



United Nations
Victims' Rights
Advocate

Annual Report 2021



‘We must be vigilant
and spare no effort
to prevent sexual exploitation
and abuse and uphold
the rights and dignity
of victims’

António Guterres

Secretary-General of the United Nations

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Imprint

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Cover

OVRA is grateful for the generous pro bono support provided by visual artist Greta Kotz (<http://gretakotz.com>), who produced a series of representational portraits portraying victims of sexual exploitation and abuse.

The portraits seek to convey that victims can be of any age, sex, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, nationality, religion, or ability. They are representational and do not depict real victims.

Foreword



It is five years since the United Nations Secretary-General pledged to put the rights and dignity of victims at the centre of our efforts to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations staff and related personnel. Since I began work as the first United Nations Victims' Rights Advocate, there have been steps forward in integrating a victims' rights approach to policies and procedures related to these wrongs across our complex system, including humanitarian, peace, and development settings.

This year we saw the deployment of Senior Victims' Rights Officers (SVROs) in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Haiti. They are full-time and system-wide staff dedicated to realizing victims' rights, and have contributed to the prioritization of the rights and dignity of victims on the ground. I am committed to increasing the number of advocates for victims' rights in the field. Accordingly, I champion the appointment of other Officers wherever they are needed, or, if that is not possible, the appointment of focal points for victims' rights.

I am delighted that the United Nations Country Teams and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Networks in Nepal and Guatemala designated victims' rights focal points with a system-wide mandate mirroring my role and that of the SVROs. The focal points provide consolation and support to victims and advise senior United Nations officials in the country on implementation of a victims' rights approach to prevention and response to sexual exploitation and abuse.

The Covid-19 pandemic continued to impact on our work, but we sought to overcome the challenges it created and stepped-up efforts to uphold victims' rights. Towards the end of the year, United Nations staff returned to working on-site. As restrictions on travel were relaxed, I was very happy to be able to take up the invitation of the United Nations Resident Coordinator to visit Kenya, a country with a large United Nations footprint. I was pleased to discuss implementation of the victim-centred approach with United Nations colleagues, including senior leaders, civil society, and Government actors.

One focus of our work in 2021 was fostering partnerships in local, national and international contexts. My Office's collaboration with the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) led to creation of a guide for national human rights institutions on prevention and response to sexual exploitation and abuse, training and awareness-raising, support for victims, including in accountability processes, and advocacy for legislative reform. An online event, co-sponsored by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Permanent Missions of Australia, Costa Rica and Germany, provided a venue for Member States and national human rights institutions to discuss opportunities for collaboration with the United Nations to support victims.

In the spirit of 'One United Nations', with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), OHCHR and the Chief Executives Board Task Force Secretariat on addressing sexual harassment, the Office began the development of a training module

and a short film to promote greater understanding of victims' rights and strengthened integration of a victims' rights approach to sexual misconduct across the United Nations system.

I thank donors which provided voluntary contributions to my Office, and States which have agreed to sponsor junior professional officers to expand its work: Australia, Germany, Israel, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. I am also grateful to the online United Nations Volunteers, interns and staff from other offices who have given time and expertise, both remotely and in-person, to support my mandate. We have much to build on in 2022, but a long way to go to translate policies and commitments on sexual exploitation and abuse into practice to fulfil victims' rights.



Jane Connors

Victims' Rights Advocate

Four years of upholding the rights and dignity of victims

A timeline

- **September 2017** | Secretary-General introduces Jane Connors as the first United Nations Victims' Rights Advocate, along with the Circle of Leadership and the Voluntary Compact at the High-level Meeting on the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.
- **May 2018** | First projects financed by the Trust Fund in Support of Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse launched in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
- **July 2018** | General Assembly approves dedicated posts for field advocates in the Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Haiti.
- **December 2018** | Establishment of the Office of the Victims' Rights Advocate.
- **December 2018** | First project financed by the Trust Fund in Support of Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse launched in the Central African Republic.
- **July 2019** | General Assembly approves dedicated post for a field advocate in South Sudan.
- **December 2019** | High-level Steering Group endorses United Nations Protocol on the Provision of Assistance to Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.
- **May 2020** | Office of the Victims' Rights Advocate completes the pilot project to map assistance and services available to victims of sexual exploitation and abuse in 13 countries.
- **April 2021** | United Nations Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Working Group in Nepal designates the first Victims' Rights Focal Point.
- **August 2021** | First project financed by the Trust Fund in Support of Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse launched in Haiti.
- **October 2021** | United Nations Country Team in Guatemala designates Victims' Rights Focal Point.

Policy

■ Mandate

The Victims' Rights Advocate is tasked to lead efforts to prioritize the rights and dignity of victims of sexual exploitation and abuse by anyone working for the United Nations in prevention and response efforts of the United Nations system, including its agencies, funds and programmes, at headquarters and in the field.

With the support of her Office and SVROs in the field, the Victims' Rights Advocate collaborates with Government institutions, international intergovernmental and regional organizations and civil society, including national human rights and legal aid organizations, to build networks of support and help ensure that reliable pathways exist for victims to file complaints, assistance is rapidly and sensitively delivered, and victims' rights are protected during United Nations and national accountability processes.

In 2021, the Victims' Rights Advocate pushed forward existing workstreams and introduced new initiatives to elevate the rights and dignity of victims.

■ Training module on a victim-centred approach

OVRA, together with OHCHR, IOM, and the Secretariat of the Chief Executives Board (CEB) Task Force on Addressing Sexual Harassment began work to create a training module to strengthen understanding of the victim-centred approach to sexual misconduct directed at all United Nations personnel, including third-party contractors and implementing partners.

It will include a short film on the United Nations' victims' rights approach to sexual misconduct. As part of joint preparatory efforts to strengthen a system-wide understanding of the victim-centred approach, the partners led by OVRA also mapped existing United Nations system trainings on sexual exploitation, abuse and sexual harassment. The module and short film will be launched in 2022.

■ Methodologies to gather victims' feedback

To ensure that the United Nations response to sexual exploitation and abuse at country level is informed by victims' opinions so that policies are truly aligned

‘Victims will be able to express their views on the quality and appropriateness of assistance and the way it was delivered’

with their priorities and needs, OVRA progressed work to develop methodologies to gather their feedback on provision of assistance and services. Victims will be able to express their views on the quality and appropriateness of assistance and the way it was delivered. The methodology will be piloted in Haiti this year and rolled out in countries where victims have received support.

■ Update to mapping of services available to victims of sexual exploitation and abuse

In collaboration with United Nations Country Teams in 13 countries, OVRA administered a survey to update information on victims’ services included in a pilot mapping project completed in May 2020. Some progress has been made, but significant gaps remain.

■ Statement on victims’ rights

The Victims’ Rights Advocate is close to finalizing a statement on victims’ rights which sets out the rights of victims of sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations staff and related personnel. It is intended to ensure victims know and understand their rights and serve as a common point of reference for anyone working for the United Nations. Plain language, child-friendly and language versions of the statement will be produced in 2022, as will versions for people with disabilities. OVRA will develop complementary guidance on implementation after the statement has been issued.

■ Legal aid roster

Lack of legal aid and support is a significant obstacle to realizing victims’ rights to accountability, including paternity and child support claims. In 2020, the Victims’ Rights Advocate convened a system-wide consultation on legal aid for victims which recommended the creation of a roster of qualified lawyers and legal aid organizations willing and able to offer *pro bono* legal assistance to victims in criminal and civil proceedings, including paternity and child support claims. The methodology and framework to create and maintain the roster was finalized in 2021 and will be piloted in one or more of the four countries where Senior Victims’ Rights Officers are present in 2022.

■ Partnership with GANHRI

National human rights institutions are well-placed to support the mandate of the Victims’ Rights Advocate on the ground. OVRA strengthened its partnership with GANHRI and its member institutions and jointly produced a guide for national human rights institutions setting out avenues for collaboration, including facilitating legal aid, developing reporting mechanisms, and conducting awareness-raising and advocacy.¹ The guide was released in English and French in October 2021, along with a promotional video, at an online event on the margins of the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly, co-

¹ Guide for National Human Rights Institutions, October 2021, available at www.un.org/preventing-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse/sites/www.un.org/preventing-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse/files/ovra_guide_for_nhris-en.pdf

‘The Victims’ Rights Advocate looks forward to deepening partnerships with national human rights institutions in 2022’

sponsored by OHCHR and the Permanent Missions of Australia, Costa Rica and Germany.² The Victims’ Rights Advocate looks forward to deepening partnerships with national human rights institutions in 2022.

experience in approaching institutional mechanisms on sexual harassment to assist United Nations system Organizations implement a victim-centred approach in responses to sexual harassment.

Guidance on the scope and duration of assistance for victims

Led by the Victims’ Rights Advocate and based on consultations held with stakeholders and the experience of the Senior Victims’ Rights Officers, a guide on the scope and duration of assistance for victims was initiated and will be available in 2022.

Preventing and addressing sexual harassment

The Victims’ Rights Advocate co-led, with representatives of the World Bank, Workstream 2 of the Chief Executives Board (CEB) Task Force on Addressing Sexual Harassment within the Organizations of the United Nations System, established in 2017 by the Secretary-General. The Workstream developed principles on ‘Advancing a Common Understanding of a Victim-centred Approach to Sexual Harassment within the Organizations of the United Nations System’ setting out general principles which was approved by the High-Level Committee on Management in July 2021.³ Workstream 2 is working on a draft survey aimed at gathering information from victims on their

³ Advancing a Common Understanding of a Victim-centred Approach to Sexual Harassment within the Organizations of the United Nations System, July 2021, available at <https://unsceb.org/sites/default/files/2021-09/A%20Victim-centred%20Approach%20to%20Sexual%20Harassment%20%20.pdf>.

² For a summary note of the event, see <https://www.un.org/preventing-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse/content/events>.

Advocacy

The Victims' Rights Advocate continued efforts within the United Nations system, with Member States, intergovernmental and regional organizations, civil society and academic institutions to advocate for a victim-centred and rights-based approach to prevention and response to sexual exploitation and abuse.

In 2021, the Victims' Rights Advocate:

- Chaired a brown bag discussion, sponsored by the Office of the Special Coordinator on improving the United Nations response to sexual exploitation and abuse, on victims' right to assistance for prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse practitioners.
- Co-hosted, with OHCHR, three online sessions for OHCHR Heads of Field Presences on the victim-centred approach.
- Participated in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee High-Level Roundtable on the OECD's recommendation on ending sexual exploitation and abuse in development co-operation and humanitarian assistance.
- Contributed to the independent external Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) review of Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment commissioned by the 2021 IASC Champion, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Executive Director Natalia Kanem and participated at the Principals' level roundtable launch and discussion on the Review.
- Participated in the Annual Humanitarian Coordinators' Retreat.
- Briefed United Nations Country Teams, United Nations Networks on Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, Resident and Humanitarian Coordinators and other colleagues through in-person and online events within the United Nations system on the victim-centred approach.
- Participated in the Community of Practice organized by The Netherlands and USAID on adopting a victim-centred approach to

‘OVRA advocates for a victim-centred and rights-based approach to prevention and response to sexual exploitation and abuse’

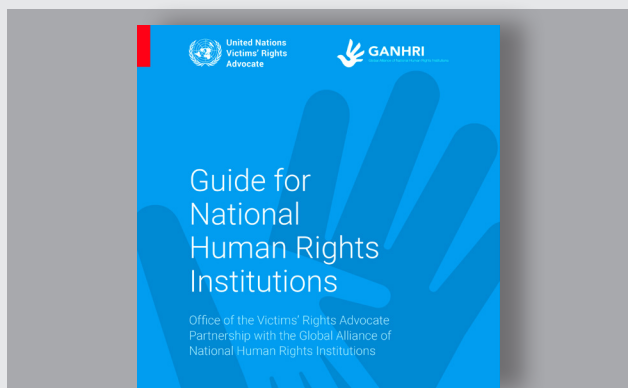
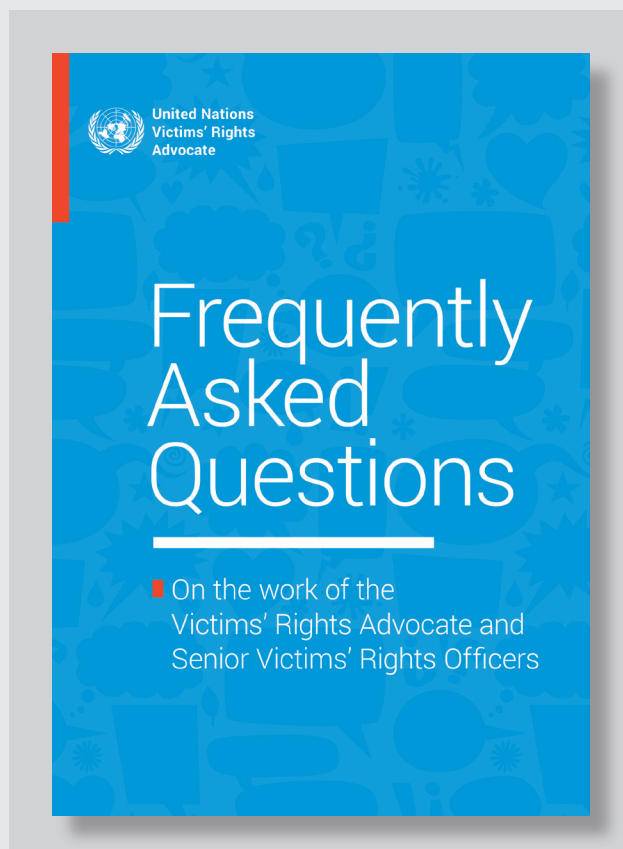
employment accountability in the context of sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment.

- Facilitated advocacy sessions on sexual harassment organized by UN Women with Gender Focal Points and participated in a UN Women Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Focal Point Capacity-Building Workshop.
- Delivered webinars on the victim-centred approach for university students, including at institutions in Argentina, France, Japan, Poland, South Africa, the United Kingdom and the United States.
- Addressed external events on victims’ rights, including as keynote speaker to the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) Exchange 2021.
- Developed a Frequently Asked Questions document in English and French on the work of the Office disseminated through the official OVRA Twitter account @UN_OVRA.⁴

⁴ ‘Frequently Asked Questions on the work of the Victims’ Rights Advocate and Senior Victims’ Rights Officers’, July 2021, available at www.un.org/preventing-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse/sites/www.un.org/preventing-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse/files/un-ovra-qa-booklet.pdf



Selected media | Top left: Victims' Rights Advocate attends the CHS Exchange online, September 2021. Top right: social media card marking four years of the United Nations' victim-centred approach to sexual exploitation and abuse, September 2021. Middle left: Renan Hédouville, Human Rights Ombudsperson, Haiti at the online event on 'Strengthening the United Nations' victim-centred response to sexual exploitation and abuse', October 2021. Middle right: Alexandra Finch, Intern, Office of the Victims' Rights Advocate, June 2021. Bottom left: Victims' Rights Advocate meeting with Dr. Gaya Gamhewage at the World Health Organization in Geneva, Switzerland, August 2021. Bottom right: Victims' Rights Advocate attends the Security Council Informal Expert Group on Women, Peace and Security, September 2021.



Events | Top left: Online event 'Strengthening the United Nations' victim-centred response to sexual exploitation and abuse', October 2021. Bottom right: Jus Gentium Conference at the Institute for International Humanitarian Studies, Aix-Marseille on 'Advocating for Victims' Rights in the United Nations: a Conversation with Jane Connors', November 2021. **Publications** | Top right: Frequently Asked Questions on the work of the Victims' Rights Advocate and Senior Victims' Rights Officers, July 2021. Bottom left: Guide for National Human Rights Institutions, October 2021.

Operational

■ Country visits

Country visits are a vital part of the work of the Victims' Rights Advocate, allowing her to connect directly with victims and gain a first-hand understanding of how United Nations entities are supporting victims on the ground.

These visits, which had been suspended since March 2020 due to COVID-19, resumed with a visit to Kenya, a country with a large United Nations presence, having global and regional entities and national level representation from 28 November to 10 December 2021.

The visit, conducted at the invitation of the Resident Coordinator, coincided with the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence and included the participation of the Special Coordinator on improving the United Nations response to sexual exploitation and abuse, the World Health Organization Director on Prevention and Response to Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment and UNHCR's Senior Coordinator on Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment to underline the fact that sexual exploitation and abuse are system-wide concerns. Participants met with representatives of United Nations entities, Government and civil society organizations, beneficiaries, and service providers in Nairobi, at Kakuma refugee camp, Kalobeyei integrated settlement and Lodwar. The Victims' Rights Advocate also met with representatives of the International Peace Support Training Centre in Nairobi, and will visit the training centre again in 2022.

In October 2021, OVRA and the SVRO in the Central African Republic participated in a review that assessed the factors contributing to the significant number of allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse, which led to the repatriation of a contingent. OVRA provided input on strengthening the provision of support to victims and advised on the integration of a victims' rights approach in risk mitigation measures.



Country visits | Top: Victims' Rights Advocate visit to the International Peace Support Training Centre in Nairobi, Kenya in December 2021. Bottom: Senior Victims' Rights Officer, Fernanda Pérez Solla and interpreter Sammuelle Nzanga-Ndaranga, in Bangui, Central African Republic, October 2021.

Senior Victims' Rights Officers

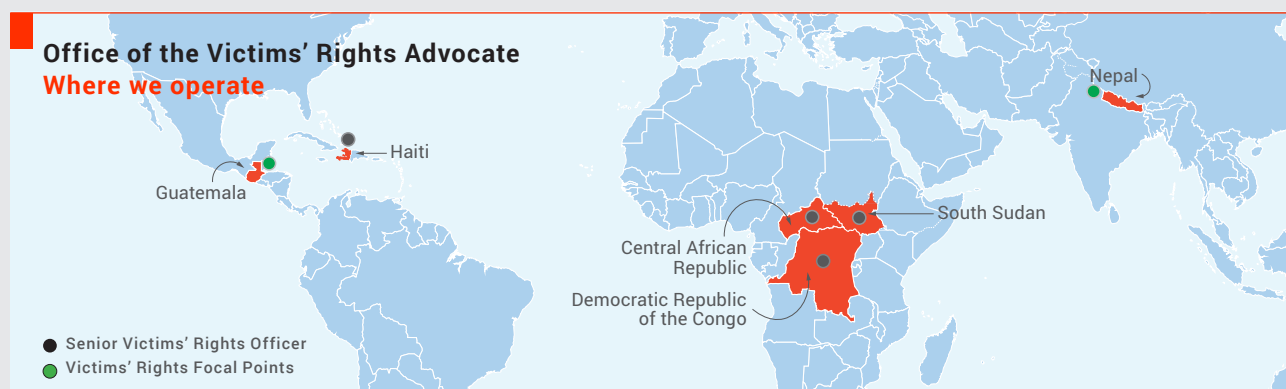
By the end of 2021, dedicated SVROs were deployed in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti and South Sudan.

These Officers built on the achievements of the Field Victims' Rights Advocates (FVRAs) who undertook victims' rights functions along with their existing duties. The work of the FVRAs and SVROs shows that the presence of a dedicated and trusted person on the ground, tasked to see that victims' rights are prioritized, makes a real difference.

Central African Republic

Post-election violence in the Central African Republic challenged the capacity to deliver assistance early in the year, but FVRA, Alex Cudgenselhey, sought to promote and uphold victims' rights through outreach and other strategies. In July, the dedicated SVRO, Fernanda Pérez Solla, arrived in the country to carry the work forward. Notably, she provided support and assistance to victims in remote areas after the repatriation of the Gabonese battalion. In 2021, she:

- Supported the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) investigations across the country to provide emotional support and ensure victims' rights are upheld.
- Participated in a review that assessed the factors contributing to the significant number of allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse, which led to the repatriation of a contingent.
- Prepared project proposals to be submitted to the Trust Fund in Support of Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse aimed at provision of psychosocial support, and delivery of income-generating activities and legal assistance to victims.
- Consolidated cooperation with local partners to facilitate access to birth certificates and legal assistance to victims on paternity and child support claims.
- Developed partnerships with local organizations, such as the Mukwege Foundation, to facilitate



‘The presence of a dedicated and trusted person on the ground, tasked to see that victims’ rights are prioritized, makes a real difference’

provision of immediate care and longer-term support to victims.

- Led awareness-raising and outreach activities on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse.
- Reinforced cooperation with international and local civil society organizations, including through missions to Bambari and Bossangoa.
- Fostered information exchange on victims’ cases among colleagues in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA).
- Coordinated assistance and support for victims, in close collaboration with MINUSCA, the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Task Force and the gender-based violence and child protection subclusters.
- Collaborated with the UNFPA and United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) to facilitate medical and psychosocial support for victims through local partners.
- Managed the implementation of projects financed by the Trust Fund in Support of Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.
- Prepared new project proposals for the Trust Fund which focus on strengthening livelihood support directed to create long-term and sustainable transformation in victims’ life prospects.
- Prepared for and supported victims during the visit of a Member State to gather DNA samples to support processes to resolve outstanding paternity claims.
- Supported victims in OIOS investigations related to personnel responding to the tenth outbreak of the Ebola disease in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.
- Participated in an Inter-Agency Standing Committee’s mission led by WHO and UNICEF, and including UNFPA to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to identify gaps in support for victims; strengthen community awareness and networks and community-based complaints mechanisms.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

The FVRA in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Christine Besong, served for most of 2021, providing invaluable support to victims, including those who had been harmed by personnel responding to the tenth outbreak of the Ebola disease in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. In late November 2021, Mihaela Aurelia Pórubm took up the post of SVRO. In 2021, these colleagues:

- Responded to complaints from victims received through community-based networks.

Haiti

In 2021, natural hazards and political instability led to increased gang violence and insecurity in Haiti

making access to victims even more challenging.

The SVRO, Ritu Gambhir, who took over from FVRA Carla Pessanha Loque in August, made every effort to ensure that assistance to victims was delivered.

In 2021, they:

- Oversaw the implementation of a project providing school support packages to 36 children born of sexual exploitation and abuse, and income generating activities for 30 mothers, with the support of the Resident Coordinator, IOM, the United Nations Development Programme and local partners.
- Disbursed grants, with IOM, from the Central Emergency Relief Fund to fund lifesaving needs of children born as a result of sexual exploitation or abuse, and their mothers.
- With the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs and the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance's Conduct and Discipline Service sought to facilitate the resolution of paternity and child support cases involving former personnel of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti in line with the wishes of the children and their mothers.
- Facilitated DNA sample collection to support resolution of paternity and child maintenance claims.
- Cooperated with lawyers in various countries on paternity and child maintenance proceedings and updated victims on the status of these proceedings.

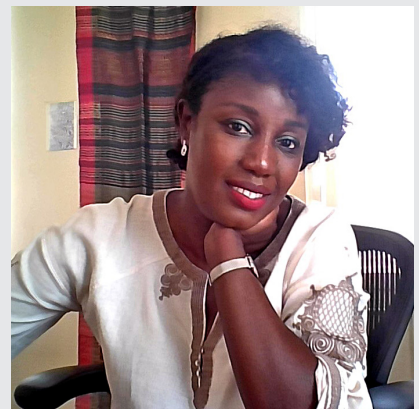
- Organized workshops with the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Coordinator on prevention tools and activities to mitigate the risks of sexual exploitation and abuse.
- Reinforced collaboration through joint activities with the Office de la Protection du Citoyen – the national human rights institution in Haiti – including through the development of training modules on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse.

South Sudan

In South Sudan, SVRO Maria Nakabiito led inter-agency efforts to facilitate system-wide and coordinated implementation of victims' assistance.

In 2021, she:

- Collaborated with UNFPA to develop a project for the Trust Fund to provide specialized services to victims and children born of sexual exploitation and abuse.
- Worked with the United Nations Country Team, with the support of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), to strengthen the coherence of inter-agency referral mechanisms and initiate discussions on the development of an inter-agency victim assistance tracking system.
- Continued discussions with rule of law practitioners on harmful practices that impede the realization of victims' rights, such as child marriage.



Portraits | Top left, Alexandre Cugdensenhe, former Field Victims' Rights Advocate, Central African Republic. Top middle: María Fernanda Pérez Solla, Senior Victims' Rights Officer, Central African Republic. Top right: Christine Besong, former Field Victims' Rights Advocate, Democratic Republic of the Congo. Middle left: Mihaela-Aurelia Pórub, Senior Victims' Rights Officer, Democratic Republic of the Congo. Middle: Carla Pessanha Loque, former Field Victims' Rights Advocate, Haiti. Middle right: Ritu Gambhir, Senior Victims' Rights Officer, Haiti. Bottom left: Maria Nakabiito, Senior Victims' Rights Officer, South Sudan. Bottom middle: Karelía Ramos González, Victims' Rights Focal Point, Guatemala. Bottom right: Inah Fatoumata Kaloga, Victims' Rights Focal Point, Nepal.

‘In the absence of a fully funded position, the Victims’ Rights Advocate encourages the appointment of system-wide focal points in other locations’

- Developed terms of reference for victims’ rights focal points to be appointed by each United Nations entity in South Sudan to foster greater usage of the victim assistance tracking system and information-sharing.
- Briefed the gender-based violence subcluster on victims’ rights and the United Nations’ victim-centred approach.
- Organized trainings in collaboration with UNMISS Child Protection Unit on the responsibilities of Child Protection Offices regarding victims’ assistance.

Focal points for victims’ rights

In 2021, the United Nations Country Team and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Networks in Nepal and Guatemala designated their first victims’ rights focal points with system-wide mandates to champion victims’ rights and strengthen respective prevention from sexual exploitation and abuse and victim assistance strategies.

In consultation with the Victims’ Rights Advocate, the focal points advise the most senior United Nations official in the country and the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Coordinator on the victims’ rights approach to addressing allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse. In the absence of a fully funded position, the Victims’ Rights Advocate encourages the appointment of system-wide focal points in other locations. These focal points are part

Explainer

Trust Fund in Support of Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

In March 2016, the Secretary-General created the Trust Fund in Support of Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse to support United Nations and non-United Nations entities’ projects that provide victim assistance and support.

The Trust Fund is administered by the Department of Management, Strategy, Policy and Compliance. It funds:

- Specialized services for victims and children born as a result of sexual exploitation and abuse, including medical care, and psychosocial support
- Community outreach
- Communications
- Legal assistance for victims, including in paternity and child support claims
- Income generation projects for victims

Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (13 February 2015)
A/69/779 [66]

of an expanding community of practice, including the Victims’ Rights Advocate, the SVROs and other staff committed to upholding the rights and dignity of victims.

‘The focal points advise the most senior United Nations official in the country and the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Coordinator on the victims’ rights approach to addressing allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse’

Nepal

In Nepal, the UNCT Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Working Group appointed Inah Fatoumata Kaloga, UNICEF Chief, Child Protection, as its first system-wide focal point for victims’ rights in April 2021 to strengthen a victims’ rights approach to addressing sexual exploitation and abuse in the country. The UNCT is finalizing common referral pathways for victim assistance. It is encouraging better integration of services for victims of sexual exploitation and abuse within existing gender-based violence and child protection networks. The focal point partnered with a local organization to map available services to victims. She has also advised on victims’ rights in relation to open cases of sexual exploitation and abuse involving personnel of United Nations system implementing partners.

Guatemala

In Guatemala, the UNCT appointed Karelia Ramos González, UNFPA Technical Coordinator as its first system-wide victims’ rights focal point in October 2021. As part of its Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Action Plan, the UNCT drafted a country-level victim assistance strategy in consultation with OVRA and the inter-agency Specialized Group on Gender Empowerment. The Network in Guatemala established the first reporting hotline in the country and mapped focal points and services available to victims of sexual exploitation and abuse. The UNCT will operationalize its first community-based complaint mechanisms and victim assistance strategy in 2022.



United Nations
Victims' Rights
Advocate

'The biggest challenge is getting people's minds off the usual – which tends to focus immediately on protection of the reputation of the organization and punishment and accountability of the perpetrator'

Jane Connors

Victims' Rights Advocate