



CENTRE FOR AFRICAN JUSTICE, PEACE  
AND HUMAN RIGHTS

**REPORT ON  
SEXUAL  
VIOLENCE  
AGAINST THE  
MALE  
GENDER:**

**THE REPUBLIC OF MALI**

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# Introduction

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In the recent tumultuous decades, Mali has confronted the profound repercussions of armed conflicts that have inflicted enduring wounds upon its populace. Within the harrowing tapestry of war, a frequently overlooked and stigmatised facet has come to light—the widespread occurrence of male conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV), in particular in the northern and central regions. Traditionally, the discourse surrounding sexual violence has been predominantly centred on female victims, relegating the experiences of male survivors to the shadows of shame and silence.

The Report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council identifies that after the coup d'état of 18 August 2020, there was a spike in the number of cases of CRSV. Despite the spike in the number of reported cases, the issue of underreporting due to the pervasive influence of stigma, heightened insecurity and the significant constraints placed on humanitarian access by the restriction imposed as a consequence of the ongoing pandemic still posed an issue. Out of 1,020 cases registering reported sexual violence, 510 women and 489 girls were affected, in contrast to 6 men and 15 boys. Nevertheless, recent research and the courageous testimonies of survivors are challenging these preconceptions, exposing a grim reality where male sexual violence is wielded as a weapon of warfare in Mali's conflict-ridden regions.

'Mali' (Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict) <<https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/countries/mali/>> accessed 29 January 2024

'Mali, a Coup within a Coup' (International Crisis Group)

<<https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/sahel/mali/mali-un-coup-dans-le-coup>> accessed 29 January 2024

UNGA 'Report of the Secretary-General', 'Conflict-Related Sexual Violence' (2021) UN Doc S/2021/312 p.

This comprehensive report embarks on a thorough exploration of the multifaceted dimensions of male conflict-related sexual violence in Mali, aiming to unravel its underlying causes, prevalence, and diverse forms. Within this examination, we delve into the root causes of the conflict in Mali, shedding light on the intricate web of factors, including ethnic tensions, historical grievances, and economic disparities, that have fueled the protracted turmoil.

Mali's conflict involves various key actors, each playing a pivotal role in shaping the intricate dynamics. Tuareg separatist groups, exemplified by the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA), initially sought autonomy for the northern region, contributing to the escalation of tensions. Islamist extremist groups like Ansar Dine, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), and other armed militias further complicated the landscape, taking advantage of the power vacuum created by the initial conflict.

The Malian government, international peacekeeping forces such as the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), and transnational criminal networks, including arms and drug smugglers, constitute additional actors influencing the complex scenario.

As part of this report's exploration, we scrutinise the international and domestic legal frameworks that intersect with male CRSV in the Malian context. Examining Mali's adherence to international legislation, we assess the country's commitment as a signatory to various conventions and treaties. The analysis aims to pinpoint gaps and challenges in effectively addressing male CRSV within Mali, offering a nuanced understanding of the legal landscape surrounding this issue.

In weaving together these intricate threads, the report not only illuminates the stark realities of male conflict-related sexual violence in Mali but also underscores the interconnectedness of root causes, key actors, and international legal frameworks. Through this holistic examination, we strive to contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the issue, laying the groundwork for informed interventions, policy reforms, and advocacy initiatives to address and prevent male CRSV in the context of Mali's enduring conflict.

Lecocq, Baz, and Georg Klute. "Tuareg Separatism in Mali." *International Journal*, vol. 68, no. 3, 2013, JSTOR, <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/24709398>> accessed 24 January 2024 p. 424–34

'Al-Qa'ida in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) (Counter Terrorism Guide) <<https://www.dni.gov/nctc/groups/aqim.html>> accessed 24 January 2024

'Ansar Al-Din' (European Council on Foreign Relations) <[https://ecfr.eu/special/sahel\\_mapping/ansar\\_al\\_din](https://ecfr.eu/special/sahel_mapping/ansar_al_din)> accessed 29 January 2024

'About Minusma' (UN Missions) <<https://minusma.unmissions.org/en/about-minusma#:~:text=The%20United%20Nations%20Multidimensionalat%20Integrated,number%20of%20security%2Drelated%20tasks.>> accessed 24 January 2024

# Contextual Analysis of the Mali Conflict and Relevant Actors

Since Mali's independence from French colonial rule in 1960, Mali has been plagued by ongoing political unrest and armed conflict, of which the most recent conflict can be traced back to two different events at the beginning of 2012. On 17 January 2012, the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) attacked a military base in Meneka in the Gao region of Mali. MNLA is a secular nationalist movement primarily consisting of former Tuareg fighters who fought with pro-Gaddafi forces and returned to Mali after the end of the Libyan revolution in 2011. The Tuareg is one of the ethnic groups located in the north of Mali, which suffered from the ongoing socioeconomic marginalisation that MNLA demanded the Malian government to end.

The second key event leading to the destabilisation of the Malian government and an increased division of society was a coup d'etat aimed at overthrowing the regime of the former president General Amadou Toumani Touré taking place on 22 March 2012. The coup was justified by highlighting the ruling government's inaction against the northern rebellion and the threat it constituted towards Malian territorial integrity. The tensions between different groups of the Malian army led to violent clashes in the capital Bamako, leaving several people dead, wounded or missing. While a framework agreement was signed under the influence of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) on 6 April 2012, tensions between the transition government and the military junta remained. Further, MNLA unilaterally declared the independence of the Azawad region on the same day, highlighting the continuance of the northern rebellion.

However, the nature of the conflict changed at the beginning of 2013 due to an increased presence of jihadist groups such as Ansar Dine, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), and the Movement for Unity and Jihad in Western Africa (MUJAO) among other things intending to impose Sharia law in the whole of Mali and with sworn allegiance to Osama Bin Laden.

In January 2013, jihadist groups conducted several offensives on Malian army posts, leading the transitional Malian government to seek the support of the French military. The launch of Operation Serval was concluded after retaking northern Mali and the destruction of multiple bases belonging to jihadist groups.

This military defeat temporarily paved the way for peace negotiations between the transition government and some armed groups and elections to supersede the interim government. Nevertheless, tensions persisted, and several non-international armed conflicts remain. At present, the most predominant belligerents are Islamist groups such as Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM) and the Islamic State in the Great Sahara (ISGS) fought by the Malian government supported by France, the peacekeeping mission United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the Joint Force of the G5 Sahel.

ICC, Situation in Mali, Art. 53 (1), para 31; Amnesty International, Mali: Five Months of Crisis - Armed Rebellion and Military Coup, p. 9

'Non-International Armed Conflicts in Mali' (Rulac) <<https://www.rulac.org/browse/conflicts/non-international-armed-conflicts-in-mali#collapse4accord>> accessed 26 February 2024  
A/HRC/25/27 (10 January 2014), para 12

OECD, The Geography of the Conflict in North and West Africa, p. 113

FIDH/AMDH, in central Mali, Civilian Populations are caught between terrorism and counterterrorism, Fact-finding Mission Report, p. 24

Underlying causes for the outbreak of the conflict can be found in the exacerbated hostilities between the north and south of Mali under the French occupation, and foreign influences of Libya and Algeria, which are believed to have supported rebel groups for their own interests, as well as foreign charity organisations, that provided humanitarian aid to northern Mali combined with religious programmes or furthered illicit trade. These influences have increased the North's marginalisation and calls for its autonomy.

The armed conflict had a severe impact on the Malian population as more than 1 million people have been forced to flee from their homes over the last 10 years, with 401.000 still being internally displaced and an additional 158.000 Malian refugees being hosted in neighbouring countries at the beginning of 2022. Moreover, the situation has been foreseen to deteriorate further as the year goes on considering the implementation delay of the planned political and institutional reform, which is aimed to stabilise government authorities and counteract the existing vacuum favourable to the continuance of the humanitarian crisis.



# Conflict-Related Sexual Violence in the Mali Context

While conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) in Mali predominantly impacts women and girls, there's an emerging recognition of men and boys as victims within this protracted conflict's complex dynamics.

The political upheaval, security vacuums, and proliferation of armed groups in 2020, especially following the coup d'état, have not only intensified these violations but also exposed all civilians to heightened risks of sexual violence, regardless of their gender. Reports from humanitarian service providers that year noted not just the extensive victimisation of women and girls but also included instances affecting men and boys— 15 boys and six men were registered as having been subjected to sexual violence amid the conflict.

This statistic, although smaller in comparison, underscores the broader pattern of CRSV where males are targeted as well, often underreported due to the heightened stigma and societal challenges men face in disclosing such experiences. This underreporting is compounded by cultural perceptions of masculinity and honour, making it difficult for male survivors to seek help.

The impact of CRSV on male survivors is profound, affecting their mental health, social standing, and economic stability. The societal expectations that men and boys must be protectors, not victims, further compound the silence around these issues. Additionally, male survivors face particular challenges in accessing support services, which are often designed with women and girls in mind, leaving them without the tailored assistance they need for recovery. The existing legal and support frameworks in Mali, while evolving, have yet to fully address the needs of male survivors, reflecting a significant gap in both policy and practice.

Efforts by the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and local partners to raise awareness and provide services for survivors, including men and boys, highlight some progress. However, the limited accessibility to healthcare and shelters, coupled with a lack of specialised services for male survivors, underscores the urgent need for comprehensive and gender-sensitive approaches to support all survivors of CRSV. Acknowledging men and boys as victims of CRSV in Mali is a critical step towards understanding the full scope of these violations in conflict settings. It challenges prevailing narratives around gender and violence. It opens pathways for more effective interventions and support for all affected individuals, prompting a reevaluation of support systems and legal frameworks to ensure they are inclusive and responsive to the needs of every survivor.

Ela Stachow, 'Conflict-related sexual violence: a review' (BMJ Military Health) <<https://militaryhealth.bmj.com/content/166/3/183>> accessed 10 February 2024

A Klearchos, 'Survivor-Centered Approaches to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence in International Humanitarian and Human Rights Law' (*AMA Journal of Ethics*, June 2022) <<https://journalofethics.ama-assn.org/article/survivor-centered-approaches-conflict-related-sexual-violence-international-humanitarian-and-human/2022-06>> accessed 10 February 2024

'That never happens here': Sexual and gender-based violence against men, boys, LGBTQ+ people' (ICRC) <<https://www.icrc.org/en/document/sexual-gender-violence-against-men-boys-lgbtq>> accessed 10 February 2024



# Root Causes of Male Sexual Violence

The root cause of sexual violence against men and boys is the political unrest in Mali. Due to the instability in the country, chaos evolves. The rule of law and human rights are not respected, leading to armed conflicts. The perpetrators of armed conflict include rebel groups, self-defence militias, terrorist organisations such as jihadist groups, and law enforcement and security forces. During conflict times, regardless of the conflict's intensity and reach, sexual violence becomes a weapon of war. Its core purpose is to demoralise, control, and intimidate people. In addition to conflict, political instability leads to gender and social inequality. Traditional societal norms are upheld. In Mali, men are expected to be strong, show no vulnerability, and never admit to being victims of violence.

In this way, sexual violence crimes, especially perpetrated against men, remain unreported and unpunished. This impunity ensures perpetrators of such crimes are not deterred. Male victims live in a culture of silence and shame, and the problem remains. Finally, the lack of legal remedies and medical, emotional, and social support creates further barriers to seeking help and justice.



The forms in which sexual violence against men and boys can be identified are sexual violence leading to death, forced rape of others, penile and object rape, genital violence and torture, genital mutilation, forced nudity, sexual slavery, and sexual humiliation.



In times of conflict, sexual violence is used to exert power and dominance over a specific group of people. Conflict-related sexual violence can be rooted in deeply ingrained gender-based hierarchies that view women and men as symbols of honour, power, or vulnerability. Attacking men through sexual violence can be seen as a challenge to the masculinity and dignity of individuals and their communities. Although all men can be subjected to sexual violence, male prisoners and detainees are at particular risk. In 2020, humanitarian services registered 1,020 cases of sexual violence related to conflict and instabilities within the country. Out of those cases, 15 were committed against boys and 6 against men. Sexual violence incidents remain under-documented. Unfortunately, there is insecurity present within Malian society. Victims are afraid to report these crimes due to reprisals, stigma, and the inadequacy of the judicial system, which does not focus on protecting victims and punishing perpetrators sufficiently.



UN Office of the Special Representative of the secretary-general on sexual violence in conflict, 'Mali' (UN, 30 March 2021) < <https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/countries/mali/> > accessed 17 June 2023.

International Federation for human rights, 'Mali: End conflict-related sexual violence' (*International Federation for human rights*, 25 November 2022) < <https://www.fidh.org/en/region/Africa/mali/mali-end-conflict-related-sexual-violence> > accessed 17 June 2023.

# Combatting Efforts

## National Laws Addressing Male CRSV

### *The Mali Constitution*

Mali gained independence from France in 1960. As a consequence, in the years that followed, the country underwent various political changes, including different constitutions. The constitution of the First Republic was adopted as a part of The Republic of Mali's regime experiment with socialism. The constitution of 1960 and the subsequent constitutions during the military rule did not provide a stable foundation for the democratic government.

Throughout the next decades, Mali has amended the constitution multiple times, reflecting changes in the political landscape, and evolving societal needs. Despite this fact, Mali's constitution of 1992 has yet to adopt a rule mentioning sexual violence. However, Mali, like many other countries, has laws and legal frameworks that criminalise and address gender-based violence.

Following a period of military rule, Mali transitioned to multiparty democracy. The aftermath of that decision was the adoption of a new constitution in 1992 by a referendum. This constitution established Mali as a secular, democratic, and social state. The Constitution also established a separation of powers among the executive, legislative, and judicial branches.

Title I of Mali's Constitution of 1992 lays down 24 fundamental rights and freedoms of every individual. It includes not only civil and political rights but also economic, social, and cultural ones. Importantly it provides for the right to their security and integrity (Article 1). Furthermore, torture and inhuman, cruel, degrading, or humiliating treatment are strictly prohibited, and the perpetrators shall be punished (Article 3). These rights and freedoms are to be protected by an independent judiciary (Article 81).

'Mali Gains Independence from France' (African-American Registry) <<https://aaregistry.org/>> accessed 24 January 2024

Mali's Constitution of 1992, Title I

'Constitutional History of Mali' (Constitutionnet) <<https://constitutionnet.org/country/africa-mali>> accessed 24 January 2024

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (adopted 13 January 2003) CCPR/C/MLI/2003/2

## ***The Mali Penal Code of 2001***

As a complementary act to the constitution, Mali has adopted the Penal Code of Mali, which includes provisions related to sexual offences and violence. In a similar manner to the development of the Constitution, the Penal Code has gone through various amendments. These amendments have been made to strengthen the legal framework for addressing gender-based violence.

According to Law No. 01-079 of 20 August 2001, “rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, forced sterilisation and any other form of sexual violence which is a serious violation of the Geneva Convention” constitutes a war crime (Article 31(i) (19) & (27)).

Rape is defined as any act of sexual penetration of any kind whatsoever committed on another person, using violence, constraint, threats, or surprise (Article 226). Derived from the gender-neutral language of the article, it is inferred that the legislation criminalised conflict-related sexual violence against the male gender. Comparably, Article 227 of the Law No. 01-079 criminalises acts or attempts to commit a sexual act on a girl aged less than fifteen years old. This offence can result in imprisonment between one to five years. Interestingly, Article 227 only concerns girls and does not include boys or young men.

In Mali, the law stipulates that rape can lead to punishment ranging from 5 to 20 years of "hard labour," and in some cases, exile from the community may also be imposed. The severity of the crime increases if it involves multiple perpetrators or if the victim is under 15 years old. Despite this legal framework, the government report of Mali fails to address the issue of rape, despite being requested to do so in General Comment 28, paragraph 11, of the Human Rights Committee.



## *National Action Plans*

Mali introduced its latest National Action Plan (NAP) in 2019, covering the period from 2019 to 2023. The NAP's strategic framework revolves around enhancing women's engagement in peacebuilding, the reconciliation process, and post- conflict governance. It also addressed emerging issues such as radicalisation, violent extremism, displacement, and the role of men in promoting gender equality. The NAP of 2019 is the third NAP implemented by Mali and as highlighted by the government, is focusing on conflict and gender-based violence prevention, victim protection and rehabilitation, women's participation in decision-making bodies, gender promotion, and empowerment.





## *Case studies*

One significant challenge in addressing rape in Mali is the lack of comprehensive statistical information on the prevalence of the crime. Many cases go unreported due to families' reluctance to come forward, as they fear the societal stigma that comes with acknowledging such incidents. This reluctance is often motivated by preserving the "honour" of the victim and the family, perpetuating cultural attitudes that prioritise family reputation over recognising and safeguarding the rights of the victim.

These cultural norms contribute to a culture of silence surrounding rape, making it challenging to combat and eradicate the crime effectively. The societal focus on maintaining family honour rather than acknowledging the violation of the victim's rights further inhibits progress in addressing and preventing rape in Mali.

## International Legal Framework

### *Mali's regional and international obligations*

Mali became a member State of the United Nations on 28 September 1960. Mali acceded to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) on 16 July 1976 and to the First Optional Protocol to the Covenant on 24 October 2001. The ICCPR address the issue of sexual violence indirectly by upholding principles related to the protection of individuals and their human rights.

Article 7 of the ICCPR establishes that “no one shall be subjected to torture or cruel, inhumane, or degrading treatment or punishment”. Consequently, the act of sexual violence, committed as a form of torture or cruel treatment, falls within the scope of Article 7.

Article 17 recognises the right to privacy, and any form of non-consensual sexual violence can be identified as a violation of an individual's privacy rights.

It is important to establish that while the ICCPR provides a framework for the protection of individuals from various forms of abuse, the ICCPR's primary focus is on civil and political rights.

Mali acceded to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Convention against Torture) on 26 February 1999. Mali is also a state party to other international and regional human rights instruments prohibiting torture, and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment.

At the regional level, Mali is a State Party to the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights. Article 2 of the African Charter stipulates that “Every individual shall be entitled to the enjoyment of the rights and freedoms recognised and guaranteed in the present Charter without distinction of any such kind such as race, ethnic group, colour, sex, language, religion, political or any other opinion, national and social origin fortune, birth and other status”. Article 18(3) provides that State Parties shall ensure the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women as well as protection for the rights of women and children “as stipulated in international declarations and conventions”. Article 5 of the African Charter prohibits torture, cruel, inhuman, or degrading punishment or treatment.

<sup>1</sup>UN in Lib'yMa'e mUbe'i Nations) s:/outs/m s2anury 2024 March 202Inte(rnnatitrtaioe Sdna Ntesl Caotvo(nUensna itenSudt opfp Corivt iLM ainds<ih Pontto plitnic /aLiwwl bRyiawn.rg/bg)h .ut<sh (toatdpos/p:e/t/neudna s1m6 iDL.- ueucnemmisebsmber-eior n1s9.o6rs6gt/atescce, eunnt-l>eib areyda i>n stasedoc fcoeracs4ee J 2d3 1M9aarch 1976) UNSC Res 939.9 US71t(IC arO ibid.A20fr0ic9a (Nn1T C6h S 1aertpere omnbcP Heru R2)m0a1n1t. 7 a)nUdN P DeopCl eSs/'R REiSg/h2t0s 0(a9d.opted 27 June 1981, entered into force 21 October 1986) (1982) ibid.21 ILM 58 (African Charter) art. 2



In 2017, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights adopted during its 60th Ordinary Session the Guidelines on combating sexual violence and its consequences in Africa. While these are not specific to Mali, they highlight a variety of obligations on the state with regard to sexual violence, including the obligations to prevent sexual violence and its consequences, to provide protection against sexual violence and its consequences, to guarantee access to justice and investigate and prosecute the perpetrators and to provide effective remedy and reparation for the victims of sexual violence.

Furthermore, these guidelines explicitly acknowledge men and boys as victims of sexual violence. They advocate for the deconstruction of stereotypes about masculinity, the promotion of a non-violent concept of virility that respects gender equality and encouraging men and boys who are the victims of sexual violence to report and denounce the violence. They also recommend the Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation Commissions to adopt a gender-sensitive approach focused on the victims of sexual violence, that pays particular attention to these victims, especially women and girls, but also men and boys.



## *The International Criminal Court*

The Mali government referred the situation to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in July 2012 and subsequently, an investigation was opened in January 2013. The Office of the Prosecutor (OTP) noted that the situation in Mali could be characterised by two main events, the first being, ‘...the emergence of a rebellion in the North on or around 17 January, which resulted in Northern Mali being seized by armed groups’ and the second being, ‘a coup d’état by a military junta on 22 March, which led to the ousting of President Toure shortly before Presidential elections could take place’, elections which were ‘...originally scheduled for 29 April 2012.’ The investigations being conducted by the OTP focused primarily on the northern regions of Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu.

On 27 March 2018, a warrant of arrest was issued against Al-Hassan Ag Abdoul Aziz Ag Mohamed Ag Mahmoud (‘Al-Hassan’) who is alleged to have committed crimes against humanity including ‘torture, rape, sexual slavery, other inhumane acts, including, inter alia, forced marriages, persecution... in the context of a widespread and systematic attack by armed groups Ansar Eddine / Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb against the civilian population of Timbuktu and its region, between 1 April 2012 and 28 January 2013.’ He is also alleged to have committed war crimes such as; torture, cruel treatment, outrages upon personal dignity, passing of sentences without previous judgement pronounced by a regularly constituted court affording all judicial guarantees which are generally recognised as indispensable, intentionally directing attacks against buildings dedicated to religion and historic monuments, rape and sexual slavery... in the context of armed conflict not of an international nature occurring in the same period between April 2012 and January 2013.’

‘Situation in the Republic of Mali’ (International Criminal Court) <<https://www.icc-cpi.int/situations/mali>> accessed 24 January 2024  
Situation in Mali (Article 53(1) Report) (16 January 2013) para 25  
Prosecutor v Al Hassan Ag Abdoul Aziz Ag Mohamed Ag Mahmoud (Information Sheet) ICC-01/12-01/18 (February 2022) p. 1



A few months after the commencement of an investigation by the ICC into the situation, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) was created by virtue of United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolution 2100 adopted on 25 April 2011, and subsequently renewed throughout subsequent resolutions. The purpose of MINUSMA being to “support the Malian authorities in their primary responsibility to protect the population” and emphasises the Malian authorities’ “primary responsibility to protect civilians.”

Therefore, the mandate is multidimensional and can be classified as one to protect civilians, promote human rights and facilitate the political process and national dialogue. MINUSMA plays a crucial role in supporting the efforts to stabilise Mali through the provision of security and the creation of conditions for delivering humanitarian assistance.

The presence of MINUSMA and its activities are crucial and vital in the context of ongoing challenges in Mali. Those challenges include terrorist threats, intercommunal tensions, and the need for political stability. The mission represents a concerted international effort to bring peace and stability to Mali and contribute to regional and global security.

# Conclusion

In conclusion, the report delves into the intricate and often overlooked issue of male conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) in Mali. Despite the predominant focus on female victims, there is emerging recognition of men and boys as victims within the country's protracted conflict dynamics. The report highlights the spike in reported cases of CRSV following the 2020 coup d'état and the challenges of underreporting due to stigma, insecurity, and pandemic-related restrictions.

The root causes of the conflict in Mali, including ethnic tensions, historical grievances, and economic disparities, are explored, shedding light on the complex web of factors contributing to the ongoing turmoil. Key actors such as Tuareg separatist groups, Islamist extremist organizations, the Malian government, international peacekeeping forces, and transnational criminal networks are analyzed in their roles within the conflict landscape.

Legal frameworks at both international and domestic levels are examined, emphasizing Mali's adherence to various conventions and treaties addressing sexual violence. Despite existing legal frameworks, gaps and challenges persist in effectively addressing male CRSV and providing support and services for male survivors.

Efforts to combat male CRSV include national laws, international legal frameworks, and initiatives such as Mali's National Action Plan and the involvement of international bodies like the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). These efforts aim to raise awareness, provide support services, promote gender equality, and hold perpetrators accountable.

Overall, the report underscores the urgent need for comprehensive and gender-sensitive approaches to address and prevent male CRSV in the context of Mali's enduring conflict. It calls for informed interventions, policy reforms, and advocacy initiatives to ensure the protection and well-being of all survivors, regardless of gender, and to contribute to lasting peace and stability in Mali.

# ABOUT THE SV TEAM

Sexual Violence against the Male Gender (SVMG) was the first established team of CAJPHR. We believe in the establishment of just, peaceful and inclusive societies. The project squarely falls under the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goal 16 which clearly states that "people everywhere need to be free of fear from all forms of violence and feel safe as they go about their lives whatever their ethnicity, faith or sexual orientation".

Furthermore, the Sexual Violence Team also propagates, in its objectives, the establishment of multi stakeholder's partnership in line with SDG 17. Goal 17 that calls for a "global partnership for sustainable development" includes as multi-tasked holders the national governments, civil society, scientists, academia and the private sector — to strive together to achieve the sustainable development goals.

The Sexual Violence Team indirectly supports SDG 5 that seeks to "achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls". A safe society for men will mean a safer society for women, too, which will, in turn, result in greater equality between men and women.

We strongly believe that the discourse and interactive sessions shared among the participants can provide and develop recommendations and action plans concerning how to address the stigma surrounding sexual violence against male child soldiers in situations of armed conflict.

Our mission is to break the silence and create awareness concerning the stigma surrounding sexual violence against the male gender by conducting research, publishing articles, as well as engaging stakeholders and policymakers in conversations on the subject and advocate for legislator change in domestic jurisdictions where sexual violence against men and boys is not recognised.

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