



“WE WERE LIKE CAGED BIRDS,
THIS GAVE US WINGS TO FLY”:
A REVIEW OF UN WOMEN
PROGRAMMING ON GENDER-
SENSITIVE TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE

HENRI MYRTTINEN AND NICOLA POPOVIC



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Artwork used in this publication, including cover art, was created by survivors of conflict-related sexual violence during the conflict in Kosovo (UNSCR 1244) for the exhibition “[Colours of Our Souls](#),” organized by UN Women. Photo credits: UN Women

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UN Women also wishes to extend its thanks to global implementing partners for the GSTJ programme, including the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Development Programme, the Special Rapporteur on Truth, Justice, Reparations and Guarantees of Non-Recurrence, the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ), Justice Rapid Response (JRR), Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, and the Center for Transitional Justice and Post-Conflict Recovery at the University of Western Ontario.

The GSTJ programme owes its successes to the commitment to gender-sensitive transitional justice from its partners in state agencies, civil society, academic institutions and UN entities in all countries where the programme operated.

Most importantly, UN Women extends its profound appreciation for the survivors of sexual and gender-based violence who participated in the programme. UN Women is committed to ensuring that the global momentum for accountability continues to grow, until there is an unstoppable force for justice which makes sexual and gender-based violence a relic of the past.

The authors would further like to thank the participants of the Kosovo¹ workshop for their enthusiastic engagement and their work more broadly, as well as UN Women Kosovo for hosting the event. Thanks also go to Emily Kenney and Sarah Douglas for their invaluable inputs and comments to this report.

¹ All references to Kosovo in this report are understood to be under United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

ABBREVIATIONS

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
C/PVE	Countering/Preventing Violent Extremism
CRSV	Conflict-related sexual violence
CSO	Civil society organization
EU	European Union
FARC	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia
GSTJ	Gender-Sensitive Transitional Justice
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICTJ	International Center for Transitional Justice
IDP	Internally displaced person
JRR	Justice Rapid Response
NAP	National action plan
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PAPP	Presidential Advisor on the Peace Process (Philippines)
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SOGI	Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity
TJRC	Transitional Justice and Reconciliation Commission (Philippines)
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council resolution
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The UN Women global programme on gender-sensitive transitional justice (GSTJ) has contributed to significant changes in women's lives, seeking truth, reconciliation and justice for the crimes and trauma they have endured. The EU-funded programme (2015-2018) focused its activities on Colombia, Nepal, the Philippines and Kosovo,² in addition to global and indirect support to transitional justice processes in many other countries, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Guatemala, Mali and Tunisia. The programme included a wide range of activities implemented by state agencies, NGOs, and UN agencies which were supported by the respective UN Women offices in countries and at headquarters. The programme also supported dialogue, research and advocacy at the international level.

The GSTJ programme utilized innovative approaches, tailored to the context and the needs of survivors, including connecting transitional justice to economic empowerment, using digital technology for truth-telling, employing intersectional approaches to gender in transitional

justice, and using a gendered approach for examining transitional justice in the context of violent extremism. The programme facilitated mutual learning between global transitional justice experts and national practitioners, as well as between national-level actors from different contexts. Beyond bringing a gender perspective into transitional justice processes, the programme also highlighted ways in which transitional justice processes themselves can become avenues for promoting social transformation towards greater gender equality.

Through the GSTJ programme, UN Women contributed substantially to transitional justice processes in countries, and to the evolution of good practice on gender-sensitive transitional justice around the globe. The programme's outcomes evidence the need for sustained and scaled-up support for UN Women's work in this area, moving beyond the pilot phase of the GSTJ programme to ensure that UN Women consistently engages as a global leader on gender-sensitive transitional justice in the future.

² All references to Kosovo in this publication are understood to be under United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999)



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