

# 'Sexual violence is a threat to every individual's right to a life of dignity' – UN chief

19 June 2017 – Marking the [International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict](#), United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres today paid tribute to the women, girls, men and boys who have suffered the atrocity of sexual violence in conflict, and reaffirmed our global commitment to eliminate this scourge.

Rape and sexual violence in conflict are [tactics of terrorism and war](#), used strategically to humiliate, degrade and destroy, and often to pursue a campaign of ethnic cleansing, the Secretary-General said in his message for the International Day.

They should never be downplayed as war's inevitable by-product, he continued. Sexual violence is a threat to every individual's right to a life of dignity, and to humanity's collective peace and security.

This year, the Day is being observed this year under the theme 'Preventing Sexual Violence Crimes through Justice and Deterrence.'

Mr. Guterres underscored that the UN is making every effort to address the root causes of conflict-related sexual violence by using preventive diplomacy, fostering peacebuilding and development, encouraging national action, and ending gender discrimination.

We will continue to monitor, report, provide care for survivors and spare no effort in pressing for perpetrators to be held accountable, he continued.

The Secretary-General stressed, The United Nations is constantly striving to enhance the capacity of our peacekeeping personnel to protect vulnerable civilians and to pursue justice in the case of all abuses. Each and every one of us has a responsibility to help put a stop to these crimes.

Mr. Guterres concluded by urging that everyone use this Day to rededicate ourselves, on behalf of every survivor, to ending sexual violence in conflict and providing peace and justice for all.

A [panel discussion](#) to commemorate the second annual International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict will be held at UN Headquarters in New York tomorrow.

In June 2015, the UN General Assembly proclaimed 19 June as the International Day to highlight the need to end conflict-related sexual violence, to honour the victims and survivors of sexual violence around the world and to pay tribute to all those who have courageously devoted their lives to and lost

their lives in standing up for the eradication of these crimes.