



UN PEACEKEEPING RESOLUTION 1325: WOMEN AS AGENTS OF PEACE: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF CONGO AND LIBERIA

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Abstract:

The violence in the African region has been alarming in regard to colonial domination, tribal differences, economic marginalization, majoritarianism, political instability, and civil wars. This research's key areas of concern are the Democratic Republic of Congo and Liberia, where years of civil wars and political instability have called for an effective course of action. In such a scenario, women are the most vulnerable social gender group in any society, and how they are affected due to an armed conflict also differs from the effects of conflict on men. United Nations Organization introduced peacekeeping Resolution 1325, in the year 2000, which focuses on the impacts of armed conflict and war on women and works for their inclusion in peacekeeping and peacebuilding processes. However, due to many shortcomings in the implementation of this resolution and the lack of accountability and overall cooperation between the recipient states and UNO, this resolution has not been implemented with efficacy in Congo and Liberia. In order to analyze the achievements and failures of this resolution and for the establishment of possible solutions/recommendations for the operational effectiveness of the resolution and the induction of women into peace processes, this research has been conducted. This is a qualitative and deductive research. The research design is based on a descriptive method. The theory used is "Feminism" with a slight reference to Johan Galtung's model of the violence triangle. The literature used is taken from secondary data, gathered through 'Purposive Sampling.' The data analysis conducted is Thematic Analysis, with different



sorts of coding methods. However, due to less time and limited access we could only use secondary and nonstructured interviews for the data analysis. The findings are based on a comparative analysis between Congo and Liberia, which claims that Resolution 1325 so far has been the most successful in Liberia, and violence in Congo has continued so far.

KEYWORDS: Gender Perspective, Impacts of Conflict on women, Induction of women in peacekeeping, post-conflict peacebuilding, United Nations Resolution 1325, Violence in Congo, Violence in Liberia

Introduction:

The nature of conflict in both Congo and Liberia has been intra-state based on a traumatic history of civil wars. Congo, known as the Rape Capital of the world, gained its independence from Belgium's colonialist domination in the 1960s, resulting in the outbreak of many separatist movements and tribal conflicts between the Tutis and Hutus tribes, which ultimately resulted in the First and Second Civil wars. The UN sent its mission "MONUSCO" (The United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo) to the region in 1999, to monitor the situation and implement Resolution 1325. On the other hand, Liberia's conflictual situation began from the majoritarianism caused by the migration of African Americans to Liberia, which resulted in the marginalization of the existing tribes and clashes between the Mano and Gio tribes. As a result, two civil wars are caused, and the UN sent its mission "UNMIL" (The United Nations Mission in Liberia) to the region to control the situation and implement Resolution 1325. So far, violence in Congo has continued under the CODECO (Cooperative for Development of Congo) militia, which is considered one of the deadliest militias, blamed for ethnic massacres. Moreover, there are tribal disputes between Lendu and Hema tribes under Félix Antoine Tshisekedi's government. The situation in Liberia is however more controlled as compared to Congo, with only slight clashes between civil and pro-government groups regarding the dissatisfaction with George Weah's government. This research discusses the successes and failures of Resolution 1325 in these regions and works to increase the operational effectiveness of Resolution 1325 and UN PKOs (Peacekeeping Missions). Previous literature has mostly focused on explicit statistical information, such as; how many women were affected during the civil wars, and how many women peacekeeping teams have been sent by the UN Resolution 1325. However, this research will be an all-rounder. Not only it will highlight the explicit information such as the impacts and critiques of Resolution 1325 in Congo and Liberia, but it will also focus on implicit ideas. It will focus on all terms such as Sexism, Gender-Based Violence, Induction of women in peacekeeping, and challenges to Resolution 1325. This research has been centered on the Democratic Republic of Congo and Liberia because these places are the ones where women have suffered the most because the situation of GBV (Gender Based Violence) is very sensitive. This study is vital because it will help conclude recommendations for the adoption of the National Action Plan for Resolution 1325 in Pakistan, and on how to engage more Pakistani women in the peacekeeping/peacebuilding arena. As per Pakistan's history



of civil wars and armed conflict in FATA regions, this research can help us to drive out various implications for the prevention of armed conflict, and for the reduction of its impact on local women. We have specifically chosen Third World countries because it is where the ratio of post-conflict violence is very high. Most of the literature addresses the problems but has given only a general depiction of solutions. However, this research entails more specific and in-depth recommendations regarding the operational effectiveness of Resolution 1325. The recommendations are based on a two-tier analysis of inter and intra-state measures, which are to be implemented by each state through a proper research and development approach. In order to study the operational effectiveness of Resolution 1325 in Congo and Liberia, and the impacts of armed conflict on women, it is vital for us to incorporate and mainstream a gendered perspective.

The theoretical framework is based on the International Relations theory of Feminism, which has been used as a lens. "Feminism entered the sphere of International Relations in the 1980s as part of the emerging critical movement for the rights of women." (Gold, 2017). It was a political and social movement intended for the protection of women's political, civil, economic, and social rights and advocacy of their liberties. It focused on explaining concepts like the social construction of gender roles, gender stereotypes, gender inequalities, sexism, etc. This is a critical theory that aims to destabilize exploitative systems and structures of operation and biased prejudice. It is not just limited to women but also analyzes men, their behavior, and how they respond to such power structures. The core concepts of this theory are sex, gender, race, discrimination, gender equality, etc. This research will use 'Feminism' as the main theory because it is through Feminism that we can look at the implementation of Resolution 1325 through a 'gendered perspective'. Ultimately, the fault lines in Congo and Liberia will serve as a lesson for other conflict-ridden areas, where the participation of women peacekeepers is not ideal. Not in any way does this theoretical research advocate the exclusion of men from the peacekeeping sphere, or claim that their rights are less important than women's rights. It just tries to explain how women and their issues need to be addressed through a gendered lens because of their heterogenous social nature. This theory was chosen because it addresses the creation of power structures in societies and how these power structures violate women's rights. Since, this research is also based on the concept of power structures, women's rights, armed conflict, and the protection of women in the face of human security, Feminism seemed to be the most credible theory. Another model that has been used as a lens in this research is Johan Galtung's Violence Triangle. This triangle is based on three types of violence: "Direct Violence, Structural Violence, and Cultural Violence." Hence, according to Galtung, Peace is not just the absence of war and conflict, that peace is only termed as 'negative peace.' (Galtung, 2004). Peace can only be achieved, when it is positive and sustainable when it focuses to abolish all sorts of violence from society and not just direct violence. Hence, this research also addresses the impacts of armed conflict on women which are based on Johan Galtung's violence triangle. The relationship of this research with the existing literature is that of a descriptive nature, it explains the problems in a descriptive manner, and tries to propose probable solutions to address the impacts of armed conflict on women.



Moving forward, regarding our research questions, we have tried to inquire how through mainstreaming a 'gendered perspective', we can actually make the implementation of Resolution 1325 more operationally effective. This could be through many ways like; incorporating more women as 'blue helmets' in peacekeeping missions or training women as peace activists and gender advisors on state and international levels. The Second inquiry is regarding the types of impacts of armed conflict on local Congolese and Liberian women. Those impacts have been then broken down into more specific Direct and Indirect Impacts. We also incorporated a female peacekeeper's perspective in our thematic analysis to show how not only the local women but educated and aware women also have to face discrimination.

Impacts of armed conflict on women in Congo and Liberia:

1. Direct Impacts:

When it comes to the terms 'war and conflict', violence is a by-product. That violence exists in the absence of war as well but is exacerbated in presence of conflict. The same thing happened in Africa. From street crimes, gun violence, and homicides, in terms of direct violence, to poverty, patriarchy, unemployment, and extremism, in the forms of cultural and structural violence, the African region has suffered a lot. The impacts that we have discussed in our research are from these categories of violence, and among these structural and cultural violence which can be considered non-traditional security issues leave the deepest and most gruesome impacts on women. One of the most noteworthy and horrifying realities of conflict and the post-conflict era includes the unprecedented level of sexual assaults and gender-based violence faced largely by women who are intentionally or unintentionally prone to this vicious cycle of atrocities committed against them by the belligerent factions of rebel groups, and national security forces. In 2006, the new Congolese Constitution declared sexual violence a crime against humanity however, just because it is now declared a crime does not mean it has been countered. According to reports, when a woman is raped, traditional African families and their male heads often negotiate through out-of-court settlements in the form of money. And that money too never reaches the victim herself. The problem associated with rape and sexual violence is that it is something independent of the age of women, it is something that affects women of all ages and also men. Another problem is the lack of sexual assault cases reported due to social stigmas. The third problem is that rape is not the only form of Gender-based violence employed on women but other forms such as unwanted sexual touching, being stripped, and publicly displayed also come under the umbrella of GBV. In Liberia, the majority of these reported rapes have been perpetuated by the LURD (Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy forces), which was a rebel group against Charles Taylor. The same violence has also outstretched to forced pregnancies and human trafficking/prostitution. Both regions have become a source and transit hub of women trafficking for prostitution purposes. The most vulnerable to such cases are displaced women. Many Liberian officials are involved in such crimes as well. Such that, in January 2018, the United Kingdom expelled two Liberian diplomats because of several reasons, one of which was allegedly facilitating prostitution.



Migration in Liberia and Congo after the civil wars came in the form of forced temporary and permanent internal displacements. During the civil war, many women were displaced due to active violence in Liberia and its regions exposed to violence, rape, and zero facilities in refugee camps. Hence, this is a continuous loop of exploitation. When conflict occurs, violence takes place in various forms, the direct impacts come first in the cycle of exploitation. When men from families are sent out to fight, they get killed, and women are left as the sole survivors and breadwinners of these households. They have to earn and handle domestic chores at the same time. But when perpetrators attack the very homes where these women reside, the women are either kidnapped and sent into prostitution or killed and left disabled. The women sent into prostitution suffer from many horrific and traumatic experiences. And, the ones who survive ultimately join militant groups and become combatants themselves to protect their families. This cycle continues and transitions into the second cycle of violence and its indirect impacts.

2. Indirect impacts:

These are mostly overlooked or very under-rated, however, these are the ones that have the most profound effects on women. Education is the most vital ingredient when it comes to women's role in peacebuilding. Most of the girl combatants who had taken up arms during the civil wars in Congo and Liberia had never been to school. In both regions, the men are more literate as compared to women. The reason why Liberian women are not able to go to school years after the civil war is due to the weak reformation/restoration system. Most families are unable to bear the cost of education for girls due to poverty, long distances to schools, and lack of security. Both regions face an acute lack of hygiene and sanitation facilities and a lack of healthcare systems. The hospitals lack resources and equipment and women have to walk to the nearest hospital. And they feel unsafe when traveling too because of the disturbances caused by rebel groups. The impacts of an armed conflict are not just physical but psychological too. Especially, when war crimes like Mass rapes are involved. Both Congolese and Liberian women who were raped were unable to voice their concerns due to the shame and humiliation they felt in traditional African societies which hold stigmas against raped women. Their interviews show how vulnerable, and scared they had felt due to their traumatic experiences during the conflict. Hence, these are only some of the indirect impacts explained.

Hence, when we talk about the operational effectiveness of resolution 1325 in Congo and Liberia. They do not run short of a planned and organized mandate or effective NAPs (National Action Plan). The fault lies in the restoration abilities of the NAP. The blueprints stated in the NAPs and the facilities often differ. There is no iron triangle between the government, the civil society, and the women's organizations, which need to work together in collaboration as each has different roles. Investors are most likely to fund short-term projects with easier-to-achieve targets rather than long-term plans which need a lot of energy, time, and resources. Another problem is the vague role of the justice system and judicial authorities, which delay cases and as a result, the citizenry is forced to opt for out-of-court settlements that exploit the victims of violence and sexual assaults. Women peacekeepers too face challenges due to the misogynistic nature of some working



organizations. They are only sent for short-term projects and are not preferred on field missions. Even if they do go on field missions, they face difficulties regarding the mandate implementation in front of their male heads. Despite all this, in both regions, women have created many NGOs and peacebuilding institutions that have been involved at the forefront of post-conflict reconstruction. The same Liberian women helped get women registered to vote and helped to elect Ellen John Sirleaf as the first female President of Liberia, in 2005. They helped conduct the Accra Peace Agreement between the government and rebel forces. They were the ones who set the table for effective negotiations. Hence, such peacebuilding networks were set up by Liberian and Congolese women who have been active in abolishing the impacts of armed conflict in their respective regions. This is why we call them the “Agents of Peace.”

By analyzing the WPS Women, Peace, and Security framework, we compared the situations, facts, and figures from both Congo and Liberia to each other. And, a number of factors have been explained in detail. Commencing from the security environment, the direct and indirect impacts were the same in both regions. Gender-based violence, sexual assault, war crimes, disruption in education, lack of health facilities, etc. were equally visible in both regions in the history of their two civil wars. However, the ‘third world’ nature of these countries prevents them from addressing these problems in an effective manner. Secondly, two NAP National Action Plans have been launched in Congo and Liberia respectively. Third, the nature of armed conflict in both regions. In Congo, the conflict began from the rivalries between two tribes the Tutsi and Hutu. The clashes began right after Congo’s independence from Belgium in 1960, with the commencement of separatist movements. Later on, Mobutu Sese Seko launched a coup with the support of the US and established a dictatorial single-party system. His rule was that of bad governance and corruption. He favored his own tribe over the other tribes of Congo which caused a lot of discrimination. Afterward, the genocide in Rwanda and Burundi eventually resulted in the outbreak of the first and second Congo wars. Henceforth, the nature of conflict in Congo has been intrastate, and domestic which has resulted in two Congo civil wars. Moving on towards Liberia, the conflict began from the exploitation of the locals, and the domination of one ethnicity over another. The Mano and Gio tribes were charged with treason against the states, they were discriminated against by the state. Hence, Samuel Doe, the then president of Liberia did the same as Mobutu, he also favored his own Krahn tribe over the Mano and Gio tribes. The clashes gave birth to a rebellion led by Charles Taylor comprised of the Mano and Gio tribes. Thus began a series of attacks between the state’s army and Taylor’s rebel forces. Henceforth, the nature of conflict in Liberia too was intrastate and domestic which also resulted in the Liberian civil wars. Consequently, the nature of conflict has been also the same in both regions. Fourth, the socially constructed gender roles established perceived femininity and toxic masculinity in both regions. Both Congolese and Liberian women were subjected to domestic life and prevented from political voting. They were not sent to schools because of the fact that women are eventually married off. However, some change has been observed since the civil wars. Liberian and Congolese women started by becoming girl combatants to protect themselves against violence, then they became peace activists to end the civil wars and are still working for effective peace-



building. Hence, in order to improve the situation in Congo and Liberia and to promote women's role as peace-builders, it is vital to shatter the glass image of women and promote positive masculinity. Positive masculinity means when men exercise power WITH women rather than ON women. Tribal discrimination was common in both states as mentioned previously. Samuel Doe in Liberia too discriminated against other tribes and Mobutu from Congo did the same. Such systemic and structural discrimination creates majoritarianism, which marginalizes society and creates a violent environment. This environment is characterized by unequal resource distribution, bad governance, and political and economic instability, which creates clashes and competition between tribal clans. The conducive environment which sustained the direct and indirect impacts of armed conflict on women was also the same in both states. This sort of environment not only made violence against women possible but also promoted it further. The elements that made the environment conducive to violence include poverty, illiteracy, etc. Since these elements are more readily prominent in third-world countries, the rate of violence there is higher as compared to developed states like the USA. In the current scenario, other contributing factors to violence have been the rise of populism and right-wing politics after Trump which has also worsened the conditions that are needed for the equal participation of women. In addition to this, the rise of COVID -19 also exacerbated the already hostile inflation, poverty, and illiteracy rates for women. Another common factor between both states was how women were created into "war women", "sexual slaves", and "informal polygyny". Informal polygyny was active in both regions. Women were expected to associate with at least one soldier, and become his girlfriend. The soldier would keep her protected from enemy forces and she in turn had to cook, clean for him, and give him sexual favors. The women who did not find a man were eventually left unprotected and killed. The women who had already found a man were then tortured, beaten, forcefully raped, and exploited for domestic labor. In addition to this, women can also be peace violators themselves because men cannot be the only ones responsible for the violence. Congolese and Liberian households hold vital cultural practices which define their very identity. The elderly female heads of African households who acquire this position after the death of their husbands tend to support the discrimination against other women. Example: Female Genital Mutilation is a custom carried out in African regions. Anyone who goes against this practice can face serious repercussions from the tribal heads. And women are the ones who promote the continuation of this practice against their own gender identity. Another commonality found between both states is violence carried out by UN Peacekeepers themselves. Many UN Peacekeepers were accused of sexual violence, such that UN published a report in 2016 of a list of those countries whose troops were involved in conducting sexual violence. Congo acquired the top position in that list. If the saviors themselves are involved in such vile acts, who would take the responsibility for creating peace? This is why we ask for a larger proportion of women in the peacemaking/peacebuilding sphere and the only solution to this is to keep a better check on male peacekeepers and introduce harsh penalties for them in case they sexually abuse anyone. Lastly, both Congolese and Liberian women collectively mobilized to handle things on their own when their governments failed. These efforts include prominent individuals like Leymah Gbowee, and Ellen John Sirleaf from Liberia, and organizations like SOFEPADI (2000) Women's solidarity for Inclusive Peace and



Development. Such entities were the ones mainly headed by women for women's rights activism.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, Resolution 1325 has been the most successful in Liberia, with more positive feedback coming from there. However, in Congo, conditions are yet to improve. *Additionally, many "members of the international community view Liberia as successful in implementing the four pillars of Security Council Resolution 1325."* (Freese, 2019). This answers our evaluation and consequently, it is to be stated that though the impacts of armed conflict and civil wars in both Congo and Liberia have been the same, their intensity has fluctuated. Moreover, the Peacekeeping Operations have been more successful in Liberia since UNMIL has been concluded in 2019 and MONUSCO's second NAP mandate has yet to end in 2022. After results are announced in 2023 of the conclusions of MONUSCO, we can determine that. So far, UNMIL has been the most effective UN Peacekeeping Mission of Resolution 1325 mandate, in terms of time efficiency and positive feedback received from civilians and Peacekeeping observers.

Lessons for Pakistan:

According to the World Economic Forum WEF, Pakistan is the second-worst state for women, in terms of gender parity, with Afghanistan acquiring the first position. The Global Gender Gap report placed Pakistan in the 145th position out of 146 countries. To address the gender issues in Pakistan, it is important to employ the WPS Women Peace and Security agenda in Pakistan. Resolution 1325 for the first time, in annals, recognized that women are the most affected in case of a conflict; hence, they deserve special attention. It also recognized and acknowledged women's role in post-conflict reconstruction and peace-building efforts. However, in a Pakistani society, which is patriarchal to the core, the success of such endeavors seems difficult because of the existing inequalities that enhance sociocultural differences and the gender gap. Despite geopolitical and geographical differences in various conflict-ridden areas, women across the globe may be equally impacted due to war and conflict. Issues like terrorism from the "war on terror", violent extremism, and military operations have displaced women and caused serious dangers to their health. In rural areas of Baluchistan and KPK, women are barred from going outside their homes without being accompanied by a male. They are not allowed to participate in political or economic campaigns and are confined to the domestic sphere of the household. Even there, they face problems as such domestic violence, gang rapes, and honor killings.

An attempt to adopt Resolution 1325 was seen in Pakistan in 2010 but the project stalled. Let us compare the situation here in Pakistan (Southeast Asia) to that of Africa. The women of Congo and Liberia, when subjected to rape, and violence took up guns to protect themselves. They assumed the roles of women combatants due to the failed security system. In Pakistan, women are assuming the roles of suicide bombers. A recent example is an attack carried out by Sharri Baloch that killed three Chinese nationals and a Pakistani man



at Karachi University on April 26, 2022. Sharri was born in Turbat in 1991, she was married and had two children. She herself was highly educated, with two Masters. In Quetta (Baluchistan), a female suicide bomber carried out the first attack on a bus carrying students of Sardar Bahadur Khan Women's University, in 2013, killing at least 25 people. Thus, why is it that the number of women involved in violence is growing day by day? Why have they been taking up violent roles instead of peacemakers and peacebuilders? The answer is oppression, whether political, social, or economic. It is oppression that drives women to take up control in their own hands regardless of their religious, cultural, political, or geographical affiliations. These objectives need to be incorporated into the National Security Policy of Pakistan under a special mandate, so that, Pakistan leaves its position as the second-worst state for women.

Recommendations:

The lack of female representation often arises from the inadequate quotas and no separate quotas for women in their respective countries, which even undermine their right to fully participate in peace negotiations and conflict management strategies, therefore in order to increase the number of women in peace processes, the nation-states should compose or introduce "Gender Quotas" or "Gender-Sensitive Quotas" in their political, social and economic institutions. The penal code of Congo where women are not allowed to own property without their husband's approval and many such similar subjugations prove that the preexisting laws are of a discriminatory nature, and hence they should be amended. In addition to this, there is a big void between the creation and implementation of laws. The Congolese and Liberian women have created many laws regarding women's rights but accountability and transparency regarding those laws are absent. In times of war and conflict, women are left unemployed, and as the sole survivors of their domestic households. They should not only be given livelihood courses regarding stitching, farming, food production, etc. but they should also be provided technical and leadership skills so that they can come to the forefront to lead. Other training sessions include entrepreneurship workshops, nursing, and first-aid training, etc. Patriarchy and male-dominated society cannot be eradicated without the help of men themselves. Hence, men should come forward to promote positive masculinity. The allocation of funds and fund-raising programs for women are affected by war but most of these funds are often inadequate and temporary and fail to fulfill the needs of women in the long run therefore a permanent international hub should be established that is able to extract information and rationally raise demands for the requirement of funds needed at a specific area at a specific time for a specific purpose. Secondly, interest-free micro-loans should be given to poverty-driven women based on different need-worthy categories such as small-scale business loans, house loans, agriculture loans, educational loans, emergency loans, etc. So that women would finally become financially independent. A massive number of committed violence against women include the use of guns and arms and therefore the state should take an initiative aimed at formulating strict laws and legislation against gun-based violence and the use of weapons for illegal activities. Last but not least, GRB or Gender Responsive Budgeting should be carried out which is a method through which the national budget of a state and its resources



are effectively and accurately distributed among gender groups in a society. It considers women and men as an equal part of a society and heterogenous, which is why it presses on the distribution of budget resources from a gendered lens. To conclude, if developing states follow these methods through a designed mandate which incorporates the 4 pillars of Resolution 1325, the intensity of conflict on those regions can be efficiently controlled and a larger proportion of women can be incorporated in the peacekeeping/peacebuilding sphere. A larger number of women means more women as 'Agents of Peace' in this anarchic world.



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