

Effect of dispute resolution on justice

Headline finding: Dispute resolution interventions in the study had limited impact on achieving justice, as legal mechanisms were often weak, survivors faced stigma and retaliation.

Geographical distribution: Sub saharan Africa

Effect: Low (Evidence suggests interventions improved reporting but did not reduce violence)

Confidence in study findings: High and medium confidence

Short summary

Dispute resolution interventions combined community mediation, legal reform, capacity-building, traditional dispute resolution, and survivor support to address sexual violence in conflict settings. It aimed to reduce risk by strengthening justice systems, engaging communities, and supporting survivors. While some services improved survivor well-being and awareness, evidence showed limited impact on reducing violence. Legal responses were often slow, with low conviction rates and potential harm to survivors.

Long summary

The intervention

The interventions included community mediation programs using trained mediators to reduce tensions and improve conflict resolution. In addition, legal approaches focused on strengthening laws against gender-based violence and improving survivors' access to justice. It also incorporated capacity-building efforts that trained community leaders and provided aid to workers in conflict resolution. Traditional mechanisms involved customary leaders and local laws to settle disputes. Lastly, survivor support programs were aimed to help reintegrate individuals through inclusive dispute resolution processes.

How the intervention is expected to work:

The strategies in this regard are supposed to work through a combination that is implemented to ensure the dispute resolution in place. The strategies target different aspects of the issue, including provision of care and support to survivors, addressing structural and security vulnerabilities, engaging communities in prevention efforts, and strengthening legal responses. Community involvement is critical in making interventions acceptable and culturally sensitive, hence increasing the chances of positive outcomes. Legal interventions are expected to positively contribute towards justice by holding perpetrators accountable and reducing impunity, which could contribute to deterring the occurrence of further violence.

The evidence base

The summary cell consists of one systematic review that included 40 studies that examined the impact of interventions aimed at reducing the risk and incidence of sexual violence in armed conflicts and humanitarian crises mainly in Africa and post-conflict settings.

The review evidence

Many interventions, such as survivor care including medical, counseling, and advocacy services showed benefits for survivor well-being but lacked direct evidence of reducing violence. Livelihood programs like vocational training had mixed outcomes, sometimes even increasing vulnerability. Community mobilization efforts, such as awareness campaigns targeting men and leaders, improved knowledge and reporting but did not clearly reduce violence. Legal responses, including prosecutions by international courts, were slow and often ineffective, with low conviction rates and harmful consequences for survivors, such as trauma and retaliation. The review did not mention any effect size, the data is narratively synthesized

Confidence Assessment : High and medium confidence

Source: Spangaro (2013)