

Gender-Based Violence Incident Classification System

to be used in conjunction with the GBV Information Management System (GBVIMS) developed by UNFPA, IRC, UNHCR

The humanitarian community has not been able to collect, classify and analyze GBV-related information in a way that produces comparable statistics. At present, it is nearly impossible to compile and analyze data across programs and field sites. This cannot be solved without taking a new approach to the classification of GBV incident types. To address this problem, the International Rescue Committee (IRC), the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) have developed a new incident classification system strictly for the purposes of improving data collection and analysis.¹

The criteria used to generate the list of incident types were:

- Universally-recognized forms of gender-based violence
- Mutually exclusive (they do not overlap)
- Focused on the specific act of violence; separate from the motivation behind it or the context in which it was perpetrated

Each of the definitions below refers to the concept of **consent**.² Consent is when a person makes an informed choice to agree freely and voluntarily to do something. There is no consent when agreement is obtained through:

- the use of threats, force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, manipulation, deception, or misrepresentation
- the use of a threat to withhold a benefit to which the person is already entitled, or
- a promise is made to the person to provide a benefit.

Eight core incident types.³ The eight core incident types were created for data collection and statistical analysis of gender-based violence (GBV).⁴ They should be used only in reference to GBV even though some may be applicable to other forms of violence which are not gender-based.

1. Female genital cutting/mutilation: all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.
2. Rape: non-consensual penetration (however slight) of the vagina, anus or mouth with a penis or other body part. Also includes penetration of the vagina or anus with an object.
3. Sexual assault: any form of non-consensual sexual contact that does not result in or include penetration. Examples include: attempted rape, as well as unwanted kissing, fondling, or touching of genitalia and buttocks. *This incident type does not include rape, i.e., where penetration has occurred.*
4. Physical assault: physical violence that is not sexual in nature. Examples include: hitting, slapping, choking, cutting, shoving, burning, shooting or use of any weapons, acid attacks or any other act that results in pain, discomfort or injury.
5. Forced marriage: the marriage of an individual against her or his will.
6. Denial of resources, opportunities & services: denial of rightful access to economic resources/assets or livelihood opportunities, education, health or other social services. Examples include a widow prevented from receiving an inheritance, earnings forcibly taken by an intimate partner or family member, a woman prevented from using contraceptives, a girl prevented from attending school, etc. Reports of general poverty should not be recorded.
7. Psychological / emotional abuse: infliction of mental or emotional pain or injury. Examples include: threats of physical or sexual violence, intimidation, humiliation, forced isolation, stalking, harassment, unwanted attention, remarks, gestures or written words of a sexual and/or menacing nature, destruction of cherished things, etc.
8. Other GBV: This category should be used only if any of the above types do not apply and should be avoided as much as possible. *Please note that this category does NOT include intimate partner violence, child sexual abuse, sex trafficking, sexual slavery, sexual exploitation, or forced prostitution.*⁵

¹ The Incident Classification System is part of the process of developing a GBVIMS initiated in 2006 by OCHA, UNHCR, and the IRC. The GBVIMS global team has counted on technical guidance from the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's (IASC) Sub-Working Group on Gender and Humanitarian Action, throughout the project.

² Many laws set an age of consent. These legal parameters do not apply to the incident types proposed for this system.

³ Case definitions used in the context of GBV programming are not necessarily the legal definitions used in national laws and policies. Many forms of GBV may not be considered crimes, and legal definitions and terms vary greatly across countries and regions.

⁴ Several resources were considered when preparing this document. Most importantly, the IASC Guidelines for Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Setting, and Sexual and Gender-Based Violence against Refugees, Returnees, and Internally Displaced Persons, Guidelines for Prevention and Response (UNHCR)

Explanation:

Any act of GBV can involve multiple forms of violence (i.e. a woman who is raped, beaten and psychologically abused during the course of an incident). **The incident recorder can only capture one incident at a time and only one type of violence per incident.** To ensure valid and statistically comparable data, all those using the Incident Recorder must use the same approach to classifying any given incident. **The incident types are listed in a specific order to ensure statistically comparable data.**⁶ The instructions below allow us to use a process of elimination to determine the most specific incident type to use in classifying a reported incident.

Instructions for using the GBVIMS incident classification system:

- ✓ To determine the appropriate incident type described to you by the survivor, ask yourself the questions below in their given order.
- ✓ The first incident on this list that matches the description of the case being reported should be the one used to classify the incident.⁷
- ✓ Only incidents reported directly by the survivor (or by the survivor's guardian if the survivor is a child or is unable to report due to a disability) in the context of receiving a service can be recorded, which automatically excludes recording an incident in which the victim has already died at the time the incident is being recorded.⁸

1. Was the reported incident a case of **FGM/C**?
If yes → classify the incident as "FGM/C".
If no → proceed to the next incident type on the list.
2. Did the reported incident involve **penetration**?
If yes → classify the incident as "rape".
If no → proceed to the next incident type on the list.
3. Did the reported incident involve **unwanted sexual contact**?
If yes → classify the incident as "sexual assault".
If no → proceed to the next incident type on the list.
4. Did the reported incident involve **physical assault**?
If yes → classify the incident as "physical assault".
If no → proceed to the next incident type on the list.
5. Was the incident an act of **forced marriage**?
If yes → classify the incident as "forced marriage".
If no → proceed to the next incident type on the list.
6. Did the reported incident involve the **denial of resources, opportunities or services**?
If yes → classify the incident as "denial of resources, opportunities or services".
If no → proceed to the next incident type on the list.
7. Did the reported incident involve **psychological/emotional abuse**?
If yes → classify the incident as "psychological abuse".
If no → proceed to the next incident type on the list.
8. Is the reported incident a case of GBV that **does not fit into any of the above categories**?
If yes → classify the incident as "other GBV"
If no → provide services as appropriate but do not record the incident in this system

Service providers are encouraged to continue to capture all the information of reported incidents needed for service provision as described by their clients in their case notes. The type of information appropriate to collect and record may differ between services.

The following were not included as core incident types. However, they can be analyzed indirectly.

1. Intimate Partner Violence (often referred to as "domestic violence")⁹
2. Child Sexual Abuse
3. Early Marriage
4. Sexual Exploitation / Transactional Sex
5. Sexual Slavery
6. Harmful Traditional Practices

⁵ Please see below for explanation on how these can or cannot be captured in the GBV Incident Recorder.

⁶ The order is NOT intended to express an implied 'value' of the incident (i.e. rape is worse than forced marriage).

⁷ For example, within this system, an incident where a woman reports having been beaten by her husband and also forced to have sex with him the incident would be classified as "rape".

⁸ This rule was established to avoid 3rd party reports outside of the context of service delivery.

⁹ Intimate Partner Violence refers to violence perpetrated against an individual by her or his partner (whether legally married or cohabiting), boyfriend or girlfriend, or other sexual partner.

Explanation:

- **Intimate Partner Violence** is defined by the relationship between perpetrator and survivor and may include multiple forms of violence (rape, sexual assault, physical assault, psychological / emotional abuse, which can lead to inconsistencies in the recording of incidents. By analysis of the type of incident and the survivor's relationship to the perpetrator, one is able to identify which incidents took place within the context of an intimate partner relationship and they can be easily analyzed as such.

<u>Incident Type</u>		<u>Accused Perpetrator</u>		<u>Analysis</u>
Rape, Sexual Assault, Physical Assault, etc.	+	Intimate Partner	=	Intimate Partner Violence

- **Child Sexual Abuse** is defined by the age of the survivor it includes different forms of sexual violence, which can lead to inconsistencies in the recording of incidents. By analysis of two incident types (sexual assault and rape) and the age of the survivor, one is able to easily analyze which reported incidents were child sexual abuse cases.

<u>Incident Type</u>		<u>Accused Perpetrator</u>		<u>Adult/Child</u> ¹⁰		<u>Analysis</u>
Sexual Assault	+	Any	+	Child	=	Child Sexual Abuse
Rape	+	Any	+	Child	=	Child Sexual Abuse

- **Early marriage** is defined by the age of the survivor at the time of the incident of forced marriage. By analysis of the incident and the age of the survivor, one is able easily to analyze which reported incidents were early marriages.

<u>Incident Type</u>		<u>Accused Perpetrator</u>		<u>Adult/Child</u>		<u>Analysis</u>
Forced Marriage	+	Any	+	Child	=	Early Marriage

- **Sexual Exploitation and Transactional Sex** are defined by the power relationship between survivor and perpetrator, as well as the circumstances surrounding the incident - not the actual act of violence (i.e. rape or sexual assault), which can lead to inconsistencies in the recording of incidents. The incident recorder includes a column in which 'yes / no' can be indicated in response to the question "were money, goods, benefits and/or services exchanged in the context of the reported incident?" which can give a sense of whether the sexual violence being reported is exploitative in nature.
- **Sexual Slavery** is defined by the circumstances during which multiple acts and various forms of sexual violence are perpetrated over a period of time. The incident recorder is only able to capture one unique incident at a time. The Incident Recorder includes a column for indicating whether the incident was perpetrated while the survivor was: a) being forcibly transported (trafficked); b) conscripted; c) held against her/his will, abducted or kidnapped.
- **Harmful Traditional Practice** is defined as forms of violence that have been committed against women in certain communities and societies for so long that they are considered part of accepted cultural practice. Many harmful traditional practices can be defined elsewhere in this incident recorder, according to the existing seven core incident categories (excluding "other GBV"). To distinguish those actions that are culture or religion-specific, the incident recorder includes a "yes/no" tick box to enable data recorders to mark the incident as a harmful traditional practice and to analyze the data accordingly.

¹⁰ For the purposes of this system, all persons under 18 years of age are considered to be children