



## **“Combating Conflict-Related Sexual Violence – Comparative Insights on International and National Capacities”**

**Workshop, 12 and 13 May 2023**

**Freie Universität Berlin Department of Law**

**Keynote Lectures: Christine Chinkin, LSE Centre for Women, Peace and Security, and Michelle Jarvis, International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism – Syria**

**Concluding observations: Kim Thuy Seelinger, Washington University and Special Adviser on Sexual Violence in Conflict to the ICC Prosecutor**

**Workshop organiser: Ajla Škrbić, Freie Universität Berlin**

### **Call for Papers**

The use of sexual violence in armed conflicts and post-conflict situations is one of the worst global challenges, not only because of its scale and prevalence, but also because of its profound impact. It has been frequently and deliberately used as a tactic of war, inflicting long-term trauma and humiliation, and exacerbating situations of armed conflict, impeding peace and reconciliation. However, conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) is no longer seen as an inevitable by-product of war. It is a crime in most national legal systems as well as a gross violation and grave breach of international human rights law, international humanitarian law, and international criminal law.

In recent years, more attention has been paid to the scholarship on CRSV, and international courts have contributed significantly to a more advanced and sophisticated understanding of this crime. However, attempts to advance gender justice in the practice of both international and national courts have resulted in mixed outcomes and limited accountability. Beneath the progress accomplished lie a number of challenges in terms of representation of sex, gender expertise, and gender-sensitive participation in CRSV cases.

The workshop aims to bring together scholars and practitioners working on CRSV from different disciplinary perspectives, especially with a focus on gender. Papers that introduce innovative methods and new data to capture responses to CRSV in post-conflict societies, with authors working in the fields of international criminal law, domestic criminal law, the rule of law (RoL), transitional justice, social psychology, criminology, media studies, and the interpretation of

international law by domestic courts, are particularly welcomed. We are interested in taking stock of the research, the broader global context, and the emerging opportunities in addressing CRSV. In particular, we want to assess different states' practices in the prosecution of CRSV in order to see best practices in this field and to generate new knowledge that is not currently available. This is especially important given the fact that CRSV, despite various attempts of its eradication, continues to occur on a daily basis in different parts of the world, with Ukraine and Ethiopia serving as the latest examples.

Against this background, the idea behind this workshop is to bring new perspectives into existing scholarship by examining the CRSV research and prosecutions in different states and by aiming to formulate examples of best practices. The workshop seeks to encourage a multi-disciplinary discussion and exchange of ideas among scholars and practitioners (representatives of judicial mechanisms and civil society organisations) from different disciplines, with a particular interest in case studies from different post-conflict societies and regions, especially from jurisdictions which have so far not been the focus of attention in CRSV research. The examination can be from theoretical, doctrinal, empirical, socio-legal, and/or practical perspectives. The opportunity for practitioners to share their insights into the practical workings and difficulties of their respective systems can foster experience sharing. Therefore, the workshop will explore the legal, policy and practice gaps that exist when it comes to identifying and responding to the needs of victims of CRSV with its further objective to determine the need and direction for follow-up research and action on the topic.

We invite abstracts that explore CRSV, including but not limited to the following subthemes:

- **Legal discourse on CRSV:** evolution of CRSV in law; importance of women's inclusion in peace and security.
- **Combating CRSV in international setting and at the domestic level:** victim's participation in criminal proceedings; comparative CRSV legislation and national capacities for combating CRSV; interactions between international and national law in the prosecutions of CRSV; courts and CRSV (ICTR, ICTY, ICC, particular countries/cases); international conventions and resolutions on CRSV; UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict; development of forensic medicine in CRSV cases.
- **Specific questions related to CRSV:** CRSV against men and boys; CRSV against LGBTI+; female perpetrators of CRSV; trafficking in human beings and gender-based violence; particular cases of CRSV (e.g. prosecuting forced marriage as a form of sexual violence); reparations for CRSV; work with persons with the trauma of CRSV; trans-generational transmission of trauma: children born of wartime rape; memory studies and CRSV; media coverage of CRSV; the role of civil society in combating CRSV; CRSV and the environment.
- **CRSV as a threat to the RoL:** approaches to understanding CRSV and its nexus to RoL; policies for preventing and responding to CRSV; broader global context in combating CRSV.

The workshop will be held in an informal setting with a group of 10-15 participants, enabling open and mutually stimulating discussions. The language of the conference is English. Selected papers

will be published in the form of an edited volume with an international publishing house or as a special issue of a peer-reviewed international journal. Further information on publication plans will be provided at the end of the workshop.

The keynote addresses will be delivered by Professor Christine Chinkin (London School of Economics and Political Science) and Ms. Michelle Jarvis (Deputy Head of the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism – Syria). Concluding observations will be delivered by Professor Kim Thuy Seelinger (Center for Human Rights, Gender and Migration at Washington University and Special Adviser on Sexual Violence in Conflict to the ICC Prosecutor).

### **Submissions and timeline**

Interested participants should submit the following documents in English: (1) an abstract, (2) a short CV (maximum two pages), and (3) a list of recent publications (applies only to scholars), to the convenor Prof. Dr. Ajla Škrbić ([ajla.skrbic@fu-berlin.de](mailto:ajla.skrbic@fu-berlin.de)) by **1 January 2023**. Paper proposals are encouraged from scholars in all stages of their academic careers, including early-career scholars and senior researchers, as well as practitioners from around the world.

Abstracts should be of no more than 600 words and should contain the title of the paper, as well as the name, title and affiliation of the author(s). Only one abstract per author will be considered. Joint submissions are possible. Selection will be based on the quality and originality of the abstract as well as its capacity to engage with other proposals and to foster a collaborative dialogue, and on diversity criteria.

Decisions will be communicated no later than 15 January 2023. Selected participants will be expected to submit a draft paper of 6.000 to 8.000 words (including footnotes) by 15 April 2023. Presentations should be no longer than 20 minutes in duration.

### **Venue**

The workshop will be hosted by the Freie Universität Berlin with the support of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. We are aiming for this workshop to be an in-person event, if this is possible in view of the COVID-19 related restrictions and regulations. If this is not possible, the workshop will be held online.

With the support of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, travel and accommodation expenses will be covered in line with applicable regulations of Freie Universität Berlin for participants who are invited to present and would otherwise be unable to participate. If you wish to be considered for financial assistance, please indicate it with your abstract submission, specifying your city of departure and an estimate travel costs.