

Committee/Council: Social and Humanitarian Committee

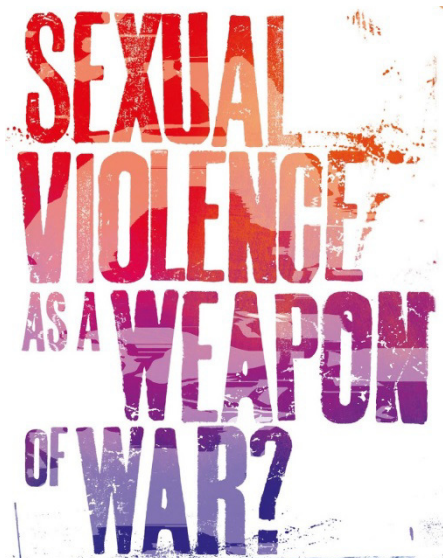
Issue: Violence against women as weapon of war

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Position: Main Chair

Introduction

The use of violence against women during war time is almost as old as war itself. It is without a doubt a highly effective weapon of war with multiple forms, among which rape proves to be the most destructive one. Although at first sight acts of violence



against women seem to be attacks on an individual, they actually represent attacks of a much larger scale whose targets are not just the direct victims, but also entire communities. Such violence is employed during conflict situations to dehumanize, humiliate and degrade the victim, but at the same time spread fear among its social surroundings. At this point, it is important to understand that crimes of this nature are not the product of the perpetrator's sexual impulses but they mainly occur as a result of a premediated combat strategy aiming to demoralize and destabilize entire communities.

Over the last years these crimes have increased in intensity and frequency in multiple countries around the world, thus once again drawing international attention to the issue. Despite consistent efforts made to prevent and eliminate violence against women in conflict situations, the problem is not yet under control proving not only that the existing national legislation is insufficient, but also that international responses to the issue lack coordination and efficiency.

'When rape is employed instead of a bullet, the weapon continues to wield its power beyond the primary victim; while the battlefield may be the body, the target is civil society'

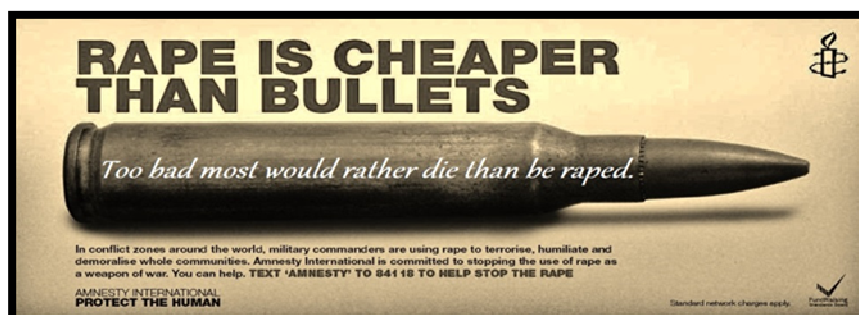
(Cassandra Clifford 2008)

Definition of Key-Terms

- Gender based violence against women (GBVW): Violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately. (As defined by the United Nations' Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights' Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW))
- Genocide: Any of the following acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:
 - (a) Killing members of the group;
 - (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
 - (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
 - (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
 - (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

(As defined in the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, Article 2)

- Sexual violence: an act of a sexual nature by force, or by threat of force or coercion. (As defined by the Human Rights Watch)
- Rape: a form of sexual violence during which the body of a person is invaded, resulting in penetration, however slight, of any part of the body of the victim, with a sexual organ, or of the anal or genital opening of the victim with any object or other part of the body. (As defined by the Human Rights Watch)
- Ethnic cleansing: a purposeful policy designed by one ethnic or religious group to remove by violent and terror-inspiring means the civilian population of another ethnic or religious group from certain geographic areas. (As defined by the Commission of Experts Established Pursuant to United Nations Security Council Resolution 780)



Background Information

Why is violence against women and especially rape considered a useful weapon of war?

Violence against women regardless of their age or background is frequently used as a form of warfare that imposes the enemy's domination not only on the victim but the society as a whole. Sexual violence as a war tactic has been used throughout the globe to dominate and instill fear in women, communities and whole nations. Especially rape as the most favored type of sexual violence during war time is an offence that is associated with intense violence and the humiliation of the victim. So stigmatizing are such acts, that the brutality of rape permanently scars the victim on a physical but mainly psychological level. Such sexual violence often results in the victim's death, but even in the case of her surviving it serves as a reminder to the entire social surroundings of the tragedies and atrocities of war. The long-term physical effects of rape can include pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases such as but not limited to HIV/AIDS or Hepatitis C. What is even more traumatic is that the victims of such gender-based violence often face social isolation and are shunned by their families and communities. It is, therefore, clear that any form of violence against women, and, especially, rape results in numerous consequences, mainly irreversible not only on the rape victim, but also on their entire family, and community.

Incidents, where violence against women is exerted by soldiers, express not necessarily the militant's strong sexual impulses, but primarily their effort to defeat and dehumanize the enemy by any means. In the case of sexual violence, however, the weapons deployed hardly have any similarity with the modern warfare arms. Men are choosing to use their strength and bodies as weapons to attack the enemy leaving their lasting marks on an entire country's civil society.

"Rape, as with all terror-warfare, is not exclusively an attack on the body- it is an attack on the 'body-politic'. Its goal is not to maim or kill one person but to control an entire socio-political process by crippling it. It is an attack directed equally against personal identity and cultural integrity"

(Nordstrom 1991)

STOP

Violence Against Women

Historical and Modern Context of violence against women as a Weapon of War

Customary evil

Rape during conflicts

Conflict	Estimated rapes
Second Sino-Japanese war, Nanking, 1937	20,000 (some 200,000 sex slaves were then provided for the Japanese army during WWII)
Soviet army in Germany, WWII	100,000 - 2m
Pakistani army during the Bangladesh war of secession, 1971	200,000
Bosnian war, 1992-95	20,000
Sierra Leone civil war, 1991-2002	Over 50,000
Rwandan genocide, 1994	500,000

Source: *The Economist*

Historically, the use of violence against women has been considered a normal act taking into consideration that before the 20th century gender equality did not even exist as an idea. In fact, numerous pieces of art and literary works have been saved that confirm the use of violence and especially sexual violence as a weapon of war. Such representative examples are references in Homers Iliad and Giambologna's sculpture, "The Rape of the Sabine Women" (1574-82). In addition to that, there are many references in the Bible noting the use

of rape as a normal casualty of war and depicting rape as a normal aftermath of a city fall.

It was, however, during the 13th century that sexual violence against women as a weapon of war took far greater and more terrifying dimensions. This historical instance of mass rape warfare took place under the rule of the imposing ruler Genghis Khan who managed to amass an empire extending across Asia and Central Europe. Genghis Khan made use of strategic methods of violence and terror, in order to establish his power, often at the expense of millions of women and young girls. According to his words, "The greatest pleasure in life is to defeat your enemies, to chase them before you, to rob them of their wealth, to see those dear to them bathed in tears, to ride their horses, and to ravage their wives and daughters", thus illustrating the use of rape and any other form of sexual violence as means to humiliate and torture, not only those raped, but also their families.

In recent history, sexual violence against women has been employed in multiple occasions during World War II by the Nazis, the Soviets, the Japanese, and,

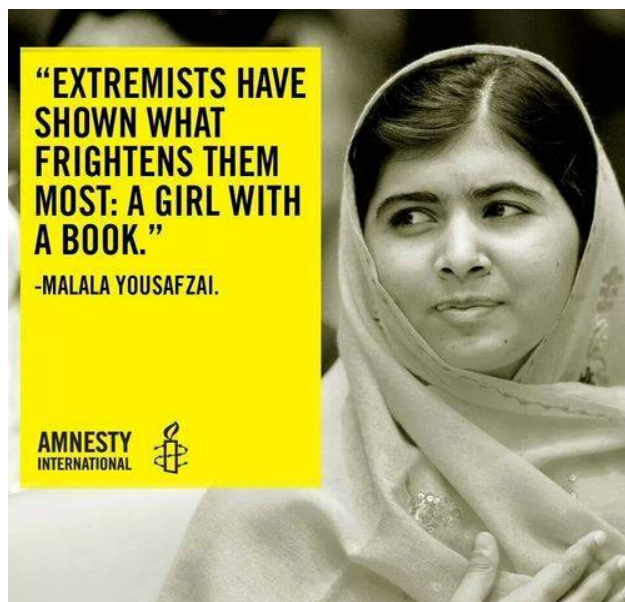
it was also used in the Vietnam War. Unfortunately, this epidemic of sexual violence as a form of warfare has not stopped till then. In fact, studies show an alarming increase in the number of rapes and other forms of abuse over the last decade, proving that, once again, women and girls have become targets during civil conflicts around the world.

Suggested video: <https://vimeo.com/18809745>

Effects on the Victim

Such violence includes rape, sexual abuse, deliberate infection with HIV/AIDS, sexual mutilation, sexual slavery, forced impregnation, discrimination against children born from conflict-related rapes and their mothers, enforced sterilization, forced abortion and many more.

It is clear that violence against women as a weapon of war is an act of torture and causes serious physical injuries or even death. Gang rapes are a form of sexual violence with the highest degree of physical and physiological injuries, and, are responsible for hundreds of deaths of women. In such cases, unwanted pregnancies are one more possible scenario for the victims surviving the sexual abuse. These women are many times forced to have abortions through non-sterile procedures, non-medical methods, and, thus, putting themselves into the high risks of getting infected, sterilized, scarred or even dying.

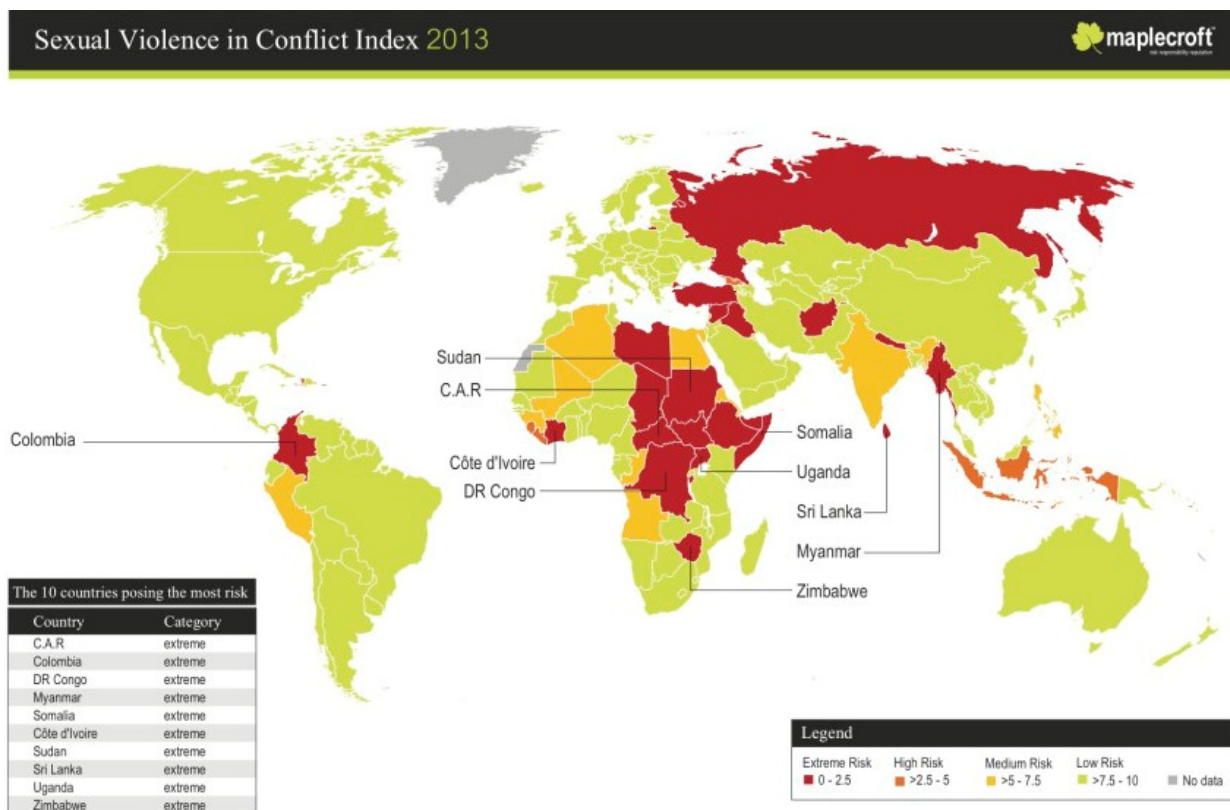


(Victim of Taliban violence and Nobel Peace Prize winner)

Physical injuries may include gynecologic, rectal, and internal hemorrhaging. The long-term physical effects of rape can include pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS and fistulas. As far as the psychological effects are concerned, it is possible that the victims experiences social difficulties, sexual dysfunction, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Rape Trauma Syndrome (RTS).

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

Countries where rape has been used as a weapon of war in recent conflicts include:



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Afghanistan, Algeria, Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, Burma, Cambodia, Chechnya, Congo, Cyprus, East Timor, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Kuwait, Liberia, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Peru, Pakistan, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Turkey, Uganda, Vietnam, The Former Yugoslavia (Bosnia, Croatia, Kosovo and Serbia), Zimbabwe.

Countries currently utilizing rape as a weapon of war include:

- The Sudan,
- Chechnya,
- the Central African Republic (CAR)
- Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)

The Democratic Republic of Congo and especially the eastern part of the country has been characterized as the "Rape Capital of the World," since countless acts of sexual violence take place in frightening intensity and frequency. The country's history, which is marked by ongoing civil unrests and instability in general, shows that violence against women is not a new phenomenon in the DRC. However,

despite that, research statistics indicate a dramatic increase in rates of sexual violence from the early 1990s and later. While the consequences stemming from the use of such violence have been noted multiple times both by national and international agencies, the government has not yet taken any serious measures towards the elimination of violence against women as a war tactic. Rape has been



used by armed groups and members of the Congolese army as a weapon of war, to spread fear over a particular ethnic group resulting in the death of thousands of women and girls. In the meantime, Congolese law has proved

insufficient to fully address the problem leaving the vast majority of the perpetrators unpunished.

Suggested video: <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/war-against-women/>

RWANDA

Rwanda's involvement in the employment of severe violence against women in conflict situations was made clear by one horrific event, galvanized the international community and drew worldwide attention. It was April 1994, when an unexpected genocide, mainly against the Tutsi minority in Rwanda, broke out lasting for more than two months and leading to the death of at least 500,000 women, children and men. The Rwandan genocide was a result of long held ethnic disputes and hatred, which were climaxed by intense government-supported propaganda. In this tragic incident, rape was used as a means of ethnic cleansing. The victims of this act were forcibly deprived of their dignity, as well as their identity, since they were dehumanized and treated as slaves. Mutilation which resulted in sterilization, unwanted pregnancies and transmission of HIV were just some ways through which the perpetrators managed to deform the ethnic identity of the Tutsi population. It was on that basis that they managed to block the Tutsi population's reproductive ability and to 'ethnically infiltrate' the community with the unwanted births of the enemy's child.

SUDAN-DARFUR

The western region of Sudan is one of the most dangerous places in the world for a woman to leave. Sexual violence against women –and men- is excessively used in the context of a long held brutal conflict in the region of Darfur. A rebellion which started in 2003 and continues till today, has taken the form of an armed conflict between the Sudanese government and the rebel groups, resulting in an endemic of sexual abuse. While violence continues to escalate, horrific infringements on human rights by government forces take place and grow in intensity. Once again, the systematic use of sexual and gender-based violence is considered a highly promising war-strategy aiming to terrorize the rebels and establish the government's power. Meanwhile the government refuses and often forbids the involvement of NGOs and international aid groups in the area rendering the deployment of violence in the region a highly unknown issue for the international community.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Although Bosnia and Herzegovina is not one of the countries currently using violence as a weapon of war, its recent history has been marked by conflict-related sexual violence, whose consequences have hardly faded away providing us with an example of the long-term effects of such war tactics. Twenty years have passed since the end of the war in the country, but sexual violence during war time still remains a highly sensitive political issue. The post-conflict situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina soon made clear that a comprehensive support-system for survivors was deemed necessary. Unfortunately, little progress has been made towards healing the wounds of war-violence, leaving the victims of such crimes vulnerable to social stigmatization and economic marginalization.

Suggested video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ClJoKKKApk>

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Perpetrations of crimes against women in Central African Republic have been widespread and systematic over the last decade, especially during the years 2002 and 2003. With constant arises of civil conflicts, the use of sexual violence is seen as an effective weapon to terrorize the public and humiliate the enemy. Incidents of sexual abuse take place on a daily basis, and, particularly, in areas where political-military armed groups and other armed bandits operate. Women, girls and boys are often forced to serve as soldiers, cooks, messengers and sex slaves. As a matter of fact, it is suspected that many child combatants have been involved in the use of sexual violence against women, with the majority of them being under the influence of illicit drugs. In most cases, the use of sexual violence is followed by the looting or forcible removal of the victims' property. Last but not least, although the people frequently witness the atrocities of such crimes, there seems to exist a deep culture of silence regarding acts of sexual abuse, thus making the situation even more difficult to handle.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL (AI)

Amnesty International, as one of the most active and acknowledged organizations in the humanitarian issues, has always strived to safeguard human rights of people in emergency situations, and, especially during conflicts. AI's



presence in areas, where human rights are under threat, has been proved salutary in our understanding of the situation, since it has consistently conducted research on the issue and taken significant measures to alleviate the pain

caused to the victims of violence during times of war.

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH (HRW)

Human Rights Watch has provided us with valuable insight into the use of violence against women in times of conflict. The organization's main goal is to conduct on-site investigations and research on human rights abuses. Operating in 70 countries worldwide HRW frequently publish the findings of their research as a way

to provide reliable information on the issue, raise public awareness, shame the abusers, and press for change.

INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE (IRC)

Operating for more than 70 years, the International Rescue Committee has offered consequential humanitarian assistance to anyone who has been impacted by violent conflict and disaster. Apart from their work on the prevention of sexual violence against women in armed conflicts, IRC has launched a series of counseling programs to assist survivors in coping and healing. IRC's work has significantly contributed in changing the attitudes that perpetuate violence against women on an international level using education as a key factor to their efforts.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
December-February 1937	The Nanking Massacre or Nanjing Massacre, also known as the Rape of Nanking or Rape of Nanjing is considered to be one of the most horrific instances of mass rape and mass murder in recent history. The episode occurred during the Second Sino-Japanese war and involved an unexpected attack unleashed by Japanese troops against the residents of Nanjing (also known as Nanking), then capital of the Republic of China.
9 December 1948	Adoption of the 'Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (CPPCG)' by the United Nations.
1971	Another instance of genocidal rape took place during the Bangladesh war for independence. Members of the Pakistani military raped between two and four hundred thousand Bangladeshi women.
1974	Following the invasion of Cyprus by Turkey, rape and other forms of sexual violence were used against Greek women.
1974	Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict.

10 December 1984	Adoption of 'The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment' by the United Nations.
August 1990	Following the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq, an estimated 5,000 Kuwaiti women were raped.
1992	The Višegrad massacres also known as the Višegrad Genocide took place in the town of Višegrad during the Bosnian War. Serbian police and military forces employed extreme violence against the Bosnian civilian population using mass murder and rape as a way of ethnic cleansing.
7 April 1992 to January 1994	During the Foča massacres Serbian military, police and paramilitary forces committed a series of sexual abuses and killings targeting the civilians in the Foča region of Bosnia and Herzegovina
April 1992 to 29 February 1996	The Siege of Sarajevo, the longest siege of a capital city in recent history, is associated with the use of intense violence against the Bosnian Herzegovinian women.
April-June 1994	Rwandan genocide is one of the most terrifying and brutal incidents of violence against civilians during times of conflict. It is further analyzed below.
2009-2014	New evidence suggests the continual use of sexual violence and torture in Sri Lanka against Tamil people. Although the country is currently during the post-war period, crimes against women have not yet come to an end resulting in the death of hundreds of people.
August 2010	An estimated of 500 rapes were reported in Eastern Congo.
2011	The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) has often exerted sexual violence against women, as well as men as a way to terrorize -and control- the public. ISIL is responsible for numerous crimes against women which took place mainly during the year 2011 and were perpetrated in an attempt to raise funds through the sale of captives into sexual slavery.
November 2012	Army Mass Rape in Minova Area, Congo where hundreds of women and children have been targeted by the Congolese army.

June 10-13 2014	Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict
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Relevant UN Treaties, Resolutions and Events

The United Nations and especially the Security Council have made some important steps towards raising awareness on the issue and eliminating sexual violence in conflict situations:

- *Security Council resolution 1325 (2000)* which highlighted the importance of abiding by international laws which serve to safeguard the rights of civilian women and girls and suggested the introduction of policies that protect women from gender-based crimes such as rape and sexual assault.
- *Security Council resolution 1820 (2008)* which called for an end to the use of sexual violence against women and girls as a tactic of war and promoted the participation of women in all aspects of peace process.
- *Security Council resolution 1888 (2009)* which provided detailed measures on the protection of both women and children from sexual violence in conflict situations.
- *Security Council resolution 1889 (2009)* which condemned violence against women as a weapon of war and called for raising public awareness on the issue and further empowering women and girls in conflict situations.
- *Security Council resolution 1960 (2010)* which suggested monitoring, analysis, and reporting arrangements as promising solutions to battle conflict-related sexual violence.
- *Security Council resolution 2106 (2013)* which concentrated on coordinating the monitoring and prevention of sexual violence in conflict situations.
- *Security Council resolution 2122 (2013)* which encouraged women's involvement in conflict prevention, resolution and peace-building.

The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (CPPCG)

The CPPCG was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 9 December and entered into force on 12 January 1951. Apart from defining genocide

in legal terms the Convention urged all member states to prevent and punish actions of genocide both in war and in peacetime.

The Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict

A serious step towards ending violence against women and children in conflict situations was made when the United Nations adopted 'The Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict' in 1974. Noting that women and children have often suffered inhumane acts during wars, civil unrests, and other emergency situations, the Declaration demanded that member states take measures to end "persecution, torture, punitive measures, degrading treatment and violence" against women and children in times of war. Last but not least the Declaration recognized "imprisonment, torture, shooting, mass arrests, collective punishment, destruction of dwellings, and forcible evictions" as criminal acts.

The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

One of the most crucial international human rights treaties on the issue is the United Nations Convention against Torture which was adopted on 10 December 1984. Briefly, the Convention requires states to implement measures that aim to the prevention of acts of torture in any territory under their jurisdiction, while also forbidding the transportation of people to any country where there are potential human rights threats.

Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

Although the use of violence against women as a war tactic has always attracted international attention, it was the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia in the early 1990s that highlighted the need for a more cohesive international response to the issue. It was on that basis, that in 1993 the Security Council established the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in an attempt to introduce and implement international criminal legislation related to crimes against women during times of conflict.

One year later, following the Rwandan genocide, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) was founded, in order to thoroughly investigate the incident in the context of international criminal law, and, decide on, who will be prosecuted for genocide. These two tribunals have highly contributed to the global understanding of the gender implications of armed conflict, and, have led over the years to the creation of similar bodies specializing in the use of violence in war, such as the Special Court for Sierra Leone which was founded in 2002.

UNiTE to End Violence against Women

One of the most recent and significant attempts to solve the issue was the launching of the 'UNiTE to End Violence against Women' campaign in 2008. With Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon being the visionary behind this act, the campaign aims at the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls in all parts of the world, in times of war and peace. What is remarkable about this campaign is that it brings together a host of UN agencies and cooperates with individuals and governments to eliminate gender-based violence in all its forms.

Possible Solutions

The use of violence as a combat strategy has been particularly intensified in places where national legislation is not efficiently implemented. Anarchy, conflict, political turbulence, dictatorship or governmental corruption, are just some key elements that characterize these regions. At the same time, international response to emergency situations of extreme violence has often proven to be uncoordinated, late and even defective.

On a national level, there are certain aspects that should be taken into consideration when dealing with the problem and its consequences. It is of paramount importance that national legislation of the countries involved is reinforced and strengthened, in order to bring an end to impunity and facilitate the access to justice for victims of intense violence. Moreover, it is incumbent upon each and every member state where sexual violence is frequently deployed, to take measures that concentrate on the prevention of such crimes and the formulation of a safe environment which is intolerant to any act of sexual abuse. Another priority for any national or international agency specializing on the issue must be the improved multi-sectoral assistance of the victims, ensuring the survivors' access to a range of medical, mental health, judicial and reintegration services. Recognizing the importance of raising public awareness, it is suggested that crucial research results and data regarding the use of violence as a weapon of war are made available to the public by developing a system of information management including collection, analysis and dissemination.

On an international level member states' strict abidance by the international criminal laws covering the topic of violence against women in times of war must be further promoted. Enforcement of the global legal framework designed to eliminate such acts of violence in conflict situations should also be a major concern for the worldwide community. Coordination has always been a problem in multilateral plans of action and that is the reason, why measures must be taken to guarantee that the

United Nations' response to incidents of intense violence will be prompt, well organized, and, of course, effective.

Notes to Participants:

The solutions proposed are neither a panacea nor exclusive, but, on the contrary, they are a general basis, on which you can depend, in order to prepare for the conference. Any other suggestions for the elimination of the use of violence in armed conflicts are more than welcome. The expectations concerning the Committee work are high and I hope that you will do your best during the sessions. Therefore, I would like to ensure you that when it comes to the procedure, the composition of your official papers and the debate, I will be at your disposal in any way possible, providing you with the answers, the materials and the support you might need. Should any questions concerning the topic or the procedure arise, feel free to contact me via email (nbeltsos@hotmail.com)

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