



List of Critical Issues

Submitted to the Committee on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women

by Cambodian Defenders Project (CDP)

regarding Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) in Conflict in Cambodia

INTRODUCTION

Looking back on more than 30 years of war, including civil war (1970 – 1975), an oppressive regime under the Khmer Rouge (1975 – 1979) and continued armed conflict (1979 – 1993), Cambodia is still struggling to deal with the legacy of past human rights violations. Today it is categorized as a Least Developed Country where impunity and violations of Human Rights are rife¹. This history of conflict justifies the relevance of the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)** which in post-conflict contexts is reinforced by the **UN Security Council Resolutions (SCR) on women, peace and security** to safeguard women’s human rights.

This paper intends to alert the CEDAW Committee on the failure of the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) to adequately address and deal with the issue of SGBV committed in past conflict, especially during the Khmer Rouge regime. The impacts on female survivors, including stigmatization, social isolation, lack of access to health care and impunity, and the normalization of underlying discriminatory gender roles require positive action by the Cambodian Government. Yet as discussed below the action taken by the RGC has fallen well below the standards set by its obligations under **CEDAW, especially Article 2, 3, 5, 12**, under the **General Recommendations No. 19, 28** and **SCR 1325, 1820**.

BACKGROUND ON SGBV IN CONFLICT IN CAMBODIA

During past conflicts, various forms of SGBV were perpetrated against women.² Whereas specific documentation for the periods before and after 1975-1979 does not exist, some information on the period of the Khmer Rouge regime was gathered in the recent years and is described in the following.

1. Forced Marriages during the Khmer Rouge Regime

When the Khmer Rouge took power on 17 April 1975, in an attempt to bow the public into a submissive and unquestioning subservience, they implemented a number of practices that would direct loyalty away from the family and towards the State and the abstract concept of “the Revolution”. To ensure the emergence of a next generation of workers in a union that would naturally provide less family loyalty, and as a corollary decreased opposition to

1 Human Rights Watch, *Country Summary – Cambodia*, January 2012.

2 To maintain the relevance for CEDAW, SGBV against men will not be addressed in this paper.

State practices which could be considered a threat to family members, couples were arbitrarily married without choice or consent and pressured to consummate their marriage.

Widespread and Systematic Practice of Forced Marriage³

Marriages took place in impersonal mass ceremonies organized by Khmer Rouge cadres that would involve anywhere from 3 - 160 couples. Shortly before the ceremony couples would be approached and informed that they were to be married. With the exception of rare instances, usually involving Khmer Rouge cadres, in which men were allowed to select who their wife would be, most couples had no choice in who their partner was, and many had never met their future spouses before. Refusal often resulted in imprisonment, torture or death. Although the details of the ceremonies varied according to location and time, these main features of the mass weddings remained unchanged.

After the ceremony couples were forced to spend the night together and were expected to consummate their marriage. Due to the fear of punishment and knowledge of covert supervision by Khmer Rouge spies, couples often unwillingly did so, in many cases resulting in a pregnancy. Those who refused, the vast majority of whom were women, were subjected to coercive measures, such as violence or threats of violence. In some cases it was reported that Khmer Rouge cadres assisted husbands in raping their new wives if they refused to have sex. After a few days, most couples were separated and had to continue forced labor in their respective units reuniting with each other when permitted by the chiefs.

Lasting Consequences for Women Originating from Forced Marriages⁴

The immediate harm suffered from the marriage, in particular by women, stems from the rape they were subjected to as a means to enforce the consummation of the marriage. Victims reported on a spectrum of emotional and physical suffering, ranging from fear of the sexual intercourse because they were virgins to severe traumatization. Many of the women, especially those from the age of 18 – 20, became pregnant as a result of the marriage. In many cases women who had to give birth during the Khmer Rouge regime were forced to continue hard physical labor with no health care and insufficient food until the day of birth and were not allowed much time to rest afterwards.

By not allowing women to choose their partner, the Khmer Rouge stripped them of a major life decision, undermining the basic right to control the direction of their own lives. Such a life-changing event is difficult for to amend, and indeed many wives still find themselves married to the same partners, in sometimes harmful situations. Even after the fall of the Khmer Rouge, many of those forced to marry chose to stay with their partners. Cultural and circumstantial barriers standing in the way of divorce have locked people into ill-matched unions for the rest of their lives.⁵ There is no data on the rate of domestic violence against the intimate partner experienced in such households but there have been some reports by victims supported through CDP. Women who separated from their partners had to face the stigmatization of no longer being a virgin, making it difficult for them to re-marry. Those with children had to encounter the hardship of child-rearing as a single mother in a post-conflict setting and were at risk of impoverishment.

³ The following information summarizes the analysis of 40 Civil Party applications of survivors of forced marriage and statements collected in Duong Savorn, *The Mystery of Sexual Violence under the Khmer Rouge Regime*, Cambodian Defenders Project, 2011.

⁴ The following information was collected through case studies with participants of self-help groups for forced marriage survivors and from statements in Duong Savorn, *The Mystery of Sexual Violence under the Khmer Rouge Regime*, Cambodian Defenders Project, 2011.

⁵ For a discussion of the reasons why couples forced to marry stayed together, see Peg Levine, *A Contextual Study into the Weddings and Births under the Khmer Rouge Regime: The Ritual Revolution*, 2007, including such reasons as: the financial impossibility of divorce, and the social stigma of being a divorcee.

Forced Marriages Enforce Discriminating Stereotypes of Women Today

Marriages imposed contrary to the will of the spouses, especially women, are a Cambodian practice, established well before 1975 and which continues today. In this respect, this practice not only reflected the Khmer Rouge ideology of the ruling party taking the place of parents as guardians, but it further entrenched already established notions of gender inequality by imposing the duty of sexual obedience and confining the roles of women to being child-bearers. These notions still continue to this day as the Cambodia 4th & 5th State Report to CEDAW confirms by stating that some people still hold on to traditional stereotypes and use their influence on their children, especially girls, to pressure on them in choosing partner for marriage. In a USAID survey, 45% of women believed that it was justifiable for a husband to beat his wife if she neglected to look after the children.⁶ It is not only the circumstances of the relationships themselves that provide a lasting pernicious effect on the well-being of those women forced to marry, but it is the unchecked presumptions that arise from institutionalizing a practice where women were designated to a domestic role, and were reprimanded, sometimes physically, if they neglected their obligations.

2. Other Types of SGBV

Due to the culture of silence surrounding sexual violence prevalent in Cambodian society, gathering precise statistics on rape and other sexually violent acts is notoriously neglected. There is a Cambodian proverb that advises women, "If the skirt is torn do not tear it further". This common attitude serves to illustrate not only the unknown potential extent of sexual crimes during the period of civil war but the probable level of impunity enjoyed by the perpetrators of those crimes.

Misconception of "Rape Never Happened during the Khmer Rouge Regime"

Rape during the Khmer Rouge is commonly viewed as a rare occurrence which was unrelated to the context of conflict.⁷ This assumption is based on lack of statistics and a Khmer Rouge official policy that pronounced punishments for so-called "moral offenses". In how far this policy was intended to prevent rape and, if it was, in how far it was implemented is highly contested.⁸

First-hand accounts by rape survivors and witnesses that have emerged in the last few years based on civil society advocacy efforts are beginning to disprove this myth. Up until today, only two studies have endeavored to uncover the truth behind the myth that rape did not happen under the Khmer Rouge.⁹ Other studies were not specifically targeted to address this issue but still produced some ancillary data. For example, in a 1990 study on the psychological effects of conflict conducted at a Thai border camp, 17% of the 993 Cambodian refugees surveyed reported that had been subjected to some form of sexual abuse, including rape, during the Democratic Kampuchea period.¹⁰

⁶ USAID, *Cambodia Gender Assessment*, 2010; http://transition.usaid.gov/our_work/cross-cutting_programs/wid/pubs/Cambodia_Gender_Assessment_2010.pdf.

⁷ See "KR Regime an Anomaly on Gender-Based Violence," Cambodia Daily, 12-14 September 2011 (page 11), in which Judge Cartwright states that "this particular conflict is unusual [in that] it does not contain allegations of widespread violence against women because they are women."

⁸ See a discussion on this policy in Theresa de Langis, *Code #6, "Moral Offenses" and Sexual Violations against Women Under the Khmer Rouge Regime*, 2012.

⁹ Kasumi Nakagawa, *Gender-Based Violence during the Khmer Rouge Regime: Stories of Survivors from the Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)*, Cambodian Defenders Project, 2008. Katrina Natale, "I Could Feel My Soul Flying Away" – A Study on Gender-Based Violence during Democratic Kampuchea in Battambang and Svay Rieng Provinces, Cambodian Defenders Project, 2011.

¹⁰ RF Mollica, et al., *The Effect of Trauma and Confinement on Functional Health and Mental Health Status of Cambodians Living in Thailand-Cambodia Border Camps* 581, 270 *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 1993.

In the two studies, a wide variety of rape scenarios was reported including gang and mass rapes, especially prior to executions at killing sites, rapes in Khmer Rouge installations and cooperatives, rapes with foreign objects, rapes through sexual exploitation and sexual slavery, attempted rape, and rape which occurred in the periods of conflict both before and after the regime. Certain groups of the population who were persecuted by the Khmer Rouge as enemies, in particular ethnic groups such as the Vietnamese minority, were more often targeted.

Perpetrators were very rarely punished. For those that were subjected to some sort of penalty, it was not clearly characterized as the crime of rape, and quite often their charge was completely unrelated. In some cases, both the victim and the perpetrator were killed for committing “moral offenses”. The Khmer Rouge policy of punishing any sexual relationships outside of marriage sanctioned or arranged by the state allowed perpetrators to act behind a veil of impunity, knowing their victims would be unable to report the assault without risking punishment themselves.

Among the forms of SGBV outside of forced marriage, rape was most commonly reported. However, there is an overall lack of knowledge about the prevalence rates but also about the quantitative data on the types of SGBV, the geographical areas as well as the needs and interest of the survivors.

Other incidences of SGBV besides rape were also common during the war, in particular genital mutilation and forced nudity as an example of sexual humiliation.¹¹ Forced nudity was reported to be common particularly in prisons or detention centers, but also happened in communes, where the commune chiefs would sometimes force female villagers to undress for them.

*Lasting Consequences for Victims and Society Originating from Rape*¹²

The harm created by sexual violence does not occur in a vacuum, the trauma is long-lasting and devastating for survivors and their families. A woman’s purity is highly valued in Cambodian society which is itself a symptom of patriarchal attitudes that women are the sexual property of men and their value in society is almost entirely predicated upon submission, subservience and purity. Some survivors of SGBV face stigmatization by their communities due to their perceived impurity, leaving them isolated from family and the support structure that comes with family bonds. Known victims of sexual violence are subject to high levels of discrimination in modern day Cambodia, and as a corollary face social isolation, economic hardship and all the negative consequences that follow.

Another consequence commonly reported by survivors concerns the lasting health problems, especially regarding reproductive organs, due to injuries that remained untreated over a long period of time. The exacerbating factor of an inadequate health infrastructure makes it even more difficult to treat survivors who desperately need medical attention. Some survivors are forced to dedicate a large part of their income to treating problems resulting from sexual assault during conflict.

The negative effects of gender-based violence during conflict can have a profound impact on the culture underlying the post-conflict setting. A culture of impunity during war-time means that sexual violence remains accepted during peace-time. One symptom of this can be seen in modern day Cambodia where a lot of justice affected for rape

¹¹ Katrina Natale, “I Could Feel My Soul Flying Away” – A Study on Gender-Based Violence during Democratic Kampuchea in Battambang and Svay Rieng Provinces, Cambodian Defenders Project, 2011.

¹² The following information reflects testimonies of SGBV survivors who participated in the Women’s Hearings in Cambodia, see *Women’s Hearing – True Voices of Women Under the Khmer Rouge Regime, Report on the Proceedings 2011*, Cambodian Defenders Project, 2011 and *Asia-Pacific Regional Women’s Hearing on Gender-Based Violence in Conflict – Report on the Proceedings 2012*, Cambodian Defenders Project, 2012, and from statements in Duong Savorn, *The Mystery of Sexual Violence under the Khmer Rouge Regime*, Cambodian Defenders Project, 2011.

victims happens behind closed doors in a mediation setting.¹³ These cases very rarely end in prosecution and the reparation sums that are meted out are small. The concept of marital rape is almost unheard of and the culture of impunity is generally considered to be just as present today as it was 30 years ago.¹⁴ In addition, the culture of silence carries on to the post-conflict generation, discouraging SGBV survivors today from reporting the crime. It was often in their motivation to break this cycle that rape survivors of the Khmer Rouge period who had remained silent for decades often found their courage to speak out.

CAMBODIA'S OBLIGATIONS UNDER CEDAW

As a State Party to CEDAW, Cambodia has the obligation to address the issues of SGBV in conflict to prevent the normalization of such conduct in the post-conflict society and fulfill the needs of women survivors. According to the Concept Paper for the General Discussion on the Protection of Women's Human Rights in Conflict and Post-Conflict Contexts (Concept Paper) in post-conflict periods where a country, like Cambodia, is confronted with the complex task of dealing with the past, the meaningful and equal participation of women and the incorporation of a gender perspective in all conflict resolution, peace-building processes and transitional justice mechanisms is an obligation under CEDAW.

1. Access to Criminal Justice and Non-Judicial Justice

CEDAW Articles 2(c) and 15(1), General Recommendation No. 19 (Article 6), reinforced by SCR 1325 (Article 11) and 1820 (Article 4), require the Cambodian Government to fully investigate, prosecute and, where evidence demands, try the crimes committed against women in conflict. For past gross human rights violations as occurred during the Khmer Rouge period this is a complex task and often states receive support from the international community, in particular the United Nations (UN).¹⁵ Where this is the case, any institution or body established through such a process has the obligation to take into account the framework of CEDAW which calls for the full inclusion and appropriate addressing of crimes committed against women. Thus, Cambodia has the obligation under CEDAW to end the impunity for SGBV which disproportionately affects women.

According to **General Recommendation No. 28 (Par. 11)**, State Parties should adopt measures addressing the needs of women in conflict. In particular in the context of SGBV in conflict, it is of utmost importance that the state provides platforms for truth-telling and channels for truth-seeking, either through criminal justice or through non-judicial mechanisms. This obligation expands to documentation of the historic narrative of these women and to the acknowledgement of their suffering. Passive acquiescence of past violence reinforces the culture of silence and stigmatization. As the Concept Paper reiterates, women in transitional context have a legitimate expectation that their experience of the conflict will be included, the violations they experienced addressed, including the structural gender inequalities that result in discrimination.

¹³ Amnesty International, *Breaking the Silence – Sexual Violence in Cambodia*, 2010. Also see O'Connell, Stephen and Yin Soeum, *Rights of Rape Victims Often Ignored by Mediators*, Phnom Penh Post, March 31 - April 13, 2000.

¹⁴ On the issue of the impunity of marital rape, see Chanthol Oung, *Gender Issues; Violence Against Women in Cambodia*, Cambodian Women's Crisis Center, 1999, where it is stated that not a single case of marital rape has led to conviction. On the issue of impunity in general, see the United Nations Population Fund Report on the general presentation of population issues and UNFPA projects in Cambodia (Page 21 - 22), which can be found at <http://www.un.org.kh/unfpa/docs/popmatters.doc>.

¹⁵ E.g. Rwanda, former Yugoslavia, Sierra Leone.

2. Obligation to Provide Reparations

General Recommendation No. 28 (Par. 32) on CEDAW Article 2(b) requires that State Parties provide reparations to women whose rights have been violated. This applies to violations in peace-time but also to violations in past conflict, in particular the experience of SGBV. In the **Article 16 of the Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law**¹⁶, the UN General Assembly calls on all member states, including Cambodia, to endeavor to establish national programs for reparation and other assistance to victims. For SGBV survivors and their families this can include various types of services and compensation¹⁷, in particular health services as stipulated in **CEDAW Article 12(1) and General Recommendation No. 19 (Article 24 (k))**, legal protection services as referred to in **CEDAW Article 2(c)**, training and education as described in **CEDAW Article 10** and other socio-economic benefits as referred to in **CEDAW Article 3**. When developing such reparation programs, Cambodia has to take into account the specific needs of SGBV survivors of past conflicts by assessing the impact of such violence and the conflict in general on women as stipulated in **General Recommendation No. 19 (Article 24(c))**.

3. Elimination of Discriminatory Gender Stereotypes

CEDAW Articles 5(a) and 2(f) oblige Cambodia to modify and abolish social attitudes and cultural practices and patterns that are based on the inferiority or superiority of either sex which hinder the enjoyment of equality for women. As outlined above, the widespread misconception that rape did not occur during this oppressive regime feeds into the enforced silence among SGBV survivors and the denial of acknowledgment of their suffering. This needs to be combatted by governmental action to acknowledge and publicly condemn SGBV in the past as well as today. The acceptance of the cultural practice of marriages against the consent of the children which enforces discriminatory gender roles of women was bolstered by the forced marriages during the Khmer Rouge regime. Cambodia's obligation under the above mentioned CEDAW articles include a public discourse of such practice, the underlying gender stereotypes and its consequences. **General Recommendation No. 19 (Article 24 e))** obliges the State Parties to identify customs and patterns and report on any measures to overcome them.

CAMBODIA'S ACTIONS TO ADDRESS SGBV IN CONFLICT

In 2011, the Government submitted the combined 4th&5th State Report to CEDAW. Although the State Report in its chapter on "Political Background" describes long lasting periods of conflict in the past, it makes no mention of the gender-specific implications of this era and the current transitional justice process.

The RGC has so far taken very limited steps to fulfill their above-mentioned obligations. Though some efforts have been made to provide criminal justice for the gross human rights violations committed under the Khmer Rouge regime, these have not fully addressed SGBV. On the other obligations the RGC have not taken any measures.

*Criminal Justice through the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC)*¹⁸

The ECCC were established as a hybrid-international court under the auspices of the RGC and the UN to prosecute crimes committed during the Khmer Rouge regime. Victims of alleged crimes can participate in the proceedings as

¹⁶ Adopted and proclaimed by General Assembly resolution 60/147 of 16 December 2005.

¹⁷ See Nahla Valji, *A Window of Opportunity: Making Transitional Justice Work for Women*, UN Women, 2012, for examples of gender sensitive reparation programs.

¹⁸ Theresa de Langis, *Briefing Paper on the ECCC, Sexual Crimes, and Recommendations from the Cambodian Women's Hearing*, 2012.

Civil Parties, which bestows certain rights on them. Despite the fact that numerous Civil Parties reported on SGBV, this type of violence has only been partly addressed in these trials so far.

Due to the efforts of Civil Party Lawyers¹⁹, the Office of the Co-Investigating Judges investigated the crime of forced marriage in 2009, and it was included as part of the Closing Order in Case 002 under the 5th policy of the Khmer Rouge as “regulation of marriage.” The court has admitted 780 civil parties under the charge of forced marriage, the second largest group of Civil Parties at the ECCC. The ECCC hoping to expedite a conviction against a set of defendants who are becoming increasingly elderly and fragile has severed case 002 into several sub-trials dealing with separate sets of crimes. Forced marriage is due to be heard as part of a severed trial in the future, but has not been scheduled for a specific timescale. Due to problems with funding, the age of the defendants, and the speed of proceedings, it is unclear if this segment will be heard at all.

In addition, the fact that the indictment for Case 002 does not hold the accused liable for rapes outside of the context of forced marriage means that the vast majority of rape cases will never be prosecuted as a crime against humanity. Case 002 is the only case to deal with four of the most senior leaders, and the only case to cover the entire country and period 1975-1979. So far, the accused in Case 001 was convicted for one incident that occurred at the S-21 security center in Phnom Penh.

Currently, Case 003 and 004 are in the investigation stage although it is not clear if and when they will be tried. Whether SGBV crimes are being investigated in these cases is not known since at this stage any information on the alleged crimes and facts under investigation are confidential.

Due to the limited temporal jurisdiction, and absence of any other judicial mechanism, there has also been no effort to prosecute any of the SGBV crimes during conflict that occurred outside of the Khmer Rouge regime period. There have been no efforts made for prosecution of crimes during any conflict period, including SGBV, through domestic courts.

No Non-Judicial Justice Mechanisms

To a certain degree, the ECCC has the potential to be a truth-telling and truth-seeking platform for victims. However, since SGBV is not addressed in the current hearings and future hearings are unlikely, this opportunity is lost for SGBV survivors. Other non-judicial truth-telling and truth-seeking channels are run solely by NGOs without support from the Government. The RGC has no programs to research, document and educate on SGBV in conflict, its root causes and underlying patterns.

Reparation and Non-Judicial Measure Programs at the ECCC

At the ECCC, all Civil Parties can request moral and collective reparations which the court may grant in case of a conviction. However, since these have to be linked to the harm suffered through the convicted crime and no SGBV crime is currently on trial, specific programs for survivors of SGBV cannot be claimed at this moment. Given the low chances of future trials for the reasons mentioned above, reparation programs for this group are highly unlikely to ever be realized through the ECCC. Outside of the ECCC, the RGC has taken no efforts to develop any type of reparation or assistance programs for victims of SGBV during the Khmer Rouge regime.

The Victims Support Section (VSS) at the ECCC can develop non-judicial measures which are independent from any conviction. Those can address any harm suffered by victims of the Khmer Rouge, including SGBV survivors. Currently,

¹⁹ Civil Party Lawyers at that time were not employed by the Court but worked pro-bono or for NGOs.

the VSS in cooperation with Cambodian Defenders Project and Transcultural Psychosocial Organization is implementing a project funded by the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women to increase the involvement and the benefit for women in the transitional justice process. This project includes outreach programs, truth-telling forums, direct psycho-social and legal services and institutional capacity building on gender sensitivity. However, the number of beneficiaries and the time period are limited so that such a mainly NGO driven project cannot fulfill the Government's obligation for a comprehensive reparations and assistance program.

Role of the Cambodian Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA)

MoWA has so far not addressed the issue of SGBV during the Khmer Rouge regime and therefore failed to fulfill the above-mentioned obligations under CEDAW. There have been a number of efforts that deal with violence against women in today's society, with strong and sometimes exclusive focus on domestic violence. However, it seems there is no interest to include past violence in the discussions although this has been frequently raised by NGOs and other advocates.²⁰

LIST OF QUESTIONS TO CAMBODIA

In light of the analysis of the consequences of SGBV in conflict and the insufficient state actions to fulfill obligations under CEDAW, we propose the following questions and recommendations to the RGC:

- ***How has the Government addressed SGBV in conflict so far?***
- ***What are present day situations, needs and concerns of survivors of SGBV in conflict?***
- ***When will the Government complete a gender-specific analysis of the impact of conflict for women today?***
- ***What services are currently provided to survivors of SGBV in conflict?***
- ***How will the Government fulfill its obligation under CEDAW and UN SCR 1325, 1820, in particular,***
 - ***to eliminate the myth that rape did not happen during the Khmer Rouge regime?***
 - ***to add women's perspective to the historic record and narrative?***
 - ***to end impunity for rape and other SGBV committed during the Khmer Rouge regime?***
 - ***to provide access to justice for SGBV survivors of past conflicts?***
 - ***to develop programs to retribute, compensate, rehabilitate and satisfy²¹ SGBV survivors to redress the harm suffered through gross human rights violations in the past that continue to have an impact until today?***
- ***How will the rights to justice and reparations of survivors SGBV in conflict be incorporated in on-going Government programs and action plans, in particular those dealing with violence against women?***

²⁰ See op-ed of Margot Wallström, former Special Representative to the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, *Thirty Years After the Fall of the Khmer Rouge, Victims of Sexual Violence Still Seek Justice*, published in the Phnom Penh Post on 29 May, 2012.

²¹ For definition of these terms see Article 19 – 22 of the *Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law* adopted and proclaimed by General Assembly resolution 60/147 of 16 December 2005.

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE CAMBODIAN GOVERNMENT

1. Acknowledge the truth that widespread SGBV occurred during Democratic Kampuchea by initiating or supporting on-going documentation to preserve the history of past experiences of victims and survivors, to break the silence and to reveal root causes of VAW. Such documentation should be made publicly available, especially for universities, as basis for further research, discussion and awareness on the connection and continuum between past and present VAW.
2. Use the results of documentation projects for discussions on the impact and root causes for VAW in the public and school education to promote the notion that these acts are unacceptable at any times.
3. Set-up national or local Women's Hearings under the leadership of MoWA on violence against women in the past and today to give a voice to survivors; publicly acknowledge their suffering and condemn such acts. Such Hearings should be used as inter-generational or inter-communal platform for a dialogue on prevention of VAW.
4. Establish a reparations program led by MoWA and implemented in cooperation with civil society which includes a package of services for victims of gender-based violence during conflict (e.g. health services, counseling services). The content of the reparations should be developed in consultation with the victims and respond to their needs.
5. Improve cooperation between MoWA and civil society by forming a special advisory panel to the government on SGBV in conflict with the purpose of proposing projects and programming or offering input and advice on how to successfully integrate the perspective of this unique group of survivors into services contemplated by the government.
6. Provide training and raise awareness among all service providers about SGBV in conflict to ensure that services are considerate of the needs of SGBV victims from that period. Service providers should be conscious that most elderly women who request services are survivors of conflict facing specific difficulties (e.g. PTSD).
7. As a member of the UN General Assembly, adhere to obligations under UN SCRs 1325, 1820 and
 - report on the situation of survivors of sexual violence during conflict, including access to support and justice, in Government reports on the above obligations;
 - regularly report on the prosecution rate of sexual violence as per Security Council Resolution 1325 global indicators.

CONTACT:

Mr. **Duong Savorn**, Project Coordinator

E-Mail: savorn@cdpcambodia.org

Tel: +855 (0)12 800 816

Ms. **Beini Ye**, Advisor and International Civil Party Lawyer

E-Mail: beini.ye@giz.de

Tel: +855 (0)12 973 026

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