

European Union supports survivors of sexual violence in conflict

Today, Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development Neven **Mimica** is announcing a €2 million contribution by the European Union to the International Fund for Survivors of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence. The announcement takes place in the margins of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, where Commissioner **Mimica** is meeting with Nobel Peace Prize laureate Dr Denis Mukwege.

Commissioner Neven **Mimica** said: *“Violence against women and girls is one of the gravest violations of human rights. It comes with tremendous costs to individuals, as well as to society. By contributing €2 million to this Fund today, we want to reach out to women who had to go through the unspeakable pain of sexual violence in situations of war and conflict – and provide them with the support they need to rebuild their lives.”*

The Fund is built upon the commitments of the [United Nations](#), the work of Nobel Peace Prize laureates Dr [Denis Mukwege](#) and [Nadia Murad](#), as well as the voices of survivors of conflict-related sexual violence worldwide. It is an innovative collaboration between multiple partners to provide survivors of conflict-related sexual violence with access to reparations and other forms of redress, and to help them reintegrate fully into their communities. It will also serve to provide technical advice, establish good practices, and advocate for reparations for survivors. Dr Denis Mukwege and Nadia Murad are leading the initiative in close collaboration and consultation with other public, private and civil society stakeholders.

Nadia Murad said: *“Accepting responsibility and acknowledging the crimes committed is of utmost importance to survivors. It can enhance the healing process greatly”*.

Dr Denis Mukwege added: *“The importance of establishing this Fund for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence cannot be overstated. We have been advocating for such an initiative for many years. Seeing it come to fruition is a huge step forwards for humanity”*.

The official launch of the Fund is expected to take place on 30 October 2019 at the United Nations in New York. Countries such as France and Germany have also announced their support to the Fund. At the G7 Summit in Biarritz in August 2019, the EU had announced a €1 million contribution to the Fund.

Background

Dr Denis Mukwege is a Congolese gynaecologist. He founded and works at Panzi Hospital in Bukavu, Democratic Republic of the Congo, where he specialises in the treatment of women victims of rape and sexual violence by armed rebels. Nadia Murad is a member of the Yazidi minority in northern Iraq. In 2014, she survived a brutal attack on her home village from the Islamic State. In 2018,

Dr Denis Mukwege and Nadia Murad were jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for “their efforts to end the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war and armed conflict”.

The European Union has been supporting Dr Mukwege’s Panzi Foundation with €19 million since 2004. Panzi Hospital is internationally recognised as a reference model for care provided to victims of sexual violence.

In addition, in 2018 the EU strengthened its ongoing stabilisation and reconstruction efforts in the Sinjar region in Iraq through a €1 million contribution to Nadia Murad’s [“Sinjar Action Fund”](#). European development cooperation in the areas of the country liberated from Da’esh supports in particular the needs of displaced populations, vulnerable groups and local communities.