

# Dual Referral Factsheet

SJAC is committed to expanding and improving its ability to document violations of sexual and gender based violence (SGBV), while maintaining the highest ethical standards. SJAC's Dual Referral System is designed to facilitate access to survivors while ensuring that Documentation Coordinators can refer survivors to support services following a documentation interview. This factsheet provides guidelines on establishing referral partnerships.

**Referrals to SJAC** — Once a partnership has been established, the partner's local staff is put in contact with SJAC's local Coordinator. When the service provider encounters a survivor who experienced SGBV in the Syrian conflict, its local staff will inform the survivor about the option to document his or her experience with SJAC. If the survivor is interested, the local staff will put the survivor in touch with the SJAC Coordinator. The method of connecting the Coordinator with the survivor will depend on the specific security conditions of that locality and is determined on a case-by-case basis in collaboration with the referral partner. Survivor support services include medical, psychosocial, economic assistance, and protection organizations.

**Referrals to Partners** — In addition to training Coordinators in techniques that avoid retraumatization according to the Do No Harm principle, SJAC aims to meet survivors' needs after they go through the difficult process of recounting the details of the abuse during the documentation interview. Although SJAC is not equipped to provide survivor support, SJAC intends that referrals to other organizations

can enable the survivor to access the type of support s/he needs. Following the interview, the Coordinators provide the survivor with information about nearby available resources and assist the survivor with accessing those services. However, Coordinators provide realistic expectations of those services, explaining that SJAC has no control over whether the services can or will be provided.

**Scope of Partnership** — Referral partners are provided with information on SJAC's mission, confidentiality and informed consent procedures, and methodology so they can provide the survivor with information about the purposes and process of documentation. However, referral partners are not required to gather documentation on behalf of SJAC or to provide SJAC with the documentation that they already gather. Rather, the referral partner simply makes a connection between the survivor and the Documentation Coordinator. The survivor may feel intimidated or coerced to agree to whatever the referral partner's local staff asks of them. Thus, the referral partner must be clear that it is the survivor's choice

whether to participate or even contact SJAC and that services are not hinged on participation in SJAC documentation.

**Incentives** — Although referral partners oftentimes collect some form of documentation from survivors (such as medical records), SJAC Coordinators do more in depth documentation, touching on the facts that could elicit a legal determination of whether a Violation occurred. Referral partners can aid in the documentation of these abuses to enable the potential for a justice process that could bring attention to SGBV and deter the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war in future conflicts. Referrals also serve survivors' interests: survivors have a right to justice and reparations, even in the absence of immediately available justice mechanisms. Although resulting benefits may be indirect or long-term, survivors may wish to take what steps they can to influence overall attention to addressing SGBV Violations as well the likelihood that they see personal, direct benefits in the future.

*Please contact SJAC if you have any questions or suggestions, or if you would like a copy of our Gender and SGBV Policy.*