3. Please inform about civil society initiatives to register, map, collect and preserve evidence, data and testimonies (including victim's testimonies) of serious violations of human rights and humanitarian law in transitional contexts for truth seeking, accountability and memorialization purposes, among others. How has civil society supported documentation efforts in transitional contexts? What lessons can be learnt from these experiences? What support has civil society received from concerned States and/or donor states and institutions to carry out initiatives in this field? What obstacles has civil society faced in implementing initiatives to document human rights violations (state blockages, lack of resources, insecurity for staff conducting documentation or archiving efforts, challenges to the preservation of documentation/evidence/archives, impeded access to archives or victims, etc.)?

We support the documentation efforts of civil society actors in several countries, including Syria, Iraq, Ukraine, Colombia, and Sudan. Some of them are working with the concerned states or with UN agencies.

Typical challenges faced by these organizations include a lack of resources and systems for documentation.

Transitional justice processes are often not led by the state or do not meet international standards. This can lead to fragmentation of the transitional process and limit what civil society initiatives can achieve, but it can also help to prevent impunity if national law enforcement agencies are involved at an early stage. In many contexts, the prosecution of violations of international law can only take place on the basis of universal jurisdiction.

A relevant issue in the work of civil society organizations is working with survivors of various violations of international criminal law, including many cases of SGBV. In an effort to avoid re-traumatizing these individuals, it is essential to train organizations on how to conduct interviews in a sensitive manner. This can be supported by improving cooperation between different initiatives to ensure that victims do not have to tell their story more than necessary. This is also important if their testimony is to be used in future criminal proceedings.

Another challenge that civil society organizations face in their efforts to document human rights violations is having the knowledge and capacity to collect and preserve evidence in an appropriate way to make them accessible to authorized judicial institutions. We support projects to standardize the way evidence is collected, so that it is manageable and can be used for accountability purposes. This may include issues such as how to send photos or videos in a way that preserves their metadata, or how to protect access to a database. These digital aspects are also relevant to the safety of local staff.

Examples of how we support the work of civil society organizations and the UN in different contexts:

In Iraq and Syria, we support several organizations that collect evidence of human rights violations committed by state and non-state actors and support work on missing persons. They both work with survivors on documentation, but also with local law enforcement agencies to support their efforts. An example of this is a project that recreates (both visually and informatively) various sites used by the Islamic State terror organization as detention centers to assist law enforcement in verifying witness testimony.

In Iraq, we have been supporting various aspects of the Yazidi genocide reappraisal for years - from the drafting of the internationally recognized "Yazidi Survivors Law" to its implementation by the Iraqi authorities and the payment of compensation. We worked with UNITAD in Iraq until the end of its mandate, supporting its Economic Crimes Unit and sending staff on secondment.

In Tunisia and Libya, we have supported the transitional justice processes through various projects, although in these contexts it is clear that political will is an important factor in the success of a transitional process, while the work of civil society organizations alone can only have a limited impact.

In Ukraine, we support various civil society organizations in documenting war-related crimes. A focus of our support is on investigating the fate of missing persons through DNA analysis, on collecting evidence of human rights violations committed by Russian actors, and on assisting Ukrainian law enforcement in investigating these violations.

The GFFO also supports the UNDP Conflict-Related Sexual Violence Multi-Partner Trust Fund, specifically Pramila Patten's team of experts to work with Ukrainian law enforcement agencies to support victims of conflict-related sexual violence in asserting their rights and needs.

The GFFO also supports the transitional justice process in Colombia. In 2016, we initiated the founding of the German Colombian Peace Institute CAPAZ, which contributes to the consolidation of peace in Colombia through interdisciplinary scientific support and political advice. With numerous interdisciplinary programs, CAPAZ connects actors from a wide range of fields. Among other activities, they focus on memorialization and on cooperating with the Colombian Special Peace Court (JEP) and the Colombian Truth Commission.