READINGS IN PEACE & CONFLICT





Essays in honour of

Professor Isaac Olawale Albert

Editors:
Elias Suleiman Bogoro
Matt Meyer
Nathaniel D. Danjibo

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Gender, Peace and Conflict

ADIMULA, RUTH ABIOLA, Ph.D

Lecturer, Centre for Peace and Strategic Studies, University of Ilorin, Ilorin.

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INTRODUCTION

Peace is the most sought-after state of experience across the globe. The search transcends politics and cuts across religion, socio-economy and social interactions. It surpasses freedom from war and violence, but includes and not limited to peace within and without a person, his environment and relationships. From the United Nations, to continental bodies, regional cooperations, national, state and local government authorities, peace is the core of pacts and agreements. Religious bodies, schools at all levels, workplace of different categories are all peace propagators. Yet, conflict is inevitable in human's daily endeavours. Conflicts pertains to the opposing ideas and actions of different entities, thus resulting in an antagonistic state. Each of us possesses our own opinions, ideas and sets of beliefs. We have our own ways of looking at things and we act according to what we think is proper. Hence, we often find ourselves in conflict in different scenarios; it involve other individuals, groups of people, or a struggle within our own selves. Consequently, conflict influences our actions and decisions in one way or another (Evans 2013). Conflict **can be intrapersonal, interpersonal, intragroup or intergroup. Conflict is intrapersonal when it** occurs within an individual (the experience takes place in the person's mind). It is psychological, involving the individual's thoughts, values, principles and emotions. Interpersonal conflict may come in different scales, from the simpler, mundane ones like deciding what dress to wear to major decisions such as choosing a career path. **Interpersonal conflict** refers to a conflict between two individuals. This occurs typically due to how people are different from one another. We have varied personalities which usually results to incompatible choices and opinions. **Intragroup conflict** is a type of conflict that happens among individuals within a team. The incompatibilities and misunderstandings among these individuals lead to an intragroup conflict. It arises from interpersonal disagreements (e.g. team members have different personalities which may lead to tension) or differences in views and ideas. **Intergroup conflict** takes place when a misunderstanding arises among different teams within an organization. This is due to the varied sets of goals and interests of these different groups. In addition, competition also contributes to intergroup conflict, also a rivalry in resources or the boundaries set by a group to others which establishes their own identity as a team (Evans 2013).

The central actors in peace and conflict are people- human beings (male and female). How conflict generates, how it affects people and is resolved to achieve peace is what gender is about. Gender refers to either of the two sexes (male and female), especially when considered with reference to social and cultural differences rather than biological. It defines culturally acceptable attitudes and behaviour of men and women, including their responsibilities, advantages, disadvantages, opportunities and constraints. Gender roles are learned and they vary within society or culture and are thus changeable (Vann 2002). Focusing on gender often means focusing on inequality, power differences and the generally disadvantaged positions women have as compared to men especially in conflict situations. Thus, the focus of this chapter is a discussion

on how conflict generates, develops and is resolved among persons and how peace can be pursued and achieved considerably.

GENDER

The term 'gender' began to be used in research in women's studies at the end of the 1970s as a result of a realization that concepts of female and male are largely social constructions and far from being solely biologically given phenomena.

The gender concept has been used in research as an analytical tool to draw attention to the way in which gender differences are constructed and conveyed in social groups, institutions, the media and law, etc.

Indeed, researches show that females are three to six times more likely to experience sexual abuse than males (Pickup, 2011)

DIFFERENTIATING GENDER AND SEX

The term `gender' refers to the culturally expected behaviours of men and women based on roles, attitudes and values ascribed to them on the basis of their sex, whereas 'sex' refers to biological and physical characteristics.[1] Gender is perhaps most apparent in the social differences between females and males. These differences inform how individuals are viewed, and how they view themselves.

In defining gender we must differentiate it from sex. To be sure, the essentialist position holds that sex and gender are almost synonymous. This biological reductionism implies that sex differences between men and women related to size, strength, speed and stamina all determine the gender differences noted in masculinity and femininity.[2] These differences all favour men, and thus determine their leadership in society.

The differences between males and females are learned and deeply rooted, but also cultural, contextual, and subject to change over time.[3]

Through interaction with other key factors like ethnicity, religion, class, sexual orientation, gender acts to critically inform identity.[4]

The term `gender' refers to the culturally expected behaviours of men and women based on roles, attitudes and values ascribed to them on the basis of their sex, whereas 'sex' refers to biological and physical characteristics.[5] Gender is perhaps most apparent in the social differences between females and males. These differences inform how individuals are viewed, and how individuals view themselves.

Yet gender is more than people's identities. Gender is a social structure that is flush with symbolic meaning. Gender is a way of categorizing, ordering and symbolizing power, of hierarchically structuring relationships among different categories of people and different human activities in a manner symbolically associated with masculinity and femininity.[6] Gender, at its heart, is a structural power relation that rests upon a central set of distinctions between different categories of people, valuing some over others. Gender roles and relations organize authority, rights, responsibilities, access to resources, and life options along the lines demarcating those groups. Gender systems of power require political, social, economic, cultural, legal and educational institutions which actualize and underpin this distribution of power and, at times, justify unequal access and treatment.

The position taken here is that sex is biologically determined while gender is socially constructed. Those who argue that gender is biologically constructed may say that, if gender were totally a social construct, then one should expect to find such wide variations in masculinity in history and contemporary cultures as to defy unifying categorizations. However, there do exist common themes associated with masculinity and femininity across widely different cultures and

throughout history. Such common themes, it is claimed, can only be accounted for by biological factors operating through genetics.[7]

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Vann (2002), defined the term gender, as referring to the different characteristics of men and women that are socially determined. Gender refers to the different social roles men and women have in a particular society.

Discussing the term GBV, Vann (2002) noted that, while men and women can be victims of GBV, women and girls are disproportionately affected. She said, GBV encompasses a range of acts of violence committed against females because they are females and against males because they are males, based on how a particular society assigns and views roles and expectations for these people. It includes sexual violence, intimate partner or spouse abuse (domestic violence), emotional and psychological abuse, sex trafficking, forced prostitution, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, harmful traditional practices (e.g. female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, infanticide of girl children and discriminatory practices based on gender. However, most cases of gender-based violence involve a female survivor and a male perpetrator. The majority of acts of gender-based violence against boys and men are also committed by male perpetrators.

In 1993, the *United Nations General Assembly* defined violence against women as: "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women". *The United Nations* referred to "gender-based" violence to acknowledge that such violence is rooted in gender inequality and is often tolerated and condoned by laws, institutions and community norms; it is not only a manifestation of gender-inequality, but often serves to enforce it (Heise *et al.* 1999). Gender-based violence comes in many forms but this review focuses on GBV perpetrated against men and women in conflict situations and in displaced camps.

A growing body of international research documents the magnitude and patterns of Gender-Based Violence, stating that, worldwide, men experience higher levels of physical violence than women as a result of war, gang-related activity, street violence, and suicide, while women and girls are more likely to be assaulted or killed by someone they know, such as an intimate partner (Heise *et al.*, 2002).

Etienne (1995) asserted that, mass rapes and other violent acts against women are commonplace weapons of war and intimidation. He noted that thousands of women were raped in Bangladesh, that Korean "comfort girls" served as sex slaves to Japanese soldiers during the second world war, and that in the seventies and eighties rape was a common tool to target women for oppression in Central America.

GBV occurs in phases which can be categorized into pre-conflict, conflict and post-conflict stages. One of the changes in GBV relates to its intensity. GBV is frequently rooted in pre-conflict conditions, but it increases and often becomes an accepted practice during conflict and in the post-conflict phases. In addition, with the transition from conflict to peace, a shift in GBV seems to take place from the public to the private domain through an increase in domestic violence.

Generally in Africa, in pre-conflict situations, women have been the most vulnerable group because of their low education level and the isolation they live in. In villages where most of the African women live, there is minimal information on social, economic and political dynamics and developments that take place within their countries. When wars erupt they have no idea of what is going on and thus become susceptible to violence and abuse.

Kirsten (2007) reported that, men can be victims as well as perpetrators of violence. He noted that, across cultures, most acts of violence, including firearm-related violence, are overwhelmingly perpetrated by men and boys and most victims of firearm-related violence are also men and boys; also that globally, data from situations of war and peace show that over 90 percent of firearm-related homicides occur among men and that most firearms are owned by

males–whether in state structures such as the police or military, as part of non-state armed groups, gangs and militia, for leisure or sporting activities such as hunting, or for self-defence in the home. He asserted that, in countries at 'peace' where guns are widely available, they are used mostly by men, to commit various types of violence, such as murder, suicide, robbery and assault, and in gang warfare.

Gender rules and roles are not incidental to war-time violence; indeed, gender critically informs and provokes the kinds of violence armed actors utilize in their attacks on women and girls.[8] Gender violence should be understood as the intentional rupturing of gender roles.

GENDER AND CONFLICT

Among the enduring stereotypes encountered in analyses of the roles of men and of women in decision making processes on war and peace is the view that women are less likely than men to adopt decisions that lead to the organized use of force in resolving domestic and international conflict. It is also suggested that, primarily as a result of socialization, women are 'peace-oriented' while men are 'war-oriented'.[9]

While men, women, boys and girls experience similar phenomena during and after conflict, their experiences and levels of vulnerability are influenced by their gender.

Above all, Bashi (2003) noted that the worst crisis is armed conflict. He said it is the worst in the sense that it is widespread. Its consequences are most devastating and it easily leads to or escalates other crises. For example, in armed conflicts, lives and property are lost or destroyed. With the destruction of industries and other production activities, unemployment is increased, so is poverty. Education is brought to a standstill as schools are closed, budgets for education are cut down in favour of the purchase of military hardware, etc. According to Bashi (2003), a very quick count shows that about 27 out of the 54 African countries, representing 50% are either in one kind of armed conflict or another or have emerged from one recently. These countries are spread throughout the whole continent- West, Central North, East and Southern Africa. The millions of people, including workers in these countries and their neighbours, are affected by these conflict situations in such areas leading to the displacement of huge populations, movement of refugees and interruptions in trade and commu

Armed conflict is not gender neutral; in fact, it is deeply discriminatory.[10] Armed conflict directly kills and injures more males than females, since combatants are predominately male, but direct fatalities "do not provide a remotely adequate account of the true human costs of conflict."[11] It is the so called indirect consequences of war and armed conflict that have the biggest role in shaping people's lives and livelihoods in the aftermath of conflict. There is increasing evidence that women and girls often bear the worst brunt of these indirect consequences.[12]

Emphasizing the discriminatory nature of armed conflict, a study of 14 ethnic conflicts and four non-ethnic conflicts that lasted at least 10 years was carried out by Thomas Plumber and Eric Neumayer and they found that interstate and civil wars (and in particular ethnic conflicts and conflicts in failed states) affect women more negatively than men.[13] They found that the direct and indirect consequences of armed conflict combine to kill more women, and/or kill those women younger, than their male counterparts.

Another dimension that has received less attention is the fact of women carrying arms. These questions will suffice, Is armed conflict strictly a male terrain? Are women more peaceful than men?[14]

War is largely understood as "a masculine endeavour for which women may serve as victim, spectator, or prize."[15] "State-making and war-making are cognate activities and war-making has long been a way of defining and demonstrating a range of stereotypically masculinist traits," argues Pettman.[16]

Men and women share unequal relationship and in war this relationship is even more perceptible. This anthology emphasizes that women not only bear the consequences of violence

unequally as "protected" but also that inequality prevails even when they transgress the traditionally imposed boundaries and become "protectors." And the post-conflict scenario is no different.[17]

Violence against women and girls during armed conflict is here organized into seven key categories. Beyond serving as a rough taxonomy, this is intended to help us think through short- and long-term effects of violence for individuals, their households and larger communities.

(1) Male Exchanges through Violence toward Women and Girls

As noted above, much of the violence directed at women and girls during armed conflict regards males communicating with other males, as well as women and girls, about their masculinity (and or the presence or lack of other males' masculine abilities). Gang rape is one particular example of how men challenge each other's 'manhood.' Strategies of control, domination, humiliation or protection of women and girls by men and boys are a means by which males acknowledge or challenge other males' possession, protection and control of females. This is a fundamental way in which males establish hierarchies of power and status.[18]

(2) The Symbolism of Gender and Punishment of Women and Girls'

Gender Transgression Gender is a symbolic system that infuses women and girls (and men and boys) with cultural, religious and political meaning. In many cultures, women and girls through their bodies and behaviors represent families, ethnicities, cultures and, at times, nations.[19] When women and girls' sexual purity defines the honor and integrity of social groups, the violation of their bodies by outside forces serves as a direct attack on and `staining' of the entire group. Men who fail to protect their women and girls have failed in their masculine duties and will more likely attempt to avenge this by subjecting women in the opposing community to like treatment.

(3) Sexual or Reproductive Coercion, Harm, Torture or Mutilation

Much reported sexual violence has instrumental purposes -- to terrorize, subjugate and demoralize women and their communities, and to punish women (or their male family members) for political or autonomous activity. Violence afflicting women and girls includes abuse, torture, terror and mutilation that is specifically sexual in nature, or that targets females' reproductive and sexual parts, not infrequently causing irreparable damage and reproductive disability or inability. In addition to rape and other sexual abuse, sexual mutilation, forced prostitution, sexual slavery, forced pregnancy, forced abortion, forced sterilization and sexual torture are reported in many contemporary conflicts. Rapes include gang rapes, rapes with objects, rapes by animals (usually dogs and rodents), public rapes and sometimes men forced to rape women and girls who are related to them. Armed actors may engage in rape opportunistically or as part of a systematic practice of sexualized violence.[20]

Sexual violence is a highly taboo crime in all cultures, where victims are often stigmatized in their families and communities. Thus, many victims are extremely reluctant to come forward or disclose their experiences. While, in many situations, reported sexual violence seems to be almost exclusively directed at women, sexual violence against men also occurs and probably suffers from even greater underreporting.[21] This is a topic that requires further exploration.

(4) Targeting Mothering

"The vulnerability of women to forms of torment and torture because of their maternal hopes, attachments, and responsibilities deserves' specific focus." [22] Diverse forms of reproductive coercion and violation are a part of many contemporary conflicts. Forced pregnancy, forced abortion or sterilization, and forced cohabitation/"marriage" with the almost inevitable result of pregnancy are among the forms of reproductive abuse reported in contexts of conflict. Such physical and psychological violence has potentially irreversible social and economic

consequences. Furthermore, women's maternal roles and attachments can be exploited to produce anguish and terror. The mental and emotional torment visited upon mothers who failed to prevent beatings, torture, abduction, enforced disappearance or killings of their children and dependents can be significant and long lasting, as can the resulting social and economic consequences.[23]

(5) Women, Productive Labor and Property

Women are pivotal to the labor force. They are essential to the survival and wellbeing of their families and communities. Women also hold and control property and resources and are a major force in many local economies. Yet often by law, custom and/or religion, women do not enjoy control over property and wealth comparable to men of a similar class. Violent upheavals that disrupt and transform traditional divisions of labor, power and ownership, or that involve displacement or relocations, often result in dramatic losses for women economically, or in women's being unable to assert rights and access to property.

The combination of war, war-related injuries, displacement, and various kinds of loss – of breadwinners, assets, employment, educational opportunities, etc. – impoverishes households, at times to a fatal degree.[24] Women, girls and their households thus emerge from the conflict significantly poorer, with substantial loss of assets, weakened livelihood systems, in poor physical and mental health, with family members disappeared, injured, killed or dead, and with more children to care for, as many households take on war orphans or children from extended families unable to care for them.[25]

(6) Women and Social Capital

Women are often seen as vital to the production of social capital, which is in turn critical to the daily maintenance of communal life. "Social capital is defined as 'the rules, norms, obligations, reciprocity and trust embedded in social relations, social structures and a society's institutional arrangements that enable its members to achieve their individual and community objectives'.[16] Both men and women are utterly dependent on, and contribute to the production of, social capital embodied in formal institutions and informal networks." [26] Women, through labor as well as maintenance of day-to-day cooperative relationships and informal social networks, are indispensable to the maintenance of this order, both materially and socially. This makes women prime targets during conflict, where the goal is "the disruption of social arrangements, activities, and institutions that give people a sense of belonging and meaning" is served by targeting women for killing, social disgrace, and communal exclusion.[27]

(7) Gender Multipliers of Violence

The multiple dimensions of suffering faced by women and girls – physical, psychological, spiritual, economic, social and cultural – and their already marginalized status in households and societies means that some serious crimes actually make women and girls more vulnerable to subsequent human rights violations and or abuses. These factors are called gender multipliers of violence and harm. They predictably play a role in causing additional exposure to violence both during and after conflict.[18] In South Sudan, for example, the widows of liberation martyrs are often assaulted or threatened with violence in order to drive them away from demanding their late husbands' entitlements. In Nepal, the wives of the disappeared and their children are frequently chased off their husband's land.

GENDER AND EFFECTS OF CONFLICT

However, it is the indirect effects of war that are, in fact, the most deadly. In particular, the effects of militarized conflict include limited food and water access, poor sanitation and hygiene, weak or collapsed health services, and increased displacement, family dislocation, family stress and domestic violence. These effects have a greater impact on women. For example, when food access is reduced and males are generally given priority when rations are scarce, women's health

deteriorates more rapidly as they are physiologically more susceptible to vitamin and iron deficiencies. Declines in health services due to conflict have a greater impact on women because of their reproductive and caring roles, decrease in obstetrical care, and increase in child and maternal mortality. In societies where women are already discriminated against in terms of accessing food, resources and services, violent conflict exacerbates such discrimination and can make it even more deadly.[28]

During wartime, the widespread use that has been made of violence directed against women in order to demoralize communities and break their resistance. There have been strikes at women for strategic and political reasons, but importantly they have often also been directed at personal identity.[29] Rebel armies are implicated as well as government forces. Women were also involved in some incidents. The reasons for the violence are multiple. For instance, women are described as being used as 'walking wombs' – impregnated to introduce children of another ethnicity to an area. In addition they were raped to show other men that they have been defeated or as a rightful reward for victory. Finally, some men took advantage of the social upheaval and forced women to give sexual favours in order either for her to gain access to her family and/or to ensure her survival.[30] In Rwanda women who were raped by the enemy and any resulting children were outcasts. One woman described the child she had after being gang raped by men who killed most of her family as 'a cross I have to carry for the rest of my life.'[31] In southern Sudan when a woman is raped the men will go out to avenge their honour not hers. The feelings a woman has are disregarded. Women find it difficult to describe the experiences they have had and realize the high costs of doing so. In addition women do not see that the process of law results in justice being handed out to the perpetrator of the violence.[32] Despite an overwhelming record of abuse and violence, we now have the positive outcomes of violent change. In the north of Sudan southern women have started to work, changing from wives to breadwinners, and have vowed never to give up this change and never to revert to the status of being owned or inherited. In Mozambique a national organization was established with the aim of empowering women through the law. Recommendations made to the Truth and Reconciliation Council in South Africa are related, and include that separate women's hearings be held.[33]

One form of violence specifically targets women: *rape*. Though men as well as women can be and are raped – especially in all-male contexts such as prisons – accounts of atrocities in war rarely include rape of men, though there are well-documented reports of the sexual mutilation of men. It thus seems that rape in war affects women exclusively. Rape has long been part of war and is often regarded as, if not acceptable, then so inevitable that there is no point in making a fuss about it.[34]

Rape piles vulnerability on vulnerability, most clearly demonstrated in the case of refugee women who are attacked and raped, as with the Somali women and girls in refugee camps in north eastern Kenya in 1992 and 1993. The rapists were reportedly armed bandits, including groups from the former Somali army.[35] Here, as in most wars throughout history, the raped women and girls were the deliberately chosen victims of male rapists, at the same time as they were the incidental victims of war.[36]

This deliberate and systematic use of rape is an extension of the use of rape as a means of torture, of which there have been numerous accounts over the years in many states. Rape is used not simply to attack the woman but, through her, to attack another target – somebody whom she is believed to be protecting, for example, a male comrade in arms. The attack exploits not only the physical vulnerability of the woman, but also her subsequent sense of shame and defilement, and all too often the likely rejection by her partner, family and community.[37]

In 1972, over a period of nine months, Pakistani soldiers raped 200,000 women in the breakaway Eastern Pakistan, which became Bangladesh. After the war, the government of Bangladesh had the greatest difficulty in trying to persuade the husbands of raped women to accept their wives.[38] Thus mass rape is a way to terrorize individuals, communities and, if done on a large enough scale, an entire ethnic group. Those who are ruthless enough to launch a war in

which civilians themselves are the target are therefore likely to find that rape can be a convenient and effective weapon.[39]

The role of women in peace building needs to be investigated and highlighted as part of gender analysis of peace support operations. The perception of women as victims of violence as also actors during war and conflict situations could provide an improved basis to develop effective strategies for incorporating gender perspectives in peace initiatives.

Significant Dimensions of Violence against Women and Girls during Conflict Men, boys, women and girls experience many of the same phenomena during armed conflict: loss of livelihoods and assets, displacement, physical and mental injury, torture, the death and injury of loved ones, sexual assault and enforced disappearance. Nevertheless, how they experience these phenomena during and after conflict is influenced by their gender roles. When we take these factors into account, we see that conflict affects men, boys, women and girls in different ways because they:

- Are differently embodied;
- Symbolize different things to their communities and those that attack them;
- Are targeted differently and their injuries have different social and livelihood impacts;
- Have different responsibilities in their families and communities and thus end up in harm's way differently; and
- Have different livelihoods, access to the cash economy, and ability to claim, own and inherit property, all of which impact the resources they can access to aid their survival and recovery.

CONFLICTS AND CIVILIAN POPULATION

Why do civilians make up such a high proportion of the casualties of war today? Because in many wars, the civilians are the targets. Civilians – as well as the economic and industrial infrastructure – were the targets of strategic terror bombing in World War II, culminating in the nuclear strikes on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945. Civilians were likewise the targets of ethnic cleansing in the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1992–95, and of the genocide in Rwanda in 1994. In both these recent cases, Western media initially tended to depict the violence as the result of a frenzied orgy of hatred. Evidence has since emerged to show that in both cases the killing was in fact planned in cold blood.[40]

When war is brought to the civilian population, women suffer. Data generally fail to distinguish with respect to gender or age.[41] However, the *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees* (UNHCR) has reported that about 80% of international refugees are women and children, compared to the 70% of the population of an average Third World country that is constituted by women and children. Clearly, then, women and children are disproportionately hard-hit by this aspect of war suffering. Among the reasons is that men are more likely to be involved in the actual fighting; moreover, even as civilians, men are often killed while the women and children are expelled. Detailed accounts of the 1995 massacre of Bosniak men in Srebrenica are an example of this.[42]

PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN DURING CONFLICT

There are numerous provisions and standards that mandate the integration of gender into human rights instruments and mechanisms. The 1979 *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)* applies to both state and private actors, as well as all peacekeepers operating in United Nations Operations. The CEDAW prohibits discrimination against women, supports increasing the presence of women in peacekeeping bodies and mainstreaming gender perspectives throughout peace- keeping operations, thus helping to prevent discrimination against women within the host nation by peacekeeping operations. Women's equal participation in all aspects of peace processes has also been an important focus in the Beijing

Platform for Action. The Platform, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, defined the need to "increase the participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels" under Strategic Objective E.1, and urged Governments, as well as international and regional international institutions, to integrate gender perspectives in the resolution of armed or other conflicts and foreign occupation.

UN Security Council Resolution 1325 passed on the 31st October 2000, recognised that women world-wide are playing an active and positive role in conflict resolution and peace building. It acknowledged that peace can not be sustained unless women have an equal and active role in formulating political, economic and social policy and that without women's full participation in peace processes, there can be no justice or sustainable development in the reconstruction of societies.

The Commonwealth is an association of 53 countries worldwide. The Commonwealth Secretariat is the main agency, facilitating interactions and consultation among member states and governments. The Secretariat has a Plan of Action (PoA) for Gender Equality 2005–15. The PoA works towards the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and gender equality as expressed in the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2000 Beijing+5 Political Declaration and Outcome Document. In its PoA, the Commonwealth prioritised four critical areas including "gender, democracy, peace and conflict as one of the priority area". The G-8 comprises the governments of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United States and the United Kingdom. In particular, the G-8: emphasises the importance of the systemic inclusion of women; encourages the participation of all actors of civil society, including women's organisations in conflict prevention and conflict resolution; calls for special attention to the needs of female ex-combatants; urges gender sensitivity in training materials for peace support operations, including military, civilian police and humanitarian personnel. In 1997, the Organisation For Economic Cooperation And Development issued Guidelines on Conflict, Peace and Development Cooperation. The Guidelines explicitly recognise that women "play special roles as bridging partners in dialogue, peace negotiations, reconstruction and rehabilitation strategies and contribute their special experience and perceptions to peace building and reconciliation efforts." The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has 55 member states from Europe, Central Asia and North America. It is active in early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post conflict rehabilitation. The OSCE participating states officially "recognise that equality of women and men and the protection and promotion of the human rights of women are essential to sustainable democracy and to security and stability in the OSCE region.

GENDER AND PEACE

As Maha Abud DayyehShamas, a Palestinian and executive director of the Jerusalem-based Women's Legal Aid and Counseling Service contends, "Peace is made between peoples and not between leaders. A process that should lead to a political solution and is sustainable and consequently permanent...should not be left to the confines of the generals, and should be transparent to the relevant societies." Speaking of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and the need for women to be part of the peace process, Shamas addressed the UN Security Council:

> The participation of women in any future peace processes is essential to maintain connection to the realities of the relevant societies... We want to approach peace-building in a way that will promote long term stability. We want to explain to each other what it is like to live in Israel and Palestine, to develop transparent procedures so that any peace will be one between individuals and not politicians.... If we leave it only to men we get Israeli generals and Palestinians who will not be defeated and there is no room to negotiate.[43]

Decades of feminist research have shown that women are key actors in building peace in conflict affected societies. As family and community members, in the midst of conflict they deal on a daily basis with the ramifications of war, ranging from weak to non- existent healthcare and education systems, to helping each other within displaced and refugee camps, to responding to the horrors and daily drain of violence. As human rights and peace activists, women are on the front line of conflicts around the world; they possess a deep understanding of devastation of war and the long term efforts needed to rebuild a more just society. Women in grassroots organizations are also well positioned to understand and, at times, represent the needs of conflict affected populations before, during and after the fighting.[44]

Research shows that as participants in peace processes, women expanded and redefined agendas.[45] They brought to the fore issues which military leaders and high ranking politicians might ignore, such as addressing the destruction of livelihoods, the dearth of schooling or healthcare and the local effects of post-conflict trauma. They helped ensure that victims' voices are heard, particularly those 'invisible victims' including the elderly, women, children and the mentally ill who have suffered deprivation, impoverishment, physical and emotional injury, enforced disappearance and/or sexual violence. They brought a different perspective to post conflict military policies, such as DDR (Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration) programs, focusing not only on the men and women who must be disarmed, but on the communities who must reabsorb them. They were also more sensitive to household and family challenges, such as the spike in domestic violence that often occurs in post conflict environments.[46]

Finally, they were effective in keeping women's rights, experiences and priorities on the peace agenda.[47]

In recognition of the key contribution women can make to the resolution of conflict and the creation of lasting peace, *UN Security Resolution 1325* specifically calls on all actors for the inclusion of women in negotiations, peace building and post conflict reconstruction. However, almost two decades after *Resolution 1325* was passed, a study from UNIFEM (*The United Nations Development Fund for Women*) found that women's participation in peace processes remains one of the most unfulfilled aspects of the women, peace and security agenda. Their review of 31 major peace processes since 1992 shows a low number of women negotiators (9 percent), with little increase since passage of SCRes 1325 in 2000. Only 4 percent of women were signatories in peace processes, and women were completely absent in chief mediating roles in UN brokered talks.[48]

Why, after more than a decade of explicit recognition that their presence makes a positive difference and should be supported, are women still essentially absent from peace processes? There is a range of reasons. More often than not, women's exclusion from peace negotiations is a result of logistical and political challenges.

During and immediately after a conflict, women's groups and activists may be focused on providing immediate relief and in helping to reconstruct their societies and thus not actively organizing around peace process negotiations. This is a consequence of their position on the frontlines. Facing acute post conflict crises, it is seen that work may emphasize local needs and the provision of necessary services. Unfortunately, while focused on local survival and recovery, and given the exclusionary nature of formal peace processes, women's groups are often unable to make their voices heard before major deals have already been negotiated. Consequently, peace negotiations may result in trade-offs such as amnesty for war crimes, or so called `reconciliation' over justice that directly contradict with the priorities and rights of people in local communities and put forward serious challenges to what kind of peace will actually be possible in the post conflict period.[49]

Women's absence from peace processes is also an extension of their marginalization within social and governmental institutions. Elite in government and armed opposition groups deploy a range of justifications and means to keep out women who represent victims and civil society

actors. Where participants in peace negotiations are selected based on seniority within civilian or military institutions, the lack of women filling upper ranks contributes to a deficit of female representatives at the negotiating table. Male policymakers and political elite may further deny women space to participate because women's groups lack a formal elected position, or because they are seen as representing too narrow an issue (a peace negotiation is not the space to discuss "women's rights," such elite often argue). Elite have also argued that peace is "gender-neutral" and that the issues of concern to women are the concern of everyone, and therefore male leaders can represent women as effectively as a female leader could.[50]

However, according to Sanam Anderlini,

> The exclusion of women, particularly those representing civil society organizations, results from systemic flaws in the structure and process of peace negotiations. Just as conflict prevention structures were designed in the era of international conflict, peace negotiations are also modelled on processes to end interstate wars. Herein lies the problem. International peace negotiations are largely focused on ending wars between countries.[51]

GENDER ASPECTS AT VARIOUS STAGES OF PEACE SUPPORT EFFORTS

At all stages of peace support efforts, there are important gender aspects such as prior to the conflict, during the conflict, after the conflict. Prior to the conflict Peace and conflict research discusses early warning signals, which comprised the risk factors indicating the imminent break out of armed conflicts. One of these may be extreme oppression of the female section of the population and also other sections of the population. A significantly uneven distribution of power resources increases the risk of a struggle for control over resources. Control over resources, like the exercise of power, are gendered, where women generally have considerably less power and influence than men. Conflicts that flare up tend to worsen the balance of power resources existing between women and men During the conflict. Although conflict situations tend to reinforce existing gender stereotypes, new gender roles also emerge. Women, for example, often take over the main responsibility for the household so that men are free to fight. This means that they have to struggle on their own to obtain resources that are often inaccessible while conflicts are going on. This increases women's vulnerability and the risk of falling victim to blackmail or to trafficking.

Some research has also shown more positive effects of this re-structuring of society, where women frequently obtain more power in the civilian sphere during the conflict. The outcome seems to depend on the type of conflict and the way in which society was organised prior to it. Because of these differences between conflict areas, it is essential that an expert gender analysis be conducted so that peace-keeping personnel can be properly prepared. Other aspects are the roles played by women during a conflict. With the emergence of an armed conflict, access to weapons increases, often throughout the entire population. Women are made use of, or participate on their own initiative, in smuggling weapons, using, for example, pregnancy as a cover. The presence of weapons among the civilian population and the difficulties of detecting weapons smuggled by women hamper peace support efforts and increase the risk of new violent conflicts flaring up. Women can also be more vulnerable since the roles they play are often not among those protected by international law.

AFTER THE CONFLICT

One effect of war is greater criminality and acts of violence among the civilian population as a result of increased access to weapons and the lack of traditional institutions to maintain law and order. Studies have shown both an increase in domestic violence at the post-conflict stage and also an increase in domestic violence involving weapons. The needs and rights of widows to dead husbands' land and property, etc. are not, as a rule, regulated by law, which is why women often lose all their property to the deceased husband's relatives. This leads to particular hardship for

women, since it reduces their ability to gain access to the necessities required to maintain a household. It also often leads to social expulsion and poverty for these women and their children. Forced displacement of women leads to a change in roles and relations, which can be both empowering and challenging. It is important to provide accompaniment to returning and resettling populations to support the continuation of positive social change and to include both men and women.

The numerous new roles shouldered by women in conflict situations, entailing both reproductive, productive and social responsibility, are a heavy burden and are often delegated to daughters who are therefore not able to continue at school. This naturally increases the imbalance between the genders, even after the end of the conflict. What is defined as peace from a gender perspective can differ from a traditional definition. For women, peace is not only the cessation of armed conflict, since gender discrimination is still going on. Women and girls are exploited as sexual slaves in almost all dimensions of war and conflict situations, in refugee camps, by the police, the armed forces, etc. All forms of gender-related violence must therefore be criminalized and the reporting of rape and sexual exploitation of women associated with peace support personnel must be improved and the perpetrators sentenced. It should therefore be analyzed on the basis of the social and economic changes brought about by the conflict.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The Platform for Action, adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995, identified the effects of armed conflict on women as one of 12 critical areas of concern requiring action by governments and the international community, and stressed the need to promote the equal participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels. Although various initiatives of Governments and civil society have focused on supporting and increasing the representation of women in peace negotiations and in peacekeeping operations, much needs to be done to broaden the focus from women's presence at the peace table to consistent and systematic attention to gender issues in all aspects of peace processes, including in post-conflict reconstruction.

CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED IN INCORPORATING GENDER PERSPECTIVES IN PEACE OPERATIONS

- There is no/lack of gender sensitive diagnosis that explains the differential impacts of violence and conflict on women and men. The peace process is mostly seen only in the context of women as victims of war and conflict, but not as women playing a proactive role in the process of peace negotiations, peace building and post conflict activities. It needs a thorough analysis of participation of women in conflict and peace.
- Women lack the organizational force to have strategic plans to address the current situation of the country as also to present their plans in peace process.
- A gender perspective recognizes that men's and women's experiences and actions during conflict are determined by gender roles and identities assigned by society. It is important to recognize the multifaceted relationship between men, women, violence, and peace. Since these have been seen predominantly as male domains, women and gender issues have generally been excluded from discussions and interventions for conflict and peace.
- The contributions of women are often overlooked because they are non-traditional or they are outside the formal issues of the conflict. While women and women's groups undertake many informal activities that are supportive of peace processes, these efforts remain less well known, are not well publicized, and are rarely integrated or reflected in formal peace processes. Women continue to be largely absent from formal processes. Support for women's efforts, and for capacity building towards their effective engagement in formal peace is

lacking. The absence of women from the peace tables cause insufficient attention to and reflection of the concerns of women in peace agreements.

- The number of women who participate in formal peace processes remains very small. Even when women participate or are included in formal peace negotiations, their role can be limited to a formal presence without having the capacity or mandate to contribute to setting or shaping the agenda of such negotiations. Male negotiators may also simply be unwilling to consider gender issues and women's concerns due to customs and traditions, as well as stereotypes that limit or narrowly define the role of women in public life and decision-making.
- Even when peace agreements contain issues of concern to women or gender-related aspects or provisions, these are sometimes phrased in such general terms so as to provide insufficient opportunity and basis for action in the implementation phase.
- Lack of a common voice or agenda with regard to peace negotiations due to the lack of time or resources, the particular geographical constraints of a country, language constraints which make communications among women and women's groups difficult, women's diversity, with regard to ethnic, racial or religious affiliations, or their particular experiences during conflict, can also be an obstacle in developing a common agenda.
- Lack of gender awareness in peace negotiations further marginalises women's needs and contributions to peace. Gender, social exclusion, and human rights are all too often relegated as secondary issues to be dealt with once peace accords are signed. Senior personnel in key decision-making positions in peace support operations should be gender-aware. The nature of leadership is key to the implementation of a gender-aware approach. It is fundamental to whether gender-informed policies are carried out and whether gender equality is strengthened in the operation.
- Gender-awareness training for all involved in peace-keeping operations is core to the mainstreaming of a gender aware approach. Gender mainstreaming requires gender-aware norms, standards mechanisms for implementation and resources, the selection of appropriate leadership and decision-making structures; the recruitment of gender balanced peacekeeping teams; gender-awareness training and capacity building for all peace-keepers and the regular monitoring and evaluation of gender mainstreaming at all phases of peace operations.
- No peace-keeping operation could be sustainable and successful without the full respect of women and girls' rights. The military, police force and the judiciary need to be made gender sensitive, i.e. fully aware of the human rights of women and girls to be respected.
- Women's participation is crucial from the outset of negotiations if there is to be a gender perspective at the negotiating table. Women are under-represented in conflict and post-conflict decision-making positions, peacekeeping bodies, defence and foreign affairs organisations. Mainstreaming gender into peacekeeping calls for gender balanced representation within all levels of peacekeeping operations.

OPPORTUNITIES TO REFLECT GENDER CONCERNS

In Peace Operations women experience armed conflict in diverse ways as victims, survivors, leaders and peacemakers. Violence against women in conflict zones is often an extension of the gender discrimination that already exists in peacetime. Because of their lack of status within society, women are systematically excluded from decision-making opportunities; they are often stereotyped as victims and their experiences and contributions are virtually ignored in conflict zones and in nations emerging from war. Despite this women can also play a significant part in peacemaking if they are properly supported and genuinely included as:

- Women's peace initiatives are marked by a number of distinct characteristics. Women's peace activism encompasses concerns for food security, access to their land, forest, water and

other resources. As women negotiate survival strategies the issue of livelihood, health care and education is given utmost priority grounded in the notion of justice and human security.

- Once the political, economic and social impact of wars on men, women, girls and boys i.e. gender analysis of conflict/war situation is undertaken, the needs of a post -conflict society. This is a very important phase that gives an opportunity to promote reconstruction efforts with a gender perspective and enable women to participate actively in this process.
- Numerous studies have noted that gender roles change in various ways during armed conflicts and that this can entail positive potential for social changes in gender relations. It is important to call attention to and support these processes. Women are often active in local peace activities and women's movements.
- In many regions today, military forces are on the spot to secure or maintain peace by force. The presence of women and the incorporation of a gender perspective in these efforts have a favourable effect on the peace process. This is vital, particularly in light of the fact that women increasingly make up the majority of the local population and able to function as role models for both women and men. The presence of women in areas affected by conflict would significantly help to create confidence-building and stable relations with local populations.
- The process of violence has created new "unfeminine" roles for women within the household, community and other levels, such as women who lead and command over men; women who are publicly and politically engage; who can put forth an unconventional political, military, economic and cultural viewpoint and who can organize; Women who head households; women who owns means of production which previously used to be male's authority; women who are principal income earners in family; women who perform death rites due to the death, injury and displacement of male members of the family.
- Women peace negotiators understand and articulate the implications of peace processes for women better than male negotiators. Women have made and will continue to make significant contributions towards the culture of peace. Women are largely known to be responsible for nurturing positive cultural practices and they often offer non-violence to violence and strife. Women, although less visible than men, have to be integrally involved in seeking solutions to issues intrinsic to building peace, and sustainable economic, environmental, and political development. Women's fullest potential can be realized and it is primarily the women who can usher in an era of peace in 21st century. There is a need to discuss their image of a culture of peace as well as the strategies for removal of social, political and other hindrances in mandating gender in peace efforts. Women's role as resource managers, advocates for others in emergency and crisis situations, leaders in political processes, and influential, as advisors needs to be valued.

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