

# Gender-Based Violence Classification Tool<sup>1</sup>

*To be used with the Gender-Based Violence Information Management System (GBVIMS)*

The humanitarian community has not been able to collect, classify and analyze Gender-Based Violence (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 how types of GBV are classified. To address this problem, the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), the International Rescue Committee (IRC), and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) have developed a new GBV classification tool strictly for the purposes of standardizing GBV data collection across GBV service providers.

The criteria used to generate the classification tool's six types of GBV 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.<sup>2</sup> 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.

**Six Core Types of GBV.**<sup>3</sup> The six core GBV types were created for data collection and statistical analysis of GBV.<sup>4</sup> 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. **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.
2. **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. FGM/C is an act of violence that impacts sexual organs, and as such should be classified as sexual assault. *This incident type does not include rape, i.e., where penetration has occurred.*
3. **Physical Assault:** an act of 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. *This incident type does not include FGM/C.*
4. **Forced Marriage:** the marriage of an individual against her or his will.
5. **Denial of Resources, Opportunities or 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.
6. **Psychological / Emotional Abuse:** infliction of mental or emotional pain or injury. Examples include: threats of physical or sexual violence, intimidation, humiliation, forced isolation, stalking, verbal harassment, unwanted attention, remarks, gestures or written words of a sexual and/or menacing nature, destruction of cherished things, etc.

<sup>1</sup> The GBV Classification Tool was developed as part of the GBVIMS project 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.

<sup>2</sup> Many laws set an age of consent. These legal parameters do not apply to the GBV types proposed for this system. For the purposes of the GBVIMS a child is any survivor who was under 18 at the time when the incident occurred.




<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> 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 incident involving GBV can often involve more than one form 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 type of GBV per incident. To ensure valid and statistically comparable data, all those using the GBVIMS must use the same approach to determine how to classify a given incident based upon the type of GBV it involved. The types of GBV are listed in a specific order to ensure statistically comparable data.<sup>5</sup> 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 GBV Classification Tool

-  To determine the appropriate GBV classification for the incident described to you by the survivor, ask yourself the following questions in their given order.
-  If the answer to the question is “No” based upon the description of the reported incident, continue down the list to the next question. Stop at the first question that can be answered “Yes” based upon the description of the reported incident. The GBV type corresponding to this question is what should be used to classify the incident.<sup>6</sup>
-  The GBVIMS only records incidents reported directly by the survivor (or by the survivor’s guardian if the survivor is a child or unable to report due to a disability) in the context of service provision. Thus any incident in which the victim has died prior to the report, should not be recorded for the GBVIMS.<sup>7</sup>

1. Did the reported incident involve penetration?

If yes → classify the GBV as “Rape”.  
If no → proceed to the next GBV type on the list.

2. Did the reported incident involve unwanted sexual contact?

If yes → classify the GBV as “Sexual Assault”.  
If no → proceed to the next GBV type on the list.

3. Did the reported incident involve physical assault?

If yes → classify the GBV as “Physical Assault”.  
If no → proceed to the next GBV type on the list.

4. Was the incident an act of forced marriage?

If yes → classify the GBV as “Forced Marriage”.  
If no → proceed to the next GBV type on the list.

5. Did the reported incident involve the denial of resources, opportunities or services?

If yes → classify the GBV as “Denial of Resources, Opportunities, or Services”.  
If no → proceed to the next GBV type on the list.

6. Did the reported incident involve psychological/emotional abuse?

If yes → classify the GBV as “Psychological / Emotional Abuse”.  
If no → proceed to the next GBV type on the list.

7. Did the reported incident involve GBV?

If yes → Start over at number 1 and try to reclassify the type of GBV again. *(If you have tried to classify the GBV multiple times, ask your supervisor or GBVIMS focal point for support)*  
If no → classify the violence as “Non-GBV”

Service providers are encouraged to capture all relevant information provided by a survivor about the incident for case management and service provision in their case notes. The type of information appropriate to collect and record may differ between services.

<sup>5</sup> The order is NOT intended to express an implied ‘value’ of the GBV types (i.e. rape is worse than forced marriage).

<sup>6</sup> 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 GBV would be classified as “rape”.

<sup>7</sup> This rule was established to avoid 3rd party reports outside of the context of service delivery.

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

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

**Explanation:**

1. 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 GBV and the survivor’s relationship to the perpetrator, one is able to identify and analyze which incidents took place within the context of an intimate partner relationship.

TYPE OF GBV		ACCUSED PERPETRATOR		CASE CONTEXT
Rape Sexual Assault Physical Assault Denial of Resources Psychological / Emotional Abuse	+	Intimate Partner / Former Partner	=	Intimate Partner Violence

2. 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.

TYPE OF GBV		ACCUSED PERPETRATOR		AGE OF SURVIVOR		CASE CONTEXT
Rape Sexual Assault	+	Any	+	Child	=	Child Sexual Abuse

3. 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.

TYPE OF GBV		ACCUSED PERPETRATOR		AGE OF SURVIVOR		CASE CONTEXT
Forced Marriage	+	Any	+	Child	=	Early Marriage

4. Possible 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.

5. Possible 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) being forced to join an armed group (forced conscription); c) held against her/his will, abducted or kidnapped.

6. Harmful Traditional Practices are defined by the local social, cultural and religious values where the incident take place. To distinguish those acts of GBV that are harmful traditional practices specific to the context in which they took place, the Standard Intake / Initial Assessment form includes a question to indicate whether the GBV was a type of harmful traditional practice. The responses must be customized locally to define the incident as 1 of up to 5 relevant types of harmful traditional practices found in that context. The Incident Recorder will be able to quantify how many instances were marked “yes/ “no” for Harmful Traditional Practice and the frequency of the individual customized types.

TYPE OF GBV		ALLEGED PERPETRATOR		HARMFUL TRADITIONAL PRACTICE?		CASE CONTEXT
Any	+	Any	+	Yes- Bride Capture	=	Harmful Traditional Practice
<u>Sexual Assault</u>	+	Any	+	FGM/C	=	Harmful Traditional Practice