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## KAMALA HARRIS (/PEOPLE/OTHER/KAMALA-HARRIS)

### **FACT SHEET: The Biden-Harris Administration's Actions to Address Conflict-Related Sexual Violence**

June 17, 2024

Preventing and responding to conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) is a top priority for President Biden and Vice President Harris. The Biden-Harris Administration is advancing policies and programs to prevent conflict-related sexual violence and all forms of gender-based violence, to support survivors and ensure accountability and justice. This work is guided by the 2023 [U.S. Strategy and National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security](https://whitehouse.us19.list-manage.com/track/click?u=0ae7f75ebacfaef55ba39fcd&id=eea0d2d828&e=9e2cdab268) (<https://whitehouse.us19.list-manage.com/track/click?u=0ae7f75ebacfaef55ba39fcd&id=eea0d2d828&e=9e2cdab268>) and the 2022 [U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally](https://whitehouse.us19.list-manage.com/track/click?u=0ae7f75ebacfaef55ba39fcd&id=cc1402410d&e=9e2cdab268) (<https://whitehouse.us19.list-manage.com/track/click?u=0ae7f75ebacfaef55ba39fcd&id=cc1402410d&e=9e2cdab268>), which recognize that conflict-related sexual violence is a heinous crime used by perpetrators as a tactic of war, and that preventing it is essential to stability, peace, and security.

On June 17, the Vice President is hosting an event at the White House to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict. Together with survivors and experts on CRSV from around the world, the Vice President will condemn CRSV unequivocally—wherever

and whenever it occurs—and called for the international community to join the United States in advancing justice and accountability for this crime.

The Vice President spent her career as a prosecutor working to protect women and girls from violence. As Vice President, she has continued this leadership globally, working to ensure that CRSV—and promoting the status of women and girls—remains at the forefront of our national security policymaking.

As part of this event, the Vice President is launching the **Dignity in Documentation Initiative**, which intends to provide support for survivor- and civil society-led efforts to investigate and document CRSV in line with the Murad Code, named for Nobel Laureate and survivor Nadia Murad. This holistic program, supported under a \$10 million investment from the U.S. Department of State, will support justice for survivors by promoting accountability for crimes punishable under international law.

In addition, the Biden-Harris Administration announces the following actions to implement the 2022 President Memorandum on Promoting Accountability for Conflict-Related Sexual Violence—including efforts focused on documenting violence and supporting survivors, advancing justice and accountability, and preventing CRSV.

### **Documenting Violence and Supporting Survivors**

- **Incorporating Gender-Based Violence Prevention into Humanitarian Response.** In 2022, USAID and the U.S. Department of State launched Safe from the Start: ReVisioned, an ambitious update of the flagship U.S. Government initiative focused on GBV prevention and response in humanitarian emergencies. The expansion of this program supports a systemic shift in humanitarian response to focus on women and girls as experts, service providers, and leaders. Since the start of this initiative in FY 2013, the United States has provided nearly \$373 million for dedicated GBV prevention and response programming at the global, regional, and country levels, including in support of Safe from the Start.

- **Supporting Survivors in Ukraine.** To support survivors of CRSV and other forms of GBV in Ukraine, the U.S. Department of State is supporting a \$4 million project offering survivors and local GBV service providers critical services to help individuals and communities recover and thrive, including psycho-social support and survivor-centered care. The Department of State also supports Ukraine's effort to hold accountable those responsible for atrocities, including CRSV, through the U.S.-UK-EU Atrocity Crimes Advisory Group, which provides coordinated strategic advice, capacity building, and operational assistance to Ukraine's Office of the Prosecutor General. USAID is also supporting the World Health Organization, the International Organization for Migration, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Population Fund, and eleven NGO partners to respond to CRSV and other forms of GBV across Ukraine.

### **Advancing Justice and Accountability**

- **Imposing Sanctions.** In 2022, President Biden signed a Memorandum on Promoting Accountability for Conflict-Related Sexual Violence. (<https://whitehouse.us19.list-manage.com/track/click?u=0ae7f75ebacfaef55ba39fcdb&id=4b64993f12&e=9e2cdab268>) and committed to fully exercising U.S. authorities—including sanctions, visa restrictions, and security assistance vetting—to promote accountability for perpetrators and enablers of CRSV. Following the release of this new policy, the Biden-Harris Administration issued sanctions in June 2023, marking the first time the United States imposed sanctions based solely on CRSV. In December 2023, the Administration announced additional sanctions against thirteen targets from four countries for their connection to acts of CRSV—the largest set of financial sanctions and visa restrictions the United States has issued against individuals connected to this human rights abuse. Sanctions issued on the basis of CRSV since the release of the PM include:
  - *Central African Republic.* Designated two armed rebel group members—one for involvement or complicity in killing, maiming, torture, or rape or other sexual violence, and the other who supplied weapons to an armed rebel group that has recruited child soldiers and perpetrated sexual violence.
  - *Democratic Republic of the Congo.* Designated two leaders from the ISIS affiliate in the Democratic Republic of the Congo for their leadership role in ISIS-DRC, which is responsible for killing, maiming, and committing sexual violence against women and girls. Additionally, the administration sanctioned two individuals from the March 23 Movement and Mai-Mai Yakutumba, two armed groups implicated in sexual violence against civilians.
  - *Haiti.* Designated four leaders of gangs that have committed serious human rights abuses, including rape. One of the targets and his gang were identified by survivors as directly responsible for more than 1,000 documented cases of sexual violence in 2022 alone.
  - *Iraq.* Designated two ISIS leaders, who committed sexual violence and were responsible for the enslavement of Yazidi women and girls.
  - *South Sudan.* Designated five government and military officials in South Sudan who oversaw, ordered, incentivized, directly engaged in, or failed to prevent sexual assault, sexual slavery, and gang rape.

- *Sudan*. Designated a Sudanese paramilitary leader for his leadership of the Rapid Support Forces, an entity whose members have engaged in acts of violence and human rights abuses, including the massacre of civilians, ethnic killings, and use of sexual violence.
- *Syria*. Designated two Syria-based armed militias and three members of the groups' leadership structures in connection with serious human rights abuses, including rape.
- **Strengthening Sanctions Regimes.** In June 2024, the United States negotiated the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2734, renewing measures under the sanctions regime on ISIS, Al Qaeda, and other terrorist organizations originally established under Resolution 1267. For the first time, the resolution explicitly recognized that planning, directing, or committing of acts involving sexual- and gender-based violence are eligible for designation for sanctions under the regime's criteria, recognizing that GBV is used as a tactic by terrorist groups, and leading to improved reporting, coherence, and coordination.

### **Preventing Conflict-Related Sexual Violence**

- **Supporting United Nations Efforts to End CRSV.** In 2022, the United States announced an additional \$400,000 for the Office of the UN Special Representative to the Secretary General (SRSG) on Sexual Violence in Conflict, supporting efforts to promote justice and accountability and address the root causes of conflict-related sexual violence. The United States provides an annual contribution of \$1.75 million to support the Office of the SRSG.

- **Increasing Women's Leadership to Address CRSV.** Through the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Incentive Fund, USAID plans to support implementation of the WPS Strategy by investing in programs that increase women's participation in peacebuilding and decision making, improve access to justice for GBV survivors, and address CRSV.
  - In **Sudan**, USAID intends to provide \$2.72 million in WPS Incentive Funds to strengthen monitoring, documentation, and accountability processes and amplify existing Sudanese women's initiatives, such as the Women Coordination Advocacy Agenda. Activities include the development of specialized training for GBV and CRSV case documentation, increasing access to care and psychosocial support for survivors, and incorporating the needs of women and girls in relief and recovery distribution systems and services.
  - In **Sri Lanka**, USAID intends to provide \$1.5 million to facilitate women's advocacy on CRSV and peacebuilding and develop programs for women leaders to conduct dialogue and mobilize collective action. This program will also provide grants to women-led organizations to engage men and boys and mitigate cultural barriers that inhibit women's participation and fuel CRSV.
- **Expanding Atrocity Prevention.** The White House-led Atrocity Prevention Task Force—comprised of representatives from a broad array of U.S. government departments and agencies—requires the consideration of gender and GBV in atrocity risk assessments and has refined atrocity prevention toolkits to incorporate CRSV-specific early warning, prevention, and accountability tools. This helps ensure that U.S. government response efforts, whether diplomatic or programmatic, are informed by an analysis of gender equality issues.

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Kamala Harris, FACT SHEET: The Biden-Harris Administration's Actions to Address Conflict-Related Sexual Violence Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project  
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