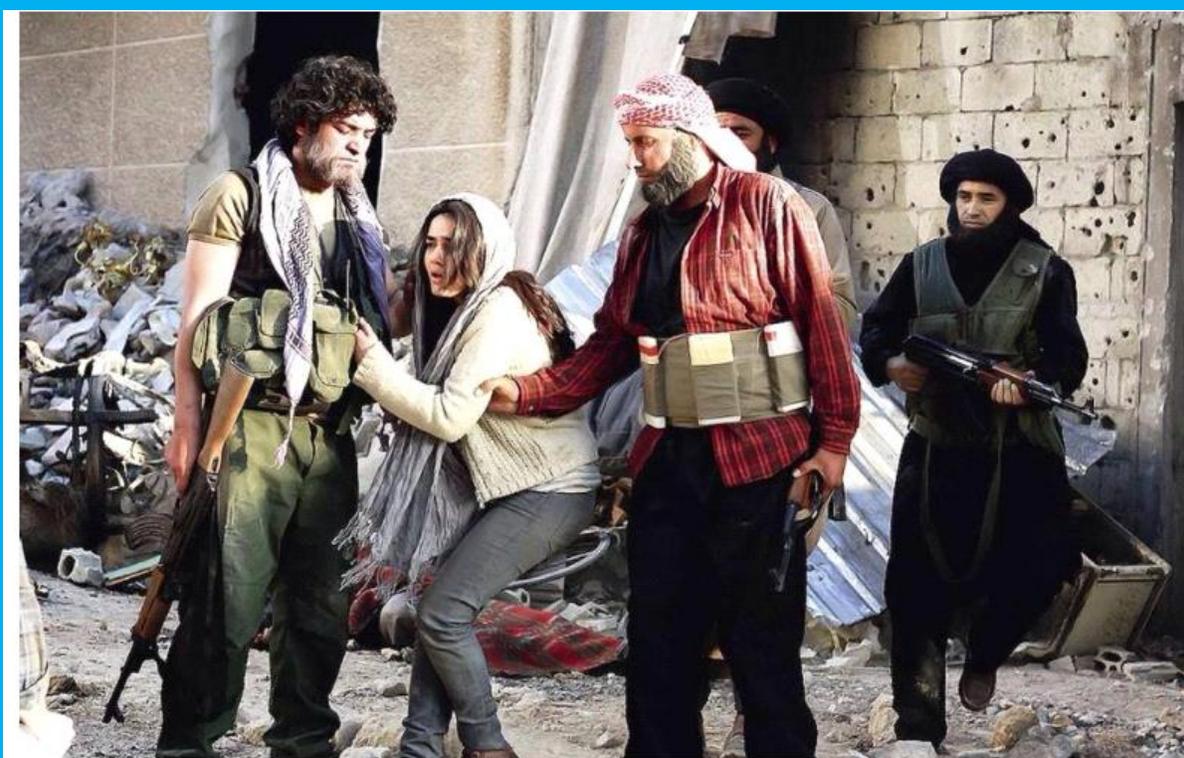


Manifestations of Sexual Violence (Tigray Province-Afghanistan-Yemen-South Sudan)



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Introduction

Conflict-related sexual violence is frequently and deliberately used to target civilians, inflict long-term trauma and humiliation, and fragment families and the social fabric, leading to displacement and fueling the activities of armed actors, motivated by political, military, or economic objectives to gain control of land or resources. This violence is also used as an approach to violent extremism and terrorism.

Women and girls are the primary and principally affected victims of conflict-related sexual violence, not least because of pre-conflict patterns of gender discrimination and inequality. Under international law, conflict-related sexual violence is described as war crimes and crimes against humanity. And when this crime is committed with intent to destroy the population, as occurred during the Rwandan genocide in 1994, systematic sexual violence can amount to genocide.

According to international law, there are eight forms of sexual violence during times of conflict: rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, forced abortion, forced sterilization, and forced marriage. Furthermore, conflict-related sexual violence can be an aspect of other crimes, such as human trafficking, when committed during war and for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

The consequences go beyond individual suffering as sexual violence committed across entire communities spreads disease, destroys family ties and harms across generations. Moreover, sexual violence as a tactic of war reinforces gender inequality and normalizes sexual violence, even after conflict has ended.

The term “conflict-related sexual violence” refers to rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, forced abortion, forced sterilization, forced marriage and any other form of sexual violence of equal severity against women, men, girls or boys that is directly or indirectly related to by dispute. This link may be evident from the characteristics of the offender, who often belongs to a state or non-state armed group, including terrorist entities; or by the characteristics of the victim, who is often an actual or perceived member of a political, ethnic or religious minority group or a person targeted on the basis of actual or perceived sexual

orientation or gender identity; or through a climate of impunity, generally associated with state collapse, or through cross-border consequences such as displacement or trafficking and/or ceasefire violations. This term also includes trafficking in persons for the purpose of sexual violence or sexual exploitation, when such acts are committed in conflict situations.

The report discuss:

First: International Humanitarian Law

International legal protection includes all groups in areas of international and non-international armed conflicts, and because the devastating impact of armed conflicts is particularly severe on women, as they constitute in various societies, and for various reasons, a vulnerable group due to their inability to protect themselves and their dependence in most cases on others, as well as She is targeted because she is a woman, that is, she is targeted with violence and abuse because of the discrimination against her because of her gender. The violence that women are subjected to during armed conflict does not differ in essence from the violence practiced against them during periods of peace, as it is an extension of what women suffer from discrimination, devaluation and marginalization in the previous stages of armed conflicts and intensifying efforts to achieve adequate protection for it.

International humanitarian law has witnessed, from the beginning of the last century until this time, an important and justified development, as it becomes more relevant to humanitarian issues and an interest in the issue of distinction between persons involved in military operations and the civilian population, who must be avoided as much as possible from the effects of the conflict, and since conflicts are a reality that cannot be ignored, it was necessary to intervene to calm the impact of these conflicts on the human being in general and on the victims of the conflict in particular.

As fundamental rights and freedoms were important in international law, requiring the doubling of international legal protection in times of armed conflict, the rules of international humanitarian law derived from specific conventions appeared in

the Hague rules relating to the laws and customs of war on land, the four Geneva Conventions and the two additional protocols attached to these conventions, as well as the conventions of law international humanitarian law on the arms embargo.

International humanitarian law guarantees special protection for women during armed conflicts, in terms of being extremely vulnerable, and Article 19 of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 is specifically concerned with women. Thus, international humanitarian law is defined as: the law applied in armed conflicts, which means customary rules and international conventions that are concerned with solving humanitarian problems directly in international and non-international armed conflicts, and the rules of this law limit the right of the parties to the conflict to choose ways and means of war and aim to protect Persons and property affected by the conflict.

Women benefit from the general protection provided for in the four Geneva Conventions and the two Additional Protocols as a civilian not taking part in hostilities, and thus enjoy all the rights provided for. This protection is formed by preventing the conflicting parties to invoke the existence of a state of armed conflict to evade their obligations under international conventions, and accordingly, the rights of women granted to them under international laws must be preserved, and this was confirmed by the United Nations General Assembly, as the General Assembly expressed its concern of the harm and pain that women are subjected to, the violation of fundamental freedoms, and the continuation of colonial and racist regimes and authoritarian foreign states in violating international humanitarian law, and affirmed that women in the civilian population in emergency situations and armed conflicts may not be deprived of their inalienable rights, in accordance with the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, And the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and other instruments of international law, as the rights contained in these international conventions represent the minimum rights that may not be violated or exceeded.

The Fourth Geneva Convention contains articles that stipulate the necessity of providing special protection for women in periods and areas of conflict. Also, Article (75) of Additional Protocol I, in paragraph (2) that “It is prohibited to violate personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment of a human being, Forced prostitution and any form of indecent assault.” Article (76), paragraph (1), of Protocol I states that “women shall be the object of special respect, and shall enjoy protection especially against rape and enforced prostitution and against any form of indecent assault.” ”.

In fact, international efforts were not limited to criminalizing sexual violence, but voices were raised to demand all measures that reduce sexual violence, such as appointing a special representative to coordinate between all parties working to combat sexual violence, and calling for the perpetrators of sexual violence to be brought to justice and legal and judicial reforms that This included and also called for the inclusion of issues of sexual violence in all the agendas of the peace negotiations.

Second: Sexual violence as a tactic of war and terrorism: patterns and trends

In 2021, the continued recourse to military rather than diplomatic and political means resulted in widespread displacement, exposing civilians to high levels of sexual violence. Growing inequality, increasing militarization, shrinking civilian space and the illicit flow of small arms and light weapons, among other factors, have fueled widespread and systematic sexual violence associated with conflict, even in the midst of a global pandemic. Terrorist groups and transnational criminal networks continued to destabilize some of the most vulnerable contexts, including through the use of sexual violence as a tactic. In some cases, gender-based hate speech and incitement to violence were evident in public discourse, including on digital platforms.

On the background of ongoing political and security crises, exacerbated by militarization trends and the proliferation of weapons, sexual violence continued to emerge. It is used as a tactic of war, torture and terrorism. Civilians have been disproportionately affected in places where actors have sought military

intervention at the expense of political processes, dramatically reducing the space for humanitarian workers and human rights monitors to work. Unconstitutional shifts of power in Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, Myanmar and Sudan were followed by widespread insecurity, economic shocks, and human rights abuses, including the use of sexual violence in the lead up to, during and in the aftermath of these events to subjugate and humiliate groups Opposition and rival societies.

In certain circumstances, actors who seized power have been implicated in documented patterns of conflict-related sexual violence for several years, such as the Taliban in Afghanistan and the Tatmadaw in Myanmar. The shrinking of the civic space, along with anti-women threats, were worrying trends observed in Afghanistan, Libya, Myanmar, Sudan and Yemen, where sexual violence was perpetrated against political activists, including during demonstrations. In Myanmar, a rise in online sexism, including threats of sexual violence, has been reported as directed against politically active women. In Ethiopia, gender-based hate speech and incitement to violence, including various forms of sexual violence, were directed against women on the basis of their actual or perceived association with parties to the conflict.

Moreover, service providers were subjected to threats and attacks, which led to the closure of many places providing health services and support to victims of sexual violence. Globally, despite increasing restrictions, survivors and service providers continued to report crimes of sexual violence.

Conflict-related sexual violence has contributed to internal and cross-border displacement and the erosion of family networks, as documented in many places, with family members forced to witness rape, the breakdown of protective social networks and pervasive insecurity exposing IDPs, refugees and migrant survivors to more violence in the Central African Republic The Democratic Republic of the Congo and elsewhere. Migrant and refugee women and girls in conflict-affected areas, particularly those in detention facilities, continued to face increased risks of sexual violence in Libya and Yemen. Sexual violence is practiced in the context of kidnapping victims or human trafficking, and it was also practiced by terrorist

groups according to a United Nations report, where the United Nations received reports of the abduction of women and girls by fighters from non-state armed groups in Cabo Delgado, Mozambique, including forced marriage and rape. Elsewhere, authorities continued to address the legacy of conflict-related sexual violence crimes.

The year 2021 witnessed waves of terrorism in many regions, which were accompanied by sexual violence and human trafficking. As a result of the penetration of the presence of terrorist groups such as the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara and the Support of Islam and Muslims, local grievances in Mali and Burkina Faso, this led to an increase in sexual violence rates in conflict areas. Furthermore, women and children allegedly associated with ISIS continued to be detained in conflict-affected settings, including the Syrian Arab Republic, Iraq and Libya. Accountability for crimes of sexual violence committed by members of terrorist groups remains low.

Third: Sexual violence in conflict zones (Afghanistan - Tigray - Yemen)

- Afghanistan

Taliban managed to take control of Afghanistan in 2015, and they practiced violence against all segments of society, especially against women. Reports showed the Taliban's involvement in mass killings and gang rapes of Afghan civilians in Kunduz and Taliban fighters killed and raped women from relatives of police commanders and soldiers. Taliban also raped and killed the nurses they accused of providing reproductive health services to women in the city.

Taliban were able to come to power again in 2021 as waves of violence against women and the desire to marginalize them in society increased. Soon after returning to power, Taliban leaders announced that although women and girls would not be prevented from going to school, there would be a ban on co-education. On August 29, 2021, the Taliban's "Acting Minister of Higher Education," Abdul Baqi Haqqani, stated that "the people of Afghanistan will continue their

higher education in the light of Islamic law safely without being in a mixed male and female environment”.

The escalation of insecurity associated with the military offensive and the subsequent takeover of the Taliban on 15 August 2021 led to mass displacement, increased humanitarian needs and a significant restriction of civilian space. Despite statements and assertions by Taliban authorities, reports indicate that women and girls have been targeted as part of widespread and systematic gender-based violence, including conflict-related sexual violence, amid a strong push to reduce their participation in public and political life.

However, data remains difficult to obtain due to structural gender inequalities and fear of reprisals associated with the prevailing climate of impunity. In December 2021, the Taliban-affiliated authorities issued a decree banning forced marriage. However, reports emerged of women and girls being sold, forced into marriage and sexual slavery by Taliban forces, including one case in which the daughter of a former government official was handed over to the Taliban in exchange for the official's safety. A number of women human rights defenders, journalists and other professional women have been targeted with violence, from kidnapping to assassination. For example, in September 2021, an Afghan policewoman, who was eight months pregnant, was tortured and killed in Ghor Province.

Violence against women has escalated further since August 2021 when legal and other support mechanisms for women began to close - particularly when women's shelters closed. The Taliban's termination of institutional and legal support for women has exposed women to more violence, and the fear of reporting incidents for fear of being tempted by the Taliban.

2-Yemen

Sexual violence against women in Yemen increased after the Shiite Houthi movement took control of Sanaa and expanded in other parts of the country. Although the Houthis reject these allegations, criticism of them has raised concerns among human rights activists that they will witness a setback to the already limited freedoms enjoyed by women in Yemen.

Sexual violence in the Yemeni conflict is largely used as a systematic tool to suppress, intimidate and torture individuals, especially detainees who are subjected to such treatment as punitive measures for their perceived political affiliation or in an attempt to extract confessions by force.

It is also used as a way to humiliate women who pursue political careers or choose to speak out in the context of their work, in denouncing war and its impact on civilians. According to the United Nations Population Fund, in a report issued in March 2018, it confirmed that 60,000 Yemeni women may face the risk of sexual violence, including rape. However, the majority of cases remain undeclared, making it difficult to know the true situation of Yemeni women during the war.

The Houthi group had been accused of sexual violence against women and forcing them to work in prostitution. The Yemeni model, Intisar Al Hammadi, was kidnapped. The car she was traveling in was stopped at a checkpoint northwest of the Yemeni capital, Sana'a, while she was on her way to participate in a Filming session and the Houthi forces arrested her "without a clear reason." Al-Hammadi spoke of Houthi security officials forcing her and other girls to drink alcohol and engage in prostitution and when she was confronted by the Houthis on charges of prostitution, they replied: "It is okay as long as it is in the service of the country."

After seven years of hostilities, two thirds of the population needs humanitarian assistance. Displacement, economic despair, and the breakdown of rule of law institutions have created an environment in which women and girls are exposed to conflict-related sexual violence.

3-Tigray

Sexual violence was used in the Tigray region as a "weapon of war", which greatly affected the lives of women and girls there. From November to June 2021, female Tigrayans were the primary targets of war-related sexual violence, with rape victims as young as four years old and teenage girls.

In addition, women of all ages, including pregnant and lactating women and grandmothers, were subjected to sexual abuse. These attacks were not isolated in one area but the victims come from all over the areas where the Ethiopian National

Defense Forces, Eritrean Defense Forces, Amhara regional militias and Special Forces were fighting or controlling territory. The victims identified the perpetrators of these crimes as members of those armed forces.

Sexual violence in the Tigray war, according to the United Nations Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Pramila Patten, included people forced to rape family members, “sex in exchange for essential goods,” and “a rising demand for emergency contraception and testing for sexually transmitted diseases.”

As of August 2021, the number of rape victims ranged from 512-516 hospitalized rapes in early 2021 as a minimum to 10,000 rapes according to MP Helen Hayes and 26,000 women in need of sexual and gender-based violence services according to the United Nations Fund Weyni Abraha of Yikono, a Tigray women's rights group, argues that sexual violence during the Tigray War was a deliberate pattern of rape as a weapon of war, saying, in February 2021, “This is done on purpose to break people's morale and threaten them to give up the fight.”

Victims and those treating their injuries reported that there are no safe places for females from the risk of rape. The testimony provides evidence of rape incidents taking place in the victims' homes in front of their families. They were dragged and raped in public. They were raped while searching for food and water. School girls were raped on the way to school. More than a dozen medical students from the Meckel University School of Health Sciences were raped on campus by Ethiopian Federal Police officers.

While subjecting Tigrayan, girls and women to forms of sexual torture, the Ethiopian National Defense Forces, the Eritrean Defense Forces, the Amhara regional militia and the Special Forces told their victims that they were the cause of their suffering, and that they had betrayed them. The soldiers said that they had been directed by the government that they could kill and rape these women without reckoning. The soldiers from the Ethiopian National Defense Forces believed that if the Tigrayan, were eliminated in reference to genocide, they could give that land to the Eritreans. As the Ethiopian National Defense Forces and

Eritrean forces advanced and took them On the territory, some areas have been turned into rape camps.

Speaking about the consequences of sexual violence against Tigrayan women, medical staff reported that female victims suffer a wide range of psychological and emotional injuries not only because of the sexual violence they have experienced, but also from witnessing the killing of their family members and neighbors and the destruction of their homes and communities. For example, a mother in her mid-30s was gang-raped in front of her young son for several hours by members of the Ethiopian National Defense Force. I lost consciousness. After she woke up, she found her son dead and lying dead on her legs. He was four years old. She did not bury him, but ran away from the scene of the accident, fearing for her life. She received medical attention only because those who found her from the Samaritans found her in poor physical and mental condition, and brought her to the medical professionals.

The governments of Ethiopia and Eritrea have a direct and urgent obligation to stop all such actions. Likewise, the international community has a responsibility to prevent and respond to this violence, and to demand accountability for what actually happened.

South Sudan: Highest Rates of Sexual Violence in the World

About 90 percent of women and girls were raped by more than one perpetrator, often over several hours. Pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers have also been victims of sexual violence. In one single incident on December 17, 2019, in Lang village in Koch district, five women were gang-raped, including four pregnant women, including one who was nearly nine months pregnant.

Survivors of sexual violence described being brutally beaten by perpetrators with rifle butts, sticks, light firearms and cable wires, if they tried to resist their attacker or after they raped them. It appears that the attackers' lack of mercy was a convenient feature of the sexual violence documented, according to the report, which also indicates that the perpetrators had a kind of intentionality in what they did. One survivor recounted how she and her companions were raped on three

separate occasions. With each attack, the number of attackers increased significantly.

Most of the perpetrators of the attacks came from youth militia groups, elements of the opposition Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) loyal to leader Taban Deng, and the South Sudan People's Defense Forces. In some cases, the attacks were perpetrated by elements of the opposition Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) loyal to leader Riek Machar.

Several factors have contributed to the escalation of sexual violence in the region, including the presence of large numbers of fighters in "reserve" status, pending implementation of the security arrangements under the peace agreement; the presence of several armed youth militias; and the absence of accountability for acts of sexual violence committed in the past at the individual and leadership levels.

Although attacks against civilians have decreased significantly since the signing of the peace agreement on 12 September 2018, the report prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in cooperation with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan warns that sexual violence related to the endemic conflict remains prevalent in Northern Unity State. The report asserts that sexual violence was perpetrated in the context of "widespread impunity, which has contributed to the normalization of violence against women and girls."

Conclusion

Armed conflicts, both international and non-international, represent one of the harshest forms of reality in our world, because of the losses that result at the level of the individual in terms of displacement, torture and killing. . Recent developments in martial arts and weapons technology, which included the battlefield and their spread across the warring countries and neighboring countries, have led to an increase in the number of victims, especially women - by virtue of their circumstances - and their exposure to killing, mutilation and various forms of sexual violence. Conflict In most cases, the international rules governing disputes, these women are exposed to violence to become its tools, and they are recruited

or kidnapped to become soldiers. Since the suffering of women during international and non-international armed conflicts is harmful and dangerous, it has received great attention and has been translated into the form of international conventions and protocols, some of which are old and belong to international humanitarian law at the forefront of the Fourth Geneva Convention, while others are modern and belong to international human rights law. That the majority of countries sought to reduce the manifestations of torture and killing of women during armed conflicts.