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Committee: United
Nations Women

Issue: Preventing the
Weaponization of
Violence Against Women
in War Zones

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INTRODUCTION

- The weaponization of violence against women in war zones is a critical issue affecting millions of women around the world.
- In any war, women and girls are the most vulnerable. The breakdown of institutions and social networks make women and girls extremely vulnerable to sexual violence and exploitation.
- Such acts are usually done to humiliate, subjugate, and terrorize populations. It is a way to instill fear and disrupt social structures in communities.
- The issue of gender-based violence in conflicts has not received adequate attention in the discourse on gender equality and sustainable development.
- As recognized by the United Nations and various international human rights organizations, addressing this issue is crucial for ensuring peace, security, and human rights.

Background Information

Past Examples:

- Around 200,000 and 400,000 Bengali women were systematically sexually assaulted during the Bangladesh Liberation Movement.
- More than 60,000 women were sexually assaulted during the civil war in Sierra Leone between 1991-2002, about 40,000 in Liberia during the 14-year civil war between 1989-2003
- In Rwanda, between 100,000 and 250,000 women were raped during the three months of genocide in 1994.
- Multiple forms of sexual violence—including rape, sexual slavery, gang rape, sexual mutilation, and torture—have been perpetrated against women and girls in the Tigray region by Ethiopian and Eritrean forces.

Background Information

Objective and Impact:

- Violence against women committed during war is often intended to terrorize the population, break up families, destroy communities, and, in some instances, change the ethnic make-up of the next generation. Sometimes it is also used to deliberately infect women with HIV or render women from the targeted community incapable of bearing children.
- Even after conflict has ended, the impacts of sexual violence persist, including unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections and stigmatization. Widespread sexual violence itself may continue or even increase in the aftermath of conflict, as a consequence of insecurity and impunity. And meeting the needs of survivors – including medical care, HIV treatment, psychological support, economic assistance and legal redress – requires resources that most post conflict countries do not have.

Relevant Treaties or Past Solutions

Security Council resolution 1820 (2008):

- It called for an end to the use of acts of sexual violence against women and girls as a tactic of war and an end to impunity of the perpetrators. It requested the Secretary-General and the United Nations to provide protection to women and girls in UN-led security endeavors, including refugee camps, and to invite the participation of women in all aspects of the peace process.

International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR):

- the first to convict a perpetrator for rape as an act of genocide and war crime.
- The defendant was a local government leader who was found to have ordered, instigated, and aided and abetted sexual violence against women, including the rape of Tutsi women. About half of the ICTR's prosecutions involved such charges.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 2106 (2013):

- This resolution reaffirms the importance of preventing sexual violence in conflict and encourages member states to ensure accountability for such crimes.

UN Security Council Resolution 2467 (2019):

- Strengthens justice and accountability and calls for a survivor-centered approach in the prevention and response to conflict-related sexual violence.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1) Imposing strict Legal Frameworks:

- Promote adherence to international treaties and conventions that protect women's rights.
- Encourage countries to implement and enforce laws that criminalize sexual violence in conflict.
- Strict consequences to be followed in case of non-adherence of laws.

2) Healthcare services for survivors:

- Build accessible medical and legal systems for survivors of gender based violence.
- Conduct awareness programs in such affected areas to destigmatize survivors and encourage reporting.

APPENDICE

- Link:
- <https://www.un.org/shestandsforpeace/content/united-nations-security-council-resolution-2467-2019-sres24672019>
- <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/sexual-violence-as-a-weapon-of-war>
- <https://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/rwanda/assets/pdf/Backgrounder%20Sexual%20Violence%202014.pdf>
- <https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/armed-conflict-and-women-10-years-security-council-resolution-1325>