

Sex as a War Tool

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ABSTRACT : Sex has long been recognized as a weapon of war in many shapes as rape, forced prostitution, sexual slavery, and forced marriage which are used to terrorize and control populations in times of conflict. Why has sex been used as a weapon of war in conflict zones, and what are the impacts on the survivors? This paper examines the prevalence and impact of the use of sex as a tool during war, including the physical, psychological, and social consequences for survivors. Additionally, this study explores the factors that contribute to the use of sex as a tool of war, such as gender inequality, political factors, cultural norms, and military structures. To gather in-depth information and understanding of the experiences and perspectives of those affected by this issue, this study employs a qualitative methodology, including examples and analysis of them. The findings must highlight the urgent need for increased awareness, prevention, and response to sexual violence in conflict, including comprehensive support and services for survivors. The study concludes with a call to action for policymakers, civil society, and the international community to prioritize the prevention and response to sexual violence in conflict, and to hold perpetrators accountable for their crimes.

KEYWORDS : Sexual Violence – Rape – War – Conflict – Sexual Assault – Gender – Power Dynamics

Abbreviations

ISIS: Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham

DRC: Democratic Republic of the Congo

KLA: Kosovo Liberation Army

RUF: Revolutionary United Front

HIV: Human Immunodeficiency Virus

PTSD: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

RTS: Rape Trauma Syndrome

OCD: Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder

DID: Dissociative Identity Disorder

I. INTRODUCTION

“Rape (...) there are different types of rape. They are all forbidden. There is the rape when a soldier is away, when he has not seen his women for a while and has needs and no money. This is the lust/need rape [viol yaposá]. But there are also the bad rapes, as a result of the spirit of war (...) to humiliate the dignity of people. This is an evil rape...” (Male, Lt.)

Sex as a weapon of war is a horrible crime that has occurred across history, from ancient to current battles. It is widely used as a tool in both social and armed fighting, such as war, to humiliate enemies and weaken their spirit (DeLong-Bas, 2013). While sexual violence has always been a terrible result of war, the use of rape as an organized approach to scare, weaken, and oppress populations is a relatively recent issue that is getting international attention. **What are the consequences of sexual violence in war and how can they be addressed using survivor-centered approaches that focus on their needs, along with action from policymakers and the international community to prevent sexual violence in conflict and hold perpetrators accountable?** The purpose of this research study is to examine history of the use of sex as a war tool at some times, the factors that contribute to the use of sex as a tool of war, and the severity and impact on victims and communities of rape as a weapon of war. By shedding light on this horrific behavior, this study will recommend actions that can contribute to efforts to prevent and respond to sexual assault in conflict, as well as to promote justice and accountability for those who conduct it.

II. METHODOLOGY

This research paper adopts a qualitative methodology that involves a comprehensive literature review and analysis of examples to gain a deeper understanding of the context of rape in war. The study draws on journal articles and books that provide literature on sexual violence during conflicts. The research focuses on identifying and analyzing factors that contribute to the use of sexual violence as a tool of war and the impact of such violence on its victims. The insights gained from this approach can inform policies and efforts aimed at preventing and responding to sexual violence in war.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

History of the Use of Sex as a War Tool at Some Times

Sexual violence has been utilized as a tool of warfare since ancient times till now. Brownmiller, (1975) argues that, rape was socially allowed under the norms of battle in ancient Greek civilization. Greek soldiers could seize a woman's body without shame, and the women were viewed as concubines, lawful war goods, and figures who might be useful wives or put into slavery. According to Lamb (2020), although rape has existed since the beginning of time, the first documented use of rape as a weapon of war to spread fear began in 1936 during the Spanish Civil War. When the Germans invaded Belgium in 1914, rape became the ultimate expression of humiliation (Brownmiller, 1975). In World War II, the war was cruel to civilian women and girls. Rape and other types of sexual assault were not only committed with purpose and frequency during World War II, but they were also "given license, either as an encouragement for soldiers or as an instrument of policy" (Companaro, 2001). The Nazi and Japanese regimes used different types of forced prostitution and rape on a huge scale was neglected (Companaro, 2001). According to Axis authorities, "man should be trained for war and woman for the recreation of the warrior" and that it is appropriate when "a soldier who has crossed thousands of kilometers through blood and fire has fun with a woman or takes a trifle" (Companaro, 2001). In 1937–1938, the Japanese became famous for the "rape of Nanking", when they brutally raped and mistreated a large number of Chinese women before turning them into sexual slaves (Milillo, 2006). It is claimed that between 200,000 and 400,000 Bangladeshi women were raped by Pakistani forces during the 1971 Bangladesh War for Independence (Lamb, 2020). On March 25, 1971, a huge military operation known as Operation Searchlight launched an attack on the Dhaka neighborhood, burning buildings, killing academics and students, and raping large numbers of women (Lamb, 2020). Girls and women were kidnapped by Pakistani forces from their houses, from the streets, or while attending school or fetching water from a well (Lamb, 2020). Some victims of so-called spot rape were violated on the spot, sometimes in their own beds and in front of their own families, while others were gang raped while being chained to banana trees (Lamb, 2020). Between 1976 and 1983, during what became known as the 'Dirty War,' Argentina's military dictatorship murdered 30,000 Argentines (Lamb, 2020). According to Lamb (2020), around 30% of those abducted were women. Martin (2005) states, high rates of rape and other gender-based violence against civilians characterized the civil conflicts in Sierra Leone and Liberia in 1991. She added that women and young girls were the main targets of this brutality, however males were also hurt. In order to brutalize recruits and sever family ties, the military forces frequently forced conscripts—often young combatants—to rape their mothers and sisters (Martin, 2005). Both sides' armed troops have also kidnapped girls and women to use as "bush wives" or sexual slaves (Martin, 2005). In 1992 and 1993, about 30,000 to 50,000 women were victims of rape in the Bosnian war that was done by Bosnian Serbs army (Albanese, 2001). In another battle, the ISIS has attempted to wipe out Yazidis in 2014 via murder, sexual enslavement, abuse, and other cruel and humiliating experiences (Human Rights Council, 2016). According to the Human Rights Council report (2016) They Came to Destroy: ISIS Crimes Against the Yazidis, hundreds of Yazidi women and girls (some as young as nine years old) have been sold in Syria's slave marketplaces, known as souk sabaya, and are continually "sold, gifted, and willed between fighters." In 1996, since the outbreak of the liberation struggle, the impact of sexual assault on women's life has been seen throughout the DRC (Zihindula et al., 2018). Women were victims of all of the warriors; military arrived from neighboring countries, including Rwanda, as well as the government army and paramilitary organizations (Zihindula et al., 2018). They raped, robbed, tortured, and slaughtered to prove their authority and superiority (Zihindula et al., 2018). They began raping in public, secure in their totalitarian position (Zihindula et al., 2018). Children and people have come to see the rapes. Some males were so disturbed that they abandoned the region, leaving their wives without assistance, and women who were victims or survivors of sexual abuse were also badly traumatized (Zihindula et al., 2018).

Factors That Contribute to The Use of Sex as A Tool of War

The use of sex as a weapon of war is a complicated subject impacted by a number of elements, including power dynamics, social beliefs about gender, and military tactics. In times of violence, girls are frequently raped or assaulted (Coomaraswamy, 2012). Rape has become recognized as a normal, predictable, and inescapable consequence of war, just as war is considered as a part of history (Companaro, 2001).

Military Tactics

Military tactics play an important part in the use of sex as a weapon of war, with certain armed organizations purposefully exploiting sexual assault to intimidate, dominate, and demotivate the enemy's people. Raping girls and women is frequently used as a military technique to terrorize the people and humiliate the community (Coomaraswamy, 2012). As Isgandarova (2013) also suggests, rape of women in times of war is used as a "deliberate method to destroy bonds between communities and limit the resistance to invasion." In addition to that, Milillo (2006) posits, even though not all rape is done in the same manner, there are a number of features that make it a common strategy in conflict. First off, rape frequently occurs when a family member of the victim is thought to be involved in political activity that is at odds with that of the government or a rival organization (Milillo, 2006). "Punishing actual or alleged deeds attributed to women or members of their family" includes the use of rape and torture (Milillo, 2006). For instance, there are several recorded cases of rapes carried out by Serbian police and military personnel in 1998 as retaliation against Bosnian women whose families were KLA supporters (Milillo, 2006). Other times, violence is focused toward women who publicly challenge or endanger the objectives of the ruling power (Milillo, 2006). According to Lamb (2020) in 1971, Bangladeshi women were imprisoned as sex slaves in rape camps throughout the conflict and kept nude so they could not escape. Before preying on their victims, men were given porn movies to get them set up (Lamb, 2020). Many women were killed in horrible and sadistic ways, some by having their vaginas bayoneted and then allowed to bleed to death (Lamb, 2020).

Power Dynamics

The power dynamics that exist in conflict and war frequently lead to the use of sex as a weapon of war, with those in positions of authority utilizing sexual violence to demonstrate their dominance and impose control over vulnerable people. Companaro (2001) writes, rape is frequently used as a message between men—a message that is predominantly imposed on women—whether as a measure of success or as a reward to the winner. At times, the environment of lawlessness in conflict zones encourages rape and exploitation by individual troops who know they will not be prosecuted (Coomaraswamy, 2012). This was also argued by Pittaway&Bartolomei (2022), a large portion of the rape and sexual abuse of refugee women is systematic and planned. It is institutionalized and used as a form of control in camps, these actions are carried out mostly unpunished (Pittaway&Bartolomei, 2022). On the other hand, the burden is particularly heavy for married women who are raped (Milillo, 2006). A married woman who was raped was similarly condemned as having performed adultery, for which stoning or exile might be imposed, in the ancient Babylonian Code of Hammurabi (Brownmiller, 1975). Therefore, one of the main objectives of people who are at war is to purposely rape women imposing shame and guilt. Milillo (2006) argues, women's family security is frequently threatened in order to further the wider objective of "ethnic cleansing." The reproductive functions of women as the keepers of culture are played on in ethnic cleansing (Milillo, 2006). A conquering group may feel that by injuring or shaming women out of marriage and motherhood, they are impregnating them with more "desirable" genetic material and working toward the eventual eradication of that social group (Milillo, 2006). Mass and systematic rapes are "instrumental" to a more distant collective goals for power on a larger societal scale (Milillo, 2006). The women shared stories of how rape was employed as a tactic in violent conflicts to humiliate populations, rip apart social structures, and get information. To destroy racial purity, they were forced pregnant (Pittaway&Bartolomei, 2022).

Social Beliefs About Gender

Social beliefs about gender and sexuality play a crucial role in the use of sex as a tool of war, with deeply entrenched attitudes towards gender roles and sexuality often contributing to the use of sexual violence as a means of asserting power, control, and dominance over the enemy population. Susan Brownmiller (1975) argued that "war provides men with the perfect psychological backdrop to give vent to their contempt for women.... A simple rule of thumb in war is that the winning side is the side that does the raping.... Rape by the conqueror is compelling evidence of the conquered's status of masculine impotence". According to Brownmiller (1975), all males become potential dangers to all women once they realize that their genitalia may be used as a weapon of force. She added that men's discovery of their innate strength enables them to cause fear or danger when necessary or desired. The sociobiological foundation of Brownmiller's theory suggests that every guy has an inbuilt desire to utilize his sexual dominance on women. During wartime, women and girls are targeted for sexual assault based on their gender, regardless of their age, ethnicity, or political involvement (Companaro, 2001). Women become the focus of one of the most significant abuses that occur during wartime because of their gender (Companaro, 2001). Men demonstrate their masculinity by sexually assaulting the women of other clans, symbolically causing death through the "death" of the clan's honor as represented by its women, reinforcing the clan's social structure by rendering women defenseless and limiting them to the position of representing the group's honor (DeLong-Bas, 2013).

The Impact on Survivors of Sex in War, Including Physical, Psychological, And Social Consequences**- The Physical Effect on the Victims of Sex in War**

In conflict, rape victims frequently experience severe physical consequences that may have a long-term impact on their health and well-being. Women's stories from throughout the globe have described the pain and destruction of victimization (Milillo, 2006). According to Human Rights Watch study "We'll Kill You If You Cry" on war rape in Sierra Leone, R.T. was gang-raped when she was 16 years old, as she described the attack as follows:

"When the RUF (rebels) discovered our hiding location, my parents, two elderly ladies, and I were all hiding in the jungle. The RUF said I had a husband in the military. I had about to get married. Ten rebels, including four child soldiers, were there, each carrying an AK-47 and two rocket-propelled grenades. My mum begged them to go... Then they ordered me to undress. Ten rebels raped me one after another. They lined up, waited in line, as I was raped in my anus and vaginally... If I cried, the rebels said they were going to kill me (R.T.)."

Many women who have abortions by non-sterile procedures or other non-medical ways do so due to unwanted pregnancies and run the danger of dying, becoming sick, wounds, or being sterilized (Clifford, 2008). Internal, rectal, and gynecologic bleeding are examples of physical injuries (Clifford, 2008). The brutality and inhumanity of using rape as a weapon of war does not start or stop with the rape act; victims are frequently assaulted and physically tortured (Clifford, 2008). Grisly actions are frequently committed in front of family members, as one mother saw when her daughter was tortured and mutilated according to the international Alert (2004):

"...My daughter resisted being told to take off her clothes. So they gave her the option of being raped or being killed. She decided to die. So they began torturing her by using a knife to chop off each of her breasts one at a time, then her ears, and finally they totally sliced up her belly. After some time, my daughter passed away. I felt helpless in protecting her because of this. I haven't been able to accomplish anything since then."

Clifford (2008) adds, pregnancy and sexually transmitted illnesses like HIV/AIDS are examples of the long-term physical impacts of rape. Guns, branches, bottles, and other weapons are frequently used during rapes with the goal of inflicting more suffering on the victim (Clifford, 2008). The physical harm that is long-lasting and irreversible—like fistulas, in which an abnormal hole develops between the vagina, the bladder, and/or the rectum—is made worse by the violent nature of rapes and the frequent use of instruments (Clifford, 2008). Due to the intensity of the rape's physical harm, many pregnant women miscarry, and others are left infertile (Clifford, 2008).

- The Psychological Effect on the Victims of Sex in War

Rape in war may have a terrible psychological effect on the victims, with lasting consequences that may harm their mental health and general quality of life. According to Clifford (2008), it is common for victims to be raped in front of their relatives, leaving those who are forced to witness it psychologically traumatized and damaged since they feel powerless and partly to blame for the crimes. According to Zihindula et al., (2018), Ivette, a survivor of wartime rape in the DRC, reported, men who were still on a trip when their wives were raped refused to return home:

"He said that he didn't want to be infected with HIV from Hutu; that he had better die far from me, but never live with me again, because he got it in his mind that I was infected with HIV by those persecutors who had raped me in his presence. He also questioned how his children would consider him; the children who saw how I was raped in their presence. I suffer so much."

Due to the physiological consequences, victims are also more likely to commit suicide since even "hiding their stress can also result in... increased risk of suicide (Clifford, 2008)." Victims have been forced to rape other victims, men have occasionally been forced to rape other men, or family members have been forced to rape one other (Clifford, 2008). Social problems or dysfunction, dissociated blame, loneliness, intimacy phobia, and sexual dysfunction are examples of psychological repercussions (Clifford, 2008). According to Clifford (2008), PTSD and RTS, OCD, DID, eating disorders, self-injury, self-blame, panic attacks, flashbacks, and sleeping difficulties are a few examples of the long-term psychological repercussions of rape. If the sufferer does not get timely help and treatment, these consequences might last a lifetime (Clifford, 2008). Acute Stress Disorder can be promptly brought on by victim symptoms, which can be either visible or discreet (Clifford, 2008).

- The Social Effect on the Victims of Sex in War

Sex as a weapon of war has profound social effects on its victims, causing social stigma, isolation, and marginalization that can persist long after the conflict has ended. Rape is particularly stigmatizing in societies where there are strict taboos against sex, virginity, and other aspects of sexuality (Clifford, 2008). According to Milillo (2006), many are committed to the idea that women must be virginal and unmarried before marriage, despite regional differences in cultural and religious standards. For instance, Mexican women are supposed to resemble virginal saintly religious icons like the Madonna or the Virgin of Guadalupe (Milillo, 2006). As a result, society might view victims as being disloyal, filthy or unclean, traitors, or damaged (Clifford, 2008). They are also frequently isolated, disowned, and forbidden from getting married (Clifford, 2008). When a

warrior returns to civilian life, regardless of his wartime actions, a war-rape victim is frequently blamed for her own victimization (Albanese, 2001). Some rape victims' physicians noted that unmarried women in traditional Muslim society who have been "stigmatized by rape" are unlikely to marry (Albanese, 2001). Because they couldn't defend off their assailants, they were polluted, unpure, worthless, and branded. Muslim victims interviewed maintain that raped women have little or no chance of having a normal family life in the future (Albanese, 2001). Despite a fatwa issued by Bosnia's top Muslim authority that men marry these women and raise the children born because of rape in a Muslim manner, the ladies recognized that this was unlikely to occur (Albanese, 2001).

In addition to that, women are frequently raped and mistreated in front of their family (Milillo, 2006). "When your sexuality is ruined, your motherhood and your dignity are also lost", as one lady expressed. Yet violence simply aims to stigmatize a woman and her family (Milillo, 2006). In peace, biased toward men and nationalist societal norms promote chastity, but war suspends most sexually oppressive and other norms of society (Albanese, 2001). "Thou shalt not kill" becomes "kill or be killed," and desiring thy neighbor's wife is not just common as a concept, but also practiced (Albanese, 2001). Even this, social rules continue to apply to war rape victims (Albanese, 2001). When all other conventional standards are turned upside down, the rule controlling female chastity is supposed to stand firm, despite women's full incapacity to do so (Albanese, 2001). Victims are frequently abandoned, divorced, abused, ignored, and even killed (Clifford, 2008). According to Zihindula et al., (2018), before raping the wife, the aggressors tortured the husband and that made him flee the village. He abandoned his wife and his family in fear. Chibalonza had an experience and reported the following: *"After they had beaten my husband and taken all his money, they left him tied up. A few days after, my husband again went to Matiri where he tried to earn money. He stayed there permanently."*

Survivors of sexual assault in the DRC were thought to be HIV/AIDS positive, which was one of the causes that caused some spouses to abandon them (Zihindula et al., 2018). Other spouses were angry and ashamed since the rape occurred in public, and they blamed themselves (Zihindula et al., 2018). The collapse of social communication as a result of massive rapes resulted in the loss of social support that women survivors of sexual abuse required to live a sustainable existence (Zihindula et al., 2018).

Another story according to Milillo (2006). there was a young woman of 19, that resided with her family in Bosnia. She hid in cellars in the area of the city where the army was stationed while her brothers fought for the Serbian side when the conflict first broke out. She was pregnant after being raped by troops. When her father learned of her pregnancy and the father, he made the decision that she could no longer live with them. She then fled to another city. Many women are left to raise their children on their own, while also having to cope with the trauma of recovery, living in fear of being raped, and being stigmatized (Clifford, 2008). These effects have a long-term impact on both the individual and society because they cause the community and family system to become unstable (Clifford, 2008).

IV. ANALYSIS

The analysis emphasizes the need for a gender-sensitive approach to the prevention and response to sexual violence in conflict, which takes into account the complex social and cultural factors that contribute to the use of sex as a weapon of war. The use of rape as a weapon of war is a gendered issue that is a reflection of the patriarchal social structure and the inequalities in power between genders. It is used to control and subordinate women who represent a threat to or destroy the goals of the ruling power as well as to demoralize and control the enemy's population. In conflict areas, sexual violence is institutionalized and employed as a tool of control. Beyond the psychological, social, and physical effects on individual survivors, the use of rape as a weapon of war has serious gendered implications. The physical and psychological impacts of sexual violence in conflict disproportionately harm women, and they are also stigmatized by their communities as being unfaithful, dirty, or damaged, which reinforces patriarchal beliefs that women are less valuable and less important than men. Sexual assault survivors need social assistance to maintain their quality of life, but because of widespread violence, social communication has broken down, depriving these women of the social support they needed to survive. In addition, rape leads to the abandonment, divorce, violence, disregard, and even murder of women. The patriarchal nature of war and the social norms that control it are reflected in the use of rape as a weapon.

V. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

"We have tried to tell people, but no-one will listen. They don't want to hear. They say women will not talk about rape because we feel ashamed. Who should be ashamed? Us, or those who raped us?" (El Salvadorean refugee woman 1990)

Effective policies and strategies must be implemented to address the issue of rape as a weapon of war, including measures to prevent, prosecute, and punish perpetrators, support and provide justice to survivors, and promote gender equality and human rights in conflict zones.

War almost invariably results in sex crimes, which is a terrible yet nearly widely recognized premise (Companaro, 2001). Despite the fact that the world was aware of the sexual assaults occurring during World War II, very little, if any, was done to stop them from happening or to hold those responsible accountable (Companaro, 2001). In 1975, Susan Brownmiller wrote one of the first and most extensive historical accounts of rape in conflict (Pittaway&Bartolomei, 2022). Even more astonishing, despite the fact that these crimes occur with "alarming regularity," attempts to punish such events have been exceedingly unsuccessful or, in some cases, absent (Companaro, 2001). Although humanitarian law has for more than a century forbidden sexual assault against women, traditional international law has consistently overlooked and failed to punish gender-based crimes (Companaro, 2001). And, while there has been evidence of an international commitment to cease widespread sexual assault during war and armed conflict during the previous century, the efforts taken are sometimes insufficient to protect civilian women from sexual violence and seen as less significant than other "rules of war" (Companaro, 2001). Social capital, such as networking and family and community support, is a resource that women survivors of sexual abuse must have in order to make a living (Zihindula et al., 2018). Although many thousands, if not millions of innocent women and girls in countries suffering from war are subjected to some of the most horrific sexual and physical attacks possible, the media has paid little attention to this kind of gender violence (Farr, 2009). According to Pittaway&Bartolomei, (2022), rape is an intentional act of violence mostly committed by a man against a woman. A man must be psychologically and physically prepared to commit the crime of rape; his own body is his major weapon (Pittaway&Bartolomei, 2022). Unauthorized use of a weapon, particularly when used against people, is illegal (Pittaway&Bartolomei, 2022). Some human rights organizations made a concerted effort to minimize the implication of the phrase "rape as a weapon" in public papers and the media (Pittaway&Bartolomei, 2022). We hammered home the idea that rape is both a violent crime and a kind of torture. Pittaway&Bartolomei, (2022) argued, we fought against the idea that rape might be used as a weapon of war wherever feasible. The term "rape as a strategy of war" was subsequently adopted by the UN as a result. Even while it was an improvement, it was still not recognized as a crime (Pittaway&Bartolomei, 2022).

To stop rape from being used as a weapon of war and to make those who commit it responsible, the following policy recommendations might be made:

- Strengthen legal frameworks: Governments should make sure that their legal systems have sections that make using rape as a weapon of war illegal and that punish perpetrators appropriately. Additionally, these legal frameworks need to offer assistance to sexual assault victims and their survivors.
- Increase awareness and training: More education and training should be given to soldiers and other armed groups on the terrible effects of sexual assault on people and communities. This should be done by governments and international organizations. This involves instruction on sexual violence prevention, detection, and response.
- Strengthen international institutions: Institutions like the International Criminal Court that are currently in place to prevent and address sexual violence in armed conflict should be strengthened. This involves making sure that perpetrators face justice and that victims have access to it.
- Addressing gender inequalities: Both governments and international organizations should work to eliminate the core causes of sexual violence in armed conflict, such as negative gender stereotypes. Addressing challenges like uneven access to education, employment prospects, and political representation falls under this category.
- Support peacebuilding efforts: Governments and international organizations should back peacebuilding initiatives that tackle the root causes of conflict and advance social harmony. Involving women and other marginalized individuals in peacebuilding initiatives and making sure their opinions are heard fall under this category.
- Increase funding: More funding must be given by governments and international organizations to initiatives aimed at preventing sexual violence during times of conflict and helping individuals who have been harmed. For those who have experienced such violence, this involves increasing financial support for health services, counseling, legal help, and other types of support.

VI. CONCLUSION

As a conclusion, this study shows how deeply social beliefs about gender and sexuality contribute to the use of sexual violence as a tool of war. The violence in war is a manifestation of patriarchal attitudes and structures that seek to dominate and control women's bodies. This study examined history of the use of sex as a war tool at some times, the factors that contributed to the use of sex as a tool of war, and how the physical, psychological, and social consequences of sexual violence disproportionately affect women and highlight the gendered nature of armed conflict. As Nelson Mandela stated:

"Safety and security don't just happen: they are the result of collective consensus and public investment. We owe our children – the most vulnerable citizens in any society – a life free from violence and fear. In order to

ensure this, we must become tireless in our efforts not only to attain peace, justice and prosperity for countries but also for communities and members of the same family. We must address the roots of violence. Only then will we transform the past century's legacy from a crushing burden into a cautionary lesson." (WHO 2002).

This shows the need for urgent action to prevent and respond to sexual violence in conflict, as it emphasizes the importance of holding perpetrators accountable for their crimes and providing support and justice for survivors.

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