

The Elusive Peace: Ending Sexual Violence during and after Conflict

Author(s): Pearl Karuhanga Atuhaire, Nicole Gerring, Laura Huber, Mirgul Kuhns and Grace Ndirangu

US Institute of Peace (2018)

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep20222>

Accessed: 02-06-2020 21:37 UTC

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



JSTOR

US Institute of Peace is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to this content.



UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE www.usip.org

SPECIAL REPORT

2301 Constitution Ave., NW • Washington, DC 20037 • 202.457.1700 • fax 202.429.6063

ABOUT THE REPORT

Adopted in 2008, UN Security Council Resolution 1820 called upon member states to end sexual violence against women and girls and acknowledged the international community's responsibility to respond to and prevent conflict-related sexual violence. Although Resolution 1820 has led to remarkable progress in addressing sexual violence during conflict, narrow interpretations of what constitutes conflict-related sexual violence limit its impact. This report focuses on types of sexual violence that may occur outside of conflict but are worsened by it and makes recommendations to institutions that can play a role in preventing sexual violence during and after conflict.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Pearl Karuhanga Atuhaire is a program specialist with UN Women in Liberia. Nicole Gerring is a senior lecturer in the Irvin D. Reid Honors College at Wayne State University. Laura Huber is a PhD candidate in political science at Emory University. Mirgul Kuhns is a peacebuilding practitioner based in Washington, DC. Grace Ndirangu is a graduate student in governance, peace, and security at the African Nazarene University in Nairobi, Kenya. All five are members of the Missing Peace Initiative's Young Scholars Network.

© 2018 by the United States Institute of Peace.
All rights reserved.

SPECIAL REPORT 437

DECEMBER 2018

CONTENTS

Introduction	2
Impact on National and International Security	3
Consequences of Armed Conflict on Women's Security	3
The Continuum of Sexual Violence Related to Conflict	4
Gaps in Addressing Conflict-Associated Sexual Violence	7
Conclusion and Recommendations	8

Pearl Karuhanga Atuhaire, Nicole Gerring, Laura Huber, Mirgul Kuhns, and Grace Ndirangu

The Elusive Peace: Ending Sexual Violence during and after Conflict

Summary

- The consequences of sexual violence during armed conflict include trauma, social stigma, cyclical poverty, health issues, and unwanted pregnancies. Furthermore, the impacts of sexual violence during armed conflict last generations, disrupting societies and making peace elusive.
- Recognizing the scale of the problem, the United Nations Security Council in 2008 adopted Resolution 1820, which condemned sexual violence as a tool of war and offered specific actions to address the causes and consequences of wartime sexual violence.
- The implementation of Resolution 1820 has primarily focused on sexual violence committed by armed actors, but ten years of programming and research demonstrate clear connections between conflict and sexual violence that extend beyond wartime.
- Other forms of sexual violence, including sexual exploitation and abuse, domestic sexual violence, and violence targeted at women in politics, are often exacerbated by armed conflict and increase insecurity. This report defines this violence as conflict-associated sexual violence.
- Conflict-associated sexual violence contributes to the normalization of violence, undermines social cohesion, and worsens structural inequalities.
- The harmful impacts of conflict-associated sexual violence threaten the security of women, communities, and states, and disrupt peace processes.
- The United Nations and its member states, civil society organizations, media outlets, the private sector, and academia must recognize and address the detrimental impacts of conflict-associated sexual violence.
- The policy community must consider conflict-associated sexual violence as both a public health and a security concern.

ABOUT THE INSTITUTE

The United States Institute of Peace is an independent, nonpartisan institution established and funded by Congress. Its goals are to help prevent and resolve violent conflicts, promote postconflict peacebuilding, and increase conflict management tools, capacity, and intellectual capital worldwide. The Institute does this by empowering others with knowledge, skills, and resources, as well as by its direct involvement in conflict zones around the globe.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Stephen J. Hadley (Chair), Principal, RiceHadleyGates, LLC, Washington, DC • **George E. Moose** (Vice Chair), Adjunct Professor of Practice, The George Washington University, Washington, DC • **Judy Ansley**, Former Assistant to the President and Deputy National Security Advisor under George W. Bush, Washington, DC • **Eric Edelman**, Hertog Distinguished Practitioner in Residence, Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, Washington, DC • **Joseph Eldridge**, University Chaplain and Senior Adjunct Professorial Lecturer, School of International Service, American University, Washington, DC • **Kerry Kennedy**, President, Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights, Washington, DC • **Ikram U. Khan**, President, Quality Care Consultants, LLC, Las Vegas, NV • **Stephen D. Krasner**, Graham H. Stuart Professor of International Relations at Stanford University, Palo Alto, CA • **John A. Lancaster**, Former Executive Director, International Council on Independent Living, Potsdam, NY • **Jeremy A. Rabkin**, Professor of Law, George Mason University, Fairfax, VA • **J. Robinson West**, Chairman, PFC Energy, Washington, DC • **Nancy Zirkin**, Executive Vice President, Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, Washington, DC

MEMBERS EX OFFICIO

Mike Pompeo, Secretary of State • **James Mattis**, Secretary of Defense • **Frederick J. Roegge**, Vice Admiral, US Navy; President, National Defense University • **Nancy Lindborg**, President, United States Institute of Peace (nonvoting)

The views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Institute of Peace, which does not advocate specific policy positions.

To request permission to photocopy or reprint materials, email: permissions@usip.org.

Introduction

The awarding of the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize to two advocates for survivors of wartime sexual violence indicates that the issue of sexual abuse has become prominent on the international agenda. As the Nobel winners—Dr. Denis Mukwege of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Nadia Murad, a Yazidi Iraqi woman who is a United Nations Goodwill Ambassador for the Dignity of Survivors of Human Trafficking—have shown, the effects of conflict-related sexual violence do not end when the fighting stops.

Mukwege, a gynecological surgeon who treats rape victims, has indicated that many of his patients are assaulted not during active conflict but rather by ex-combatants living among civilians.¹ Similarly, Murad's discussion of her trauma as a member of the Yazidi ethnic group forced into sexual slavery by the Islamic State demonstrates the painful legacy of sexual violence for individuals and communities. Together, they highlight the intersecting forms of sexual violence that are often forgotten in peacebuilding. As reiterated by UN Secretary-General António Guterres, "By honoring these defenders of human dignity, this prize also recognizes countless victims around the world who have too often been stigmatized, hidden and forgotten."²

The Nobel recognition of Mukwege and Murad is the latest in a long line of actions by the international community to respond to the scourge of wartime sexual violence. Sexual violence in conflict was recognized as a war crime in international legal instruments such as the 1949 Geneva Conventions, but few gains were made in bringing perpetrators to justice until the 1990s, when armed conflicts in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda brought increased attention to the issue and resulted in the international prosecution and conviction of rape as a war crime and a crime against humanity.³

The UN Security Council's recognition of rape as a tactic of war through the unanimous adoption of Resolution 1820 in 2008 was another major achievement.⁴ It called upon UN member states to end sexual violence against women and girls and acknowledged the international community's responsibility to respond to and prevent wartime sexual violence. Although Resolution 1820 has led to remarkable progress in addressing sexual violence in conflict, narrow interpretations of what constitutes conflict-related sexual violence have limited its scope.

This report distinguishes between two broad categories of sexual violence that are aggravated by conflict and that undermine individual, local, national, and international security—conflict-related and conflict-associated sexual violence.⁵ Conflict-related sexual violence is committed by armed parties to the conflict, including insurgents, state militias, and regular military forces. Conflict-associated sexual violence may occur outside of wartime but is worsened by conflict.

Periods of conflict and displacement may intensify existing intimate-partner violence and sexual violence and "may also lead to new forms of violence against women," according to the World Health Organization.⁶ While a broad range of violent acts may be considered, this report looks at three types of conflict-associated sexual violence: sexual exploitation and abuse, domestic sexual violence, and sexual violence against women in politics. These forms of sexual violence are both a consequence and a cause of conflict. On the one hand, conflict increases the vulnerability of women and girls, which in turn increases their risk of conflict-associated sexual violence. On the other, conflict-associated sexual violence disrupts social networks, increases familial tensions, and worsens individual insecurity; these processes decrease community stability and degrade state security. Thus, conflict-associated sexual violence presents a threat not only to individuals and their communities but also to national security and international peace.

Impact on National and International Security

Sexual violence can undermine peace and amplify the risk of conflict. Increasingly, scholars are recognizing the connections between gender inequality, violence against women at the individual and community level, and an escalated propensity for conflict. For example, Cynthia Cockburn observes that there is a continuum of violence in peacetime and in war. Although wartime violence has distinct properties and forms, violence in war, just like domestic sexual violence and harassment, reflects underlying social inequalities between men and women.⁷ Similarly, Erik Melander argues that gender equality deeply impacts views regarding tolerance and respect for others and conflict resolution.⁸ A team of scholars led by Valerie Hudson argues that poor treatment of women influences all human relations and increases aggressive and violent behavior in society; these norms heighten the potential for violence among political groups.⁹ Further, gender inequitable societies may be more likely to experience sexual violence both during and outside of conflict.¹⁰

Conflict-associated sexual violence reflects gender inequality and gender discrimination norms that predispose a society toward violence. Thus, conflict-associated sexual violence—even when it occurs outside of a wartime setting—should be viewed as a national and international security issue. UN measures and initiatives such as Security Council Resolution 1325 and the Sustaining Peace Agenda have recognized the links between women’s rights, the elimination of gender-based violence, and peace and security.

Moreover, sexual violence associated with conflict may directly contribute to conflict or prevent the resolution of it by disrupting peacebuilding and preventing women’s political engagement. For example, sexual exploitation and abuse committed by peacekeepers may damage a peacekeeping mission’s effectiveness and undermine the moral authority of the UN, as recognized by the UN Security Council in 2016 in Resolution 2272. Violence committed by individual peacekeepers subverts a local population’s perceived legitimacy of peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions.¹¹ As a result, a host population may be less willing to cooperate with international actors and peacekeepers, which can hamper their ability to gather information, perform security patrols, protect civilians from attacks, and fulfill their mandate more generally.

Violence against women in politics also contributes to insecurity. Efforts to quell women’s activism and political participation can be detrimental to peace in the short term and in the long run, as women’s participation is a key element of postconflict recovery and of the sustainability of healthy democracies. Women’s suffrage and political participation are associated with less interstate conflict and civil war and its relapse.¹² Women’s participation in civil society reduces a state’s use of force and war.¹³ Further, after conflict, women play a key role in conflict resolution and that may be jeopardized if threats of violence prevent women’s participation. Peace processes that include women are, according to one study, “35 percent more likely to last at least fifteen years.”¹⁴ Thus, sexual violence threatens not only the physical security of individuals and their families but also undermines the peace and security of their communities and the state.

Consequences of Armed Conflict on Women’s Security

Armed conflict increases women’s vulnerability to sexual violence. One primary way this occurs is through women’s exposure to armed actors. For example, during conflict men and boys are likely to be absent from the home fighting in the war, leaving women and girls vulnerable to attacks by armed groups.¹⁵ As a result, female bodies have symbolized battlefields for armed groups and for opportunists who take advantage of war to inflict

violence upon vulnerable members of their societies, such as women and girls. Even after conflict, ex-combatants may continue to perpetrate sexual violence as a result of learned behaviors during the war. Additionally, former combatants often experience higher levels of alcohol and drug abuse, unemployment, and tolerance for violent acts, which increase the likelihood of sexual violence.¹⁶ Further, the population in general, especially ex-combatants, may face high levels of mental health problems, such as post-traumatic stress disorder, which contribute to sexual violence.¹⁷

Second, conflict may increase conflict-associated sexual violence by disrupting and damaging social networks and altering traditional norms and behaviors. Conflict often weakens social support structures and traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution, such as the family, village, and religious leaders who would act as arbitrators to prevent sexual violence.¹⁸ Conflict may also displace families, disrupt women's support networks, and leave women without allies. Additionally, exposure to conflict can lead to a greater habituation to violence and increase negative conceptions of masculinity and patriarchal structures.¹⁹ In postconflict settings such as refugee camps, men may feel a loss of power, frustration, and anger as they navigate contexts that challenge traditional norms of male superiority; this may result in an increase in sexual violence. One such example from a Congolese man in a refugee settlement in Uganda illustrates how men use marital rape to reestablish power within their families:

While we were still in Congo, my wife used to respect me and never denied me sex at any point. But since we arrived here, because of the strong message of women's emancipation and women's rights in Uganda, my wife has become big-headed. She sometimes denies me sex! Yet she is my wife! And I am entitled to conjugal rights from my wife.... Once, she even told me that I had raped her because I forcefully had sex with her. How is it possible that someone can rape his wife? [Laughter arises from the rest of the group members.]²⁰

Third, the influx of international and humanitarian actors after conflict magnifies the risk that vulnerable women and girls will be sexually exploited by powerful actors. Female refugees and women who experienced sexual violence during conflict may be particularly at risk for further assaults and exploitation. Moreover, international actors may unintentionally contribute to sexual violence by using a gender-blind approach to programming. For example, a 2016 field study conducted in the Kyaka II refugee settlement in Western Uganda discovered that women were forced into survival sex work to earn a living because the refugee settlement did not offer adequate support for women to provide for their families.²¹

Fourth, the conflict-associated vulnerability experienced by women, and especially adolescent girls, increases their risk of engaging in survival sex, entering forced marriages, and being subjected to other forms of sexual exploitation, such as bride kidnapping and human trafficking.²²

Finally, women often become more politically engaged during conflict as they mobilize in peace movements, participate in reconstruction efforts, and engage in civil society. After conflict, these women may wish to continue their engagement in politics. But as men seek to reestablish their power and build a new status quo, they may turn to using sexual violence to coerce women out of politics or civil society activism.

The Continuum of Sexual Violence Related to Conflict

In June 2008, the UN Security Council made a groundbreaking commitment to address sexual violence in conflict as an international security concern. Resolution 1820 singles out sexual violence as a tactic of war and posits that it "can significantly exacerbate situations of armed conflict and may impede the restoration of international peace and security." The

resolution goes on to categorize conflict-related sexual violence—sexual violence perpetrated by armed actors, including state security forces, militia, and rebel groups—as a war crime and a crime against humanity.²³

Conflict-related sexual violence manifests in various forms, including rape, sexual torture and mutilation, sexual slavery, forced prostitution and abortion, sterilization, forced marriage and pregnancies, and human trafficking that involves sexual violence and exploitation.²⁴ Conflict-related sexual violence can be committed by armed actors on battlefields, inside homes, in refugee settings, at markets, or in places where individuals are particularly vulnerable, such as firewood collection spaces, water access routes, or farmlands. Both men and women perpetrate and are victims of conflict-related sexual violence.²⁵ The motivations range from individual/personal to a bonding strategy to enhance unit cohesion to strategic uses to achieve conflict aims, such as during genocide and ethnic cleansing.²⁶

Recognizing the detrimental impact of conflict-related sexual violence on peace and security, Resolution 1820 calls for UN bodies and member states to prevent such violence, supply assistance to victims, remove amnesty for perpetrators, and to build infrastructure to mitigate and address sexual violence in conflict. This provided international actors with unprecedented legitimacy and motivation to address sexual violence committed by actors of the conflict. However, policy innovations, programming, and scholarship conducted in the ten years since the adoption of Resolution 1820 demonstrate that a more holistic understanding of the connections between sexual violence and conflict is needed to achieve lasting peace and security.

Classic explanations of conflict-related sexual violence do not account for the full spectrum of sexual violence.²⁷ Thus, it is necessary to consider an additional category of sexual violence that is not directly related to armed conflict but is exacerbated by it. Three types of conflict-associated sexual violence are discussed below.

Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

Sexual exploitation and abuse occurs when a person uses his or her authority or position of power to obtain sexual favors from a beneficiary or vulnerable person. Sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) is mostly committed by nonconflict actors.²⁸ Armed conflict exacerbates SEA as humanitarian and security actors inundate postconflict settings, which increases power differentials between the vulnerable local community and these actors. This situation is worsened by collapsed economies, weak judicial systems, corrupt and ineffective law enforcement agencies, and weak or nonexistent rule of law.

Women and girls are particularly vulnerable to SEA by peacekeepers, humanitarian aid workers, and civilian personnel.²⁹ A 2012 survey found that 44 percent of female respondents in Monrovia, Liberia, engaged in transactional sex with UN peacekeepers.³⁰ Between 2005 and 2017, there were almost two thousand reports of SEA by UN peacekeepers and other personnel.³¹ In 2015, UN peacekeepers from South Africa in the Democratic Republic of Congo were accused of SEA. (South Africa had the highest record of sexual exploitation and abuse cases of all troop-contributing countries participating in UN missions from 2008 to 2013.)³² Moreover, in 2018, it was reported that a number of Liberian students were raped by a staff member at More Than Me, a charitable organization that provided free education to vulnerable girls, especially those who had previously engaged in transactional sex for food, jobs, and other essential commodities and services.³³

Domestic Sexual Violence

Domestic sexual violence is committed by a family member or domestic partner. While some forms of domestic violence are not sexual, domestic violence is often sexualized and

can include rape, assault, and sexual threats. While domestic violence is often overlooked in postconflict reconstruction and peacebuilding, conflict exacerbates economic, personal, social, and familial tensions that can contribute to domestic sexual violence. After conflict, men often face high levels of unemployment, mental health disorders, a feeling of vulnerability, and a loss of power and control. This can lead men to channel their frustrations into domestic sexual violence, such as raping their wives or girlfriends to reassert their power within the home. This is especially pertinent with ex-combatants.

Worldwide, between 20 and 30 percent of women experience domestic violence, which results in numerous harmful, long-lasting effects, such as familial dysfunction and community insecurity.³⁴ It is an especially pressing concern for women in postconflict societies. In Liberia, women exposed to violence during the civil war (1989–2003) were up to twice as likely to face domestic violence.³⁵ Similarly, refugee women along the Thai-Myanmar border who experienced violence or victimization during the conflict in Myanmar were almost six times more likely to experience domestic violence.³⁶ Further, domestic violence may increase distrust in the government if it is perceived that the government is failing to adequately protect women and girls. For example, women who believe law enforcement will not seriously address their domestic violence complaints may see the police as ineffective or as their adversaries and often turn to unofficial dispute mechanisms instead.³⁷ Lack of trust in government may undermine postconflict peacebuilding and increase the chances of renewed conflict.³⁸

Sexual Violence Directed at Politically Engaged Women

Sexual violence also has been directed at politically engaged women or against activists in civil society. These acts may occur during conflict or in postconflict periods as women engage in peacebuilding or in human rights advocacy. They also occur in periods of civil unrest, such as cases of sexual violence perpetrated against women voters or advocates during elections. Sexual violence against women in elections has the potential to suppress women's political participation—which is a key ingredient in promoting peaceful societies.

A range of violence including harassment, sexual assaults, and rape may be used against politically engaged women to discourage their political participation or in retaliation for their activism. A study of women legislators around the world found that more than 40 percent of women politicians have received threats of death, rape, beatings, or abduction, and more than 20 percent said they have experienced sexual violence.³⁹ Perpetrators also have targeted the families of political and civil society leaders. In many places, women are still not seen as equal partners in decision making, and their rise to power may be met with violent backlash. Women who defend human rights are at more risk for sexual violence than their male counterparts.⁴⁰

In many postconflict environments, women are actively engaged in peace and democracy building. Yet women's activism may be met with backlash as conflict actors vie for power, or as men attempt to reassert traditional gender roles during a period of major political and social change. For example, in the Balkans, women's rights advocates and activists faced backlash because of the persistence of patriarchal norms and attitudes.⁴¹ In Colombia, women who assert land rights and advocate for victims of conflict (including survivors of sexual assault) have been raped and intimidated. Their families also have been targets of assault, harassment, and rape.⁴² Although the postconflict stages of reconciliation and constitution building may provide windows of opportunity for women's leadership, these periods can also be times in which groups reassert traditional gender roles or seek to diminish women's activism as part of a power struggle.

Because the scope of Resolution 1820 is limited to conflict-related sexual violence, its current implementation often treats conflict-related sexual violence and other types of sexual violence as mutually exclusive. Thus, conflict-associated sexual violence is primarily the responsibility of UN member states, as it occurs both during and outside of wartime. However, many member states do not view protracted conflict-associated sexual violence as a priority, especially not as a security priority. This limits the potential of Resolution 1820 to address other manifestations of sexual violence that go beyond wartime.

The conflict-related and conflict-associated sexual violence framework recognizes that violence, especially sexual violence, does not exist within a vacuum. Sexual violence does not begin and end with war. Therefore, considering sexual violence that occurs outside of the traditional scope of war separately from conflict-related sexual violence is insufficient, potentially harmful, and ineffective.

Gaps in Addressing Conflict-Associated Sexual Violence

There are several key challenges to addressing conflict-associated sexual violence: insufficient understanding of its impact on peacebuilding, failure to equate it to conflict-related sexual violence, and problems with assigning responsibility to address sexual violence to specific actors. Additionally, the potential role of the media, private-sector companies, and academic research has been underutilized. Addressing the full continuum of sexual violence requires an approach that targets the insufficient prioritization, narrow definitions and conceptualizations, limited intervention techniques, and a lack of accountability.

First, facing limited resources, humanitarian crises, and contentious warring factions, governments and international actors often prioritize appeasing the warring parties and reestablishing government control. Conflict-associated sexual violence is perceived as a secondary concern.⁴³ This is a potentially disastrous oversight in prioritization during the peacebuilding process.

Second, this is exacerbated by the lack of attention paid to conflict-associated sexual violence in Resolution 1820, which only emphasized conflict-related sexual violence as a security issue, resulting in a new hierarchy of sexual violence within postconflict peacebuilding policy.⁴⁴ Conflict-related sexual violence often takes priority over conflict-associated sexual violence when sexual violence interventions are created.

Third, the UN argues that it is the responsibility of member states to address conflict-associated sexual violence since it does not fall within the purview of Resolution 1820. Yet states may lack political will, defend cultural or traditional practices, or lack the funding to address such violence.⁴⁵ The structural inequalities that lead to sexual violence beyond conflict are often deeply embedded within society and thus are difficult to change. Further, programs targeted at conflict-associated sexual violence are costly and can result in backlash. Harmful practices continue because of authorities' reluctance to punish perpetrators and the inability of states to fully protect the rights of women and girls.⁴⁶

The UN view of conflict-associated sexual violence as a state responsibility is particularly problematic in the context of peacekeeping. The UN has not accepted legal responsibility for sexual exploitation and abuse in its peacekeeping missions, maintaining that it is the responsibility of individuals and troop-contributing countries.⁴⁷ Instead, sexual exploitation and abuse continues to be addressed as a problem of individual noncompliance with rules and procedures rather than a systematic problem arising from power imbalances. The UN's exclusive focus on individual and member-state responsibility makes it difficult for victims to obtain justice and redress.

Fourth, insufficient media coverage of conflict-associated sexual violence contributes to its neglect by policymakers. Media coverage has increased attention to sexual exploitation and abuse perpetrated by UN peacekeepers and aid workers and even pushed agencies to hold perpetrators accountable. Nonstate actors have also worked with media outlets to tell stories of those affected by sexual violence. For example, Women Under Siege, a project of the Women's Media Center, has done exemplary work to draw attention to the problems of wartime sexual violence and to examples of conflict-associated sexual violence.⁴⁸ However, many cases of conflict-associated sexual violence remain undocumented in the media, and the media itself sometimes perpetuates "rape culture" attitudes that condone such violence.⁴⁹

Fifth, private-sector actors knowingly or unknowingly contribute to sexual exploitation and abuse both within business entities and in communities where they operate. And although the role of the private sector in peacebuilding is frequently underestimated, it has the resources to include diverse groups of women in postconflict development.

Finally, although academics are among the best equipped to investigate sexual violence against women and girls in conflict and postconflict settings, which is hard to monitor because of the sensitivity of the issue, there is a dearth of literature or data on conflict-associated sexual violence. Robust studies are limited and baseline data on conflict-associated sexual violence are insufficient.⁵⁰ There is a lack of research on effective interventions to decrease sexual violence.

Conclusion and Recommendations

UN Security Council Resolution 1820 provides a framework for the international community to consider how sexual violence in conflict impacts civilian populations—women in particular. Ten years after the adoption of Resolution 1820, the task is to expand the framework established in the resolution and include sexual violence associated with conflict in all its forms, even long after the conflict is officially considered finished. The long-term effects of this conflict-associated violence create obstacles to sustainable peace in the postconflict setting. Recognizing the continuum of harm and vulnerability in sexual violence during and after conflict is essential to realizing the aspirations of Resolution 1820 and making them sustainable. These efforts are critical not only for survivors of sexual violence but also for lasting peace around the world.

The following actions can help better address all forms of sexual violence related to or associated with conflict.

United Nations

The UN has acknowledged the importance of holistic and localized approaches to creating strong communities and sustainable peace in recent resolutions (1325, 1820, 1960, and 2282). However, sexual violence against women before, during, and after conflict undermines women's participation in development and peace, which limits comprehensive, locally informed policymaking. To build lasting peace, the UN and its agencies should address the root causes of conflicts, including gender inequality. There is a continued need across UN actions for gender-sensitive programming and initiatives that consider the varied needs and roles of men and women in peace and development processes. Such programs would help uncover the links between conflict-related and conflict-associated sexual violence, thus improving the effectiveness of policy innovations and programming.⁵¹ Also, it is not enough that the core concerns of the Sustaining Peace Agenda include the demand to address structural inequalities—the UN should formally recognize the continuum between conflict-related and conflict-associated sexual violence as a crime against women and girls that does not end with war.

UN Member States

UN member states not only have the legal authority but also the responsibility to address sexual violence. Member states should work to end impunity and to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse, domestic sexual violence, and sexual violence against politically engaged women. This can be achieved through updating and enacting national laws and policies, such as adopting national action plans, strengthening existing institutions' capacities to ensure functional coordination and oversight mechanisms, and enhancing response services such as justice systems, health centers, and security centers to provide effective, multisectoral support to all survivors.

Examples from Latin America show promise in combatting violence—including sexual harassment and sexual violence—against women in politics and civil society. Innovative efforts include risk mitigation measures in Colombia, a ground-breaking national law in Bolivia that criminalizes violence against women leaders, and integration of the issue into a national action plan against gender-based violence in Peru.⁵² Government ownership and political commitment are imperative to address violence against women in conflicts and to protect them when armed violence does occur.

Civil Society Organizations

The involvement of inclusive civil society organizations and women's movements is essential for reducing sexual violence. These organizations may be more independent of the politics in peacebuilding. They also have the capacity to increase social cohesion and involve practitioners. To facilitate peacebuilding, these groups should promote the idea that sexual violence is not merely a local public health concern but is also a problem that threatens national peace and security. Programs targeted at engaging men and boys in preventing and responding to gender-based violence are especially crucial to reducing the likelihood of backlash against women. Working with local faith-based leaders and informal institutions in postconflict settings is important as well because of their large community influence. Thus, they can be used as change agents in addressing patriarchal norms and attitudes, countering traditional views of gender roles, and combatting sexual and gender-based violence.

The Media

Media coverage can emphasize the work of peacebuilders and, simultaneously, uncover cases of abuse. They can also raise awareness about the risks of sexual violence, discuss protection, and expose perpetrators.⁵³ Reputable media outlets can empower survivors and share stories of recovery and resilience to reduce gendered stereotypes that perpetuate violence, while also highlighting program implementation and informing the public about the challenges of ending sexual violence in the home and in public spaces. For example, the July 2018 broadcast of *Frontline's* investigation into sex abuse committed by UN peacekeepers has already provoked action-oriented discourse among stakeholders, with involved countries and agencies taking measures to end impunity.⁵⁴ Government and civil society partnerships with traditional and emerging media outlets can promote programs that bolster prevention efforts.⁵⁵

The Private Sector

Companies and businesses in the private sector should enforce antidiscrimination regulations and protect women employees and vendors from sexual violence. These entities should promote inclusivity in their operations and products by creating grants and other empowerment programs for women. Private-sector investment in postconflict programs that include women can help peacebuilding efforts.

Academia

Improved data collection on sexual violence leads to better informed policymaking and programming that can change attitudes and behaviors. Scholars should engage in policy-relevant research and share their findings with practitioners.⁵⁶ To ensure the data collected are reliable, scholars should work closely with field practitioners who can enhance evidence-based research.

Notes

1. Agence France-Press, "Brave Healer of DR Congo's Most Horrific Wounds," October 5, 2018, www.france24.com/en/20181005-brave-healer-dr-congos-most-horrific-wounds.
2. United Nations, "Hailing Nobel Laureates as 'Defenders of Human Dignity, Secretary-General Says Peace Prize Also Honours Hidden, Stigmatized, Forgotten Victims,'" October 5, 2018, www.un.org/press/en/2018/sgsm19278.doc.htm.
3. The International Criminal Court's Elements of Crimes (2000) lists sexual violence as an enumerated crime against humanity in Article 7(1)(g)-6 and as a war crime in Article 8(2)(b)(xxii)-6 and (2)(e)(vi)-6. Male sexual assault was also identified as a crime against humanity in 1997 in the first case by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. See also Richard J. Goldstone, "Prosecuting Rape as a War Crime," *Case Western Reserve Journal of International Law* 34, no. 3 (2002).
4. United Nations, "UN Security Council Resolution 1820 on Women, Peace and Security (2008)," June 19, 2008, www.unwomen.org/en/docs/2008/6/un-security-council-resolution-1820.
5. For a discussion of recent scholarly findings around conflict-related sexual violence, see Elisabeth Jean Wood, "Conflict-Related Sexual Violence and the Policy Implications of Recent Research," *International Review of the Red Cross* 96, no. 894 (2015): 457–78.
6. World Health Organization, "Violence against Women," November 29, 2017, www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women.
7. Cynthia Cockburn, *The Space between Us: Negotiating Gender and National Identities in Conflict* (New York: Zed Books, 1998).
8. Erik Melander, "Gender Equality and Intrastate Armed Conflict," *International Studies Quarterly* 49, no. 4 (2005): 695–714.
9. Valerie M. Hudson et al., *Sex and World Peace* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).
10. Gurvinder Kalra and Dinesh Bhugra, "Sexual Violence against Women: Understanding Cross-Cultural Intersections," *Indian Journal of Psychiatry* 55, no. 3 (2013): 244–49; Sabrina Karim and Kyle Beardsley, "Explaining Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Peacekeeping Missions: The Role of Female Peacekeepers and Gender Equality in Contributing Countries," *Journal of Peace Research* 53, no. 1 (2016): 100–15.
11. Karim and Beardsley, "Explaining Sexual Exploitation."
12. Patrick M. Regan and Aida Paskeviciute, "Women's Access to Politics and Peaceful States," *Journal of Peace Research* 40, no. 3 (2003): 287–302; Mary Caprioli, "Gender Equality and State Aggression: The Impact of Domestic Gender Equality on State First Use of Force," *International Interactions* 29, no. 3 (2003): 195–214; Mary Caprioli, "Gendered Conflict," *Journal of Peace Research* 37, no. 1 (2000): 51–68; Jacqueline H. R. Demeritt, Angela D. Nichols, and Eliza G. Kelly, "Female Participation and Civil War Relapse," *Civil Wars* 16, no. 3 (2014): 346–368.
13. Nicole E. Gerring, "Empowered to Stop War? Testing the Women and Peace Hypothesis, 1930–2010" (PhD diss., Wayne State University, 2018).
14. Laurel Stone, "Quantitative Analysis of Women's Participation in Peace Processes," *Reimagining Peacemaking: Women's Roles in Peace Processes* (New York: International Peace Institute), 34.
15. International Committee of the Red Cross, "Protection Challenges and Needs Faced by Women and Girls in Armed Conflict and Post-Conflict Settings," January 30, 2015, www.icrc.org/en/document/protection-challenges-and-needs-faced-women-and-girls-armed-conflict-and-post-conflict.
16. Rachel Mayanja, "Armed Conflict and Women: Ten Years of Security Council Resolution 1325," *UN Chronicle* 47, no. 1 (2010), <http://unchronicle.un.org/article/armed-conflict-and-women-10-years-security-council-resolution-1325>; M. C. Greene, J. C. Kane, and W. A. Tol, "Alcohol Use and Intimate Partner Violence among Women and Their Partners in Sub-Saharan Africa," *Global Mental Health* 4 (2017).
17. Elizabeth D. Krause et al., "Role of Distinct PTSD Symptoms in Intimate Partner Reabuse: A Prospective Study," *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 19, no. 4 (2006): 507–16.
18. Jocelyn T. D. Kelly et al., "From the Battlefield to the Bedroom: A Multilevel Analysis of the Links between Political Conflict and Intimate Partner Violence in Liberia," *BMJ Global Health* 3, no. 2 (2018).
19. K. Thaler, "Norms about Intimate Partner Violence among Urban South Africans: A Quantitative and Qualitative Vignette Analysis," MICROCON Research Working Paper 59 (Brighton, UK: MICROCON, May 2012).
20. Focus group discussion with Pearl Atuhaire, March 2016.
21. Pearl Karuhanga Atuhaire, "Reflection in Action: Reducing Sexual and Gender Based Violence against Women in Kyaka II Refugee Settlement, Uganda" (PhD diss., Durban University of Technology, 2018); Gayle Tzernach Lemmon, "Fragile States, Fragile Lives: Child Marriage Amid Disaster and Conflict," Council on Foreign Relations, July 30, 2014, www.cfr.org/blog/fragile-states-fragile-lives-child-marriage-amid-disaster-and-conflict.
22. UK Department for International Development, "Violence against Women and Girls in Humanitarian Emergencies," CHASE Briefing Paper, October 2013, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/271932/VAWG-humanitarian-emergencies.pdf.
23. United Nations, "UN Security Council Resolution 1820."
24. United Nations, "Report of the Secretary-General on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence," April 15, 2017, www.un.org/en/events/elimination-of-sexual-violence-in-conflict/pdf/1494280398.pdf.

25. Dara Kay Cohen, Amelia Hoover Green, and Elisabeth Jean Wood, "Wartime Sexual Violence: Misconceptions, Implications, and Ways Forward," Special Report no. 323 (Washington, DC: US Institute of Peace, February 2013), www.usip.org/publications/2013/02/wartime-sexual-violence-misconceptions-implications-and-ways-forward.
26. Alexis Arieff, *Sexual Violence in African Conflicts* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2010), 8; Jocelyn Kelly, "Rape in War: Motives of Militia in DRC," Special Report no. 243 (Washington, DC: US Institute of Peace, June 2010), www.usip.org/publications/2010/05/rape-war-motives-militia-drc; Beverly Allen, *Rape Warfare: The Hidden Genocide in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); Dara Kay Cohen, "Explaining Rape during Civil War: Cross-National Evidence (1980–2009)," *American Political Science Review* 107, no. 3, (2013): 461–77.
27. Wood, "Conflict-Related Sexual Violence."
28. Inter-Agency Standing Committee Task Force on the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Taskforce, "Introduction to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse," 2012.
29. Alicia Luedke, Chloe Lewis, and Marisella Rodriguez, "Sexual Violence, Exploitation, and Abuse Improving Prevention Across Conflicts and Crises," Special Report no. 415 (Washington, DC: US Institute of Peace, November 2017), www.usip.org/publications/2017/11/sexual-violence-exploitation-and-abuse.
30. Bernd Beber et al., "Peacekeeping, Compliance with International Norms, and Transactional Sex in Monrovia, Liberia," *International Organization* 71, no. 1 (2017): 1–30.
31. Azad Essa, "UN Peacekeepers Hit by New Allegations of Sex Abuse," *Al-Jazeera*, July 10, 2017, www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/07/peacekeepers-hit-allegations-sex-abuse-170701133655238.html
32. Danish Institute for International Studies, "When Peacekeepers Do Damage: Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in the Democratic Republic of Congo," Policy Brief, January 2017, http://pure.diiis.dk/ws/files/740874/Gender_in_MONUSCO_WEB.pdf.
33. Finlay Young, "Unprotected," ProPublica, October 11, 2018, <https://features.propublica.org/liberia/unprotected-more-than-me-katie-meyler-liberia-sexual-exploitation>.
34. World Health Organization, "Violence against Women."
35. Kelly et al., "From the Battlefield to the Bedroom." It should be noted here that this study focuses specifically on one form of domestic violence, known as intimate partner violence.
36. K. L. Falb et al., "Violence against Refugee Women along the Thai-Burma Border," *International Journal of Gynecology and Obstetrics* 120, no. 3 (2013): 279–83. It should be noted that this study also focuses specifically on intimate partner violence.
37. Laura Huber and Natalie Florea Hudson, "Deepening the Conversation: The Successes and Dangers of Gendered Police Reform in Liberia" (working paper, Department of Political Science, Emory University, 2018).
38. Alexander De Juan and Jan Henryk Pierskalla, "Civil War Violence and Political Trust: Microlevel Evidence from Nepal," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 33, no. 1 (February 2016): 67–88.
39. Inter-Parliamentary Union, "Sexism, Harassment and Violence against Women Parliamentarians," Issues Brief, October 2016, <http://archive.ipu.org/pdf/publications/issuesbrief-e.pdf>; Liz Ford, "Threats of Death and Violence Common for Women in Politics, Report Says," *The Guardian*, October 26, 2016, www.theguardian.com/global-development/2016/oct/26/threats-death-violence-common-for-women-in-politics-report-says.
40. United Nations, "Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders, Margaret Sekaggya," December 20, 2010, www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/16session/A-HRC-16-44.pdf.
41. Huma Haider, "Gender and Conflict in the Western Balkans," K4D Helpdesk Report (Brighton, UK: Institute of Development Studies, March 2017).
42. ABColombia, "Women Human Rights Defenders and the Struggle for Justice in Colombia," September 2011, www.abcolombia.org.uk/women-human-rights-defenders-and-the-struggle-for-justice-in-colombia.
43. Mike Brogden and Preeti Nijhar, *Community Policing: National and International Models and Approaches* (Devon, UK: Willan Publishing, 2005); Sabrina Karim and Kyle Beardsley, *Equal Opportunity Peacekeeping: Women, Peace, and Security in Post-Conflict States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).
44. For more on hierarchies of victimhood and sexual violence after conflict, see Marie Berry, "Barriers to Women's Progress after Atrocity: Evidence from Rwanda and Bosnia-Herzegovina," *Gender & Society* 31, no. 6 (2017): 830–53.
45. Laura Huber and Sabrina Karim, "The Internationalization of Security Sector Gender Reforms in Post-Conflict Countries," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 35, no. 3 (2018): 263–79.
46. United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, "Harmful Traditional Practices and Implementation of the Law on Elimination of Violence against Women in Afghanistan," December 2010, www.peacewomen.org/node/90088.
47. United Nations, "Responsibility of International Organizations: Comments and Observations Received from International Organizations," February 17, 2011, <http://legal.un.org/docs/?symbol=A/CN.4/637/Add.1>.
48. Katelyn James, "Double Discrimination: Disabled Women Face Increased Violence in Wartime," Women's Media Center Women Under Siege, September 26, 2014, www.womensmediacenter.com/women-under-siege/double-discrimination-disabled-women-face-increased-violence-in-wartime; Salim Hussaini, "Why I'm Breaking the Cycle of Violence in Afghanistan," Women's Media Center Women Under Siege, January 28, 2013, www.womensmediacenter.com/women-under-siege/why-im-breaking-the-cycle-of-violence-in-afghanistan.
49. Dara K. Cohen, Matthew Baum, and Yuri Zhukov, "Rape Culture and Its Effects: Evidence from U.S. Newspapers, 2000–2013," *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 13, no. 3 (2018): 263–89.
50. Current evidence suggests up to 22 percent of women experience sexual violence in conflict, although the data are considered incomplete. See Lindsay Stark and Alastair Ager, "A Systematic Review of Prevalence Studies of Gender-Based Violence in Complex Emergencies," *Trauma, Violence & Abuse* 12, no. 3 (July 2011): 127–34.
51. See paragraphs 2, 21, 22, and 27 in United Nations Security Council Resolution 2282 (2016), [https://undocs.org/S/RES/2282\(2016\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/2282(2016)).
52. The Colombia risk assessments and protection measures are discussed in United Nations, "Report of the Secretary-General on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence," April 15, 2017, www.un.org/en/events/elimination-of-sexual-violence-in-conflict/pdf/1494280398.pdf. For an evaluation of the initiatives in Bolivia and Peru, see Saskia Brechenmacher, "Fighting Violence against Women in Politics: The Limits of Legal Reform," International Peace Institute Global Observatory, October 5, 2017, www.theglobalobservatory.org/2017/10/fighting-violence-against-women-in-politics-the-limits-of-legal-reform.

ISBN: 978-1-60127-751-0

An online edition of this and related reports can be found on our website (www.usip.org), together with additional information on the subject.

53. Human Rights Watch, "Invisible Victims of Sexual Violence: Access to Justice for Women and Girls with Disabilities in India," April 2018, www.hrw.org/report/2018/04/03/invisible-victims-sexual-violence/access-justice-women-and-girls-disabilities; A. Ullah, "Rohingya Refugees to Bangladesh: Historical Exclusions and Contemporary Marginalization," *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies* 9, no. 2 (June 2011): 139–61.
54. Patrice Taddonio, "This Is Unacceptable: How the UN Falls Short in Responding to Alleged Sex Abuse," PBS *Frontline*, July 24, 2018, www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/this-is-unacceptable-how-the-un-falls-short-in-responding-to-alleged-sex-abuse; Nicole Einbinder, "French Police to Investigate New Abuse Claims against Former UN Peacekeeper," PBS *Frontline*, July 24, 2018, www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/french-police-to-investigate-new-abuse-claims-against-former-un-peacekeeper.
55. The National Sexual Violence Resource Center in the United States offers tips for media coverage of sexual violence. See National Sexual Violence Resource Center, "Reporting on Sexual Violence," www.nsvrc.org/sexual-violence-reporting-tools.
56. Hugh Lauder, "Research Impact: How Academics Can Grab Policy Makers' Attention," *The Guardian*, November 11, 2014, www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/2014/nov/11/academics-grab-policy-makers-attention.

Of Related Interest

- *Sexual Violence, Exploitation, and Abuse: Improving Prevention Across Conflicts and Crises* by Alicia Luedke, Chloe Lewis, and Marisella Rodriguez (Special Report, November 2017)
- *Ending Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in War and Peace: Recommendations for the Next U.S. Administration* by Amanda H. Blair, Nicole Gerring, and Sabrina Karim (Peace Brief, September 2016)
- *Improving Accountability for Conflict-Related Sexual Violence in Africa* by Ketty Anyeko, Kim Thuy Seelinger, and Julie Freccero (Peace Brief, June 2016)
- *UNSCR 1325 in the Middle East and North Africa: Women and Security* by Paula M. Rayman, Seth Izen, and Emily Parker (Special Report, May 2016)



UNITED STATES
INSTITUTE OF PEACE
Making Peace Possible

2301 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20037
www.usip.org

