



Campion School MUN

2018

***DISARMAMENT AND
INTERNATIONAL
SECURITY
COMMITTEE (GA1)***

**GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE
DURING WAR**

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**International
Community**

**Memorable
Experience**

**Challenges
Skills**



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INTRODUCTION

The topic of the 6th session of CSMUN is violence against the other gender, with all the implications this topic incorporates. As the UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, has said; “Sexual violence is a brutal form of physical and psychological warfare rooted in the gender inequality extant not only in zones of conflict, but in our everyday personal lives. The persistence of such forms of violence undermines peace and security and shatters community and family ties. The prevention of sexual violence must remain one of our highest priorities.” The issue of gender-based violence is, therefore, interrelated to this theme. Gender based violence mostly refers to violence against women or girls inflicted by men. This gender-based violence constitutes a violation of human rights and an expression of discrimination against women as inferior. As any other form of violence, gender-based violence also incorporates different types of violence such as human trafficking, rape, genital mutilation etc. However, the topic of GA1 refers to gender-based violence committed in times of war. Gender-based violence during conflict and post-conflict situations has received increased attention the recent years. 50,000 women were raped in Bosnia-Herzegovina during the war, 500,000 women during the Rwanda genocide and 40 women raped per day in conflict in the Republic of Congo. What makes someone skeptical, however, is the fact that during times of war, many violent crimes are committed, including gender-based ones. But does the fact that a crime is committed in a warzone ‘legitimize’ it? The answer should be negative. At all times violations of the human integrity should be considered illegitimate and criminal and the perpetrators should be facing a respective sentence. Violence against the other gender has been consolidated as a method of ethnic cleansing or a way for the armed forces to humiliate or intimidate civilians. Either way, gender-based is a rising issue that needs to be tackled immediately. To conclude, the issue of gender based violence during war is one that affects the international community as it doesn’t only refer to rudimentary human rights, but also threatens the international security and stability.



DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

- **Gender-based violence**

Gender-based violence constitutes a violation of human rights and an act of discrimination mostly against women or LGBTQI+ members and implies any kind of violence that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological abuse or economic harm or suffering, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life. Gender-based violence can cause problems in the health, dignity, security and autonomy of its victims, though it often remains silent. Victims of gender-based violence can suffer ‘sexual and reproductive health consequences’, such as forced and unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions, traumatic fistula, sexually transmitted infections including HIV, and even death.

- **Violence in war**

Wartime violence can be any kind of violence as mentioned above and are committed by combatants during armed conflict or war or military occupation often as spoils of war. Violence during war also refers to situations where girls or women are forced into prostitution or sexual slavery by the occupying power.

- **Genocide**

as defined by the Merriam Webster dictionary, genocide is ‘the deliberate and systematic destruction of a racial, political, or cultural group’. The word genocide was introduced during world war II and comes from the Greek word ‘genos’ (meaning a nation) and the Latin word ‘cide’ (meaning killing). In the contemporary international law, genocide falls under the broader category of ‘crimes against humanity’ and includes killing, mental or bodily harming members of a group.



TIMELINE

Date	Description of Event
1989-2003	Liberia: 40,000 women were sexually assaulted during the civil war
1991-2002	Sierra Leone: 60,000 women were raped during the civil war
1992-1995	Bosnian genocide: around 50,000 women were sexually assaulted
1993	UN 48/141 resolution: clarification of the term 'violence against women'
1994	Rwanda genocide: 500,000 women and children were raped, sexually mutilated, or murdered
1998	Second Congo war: approximately 40 women per day were being raped during this war
2008	UN Security Council declares that rape is used as a tool of war



TOPIC DISCUSSION

The goal of this committee is to find solutions to eliminate wartime gender-based violence. This will be facilitated by two different approaches on the issue. Firstly, the delegates should try to think of possible penalties for the victims. For every issue, penalties can function as a safety zone so as to prohibit future violations. Secondly, it is imperative that the victims are protected and given the care they need. When examining the issue of gender-based violence, one should have in mind that it is about a humanitarian issue, a violation of rudimentary human rights. The subject of the violations is human and the GA1, as a fundamental organ of the United Nations, is dutiful of protecting the people and consider them the utter goal and not the means to achieving something.



CAUSES

A major factor that has led to the severity of this problem is the need of consolidation by the armed forces attacking the communities. As it has been mentioned in previous sections of the study guide, the fighting forces use violence as a means of intimidating or humiliating the 'inferior' population. Physical or sexual abuse gives an advantage to the rivals; they paralyze the basis of the society, the people and the resistance slowly collapses; women, in fear of being abused, cannot leave their homes to access water or food sources to provide to the men. To conclude, violence has always been a tool for the fighting forces to express their superiority towards the occupied population. As a matter of fact, it is not random that every conquest in history was followed by inhumane and extreme acts of violence, especially towards woman.

The element of war

But one shall not forget another important factor that may lead to gender-based violence in wartime. In times of war, the social structures change, and the law of war is implemented. It is common knowledge, that by the war legislation certain actions are justified, 'no rules' are enforced, and chaos is dominated. People act more like animals rather than humans. One should, therefore, keep in mind that war changes people. However, a violation of human rights remains a violation of human rights, no matter if it occurs in wartime or not. The fact that 'war changes people' is not a very reliable cause of the issue, as it cannot justify any actions or violations.



POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

As mentioned in the topic discussion section, there are two ways of approaching the topic. But before analyzing these two, it is imperative that we clarify something else first. The topic is gender-based violence. This implies that there is a general perception of some genders as superior and others as inferior. So before actually addressing the issue, what should be done is create an environment of equality between the genders. That is because most violations happen against women. Progressively, if a more positive attitude is created around women, such atrocities against them will eventually stop happening. Such equality can be ensured by generally giving women more rights in practice rather than just in theory. As any other human-oriented issue, the first step towards its annihilation, is changing the mentality of the people. The people are the force which implements the problem in this case. Changing their mindset is a key to the solution of the problem through equal political representation, women in economic development etc. This way, a more positive attitude will be created towards women, as they will be considered equal to men, who will treat them respectfully. To be more specific, the implementation force of the violent actions are the people. If the people change their mindset they will stop acting at the expense of others.

As every other issue regarding the human nature, gender-based violence should be tackled in two steps. Firstly, prevention, which has been covered in the previous paragraph and secondly, repression. Repression itself incorporates the implementation of penalties for the perpetrators. To be more specific, the soldiers committing the crimes should be firstly detected successfully and then be held accountable for their actions. The international community, specifically you, delegates, should come up with different penalties for the perpetrators according to the magnitude of the violation committed.

After coming up with different clauses regarding prevention and repression, it is equally important to include in your resolution, clauses regarding the protection of the victims. As a matter of fact, gender-based violence causes not only bodily but also psychological traumas to the victims. Therefore, the victims need professional support. What should be done is that protection camps in different areas with conflict are installed, so as to provide the victims with the necessary water and food supplies, health care and psychological support and minimize their potential mental damage.



MAJOR COUNTRIES & ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

All countries that have experienced an armed conflict can be considered 'key' players in this resolution. In the recent years, countries as Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Syria, Iraq, Vietnam, South Sudan etc. have an important say on the issue, as many of their civilians have been abused during wartime.

Rwanda

To be more specific, in Rwanda, in around 100 days, half a million women and children were raped, sexually mutilated, or murdered. The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) delivered the first conviction for the use of rape as a tool of war during the armed conflict, and, because the reason for mass violence against Rwandan women and children was to destroy a specific ethnic group, it was the first time that mass rape during wartime is considered to be an act of genocidal rape.

Democratic Republic of Congo

In the democratic republic of Congo, ten thousand women have been raped by armed combatants, who were seeking to destroy communities by assaulting their female population. It is, therefore, valid to say that during the armed conflicts in Congo sexual violence was used as a weapon of war.

Bosnia-Herzegovina

As far as Bosnia-Herzegovina is concerned, rape was used as a tool of ethnic cleansing and genocide. During the Bosnian war, around 50,000 women were sexually assaulted, proving that the armed combatants



UN INVOLVEMENT: Relevant Resolutions & Treaties

Gender-based violence alone has been addressed multiple times by the United Nations and numerous resolutions have been passed regarding the issue. However, the topic of gender-based violence during war is a newly addressed topic. Hence, it is important that all delegates examine previous resolutions. To be more specific resolutions 1325, 1794, 1888, 1820, 1140 are connected to our topic. ". Resolution 48/104, adopted on 20th December 1993, clarifies the rights of women and defines the term 'violence against women'. Resolution 1325, implemented on 31st October 2000 strengthens the important role of women in the prohibition and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peace-building, peacekeeping, humanitarian response. The main goal of resolution 1794, which was adopted on 31st December 2008, was to prevent and respond to sexual violence in armed regions, with the collective help of the International Criminal Court. Moreover, resolution 1888, unanimously adopted on 30 September 2009, strived to protect women and children from sexual violence during armed conflict, and asked the Secretary-General to appoint a special representative to coordinate a plethora of mechanisms to confront the crimes. Resolution 1820, unanimously adopted on 19 June 2008, condemns the transformation of sexual violence to a tool of war, and declares that "rape and other forms of sexual violence can constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity or a constitutive act with respect to genocide".



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