

Contact details : [anr.vseg@gmail.com](mailto:anr.vseg@gmail.com)

Presentation of the Project : Sexual Violence & Childhood in War (<https://www.anr-vseg.org/projet-vseg/>)

This is a 3-year project, interdisciplinary (historical studies, medico-psychological studies, and legal studies) and international (French, Belgium and Congolese partners). We are working with partners from different entities: the Mukwege International Chair ; the research program “ EnJeux childhood and youth ”; legal students from the legal clinic The LightHouse ; and a consortium of universities (Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, University of Angers and University of Liège).

We follow 3 main objectives :

- To understand the different forms of sexual violence committed against children in armed conflict
- To identify the difficulties of international law and justice in dealing with these crimes
- To contribute to the fight against impunity by identifying ways to prevent these acts, to punish those responsible and to provide reparation.

We designed 3 different research questions :

Axis 1 VSEG: Does international law satisfactorily address the forms and motives of sexual violence against children?

It is first a matter of carrying out a work of inventory and categorization of the forms and motives of sexual violence affecting children with a view to determining whether the primary standards existing in the different fields of international law (international humanitarian law, international law criminal law, human/child rights, state responsibility law, UN law) are sufficient to understand them or if new ones need to be proposed.

VSEG Axis 2: How to better implement the various responsibilities, in the face of widespread impunity?

The observation is common, in France as elsewhere, in peace as in war: impunity reigns and the responsibilities of perpetrators of sexual violence against children are difficult to implement. Armed groups are the main perpetrators of massive and systematic sexual crime. How can justice be done when the perpetrators are members of the police or deputies, protected by immunities? How can we hold States responsible for passively allowing these acts to be committed? Which paths should we choose, between “ responsibility ” and “ accountability ”?

VSEG Axis 3: How to improve holistic reparation for child victims?

From a psychological and socio-economic point of view, how can child victims be reintegrated into society? How can we improve their care and support them in justice? Is there a need for justice, and what forms of justice (what remedies, what judges? what reparations?). From the perspective of States, it is often affirmed that there is no peace without justice. At the level of an individual or a family, can there be inner peace without justice? Medical, psychological, socio-economic harm affects the child as much as his parents, his brothers and sisters, his family, his village, his community. Reparation can take multiple forms, according to the logic of “transitional justice”.