***Training Materials on the International Protocol***

**PART II MODULE 2 – UNDERSTANDING SEXUAL VIOLENCE**

**Session objectives:**

By the end of the session, participants should be in a position to:

* Explain what sexual violence and gender-based violence mean
* Identify forms, patterns and potential victims of sexual violence
* Recognise the harm caused by sexual violence and associated stereotypes

**Suggested duration of session:** 90 to 120 minutes

**Exercise:** Recognising CARSV (30-60 minutes)

**Relevant sections of International Protocol:**

Pages 16-27; Module 7 – Do No Harm; Module 8 – Satefy and Security; Module 9 – Planning; Module 11 – Interviewing; Module 14 – Analysing Evidence and Information; Module 15 – Trauma; Module 16 – Sexual Violence against Children; Module 17 – Sexual Violence against Men and Boys; Annex 1 – Evidence Workbook

This module should form an important part of the first day of the training. All subsequent modules will depend on participants having a solid and detailed understanding of what sexual violence means, what forms it can take, and what impact it has on victims, their families and communities. Participants should also be able to distinghuish between sexual violence and gender-based violence. The trainer for this session must have professional experience dealing with sexual violence, and should ideally be able to inform the participants about relevant patterns or factors for CARSV in their geographical areas of work (i.e. ethnic, economic, religious or political motivations, issues relating to military or security services, targeting of specific groups). Depending on the time available, the trainer should encourage as much discussion as possible among the participants, both during the session itself and as part of the exercise.

The trainer should lead the group in a discussion of each of the questions on the slides – what is sexual violence, who can be affected, what are the impacts – and encourage the participants to discuss their own opinions and experiences in their local context. The trainer can then reveal the rest of the information on those slides and highlight any issues which have not already come up during the discussion. It is important for the trainer to encourage the participants to think more broadly about this topic and to underscore certain key points: sexual violence does not just mean rape; sexual violence is about violence, power and control, not about sex or sexual attraction; beautiful young women are not the only possible or likely victims; and what genuine and voluntary consent means, how certain circumstances negate genuine consent and hence why the circumstances in which the sexual violence takes place are so important in proving the lack of consent. Participants should be instructed that this module deals with the facts and concepts behind sexual violence rather than the specific legal definitions which could apply in their jurisdiction. The latter issue is covered in Module 4 (Individual Criminal Responsibility) and Module 5 (State Responsibility).

In relation to the impact of sexual violence, the trainer should ask participants to suggest examples of the possible harm sexual violence can cause for each of the headings provided and facilitate a discussion based on examples from their professional experience. The trainer should encourage participants to think how certain forms of harm (e.g. physical, psychological, social, socio-economic and legal) may affect all victims, while others may affect male, female and children victims differently. The purpose of this part of the module is for the participants to think deeply and carefully about the harm that sexual violence causes not only to the direct victim, but also how that harm extends outwards to their families, communities and beyond. The importance of systematically and appropriately documenting the different types of harm caused and the victims of that harm should already be flagged at this stage (one of the reasons for doing so is that it may be relevant to the design and implementation of reparations). The purpose is also for the participants to realise that a victim of sexual violence is first harmed by the perpetrator, but then is often further harmed by their family, community, and the authorities. The trainer should emphasise that sexual violence – particularly CARSV – is not an intimate, personal or shameful issue; it is an extraordinarily destructive form of violence which causes many forms of harm and which can cause humiliation, fear, powerlessness and a sense of loss of control. The trainer should also highlight that anyone who is documenting sexual violence should not only aim to “Do No Harm”, but endeavour to empower survivors through participation in decision-making and, as the case may be, helping them to pursue accountability.

For the slides on myths and stereotypes (slides 17-18), the trainer should again stimulate a discussion among the participants about common myths regarding sexual violence that they have encountered in their professional work and own communities. The participants should be asked for examples of stereotypes that they may have heard or encountered (or even that they used to believe themselves) about how victims of sexual violence “should” behave, react, feel, speak, dress or interact, including with the authorities. The trainer should emphasise that these myths and stereotypes are false but that they can still cause serious damage. The participants must have the self-awareness to analyse their own beliefs about sexual violence and make sure that they are not subscribing to any damaging assumptions or preconceptions. The trainer should emphasise that myths and stereotypes can cause even a seasoned documenter to overlook or incorrectly assess potential evidence/information, lead to mistaken and prejudicial assessments of credibility (i.e. a victim who is angry rather than upset must be lying), and even prevent them from recognising when they are dealing with a victim. The participants should be encouraged to look beyond their own personal and professional assumptions and hold themselves to the task of bringing justice to all victims of sexual violence, whether men, women, boys or girls, regardless of their role in society.

**Exercise instructions**

For the ‘Recognising Conflict and Atrocity-Related Sexual Violence’ exercise, depending on the size of the group and the time available for this module, the trainer can pick out some specific examples from the tables on the final two slides (ideally including at least one example of sexual violence against men, women and children and one example of gender-based violence) or go through each of them in turn. Participants should be encouraged to express their opinion about whether they would consider the act in question to be an example of CARSV, sexual violence or gender-based violence based on their discussion of the topics covered in the previous slides, and if not, to explain their reasoning. The trainer should give clear directions before the exercise and emphasise that participants should focus on the content of the acts rather than what legal qualification they would be given. All of the examples provided are situations of CARSV, sexual violence or gender-based violence, but depending on the context and the background of the participants, they may not previously have recognised them as such.

If there is time for a follow-up exercise (either in this module or the following module), the trainer could ask the participants to consider and discuss whether each of the examples would be illegal in their own countries or in the law applicable to their work. There are two primary purposes to this: (i) to get the participants to think critically about whether the law offers sufficient protection to victims (although the law in many places does not offer sufficient protection regardless of the sex or gender of the victims, the trainer should emphasise that this is often particularly difficult for male victims); and (ii) to prepare participants for the introduction of the legal framework applicable to CARSV in Modules 3-6. All of the examples provided would constitute a crime or violation of international law, but it may not be as straightforward in the local context in which the participants work. The important point of this exercise is to recognise the different forms sexual violence can take and the ways in which different individuals can be targeted.