



INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

REPORT 2025/003

Audit of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict

The Office effectively led and coordinated United Nations initiatives to address conflict-related sexual violence, but it needed to strengthen country-level reporting on related activities

7 April 2025

Assignment No. AP2023-528-01

Audit of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. The objective of the audit was to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of programme activities managed by OSRSG-SVC to prevent and respond to sexual violence, including as a tactic of war. The audit covered the period from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2023 and included (a) leadership in the implementation of the conflict related sexual violence (CRSV) mandate; and (b) support to the country-level implementation of the CRSV mandate.

OSRSG-SVC effectively led and coordinated United Nations initiatives to address CRSV, primarily through its support to United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict (UN Action), an inter-agency coordination network of 26 United Nations entities, and the United Nations Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict. The Office also supported the implementation of the Monitoring, Analysis and Reporting Arrangements (MARA) to collect and report CRSV information.

However, OIOS also observed a few areas of improvement as well. In particular, the Office had not developed specific performance indicators to monitor the impact of its communications and awareness-raising activities. Also, while the arrangements to receive country-level inputs to the annual report of the Secretary-General on CRSV were adequate, there were differences in the statistics on sexual violence against children reported by OSRSG-SVC and the OSRSG for Children and Armed Conflict (OSRSG-CAAC).

OIOS made four recommendations. To address issues identified in the audit, OSRSG-SVC needed to:

- Develop its communications performance indicators to include measurable baselines and targets in assessing the effectiveness of its advocacy and communication strategies, digital content and awareness-raising campaigns;
- Define, in collaboration with UN Action, appropriate project approval arrangements in cases where a majority of members of the Resource Management Committee recuse themselves from voting due to their member entities' participation in a project proposal;
- Coordinate with OSRSG-CAAC to develop an action plan to harmonize the data generated by MARA and the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism to report on conflict-related sexual violence impacting children; and
- Review, in collaboration with UN Action, the regularity of information flow on CRSV from and within countries implementing MARA, and revise, as needed, the provisional guidance note on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1960 (2010).

OSRSG-SVC accepted the recommendations and has initiated actions to implement them.

CONTENTS

I. BACKGROUND	1-2
II. AUDIT OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY	3
III. AUDIT RESULTS	3-11
A. Leadership in the implementation of the CRSV mandate	3-7
B. Support to the country-level implementation of the CRSV mandate	7-11
IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	11
ANNEX I	Status of audit recommendations
APPENDIX I	Management response

Audit of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (OSRSG-SVC).
2. The United Nations, through a series of Security Council resolutions, recognized conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) as a peace and security issue and a serious violation of human rights and international humanitarian law. The United Nations defines CRSV as “rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, forced abortion, enforced sterilization, forced marriage, and any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity perpetrated against women, men, girls or boys that is directly or indirectly linked to a conflict. The term also encompasses trafficking in persons for the purpose of sexual violence and/or exploitation, when committed in situations of conflict.”
3. Various resolutions dating from 2007, have established responsibilities, initiatives and structures for addressing CRSV, namely: (a) United Nations Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict (UN Action); (b) Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (SRSG-SVC); (c) United Nations Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict (Team of Experts); (d) Women’s Protection Advisers (WPAs); (e) Monitoring, Analysis and Reporting Arrangements on CRSV (MARA); and (f) OSRSG-SVC, as presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1: United Nations responsibilities, initiatives and structures on CRSV

Secretary-General's Policy Committee Decision (2007)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• UN Action - Primary inter-agency coordination network to guide United Nations system initiatives to end sexual violence in conflict and post conflict countries, and other “situations of concern.”* Governed by a Steering Committee chaired by SRSG-SVC, it is composed of principals representing 26 entities. The Steering Committee is responsible for coordinating CRSV strategic policy and operational matters, including advocacy by its member entities, and meets at the technical/expert level as UN Action Focal Points.
Security Council resolution 1888 (2009)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SRSG-SVC - Provides coherent and strategic leadership to strengthen United Nations system coordination and other stakeholders’ efforts to prevent and respond to CRSV, primarily through UN Action and/or engagement with justice and security sectors, parties to armed conflict, civil society and survivors of SVC.• Team of Experts - Supports the work of SRSG-SVC by assisting national authorities in affected Member States to strengthen their rule of law and judicial capacities to enhance accountability for CRSV. The Team is co-chaired by representatives from: OSRSG-SVC (team lead), DPO, OHCHR, and UNDP.• WPAs - Established to protect women and children from sexual violence as part of the broader women, peace and security agenda in the mandates of some peace operations. (WPAs are now also deployed to offices of RCs/HCs and regional settings.) They convene the country-level MARA, mainstream CRSV perspectives in mission mandate implementation activities and engage with both state and non-state parties to promote accountability for preventing and addressing CRSV, and collect information on CRSV to report to OSRSG-SVC through established channels.
Security Council resolution 1960 (2010)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• MARA - Mechanism to systematically collect timely, accurate, reliable and objective CRSV information to analyze trends and patterns and identify causal factors in situations relevant to the implementation of resolution 1888 (2009).
General Assembly resolution 65/259 of 24 December 2010
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• OSRSG-SVC - Established human and financial resources to support SRSG-SVC in implementing the CRSV mandate.

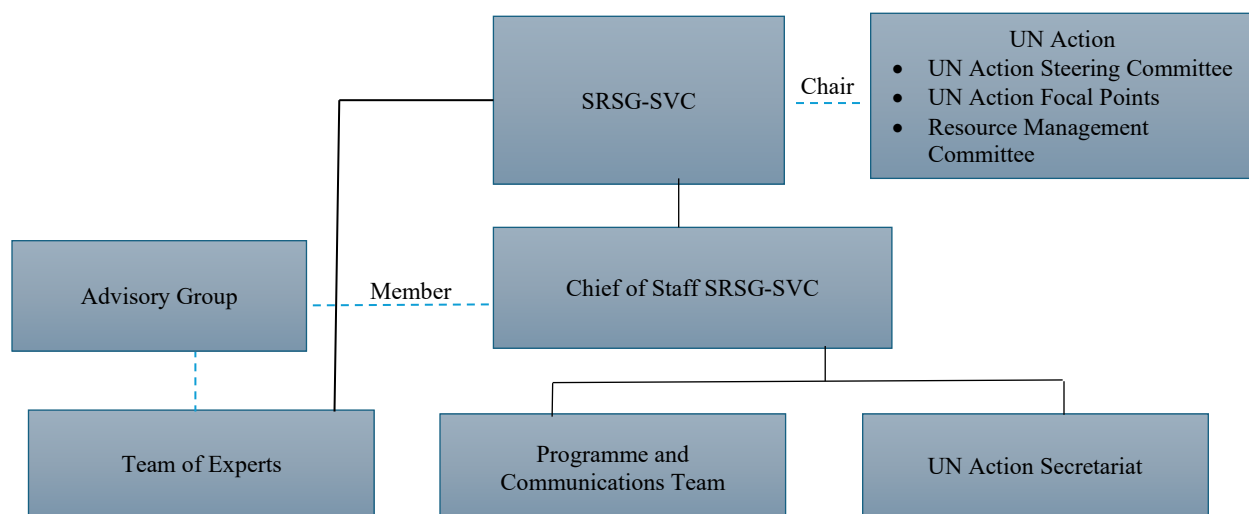
Source: Compiled by OIOS from relevant documents

* Situations of concern refer to countries or regions that, although not in conflict or post conflict settings, present threats to peace and security or international human rights and humanitarian law, placing them on the agenda of the Security Council.

DPO, Department of Peace Operations; OHCHR, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; UNDP, United Nations Development Programme; RC/HC, Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator.

4. SRSG-SVC at the Under-Secretary-General level heads OSRSG-SVC, which comprises UN Action secretariat and Team of Experts as the operational arms of the SRSG's mandate, and the Programme and Communication team. Figure 2 illustrates the integrated structure responsible for the implementation of the CRSV mandate.

Figure 2: Integrated organization structure of OSRSG-SVC for implementation of the CRSV mandate



Source: Compiled by OIOS based on OSRSG-SVC data

5. The Office's approved budgets for the period 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2024 are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: OSRSG-SVC resource requirements

	2022		2023		2024	
	No. of posts	Amount \$'000	No. of posts	Amount \$'000	No. of posts	Amount \$'000
Regular budget	8	1,769.1	8	1,789.4	8	1,638.4
Extrabudgetary	12	2,972.9	16	3,914.3	19	5,335.8
	20	4,742.0	24	5,703.7	27	6,974.2

Source: Programme budgets for 2022, A/76/6 (Sect.1), 2023, A/77/6 (Sect.1) and 2024, A/78/6 (Sect.1)

6. OSRSG-SVC relies on Umoja for monitoring programme performance and administrative purposes. The Office uploaded its operational programme plan and recorded progress towards achieving results and completing planned performance deliverables in the Strategic Management Application of Umoja. It also used Microsoft Office tools to summarize and analyze data received from United Nations country teams (UNCTs) on CRSV incidents and trends for inclusion in the annual report of the Secretary-General on CRSV.

7. Comments provided by OSRSG-SVC are incorporated in italics.

II. AUDIT OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

8. The objective of the audit was to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of programme activities managed by OSRSG-SVC to prevent and respond to sexual violence, including as a tactic of war.

9. This audit was included in the 2023 risk-based work plan of OIOS due to the operational and reputational risks to the United Nations on the implementation of the CRSV mandate. The audit was conducted in conjunction with the audits of: (a) the OSRSG for Children and Armed Conflict (OSRSG-CAAC); and (b) the OSRSG on Violence against Children (OSRSG-VAC), as part of a parallel review of the three Security Council mandates addressing violence in conflict and post conflict situations while protecting children and promoting accountability.

10. OIOS conducted this audit from April to December 2024. The audit covered the period from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2023. Based on an activity-level risk assessment, the audit covered higher and medium risk areas in the programme performance of OSRSG-SVC: (a) leadership in the implementation of the CRSV mandate; and (b) support to the country-level implementation of the CRSV mandate.

11. The audit methodology included: (a) review of relevant documents including Security Council resolutions; (b) interviews with key personnel in OSRSG-SVC including the UN Action secretariat and Team of Experts, and WPAs and working group leads on CRSV in eight countries; (c) review of CRSV information obtained from UNCTs and peace operations; and (d) sample testing of projects funded through the CRSV Multi-Partner Trust Fund (CRSV-MPTF).

12. To assess the reliability of data received from UNCTs on CRSV, OIOS: (a) performed analytical reviews of country-specific reports for accuracy, consistency and completeness of existing information about the statistical and qualitative data; (b) reviewed related documentation, including responses from SRSGs in peace operations and RCs/HCs to the annual OSRSG-SVC questionnaire on CRSV reporting; (c) and interviewed OSRSG-SVC personnel knowledgeable about the data. The related observations are presented in Section B of the audit results.

13. The audit was conducted in accordance with the Global Internal Audit Standards.

III. AUDIT RESULTS

A. Leadership in the implementation of the CRSV mandate

OSRSG-SVC planned and delivered its work effectively

14. In 2022 and 2023, the work of OSRSG-SVC was guided by the proposed programme budget and SRSG-SVC compact with the Secretary-General and informed by the 2020-2025 strategic framework of UN Action and the January 2020 to December 2024 five-year joint programme of the Team of Experts. The Office led and coordinated programme activities including: (a) prevention, protection, advocacy and programmatic initiatives; (b) strategic engagement with stakeholders including Member States, non-state parties to conflict, the international community and other partners; (c) capacity-building of rule of law and judicial institutions of affected Member States to address perpetrators; (d) development and distribution of policy guidance, information and knowledge material on preventing and responding to CRSV; and (e) management of CRSV data as a basis for evidence-based action.

15. OSRSG-SVC collated information on these activities to prepare annual reports of the Secretary-General on CRSV using the established United Nations structures on CRSV shown in Figure 1, notably the UN Action Network as the primary consultation forum. The annual reports updated the Security Council on the status of implementation of their resolutions on CRSV and recommended strategic actions. The reports also listed parties credibly suspected of committing or being responsible for patterns of rape or other forms of CRSV in situations on the Security Council agenda

16. A significant part of SRSB-SVC's activities involved visits to countries included in the annual report of the Secretary-General on CRSV and other emerging situations of concern. The purpose of the visits was to engage with Member States and non-state parties and negotiate prevention and response commitments to advance justice for survivors and accountability for perpetrators of CRSV. Other official trips of SRSB-SVC involved: (a) attending meetings and conferences; (b) visiting countries neighboring conflict and post conflict countries and countries with emerging situations where security challenges limited access to the country in conflict; and (c) advocating for financial support for the extrabudgetary funded operations of UN Action and Team of Experts. The Office maintained details on the prioritization of countries to be visited, and prepared mission reports following the visits.

17. The outcome of SRSB-SVC engagements included negotiating and signing joint communiqués and/or frameworks of cooperation with affected Member States and unilateral communiqués¹ with non-state parties, including those listed in the annual report of the Secretary-General on CRSV to adopt time-bound commitments to address CRSV. SRSB-SVC also signed agreements with other stakeholders such as international, regional and subregional, non-governmental and civil society organizations, and academic and research institutions to enhance collaboration, information sharing and knowledge building on CRSV. These joint communiqués and frameworks of cooperation established priority areas and served as entry points for a coordinated United Nations system approach to CRSV prevention, accountability and response.

18. As of 31 December 2023, OSRSG-SVC had established joint communiqués and frameworks of cooperation with:

- Member States in 13 countries between 2011 and 2022 (9 of which were listed in the annual report of the Secretary-General on CRSV, and 1 with Ukraine signed in 2022). This also included unilateral agreements with non-state parties in three countries; and
- Thirteen regional organizations, United Nations treaty bodies, academic institutions and other entities, four of which were signed during the review period.

19. OSRSG-SVC also maintained country-specific watching briefs to remain apprised of relevant political developments including upcoming mandate renewals and transitions of United Nations peace operations, and Security Council debates and briefings. Country/desk officers in the Office, UN Action secretariat and Team of Experts collated and communicated country-specific developments within their dedicated country portfolios to inform and support the strategic, advocacy and field mission engagements of the SRSB-SVC.

Need to develop performance indicators to monitor the impact of its communications and awareness-raising activities

20. OSRSG-SVC prepared a communications and advocacy strategy complemented by a schedule of key calendar dates of relevant international or United Nations observances to guide its communications

¹ Unilateral communiqués were issued by individual non-state parties to conflict to formally acknowledge the CRSV situation and independently commit to taking action.

outreach and other engagement opportunities to raise awareness and mobilize the necessary political and financial support. The Office used various communication channels to disseminate its messaging, including: (a) official websites of OSRSG-SVC and UN Action, which contained repositories of CRSV-related press releases, statements, news articles, reports, events, storytelling, factsheets and other resources; and (b) digital social media platforms and streaming services including Facebook, Instagram and X (formerly Twitter). Its target audience included policymakers, non-state armed groups, Permanent Missions to the United Nations, victims and survivors of CRSV, decision makers from donor and non-donor member states, regional and international organizations and influencers who support or are engaged in the CRSV mandate, and youths.

21. The Communications Officer compiled a detailed record of over 600 multilingual publications and articles that covered or cited the CRSV mandate in 2022 and 2023. OSRSG-SVC monitored media activities using established business information and research tools and shared the results and social media metrics with management. This informed management of user engagement to assess the effectiveness of communications platforms, identify areas for improving the communications strategy, and amplify the visibility of OSRSG-SVC's public messaging and advocacy comments.

22. However, the Office had not specified performance indicators for its communications and awareness-raising beyond generic definitions of the types of statistics to monitor such as: number of press releases/followers on social media/visits to YouTube content/publications distributed; and web statistics including hits, visits and page views. OIOS also noted that postings on social media platforms attracted very few comments, reposts and likes. The Office stated that it often disabled comments on social media posts to avoid potentially controversial or harmful comments on the sensitive topic of CRSV.

23. In the absence of performance indicators specifying baseline and target statistics, OSRSG-SVC was unable to effectively assess whether its objectives on the reach and impact of its CRSV-related communications and awareness-raising had been met.

(1) OSRSG-SVC should develop communications performance indicators that include measurable baselines and targets to assess the effectiveness of its advocacy and communication strategies, digital content and awareness-raising campaigns.

OSRSG-SVC accepted recommendation 1 and stated that the Office would revisit the performance indicators to include baselines and targets to assess the effectiveness of its advocacy and communication strategies, digital content and awareness raising.

UN Action secretariat and the Team of Experts effectively coordinated CRSV activities

24. OSRSG-SVC led and coordinated the programmatic initiatives of the United Nations system on CRSV, principally through the role of the SRSR-SVC as the Chairperson on UN Action and through the activities of the UN Action secretariat and Team of Experts.

a) The UN Action Secretariat

25. The UN Action secretariat supported the UN Action Steering Committee and facilitated the work of the network of the UN Action Focal Points and the Resource Management Committee (RMC). The UN Action secretariat convened two Steering Committee meetings in 2022 and one meeting in 2023 to: (a) develop and monitor the implementation of UN Action biennial work plans, which were aligned with its 2020-2025 strategic framework; and (b) discuss and endorse the annual report on CRSV prior to its publication.

26. The UN Action secretariat also convened and coordinated the Focal Points, who are the key support link and conduit between OSRSG-SVC and the entities they represent on the implementation of the CRSV mandate. The Focal Points met monthly and held 22 meetings in 2022 and 2023. OIOS review of minutes indicated that during meetings, the Focal Points shared country-specific updates and debriefings on UN Action Steering Committee meetings, SRSG-SVC's upcoming and completed missions, and general information and best practice on their collective CRSV mandate engagements and fundraising strategy. The meetings were also a forum to identify collaboration opportunities to raise awareness and strengthen response to sexual violence. The Focal Points also met on an ad-hoc basis to address ongoing priorities and emerging issues of concern such as the situations in Ukraine, Israel and the occupied Palestinian Territories.

27. The UN Action secretariat periodically participated in official country visits and meetings; supported the implementation of joint projects at the country-level through the CRSV-MPTF, and shared information for advocacy messaging with the Programme and Communications Team. They also coordinated the development and roll-out of a CRSV prevention framework, which SRSG-SVC launched in September 2022 to guide stakeholders in enhanced approaches to addressing the structural root causes of CRSV as part of its wider role of knowledge product development and dissemination.

b) The Team of Experts

28. The Team of Experts worked in coordination with UN Action to implement the CRSV mandate, focusing primarily on countries included in the annual report of the Secretary-General on CRSV but also supporting other Member States at their request. It carried out its activities through engagements with national authorities, United Nations partners, and national and international non-governmental organizations to strengthen the rule of law and promote accountability for CRSV. Countries supported during the period included Central African Republic, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Iraq, Libya, Mali, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Ukraine, while also following up on other situations of concern in Ethiopia, Haiti, Myanmar and Syria.

29. To further improve implementation of the CRSV mandate, OSRSG-SVC engaged independent external consultants to conduct mid-term evaluations of the implementation of the UN Action strategic framework and the joint programme of the Team of Experts. The evaluations, which were finalized in June 2023 and July 2024 for UN Action and the Team of Experts, respectively, acknowledged the relevance and satisfactory programme performance based on the strategic framework and joint programme, and made recommendations to address the challenges identified. These were being implemented during the audit.

Need to strengthen CRSV-MPTF project proposal approval process

30. The CRSV-MPTF covers the programme response aspect of the CRSV mandate, with UNDP MPTF Office as the Administrative Agent.

31. OSRSG-SVC, through the UN Action secretariat supported the RMC in administering the CRSV-MPTF project proposal evaluation process. The RMC is composed of five UN Action Focal Points,² one of whom served as Chairperson. UN Action secretariat administrative support included launching calls for proposals and project concept notes and screening qualifying submissions for evaluation by the RMC in consultation with key stakeholders. The RMC thereafter recommended project proposals to be endorsed by the UN Action Steering Committee. In 2022 and 2023, the UN Action secretariat launched one call for proposals and four for joint proposals/concept notes. The secretariat attributed the low number of calls for

² In 2022 and 2023, RMC comprised UN Women (as Chair), DPO, International Organization for Migration, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

proposals to the depletion of the CRSV-MPTF and donor preferences for earmarked project-specific funding as opposed to unearmarked thematic funding.

32. The Team of Experts largely derived its CRSV-MPTF funded projects from its five-year joint programme and cascaded these into its biennial work plans detailing activities to be supported and refining relevant project proposals and concept notes through joint internal workshops.

33. OIOS reviewed a sample of eight CRSV-MPTF projects and activities funded in 2022 and 2023 in the Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Mali and Ukraine totaling \$8.6 million out of the total of \$11.3 million funded during the period. The project proposals addressed strategic and thematic priorities ranging from rule of law-related capacity-building and judicial reform support in the focus countries to strengthening survivor-centred national and community-based CRSV prevention and response mechanisms. OIOS discussed with relevant SVC staff and RMC members, and reviewed project briefs, concept notes and proposals submitted and related evaluations and deliberations. These included project approvals during RMC meetings, concept note discussions or management meetings in the case of Team of Experts projects and signed final project documentation.

34. OIOS review indicated that OSRSG-SVC had established and applied project proposal appraisal guidelines based on United Nations Development Group Guidelines and the RMC Operational Guidance Note. The UN Action secretariat and the Team of Experts maintained adequate documents on the projects administrative process flow and monitored and evaluated the projects as part of their work plan implementation through team meetings, mid-year reports or periodic strategic updates. They also periodically uploaded project and fund narrative and financial information and/or reports to the UNDP MPTF Office Gateway.

35. However, OIOS review of CRSV-MPTF project #00140335 (strengthening national and community-based CRSV prevention and response mechanisms in Ukraine, with project budget amounting to \$6 million) observed a need for enhancing the project review and approval process. OIOS noted that three of the five RMC members had duly recused themselves from participating in the proposal approval process as they were staff members of the six organizations that had submitted a joint proposal. This resulted in the project being approved by a minority of only two RMC members, which was apparently low number considering the significance of the project and value of the allocation. This occurred because the operational guidance note of the RMC had not established alternative procedures, such as substitution arrangements, in cases where the majority of members recuse themselves.

- | |
|--|
| <p>(2) OSRSG-SVC should, in collaboration with UN Action, define appropriate project approval arrangements in cases where a majority of members of the Resource Management Committee recuse themselves from voting due to their member entities' participation in a project proposal.</p> |
|--|

<p><i>OSRSG-SVC accepted recommendation 2 and stated that it would revise the operational guidance note.</i></p>
--

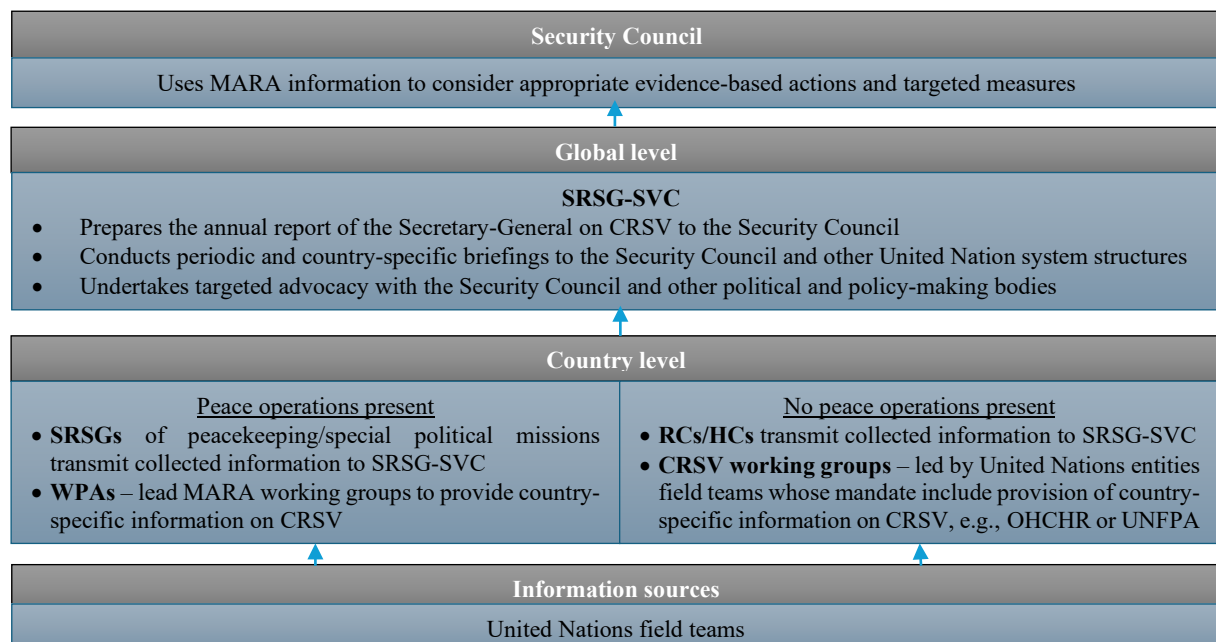
B. Support to the country-level implementation of the CRSV mandate

OSRSG-SVC supported the implementation of MARA

36. OSRSG-SVC, in consultation with UN Action, launched the Provisional Guidance Note on the Implementation of Security Council resolution 1960 (2010) on women, peace and security (provisional guidance note) in May 2011, which includes guidance on the implementation of MARA. MARA refers to the overall United Nations structure for collecting and verifying information on CRSV, which is used to

promote action to prevent and respond to the issue. The country level aspect of MARA is established in all country situations where CRSV is a concern, as determined by the Security Council or the Secretary-General, in consultation with UN Action. It can be generally depicted as below:

Figure 3: MARA



Source: Compiled by OIOS from the provisional guidance note
UNFPA, United Nations Population Fund

37. OSRSG-SVC supported the implementation of MARA in 9 out of the 18 countries in conflict or situations of concern featured in the 2023 annual report of the Secretary-General on CRSV. All nine countries hosted peace operations in which senior WPAs were deployed to support the implementation of relevant mandated activities addressing the broader women, peace and security agenda, including CRSV. OSRSG-SVC supported MARA by:

- Consistently advocating for the inclusion and timely deployment of WPAs in peace operations;
- Participating in the orientation of WPAs;
- Providing data collection guidance and support for the field implementation of MARA primarily through the provisional guidance note;
- Regularly engaging with WPAs and CRSV working group leads on the implementation of MARA; and
- Coordinating with DPO, Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and OHCHR and periodically organizing retreats for CRSV working group focal points to discuss CRSV strategy and approaches, and share information and lessons learned on how to improve working practices in their different contexts.

OSRSG established adequate structures for annual CRSV reporting at the country level but needed to resolve differences in key reported data

38. The Provisional Guidance Note requires MARA/CRSV working groups to: (a) collect, verify and share CRSV data and information; and (b) engage with parties to conflict to track and monitor progress on

implementation of specific time-bound commitments by parties to conflict to address CRSV. They were required to submit to the SRSB-SVC, through the mission SRSBs or RCs/HCs in the countries in which they were present, inputs into various reports including the annual report of the Secretary-General on CRSV.

39. OIOS discussions with WPAs and other group leads indicated that periodic meetings of MARA/CRSV working groups included harmonization of statistics obtained from UNCT entities³ whose mandates include tracking and analyzing CRSV incidents and trends.

40. Annually, OSRSG-SVC sent questionnaires to SRSBs in peace operations and RCs/HCs requesting information on: (a) the number of documented CRSV incidents; (b) contextual analyses of incidents, patterns, trends and perpetrator profiles; (c) challenges and best practices in preventing and addressing CRSV; (d) major developments impacting CRSV mandate implementation; (e) policy recommendations proposed for issuance to Member States and implementation status of previous year's recommendations; and (f) listing and de-listing recommendations for parties credibly suspected of committing or being responsible for patterns of CRSV in situations on the Security Council agenda.

41. OIOS review of the questionnaires and other relevant documentations including correspondences supporting the annual reporting process indicated that OSRSG-SVC consolidated and refined the quantitative and qualitative CRSV country inputs received through an extensive consultation process involving United Nations entity representatives at headquarters and in the field and multi-level reviews. OSRSG-SVC also notified the Permanent Representatives of Member States via note verbales of relevant excerpts on the CRSV situation in their respective countries as included in the report to prompt their attention and response and coordinated with OSRSG-CAAC to ensure consistency in their proposed recommendations to the Secretary-General for listing and de-listing of parties credibly suspected of committing or being responsible for CRSV. The draft annual report on CRSV including the annexed "List of parties credibly suspected of committing or being responsible for patterns of rape or other forms of sexual violence in situations of armed conflict on the agenda of the Security Council" was presented to the Executive Office of the Secretary-General for approval prior to submission to the Department of General Assembly and Conference Management for processing.

42. However, OIOS compared data on sexual violence against children included in the annual reports of the Secretary-General on CRSV for 2022 and 2023, with those in the annual reports of the Secretary-General on CAAC (monitored as one of the six grave violations against children) for 14 countries and noted significant differences between the statistics on child victims. While OSRSG-SVC reported 823 child victims in 2022 and 1,186 child victims in 2023, OSRSG-CAAC reported 1,114 and 1,470 child victims in the two years, respectively.

43. OSRSG-SVC explained that differences in collected data reflected variations in the methodologies/contextual framing used for MARA and the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) on CAAC, which OSRSG-CAAC uses for reporting. Recognizing the need to collaborate and ensure coherent information management, OSRSG-SVC and OSRSG-CAAC were in discussions to conduct a pilot project focused on refining the reconciliation of survivor statistics in four countries hosting peace operations, namely Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia and South Sudan.

³ These included: (a) OHCHR, based on their Human Rights Monitoring information management system (IMS), which is the core dataset of United Nations-verified CRSV cases; (b) UNFPA, based on their Gender Based Violence IMS, which is used to triangulate CRSV information and confirm identified CRSV trends and patterns; and (c) other entities such as UNDP, United Nations Children's Fund and UN Women, which contributed their data within the context of the country level working group on CRSV.

44. Differences in the data generated and reported by the two mechanisms (MRM and MARA) could pose a credibility risk to the Secretary-General's reports to stakeholders, including Member States.

(3) OSRSG-SVC should coordinate with OSRSG-CAAC to develop an action plan to harmonize the data generated by the Monitoring, Analysis and Reporting Arrangements and the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism used by their respective Offices to report on conflict-related sexual violence impacting children

OSRSG-SVC accepted recommendation 3 and stated that it would coordinate with OSRSG-CAAC to develop an action plan to enhance harmonization of the data collected by their respective monitoring systems pending finalization of the MARA review process.

OSRSG-SVC was reviewing biannual and ongoing reporting requirements on CRSV

45. The Provisional Guidance Note requires MARA/CRSV working groups to submit: (a) biannual reviews on CRSV; and (b) ongoing reports and information on grave sexual violence incidents or threats including situation, public human rights, special investigations and thematic reports, to inform United Nations efforts to address CRSV through timely strategic advocacy engagements. They were also required to provide inputs to periodic country/mandate-specific reports of the Secretary-General to the Security Council in consultation with relevant offices, including OSRSG-SVC, other United Nations Secretariat entities, UNCTs and mission leadership within the context of mandated periodic reporting for peace operations and special political missions.

46. OIOS discussions with eight WPAs and CRSV working group leads indicated that compliance with these requirements was mixed. Peacekeeping missions, such as the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and United Nations Mission in South Sudan that had deployed country-wide, human rights and protection officers were able to provide systematic and consistent information to OSRSG-SVC through code cables. These included reported CRSV incidents, trends and patterns, causal factors and impact assessments. However, the reports did not specifically cover the implementation status of agreed commitments and actions by parties to conflict to address CRSV. WPAs and CRSV working group leads indicated that ongoing conflict and reconfigurations of state and non-state actors, often resulted in bottlenecks in the development of joint national action plans and the implementation of previously agreed commitments to address CRSV.

47. Personnel in other countries such as Somalia and Iraq that had special political missions or Myanmar that had other United Nations political presences with limited field presence experienced accessibility challenges, partly due to ongoing conflict or logistical constraints. Consequently, periodically reported information on CRSV was inadequate compared to the reporting requirements outlined in the provisional guidance note. Reporting from those countries was mainly focused on providing inputs to the annual report of the Secretary-General on CRSV. In addition, confidentiality, security and protection issues in some instances hindered internal information sharing among members of MARA/CRSV working groups.

48. OSRSG-SVC indicated that the expected information flow requirements as outlined in the Provisional Guidance Note may need to be reviewed considering the evolving CRSV mandate distributed across various United Nations capacities. The Office was considering engaging a consultant to review MARA implementation within the context of UN Action, and to revise the provisional guidance note to streamline CRSV-specific reporting between field offices and OSRSG-SVC, as needed.

- (4) OSRSG-SVC should, in collaboration with UN Action member entities, review the regularity of information flow on conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) from and within countries implementing the Monitoring, Analysis and Reporting Arrangements, and revise, as needed, the provisional guidance note on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1960 (2010) to strengthen reporting on CRSV.**

OSRSG-SVC accepted recommendation 4 and stated that it would collaborate with UN Action member entities to review the regularity of information flow on CRSV from and within country-level operations that have rolled out MARA and to revise the provisional guidance note on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1960 (2010).

IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

49. OIOS wishes to express its appreciation to the management and staff of OSRSG-SVC for the assistance and cooperation extended to the auditors during this assignment.

Internal Audit Division
Office of Internal Oversight Services

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ⁴ / Important ⁵	C/O ⁶	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ⁷
1	OSRSG-SVC should develop communications performance indicators that include measurable baselines and targets to assess the effectiveness of its advocacy and communication strategies, digital content and awareness-raising campaigns.	Important	O	Receipt of updated performance indicators to help track the effectiveness of OSRSG-SVC's communications strategy.	31 December 2025
2	OSRSG-SVC should, in collaboration with UN Action, define appropriate project approval arrangements in cases where a majority of members of the Resource Management Committee recuse themselves from voting due to their member entities' participation in a project proposal.	Important	O	Receipt of the revised operational guidance note for the Resource Management Committee.	31 December 2025
3	OSRSG-SVC should coordinate with OSRSG-CAAC to develop an action plan to harmonize the data generated by the Monitoring, Analysis and Reporting Arrangements and the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism used by their respective Offices to report on conflict-related sexual violence impacting children.	Important	O	Receipt of the joint OSRSG-SVC and OSRSG-CAAC action plan to harmonize their respective data on CRSV impacting children.	31 March 2026
4	OSRSG-SVC should, in collaboration with UN Action member entities, review the regularity of information flow on conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) from and within countries implementing the Monitoring, Analysis and Reporting Arrangements, and revise, as needed, the	Important	O	Receipt of the revised provisional guidance note.	31 March 2026

⁴ Critical recommendations address those risk issues that require immediate management attention. Failure to take action could have a critical or significant adverse impact on the Organization.

⁵ Important recommendations address those risk issues that require timely management attention. Failure to take action could have a high or moderate adverse impact on the Organization.

⁶ Please note the value C denotes closed recommendations whereas O refers to open recommendations.

⁷ Date provided by OSRSG-SVC in response to recommendations.

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ⁴ / Important ⁵	C/ O ⁶	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ⁷
	provisional guidance note on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1960 (2010) to strengthen reporting on CRSV.				

APPENDIX I

Management Response

Management Response

Audit of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
1	OSRSG-SVC should develop communications performance indicators that include measurable baselines and targets to assess the effectiveness of its advocacy and communication strategies, digital content and awareness-raising campaigns.	Important	Yes	Public Information Officer	Q4 / 2025	
2	OSRSG-SVC should, in collaboration with UN Action, define appropriate project approval arrangements in cases where a majority of members of the Resource Management Committee recuse themselves from voting due to their member entities' participation in a project proposal.	Important	Yes	UN Action Coordinator	Q4 / 2025	
3	OSRSG-SVC should coordinate with OSRSG-CAAC to develop an action plan to harmonize the data generated by the Monitoring, Analysis and Reporting Arrangements and the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism used by their respective Offices to report on conflict-related sexual violence impacting children.	Important	Yes	Political Affairs Officer – Programme Team	Q1 / 2026	
4	OSRSG-SVC should, in collaboration with UN Action member entities, review the regularity of information flow on conflict-	Important	Yes	Political Affairs Officer –	Q1 / 2026	

¹ Critical recommendations address those risk issues that require immediate management attention. Failure to take action could have a critical or significant adverse impact on the Organization.

² Important recommendations address those risk issues that require timely management attention. Failure to take action could have a high or moderate adverse impact on the Organization.

Management Response

Audit of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
	related sexual violence (CRSV) from and within countries implementing the Monitoring, Analysis and Reporting Arrangements, and revise, as needed, the provisional guidance note on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1960 (2010) to strengthen reporting on CRSV.			Programme Team		