

Sexual Violence against Men in Conflict Zones: A Hegemonic Masculinity Approach

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Abstract: Masculinity as a concept has influenced the studies of gender across many academic fields. This essay argues that masculinity has shaped the current discourse on sexual violence against men in conflict zones. It further recognises the role of hegemonic masculinity as a form of masculinity and argues it presents an angle that has often been neglected in the study of gender and sexual violence, being sexual violence especially rape against men. It reveals that sexual violence against both women and men has served as a tactic of war essential to demonstrating dominance and humiliation of the perceived enemy. In the literature however, there is a gender bias portrayal of women and children being the only victims of sexual violence. This essay looks into the breadth and the forms of sexual violence and the different contexts under which it occurs against men in conflict. The reluctance of male victims to report sexual violence and in particular rape, the slow progress by the international community in recognising its existence on men, lack of investigating and theorising sexual violence specifically on men is explored.

Keywords: Sexual Violence, Rape, Men, Masculinity, Conflict.

I. INTRODUCTION

Civilians in conflict zones across the world, generally women and children are often vulnerable to sexual violence which among others takes the form of rape, mutilation and sexual slavery. This violence is carried out by either government forces, non-state actors including rebel groups, militias, criminal organisations and or both. The veracity behind sexual violence is such that those who use it deem it a strategic tool to inflict terror and humiliate civilian populations who may be seen as sympathising to the opposed factions. AsArieff (2010:8) puts it, sexual violence may be strategically employed for a variety of purposes such as intimidation, humiliation, political terror, extracting information, rewarding soldiers and ethnic cleansing.

While women and girls are regarded as the most vulnerable, sexual violence is also committed against men and boys for the same purposes as outlined above. The international community is also aware of the extent of this violence and this is demonstrated in the gender inclusive definition of the Secretary General where it referred to sexual violence as rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilisation, and other forms of sexual violence of comparable gravity perpetrated against women, men, girls or boys that is linked directly or indirectly (temporarily, geographically or causally) to a conflict (United Nations Security Council, 2015). Despite this awareness, there is a

slow progress towards recognising males also as victims of sexual violence as generally; international human rights instruments are developing in ways that often exclude, whether explicitly or implicitly, men as a class of victims of sexual violence in armed conflict.

Like women, male survivors of sexual violence committed during conflict situations may experience various short and long term consequences which are both physical and emotional. Physically, they may experience severe pain, sexual dysfunction including physical impotence, damage to their reproductive capacity, blood in their stools, abscesses, and ruptures of the rectum, general pains in the rectum, sexually transmitted diseases, other genital infections and loss of consciousness. Emotionally male victims of sexual violence may suffer trauma such as anxiety, depression, increased feelings of anger and vulnerability, loss of self-image, emotional distancing or desensitisation, self-blame and self-harming behaviours including suicide (Lewis, 2009).

It is on the account of the above that the paper seek to raise awareness of the breadth and a variety of sexual violence that are experienced by male victims in conflict zones, the veracity behind sexual violence on males as well as determining and explaining the reluctance of male victims to report such violations, which in turn leads to sexual violence against men being the least reported. In light of the above, this paper begins by conceptualizing sexual violence in conflict. It will further consider the theoretical framework through which sexual violence against men can be understood, as well as considering the different context in which sexual violence in conflict occurs. It will conclude by pondering the state of sexual violence against men within the international community.

Conceptualizing Sexual Violence In Conflict

Sexual violence denotes different things to different nations as is usually defined along the lines of the legislation, international and local guidelines as well as reports. For World Health Organization, sexual violence refers to any sexual act or attempt to obtain a sexual act by violence or coercion, acts to traffic a person or acts directed against a person's sexuality, regardless of the relationship with the victim (World Health Organization, 2002:149). It can further be understood to mean an act of sexual nature against on or more persons or caused such person or persons to engage in an act of sexual nature by force, or by threat of coercion, such

as that caused by fear of violence, duress, detention, psychological oppression or abuse of power, against such person or persons or another person or by taking advantage of a coercive environment or such persons's or person's incapacity to give genuine consent (United Nations , 2011). It follows from the two definitions that the purpose of this heinous act is often to inflict humiliation and pain on the victims as will be dealt with later.

It is important at this time to attempt to frame the perspective on social violence within the domain of conflict as is the subject of interest. To this, the definition provided in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is essential. According to UN Security Council (2015), sexual violence is can be understood to mean, rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilisation, and other forms of sexual violence of comparable gravity perpetrated against *women, men, girls or boys* (emphasis added) that is linked directly or indirectly (temporarily, geographically or causally) to a conflict. In the same light, the United Nations Secretary General report on *Conflict Related Sexual Violence* provides that the term conflict-related sexual violence refers to rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, forced abortion, enforced sterilization, forced marriage and any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity perpetrated against women, men, girls or boys that is directly or indirectly linked to a conflict.(United Nations Secretary General , 2019).

It further points to cement this view by positing that the link may be evident in the profile of the perpetrator, who is often affiliated with a State or non-State armed group, which includes terrorist entities; the profile of the victim, who is frequently an actual or perceived member of a political, ethnic or religious minority group or targeted on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity among others. All the definitions of sexual violence provided above speak to the fact that it is an instrument that is meant not only to inflict pain but diminish human integrity on the victims (women, girls, men, and boys) as it shall be explained.

With the term of under investigation explained, it is essential to attach to it that the repercussions for this heinous act on the victims are traumatising. As is the case with women, male survivors of sexual violence committed during conflict situations may experience various short and long term consequences which are both physical and emotional. Indeed for a long time and rightly so, attention has been given to women and girls who have suffered sexual violence in conflict zones, however, less is known about male victims, in particular men. It therefore suffices that in order to understand sexual violence against men, we look at it through the below theoretical lens.

II.THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Generally masculinity theory is best suited to answering the question, "why sexual violence against men?" This theoretical framework helps to explain possible reasons of any attack of

sexual nature on men (*of interest*) and women as well as explaining why sexual violence against men remains the least reported. According to Vojdik(2014:926), masculinity theory explores how social norms of masculinity create, enforce, and reproduce relations of power on multiple levels between men as individuals; between men and women; and within larger institutions such as the military, the work place, the nation state and the global political power.

This therefore signifies the need to examine the relationship between violence against male bodies, the social constructions of masculinity and its use to achieve the ethnic, national and global power. Masculinity is not a fixed identity, rather, a social practice of gender that constructs men as masculine and heterosexual, also defined in opposition to those who are perceived as effeminate and women (Vojdik, 2014).In essence as it relates to the subject under discussion, it explains the continuing sexual violence against men, the low levels of its reporting, especially rape which reflects the dominance of social construction of masculinity that defines men as powerful, sexually dominant and heterosexual. In the contemporary world, it would appear that masculinity serves as a standard upon which the real man is defined. It therefore explains why, Vojdik (2014) held that, according to this gendered script, men are not raped.

The most important aspect of masculinity theory that we shall apply here is hegemonic masculinity which was greatly marketed in the gender studies in the early 1980s as part of Raeywn Connell's scholarly works on gender order theory, which recognizes multiple masculinities that vary across time, culture and the individual. It is important to note this early that while the emergence of this theory has faced a number of criticisms, this is essay finds it more appropriate to unpack the current discourse under review.

According to Connell and Messerschmidt(2005) hegemonic masculinity is understood as a pattern of practice that allowed men's dominance over women to continue. It was further distinguished from other masculinities especially subordinated ones and it embodied the "currently" most honoured way of being a man. Hegemonic masculinity unfortunately, ideologically legitimated the global subordination of women to men and required all men to position themselves in relation to it. It goes therefore that this could be one of the reasons why it has attracted criticism, while at the same time being well positioned to help in the discussion.

As shown from above, masculinity is as much about men's relation to other men as it is about their relations to women. Dowd(2008) observes that given this idea, it seems that competition and hierarchy with other men may be a more intense part of masculinity. Dowd further states that, men although powerful and empowered as a group, feel powerful, some men feel subordinated or at least that, they must strive to be a man every day since the demands of masculinity are that it must be constantly proven.

Kimmel(2004) cements Dowd's position on this issue by pointing out the significance of fear, shame and silence in construction of gender identity, that while shame leads to silence, fear makes men ashamed because the "recognition of fear in ourselves is proof to ourselves that we are not as manly as we pretend" and that fear is the fear of humiliation. This goes to explain the least reported cases of male sexual violence. This destructive stereotype impedes reporting by men of sexual violence not only in conflict settings.

Salient on the hegemonic masculinity are two perspectives; the emphasis on the domination of men and a hierarchy of inter-male dominance. Hegemony meant ascendancy achieved through culture, institutions, and persuasion. It did not mean violence although it could be supported by force (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). Kimmel (2004), points in relation to violence that it is often the single most evident marker of manhood. This explanation as well as the literature on masculinity helps us understand the continuing conflict related sexual violence against men.

It is often the case in conflict zones that sexual violence is used as a weapon by either the security forces or non-state actors that seek to inflict terror in the civilian population or on members of the opposing group or forces. Sexual violence against men in the form of castration was carried out by the Chinese, Persian, Amalekite, and Egyptian and therefore is not an isolated event in conflict zones (Sivakumaran, 2010). It has occurred throughout history, across time and place. Acts of this nature against men are not distant phenomena.

Sexual violence against men constructs and enforces actual and symbolic gendered power on several levels and it serves multiple functions such as; to maintain and enforce the established gender order; to weaken, demoralize and destroy collectives of people; to construct ethnicity, national and other forms of collective identity, and to both construct and resist the dominance of transnational and global actors (Vojdik 2014: 926-927). In taking into account the sexual violence committed against men, there is a need to look at the variety of such acts. It is commonly assumed that sexual violence against men and boys takes the form of penetration of the anus using the penis and this is often described using the term sodomy, a term which fails to differentiate between consensual and non-consensual acts, rather than rape (Report of Workshop on Sexual Violence against Men and Boys in Conflict Situations (2013:11).

This abovementioned report takes into account other forms of sexual violence against men and boys in conflict situations as including;

- Oral rape, as well as rape using objects (e.g. screw-drivers, bottles)
- Having ropes tied to the genitalia and being pulled around by this rope
- Having electric wires attached to the genitalia, through which electric shocks are administered

- Linking two men using ropes tied to their genitalia and making them walk in opposite directions
- Being made to dig holes in the ground, or in trees, and then to rub themselves in that hole to the point of ejaculation
- Being forced to have vaginal sex with women who are also under detention
- Being forced to have anal or oral sex with fellow detainees, or with brothers, or fathers
- Being forced into sexual acts with the victim's spouse, while being watched by children, parents etc.
- Being used as a mattress while soldiers rape their family members on top of them
- Being held for lengthy periods of time as sexual slaves
- Forced circumcision, castration, and other forms of genital mutilation.

In addition to the above list of sexual violations, rape in particular has served as a weapon of war and has in fact, always been part of it. It has served to destroy men, and thereby community pride. In line with what is held to be "a cross-cultural perspective of what constitute a real man", men who have failed to protect their women are considered to be humiliated and weak. Male rape in conflict zones is predominantly an expression of aggression, power and dominance over the enemy rather than an expression of satisfying the perpetrator sexual desire (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2008). It often involves an action intended to maintain supremacy through intimidation and repression.

According to Peel (2004:12), rape in particular functions as;

- A right mainly conceded to the victors (rape as a reward)
- A way of damaging both men and women in communities (rape to inflict terror)
- A means of humiliating male opponents who were not able to protect their women (rape as a messenger of defeat)
- A method of destroying the opposing community and culture (rape as cultural warfare)

Conflict Related Sexual Violence Against Men In Context

Sexual violence is a serious human rights problem with both short and long term consequences for its victims. It occurs in different contexts in conflict zones. The paper looks into sexual violence in the context of prisons for countries wrecked with conflict, and those that are perpetrated outside the prison. In this context, prison should be regarded as a public place or building used for the confinement of people by state authorities. It is important to note that, most of the sexual violations taking place in the context of prison are perpetrated by the security forces against the prisoners, while those outside this context are usually committed by non-state actors and sometimes security forces.

Prisoner sexual violation is an alarmingly widespread human rights abuse that has received little attention within the international human rights law or human rights scholarship (Stemple, 2009). There are a number of prisoner sexual violation incidents across the world and few picked randomly, from global to Africa have been captured below;

Prison Context

Abu Ghraib Detention Facility (Iraq)

To get a picture of human rights violence in the context of prisons, I borrow heavily from the Taguba Report of May 2004 (Article 15-6 Investigation of the 800th Military Police Brigade). According to Taguba (2004) Abu Ghraib served as both forward operations base and a detention facility in Iraq. On 19 January 2004, Lieutenant General Ricardo S. Sanchez, Commander Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF-7) requested that the Commander, US Central Command, appoint investigating officer in the grade of Major General or above to investigate the conduct of operations within the 800th Military Police (MP) Brigade. Cited in the request was reports of detainee abuse, escapes from confinement facilities and accountability lapses which indicated systemic problems within the brigade, suggested a lack of clear standards, proficiency and leadership.

On 31 January 2004, MG Antonio M. Taguba, Deputy Commanding General Support was appointed to conduct this investigation. Taguba investigation revealed among many findings that between October and December 2003, at the Abu Graib Confinement Facility, numerous incidents of sadistic, blatant, and wanton criminal abuses were inflicted on several detainees. Some of the findings on human rights violations, in no particular order included this list;

- a) Punching, slapping, and kicking detainees; jumping on their naked feet;
- b) Videotaping and photographing naked male and female detainees;
- c) Forcing naked male detainees to masturbate themselves while being photographed and videotaped;
- d) Arranging naked male detainees in a pile and then jumping on them;
- e) Positioning a detainee on a MRE Box, with a sandbag on his head, and attaching wires to his fingers, toes, and penis to simulate electric torture;

Sri Lanka and Sudan

Torture in detention takes place in various sites particularly in police stations and army bases and take a myriad of forms. Among them are rape with plantain flowers soaked in chillies, bottles, or other objects; electric shocks or the application of chillies to the genitals; piercing of male genitals; forced sexual relations with other prisoners; and slamming testicles into a drawer (Wood, 2009, p. 145). At the torture treatment in London, 21% of the Sri Lankan Tamil males reported sexual abuse in detention, with sticks pushed through the anus,

usually with chillies rubbed on the stick first, being made to masturbate soldiers orally and being forced with friends to rape each other in front of soldiers for their entertainment (Hennessey & Gerry (nd); Storr, 2011). In Sudan, boys have been kept as slaves by government soldiers and subjected to sexual abuses including violent gang rape (Hennessey and Gerry (nd)).

Outside Prison Context

Democratic Republic Of Congo And Uganda

While recovering from a conflict known as Africa's First World War which led to a loss of many lives since 1996 to around 2003, the eastern of the Democratic Republic of Congo areas are still plagued by violence as various rebel groups continue to operate and perpetrate various human rights violations. Vulnerability persists for both the internally displaced and those who seek to cross the border into neighbouring Angola. The Guardian of 17 July 2011 reported on the young boy who was captured after he attempted to flee Congo following his father's assassination for allegedly aiding the enemy. He was captured along with five other males and six females. Following his escape from the rebel groups, he narrated his ordeal which was captured in the mentioned newspaper where he revealed each of the male "prisoners" was raped eleven times every night until he escaped.

Some men have been subjected to rape in the presence of their wives or children in the DRC according to (Amnesty International, 2004, p. 21). The Amnesty International captured the ordeal of one Polidor, a 40 years old man who comes from Kazimia in South-Kivu and is married with four children.

"...My wife and I were in bed when the soldiers knocked on the door, saying that the man of the house had to come outside. So I hid. The soldiers came in and threatened to rape my wife. So I came out of hiding and tried to stop them, but there were too many of them, and they beat me up, and even broke my leg. Then they held me down, and raped my wife, who was six months' pregnant, in front of me and the children. Then they raped me. While they were doing that they kept saying 'you're no longer a man, you are going to become one of our women'. My leg and foot still hurt. I'm not able to have sexual relations any more. My wife gave birth, but our child is physically ill, and the nurse said it could be because of the rape and the torture. We received some treatment at the Kazimia health centre, but they have no medicines there. So I came to Baraka for treatment. My wife is still too weak to make the journey..."

In Uganda, men caught up in conflict were being forced to penetrate holes in banana trees that runs with acidic sap, to sit with their genitals over a fire, to drag rocks tied to their penis, to give oral sex to queues of soldiers, to be penetrated with screwdrivers and sticks (Hennessey and Gerry (nd)).

International Community On Male Sexual Violence

It is rather a conventional view that international law recognises rape and other acts of sexual violence as human rights violations in both times of peace and conflict and that these acts referred to, especially during armed conflict, are violations of international humanitarian law as they usually involve crimes against humanity and acts of genocide (OHCHR 2014). The international conventions, declarations, founding statutes of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and other International Tribunals cases such as those of International Criminal Tribunal of former Yugoslavia and of Rwanda decided cases, conference documents outline legal principles which apply to sexual violence. These agreements and the jurisprudence of international tribunals also provide definitions of the terms of rape, sexual violence all for the purposes of prosecution.

In the trial of *Prosecutor v. Jean-Paul Akeyesu* (case no. ICTR-96-4) of the International Criminal Tribunal of Rwanda, rape is defined as a physical invasion of a sexual nature committed on a person under circumstances which are coercive (International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, 1998). Other courts have required some form of penetration to consider rape to have occurred, thereby resulting in what one may deem as a narrow definition. However, in as far the “victim” is concerned they have provided an inclusive definition, implying the acknowledgement that men can fall victim forms of sexual violence and rape in particular.

However, the discourse on the subject of sexual violence in conflict zones has for a considerable time put more emphasis on the violence perpetrated against women. It has presented men as perpetrators and women as victims. This framing according to Stemple (2009) misses women who are often open supporters of conflict and fails to account for female combatants. For example, Smeulers(2015, p. 207) mentions that, on 24 June 2011 Pauline Nyiramasuhuko, the first woman ever to be convicted by an international criminal court or tribunal for genocide and sexual violence was found guilty and sentenced to life imprisonment by the ICTR for her leading role in the genocide and commission of widespread rape in Butare. The other woman who has been convicted by an international criminal tribunal was the Serbian politician Biljana Plavsic who pleaded guilty and was convicted for persecution as a crime against humanity by the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia (ICTY) on 27 February 2003(International Criminal Court for former Yugoslavia, 1993).

But the truth of the matter, however is, many mass atrocity crimes have been committed by men. The international criminal courts and tribunals have tried and convicted over 280 men and these two women represent just less than a percent of all people convicted by such courts and tribunals abovementioned (International Criminal Court for former Yugoslavia, 1993, p. 208). On the other hand, women issues

were historically ignored in the domestic laws and in international law. The international law and human rights instruments have long been predominantly male dominated and developed based upon the paradigm of masculinity and in an environment biased against women (Kulemann, 2016). Violence against women therefore emerged as the salient issue around which attention to human rights would revolve.

The issue of conflict related sexual violence gained increasing prominence in the international policy making since early 1990s, partly as a result of shifts in the visibility of range of conflict and forms of warfare, and also as a result of much advocacy by the feminists and women’s rights activists (Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General 2013).The momentum on this prominence is seen among other initiatives through the United Nations Security Council resolutions which address gender through its specific Resolutions on Women Peace and Security. At the international level the UN Security Council has adopted eight resolutions on Women Peace and Security, namely, Security Council Resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013) and 2242 (2015).

The UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) was one of the initial initiatives intended to address the perceived disproportionate and unique impact that armed conflict has on women. Its adoption is deemed to represent a landmark in recognising conflict related gender-based violence (OHCHR 2014). The resolution recognised the devastating impact of conflict on women and girls and reaffirms the need to implement fully the existing international humanitarian and human rights law obligations protecting the rights of women and girls during conflict (United Nations Security Council, 2000). Following the recognition on the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war, the UN Security Council moved to adopt Resolution 1820 at its 5916th meeting on 19 June 2008. It reinforced the initial resolution by highlighting in particular that sexual violence constitutes a war crime and as a result, the parties to armed conflict should take appropriate measures to protect civilian population against such a violation.

The international community has indeed taken major steps towards protection of women in armed conflicts and these resolutions are one of the many examples of its commitment. It is important to note also that, the mass rapes of hundreds of thousands of women during the armed conflicts in former Yugoslavia and Rwanda was a major catalyst that saw feminist human rights advocates succeeding in persuading the international tribunals to recognise sexual violence against women as a weapon of war, crime against humanity and means of genocide (Vojdik, 2014). According to Stemple (2009, p. 619) at the time of his writing, there are well over a hundred uses of the term “violence against women” defined to include sexual violence in UN resolutions, treaties, general comments, consensus documents and that no human rights instruments explicitly address sexual violence against men.

Masculinity theory in this piece is used to provide an explanation to this “trendy” behaviour. Vojdik (2014) informs us that in each of the aforementioned conflicts, men were also raped, castrated, and sexually assaulted, yet they are largely absent from the international jurisprudence of gender violence during armed conflict. In fact, Vojdik argues that when sexual violence against men has been recognised, it is usually categorised under the rubric term of “torture or mutilation” rather than defining it as rape or sexual violence. This recognition and construction of sexual violence in humanitarian and scholarly circles is rather gendered. The continuing slow recognition by domestic laws of some countries (especially where homosexual behaviour is considered illegal) and generally the slow progress towards theorising male sexual violence as a crime deserving of condemnation is best described in the words of Mezey and King(2000), only that they are particular about one form that;

Male rape is a taboo subject; it happens but is concealed by the victims who are too ashamed to speak out and by a society that is not prepared to listen.

Despite the rather still dominant perspective on sexual violence as relating most to women, there are some commendable initiatives in the international community that are worthy of being noted. One such is the Secretary General’s definition of conflict related sexual violence as rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilisation, and other forms of sexual violence of comparable gravity perpetrated against women, men, girls or boys that is linked directly or indirectly (temporarily, geographically or causally) to a conflict (United Nations Security Council, 2015) is a step in the right direction. The Secretary General developed a gender inclusive definition that expresses acknowledgement of men also being victims of sexual violence. International prohibitions against sexual violence are also transforming from protections that appear to be only afforded to women to well-defined forms of sexual violence, including all gender as among the most outstandingly bad crimes.

The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC)’s definition includes the first definition of gender in an international legal treaty, explaining that gender refers to the two sexes, male and female within the context of society as indicated in Article 7 (3) of the Statute. Grey (2014) points also that the ICC’s definition of gender is one of the most important acknowledgements of gender within international law and ICTR’s and ICTY’s practice and jurisprudence largely contributed to its development. Stample (2009) comments that, in this regard ICC made an important step towards gender inclusiveness. This is in line with Vojdik (2014) argument that there is a need to broaden the notion of gender in international law to include the social construction of masculinity that privileges some men, while disadvantaging most men.

III. CONCLUSION

Women and girls, men and boys are targets and fall victims of sexual violence in conflict. While there is a growing recognition by international human rights instruments on sexual violence against women, there is a need to do away with the prejudicial and discriminatory conceptions of gender. There is a need to delegitimise this stereotypical conception of gender. Kimmel (2004) emphasised the invisibility of gender to men as well as of men as objects of gender study. The observation was that we continue to act as if gender applied only to women and therefore it was time to make gender visible to men. Men are collectively beneficiaries of patriarchal dividend, but individual men are not in power and therefore also need protection.

As earlier mentioned, some international instruments that contain the most comprehensive and meaningful definitions of sexual violence exclude men on their face, reflecting and embedding the assumption that sexual violence is a phenomenon relevant only to women (Stemple 2009, p. 619). Both men and women are victims and there should be a recognition that translates into concrete efforts on behalf of male victims, be they mechanisms for raising awareness of the problem as this paper also seeks to. The United Nations, nevertheless, has begun to embark on a promising initiative of recognising the prevalence of sexual violence against men during war. In the Security Council debate giving rise to UN Security Council Resolution 1820, the Permanent Representative of Slovenia to the United Nations, speaking on behalf of the European Union, stated that sexual and gender-based violence is an area of particular concern to women and girls in armed conflict situations, although they are aware now that also boys and men may be subjected to such violence and to sexual “torture.”

The consequences of sexual violence on female and male carry serious repercussions, therefore calls for special attention for both survivors of this human rights abuse. While there are probably well documented cases of sexual violence against women and children, only few have been documented on men. There are two explanations for this. First, it is due to the stigmatisation associated with male sexual violence especially rape. Male victims feel humiliated and ashamed to report their experiences. Masculinity renders them powerful and incapable of being raped. It identifies them with warriors. Second, having been indoctrinated with masculinity assumptions, society is not prepared to accept that men also fall victim of sexual violence, nor does it really care much to investigate or pen down about male human rights in relation to sexual violence.

DelZotto and Jones(2002) observed that there were forms of violence that males particularly male children, youths and young men, experience disproportionately that pass unrecognised and unattended to in both international and domestic spheres. They explain this as the nuance in human rights construction that most activists, lawyers, scholars, and

policy makers fail to address. Finally, the use of gender sensitive language in some of the international instruments is a step in the right direction which expresses acknowledgement that women and girls, men and boys are also victims of sexual violence.

However, much still needs to be done in attempt to influence the international community (in the form of the United Nations) to recognise the gravity of sexual violence on men that would enable the development of a legal framework that protects victims of sexual violence not only as a result of armed conflict. It remains difficult to have documented statistics of sexual violence against men especially rape, when we still have countries which still associate male rape with homosexuality. In as far as rape in armed conflict is concerned; the myth about sexual violence on other males that they must be homosexual is usually based on false reasoning. Dominance is what characterises such acts. Sexual violence and especially rape serve as a tactic of war that has been used across time.

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