

THE HAGUE PRINCIPLES ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE CALLS TO ACTION

Addressing sexual violence starts with understanding all forms of sexual violence. The Hague Principles on Sexual Violence were developed to enhance the understanding of what constitutes an act of sexual violence from the perspective of survivors. The Principles seek to ensure that violence is not overlooked or trivialized.

THE PRINCIPLES CAN BE USED BY ACTIVISTS AND NGOS TO:

- Educate the public: Organize events within communities, with church or traditional leaders. Start a campaign, including on social media, to raise awareness and explain what sexual violence entails (refer to the Guide for Survivor Activists for concrete ideas). Reach out to radio shows and other media.
- Educate practitioners: Use and refer to the Principles in the curriculums of trainings. Organize roundtables with practitioners to enable the exchange of experiences and best practices. Ensure a diverse audience and broad participation, for example by including legal officers of judges and junior staff.
- Organize marches: To raise awareness among the population and to call stakeholders to action.
- Build networks: Reach out to other practitioners and NGOs **for** cooperation, **to** exchange best practices and build coalitions.
- Share widely: Disseminate the Principles in your network by, for example, including a link on your website.
- Advocate for change: Engage with policy makers and politicians to make policies and law more inclusive (refer to the following section for concrete demands).
- Hold to account: Remind governments of their pledges and commitments to address sexual violence, for example under the Women, Peace and Security and Sustainable Development Goals frameworks. Hold them to account to fulfill their obligations under domestic and international law, for example human rights law.

BY PROFESSIONALS WORKING WITH SURVIVORS TO:

- Connect experiences of survivors and practitioners: Organize meetings, including field trip and exchanges, between practitioners such as investigators, prosecutors, judges, and policy makers, and survivors. In all activities involving survivors, apply **the** Do No Harm principle and specific guidelines on how to responsibly engage with survivors.
- Connect victims and institutions: Help police and prosecutors to engage with victims of sexual violence during investigations. Encourage survivors to access services of NGOs and help them find relevant programs and institutions. Be mindful of potential risks and long-term negative consequences for survivors.
- Build trust: Invest in the building of relationships between institutions and survivors to make it easier for victims to receive support from state actors or to participate in court proceedings.
- Sensitize victims: Use The Hague Principles to explain the variety of forms of sexual violence. Organize community sessions and peer-to-peer education. Create networks of survivors to build solidarity and work together.

BY POLICY- AND DECISION-MAKERS TO:

- Broaden expertise: Encourage a broader expertise in institutions, for example, by including anthropologists or social scientists in investigation teams.
- Take commitment of senior staff into consideration: Nominate candidates with knowledge of sexual violence for high-level political positions, in management roles, and as judges or prosecutors.
- Change laws and procedures: Amend the criminal code to cover the various forms of sexual violence and allow for the prosecution of all forms of sexual violence. Amend the Elements of Crimes of the International Criminal Court to include a clear, forward-looking, and culturally sensitive definition of sexual violence.
- Train judiciary: Ensure that all police and court officials undergo training on sexual violence.
- Participate in events: Support NGOs by hosting roundtables with practitioners and facilitate the exchange of knowledge.
- Support survivors: Establish a hotline and one-stop crisis centers for survivors of sexual violence. Train staff to recognize various forms of sexual violence.

BY LEGAL PRACTITIONERS TO:

- Reach out to survivors: Collaborate with survivor groups to receive their input and ensure their experiences are adequately included in policies, laws, and indictments.
- Broaden expertise: Broaden the expertise of the team, for example by including anthropologists or social scientists.
- Apply the full possibility of the law: Use creative, robust, and progressive strategies to enhance accountability, gather comprehensive and sufficient evidence of sexual violence crimes.
- Share knowledge: Participate in events and roundtables with other practitioners to develop best practices. Disseminate the Principles in your network. Use and refer to the Principles in the curriculums of trainings.
- Train staff: Ensure everyone receives training on sexual violence. Create a team and working environment in which sensitivity to sexual violence is embedded.
- Use the BIS app: The Basic Investigative Standards for International Crimes (BIS smartphone app provides a range of minimum standards for the investigation of international crimes, increasing the likelihood that relevant information is collected in ways that preserve its potential to be useful evidence.
- Increase one's own knowledge: Participate in trainings on the issue of sexual violence.