



CHAPTER TWO

RESPECT THE RULES OF WAR





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Photo on previous page:

Valentina (78) holds her grandson. The family lived in fear of shelling and landmines for more than four years. Ukraine.

OCHA/Ranoev

Even wars have rules to minimize human suffering. Yet violations of international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights law (IHRL) persist. In today's conflicts, the majority of victims are civilians. Millions are forcibly displaced from their homes; thousands are injured, killed, starved, tortured or raped; and schools, hospitals and humanitarian convoys are indiscriminately attacked or, in some cases, deliberately targeted.

Core Responsibility Two of the Agenda for Humanity called for collective action to ensure respect for IHL and IHRL, and to compel all parties to conflict, States and the wider international community to limit human suffering in armed conflict and hold perpetrators of violations to account.

The Agenda for Humanity called for six transformations:

2A: Protect civilians and civilian property

2B: Ensure delivery of humanitarian and medical assistance

2C: Speak out on violations

2D: Improve compliance and accountability, including preventing and prosecuting gender-based violence

2E: Stand up for the rules of war

Summary of progress and challenges

For 2018, 83 stakeholders reported on their achievements against one or more of the five transformations of Core Responsibility Two.

Key takeaways

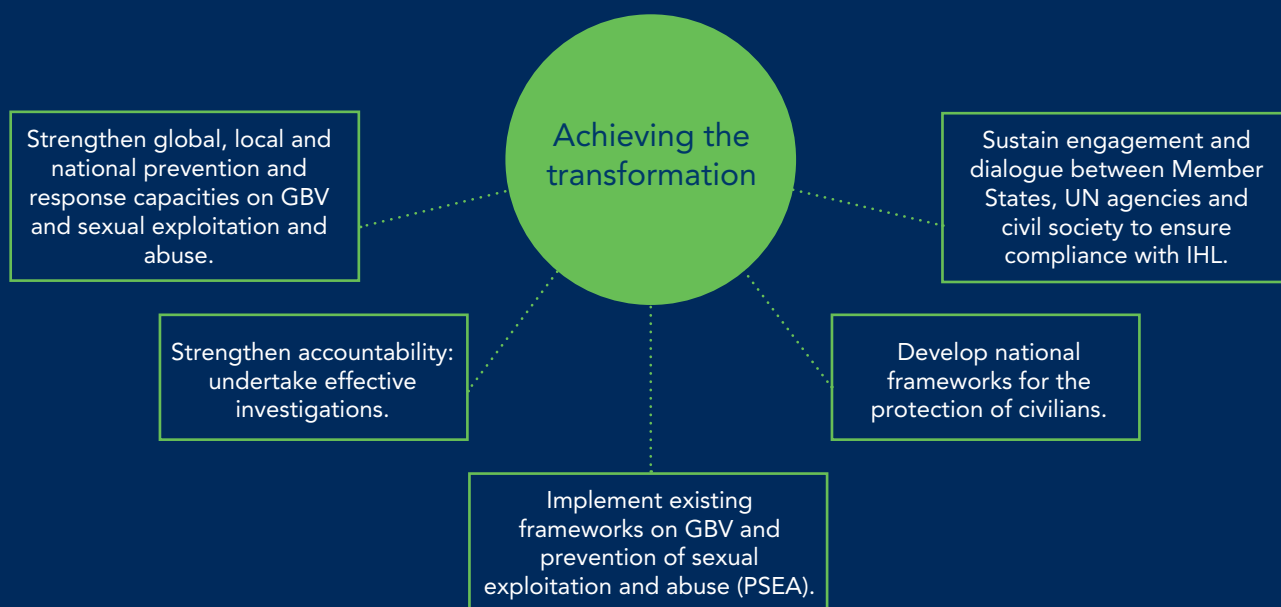
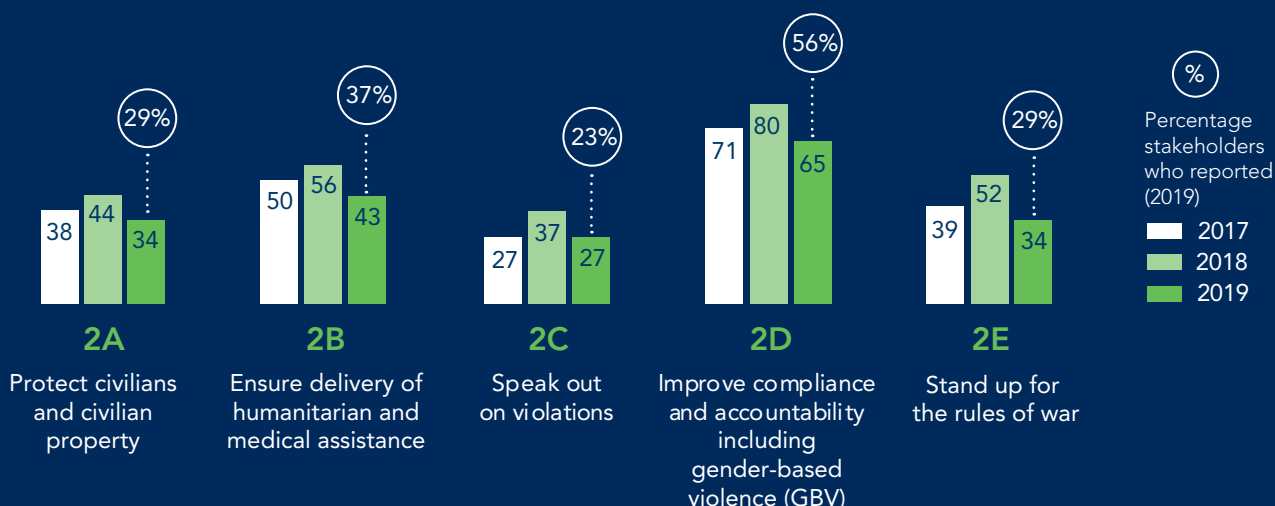
In conflicts, the state of the protection of civilians remains bleak.

There is considerable scope to build on practical measures to improve compliance with international humanitarian law (IHL).

Serious challenges persist in improving compliance with IHL: a lack of funding, shortage of political will and difficult operational conditions.

Stakeholders have strengthened the prevention of gender-based violence through knowledge sharing and best practices, providing technical assistance, supporting community-based protection committees and expanding the Call to Action (CtA) on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in emergencies.

Reporting by transformation 2017-2019

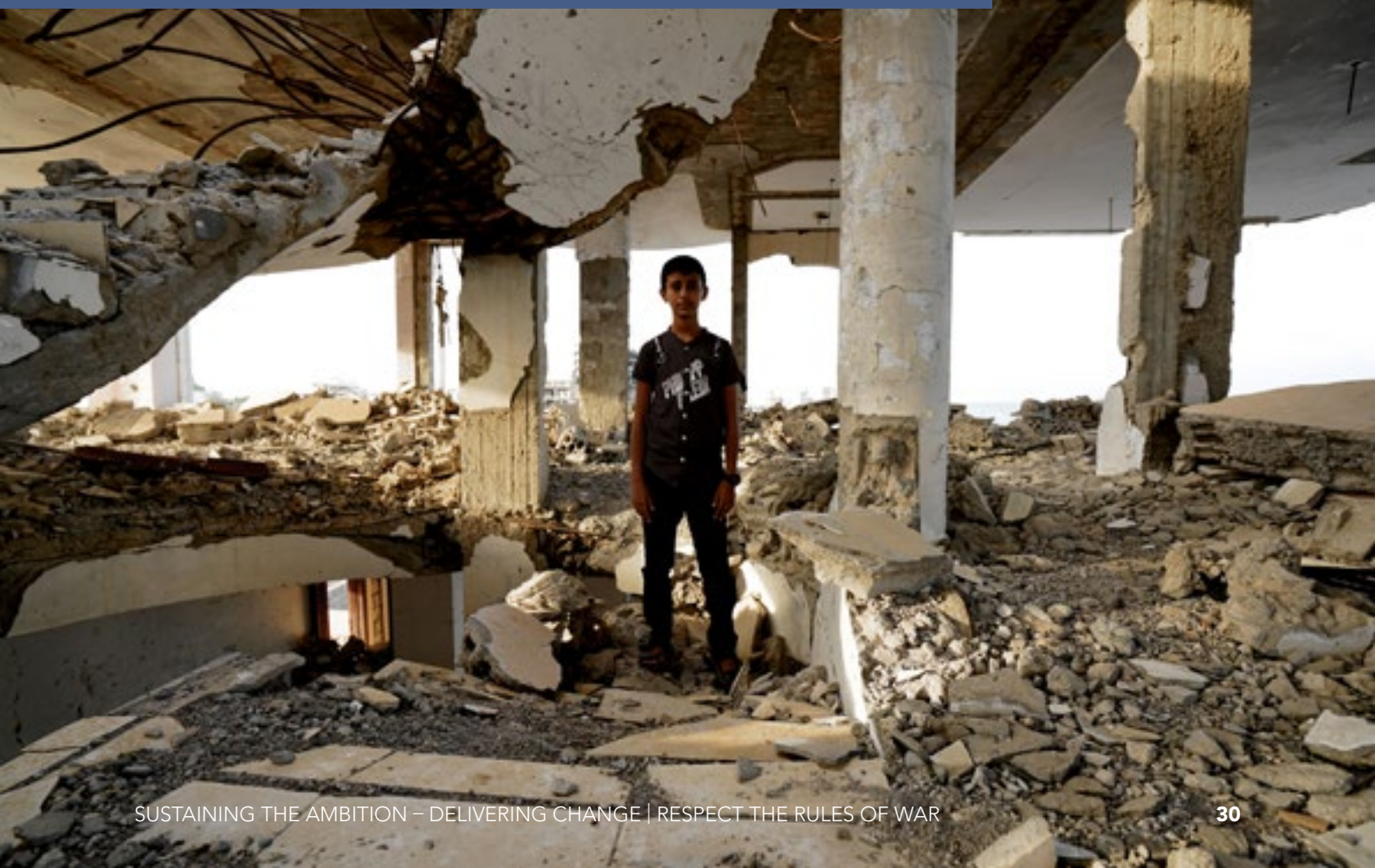


Progress in 2018

As in previous years, the majority of reporting under Core Responsibility Two focused on diplomatic efforts and advocacy. Stakeholders reminded parties to conflict of their obligations to respect the rules of war and condemned violations of IHL and IHRL. Calls for an end to impunity continued, and Member States provided political and financial support to the International Criminal Court (ICC) as well as to efforts to strengthen the international community's investigative and evidence-gathering capacity. Stakeholders also continued to push for urgent action on key issues including eliminating the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, and the protection of children, schools and humanitarian and medical missions. Practical measures included efforts to operationalize instruments for improving compliance, monitoring situations of conflict, documenting violations, training, and researching and sharing best practice.

Diplomatic or advocacy initiatives have remained the major focus of reporting over the past three years, while reporting on practical measures remains limited – although, a few caveats should be noted: some stakeholders may be unwilling to discuss sensitive parts of their activities, such as negotiating humanitarian access with parties to conflict; and there is almost no reporting by stakeholders affected by conflict.

A boy stands in a building targeted by air strikes. Aden, Yemen. OCHA/Giles Clarke



Challenges and gaps

Laws can only be effective if they are respected and applied on the ground. As in previous years, stakeholders identified the disregard for IHL and IHRL as the greatest challenge to protecting civilians affected by conflict. On a global level, they attributed the low levels of compliance primarily to the lack of accountability for violations, and noted that progress was held back by a shortage of political will, limited funding and the paucity of data and evidence. On a national level, stakeholders noted that the absence of national policies or authorities for protecting civilians – or the limited capacity of national authorities where they do exist – made it difficult to achieve sustained progress on compliance. Stakeholders also highlighted the politicization of humanitarian efforts as a serious challenge, impeding their ability to protect and assist civilians in conflicts and maintain a principled space for humanitarian action. Several expressed concerns around the potential cost to civilians of certain State practices, such as counter-terrorism measures and unrestricted arms transfers.

At the operational level, limited access and security concerns hindered the ability of stakeholders to deliver assistance or to gather data, which, in turn, impeded efforts to meet needs or provide evidence of violations and advance accountability. The lack of sufficient and long-term funding was also a major challenge, limiting the ability to deliver quality services and, in the longer-term, hindering efforts to invest in human resources, capacity-building, research and the development of good practice. Finally, stakeholders emphasized the need for clearer peacekeeping mandates on the protection of civilians, and for increased cooperation, particularly between humanitarian actors and military/security forces, to preserve humanitarian space and build buy-in from all parties for upholding IHL.



General view as Secretary-General António Guterres addresses the Security Council meeting on the protection of civilians in armed conflict in May 2018. United Nations Headquarters. United Nations

Diplomatic, policy and advocacy efforts

Multilateral and diplomatic action to enhance respect for IHL and IHRL

In their third year of reporting, Member States again highlighted diplomatic efforts to enhance respect for IHL and IHRL, both bilaterally and through multilateral bodies such as the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), the Economic and Social Council, and the Human Rights Council (HRC). Spain, for example, reported using its leverage at bilateral and multilateral levels to advocate for impartial humanitarian relief and access, and Austria co-sponsored an HRC resolution calling on States to end impunity for attacks on journalists. Member States also continued to support multilateral initiatives to improve respect for IHL and uphold the rules of war – such as the Group of Friends on the Protection of Civilians, and the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group proposal for a ‘Code of Conduct regarding Security Council action against genocide’.

Member States continued to sign up to and advocate for adherence to relevant treaties. Austria and El Salvador were among those who ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. New Zealand hosted the Pacific Conference on Conventional Weapons Treaties (which resulted in the Auckland Declaration) and funded a workshop in Cameroon to promote membership to the Convention on Cluster Munitions in West Africa. Germany, in partnership with the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) Voluntary Trust Fund, helped initiate 11 projects to support national implementation of the ATT.

Strengthening monitoring, compliance and accountability mechanisms

In support of ending impunity for violations of IHL, Member States, including Japan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, provided political and financial assistance to the ICC. In addition, Finland, Ireland, Japan, New Zealand, Spain and Sweden provided financial support to the ICC Trust Fund for Victims. Stakeholders also supported initiatives to investigate violations and prepare cases for prosecution. Member States passed a resolution at the HRC to establish an International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM) for Myanmar to collect and analyse evidence of violations of international law. Austria, Italy and the United Kingdom were among those who funded the ongoing IIIM for the Syrian Arab Republic, and Spain and Switzerland provided political and financial support to the International Humanitarian Fact-Finding Commission. Finland and Ireland supported Justice Rapid Response, which provides expert support for investigating international crimes and human rights violations, including those related to sexual and gender-based violence in conflicts. Finally, a number of Member States participated in the 'intergovernmental process on strengthening respect for IHL', co-facilitated by Switzerland and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

While the majority of efforts to strengthen accountability were multilateral, some States engaged in national and regional efforts. The Netherlands, for example, amended its International Crimes Act to broaden the application of the war crime of intentional starvation of civilians to situations of both international and non-international armed conflict. Japan and Spain reported establishing or revitalizing their national IHL committees to strengthen domestic dialogue on IHL.

Protecting the medical mission

Member States continued to advocate for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2286 on the protection of the medical mission. Spain held a retreat for members of the Security Council to examine the degree of compliance with UNSCR 2286, and Sweden organized an UNSC Arria-formula meeting on the 'protection of health care in armed conflict'. Member States also continued to provide diplomatic and financial support to public

awareness campaigns, such as the ICRC Health Care in Danger initiative, and efforts to document attacks, such as the WHO Attacks on Health Care surveillance system. Geneva Call launched a new Deed of Commitment for non-state armed groups (NSAGs) on the protection of health care in armed conflict.

In addition, stakeholders funded research on the threat to and protection of the medical mission. The UK developed a new research programme, 'Researching the Impacts of Attacks on Healthcare', and Sweden financed an ICRC study on how military doctrine can better integrate protection of health care and health-care workers.

Speaking out on violations

Many stakeholders called attention to specific violations of IHL and IHRL – for instance, by speaking out at the UN Security Council and HRC. Oxfam International sponsored individuals from Iraq, the occupied Palestinian territory and Yemen to give evidence at the HRC of breaches of IHL. Many used media statements, reports and other publications to draw attention to violations such as denial of humanitarian access, damage to health facilities, irresponsible arms transfers, violations against children and breaches of human rights. Save the Children launched a 'Speaking Out' toolkit that aims to increase the organization's ability to denounce violations of child rights. Several stakeholders also engaged with United Against Inhumanity, a new global campaign calling for the rules of war to be upheld and for an end to impunity for violations.

Practical measures to improve compliance with IHL

Adopting and operationalizing policies and instruments to improve compliance

Member States made new commitments to promote respect for IHL. Canada championed a commitment by G7 foreign ministers to take practical measures aimed at promoting respect for IHL among partners. NSAGs also made important commitments: two NSAGs from Iraq, with support from Geneva Call, issued unilateral declarations of their commitment to respect IHL. In addition, NSAGs made commitments to specific aspects of IHL: as of December 2018, 23 NSAGs had signed Geneva Call's Deed of Commitment on the Prohibition of Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict and towards the Elimination of Gender Discrimination.



A young girl receives her oral vaccine at a cholera vaccination point in Kutupalong Makeshift Settlement, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. OCHA/Anthony Burke

Stakeholders also took steps to operationalize political commitments, treaties and other instruments. Germany contributed to the UN Secretary-General's Disarmament Saves Lives initiative by developing a road map for tackling the illicit trafficking and misuse of small arms and light weapons in the Western Balkans. In line with the Mine Ban Convention, Member States continued to prioritize mine clearance. Thailand reported that over 86 per cent of contaminated areas have now been returned back to communities. Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, Japan, Norway and Switzerland funded mine clearance and other humanitarian mine action programmes in contaminated areas. To support State capacity for tracking progress on compliance with IHRL, OHCHR piloted the National Tracking Recommendations Database.

In addition, stakeholders took practical measures to improve respect for humanitarian principles, including training staff and partners, developing resources and tools to improve understanding of the principles, and conducting evaluations to support capacity-building. For example, the revised 2018 Sphere Handbook reaffirmed adherence to humanitarian principles, and Concern Worldwide and IOM provided training on the principles to staff and partners. Oxfam

conducted real-time reviews of seven operations to assess compliance with 'safe programming', including measures to avoid inadvertent harm and ensure conflict sensitivity and adherence with humanitarian principles.

Humanitarian actors took practical measures to improve coordination with military forces. OCHA and Turkey strengthened their civil-military coordination, including sharing the GPS locations of aid convoys. Care International advocated for 'deconfliction' mechanisms in Yemen—systems to share the geographic coordinates of aid operations with military forces—as a means of reducing civilian casualties and protecting humanitarian missions in areas of active hostilities.

Monitoring compliance, documenting violations and collecting evidence

Stakeholders continued to strengthen efforts to monitor compliance with IHL, and donor countries supported national efforts to document violations. Germany supported the Genocide Commission in Iraq in documenting cases of sexual and gender-based violence, and Canada funded the collection, analysis and documentation of evidence of human rights abuses by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) to support future prosecution in Syria and Iraq.

Mandated individuals and organizations, including OHCHR, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children in Armed Conflict and UNICEF, continued to monitor and report on violations of IHL and IHRL. OHCHR and UNRWA documented the impact of explosive weapons in densely populated areas, while WHO recorded incidents of violence against medical services/ personnel in eight countries through its global Surveillance System for Attacks on Healthcare.

In April 2018, the European Union (EU) published its first report on the implementation of its guidelines on promoting compliance with IHL for the period July 2016–June 2017. The United Kingdom also drafted a voluntary report detailing the steps taken at a domestic level to implement IHL. The report focused on several aspects of IHL implementation, including dissemination, training and legal advice, to help to improve understanding of IHL and encourage and inform dialogue on IHL issues.

Training, guidance and tools

As in previous years, reporting on practical action focused largely on training and guidance. Member States including Austria, Ireland, Italy, Mexico, the Netherlands and Romania trained their security and armed forces on IHL and IHRL. Some States strengthened their IHL curriculums: Finland updated IHL courses at the Finnish National Defence University, Mexico's Inter-Secretarial Commission of International Humanitarian Law (CIDIH-Mexico) delivered its Ninth Annual Specialized Course on International Humanitarian Law for national authorities as well as a specialised IHL course for teachers, and the New Zealand Defence Force published and promulgated a revised manual on the Law of Armed Conflict, which references the Safe Schools Declaration. In Romania, Nicolae Titulescu University organized an inter-university humanitarian and refugee law contest, in partnership with UNHCR, the Romanian Red Cross, the National Commission on IHL and the Romanian Ministry of Defence. Member States also provided training to the security forces of other States: for example, the Italian Centre of Excellence for Stability Police Units trained thousands of police officers from other

United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) staff conduct a mine awareness programme at St. Mathew Basic School. UNMAS cleared more than 24,000 landmines from over 37 hectares around a health facility and primary school in Lobonok Payam, then handed the land back over to the local community. South Sudan. UN Photo/Isaac Billy



Protecting children in armed conflict

Member States and parties to conflict continued to adopt and advance commitments to protect children in armed conflicts. Germany and the United Kingdom were among the 10 new States to endorse the Safe Schools Declaration in 2018. World Vision International helped co-author the first ever bipartisan Congressional Bill¹ calling for the US Government to step up efforts to end all forms of physical, mental and sexual violence against children and youth globally. Canada organized an international consultation on advancing the Implementation Guidance for the Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers. Two NSAGs in Syria, with support from Geneva Call, adopted a minimum age (18) for recruitment.

To promote best practice, stakeholders engaged in advocacy, research, training and capacity-building. The UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children in Armed Conflict (SRSG–CAAC) supported Poland, in partnership with Côte d’Ivoire, France and Sweden, to organize a UNSC Arria-formula meeting on ‘Ending and preventing grave violations against children

through action plans: best practices from African States.’ Save the Children worked with States and militaries to promote the Safe Schools Declaration and the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict. Luxembourg funded *Cradled by Conflict*, a study by the United Nations University and UNICEF, which helped to inform the work of UN personnel on the ground to prevent and address the recruitment and use of children by armed groups. SRSG–CAAC and UNICEF organized a series of regional workshops for members of United Nations country task forces to generate lessons learned on monitoring and reporting of grave violations against children affected by armed conflict.

Stakeholders continued to monitor and document violations of children’s rights. SRSG–CAAC conducted monitoring visits to Myanmar, Sudan and South Sudan, and UNICEF and UNRWA contributed to the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism on Grave Violations Committed Against Children. Geneva Call engaged with an NSAG to facilitate the return of child recruits to their families.

countries on IHL, the protection of civilians, and the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence in conflict. Stakeholders also trained non-state armed groups: Geneva Call, for example, conducted over 90 training sessions on international humanitarian norms for more than 2,500 members of NSAGs.

Stakeholders also delivered training to humanitarian personnel and partners. Many NGOs included topics such as IHL, humanitarian principles and protection in their staff inductions. A handful of organizations also focused on staff development – for instance, in 2018, IOM began offering its staff professional courses in IHL and the application of humanitarian principles. Germany, Sweden and Switzerland funded the Centre of Competence on Humanitarian Negotiation to support efforts to strengthen the capacities of humanitarian negotiators. Stakeholders also produced guidance to support humanitarian practice. Norway consulted with a wide range of stakeholders to develop a new guidance note that will offer direction on how partners can strengthen the integration of humanitarian principles in their

responses; InterAction facilitated a review of the implementation of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Policy on Protection and the Principals Statement on the Centrality of Protection, identifying priority actions for achieving better protection outcomes; and the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance (ALNAP) produced a guide for the Evaluation of Protection in Humanitarian Action.

Research and sharing best practice

Stakeholders sought to influence policy and practice through research on key topics related to IHL and protection, often in partnership with academic institutions. InterAction, in partnership with the Center for Strategic and International Studies and the Center for Civilians in Conflict, produced a report identifying critical issues and recommendations for the protection of civilians in military operations by the United States and its partners. IOM supported research by the Geneva Graduate Institute on IOM’s interactions with NSAGs during field missions, to examine the challenges faced by front-line staff in delivering

¹ H. Res. 910



Increasing hostilities are driving large-scale displacements. In Pulka, the town sometimes receives up to 150 new daily arrivals, stretching scarce resources. Nigeria. OCHA/Yasmina Guerda

Protecting civilians from explosive weapons in populated areas (EWIPA)

Member States, including Austria, Ireland and New Zealand, raised awareness at the UN of the impact of EWIPA and advocated for a political commitment against their use. These efforts were supported by Humanity and Inclusion, which conducted public campaigns to raise awareness of the long-term consequences of EWIPA, particularly in terms of forced displacement. In December 2018, 23 Member States from Latin America and the Caribbean issued the Santiago Communiqué, acknowledging the need to avoid the use of EWIPA and expressing support for the development and adoption of an international political declaration on the issue.² Geneva Call and OCHA convened an expert discussion on the use of EWIPA by non-State armed actors, identifying options for engaging NSAGs to avoid or limit their use.

humanitarian assistance. Geneva Call published a study on 'armed non-State actors and cultural heritage in wartime'.

Stakeholders also created opportunities to share learning and promote best practice. For example, the Romanian National IHL Commission and ICRC co-organized a regional IHL conference to foster peer-to-peer cooperation among States. The EU and ICRC organized a high-level event on IHL and gender in Common Security and Defence Policy military training missions in the Central African Republic, Mali and Somalia, bringing together senior EU civilian and military experts to share experiences. The United Kingdom's Foreign and Commonwealth Office hosted a series of lectures on IHL, featuring leading UK practitioners and global experts. InterAction convened multi-stakeholder roundtables on the protection of civilians, and engaged with relevant departments of the US Government on the findings – both in terms of country-specific concerns and systemic issues of US policy and practice.

² The event was co-organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile, Article 36, Humanity and Inclusion, and the International Network on Explosive Weapons.

Achieving the transformation

Despite concerted efforts, the challenges have not changed significantly over the period of reporting since the World Humanitarian Summit. For humanitarian operations, many of these challenges relate to constraints in global humanitarian capacity and funding, coupled with the practical difficulties of operating in conflicts: limited access, security concerns and the paucity of data. More broadly, stakeholders highlighted the lack of accountability for violations as a major impediment, and emphasized the need to step up efforts to document violations, gather reliable data and evidence, and hold perpetrators to account.

While the state of civilian protection remains bleak, there is **considerable scope for concrete improvements in the promotion and implementation of the law**. There is an urgent need for practical action to improve compliance with IHL and IHRL, and to protect civilians in conflicts.

To more effectively uphold the norms that safeguard humanity, stakeholders should:

- **Sustain engagement and dialogue:**

Member States, United Nations entities and civil society must continue to work together to develop more effective means of ensuring the implementation of and compliance with IHL. Member States should consider reporting on their domestic implementation of IHL as a contribution to these discussions.

- **Develop national frameworks on the protection of civilians:** Member States should develop national policy frameworks that build upon good practice, and establish clear institutional responsibilities for the protection of civilians and civilian objects in the conduct of hostilities.

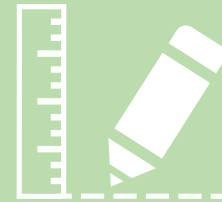
- **Strengthen compliance by non-State actors:** Stakeholders should strategically engage with NSAGs to encourage them to adapt their practices to bring them into line with IHL. Such efforts should include training, awareness-raising, and developing codes of conduct and other types of agreements that commit groups to upholding the rules of war. States should support such efforts.

- **Strengthen evidence and data-collection:**

Stakeholders should continue to gather sex- and age-disaggregated data to develop a more nuanced understanding of the human cost of armed conflict. Member States and other stakeholders should also continue to strengthen efforts to monitor compliance, document violations and collect evidence of serious breaches of IHL and IHRL.

- **Improve accountability for violations:** Member States should undertake effective investigations into allegations of serious violations and hold perpetrators to account – with the support of the United Nations as necessary. Where national action is lacking, resources should be made available; this includes greater political and financial investment in national processes, sharing experiences and good practice, and the provision of technical assistance. To complement national systems, international mechanisms should also be supported and strengthened.

Assessing progress



Despite the significant challenges, efforts to improve data and evidence collection have gained momentum in recent years and are likely to improve. These include Action on Armed Violence's Explosive Violence Monitor, Insecurity Insight, the Aid Worker Security database, and WHO's Surveillance System on Attacks on Healthcare. Further improvements should seek to refine data collection – for example, to allow for the categorization of weapons used. In addition, quantitative data collection should be accompanied by qualitative research to develop a contextual understanding of the data.

There is currently no functioning overarching monitoring framework for compliance with violations of IHL, and the limited data that exists is very difficult to verify. However, there are a number of initiatives that track compliance with particular areas of IHL. The ICRC maintains a number of databases related to IHL and, in 2018, launched a new database, 'IHL In Action', which documents instances of compliance. While the database is not meant to be globally representative or to capture all cases of compliance, it provides a valuable insight into what works – and can serve as a basis for discussion.

A number of other monitoring initiatives exist. The UN Secretary-General produces an annual report on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, which looks at key IHL issues and global trends; the UN also produces both global and country-specific reports —and maintains a reporting mechanism (led by UNICEF)— for grave violations against children in conflict. In addition, there are a number of independent initiatives that monitor Member States' compliance with relevant treaties, and Geneva Call maintains a database of NSAG commitments.

³ The content of this box was drawn from ALNAP (2018) *Making it Count: A feasibility study on collective indicators to monitor progress in the Agenda for Humanity*. London: ALNAP/ODI, pp. 40-59. Please refer to this publication for a thorough examination of the current state and challenges of tracking compliance with IHL.

Addressing gender-based violence in emergencies and preventing sexual exploitation and abuse

Progress in 2018

Addressing and preventing gender-based violence in emergencies

Reporting in 2018 demonstrated a strong commitment to prevent and respond to gender-based violence (GBV) in emergencies. Forty-five stakeholders filed reports on preventing GBV under Transformation 2D; GBV was also one of the top cross-cutting issues across other transformations. Stakeholders stressed the importance of aligning GBV programming and prevention efforts with broader gender equality work that addresses root causes – this section should therefore be read in conjunction with Chapter 3D: Empowering Women and Girls.

Improving accountability

At the global level, stakeholders worked to strengthen commitments on preventing GBV, notably through expanding the multi-stakeholder Call to Action (CtA) on Protection from Gender-

Women at the Government Science Secondary School (GSSS) camp for IDPs stand up for their rights as part of the '16 Days of Activism' campaign against gender-based violence. Nigeria. OCHA/Leni Kinzil



Based Violence in Emergencies. The EU reported that during its time as lead of the CtA (from June 2017 to December 2018), 18 new members joined the initiative. In 2018, the CtA endorsed the GBV Accountability Framework to help Humanitarian Country Teams further prioritize GBV prevention and response; during the course of the year, the framework was piloted in Iraq and South Sudan.

Research and advocacy

Stakeholders continued to improve the knowledge base on best practices. The EU awarded nearly €445,000 to the Royal Tropical Institute of the Netherlands and Save the Children Netherlands to study access (and barriers) to medical and psychosocial support for survivors of sexual violence, with case studies in Haiti, Nigeria and Yemen. The Clean Cooking Alliance launched a study in Rwanda to examine the extent to which access to clean cooking stoves reduced the risk or incidence of GBV among refugee women and girls.⁴ UNDP also published research on the potential of livelihoods programming for reducing the risk of GBV for female refugees. In addition to using research findings to advocate for more effective practices, stakeholders also raised awareness through other means, such as the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative (PSVI) film festival, hosted by the United Kingdom; the festival brought together governments, international organizations, civil society, survivors, parliamentarians and members of the public to encourage collective action.

Funding and programming for GBV prevention and supporting survivors

Many donors, including Belgium, Canada, Denmark, the EU, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, New Zealand, Sweden and Switzerland, funded GBV prevention and response efforts through UNFPA, UN Women and other partners. Over 130,000 women and girls, and 33,000 men and boys benefited directly from UN Women's GBV prevention and response efforts, including through awareness and prevention activities, psychosocial support, and referrals to counselling and other services. Funding was also channelled through the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF); 66 per cent of CERF-funded projects in 2018 either focused solely on GBV or incorporated it into project design. Austria and Germany supported initiatives to combat female genital mutilation. Germany also funded projects to protect girls from child marriage, and Austria supported programming to promote the

engagement of men and boys in preventing GBV in the Western Balkans.

Non-governmental and faith-based organizations were at the forefront of implementing GBV programmes in crises. In Bangladesh, Welthungerhilfe led a coalition of organizations to establish community-based protection committees to address gender- and age-specific needs in refugee camps, and Christian Aid installed solar-powered lights to improve safety in Cox's Bazar. Many also worked on initiatives to address root causes: World Vision International, for example, reported improvements in community attitudes towards survivors of GBV as a result of two years of programming in South Sudan; and Tearfund reported the positive impacts of a GBV prevention pilot project involving faith communities on reducing intimate partner violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

Building capacities to prevent and respond to GBV in emergencies

Stakeholders worked to strengthen the capacity of the humanitarian sector on GBV prevention and response. Ireland and Norway, among other donors, supported the Gender Capacity (GenCap) Standby Project, which, in 2018, deployed 18 expert advisers, and the United Kingdom funded the deployment of 10 experts from the PSVI roster. UNHCR deployed protection experts to mitigate risk and strengthen response to GBV at the onset of 10 emergencies. Norway developed a handbook on the prevention of and response to conflict-related sexual violence, which will be used in all UN operations from 2019; and IOM developed and disseminated guidance on reducing the risk of GBV in emergency distributions and site planning operations.

In addition, stakeholders provided funding and technical assistance to help strengthen national and local capacities. For example, Japan funded projects in Iraq to strengthen government capacities to combat GBV, and UNICEF worked with the Government of Lebanon to develop and roll out a mobile app to support clinical management of rape services. To build local capacities and invest in women-led solutions, Germany funded programmes to establish community-based protection committees in crisis contexts, including in Bangladesh and the DRC.

⁴ Clean cooking stoves help to mitigate the risk of violence that women and girls face when collecting firewood/fuel for cooking.



Men from the host community in Goma read leaflets about family planning and prevention of sexual and gender-based violence. Democratic Republic of the Congo. OCHA/Eve Sabbagh

As part of a campaign to end violence against children, World Vision International conducted outreach campaigns in South Sudan that included information on national GBV legislation.

Preventing sexual exploitation and abuse

Strengthening safeguards and standards

For 2018, 27 stakeholders reported on preventing sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA). The majority reported reviewing and updating policies, conducting training, and implementing other internal measures to strengthen safeguards against sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) within their operations. Organizations including ActionAid, CARE International, Concern Worldwide and Food for the Hungry recruited full-time safeguarding staff or created internal safeguarding committees. GOAL Global reported that, by the end of 2018, all of its country programmes had a dedicated safeguarding officer, who received comprehensive training on PSEA as well as ongoing support. A number of stakeholders also developed or updated their policies on reporting, investigations and protecting whistleblowers. Food for the Hungry adopted a third-party reporting system that allows staff to report incidents anonymously, and Caritas Internationalis developed a memorandum of understanding with an independent organization to provide expert investigators on request. The Netherlands funded a feasibility study on creating an independent ombudsperson scheme for the aid sector.

There was also notable progress on developing common standards and commitments. Donor States and NGOs made joint commitments at the Safeguarding Summit held in London in October 2018. Ireland and New Zealand were among the many States that joined the growing list of signatories to the UN Voluntary Compact on Preventing and Addressing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. Stakeholders also engaged in discussions on common international standards for preventing sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, and third-party verification in line with the Core Humanitarian Standard.

Translating commitments into coordinated action

Over the course of the year, stakeholders made progress in operationalizing commitments to scale up PSEA in humanitarian operations through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). In May 2018, OCHA created an Investigations Fund to provide rapid grants to IASC members for investigations into allegations of SEA, with an initial contribution of \$1 million. In September, UNICEF allocated \$11 million of internal funding to scale up PSEA in 16 humanitarian responses. In December, the IASC Principals endorsed a proposal for accelerating PSEA efforts at country-level. The proposal focuses on achieving three key outcomes:

- 1) safe and accessible reporting;
- 2) quality SEA survivor assistance; and
- 3) enhanced accountability, including investigations.

Achieving the transformation

Translating policies and commitments into meaningful change for those vulnerable to or at risk of GBV and SEA remains a major challenge. Lack of funding was reported as the biggest obstacle. Stakeholders emphasized the need for adequate and sustained funding for gender analysis, and gender equality and GBV programming, as well as for international and local capacity-building to prevent GBV, protect those at risk and support survivors. Stakeholders encountered similar challenges in implementing commitments on PSEA. Committed leadership and dedicated funding is critical for enabling organizations to deliver training, ensure dedicated focal points at all levels, enhance reporting and accountability mechanisms, and support survivors.

However, transformational change will require more than just an increase in funding. Stakeholders emphasized the need for a cultural shift to ensure that the humanitarian sector is accountable to all those at risk of GBV and SEA. Work to achieve gender equality—covered under Transformation 3D—is fundamental to achieving this transformation.

Recognizing the challenges in operationalizing commitments and policies to **prevent and address GBV in emergencies**, stakeholders made the following practical recommendations:

- **Implement existing frameworks:** The IASC GBV guidelines, the CtA Road Map and the GBV Accountability Framework provide practical actions for humanitarian actors at all levels to prevent and mitigate the risks of GBV, and deliver comprehensive, quality services for women and girls in humanitarian response. Organizations must be accountable for implementing these.

- **Prioritize and mobilize resources for GBV:** Donors should provide sustained and adequate funding to prevent and respond to GBV in humanitarian interventions, regardless of the availability of data. Dedicated financial and human resources should be allocated for the duration of responses, including through multi-year arrangements where appropriate, with flexible funding to meet changing needs.

- **Mandate gender mainstreaming:** Stakeholders called on donors to stipulate requirements so that fund recipients mainstream gender at all stages of humanitarian interventions. This includes conducting gender and GBV risk and vulnerability analyses at the

outset of crises, ensuring that responses are informed by the evidence, and guaranteeing the active participation of women and girls at all stages of the humanitarian programme cycle. Recipients should also be required to take proactive measures to prevent and mitigate GBV in line with the Do No Harm principle, and allocate resources to support capacity-building on GBV preparedness and response.

- **Strengthen local prevention and response capacities:** Stakeholders emphasized the need to strengthen local and national capacities to prevent and respond to GBV. In practice, this means ensuring that local women's organizations are included in decision-making at all stages of humanitarian preparedness and response, including through long-term partnerships with stakeholders, civil society organizations and service providers, and that they are provided with adequate funding and technical support.

To expedite actions to **prevent sexual exploitation and abuse in humanitarian operations**, in line with the IASC plan for accelerating PSEA at country-level, stakeholders made the following recommendations:

- **Maintain momentum in operationalizing commitments across the sector:** Progress towards implementing commitments to prevent SEA varies widely across the humanitarian sector. Leadership, coordination and dialogue between all humanitarian actors must be maintained in order to establish effective safeguarding.

- **Ensure safe and accessible reporting for all:** Stakeholders should ensure that every adult and child in a humanitarian context is able to safely report SEA, through new or existing community-based complaints mechanisms. These mechanisms must cover all aspects of humanitarian assistance and be child- and gender-sensitive, be linked to services for survivors, and provide protection for whistleblowers and complainants.

- **Strengthen accountability:** SEA should be investigated in a timely, safe and respectful manner, and leaders should be held accountable for ensuring that cases are handled promptly and effectively.

- **Improve global capacity on PSEA:** Recognizing that the capacity to prevent SEA, investigate cases and support survivors varies across the sector, stakeholders emphasized the need to strengthen and pool global capacities on PSEA. This includes creating talent pools of PSEA experts and trainers, providing regular opportunities to share learning and best practices, and strengthening shared capacity to investigate allegations.

Beatrice (45) has fled Maniema several times. She first arrived to South Kivu in October 2017, and when she tried to return to her home, insecurity forced her to flee again in December 2017 and February 2018. Democratic Republic of the Congo. OCHA/Angelique Rime



Assessing progress



It is estimated that more than a third of women and girls will experience some form of gender-based violence in their lifetime; in crisis settings the prevalence of GBV may be much higher. Systemic gender inequality is the root cause of both GBV and SEA. Given the scarcity of data on GBV in humanitarian settings—and the fact that, even when data exists, GBV is known to be dramatically under-reported—assessing progress on preventing and responding to GBV relies mainly on determining the extent to which humanitarian organizations are implementing standards that are known to lessen the risks. Similarly, measuring progress on PSEA must also go beyond reporting numbers.



Since the eruption of conflict in Kasai in 2016, hundreds of women have been raped. More than 600 sexual violence cases have been registered and many cases are also unreported. Democratic Republic of the Congo. OCHA/Otto Bakano

Annual reporting against the Accountability Framework for the IASC Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls in Humanitarian Action will assess progress against both areas. The Framework is currently under review, but some potential indicators may include:

- Percentage of Humanitarian Response Plans that address mitigation and respond to GBV and SEA.
- Percentage of Humanitarian Response Plans with strategies for the implementation of accountability to affected populations and PSEA, the IASC Policy on the Centrality of Protection in Humanitarian Action, and the IASC Gender Policy.
- Percentage of humanitarian planning processes that directly consult local women's organizations and integrate their inputs.

As the last two points indicate, the best way of assessing meaningful progress will be from the direct feedback from women and girls, particularly those at risk of SEA. Tracking the volume of funding dedicated to GBV and SEA prevention and response will also provide an indication of support for this transformation.