

## Security Council | Issue 3

# Women, Peace, and Security

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### **BACKGROUND ON ISSUE:**

The UN Security Council has championed the participation of women in peacekeeping and conflict resolution since 2000 when it passed Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security. Since then, it has adopted a number of resolutions pertaining to the same topic but most historically is a 2008 resolution that was the first of many regarding Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSV). CRSV includes, but is not limited 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." CRSV resolutions are both a reactive and preemptive tool to ensure the crimes committed in the past cannot be repeated again. They have resulted in the development of Women Protection Advisors (WPAs) on peacekeeping missions and the establishment of monitoring and reporting agreements. In recent years, the Council has adopted a more responsive survivor approach that focuses on the needs of the victims following a conflict.

CRSV leaves long-lasting trauma on the victim through repeated humiliation as a form of terrorism or a means of control to gain political or economic power. In addition, it has been declared by the UN as punishable under International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law as it constitutes a war crime. It often results in communities being destroyed or permanently altered which can lead to displacement and prolonged conflict; all of which threaten peace and security. The use of CRSV as a deliberate terrorist tactic by State and non-State groups exacerbates conflict and increases discrimination based on gender identity and sexuality.

CRSV, as a form of sexual and gender based violence (SGBV), impacts people of all genders; a significant number of those affected are women, of all ages, and is indicative of a larger system of patriarchal inequality that perpetuates the continuation of discriminatory and harmful belief systems. By addressing specific conflicts and issues like rape, sexual slavery, and more, the Council is also addressing a much larger belief system that values men in positions of power and actively subjugates and demeans women. In order to sufficiently respond to the root cause of CRSV, the social, economic, and political rights of women must be brought to fruition. Organizations like the Council, the UN General Assembly, WHO, and others have a responsibility to address CRSV and its impact on people of all genders, while simultaneously understanding that there is a larger framework that created CRSV as a concept and must be addressed.

### **CONFLICT 1: CRSV in the Tigray Region of Ethiopia**

Conflict between Ethiopia and Tigray started in November 2020 when Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed sent troops to the region following an attack on a military base. Despite armed conflict only starting in 2020, tensions have been rising since 2018, when Abiy took office. Following his appointment, he created the Prosperity Party, under which the Tigray's People Liberation Front (TPLF) lost significant power. When Abiy decided to postpone election among COVID-19 concerns, Tigray opposed the decision and held elections. The resulting rejection of Tigrayan officials only served to increase tensions. Eritrea, a country bordering Ethiopia but specifically Tigray, was pulled into the crisis after

Tigrayan forces fired missiles into the country. Eritrea, having just finalized their peace with Ethiopia after a twenty year stalemate following the Eritrean-Ethiopian War, was quick to send troops across the border into the Tigray region. Most importantly, is the number of Ethiopians who have been killed as a result of the war, with casualties going past 50,000; This number doesn't include the over 60,000 Ethiopians that have fled to Sudan seeking amnesty as refugees.

Inside of Tigray, hundreds of thousands starve due to a lack of resources and constant danger. Sexual violence has been confirmed as being used as a tool of war in northern and central Tigray. The Council has received concerning reports of women being sexually assaulted by military or individuals being forced to rape their family in exchange for basic commodities. There are similar reports coming out of refugee camps throughout the region. Over 800 cases of sexual violence have been reported since conflict started, including girls younger than ten being targeted. Other reports include women held captive for days and subjected to sexual slavery at the hands of soldiers. It's estimated that even more cases of CRSV have gone unreported due to the stigma surrounding sexual assault within the country. Many of the reports were filed due to extreme physical injury, development of a sexually transmitted disease, or pregnancy. Both Eritrea and Ethiopia have denounced sexual violence and promised to punish the perpetrators but no charges have been pressed as of yet, leaving the victims without justice or closure.

### **CONFLICT 2: Enslavement of the Yazidi Women**

In periods of conflict, militants often use trafficking to assert their power over an area by spreading fear to increase their economic and political power. Sex trafficking is one of the most common forms of this, with young girls being forced to marry men decades older than them or being sold as sex slaves as an incentive. One example of this occurred in 2014 when the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) attacked the Yazidi people due to their mixing of Islamic and pre-Islamic beliefs, killing thousands of men and women and enslaving over 6,000 women. These women, some as young as eight years old, suffered the injustice of being bought and sold like cattle, lived in nightmarish conditions, and gladly risked death for the chance at freedom.

While roughly half of the women managed to escape during their captivity with the help of smugglers, the rest were only freed when the last leg of ISIS fell in 2019. The use of CRSV on such a large scale has displaced thousands of people as the Yazidi try to resettle. In addition, it has continued to create tension as children born during captivity are not allowed back into Yazidi communities, leaving hundreds of orphans abandoned or resulting in the mothers leaving their family and being forced to search for amnesty elsewhere so as not to abandon their children.

### **CONFLICT 3: Sexual Assault in US ICE detention facilities**

The U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) was created in 2003 with the goal of preventing undocumented immigrants from entering the country or catching those already present. Under the Trump Administration, there was a large increase of immigration detention however there were no standards set for the detention facilities. Thousands of undocumented residents are forcibly taken by ICE to detention facilities where they are kept in cramped, unclean quarters, withheld from basic necessities, and not provided adequate medical care leading to illness and death. In addition, detainees are very rarely granted the right to any sort of legal representation, which makes reporting the conditions unfeasible.

In 2019, over 4,500 children reported cases of sexual assault. It was reported that most of the roughly 1,000 that were referred to the Department of Justice, were between detainees, but 178 cases involved ICE employees sexually abusing migrant children. While some of these cases were

dealt with appropriately, many I did not have enough evidence to prosecute. In 2020 at a Texas detention center it was reported that the guards were systematically raping the women in the facility, using the threat of deportation against them. In these situations, the victims of sexual assault are often left without closure with their attackers walking free.

### **QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS IN POSITION PAPERS (5)**

- 1) What changes would your country suggest, if any, for improving the survivor-based approach?
- 2) How would your country respond to refugee victims of CRSV seeking amnesty within your borders?
- 3) What should the international standard for CRSV asylees be according to your country? How does it differ from the current standard?
- 4) What, if any, internal programs does your country have in place in the prevention and recovery of trafficking victims?
- 5) How would your country suggest handling reports of sexual violence within government-owned facilities?

### **SOURCES FOR RESEARCH (11)**

- 1) <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2021-04/women-peace-and-security-5.php>
- 2) <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/conflict-related-sexual-violence>
- 3) <https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/report/conflict-related-sexual-violence-report-of-the-united-nations-secretary-general/2019-SG-Report.pdf>
- 4) <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/internationallaw.aspx>
- 5) <https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/DPO-DPPA-SRSG-SVC-OHCHR-Policy-on-Field-Missions-Preventing-and-Responding-to-CRSV-2020.pdf>
- 6) <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2021/06/29/ethiopia-tigray-conflict-faq/>
- 7) [https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s\\_2021\\_312.pdf](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2021_312.pdf)
- 8) <https://www.reuters.com/world/special-report-health-official-alleges-sexual-slavery-tigray-women-blame-2021-04-15/>
- 9) <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jul/25/slaves-of-isis-the-long-walk-of-the-yazidi-women>
- 10) <https://globalrightsforwomen.org/featured/violence-against-women-and-girls-ice-custody/>
- 11) <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/27/us/immigrant-children-sexual-abuse.html>