



23 February 2022

Dear Colleagues,

I write to express my gratitude to you as External Experts who were instrumental in the development of the *Model Legislative Provisions and Guidance on Investigation and Prosecution of Conflict or Atrocity-Related Sexual Violence*, launched by my Office in 2021. I would like, in particular, to thank you for your time and expertise in reviewing the draft, together with more than twenty external practitioners who included legislative experts, academics, prosecutors, investigators, victim lawyers and other justice practitioners representing diverse legal systems and geographical regions. The draft also benefited from the comments and feedback of survivors of sexual violence themselves, a critical contribution that underlies the deep commitment of my Office to ensure a ‘survivor-centered approach’ in all aspects of implementation of the mandate with which I am charged.

I would also like to take this opportunity to update you briefly on our plans to bring this guidance to bear in the priority situations identified by the United Nations Secretary-General.

One of the main strategies is to work with and through national Parliaments in countries of concern, to effect the legislative reform necessary to strengthen rule of law in relation to crimes of sexual violence. To this end, in 2020, my Office signed a Framework of Cooperation Agreement with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), a global organization of national parliaments that currently has [178 Member Parliaments](#) and [14 Associate Members](#). The main purpose of the Agreement is to raise awareness among and provide support to national parliaments on the prevention and response to conflict-related sexual violence, and we anticipate that the *Model Legislative Provisions and Guidance* will be a central tool in strengthening legislation. I was also pleased to appoint the Secretary-General of the IPU, Mr. Martin Chungong, as a Global Champion in the Fight Against Sexual Violence in Conflict, signifying his personal commitment to this cause. He joins the First Lady of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mme. Denise Tshisekedi, in the role as Champion, and I am pleased that the First Lady is already spearheading important legislation in the DRC such as a law on reparations for survivors of sexual violence and the establishment of a National Reparations Fund and Programme.

Going forward my Office will continue to support national legislative reform efforts including through the deployment of the United Nations Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence which works under my strategic direction, as well as the UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict network which consists of 21 United Nations entities that I chair.

United Nations



Nations Unies

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The on-going focus on justice and accountability is a central element in a prevention strategy that is being developed by my Office, in line with Security Council resolution 2467. I look forward to engaging further with many of you in future in relation to this prevention strategy. I consider our broader 'community-of-practice' as crucial in driving the change that is so urgently needed.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'N. Patten', written over a large, stylized blue circular mark.

Navamanee Patten
Under-Secretary-General and
Special Representative of the Secretary-General
on Sexual Violence in Conflict

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SEMA survivor members and other survivors who prefer to remain anonymous