

REDRESS

Ending torture, seeking justice for survivors

REALISING REPARATION FOR SURVIVORS OF CONFLICT- RELATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE: KEY INSIGHTS

March 2025



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INTRODUCTION

Over the past two years, REDRESS, with the support of the Global Survivors' Fund (GSF), has collaborated with partners to promote the implementation of decisions awarding reparation to survivors of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSV) in four countries: Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Kenya, and Nepal. We employed survivor-centred complementary techniques tied to holistic strategic litigation and advocacy. This document highlights key insights from these past two years.

The project's primary objective was to promote and strengthen coalitions and develop holistic strategies towards implementing decisions. This entailed supporting survivors, facilitating knowledge-exchange among practitioners through comparative experiences, and collaborating with national civil society to implement strategic activities.

This brief summarises our key findings through the implementation of the project and should be read alongside our report entitled "[Realising Reparation for survivors of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence. Holistic Strategic Litigation as a Tool](#)". The report explores the main obstacles faced by survivors to implement reparation decisions and distils some tools and techniques that worked in certain cases and can be adapted to other contexts. It features 11 cases, including the five included in this document.

This project was made possible through the dedication and expertise of national organisations and individuals collaborating to advance the implementation of reparation.

In Nepal, key partners included Advocacy Forum Nepal, Conflict Victim Women National Network (CVWN), Human Rights and Justice Centre (HRJC), Nagarik Aawaz, and the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) Nepal.

In Kenya, contributions came from Utu Wetu, Grace Agenda, ICJ Kenya, International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) Kenya, Survivors Network Kenya, Wangu Kanja, Coalition on Violence Against Women (COVAW), Independent Medico-Legal Unit (IMLU), Physicians for Human Rights (PHR), and the Civil Society Organisations Network (CSO Network).

In Chad, the Association Tchadienne pour la Promotion et la Défense des Droits de l'Homme (ATPDH) and Jacqueline Moudeina played a crucial role.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), significant contributions were made by Synergie pour l'Assistance Judiciaire aux Victimes de Violation des Droits Humains au Nord Kivu (SAJ) and Solidarité Féminine pour la Paix et le Développement Intégral.

DRIVING IMPACT THROUGH DIVERSE COALITIONS



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In February 2025, CVWN held a training programme in Nepal to build the capacity of women affected by the conflict on transitional justice and to create a safe, supportive space for victims to share their experiences and challenges.

Implementing reparation decisions is complex and involves multiple phases and actors. It entails complementary techniques and approaches. To navigate this complexity, an inclusive coalition of diverse actors is essential in shaping and driving effective strategies to promote the implementation of reparation orders.

Coalition for the implementation of the COVAW et al. case in Kenya

This case was filed by a coalition of four organisations: COVAW, IMLU, PHR, and ICJ Kenya. They ally domestic, regional and international legal knowledge, medical and psychosocial expertise, and connections with a wide range of grassroots and political actors. Throughout the process, they were supported by others, including survivor groups, the National Institution of Human and Peoples' Rights, and national and international organisations.

Regularly bringing these actors together was instrumental in reenergising alliances, increasing effectiveness and maximising impact. The coalition managed to raise awareness of key political actors around reparation, laying the ground for implementation, mobilising survivors in national and regional advocacy before the African Commission, in supporting survivors' urgent needs, deploying media campaigns to promote public awareness of the case, and legal progress on the case, culminating with the upcoming judgment on the appeal of some survivors whose claim had been rejected, and that had been pending for years.

To spark collaboration in Kenya and Nepal, REDRESS brought together key actors, including petitioners, civil society organisations, survivors, survivor groups, State representatives, and other actors. These engaging sessions fostered an environment of open dialogue and transparency, where participants collectively identified priorities and actionable steps, and assigned responsibilities. This enabled aligning individual case implementation strategies with broader efforts to advance administrative reparation programmes in the respective countries.

“ The workshop was the starting point and acted as a pilot for bringing organisations together to share experiences in implementing decisions. It was especially useful for NGOs and government stakeholders to come together, discuss their work and address challenges. It also spotlighted the government’s role for the implementation.

– HRJC Nepal

LEVERAGING ALLIANCES AND CREATING SPACE FOR INSTITUTIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Some contexts allow the for the co-creation of strategies with national authorities or other institutional allies. These may include National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), or State actors with aligned agendas. In the COVAW et al. case in Kenya, the NHRI has actively supported the litigation process since its early stages.

“ **The consultative workshops provided an opportunity for context-specific reflections among institutional partners and survivors on the trajectory, outcomes, and feasibility of enforcement of compensation [...]. The institutional partners and survivors jointly identified and developed advocacy strategies, centred on, and informed by survivors’ needs and priorities, to secure enforcement [...].**

- Utu Wetu, Kenya

In other contexts, State authorities may not be as informed or proactive. Yet, engaging with them can increase their understanding of a case and the importance of implementation of reparation for CRSV survivors. Bringing them in contact with survivors can create empathy and dismantle stigma, prompt them into action, or lay the foundations for future commitments. Coalitions should factor this in formulating their strategies, with a view to eventually engaging sensitised institutional actors in joint actions.

Good practice: Engaging with authorities in Nepal

In March 2024, REDRESS and Advocacy Forum Nepal, supported by GSF, facilitated discussions among practitioners, survivors, international organisations, government representatives, and provincial authorities to address the implementation of four CRSV cases decided by the UN Human Rights Committee (HRC). Despite historical reluctance to implement HRC decisions, the institutional actors engaged recognised the importance of:

- Receiving technical assistance for the implementation of recommendations from international bodies.
- Engaging with civil society organisations in national implementation plans.
- Drawing on comparative experiences to strengthen the domestic implementation process.

While the implementation process is still ongoing, there is now direct dialogue and coordination between civil society and key State actors, including national authorities and provincial governments.

CONTEXT-SPECIFIC AND DYNAMIC STRATEGIES

There is no single approach to promoting implementation in cases of CRSV. The tactics employed vary based on the context and its evolution, survivors' circumstances, and available resources, among others. Each country's unique and changing context influenced key discussion topics, the strategies designed, and priority areas over time.

“ **The legal and advocacy strategies developed in the project aim to counter the lack of or inadequate political commitment and protracted processes for securing and enforcing court-awarded reparation for CRSV and other forms of political violence in Kenya. The advocacy strategies implemented during and following the workshops have and continue to elicit sustained public attention, discourse, and engagement with duty bearers on the significance of the judgment in Petition 122 of 2013 and generate demand for enforcement of awarded compensation and broader reparation measures.**

- Utu Wetu, Kenya

In Nepal, the Transitional Justice Act was still under discussion during the strategic development phase of the project. This presented an opportunity to advocate for a reparation programme alongside the implementation of the four cases. In Kenya, outbursts of violence against protesters during the project period shifted the coalition's focus towards measures of non-repetition and survivor engagement and protection.

Implementing decisions in the context of ongoing conflict: DRC

Implementation activities and their impact in DRC were significantly limited due to the ongoing and worsening armed conflict.

Support for the survivor in the *S.A. v. DRC* case was affected by her displacement due to ongoing hostilities in North Kivu Province and the release of the perpetrator of her rape from prison. The identification of her needs was slowed down and the provision of medical support hindered by the limited availability of adequate healthcare institutions. The escalation of violence in 2025 subsequently forced members of national organisations to relocate for their safety, further complicating the execution of activities and communication with the survivor. Our priorities shifted to finding ways to support S.A., particularly in ensuring her safety.

Additionally, our strategy adopted an international and regional dimension. Activities deployed included participation in key opportunities such as the DRC's Universal Periodic Review and an event during the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights' public session.

International advocacy also included participation of national organisations during the civil society roundtables before the International Criminal Court. While in the context of ongoing armed conflict direct engagement of these bodies with the government is made difficult, it contributes to creating a body of findings and statements that can be used to push implementation forward once the opportunity arises. It also provides a platform for victims and activists to raise their concerns, priorities, and demands.

LONG-TERM THINKING FOR SUSTAINABLE AND EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION



© Utu Wetu

In Kenya, consultative workshops brought together key actors, including petitioners, civil society organisations, survivors, survivor groups, and State representatives.

The implementation of decisions often takes years to complete, primarily due to obstacles identified in our report, including the lack of political will, the absence of legal mechanisms for implementation, and insufficient follow-up avenues. Even when there is political will, the process remains lengthy.

For instance, in the Sepur Zarco case, despite apparent willingness by Guatemalan authorities to comply with national judgments and extensive advocacy and socialisation campaigns, nine years later, the reparation measures are still not fully delivered. This is worse where political will is absent.

The implementation process may not start for many more years, as in the *S.A. v. DRC* case (with a decision issued before 2014 for violations that took place in the late 2000s) or in Chad for the victims of the Hissène Habré regime (with judgments in 2015 and 2017 relating to violations that took place in the 1980s).

To address time-related challenges in the project, each case strategy included activities planned for the short, medium, and long term. These activities remain flexible, as various factors—such as political dynamics and the evolving needs of survivors—may require adjustments to the planned approach.

“ In consideration of persisting delays in judicial proceedings and implementation of court decisions, the next phase of the project should provide enhanced investments to support robust advocacy and communications interventions that will sustain public attention and demands for the State and its duty bearers to address the plight of CRSV survivors in Kenya.

– Utu Wetu, Kenya

Given the long-term nature of these strategies, sustainability is a priority from the outset. Securing resources for medium- and long-term initiatives is essential. The strategic plans produced by the project have sought to proactively assess potential risks, obstacles, and resource needs for implementation.

To the extent possible, donors financially supporting efforts to implement reparation through holistic strategic litigation must acknowledge, navigate, and help address the complexity of these processes, to ensure long-term objectives and achieve impact. Long-term funding is essential to avoid re-traumatisation and the inevitable disappointment of survivors’ expectations, in particular, when a process is co-led with the survivors, and in large part built on their expectations and needs.

The complexity of the implementation process in Chad (Hissène Habré regime)

Judgements condemning officials for grave human rights violations which took place in the 1980s and ordering reparation were adopted in 2015 (N’Djamena Court) and 2017 (Extraordinary African Chambers, EAC). In 2024, the Chadian government started disbursing an amount, representing less than 10% of the ordered compensation to some victims, without a transparent purpose and outside of the frameworks ordered by the courts. There is no information available as to how many survivors of CRSV have benefited from this measure.

Despite sustained pressure from victims and their legal representatives, Chad has consistently demonstrated a lack of commitment to implementation. This is evident in the government’s failure to meaningfully engage with victims, its lack of communication around the disbursement process, and its non-responsiveness to regional and international mechanisms. The start of the disbursement process coincided with the 2024 presidential elections and the desire by the government to repatriate Hissène Habré’s ashes to the country.

The disbursement process has lacked transparency. Victims have faced significant barriers and possibly discrimination in accessing payments. In response, REDRESS and ATPDH met with key stakeholders in Chad in October 2024, including victim groups and government representatives. These discussions helped shape an advocacy strategy focused on national authorities, regional mechanisms, and the UN.

Beyond initial awareness-raising efforts deployed in 2025, sustained and long-term action is needed to ensure effective reparation. This includes fostering a co-designed approach with the victims, the Chadian government, and the African Union to uphold international standards in the implementation process.



© ATPDH

In Chad, REDRESS worked with ATPDH to bring together stakeholders to discuss strategies to promote the implementation of reparation for victims of the Hissène Habré's regime.

“ Delays in justice and reparation contribute to deepening these wounds. A judicial battle does not end with court decisions. The process of implementation should not nullify the successes but should instead facilitate the rehabilitation of victims and address the root causes of the crimes.

- ATPDH, Chad

Sustainability is also achieved by strengthening the capacities of national organisations to lead and sustain implementation efforts. This includes support for policy development, specialised skill building or strengthening trainings, and assistance in acquiring essential facilities and infrastructure. By addressing these foundational needs, organisations can more effectively concentrate on their core mission and long-term impact.

“ Continued follow-up is essential, not just for ensuring decisions are carried out, but also for helping Nepal implement the recommendations from international bodies. It keeps the momentum going, highlights any challenges early on, and ensures that survivors' needs are prioritised. Without continued advocacy, there is a real risk that these decisions will remain ineffective.

- HRJC Nepal

Empowering survivors and addressing their needs as much as possible is a key element of sustainability. Fatigue can lead to a loss of interest in pursuing the implementation of decisions, especially when survivors continue to experience unaddressed trauma. If their immediate priorities revolve around personal well-being and recovery, advocacy for enforcement may not be a priority. Ensuring long-term comprehensive support for survivors—medical psychosocial, and material—can help sustain their engagement and strengthen the long-term impact of reparation efforts.

SURVIVORS OF CRSV AS DRIVERS OF IMPLEMENTATION

During the project, REDRESS and national organisations ensured that the most urgent needs of survivors of CRSV were addressed, including medical, psychosocial, and livelihood support. Beyond this individual support, actively involving survivors at every stage of the implementation process is essential. This enhances effectiveness, empowers survivors, and acknowledges them as key agents in their own reparation journey. It is important to note, though, that the level of survivor participation is context- and individual-specific.

“ Engaging directly with survivors, like Fulmati, was essential. It allowed her to be part of the process and have a voice in what was needed. Her involvement in meetings was especially valuable because she could follow up on key issues and advocate for herself. Her gradual but steady progress in taking charge of her advocacy is a positive example of how survivor empowerment can lead to lasting change.

- HRJC Nepal

In Nepal, for example, some survivors actively participated in discussions on the transitional justice act. Others chose to remain anonymous, due to the high stigma attached to sexual violence in the country. This highlights the importance of respecting survivors' choices and addressing the unique challenges each of them face.

Prioritising survivor participation in Nepal

From the early stages of the project, survivor groups have been actively involved in designing the events and strategies for implementation in Nepal. The family member of a deceased victim involved in one of the cases has played a crucial role in advocating for the implementation over several years. In 2024, she proposed a training programme for CRSV survivors in the country, aiming to empower them to advocate for their rights, particularly their right to reparation. These training courses contribute to the sustainability of the implementation plan, as this enables them to take leadership roles, and fosters ownership of the implementation process.

Following the workshops in Kenya, CRSV survivors of the COVAW et al. case began to take on a more active role in advocacy and communication campaigns, with the support of national organisations. This has energised activities under the strategy, increasing the impact of communication campaigns and social mobilisation.

“ The active involvement of survivors had a significant impact on shaping the strategies and ensuring they addressed real-life challenges. Their firsthand testimonies highlighted critical barriers such as legal obstacles, difficulties in accessing reparations, economic insecurity, and societal stigma. These insights helped refine advocacy approaches, prioritise key areas for intervention, and emphasise the need for survivor-led initiatives. Without their participation, the strategies might have lacked the depth of understanding necessary to effectively tackle these complex issues.

- CVWN Nepal

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The complexity of implementation of reparation for survivors of CRSV demands significant and sustained joint efforts. The design and execution of feasible strategies towards implementation must be dynamic and guided by the country context and the individual circumstances of survivors. They are also shaped by regional and international dynamics. A strong coalition of stakeholders is crucial for effective implementation, as it enables exchange of experiences and approaches, and capitalises on capacities, and resources.

It is essential that these strategies be survivor-centred, ensuring the safety and participation of survivors at every stage of the process, in line with their preferences and needs. Active engagement and recognition of survivors as agents of change is vital and fosters ownership and agency in their reparation journey.

To ensure long-term impact, implementation plans must incorporate sustainable alternatives, and address funding, organisational needs, and survivor empowerment. This should include activities to build or strengthen ownership and capacity of national organisations and survivor groups, so they can independently achieve implementation.

ANNEX: FACTSHEETS

Purna Maya vs Nepal, R. R. et all v. Nepal

Key activities undertaken

- Strategic multi-stakeholder meetings to promote the implementation of four HRC decisions related to CRSV
- Co-design of a general implementation plan for the four cases, and broader advocacy efforts on CRSV reparation in the context of transitional justice.
- Support for survivors' urgent needs (medical, psychosocial treatment, and livelihood assistance).
- Survivor-led training course, to strengthen survivors' advocacy skills on their rights.
- Legal submissions to the HRC requesting consideration of these cases as priority cases for follow-up on implementation of reparation measures awarded by the Committee

Key agreed strategies

- Targeted advocacy to State actors at provincial and State levels (Office of the Prime Minister, Ministry of Home Affairs, local and provincial governments). This strategy line aims to influence institutional and legislative frameworks, and crucially to unlock political will.
- UN advocacy, to keep external pressure on the State on implementation
- Capacity-building and strengthening of survivor leaders on reparation frameworks. This is meant to enable survivors to drive the advocacy and meaningfully participate in discussions around their rights.

Challenges encountered

- High stigmatisation of CRSV survivors. We adapted our messaging and communications to overcome this, and sought to ensure implementation is attune and responsive to this issue.
- Legal and administrative hurdles to channel and receive foreign aid funds in Nepal. This slowed down the activities, but did not prevent them.

Impact

- Some of the immediate medical, psychosocial, and livelihood needs of four CRSV survivors were met, creating the space for them to engage meaningfully in reparation as agents. Fulmati Fulmati Nyaya is now engaging in direct follow-up on reparation with provincial authorities with the support of National organisations.
- 15 survivors from the seven provinces are now empowered to advocate for reparation, demonstrating the potential of direct survivor advocacy to drive implementation forward.
- 23 survivors of different generations, from the seven provinces are engaged in open dialogue to deepen their understanding of the causes and impact of conflict and in particular sexual violence.
- The project played a pivotal role in fostering trust among CRSV survivors and creating a sense of solidarity among them.
- The Office of the Prime Minister, provincial governments, and parliamentarians publicly expressed their commitment to moving towards implementation and their interest in receiving technical support to this aim. This opening of political awareness and appetite should facilitate the implementation process.

Covaw et al. v. Kenya

Key activities undertaken

- Multi-stakeholder workshops to develop strategies towards implementation of the case and reparation programmes in Kenya.
- Engagement with survivors to assess their current needs, inform them of the case's progress, and explore opportunities for their participation in advocacy and communication campaigns.
- Targeted communication and advocacy campaigns towards implementation and the prompt resolution of a pending appeal, including through regular meetings with relevant State actors, and follow-up letters sent to State officials.
- Regional and international advocacy (UPR submission and side-events at African Commission sessions).

Key agreed strategies

- National advocacy (including to the Office of the Attorney General) towards implementation.
- Awareness-raising media campaigns and social mobilisation led by national organisations and survivor groups.
- Coordinating international and regional advocacy strategies towards human rights mechanisms to promote the implementation of reparation for survivors of CRSV in Kenya.

Challenges encountered

- Heavy domestic procedure for implementation of decisions and high litigation costs.
- Ongoing violence against protesters in Kenya during the implementation of the project.

Impact

- A revitalised national coalition and movement towards reparation for CRSV, centring reengaged survivors.
- Exhaustion of the domestic legal avenues for implementation, which paves the way for regional or international litigation.
- Survivors were supported ahead of the delivery of the appeal judgement, supporting their resilience.
- Survivors were encouraged to actively participate in advocacy and media campaigns.

S.A. v. DRC

Key activities undertaken

- Identification of needs and provision of support to the survivor.
- Advocacy with national CSOs on reparation before the ICC, in the UPR and at an African Commission of Human and Peoples' Rights (AComHPR) session.
- Follow-up letters to the AComHPR requesting the decision on the merits.
- S.A. received support for her temporary relocation during the escalation of hostilities in 2025 in the North Kivu region.

Key next steps

- In country situation allowing, convene multi-stakeholder meetings to build a coalition and define a strategic common plan.
- Case-specific advocacy in country and at the international level on implementation.

Challenges encountered

- Situation of ongoing armed conflict.
- Relocation of the survivor and national CSO members.
- National and administrative obstacles for delivering and receiving international funds.

Impact

- The UPR submission was included by the Working Group of the UPR in the summary of stakeholders' information, in its section on women's access to justice, and informed the members of the Human Rights Council.
- The survivor's most urgent medical needs were met, and support is being provided to address security concerns due to the escalation of violence in the country. This security support extends to the survivor, her family, and members of the national organisation representing her
- The African Commission's Special Rapporteur of the Rights of Women in Africa is fully informed of the need for reparation for CRSV survivors in DRC and this can shape her reflections on delivering reparation for survivors in conflict zones.

7,000 survivors of the Hissène Habré v. Chad

Key activities undertaken

- Legal steps in a pending case brought in 2017 by survivors against Chad before the African Commission: *ex parte* expert report on Chad's legal obligation to provide reparation; *ex parte* specialised report on the medical and psycho-social impact of the failure to provide reparation on survivors in Chad; legal submission on the merits in the case.
- In-person individual meetings in N'Djamena with victim group leaders, individual victims, victim representatives, national authorities, and diplomatic missions to assess the ongoing disbursement process to victims and define advocacy strategies.
- Co-design of an advocacy plan targeting the African Union, national authorities, and the African Commission to promote the implementation of the two decisions in Chad.

Key designed strategies

- Continued advocacy to the African Union to promote the functioning of the Trust Fund ordered by the Extraordinary Chambers in 2017.
- Continuation of the legal work in the African Commission case against Chad.
- Fostering collaboration among national stakeholders and victim groups to drive implementation forward.

Challenges encountered

- Lack of political will and established structures to implement reparation awards in Chad.
- Government's lack of transparency on the payments to victims initiated in 2024.
- The absence of support from key States in promoting the implementation of the decisions in Chad. For instance, some States were reluctant to issue recommendations on reparation at the UPR.
- High number of victims and survivors affected in different ways and lack of capacity of survivor groups.

Impact

- Sensitising government actors to reparation needs and legally ordered processes.
- Information-gathering enabled some oversight over the latest measures adopted by Chad to pay some survivors, and it informed strategic steps to bring actors together and drive implementation forward.

Photo cover by CVWN

Training program held by Conflict Victim Women National Network in February 2025 in Nepal to build the capacity of women affected by the conflict on transitional justice.

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