

The project “Coping strategies of survivors of war rape and sexual violence – Lessons Learnt in Bosnia and Herzegovina” implemented by *medica mondiale* aimed to contribute in rebuilding a peaceful society in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where an estimated 20,000 to 50,000 women and girls were systematically raped during the war.

Evidence-based data from scientific analysis helped to identify improved strategies for interventions and government policies to eliminate SGBV. Research on the long-term consequences of war rape and coping strategies adopted by survivors enabled Medica Zenica to improve the quality of their direct services.

The launch of a platform for knowledge sharing and learning during the conference “Working Towards Dignity - 20 years of fighting sexualized violence”<sup>1</sup> strengthened networks between *medica mondiale* and its international partner organizations by fostering cooperation in knowledge transfer and advocacy.

Research results were published<sup>2</sup> and presented to parliamentarians, the media and national and international organisations in the White Hall of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo on 7 October 2014.

Survivors’ testimonies confirm the relevance of the trauma-sensitive approach which *medica mondiale* and *Medica Zenica* developed and adopted. The report’s title, “We are still alive - We have been harmed, but we are brave and strong”, a literal quotation from one of the research participants, points to its key message.

Besides revealing key data on how war rape continues to affect the lives of survivors today, the research resulted in a series of recommendations targeted at Bosnia and Herzegovina’s state authorities, local NGOs, international donors and institutions, as well as the media and civil society.

Both *medica mondiale* and *Medica Zenica* will use the results to identify crucial strategies for developing further programmes and for influencing government policies. The recommendations will guide both organisations in continuously improving the quality and inclusiveness of the services they provide, and will be used for advocacy and lobbying work in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the coming years.

The implementation of the recommendations will greatly benefit the women and girl survivors of SGBV in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and underpin processes of sustainable peace-building.

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<sup>1</sup> The conference was held on 23 -24 October, 2013 to mark the 20th anniversary of *medica mondiale* and *Medica Zenica*. Participants including Madeleine Rees (Secretary General of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, WILPF), Jasminka Džumhur (Ombudswoman at Bosnia's Institution of Human Rights Ombudsman) and Belma Becirbašić (Journalist) sum up their impressions of the conference and feature recommendations for working with survivors of sexualized wartime violence in the following video:  
<http://www.youtube.com/embed/KdbOZcwyNwE>

<sup>2</sup> The full research and a summary report can be downloaded here:  
[http://www.medicamondiale.org/fileadmin/redaktion/Service/Mediathek/Dokumente/English/Documentations\\_studies/14128\\_Research\\_We-Are-Still-Alive\\_CR-Medica-Zenica\\_medica-mondiale.pdf](http://www.medicamondiale.org/fileadmin/redaktion/Service/Mediathek/Dokumente/English/Documentations_studies/14128_Research_We-Are-Still-Alive_CR-Medica-Zenica_medica-mondiale.pdf)