such violence, between and within conflict-affected countries and regions.

Conflict-related sexual violence occurs in homes, fields, places of detention, military sites, and camps for refugees and displaced persons. It occurs at the height of armed conflict, during population displacement, and continues after conflict. Although the majority of victims of sexual violence are women and girls, men and boys are also targeted in armed conflict. In many conflicts, indigenous people or people from specific population groups are targeted for sexual violence based upon their ethnicity. Perpetrators of sexual violence in armed conflict include members of official armed and security forces, paramilitary groups, non-state armed groups, humanitarian and peacekeeping personnel, and civilians.

*Women and civil society groups in Wau State on 24th February, 2018, held a protest against the alleged sexual exploitation committed by the UN peacekeepers in the UN protection of civilian site in Wau town. The PSEA task force comprised of IOM, IMC, UNHCR, SIHA, WDG, WHO and UNFPA in Wau, captured some stories from the beneficiaries during the PSEA assessment to the collective sites and Protection of Civilians site. Beneficiaries in the PoC indicated that SEA is a big concern and has taken a toll on the beneficiaries, as one community leader mentioned. Unfortunately so, some community leaders are actually playing the role of go-between. They connect (Go Back – a nickname given by community in PoC to peace keepers) with the women and girls in the PoC and even offer their own tents for sexual activities. The peace-keepers encourage such middle-man benefits. Another community member said that, youth in this PoC are also being used as go-between contacts and translators too, to access the women and girls. In exchange, these youth are given money, and material items.*

**Information gathered by SIHA Area Office in Wau, South Sudan (2018)**

The South Sudanese legal system is built on a mélange of statutory and customary laws. South Sudan has enacted dozens of laws since 2005, but their use in disputes and courts is limited, there is lack of laws implementation, poor dissemination of laws, little experience with the new statutory provisions and lack of access to statutory courts limit the relevance of the new laws. However, in February, 2018, Wau High Court sentenced a community chief aged of 48 year old who raped 14 year old girl. That is little indication for impunity in Wau and South Sudan at large.

With this, the culture of impunity that often surrounds sexual violence in conflict perpetuates the crime, allowing it to permeate into other parts of society. Perpetrators are rarely held accountable for their actions and do not fear prosecution or punishment for their acts.

### **Recommendations to the African Commission**

- The fight against impunity should be a primary focus of the African Commission as an act of justice for victims as well as an appropriate punishment for perpetrators of sexual violence. The African Commission should mobilize all tools and appropriate protocols to leverage pressure onto South Sudan to combat impunity and implement effective judicial mechanisms;
- SIHA requests that judicial mechanisms must be strengthened and implemented in South Sudan. Lack of capacity in the force and judiciary to know how to investigate incidences and

to hold perpetrators accountable must be tackled. Sexual violence must be prioritized as a serious crime;

- The African Commission should implore all military bodies within South Sudan to reinforce individual and command responsibility for preventing and addressing sexual violence in the country;

## SUDAN

There have been a handful of studies conducted on sexual and gender-based violence in Sudan particularly within Khartoum. According to a study conducted by UN/Women in Sudan and University of Khartoum, it was found that the prevalence of Violence against Women (VAW), particularly beating, among all patterns, from 2000 to 2010 across four northern Sudanese States, stood at 40%; followed by rape which stood at about 9.9%. In addition to this, the same study showed that most perpetrators of beating women, came from nuclear families and the perpetrators of rape were from the community in which the survivors live in.

*Despite the fact that thousands of women have been raped in Sudan, most cases of adult women that were brought before the legal system have never proceeded nor concluded. As a result of this impunity, many SGBV cases have gone unreported by survivors who have not had faith in the justice system as well as the fact that they exposed themselves to stigmatization and harassment by systems that lack orientation or understand the gravity of sexual violence as a crime.*

### **Information from “Women in the Horn still bending their heads”**

According to an unpublished study conducted by SIHA, the study showed rape in Sudan is embedded in broader social and political struggles. It is not only increasingly institutionalized as a form of sexual violence, it is also more visible than ever before, as an aspect of warfare, as a disciplinary mechanism from the state, as well as uncoordinated attacks that index social and cultural (dis)empowerment. It is deeply interwoven with racial hierarchies and structures of power between the elite and the rest of the country. Sexual violence is especially threatening to women from marginalized regions and neighborhoods, IDP and migrant women (Abusharaf 2009, 53). In these areas, women are confronted with rape as a part of warfare, acts of aggression between youth gangs, as well as from men within their own community.

During the Darfur conflict in the mid-2000s, mass rape was highly publicized in the international media, prompting a reaction from the international community. A number of initiatives sought to document and make the atrocities publically known. Amnesty International’s project “Eyes on Darfur” since 2008 has used satellite imagery to monitor war crimes and crimes against humanity. The humanitarian response included SGBV protection including a number of films which were made highlighting the prevalence of sexual violence as a part of the Darfur conflict. Following the International Commission of Inquiry for Darfur, and the indictment of Sudan’s President Omar al Bashir, an arrest warrant was issued for violations of international law by the International Criminal Court’s (ICC) prosecuting attorney Luis Ocampo in 2008. The ICC and the United States labeled these as acts of genocide due to the systematic nature of the attacks.

*“At state universities, sexual harassment and violence is a subject of shame – and condemnation, thanks to a rich heritage of democratic student movements that have persisted despite years of repression, and that usually take strong, public stances on such issues. At private universities, this heritage does not exist, nor do robust policies to protect students”*

**Quoted from “Violence against women at Sudan’s universities has been tolerated for far too long” – authored by Hala Alkarib (Regional Director – SIHA Network)**

### **Recommendations to the African Commission on Sudan**

- The African Commission should implore the Sudan government take into consideration ratifying the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against women (CEDAW) and the Maputo Protocol;
- The African Commission should encourage the government of Sudan to clarify the criminal procedure and evidentiary requirements related to the prosecution of crimes of sexual violence including establishing an effective system of protection for victims and witnesses in cases involving sexual violence;
- The African Commission should recommend to the Sudan government increasing its awareness-raising activities about the negative effects of violence against women and reinforce its training activities for State Officials, in particular judges, prosecutors and police, in order to ensure that they are able to respond effectively to all forms of violence against women especially sexual and gender-based violence;
- The African Commission should urge the Sudan government to put mechanisms to concretize stakeholders including citizens, military and armed forces, medical workers and lawyers to be receptive to prevent, protect and respond to survivors and stop stigma towards the survivors.
- The African Commission should urge the Sudan government to put in place budget allocations to facilitate effective functionality of responsible government departments that deal with Sexual and Gender based Violence including the Medical department especially, Midwives and Nurses, Legal Department and Psychosocial department;

### **THE CHALLENGES THAT REMAIN IN ALL THE THREE COUNTRIES**

In all the three countries, the military and other armed forces remain perpetrators of sexual and gender based violence;

Impunity continues to be deeply ingrained in sexual violence in the three countries; as a result of breakdown of rule of law. There is almost no prosecution of the perpetrators of violence and worse still, sexual and gender based violence has been politicized.

There is still a lack of access to health services, psychosocial support and response. There is hardly any fast, emergency and response services to address medical and social effects of survivors. Some of the services lacking include: access to post exposure prophylaxis, medical surgery, access to HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care services that come as a result of abuse.

High stigma levels; When women and men are violated they are labeled and regarded as social misfits which affects their social relations and ability to integrate in society.

The reparation and resettlement support to the survivors; Most of the survivors in conflict situations are never compensated and given an opportunity to be fully reintegrated into communities.

### **GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE AFRICAN COMMISSION ON SUDAN, SOUTH SUDAN AND SOMALIA**

SIHA representing women and girls in the Horn of Africa with a mandate on gender equality as per Agenda 2063 “An African of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law”, the African Union Solemn Declaration on Gender parity” calling for rigorous implementation of the United Nations zero tolerance policy against sexual abuse and exploitation.

Realizing that the issue of sexual violence in armed conflict is a global and regional problem, it calls for a considerable magnitude of response and solutions at national, regional continental levels.

**SIHA urgently calls upon the African commission in accordance with the Protocol to The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa to implore the governments of the three countries to:**

- 1) Integrate a gender outlook in their policy decisions, legislation, development plans, programmes and activities and in all other spheres of life according to Article 1 (c) of the protocol;
- 2) Commit themselves to modifying the socio-cultural patterns of conduct of women and men through public awareness and communication strategies of Sexual Reproductive Health Rights, with a view to achieving the elimination of harmful cultural and traditional practices and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes, or on stereotyped roles for women and men according to Article 2 of the Protocol;
- 3) Legislate and put into effect laws to prohibit all forms of violence against women including rape whether the violence takes place in private or public spaces of the society according to Article 4.2 (a) of the Protocol;
- 4) Embrace legislative, administrative, social and economic measures to ensure the prevention, punishment and eradication of all forms of violence against women in the Horn of Africa according to Article 4.2 (b) of the Protocol;
- 5) Penalize the perpetrators of violence against women and implement programmes for the rehabilitation of women victims and survivors of sexual and gender based violence according to Article 4.2 (e) of the Protocol
- 6) Put in place effective mechanisms to support victims of sexual violence through basic services such as health services, legal and judicial support, emotional and psychosocial support as well as vocational training to achieve economic empowerment according to Article 5(c) of the Protocol;

7) Ensure that the right to health of women, including sexual and reproductive health is respected and promoted. This includes:

- The right to control their fertility;
- The right to decide whether to have children, the number of children and the spacing of children;
- The right to choose any method of contraception;
- The right to self-protection and to be protected against sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS;
- The right to be informed on one's health status and on the health status of one's partner, particularly if affected with sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS, in accordance with internationally recognized standards and best practices;
- The right to have family planning education;

b. Governments of the three countries shall take all appropriate measures to:

- Provide adequate, affordable and accessible health services, including information, education and communication programmes to women especially those in rural areas;
- Protect the reproductive rights of women by authorizing medical abortion in cases of sexual assault, rape, incest, and where the continued pregnancy endangers the mental and physical health of the mother or the life of the mother or the fetus.

All, according to according to Article 14

8) Ensure that women shall have the right to live in a positive cultural context and to participate at all levels in the determination of cultural policies according to Article 17 (1)

## **WHAT IS SIHA NETWORK DOING?**

SIHA has been strengthening the capacity of community-based services and built country networks and that connects in-between the Horn of Africa sub-region, solidarity for advocacy and protection as well as effective response strategies. Our mandate on our work in the region is to break the silence on sexual reproductive health rights and to empower young people, men and women to realize their sexual and reproductive rights. With the support of a grassroots-based SRHR coalition, we are strengthening the capacity of local CSOs in the Horn of Africa sub-region, in order to build regional solidarity for advocacy and protection against the violation of sexual and reproductive rights.

This paper highlights the plight of Women in the 3 countries of Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan where SIHA is currently a sexual Violence Project

The coalition has mobilized activists, vulnerable and marginalized women, men and girls to harness resources to challenge the root causes of sexual violence in their societies. SIHA network locations in Wau in South Sudan, Khartoum and North Darfur in Sudan and South Central Zone of Somalia have, and continue to be accessed by survivors of sexual violence in the region.

SIHA Network is currently working on building community and regional alliances to combat sexual and gender-based violence and increase Sexual Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) awareness

Due to societal stigma linked to victims of sexual violence and lack of condemnation, the countries (Sudan, South Sudan and Somalia) have high prevalence of SGBV, FGM and early/forced marriage, and poor access to SRHR. This coalition is working to better mobilise activists, vulnerable and marginalized women, men and girls to harness resources to challenge the root causes of sexual violence in their societies. In addition this, the coalition is working tirelessly to achieve a vision where all women and girls in the Horn of Africa sub-region are able to exercise their rights to justice and SRHR services.

More importantly, our work in the region intends to build strong and inclusive societal/community-based movements against SGBV whilst establishing knowledge of the importance of SRHR and services through constructing referral networks.

SIHA has organized and created network of civil society organizations, medical and health workers and lawyers associations, religious institutions to prevent, and respond to SGBV within communities. The network has addressed the following key areas:

- **Psychological support services** - Counseling support and integrating survivors into livelihood activities such as handcrafts, bakery and small scale businesses;
- **Legal representation and advisory services** - Legal aid and support such as representation of survivors in courts of law, and signing up for appeals in higher courts support the victims when they need to pursue the case in courts of law (financially and technically or hiring lawyer) Legal advisory and Consultations
- **Research and documentation** - In 2017 a study was conducted in Somalia to generate evidence and information for program planning on reproductive health services;
- **Community-based services** - Health and medical services access; through its network members various health services including medical care, post exposure prophylaxis and treatment has been provided to survivors;
- **Mobilization, Education and Capacity-building** - Stakeholders including survivors, governments, communities, professional workers such as lawyers, medical workers have been sensitized to understand the problem and how to prevent, protect, support and respond to the survivors;

The three countries are extremely complex and characterized with civil armed conflicts and post-conflicts situation, stigma and harmful traditions and victims of sexual violence blaming where there is lack of effective rule of law institutions.