



التحالف للتعويضات العادلة
Coalition for Just Reparations
هاو په یمانې بۆ قهره بوو کړدنه وهی دادپه روه رانه

COALITION FOR JUST REPARATIONS (C4JR)

INTERNAL GUIDELINES ON ETHICAL ENGAGEMENT WITH SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Members of the Coalition for Just Reparations (C4JR or Members) recognize that survivors' engagement with the public and the media can serve many purposes. It can provide a platform for survivors to draw attention to atrocities on their own terms, raise awareness on the right to reparation, identify gaps in existing reparation mechanisms, increase visibility of the demands and needs of survivors, and put pressure on governments or the international community to act. The C4JR, however, also notes concerning reports of intentional and unintentional unethical practices by several actors, including media and humanitarian organizations, when engaging with survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in the context of the Islamic State (IS) conflict in Iraq.

In media, unethical practices include pressuring survivors to speak to journalists, publication of names and images of survivors that risk retaliation by perpetrators against the survivor and their family, deepening stigmatization and marginalization, and conducting interviews that re-traumatize survivors,¹ as well as creating sensationalist and voyeuristic headlines and language, often against the explicit will of survivors. Humanitarian actors are at times complicit as the ones facilitating interviews with journalists, and also engage in unethical behavior themselves as part of their documentation, advocacy or communications strategies.²

The C4JR acknowledges that no benefit that is hoped to be gathered from its engagement with survivors outweighs the safety and dignity of survivors. Drawing on ethical principles and guidelines on reporting on and documenting SGBV,³ and discussions during an internal C4JR workshop on this issue,⁴ the C4JR hereby adopts the below Internal Guidelines on Ethical Engagement with Survivors of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

¹ Foster, J. E., & Minwalla, S. (2018). Voices of Yazidi women: Perceptions of journalistic practices in the reporting on ISIS sexual violence. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 67, 53–64.

² Institute for International Criminal Investigations, Nadia's Initiative and the Foreign & Commonwealth Office. (2020). Draft Global Code of Conduct for Investigating and Documenting Conflict-Related Sexual Violence ("Murad Code"), <https://www.muradcode.com/draft-murad-code>.

³ WHO (2007). WHO Ethical and safety recommendations for researching, documenting and monitoring sexual violence in emergencies, https://www.who.int/gender/documents/OMS_Ethics&Safety10Aug07.pdf; Dart Centre (2011). Reporting on Sexual Violence, <https://dartcenter.org/content/reporting-on-sexual-violence>; Global Protection Cluster (2013). Media Guidelines for Reporting on Gender-Based Violence in Humanitarian Contexts, <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/5c3701d27.pdf>; International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) (2014). IFJ Guidelines for Reporting on Violence Against Women, https://www.ifj.org/fileadmin/images/Gender/Gender_documents/IFJ_Guidelines_for_Reporting_on_Violence_Against_Women_EN.pdf; UNFPA (2020). Reporting on Gender-Based Violence in Humanitarian Settings, https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Journalists_Handbook_-_March_8_-_English.pdf; The Draft Murad Code.

⁴ The C4JR brought members and experts together in an online Workshop on Ethical Interaction with Survivors on June 8-9, 2020, where attendees discussed humanitarian and journalistic ethics within the context of C4JR's work.

(“Guidelines”), which will govern C4JR members’ engagement with survivors for the purposes of C4JR activities and any media involvement or publicity arising therefrom:

- 1 The C4JR shall at all times abide by the principle of do-no-harm, respect the autonomy and agency of survivors to make their own decisions, and prioritize the safety, wellbeing and dignity of survivors.
- 2 When engaging with survivors, members shall adhere to the guiding principles of a survivor-centered approach and aim to foster a supportive environment in which the survivor is not discriminated against, their confidentiality is strictly preserved and upheld and they feel safe, respected and comfortable to voice their needs, concerns and aspirations.
- 3 The C4JR shall analyze and assess all possible risks to the survivor, their family, the wider community and the C4JR arising from its engagement with survivors and establish measures and structures to counter such risks. The C4JR shall make every possible effort to prevent, reduce or respond to potential harm, and shall immediately disengage if harm cannot be prevented or appropriately mitigated. C4JR will ensure that those interacting with survivors have knowledge of local services to enable timely referrals or signpost should a survivor request assistance or seek a particular service.
- 4 Before engaging with survivors, the C4JR shall reflect on whether the engagement will bring any benefit to the individual survivor and whether the objective that is hoped to be achieved from such engagement is genuinely attainable, and shall manage any unrealistic expectations that may arise from the engagement.
- 5 The C4JR shall obtain full and informed consent when requesting information from a survivor. In doing so, members shall:
 - a Explain the objective and content of the request, how the information will be collected, any possible use of such information, how the data will be stored, mandatory reporting and disclosure requirements etc. using non-technical language.
 - b Fully inform the survivor of the potential risks to themselves, their family and the wider community that may arise from the engagement. These risks include, but are not limited to, stigmatization, rejection, risk of retaliation and re-traumatization. When appropriate, the C4JR shall also seek survivors’ input in assessing risks associated with such engagement.
 - c Inform the survivor of concretely and any realistically framed benefits that are expected to arise from such engagement.
 - d Clearly state to the survivor that they retain the discretion to decide if and how they participate in an engagement and to stop and pause at any point without having to give a reason and without any consequences, including their access to services. Make an effort to counter any pressures the survivor might be feeling to answer, or to answer a certain way.
 - e Obtain additional consent from the survivor if any portion of the engagement exceeds the scope of what was initially consented to or information will be shared with any entity other than what was initially consented to, including but not limited to, media involvement, publicization or referral to support services.
- 6 The C4JR will show utmost care and attention to ensure anonymity of survivors involved in publicized C4JR activities. If, under exceptional circumstances, such as ongoing public advocacy work, the survivor’s identity might be revealed, full informed consent shall be obtained. Moreover, measures

shall be put in place to mitigate risks arising from identification and to protect the survivor from retaliation and stigma.

- 7 The C4JR shall ensure confidentiality of all data concerning survivors and shall put in place necessary measures and protocols for this purpose, by also taking into consideration challenges and risks that may arise from COVID-19 restrictions. When sharing information within the scope of C4JR activities, all data shall be fully anonymized and shared after careful consideration of the context and timing in light of survivors' interests and safety. Members shall familiarize themselves with mandatory reporting requirements and shall carefully balance any obligation to disclose information with the survivor-centered approach.
- 8 The C4JR shall not facilitate generic media requests to locate survivors for interviews. In the case of media requests in relation to the C4JR's work involving survivors, or media coverage of C4JR activities with survivor attendance, members will ensure that survivors provide full informed consent (*See* §5).
- 9 Members shall respect the complexity of survivors' experiences and shall refrain from using reductive or stigmatizing language when referring to survivors and to SGBV. The C4JR shall do its best to ensure that the media coverage of its activities also does not use such language.
- 10 When inviting survivors to attend C4JR activities, members shall make their best effort to ensure survivors are comfortable with arrangements concerning logistics, including timing, location, accommodation, travel, meals and childcare, if relevant, and shall make support services available. No profits shall be paid to survivors for attending C4JR activities. Survivors shall be fully informed of such details prior to the activity taking place.
- 11 The C4JR shall not engage with child survivors of SGBV unless through and/or in collaboration with an expert with skills and experience in working with children.
- 12 The C4JR shall ensure coordination and cooperation on reparation-related work internally and externally. Before making any requests for information from the survivor the C4JR shall first seek and if available resort to existing sources of information.
- 13 Members shall ensure that staff involved in C4JR work that may cause vicarious trauma have access to mental health and psychosocial services. Staff will be supported to develop self-care strategies and promote a healthy work-life balance.
- 14 Members shall abide by the above principles without discrimination against any survivor on any ground such as gender, ethnicity, religion, sect, race, language, sexual orientation, gender identity, political opinion, social status, age, disability or origin.