



SEXUAL VIOLENCE DURING & AFTER CONFLICT

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE
 16 DÍAS DE ACTIVISMO CONTRA LA VIOLENCIA DE GÉNERO
 16 JOURS D'ACTIVISME CONTRE LA VIOLENCIE DE GENRE
 25 NOV - 10 DEC <http://16dayscwgj.rutgers.edu>

16
DAYS

By MADRE and Center for Women's Global Leadership

Conflict-Related Sexual Violence: Sexual violence in conflict continues to occur in numerous forms, impacting the lives of survivors long after the conflict ends. Rape, forced “marriage,” sexual mutilation and slavery, forced impregnation and sterilization are used as weapons of war and domination against women and girls, impacting whole families and communities, with devastating psycho-social and economic effects. Moreover, militarized violence does not only occur during conflict: women experience the threat and act of sexual violence wherever violent forms of masculinity are privileged. This reinforces gendered and political hierarchies that continue to fuel the basis of conflict throughout the world. In response, militarized violence and violent forms of masculinity must continue to be challenged and transformed.

These various forms of sexual violence are severe violations of human rights and human dignity. They also exacerbate conflict between ethnic, religious, and political groups. Many women and girls are forced to live with insecurity and with few or no services that can address the physical and psychological trauma they continue to endure. During and after conflict, survivors and their families need the support of governments, the international community, and women's organizations. This support is especially important in funding and capacity building for health services providers, psycho-social counseling, enabling and accessing the legal justice system, and reparations for the crimes committed during conflict.

In many contexts, impunity is the norm. The legal justice system often does little to investigate, prosecute, and punish crimes of sexual violence. Systemic support for evidence collection and for formal transparent mechanisms that address crimes of sexual violence is urgently needed. In post-conflict disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration processes, women and girls forced into sexual slavery must also be given attention along with perpetrators for reintegration, reconciliation, and rehabilitation programs to be fully comprehensive.

States have been taking some steps to ending impunity and sexual violence through national policies, legislation, and UN resolutions (especially Security Council Resolutions 1820, 1888 and 1960). However, much more needs to be done toward implementation of these important resolutions, including full support for women's voices and roles as change agents and peace-makers in the context of conflict and post-conflict recovery.

The recent UN Security Council Resolution 2106 emphasizes the requirement of political will, the accountability of governments to prevent and prosecute conflict-related sexual crimes, and the importance of addressing root causes. It is vital that the international community and the UN system support local grassroots women's organizations working on the ground to address sexual violence during and after conflict, including their work on prevention, evidence collection, and advocacy for justice and reparations.

Guiglo, Côte d'Ivoire: The following recounts the lawlessness and violence by rebels and bandits who attack homes and travelers. Babies to 70 year old women have been raped during these raids. Women going to market, transport drivers, and cocoa farmers in western Côte d'Ivoire are targeted during the cocoa season by bandits preying on the vital cocoa trade:

“You hear of an attack almost every Tuesday. That's market day here in Guiglo, so women from surrounding villages come into town. Some come on transport, but most walk, leaving when the sun rises. They are often in groups; the men are back working in the fields.”

On several of the secondary roads that lead into town there is almost always an attack. The women's money is taken and often some of them are raped. Due to the lucrative cocoa trade, attacks on drivers and market vendors, among others occur frequently by bandits on the road. Women walking to and from the market are frequent targets.”

Excerpt from Human Rights Watch, “Afraid and Forgotten”. October 22, 2010. http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report/cotedivoire1010webwcover_0.pdf

Suggested Actions

Join the International Campaign to Stop Rape & Gender Violence: Become part of the first ever global collaboration between women Nobel Peace Laureates, international advocacy organizations, groups and individuals working at the international, regional and community levels to end sexual violence in conflict. Call for urgent and bold political leadership to prevent rape in conflict, to protect civilians and rape survivors, and to demand justice for all: <http://www.stopraineinconflict.org>.

Advocate: The UN Security Council has passed resolutions (1325, 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, and 2106) related to women, peace and security, and governments must make commitments to implement them. Advocate for women's participation in decision making at all levels on peace and security issues. Encourage policymakers to make addressing the crime of sexual violence in conflict a priority, and to support local, national, and international prevention, protection, and justice mechanisms. More information is available through the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders: <http://www.gnwp.org>.

Create Safe Spaces: If your organization has experience with counseling survivors of violence, develop trainings to teach others about proper counseling protocol, available legal and medical resources, confidentiality, collection of evidence and testimonies, and sensitivity to survivors.

Spread the Word: Invite the media to report on your activities and ask them to raise the issue of conflict-related sexual violence in their reporting. Give members of the media the guidance to report on violations with sensitivity and that do no further traumatize or endanger survivors. Use your social media sites to share information about opportunities to take action. Follow organizations that are active on social media, such as CWGL (<https://www.facebook.com/CenterforWomensGlobalLeadership>) and MADRE (<https://www.facebook.com/madre.org>).

Support an Organization: Connect with local and international women's organizations working in conflict areas or with displaced and refugee communities and provide financial and/or moral support for their advocacy and survivor support work. If you have access to financial resources, consider hosting a fundraiser for an organization that has a proven track record of working with survivors of sexual violence.

Men & Boys: Men and boys who believe in gender equality are important allies in activism to end gender-based violence in conflict. Invite men and boys you know to attend a 16 Days event with you and ask them to share their ideas about how to involve their peers in ending violence. For more ideas, visit the White Ribbon Campaign (<http://www.whiteribbon.ca>), the MenEngage Alliance (<http://www.menengage.org>) or the Man Up Campaign (<http://manupcampaign.org>).

Carole's Story, Haiti: "The first time 20-year-old "Carole" exchanged sex for food was after her parents died in the earthquake, while living in Champ de Mars camp. Carole heard about people fighting over food cards and was initially too scared to get one. She went to a camp committee member to ask for a food card but he would only give her one if she slept with him. Eventually, Carole was so hungry that she consented. She continued to exchange sex with him until other men found out. Once these men had decided she was "only after one thing," they got together and raped her. Although Carole was able to travel a far distance for medical attention after the rape, she says the police only told her to "take it up with the President" when she reported it. [...] She hasn't gotten her period since the rape [...] and is now certain that she is sick as a result."

Excerpt from MADRE,
<http://www.madre.org/index/press-room-4/madre-our-partners-in-the-news-41/stories-from-haiti-273.html>

Resources

- Eriksson Baaz, Maria and Maria Stern. (2010) *The Complexity of Violence: A Critical Analysis of Sexual Violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)*. Sida Working Paper on Gender Based Violence. http://www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/Resources/NGO/vaw_thecomplexityofviolence_nordicafrica-sida_2010.pdf
- Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict: <http://www.gppac.net/page.php?id=1>
- Isis Women's International Cross-Cultural Exchange (Isis WICCE): <http://www.isis.or.ug>
- MADRE. *Ending War Means Ending Violence against Women*. <http://www.madre.org/index/resources-12/madre-statements-57/news/ending-war-means-ending-violence-against-women-646.html>
- Nobel Women's Initiative. (2011) *War on Women: Time for Action to End Sexual Violence in Conflict*. http://www.nobelwomensinitiative.org/wp-content/archive/stories/Conference_Ottawa_Women_Forging_a_New_Security/war-on-women-web.pdf
- Otto, Diane and Helena Gronberg. (2009) "Confronting Sexual Violence in Conflict Situations." from *Women Claiming Justice: Using International Law in Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations*. http://www.iwtc.org/Legal_Handbook/Handbook.pdf
- Stop Rape in Conflict: <http://www.stopraineinconflict.org>
- Stop Rape Now. UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict: <http://www.stoprainenow.org/advocacy-resources>
- The Reproductive Health Response in Conflict Consortium: <http://www.rhrc.org>
- UN Women Resolutions and Instruments: http://www.unifem.org/gender_issues/women_war_peace/resolutions_instruments.php
- Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice: <http://www.iccwomen.org>
- Women Under Siege: <http://www.womenundersiegeproject.org>