



**НАЦІОНАЛЬНА СПІЛКА  
ЖУРНАЛІСТІВ УКРАЇНИ**

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**ANALYTICAL REPORT**

**according to the results of a sociological survey**

**on the topic of**

**"Coverage of conflict-related sexual violence"**

*The study was conducted in the form of a focus group in February 2024 as part of the project "Promoting social inclusion of survivors of conflict-related sexual violence and breaking the chain of stigma" implemented by the National Union of Journalists of Ukraine with the support of the Mukwege Foundation.*

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CRSV - Conflict-related sexual violence

AFU - Armed Forces of Ukraine

## SUMMARY

Ø "Conflict-related sexual violence" is one of the most important and relevant topics today and in the future. It is predicted that a significant number of cases of CRSV will be recorded after the de-occupation of the country's territories. This is evidenced by the stories of Ukrainians who returned from Russian captivity or those who were able to leave the occupied territories. It was noted that there will be much more materials on this topic after the war ends, as more eyewitnesses will come forward.

Ø To date, respondents have reported an insufficient number of materials on conflict-related sexual violence.

Ø According to the survey participants, the level of awareness of journalists on the research topic is low. From the examples given by the respondents during the discussion, it can be concluded that there is an insufficient level of training in higher education institutions in the areas of working with complex topics and target audiences. In addition, there is a lack of understanding of the importance of participating in trainings on this topic.

Ø A large number of media representatives, according to the focus group participants, are not interested in preparing materials on conflict-related sexual violence. The main reasons include: the risk of not receiving financial remuneration if the subjects of the stories decide not to publish the materials; high psychological stress during interviews and further preparation of materials.

Ø In general, respondents understand that they can play an important role in documenting war crimes related to sexual violence. The group members noted that they have an interest and desire to work in this area, provided that they receive grant support for their activities or are paid. The issue of funding comes to the fore, as the preparation of materials on conflict-related sexual violence is quite complex and time-consuming. At the same time, there is a risk that at the last moment the heroes may change their minds and refuse to be published.

Ø To popularize the topic in society, participants suggested a comprehensive approach. The government and non-governmental organizations need to work together to conduct educational events, as well as to introduce social advertising and promote materials in the media and social networks.

## MAIN RESULTS

The study participants emphasized the changes in the work and perception of journalism that have taken place since the start of the full-scale invasion. First of all, it concerns changes in the topics of stories. Some respondents called themselves "war journalists" and also noted that they began interviewing people who had been captured or relatives of fallen soldiers of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. The topic of violence, including sexual violence, also appears more often in the information space.

*"...what started out as a full-scale project has completely changed the way I think about journalism. And, in fact, I wouldn't want to have such an experience. But, unfortunately, we have what we have. We all became war journalists. And we witnessed these events directly. And we communicate with people who were in captivity. And we experience all these emotions with them again and again. And it's really hard."*

## GENERAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE TOPIC OF CONFLICT-RELATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE. RELEVANCE OF THE TOPIC IN THE CONTEXT OF RUSSIAN AGGRESSION IN UKRAINE

**Definition and perception of the terms "sexual violence" and "conflict-related sexual violence".**

In general, sexual violence includes bullying, physical violence, emotional violence, threats, forcing to listen or watch a sexual act, etc. It was noted that journalists were trained on the topic of sexual violence, where they considered all existing forms.

*"When a person is perceived as a sexual object, not as a person"*

*"That's right, where we started, and the same trainings on defining what constitutes sexual violence, there are 11 or 12 points. And even forcing to watch or forcing to listen. Listening is a separate category."*

The term "conflict-related sexual violence" is narrower and is part of the term "sexual violence". The difference is that CRSV is considered a war crime, as well as crimes committed by members of the military.

*"...if in normal circumstances a person, not everyone, would commit sexual violence, then in a conflict, the circle of potential rapists and abusers is wider, in my opinion."*

*"It is a means of conquest, not just violence for the sake of violence, but a means of conquering the inhabitants of the occupied territory. The advantages, the strength, of the nation, of its power, as a demonstration of power."*

At the same time, it was noted that there were some isolated cases of sexual violence by members of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. However, the majority of crimes were committed by representatives of the occupying army.

*"...they interviewed residents of the liberated territories of Kyiv region, and I understand that there were references to such crimes by the territorial defense, for example, ours and the Armed Forces of Ukraine. There are literally isolated cases"*

### **The relevance of the topic of conflict-related sexual violence.**

The topic of violence, including sexual violence, is quite relevant today.

*"And maybe more, because those returning from the front with their traumatized psyche are more important than me. It seems to me that later on we will actually open up to the fact that there will be a moment*

*when we, as journalists, will have to talk about this and look for some ways. But it seems to me that this is what awaits us, unfortunately."*

Among the reasons for its relevance were the following:

- ü The threat is real, and there is a high probability of encountering an IED;
- ü The topic has become much closer, survivors can find themselves in the social circle of any person;
- ü Understanding the importance of showing that this is a crime and it must be punished;
- ü The need to remove the labels "it's his own fault" or "any military man is a potential rapist."

*"I fully agree that we expect there to be a certain wave of violence, but this makes society treat every person in uniform with some caution. And this is also a label on an innocent person, on an innocent military man."*

- ü Enabling the victim(s) to feel that they are not alone;

*"And it seems to be very cool, because a person who hasn't experienced this, at least they can read that they are not the only one, and what to do, maybe what to do to go crazy there."*

- ü Increasing the number of people who can talk about their traumatic experiences.

*"I think more people may become able to talk about it. They are not so closed off, because it is purely tangible, that this is not just your personal misfortune, a crime that you have faced, but that many people can face it."*

It was also noted that the problem of conflict-related sexual violence is not only a problem for survivors of CRSV. It is also a problem for their family members, relatives and friends. They also feel the psychological burden of the traumatic experience that their loved one has undergone.

During the discussion, the respondents asked the question "Is society ready to perceive the topic of sexual violence during the conflict?" It was noted that the participants of the study do not see the readiness of the population to accept information on CRSV.

A parallel was drawn with the actualization of the Holodomor. Respondents noted that, despite the complexity of the topic, it is important and will be sufficiently popularized among the population.

*"Do you remember when people started talking about the Holodomor before Yushchenko? Of course, it was an important topic that affected almost every family and had a very serious impact on society, which is still felt today. And what did they say then? They wrote in social networks, in conversations in general, that there was too much of it, they made up some jokes about it, jokes about the Holodomor."*

The study participants predict that a high number of stories from survivors of sexual violence during the conflict in the currently occupied territories will appear. They support their opinions with the stories of the heroes and heroines of their stories, who tell about cases of sexual violence by the Russian military in the occupied territories.

*"I already know, by the way. One of the characters told us. She came from Berdiansk and left the occupation. She is 18 years old. And she says that Russian military guys come up to girls with assault rifles and present them to the temple. She says, let's get acquainted with young girls. And she says, we are sitting there and we don't know what to say. Well, this is also sexual violence. And it's a horror. And she says it's psychological. And she says, "I know cases when young boys, girls, even minors, are forced to perform some kind of sexual act under the gun."*

## COVERAGE OF CONFLICT-RELATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN THE MEDIA

### Sufficiency of materials on conflict-related sexual violence.

The focus group participants noted that materials on conflict-related sexual violence are practically absent in the information space.

The reasoning behind the relatively small number of articles on the topic of the JCPOA in the media was as follows:

ü Refusal of survivors to be interviewed;

The following reasons stood out among the refusals:

đ A ban on communication with the media, probably from law enforcement agencies (there have been cases of refusals to give interviews after the SBU and police have approved the facts to be discussed);

đ Remnants of the re-occupation of the territory in which they live;

*"People, if we talk about the de-occupied territories, sometimes people are afraid that something will return. This is in the realities of our time... There was a lot of this. Later, when we realized that we had pushed the enemy very far away, people started talking."*

đ Prohibition from law enforcement agencies to participate in interviews.

*"Because I was telling my colleagues that we recently had five people who were civilian prisoners of war take off. We don't know what happened to them there because we didn't have an interview. But at some stage, everything is fine, we will meet with you, we will talk, but now we will call there, I understand, the SBU or the police, who is in contact with them. And I understand that they are not allowed to talk much. In our case, in Zaporizhzhia, for example, we have had five people take off in the last week and a half."*

- ü The inability to receive financial compensation for the material written and the time spent if the victim refuses to publish;

*"...when you've worked for a month and suddenly people refuse, you can't do anything. I mean, it's already written, he says I don't want to. Yes, that's exactly it. Even now we don't take on any work. Unfortunately, it's not good, but..."*

- ü The presence of incorrect information about cases of conflict-related sexual violence in Telegram channels, especially at the beginning of a full-scale war;

*"You know, I think the telegram channels are to blame. When a lot of them appeared at the beginning of the war, and, as a rule, not all of them were journalists who run these channels. And at first, they either had some dry statistics, so many people were raped, so many people were killed, or it was written in such detail that you couldn't even read it. And it seems to me that there was no golden mean to convey this information to people in a quality way."*

- ü Difficulties in finding survivors of conflict-related sexual violence;

*"I think it might be difficult to look for just these cases. I mean, you don't have a list where you can go and ask this person, that person, or the other. Maybe one of them will agree. If you try to find a person, if they have reported it to law enforcement, law enforcement will not make these cases public."*

*"It's not that we don't want to talk about it. It's hard for us, we can't find people who are ready to talk about it. That is, even on the rights to remain anonymous, not to show their faces, to change their voices, to protect the person as much as possible, so that there are no signs to identify them. But still, we occasionally encounter such cases that it is very difficult for us to find a person."*

- ü A small number of de-occupied territories;



*"... I think if Berdiansk is de-occupied and the Southeast is de-occupied, I think there will be a lot of such cases. And it's just possible that there is not enough attention due to the fact that a small area is de-occupied and, perhaps, we have such material."*

ü Lack of cases on punishment of perpetrators.

At the same time, it was noted that there were more materials on the topic of the JCCC compared to the time before the start of the full-scale war. Among the reasons were noted:

Ø Massive incidence of conflict-related sexual violence;

Ø Interest of civil society organizations and journalists in the topic and its coverage;

Ø Emergence or increase in the number of independent journalists/media.

During the discussion, the respondents shared their **methods and life hacks for working with survivors of conflict-related sexual violence**.

Arguments used when working with survivors of conflict-related sexual violence about the need and importance of disclosing their experiences:

ü Documentation of the crime;

ü An additional fact in court to punish the perpetrators;

ü Informing the world about the problem in Ukraine;

*"...she speaks Russian, and she says, I'm not ashamed to show my face, my name, because I understand that if we don't talk about it, if we keep silent, we will pretend that nothing happened. But it did happen, and there are many people who suffered like me."*

ü The opportunity to tell the stories of those who died from the violence of the Russian military, along with their own.

*"He was one of the prisoners, of the torture chamber, from the Kharkiv region, de-occupied. And he said that I know exactly how many neighbors, acquaintances, or people who were brought from other villages, that they will not say anything anymore because they were killed. I'm now, well, it sounds a little pretentious, that I'm going to be their voice or something, he just says, and they won't say anything because they're not there. Or their experience is more traumatic, and so they won't say. I have a smaller one, but I can testify to what happened to me, and I can tell you what I saw with him."*

### **Search for heroes for the material.**

It was noted that they look for the heroes of their stories through their own acquaintances and colleagues. At the same time, it was noted that, for example, human rights experts advise looking for survivors' contacts through NGOs. The argument is that in the eyes of future subjects, media representatives will be more serious and more trustworthy.

*"...to look for such heroes through civil society organizations. That is, in this way, you immediately inspire more trust in these people, that you did not just find them somewhere, but that you turned to a non-governmental organization, and in a non-governmental organization, these people support each other."*

### **Difficulties for media representatives to work with the topic of conflict-related sexual violence.**

The respondents highlighted the difficulties of working with the topic of the SPSS:

ü Psychological state - unwillingness to relive the events of the hero's story;

*"As a real journalist, you experience it together with them... Well, when we had a training with Lyudmyla Huseynova in Zaporizhzhia, after the*

*training, many journalists who have 20 years of experience there actually said that they were not psychologically ready to write about it."*

*"For example, we had a training and I said 80%. If not more journalists said they were not ready to write about it. If not more. And I understand these people, but then, if you organize such trainings, such seminars, then you have to look for journalists who are ready to dive into this morally and psychologically."*

ü The need to listen to an interview several times to write/edit an article or story;

*"And I understand perfectly well that, well, everything is difficult, because, for example, there, my journalist then listens to it all, writes it, and I then listen to it all, edit it. So it's not just that you recorded the interview, you're going through it with the person."*

ü Difficulties in describing the topic, the story in such a way as to convey the victim's story as accurately as possible, while not traumatizing the audience, readers;

*"...it's hard to find the right words, the right words to keep it alive, and to describe what the man went through, and at the same time not to traumatize the audience again, so that they don't think it's some kind of cannibalism."*

ü The emergence of a sense of shame for men who have committed violence among male media representatives (it was emphasized that according to statistics, most survivors of violence are women, and perpetrators are men);

ü survivors can seek help from the media in solving their problems, ranging from psychological to financial.

*"...she can see you, you come to interview her, and she sees you as some kind of salvation. That is, you can somehow give her hope that you will solve her problems. That is, your task is to talk about the situation, but not to solve it. It happened that a person called me later and said,*

*"When are you going to help me after the interview, after the material is published, when are you going to help me, or help me financially?"*

## **Advice for media representatives on working with survivors of conflict-related sexual violence.**

The discussion highlighted tips for media representatives on working with survivors of CRSV:

- ü The journalist and cameraman must be women (even if the victim is a man);
- ü Do not pursue sensationalism, but focus on protecting the victim and maximizing the benefits to society from the interview.
- ü Arrange a date, time and place for the meeting that is convenient for the victim;
- ü Expect a lengthy interview. Take into account that the victim will want to spend a lot of time with the media and not have any other appointments or activities planned for that day;
- ü Listen attentively to the hero of the story;
- ü Be prepared to make tactile contact if the victim wants it;
- ü Obligatory submission of materials for approval by survivors before publication;
- ü Explain the purpose of the questions asked during the interview;
- ü Arrangements for video recording (vomiting face, voice changes, etc.);
- ü It is imperative to find out whether a criminal case has been initiated;

*"The legal aspect is also important in terms of whether a person has turned to law enforcement, whether criminal proceedings have been initiated, or whether they are still being opened, so that you also*

*understand who they are and whether they will continue. Because we remember that a criminal case can also be initiated based on material published by the media."*

*"In this case, maybe it's wrong, but in this case you are a little bit like a psychologist or a confessor, I don't know what to call it, when someone talks to you. And you just have to be ready to listen. You have to give the person as much time as they are willing to talk to you. That's the first thing that I think is very important, that we don't rush, we don't plan three more shootings or three more interviews after that, because this is your hero now, and he is the most important."*

*"...maybe my colleagues will disagree, or it's wrong, but this text, this video should be seen by her before publication, because she may change her mind, because she may say something on emotion. Unfortunately, there must be such censorship from the hero, because it is even more so if a person says his or her name and somehow opens himself or herself."*

They drew a parallel with the social campaign on HIV/AIDS. They explained that survivors of conflict-related sexual violence should be treated in the same way. Namely:

- ü Widespread publicity about the importance of the topic;
- ü Explain to the victim the need to tell their story;

*"At the same time, we worked with people infected with HIV. And they were told that they should not be ashamed, they live with it, it is not a taboo or a stigma. I think it is important that since this topic is growing now, it has emerged and will continue to emerge, it is obvious that we need to pay more attention to it, to pay more attention to such education for journalists."*

- ü A consultation with a psychologist is mandatory, as well as an invitation to meet with the victim;

*"A journalist must prepare very carefully for a meeting and communication, for an interview with a hero or heroine, and among the tips was even the suggestion to go with a psychologist. First, you should consult with a psychologist yourself, or better yet, take a psychologist with you, because a person is a specialist, they will be able to see where there may be a trigger, where you need to stop, where to give water to drink."*

ü Ask questions as simply as possible.

During the conversation, we came to the conclusion that it is wrong to say that statistically, women are the survivors of conflict-related sexual violence. They emphasized the large number of men with signs of sexual violence in torture chambers in the de-occupied territories.

*"I'm just an example of why I insist that, well, I can't say it's equal, but definitely not more women, depending on what kind of violence is meant. If we take, when we liberated, thank God, the Kharkiv region, a large de-occupied territory, almost every village had a torture chamber. What does a torture chamber mean? It doesn't have to be, I don't know, I'm sorry, pulling out nails, it's violence when they touch the genitals, for example, right? And who did they drag to it? ATO soldiers, people who, men who had a strong patriotic position. And we ended up with what? With the fact that the torture chamber was filled with men by three quarters. And the rest were women, teachers, kindergarten teachers, firefighters, who also had a patriotic, well, educators, teachers - that's one thing, they were appointed as educators, precisely to avoid forcing them to work with Russia... Therefore, most of the men in the torture chambers were men, and they were also subjected to sexual violence, not in terms of sexual intercourse, but the same torture with electric shocks through, you know, genitals, for example."*

It was noted that the average media consumer does not know about a dozen types of sexual violence. In most cases, they associate sexual violence exclusively with rape. Therefore, it is important to educate the population and write educational articles on this topic. It is necessary to give people a broad understanding of the terms "sexual violence" and "conflict-related sexual violence."

*"That's why we need to write, to call it like it is. To say that it is torture or coercion, that it is sexual violence. That is, we need to educate."*

It is worth highlighting the problem of using terminology. In the course of the study, respondents repeatedly used the term "victim" to refer to survivors of sexual violence during the conflict. When attention was drawn to this fact, the study participants not only stopped using this term, but also emphasized that it is used only when talking about a deceased person. It was also noted that educational institutions do not emphasize this kind of detail when teaching journalism.

*"Yes, you're probably right that when you call a person a victim, a victim, it demoralizes them, they've already suffered enough. Here they also read about themselves. Our media colleagues. This word is not correct. It's just not proven. If we were to inform journalists, perhaps some kind of educational work is needed."*

### **The role of journalists in documenting a crime**

In general, respondents see a significant role for journalists in covering and recording the events of the war, documenting crimes against Ukrainians, including cases of conflict-related sexual violence.

*"We are writing history. We record everything that happens."*

But, at the same time, they noted that today this role is not explicit, and journalistic investigations are almost absent. The reason:

- ü The significant amount of time that needs to be spent on preparing the material;
- ü Inability to get paid at all, or partial payment and its level does not correspond to the efforts expended.

At the same time, it was noted that journalistic material is not enough to bring war criminals to justice. However, criminal proceedings can be opened based on the facts of the story.

*"But from a legal point of view, it's hardly possible to do this on the basis of a journalistic material. You can open a criminal case, but to bring someone to justice, you will still need an official investigation."*

Journalists perceive their work more as highlighting a problem rather than documenting a crime.

*"I think that we, as media people, perceive that we are documenting these crimes. It's our job to record and bring it to the audience."*

It was noted that interviews should be conducted as soon as possible to document conflict-related sexual violence as a war crime. It was noted that over time, survivors tend to forget details and interpret what happened to them differently. And there are cases when the story is so different that it is unclear which is more truthful when you first talk to them or a few years later.

*"But it is forgotten. People tell stories in different ways. We talked two years ago. There is still a story to tell. But he can already speak. Yes, but I don't know when the truth was. Either then or now. And also what goes right over time, in terms of the perception of his grief."*

Respondents noted that they were ready to work alongside law enforcement agencies in the de-occupied territories. And they are ready to record crimes even at the risk of law enforcement seizing the materials and banning publication.

*"I think we're ready. Everyone is used to this. Everyone has probably had such cases."*



## PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSISTANCE TO JOURNALISTS WHO COMMUNICATE WITH survivors

The focus group participants shared their emotions and feelings that they experience when working with the topic of the SPSS:

ü Feelings of guilt for "making the person relive those events";

ü Fear that the journalist or his or her family and friends may find themselves in the position of the victim;

*"...a little bit of personal fear that you might end up in this place. You are not only there because you are afraid, you can become a victim of it. You try on these roles for yourself, for your loved ones, for your family. A journalist is a person with imagination."*

*"And I really understand that journalists are, well, also, well, you can just do your job, and they will follow you there for two weeks, and then they will put you in a trunk and take you somewhere. And they will take you there twice for execution. But, well, in the sense that, yes, you put yourself in that place."*

ü Desolation, apathy;

*"You know, sometimes there is such emptiness, and you don't want anything. It's so empty. Especially, I mean, not at the moment, even when you are interviewing, when you are listening to it, but when you are editing it, listening to it again, experiencing it again, again. Because we still take the most, the most, the most, the most catchy moments in the story. And again, again, again. And then you exhale, and it's really empty."*

ü Sadness;

ü Depression;

ü Powerlessness.

Additionally, procrastination was noted in relation to the preparation of material for publication or a story for television. The biggest difficulty is the need to listen to the victim's story in addition.

*"And so the procrastination and postponement begins. I want to put it off for an hour, two hours, until the evening, so that I don't have to listen to it a second time."*

They expressed a need for psychological training that would provide relief and help overcome the negative impact of work on mental health. The most convenient ways to get psychological support were identified:

ü Group conversations;

*"And here is even such a group conversation. I have a lot of colleagues from the Kharkiv region who have moved from such group discussions to personal ones, because you are still doing your own personal thing in addition to work, and it is also connected to the war in its various manifestations. Therefore, from group to personal, there should be a lot of this, with different approaches, both professional and personal, I think, just to make different aspects interesting."*

ü Individual meetings with a psychologist;

ü Psychological trainings;

An additional criterion for a psychologist is specialization in working with journalists.

*"...it is necessary, but with psychologists, high-quality psychologists, and those specialized in journalists, because this is a slightly different situation than just everyday things."*

At the same time, they also noted a low level of response to psychological support measures, whether in group or face-to-face meetings, online or offline.

*"...at the same time, probably 15 people requested it, but no one came.  
Because he was too busy"*

Some of the study participants also have a certain prejudice against psychologists. It was noted that free activities cannot be effective because experienced and high-quality psychologists work for quite high fees.

A separate opinion was voiced regarding the negative attitude to psychological trainings for media representatives. Attention was focused on the greater need for such events for representatives of the Armed Forces and veterans.

*"Because a good specialist is usually always busy. And not for a journalist like me, but really for a soldier who needs it. And it's normal."*

## **ACTUALIZATION OF THE TOPIC OF CONFLICT-RELATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE. SOLVING PROBLEMS FACED BY JOURNALISTS WHEN COVERING THE TOPIC**

### **Top 5 problems that prevent journalists from covering the topic of conflict-related sexual violence. Options for solving them.**

The list of Top 5 problems that prevent journalists from covering the topic of the JFK included:

- ü The reluctance of the characters in the stories to be public;
- ü Lack of information and difficulties in finding the hero of the future material;
- ü Lack of sufficient staff to devote sufficient time to interviews and preparation of material;
- ü Lack of training for journalists (psychological and professional);
- ü Law enforcement agencies prohibit survivors from participating in interviews.

*"But there is no time. In provincial publications. It's a professional approach. Really! There is no time. Two people on the spot"*

*"Now, during the war, there is a terrible crisis. That's why there are very few people working in publications or in TV studios. There are simply not enough people to take up such topics and develop them. And the news is flowing, and you have to take this news and develop it, first of all. Otherwise, you simply won't have anything to put on."*

*"Listen, there's also a point here, for example, like in our case... the SBU, some law enforcement agencies called, and the person was forbidden to tell the story. That is, this is also a factor that higher authorities do not allow people who have suffered to disclose this information. And it does not depend on the journalist."*

There were several options for solving these problems:

• Conducting educational campaigns among the country's population.

They emphasized the need to outline the problem in order to popularize the topic. First of all, according to the respondents, this should be done by civil society organizations (including international ones) in cooperation with the authorities. In this case, the media can become an auxiliary tool for dissemination.

*"Educational companies are among the people. We met a good representative of such an international organization. They have traveled to various conflict and emergency zones. And they have experience. Now I don't remember which African country, when there was a war, but I think it was a civil war, and it was women, survivors of sexual violence. He says that it worked to some extent because people started talking, at least on radio programs. "We don't talk about it on the Internet, we don't talk about it in newspapers, there are no radio programs. Radio programs that explained simply that you are a victim, a victim, not a victim, the simplest words were used to let people know that it is not their fault and that they will not be punished for it if they say so."*

• Discussion of the topic by opinion leaders, such as the president.

*"If the president would come out, at least once, and devote at least one of his speeches to this topic. I think it would be very convincing."*

• Training for journalists on how to work with this topic.

*"And to train journalists who want to go there, or who are interested in this topic. And they need to learn purposefully. To avoid these phrases that people don't want to use later."*

• Psychological support and rehabilitation programs for survivors.

This will help remove the psychological barrier of unwillingness to share traumatic experiences.

• Establishing cooperation with organizations that help people after the de-occupation of the territories (psychologists and international organizations).

This will help you find potential characters for your stories.

• Providing grants or scholarships for journalists working on conflict-related sexual violence.

• Introduce a prize, an award for the best material on the topic of the SPSC.

*"I think that this award should be, well, like an Oscar, so that people would talk about it, so that it would simply emphasize professionalism and demand professionalism from all of us... I mean, there should really be some kind of incentive for the development of such specifics. Or, like there is some kind of pride in the profession, here, so that it is a separate genre."*

• The presence in the media of stories about the punishment of perpetrators that are not currently available in Ukraine.

ð Coverage and popularization of similar experiences and stories of survivors in other countries.

**Popularize the topic of conflict-related sexual violence among media representatives and the general population.**

To encourage journalists to work more on CRSV, they should be paid regardless of whether they publish a story or not. It was emphasized that media representatives need to cover their own needs and provide for their families.

*"Financial independence. That's the only thing. It's not because journalists want money, it's just that you need to spend your time, you need to eat. That's the only reason. Either you made 15 news items for the website that day, which was read by 50 thousand readers. Or you work for 2 weeks, and then 2 thousand readers read your work that you paid for. Or nothing at all. They will ban it and that's it. As a rule, this is the case."*

In general, this issue can be solved by grant support for writing materials on the topic of the SPSC.

Additionally, it was suggested that a special course on the topic be introduced in the senior courses of journalism faculties.

*"I would also like to add that it would be nice to have a special course somewhere in the master's programs, at journalism faculties, to give students master's theses on these topics, to prepare them for media coverage of these topics. Then students will contact the media, for example, to ask what you have written about this topic."*

Among the suggestions for mobilizing society and communicating the importance of the topic were: conducting an educational campaign on the topic, as well as engaging specialists to promote and promote materials written by journalists.

*"Involve PR specialists. If you want people to read, this is not a question for journalists. A journalist can prepare a good article or interesting material. But it is the reader, the viewer, the listener who needs to be encouraged to watch it."*

It was emphasized that the issue of popularization of the topic should be addressed at the state level. It is necessary to develop a program that will include all the aspects mentioned above. It is also necessary to involve television - to create a show or to invite characters who are survivors of sexual violence.

An example was given of the promotion of feminine terms, which were negatively perceived at the beginning, but have now become fully integrated into everyday life.

*"I would have proposed it with feminine gender. How was everyone against it? They were against the use of feminine titles. Now it's almost... Two years have passed, two years at most. Who organized this company? We should hire them, give them a medal, and use their experience. How did they do it? In just a couple of years?"*

In addition, advice was provided to civil society organizations working with survivors of sexual violence, including conflict-related violence. It was noted that organizations should become more public and talk about themselves in the country's media space.

*"It is those NGOs that deal with these issues that help support survivors of sexual violence, and they should also tell more about themselves. They should enter the information space. And not just eat up grants. Yes, because they work, they help, but they also need to be implemented. They pass us by. If we, for example, are not interested in this issue, it will somehow go away..."*

**Anastasia Bastrakova, Head of the Qualitative Research Department at KIIS, PhD in Psychology, was the expert for the focus group "Coverage of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence".**

