



The Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative (PSVI)

Focus Group and Workshop Recommendations

8th September, Mali

International Alert has just completed a short consultancy for the UK Foreign and Commonwealth office (FCO) Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative (PSVI), to develop a context specific understanding of stigma of female survivors of sexual violence in Mali and to identify areas of action required to improve responses for these survivors at individual, community and structural level.

Alert Mali has delivered four focus group discussions (FGDs) with thirty female participants and a total of twelve key informant interviews (KIIs) with local and regional level civil society organisations, religious leaders and local and representatives of local and regional authorities in the regions of Segou and Mopti in central Mali. The results of these FGDs and interviews, which especially represent the context of central Mali, were presented to a workshop of regional and local authorities, civil society actors and representatives from national and international NGOs in the city of Mopti on Monday August 28th. The following recommendations were validated by participants:

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is within
our power**

346 Clapham Road, London, SW9 9AP

Tel +44 (0)20 7627 6800 **Fax** +44 (0)20 7627 6900

Web www.international-alert.org

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Recommendation for Individual Level Actions:

To be actioned by individuals and engagements within families, neighbours:

1. Individual level engagements [conversations in families, with neighbours] to raise awareness of the impacts of sexual violence against women and girls and the stigmatisation of victims of sexual violence.
2. Each citizen should be encouraged to break the culture of silence and denounce cases of sexual violence, perpetrators and act to counter the stigmatisation of victims of sexual violence.
3. Strengthen the principles of gender equality between women and men at personal level through learning and teaching.
4. Strengthen and encourage personal commitments to emotionally and psychologically support victims of sexual violence [whom we know and have any contact with].
5. Adopt personal norms of non-violent behaviour towards girls and women.
6. Fully respect the laws that punish perpetrators of sexual violence and stigmatisation of victims of sexual violence.

Recommendation for Community Level Actions:

To be actioned by community and religious leaders, CSOs and associations, including those who support victims of sexual violence:

1. Establish and accompany local community level advocacy committees to support victims of sexual violence and to challenge stigmatisation.
2. Raise awareness with all sectors of local communities (victims, husbands, wives, parents, civil society organisations, community and religious leaders) of the [health, psychological and social] consequences of sexual violence and stigmatisation of the victims of sexual violence.

3. Strengthen religious and community leader's knowledge of national and international texts that penalise sexual violence and the stigmatisation of victims, through community level meetings, debates and [training] workshops.
4. Urge community, regional and national leaders to support girl victims of sexual violence who have abandoned their education to re-enter their local schools through local and national advocacy, including the Ministries of Justice and Education.
5. Launch local advocacy campaigns for the Ministries of Justice and Education to address the application of laws against sexual violence and stigmatisation against victims in all communities.
6. Advocate for local civil society organisations, national and international NGOs to create local level income generation programs for victims of sexual violence in order to increase their financial independence.

Recommendation for Structural Level Actions:

To be actioned by regional authorities, national Ministries and the international community

1. Reinforce capacities of magistrates through training and dissemination of updated legal texts and application of these texts regarding sexual violence and the stigmatisation of victims of sexual violence.
2. Campaign and raise awareness at national level against impunity for perpetrators of sexual violence and the stigmatisation of victims.
3. Inform girls and women of their rights through early literacy campaigns that raise issues of womens and girls' rights through literacy and learning.
4. Disseminate texts ratified by the State at all levels, to create public information / awareness through radio transmissions, especially national radio and community based radio stations transmitting in local languages.
5. Reinforce capacities of Malian journalists and security forces regarding [the causes and consequences of] sexual violence and stigmatisation through training and awareness raising.
6. Create a Toll-free phone number where women and girls across Mali can access free support and advice over the telephone.

