

Newsletter „Women, peace, security“ March 2012.



Dear readers, by publishing this newsletter, we wish to contribute to better information about UN documents on security, demilitarisation, and to the greater influence of women on post-conflict problems solving, first of all in Serbia, and then in the Western Balkans. We hope that this newsletter will be read by those who are interested in the re-examination of the traditional concept of national security, the reform of the security sector, the gender dimension of security, security integrations and feminist antimilitarist concept of security. We expect your contributions on these questions. It is accessible online on the website: www.zeneucnom.org

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Women in Black and the Resolution 1325



Militarization of policy

Under the title 'Feminist-antimilitary approach to concept, interpretation and implementation of 1325 Resolution', on 24th and 25th of March, 2012 a meeting of members of a working team for monitoring UN indicators for 1325 Resolution was held in Belgrade. Based on their work and insight, a 'shadow report' will be made, with the results of the research and monitoring of the indicators.

The meeting was organized regarding the critical reflection of the implementation and the concept of 1325 Resolution. A repertory of writings of the relevant authors, from the region and the world, on the issue 'Feminist-antimilitary approach to concept, interpretation and implementation of 1325 Resolution', was prepared for the meeting. **Zagorka Golubović**, anthropologist from Belgrade, spoke about 'Critical philosophy in the period of post social transition.' She says that most of the commandments are unquestionable, but we should reassess the one 'Do not have other gods beside me!', because religion supports traditionalism and the uncritical thinking. The first was a critical thinker Socrates who commanded: Know yourself. She also said that those who strive for critical thinking should always compare the attitudes with the reality and try to find in practice the elements to create new alternatives. However, people find it easier to accept the conventional, Golubovic observed.

Lino Veljak from Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb, explained why critical thinking is crucial. He says that avoiding critical thinking leads toward prejudices and myths. When someone suppresses the knowledge out of the existential reasons or due to career, things get worse, they are drowned in uncritical mass. 'The purpose of critical thinking is to make things better,' Veljak said.

Tamara Kaliterna activist, reported that those who think critically are trying to live a rational, sensible, empathic, and push self-centered tendencies. Critical thinking is ethical duty, because it results with morally suitable and reasonable actions and with rational society.

Socrates shifted West to critical thinking and Buda did the same to the East. The adjective 'critical' to 'critical thinking' does not necessarily mean 'disagreement' or 'negative attitude'.

The Enlightenment rationalist credo, which is also called Age of Reason: 'Sapere aude'! - Dare to know - calling to people to be brave and to use their minds independently. It is a prerequisite for civil courage, she added.

Afterwards, there was a discussion on the essay of Cynthia Enloe- 'Feminist curiosity,' and the document of Cynthia Cockburn- '1325 Resolution in the trap of contradictions', as well as 'Different view of conflict and post-conflict period and the political interpretation of gender security through 1325 Resolution'-of the author Laura McLeod and at the end 'Crime of rape', of Rebecca Johnson.

Vesna Rakic Vodinelic, Professor of International Law at the University of Union in Belgrade, gave an introductory speech on 'Mechanisms of (mis)use of the international documents by Serbian institutions.' **Rakic** said that the resolutions are not so binding as international contracts, unfortunately,

National Action Plans are looser than the law, but not even 1325 Resolution allows the impunity of Genocide, crime against the humanity and sexual violence. She considers that Serbian NAP does not support regional women activism in Serbia which contributes to postwar security on the territory of ex-Yugoslavia. She also noticed that paramilitary forces are transforming into para-political forces, meaning parties. Serbian policy is militarized, the parties accept military glossary, and NAP allows sneaking amnesty.

Biljana Brankovic, a researcher, explained what a `shadow report` and an alternative report is and Gordana Subotić enumerated the members of the International Women in Black Network.

Trick against the activists

Stasa Zajovic, coordinator of Women in Black – Belgrade, spoke at the International Conference `Mass sexual abuse during the war`, under the title `1325 Resolution – the difficulties and challenges in the construction of just peace and security.` The Conference took place on 9th and 10th of March and organizers were Meres pour la paix-from France, Movement of Mothers from Srebrenica and Zepa enclaves, Center Andre Malraux and the Institute for Research of Crimes against Humanity and International Law, University of Sarajevo. **Zajovic** began by expressing `great respect for women from Srebrenica, sincere gratitude for their understanding, friendship and warmth with which they always surround us, and accept us. As the famous Mothers of the May Square in Argentina, the women of Srebrenica became one of the most important examples of women peace activism, in the present-day world. Their have transformed their deepest vulnerability, irreparable loss, tragedy and the grief into peace activism and a struggle for justice and solidarity. As Munira Subasic said: I have no right to think of forgiveness for the suffering of my child, whom I have not found yet. But I can fight for Smilja from Bijeljina and Munira from Srebrenica to seek their sons, and say that the both Smilja and Munira are only mothers and have the role of mothers, first of all.`

`Our first encounters with women of Srebrenica, our first departures to Potocare, were full of anguish for the meeting with the families, victims of genocide. All the women from Srebrenica did not know who we are, but we knew they have reasonable and justified fear of us, because we were branded with the origin of crime`, we are coming from. We have never lost out of our sight that we are in the same position, because as Nura, a woman from Srebrenica whose two sons and many relatives have been killed, says: You do not have a collective responsibility but our people are gone,` said Staša Zajovic. She considers that women do not link security to the repressive apparatus-army, police and weapons anywhere but exclusively to human security (social-economic, personal, political, educational, health, etc). Zajovic argued that a common denominator in all the regions of Serbia is women's attitude that in the country not even a minimum of human security has been provided and that the state and its institutions jeopardize women, who have no confidence in the state or any state or government institution, value system, political, cultural and spiritual climate. The security of women in Serbia, in her opinion, is jeopardized mostly by poverty, unemployment, constant fear of losing their jobs and domestic violence. The state system does not commend any trust, there is no political will for a break-away with criminal past, and the climate of impunity and crime glorification affects mostly peace activists and human rights defenders, expectations and hopes are not

fulfilled even after the overthrow of the regime. She quoted that within the Strategy of National security of Serbia (April 2009) the following are mentioned as potential dangers: `resorting to armed aggression, separatist aspirations, unlawful unilateral proclamation of independence of Kosovo, terrorism, proliferation with weapons of mass destruction,` etc. Only at the end are economic problems mentioned. Serbia is the only country in the region which has not signed and ratified the Convention on the Ban of Cluster Ammunition during NATO intervention of 1999. Serbia exports arms to dictatorships. Women in Black have called several times on the government but without any success, to adopt and ratify certain conventions and stop exporting weapons, Zajovic said. The state which has produced and exported war does not want to face with war consequences, which `necessarily backfire at home.` There is no evidence concerning PTSP syndrome, nor how many women experience violence due to PTSP. According to the Network of Women against Violence in Serbia, since the beginning of 2011 until 9th of September of 2011, 25 women were executed in their domestic environment caused by PTSP in eight of these cases. One fifth of the executors were soldiers or policemen. In the NAP of Serbia it is said for 1325 Resolution that the institutions which are in charge of the implementation of 1325 Resolution will financially support `women who have been subjected to torture and sexual abuse on the territory of ex-Yugoslavia. Lately, we have found out that this part of the document has been deleted`, Zajovic noticed. `We do consider that one of the priorities of this Resolution implementation must be post conflict reconstruction of the society, meaning the processes through which all the facts regarding crimes, individual criminal responsibility will be determined, the perpetrators punished and institutional reforms conducted,` Zajovic said. Since 2005, Women in Black have demanded the implementation 1325 Resolution, adopted as well their own `Women, Peace, Security` Resolution, adjusted to the Serbian context. Though they were supported by a dozen of civil society organizations and even some of the deputies of Serbian Assembly, their demands were not taken into account. `Through this `women` Resolution, the state cooperates only with those organizations who obediently follow the needs of the state, and that is how the civil society is divided in two – those who are obedient and those who are not, instead of solidarity, strife thrives on the principles of patriarchal competition.`

In the political analysis of the text and the process of drafting recommendations for Serbian NAP, Women in Black have noticed its extremely military character as a document as well as of the process itself. `The fact that the Ministry of Defense initiated the creating the NAP testifies on military approach to security. The experience of wars during the nineties in the territory of ex-Yugoslavia, and especially the role of the Serbian Army who have inherited the burden of the Yugoslav National Army, later Yugoslav Army and the Army of Serbia and Montenegro, as one of the executive bodies of Milosevic`s regime, seriously undermines the credibility of this institution in the preparation of NAP and especially it is unacceptable from the feminist-pacifist approach.` Women in Black have formed autonomous working groups for monitoring the implementation of the Resolution 1325. Members of those working groups have sent approximately 150 questions to the authorities regarding the implementation of Resolution 1325, but have not received any response. `Unfortunately, on the global level, Resolution 1325 became one of the most `attractive fashion hits` on the project market, a way of the so-called `fruitful and successful cooperation` of civil society, state and the international institutions, first of all UN. Nevertheless, Women in Black try to contribute to the feminist-antimilitaristic concept of security, sharing this experience with similar networks. The problem is not only the implementation, but the militarized character of Resolution 1325. Patriarchal

and military character of the 1325 Resolution is obvious because it deals only with war and military conflict as a permanent, natural, unavoidable and inevitable, which is contrary to the role of UN and maintenance of peace and security in the world. What interests women the most- human security - has been neglected due to Resolution 1325,` - Zajović concluded. `The Resolution itself is not binding, so every state uses it in accordance with the needs of its ruling elite,` Zajovic stated. `For more then ten years since Resolution 1325 was adopted, there have been minor improvements in reduction of sexual crimes in the war-affected territories, women voices (except the chosen ones) are not heard on the international conferences on peace and security, let alone `disobedient` feminist-antimilitary activists. There have been more and more protests that Resolution 1325 is a `trick` of UN Security Council members in order to pacify activists. Women in Black are involved actively on the regional and global level in the Networks which do not allow elites to jeopardize and nullify important international documents such as Resolution 1325 should be,` concluded Women in Black coordinator.

II Activities of Women in Black on the demilitarization of security



Protest against an architectural eyesore

Permanent memento of the crime

Women in Black have called on the democratic as well as on the other part of Serbia, who has conscience, to join their appeal against the erection of the monument `to all the victims and homeland defenders`, on Sava Square in Belgrade. Under the title `permanent memento of the crime`, they left a message: `We, as Serbian citizens strongly condemn Belgrade authorities' intention to raise a monument on the plateau, next to the railway station, for all the victims and defenders of the fatherland. A City government, in which the highest officials of the ruling Democratic Party raise a monumental eyesore, as new symbol of continuity with the war policy of Slobodan Milosevic and his reconciliation with the satraps of the joint coalition in power. Legislation of 16 European countries incriminates the denial of the crime. We invite you to vote for Serbia to be the 17th country which is aware of its crimes, ashamed of them, regrets them, does not want a permanent memento of shame in stone, single-handedly created, in its capital city.` At the moment when Serbia is closer to EU more then ever, Serbia is farther from the truth about itself. Serbia raises a monument, both for its victims and defenders, and by that equalizes and rewrites this part of history created by itself. Serbia will unveil the monument on 24th of March, which coincides with the 13th anniversary of the beginning of NATO bombing, and the monument is `for all the victims of wars of nineties and fatherland defenders on the territory of ex Yugoslavia. `Serbia was the author and coauthor of wars of aggression in Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, from 1991 until 1999. No soldier and volunteer of Serbia defended the `fatherland` on the line of Karlobag-Karlovac-Ogulin-Virovitica. They could `defend` there only `Great Serbia` from the local population. The origin of the idea for a monument-blender is from `veterans` and `disabled from war` who want with the

monumental eyesore to justify the defeat of what they fought for and to present their defeat as a victory. Official Belgrade does not want a monument for the victims of the Srebrenica Genocide.

The same creators of the idea for this monster monument, did not allow last year the placing of a memorial plaque for Croatian prisoners of 1991 in Serb-Yugoslav National Army concentration camps in Begejci and Stajicevo, near Zrenjanin. It would have transformed, at least slightly, the Serbian civilization and military defeat in Croatia, into a moral victory over Milosevic`s Serbia. Official Belgrade refuses to erect a monument for the unknown Serbian deserter. In Germany there are seven monuments for the deserters of Hitler`s war. Monument equalizing, a petrified version of the national reconciliation of the Democratic Party and the Socialist Party of Serbia in 2012, were in the first version of 2002 opposed by some artists and some parents of children who were killed because they `defended` their homeland hundreds of miles away. Belgrade already has a monument of Milosevic for the victims of NATO bombing, made in summer of 1999, without a building license in the Park of Friendship in Delta. Post-Milosevic`s Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, with 23% of unemployed, we guess, having nowhere else to spend the taxpayers` money, paid for the smeared and defiled monument to be washed and made look decent, though the Administration of Belgrade, of the Serbian capital, treats it as an illegal construction. By doing so, the Ministry of Labor, of Rasim Lajic, washed off Milosevic`s disgrace, whose remains the Belgrade government furbishes to microscopic invisibility, with the monument on Sava Square. In Croatia, 15,970 citizens, whose names and surnames are known, were executed. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, 97,207 were identified, and in Kosovo, 13,421 citizens were executed, too. Serbia has not counted yet how many people were killed between 1991. and 1999 – soldiers, policemen, women and children. Serbia despises its own victims, because it did not condescend to find out their names and surnames. Out of the total number of executed citizens from Kosovo, at least 1,200 bodies were transported to Serbia and buried in at least 18 mass graves, which have been discovered so far. Will their names be on the monument for `homeland defenders` too? A similar monument leveling-off the same sense and purpose was



built by Franjo Tudjman, successor of Bozidar Vucurevic and fascist dictator Francisko Franko. Yet History aligned all of them on the side of the losers. The unique monument for victims and executors from Maribor to Suva Reka is a distortion of historical facts. It denies crimes and erases the guilt of Serbia for wars, demonizes `enemies`, creates the illusion of victory, draws an equation mark between volunteers, forcibly mobilized and regular soldiers, introduces the category of the `innocent` and `mock` victims, closes the doors of confrontation with the past, mocks the final judgments of the ICTY, as the court of UN and deprives Serbian citizens of their right to catharsis. The monument whose patrons are the authorities of the City of Belgrade, returns to the crimes at the place of their origin, and undeniably shows that wars were planned and manufactured in Belgrade, and on 24th of March, 2012, they returned to their living and dead creators and punished those who were not even born when the war began. This act offends the victims and the citizens of Serbia who were from the beginning of the lunatic wars and realization of the criminal project of the official Belgrade, consistently anti-war engaged, challenged state violence in the region and the persecution of all who refused to take part in it`, it is said in the appeal. The appeal was supported by the Independent Association of Vojvodina Journalists, Center for Regionalism, Center for Civil Society, Pannonia Civic Fund, Green Network of Vojvodina, Civic Action from Pancevo, Open Lyceum from Sombor, Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, Urban In from Novi Pazar, Independent Women's Center from Dimitrovgrad, Regional Center for Minorities, Anima from Kotor, Incest Trauma Centre from Belgrade, Lawyers' Committee for Human Rights from Belgrade, Youth Initiative for Human Rights from Belgrade, Centre for Cultural Decontamination of Belgrade and Women's Association Pešćanik from Krusevac.

The appeal has been joined by hundreds of citizens, not only from Serbia. Thirty activists, friends of the Women in Black, gathered on 23rd March, at 1pm, in front of the Assembly of Belgrade, to protest against the erection of the monument. Some of the placards held in front of the Assembly bore the slogans: `Invaders are not defenders of the homeland`, `No equalization of victims and executioners`, `We demand a monument for the victims of Srebrenica`, `Stop the monument on Sava Square`, `We demand a monument for the unknown deserter.`

Accomplices of crimes

Representatives of civil society protested on 19th of March, 2012, against a gross manipulation of the public regarding the process of rehabilitation of Dragoslav Draza Mihailovic, leader of the Chetnik movement during World War II. It is a criminal convicted for crimes against humanity, against Bosniaks, Croats as well as the Serbian people. The attempt of his rehabilitation erases the antifascist struggle of Serbian people and all the other people of Yugoslavia. We were one of the most authentic and most significant national liberation movements and therefore a respected member of the coalition against Hitler. During last decades in Serbia, however, revisionism and forgery took place, and the marginalization of the Partisan movement, with which Serbia and the Serbian people excluded themselves from the Antifa European forces`, said the statement. `They passed the Law for the Unification of the Partisans and the Chetniks, and then the Rehabilitation Act which initiated the process of rehabilitation of persons who collaborated with fascist Germany` (Prince Paul, Dragisa Cvetkovic). Based on this, the process of rehabilitation of the Chetnic

leader was initiated, and therefore we want to draw attention of the state leadership and the judicial authorities on the key facts:

- In accordance with historical facts and elementary legal principles, judiciary and all the other state institutions, have to treat with due care and due to their own professional and moral authority, primarily due to the reputation of the state.
- The court is not competent to establish a new past, nor it is allowed to deny irrefutable facts which were recorded by numerous documents, not only in domestic but also in the most famous foreign archives.
- It is unfounded to lead a procedure, before the evaluation of the Constitutional Court, based on a Law, which rests on inconsistent basic legal principles and which was submitted to this Court for review.

Dragoslav Draza Mihailovic personally signed the instruction regarding extermination of the Muslim population in Pljevlja, Foca and Cajnice district. The report of his deputy Pavle Dzurisic testifies of complete destruction of the Muslim population, regardless of their sex or their age. His command responsibility for mass crimes over Serbian people is beyond any doubt, while massacres in Vranic, Drugovac and Kopljari, just the most extreme examples of massive atrocities all over Serbia. It is well known on which side Chetnicks fought in 1943, in the battles of Neretva and Sutjeska, in 1944. on Kopaonik, as well as that during the autumn of 1944., Draza refused to accept the order of King Peter the II and kept fighting until the very end of the Second World War, side by side with Ustashas and other collaborators, on the side of German occupiers, invoking terrorist actions in the newly liberated country. Numerous Chetniks joined the ranks of the National Liberation Army then, which was in fact kind of the rehabilitation for all of those who had committed war crimes, it is said in the statement. All these are just enough to qualify the attempt of the rehabilitation of Mihailovic as a deeply inhuman and immoral act. Antifascism is a foundation on which modern Europe relies. That is why Serbia has the obligation to uphold antifascist values. It is a base for good neighborly relations and a contribution to the stability in the region. Therefore we claim with responsibility that the rehabilitation of Dragoslav Draza Mihailovic and his Chetniks will additionally fuel distrust among neighbors, which is already on a very low level, due to recent wars, fought with the same ideological aims. At the same time, this rehabilitation would hurt numerous victims of Chetniks within Serbian people. Those who make the decisions, should be aware that by rehabilitation of crime, which do not expire in accordance to the International Law-they become accomplices too, in those crimes, it is concluded in the statement. The statement has been signed by: Union of Serbia Anti-Fascists, Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, Civic Initiatives, Center for Practical Policy, Women in Black, President of the Coordinating Committee of Vojvodina of the IV Convention Zivan Berisavljevic, Center for Cultural Decontamination, Group 'Monument', the Fund Biljana Kovacevic-Vuco, Center for Euro-Atlantic Studies and Independent Journalists of Vojvodina. Members of Women in Black protested on 23rd of March, due to the announced rehabilitation of Draza Mihailovic. In front of the Court in Timocka street, they held two banners- 'Mihailović = Mladić = Genocide' and on the other- 'Rehabilitation of Mihailovic is fascization of Serbia.' Except for Women in Black, a couple of dozens of Anarcho-syndicalist initiative and Union of Yugoslav Communist Youth joined too, shouting, 'Draza is a traitor' and singing Partisan songs.

Marking the 8th of March

Rebellious and in solidarity

Women in Black Network started marking the 8th of March on the Republic Square in Belgrade, at noon. The activists pointed out three banners: `For labor rights of women`, `Neither excessive nor obedient – but rebellious and in solidarity,` `Neither whores, nor saints - but friends and witches` and 50 photos of women who have struggled for women's rights all over the world. Five Women in Black activist with photographs of Flora Tristan, Clara Zetkin, Rosa Luxemburg, Audre Lorde and Neda Bozinovic, have read their statements. Tristan`s words were: `The most oppressed man oppresses his wife. She is the greatest proletarian of the proletarians`, it was covered by the statistics of 2010., which say that: `Men are responsible for 95% of the adults convicted for domestic violence in 2010.`

On Zetkin`s statement: `One who allows oppression of workers by capitalists will allow the oppression of women by men, she will remain oppressed until she is economically independent`. Statistics of Serbia show: `I was employed for three years, I worked in the private sector and he did not pay for my health and social protection. I was not aware of this. The state is doing nothing, and I have no money to sue him`. `I have been unemployed for 25 years now. There are no jobs to be found, kids do not have any scholarship, I have no way out, and nobody is interested to help me`, `Since I work without papers and am not socially covered, I live in constant fear of illness.` The interpretation of Audre Lorde`s words: `If we could feel just once the pain which runs through the veins of black women and threatens to overflow all of us as a torrent,` through Serbian statistics it would be like this: `Roma women are the most vulnerable population in Serbia – 45% of them do not possess personal documents, just one third of Roma girls finish primary school, and one fourth of them high school, and only 3% of them graduate from University. Roma women make up 2/3 of illiterate people in Serbia and even 27% of them who are above the age of ten are illiterate, too.` Neda Bozinovic, a devoted member of Women in Black, stated in October 1992 that: `War wants well-paid generals, war profiteers and speculators, all of those who force the others to kill in defense of their power and their privileges.` In other words, it would be: `Serbian nationalism did not ravage only all over ex-Yugoslavia, but has destroyed Serbia too, and its workers have been reduced to misery and only...but as long as first thing in their identity is to be Serbs, they would not only be sent to the war and used as cannon fodder any time the regime needs them, but they will be exploited, expelled from their jobs and humiliated... and when we realize that the workers are the first of all the workforce to be expelled from their jobs, and when it becomes the main part of their identities, they will organize themselves as a working class, and not as a Serbian nation.`

The end note was a statement of Roza Louxembourg: `The most revolutionary act is and will always be to say loudly what you really are.` Afterwards, the activists and drummers in the column with the placards, photos of the international heroines of women's struggle for women human rights, marched toward 49 Jovanova street, where the writer Ljiljana Vuletic revealed a memorial plaque for Ksenija Atanasijevic, a philosopher, feminist, antifascist, pacifist. The street march of women ended in the Cultural Center Rex. Documentary films about Roma women and about a German who is ashamed of her fascist parents were shown. There was a discussion with three workers of Yugoremedia from Zrenjanin on their struggle to preserve the factory. Zagorka Golubovic spoke on this occasion and supported the workers of Yugoremedia. The workers conveyed the message that they

`fight for themselves and for the state` and `will not allow anybody to take what is theirs.` Activists from Vlasotince, expressed in their performance under the title `Different but the same,` difficult position of workers and discrimination against Roma women. The motto of marking this year's eighth of March was the labor rights of women in Serbia. Because women `do not accept the role of `redundant` on the labor market, not wanting to be irrelevant and useless, deprived of their humanity, expendable. We provide resistance to the totalitarian attempt to make women redundant and unnecessary from the moment they are born, disobedient, when they are old, disabled, if they are not `white` or heterosexual, if not healthy or



not attractive. Nowadays, people become `redundant` due to oligarchy, wild, neoliberal capitalism and the inexorable economic force, which is horrible as much as any other totalitarianism. In such a kind of system, poor people and unemployed as well as others, become `redundant` as Hannah Arent defined them, or to be more precise `reserve labor army`, as Karl Marx used to define them, almost two centuries ago. With the closing message: `We point at the plundering privatization in Serbia, which is an economic crime and crime against women, but women are opposed to their own experience of redundancy, from which apathy indifference and resignation derive`, ended the marking of 8th of March of 2012 in Serbia.`

The Constitutional Court accepted the appeal of Women in Black

Police against the supreme law

Serbian Constitutional Court

Serbian Constitutional Court found that by Women in Black conference ban `One hundred years of struggle` on 8th March 2008, on the centenary of the marking of this date, Serbia violated numerous human rights - the right to freedom of assembly, the right to a fair trial, right to trial within a reasonable time and the right to an effective remedy. Women in Black are represented by the lawyers of Lawyers' Committee for Human Rights (YUCOM). As YUCOM stated on 26th March, the rally was banned without an explanation, and Police Department stated that the meeting was not allowed because: `on this critical day in the city of Belgrade, were held numerous of sports, cultural and other high risk manifestations, during which could reasonably be expected gatherings of informal and extreme fan groups, which would result in endangering of safety and property.` At the same time, this very date was celebrated by numerous organizations, among which were: Safe house, Women's Democratic Party Forum and Katarina Rebraca Fund. The decision to prohibit the gathering of human

rights defenders was arbitrary and based on political motives. YUCOM estimated that this decision of the Constitutional Court is an excellent basis for the urgent change of Law on Public Assembly to enable the realization and protection of freedom of assembly in accordance with democratic standards. The assembly may be prohibited by the law if it interferes with public traffic and endangers the health, morals and safety of people or property. Marking of 8th of March is not forbidden even by dictatorships, but was banned by the government of Vojislav Kostunica.

The Constitutional Court does not proscribe any sanctions against those who violated the constitutionally guaranteed rights of citizens. The Court only ruled that the decision is to be published in the `Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia.`

Sentence to leader of `Honor`

Theologian announced a bloodshed

In the First Instance Court of Belgrade, on 27th of March `Honor` leader Mladen Obradovic was sentenced to ten months in prison for incitement of racial discrimination and also with 15, 000 RSD for court costs. The penalty for this offense is three months to three years in prison. `Effective punishment can achieve the purpose of general prevention,` concluded Ivana Ramic, the Judge, in this clear cut case. Obradovic was sentenced to two years of prison before the Higher Court, for organizing the riots during Pride parade in 2010 in Belgrade.

On 10th October 2010, during riots on Belgrade streets, 140 people were injured, of which 124 of policemen, and the damage was huge. The verdict has yet to come into effect. This year Obradovic was convicted for organizing writing out graffiti, calling for hatred against the LGBTQ population. Graffiti were saying: `We are waiting for you`, `Death to fagots` and `Belgrade will shed blood, so there will not be a Pride parade.` The Court ruled that he had enough space to explain to the media what the slogan `We are waiting for you` really meant, as the accused interpreted it as a call of Christians to repent, but he did not do it. As civil society activists, we can be satisfied with the general verdict that was pronounced. But, on the other hand, the attempt to understand the slogan `We are waiting for you` as a Christian call for an amnesty and not as a call for a lynch, is a relativization of the activities of Obradovic and the organization `Honor`. We do consider this verdict mild and a contribution to a general climate of impunity, which will open space for the proliferation of violence. Such a mild verdict will be just an inducement to Obradovic and organization `Honor` for new threats in the future, promulgation of discrimination and calling for violence. We remind that after he was released from prison in 2011, he stated that he was `even stronger and more decisive.` We hope this verdict will contribute to the ban of fascist organizations by the Constitutional Court. Obradovic (1980) studies Theology. Obradovic started defending himself on 7th July 2011, entering the Court wearing T-shirt with the caption `We are waiting for you` on it. Ivana Ramic, the Judge, only warned that the Court should be respected by a certain dressing code. The defendant immediately pleaded not guilty. Obradovic said: `We are members of `Honour` and we fight for the spiritual rebirth of the Serbian people. As a member of Serbian Orthodox Church I share the belief that homosexuality is a sin and thatit offends public morals. Certainly, graffiti `We are waiting for you` has a twofold meaning. The first is a call to Serbian patriots, honest, honorable

Serbs to other Serbs to join us in the fight for the defense of the Serbian nation. And the second is dedicated to our errant brothers Serbs who have been alienated from our people. It is a call to repentance and return to the nest. I am a nationalist of Saint Sava`s provenance and do not hate anyone. Representatives of homosexual associations are aggressive, some of them held banners `Death to the state` and they were showing their middle fingers to the nuns. There are billboards with the caption `Turkey is ready` which I can interpret as Turkey being ready again to conquer and subdue us. Eco pump also had a slogan `We are waiting for you`. I am proud of graffiti `We are waiting for you` and with it I manifest my constitutionally guaranteed rights. The reasons why I am against the so-called Pride parade are exclusively spiritual, moral. The government organized riots in 2010. People were not allowed to go to church. Their constitutionally guaranteed rights were brutally violated. `We are waiting for you` is the best-intentioned message. We do not want them to push their finger into our eyes, to offend our religious beliefs. Soon we will be a minority in our own country or we perish altogether. In Serbia, 200,000 abortions are performed annually, and each year the population decreases by 35,000. When Judge Ramic questioned the defendant, he answered that `Honour` has `thousands of members`. We meet on Sundays at church, during liturgy and on rallies. Decisions are made by general consent, there is no false democracy in our circles. We apply the principle of Serbian hospitality. Our erring brothers and sisters are aggressive representatives of homosexual orientation.`

On questions asked by Prosecutor Lepasava Vujanovic Porubovic, the defendant responded: `We have our program of a healthy national education. We want a healthy family. We are strongly opposed to sexual perversions. We challenge with spiritual means, through our prayers.` At the third session, in October 2011. Representative Gay Straight Alliance Lazar Pavlovic, testified. With him entered the court members of the organization `Honour` wearing T-shirts with the inscription `Honour`, `Serb` and the image of Ratko Mladic. The judge did not react.

The witness attached the document of Serbian Ministry of Health, which says that homosexuality is not illness and he reminded of the fact that the Criminal Code decriminalized homosexuality in 1994. Lawyer of the accused Goran Petronijevic asked the witness: `Do you know the attitude of Serbian Orthodox Church regarding homosexuality and are you are a believer?` In the continuation of the trial on 25th of November 2011, testified a representative of Labris, an organization for lesbian rights, Maja Savic. She attached the statements of the accused from daily newspapers: `If they think that they can push their fingers into our eyes, and in the eyes of our people, without being punished, the Serbian people will not allow it. We call them once more to think it over and our message is `We are waiting for you`, ... or else `Honour` will not allow such a monstrous event and everybody knows what will happen if they try to organize it` ...Savic told that on the site of `Honour` she found information that the arrival of people from all over Serbia to Belgrade was going to be organized and that it was said many times for everything that happens the responsibility will be on those who organize the Pride Parade. She also said that police informed them regarding purchase in the shops – all the flammable substances had already been bought and attacks from the air as well as paragliders and hand grenades, are to be expected. During the trial, a lot of attention was given to `Proclamation for Serbian enemies` on the site, where among other things, `Honour` writes: `For his monstrous and unnatural way of life you will have to answer in front of God, but you will have to give your answers in front of the Serbian of state too, because

the spreading of your hateful practices. Whether you are gay, paedophiles, sodomists, trans or bisexual, if you do not repent for your perversity, there will be neither human nor God's grace for you. You will be strictly punished and exterminated!` The lawyer of the defendant asked the this kind of questions: `Do you interpret the same term to eradicate and the term to exterminate?`, `Whether in Bosnia, Croatia and Macedonia such an event took place`. The last question was not accepted. Witness Savic commented: `Eradicate and exterminate mean the same thing - we will kill you all.` At the session of 5th March, lawyer Petronijevic suggested again that Serbian Prime Minister Mirko Cvetkovic should be heard as a witness, regarding the decision to ban Pride Parade. The judge rejected the proposal and concluded that the charges had been amended, according to which the defendant or his organization or their activities are no longer charged with the ban of Pride Parade. By this act the state wants to present the violence of fascist organizations as the excesses and thereby minimize its effects. With this act the state has taken upon itself the responsibility to protect fascist organizations. Violence of fascist organizations is not a ordinary type of violence, it is of systematic and organized kind, which seeks the elimination of all who are different, in this case members of LGBT community. The lawyer of the defense asked regarding closing argument, not to be present on that very same day, because it is `a complex social problem`. He also gave additional reasons, such as his own birthday, or engagement in other proceedings (`oil mafia`, hooligans, Cuska, Svetlana Raznatovic). Once again, the Judge decided to meet the needs of the lawyer of the defense.

The prosecution did not explain why they altered the charges. During the inquest, on 23rd March, the closing arguments of the prosecutor were presented, as well as of the defence and of the accused. All supporters of Obradovic and `Honour` entered into the courtroom wearing T-shirts with the image of war crimes indictee Ratko Mladic, and there were no sanctions, regarding this matter.

Prosecutor Vujanovic Porubovic suggested to the Court to sanction the defendant, because in that way it protects the society from discrimination. Petronijevic equated homosexuality with pedophilia: `In this state until recently this kind of unnatural behavior was punishable by law,` and then he continued that the media and NGO`s and the gay lobby put pressure on the prosecution and the defendant, saying: this procedure should not even take place, because there are no consequences of the commitment of the criminal act. I want to ask the Prosecution where within our legislation hate talk is mentioned. This is a political persecution of `Honor` because some of the NGO`s need it in order to obtain a ban of this organization. The only fair verdict is release, everything else would be to satisfy the government.` He quoted his colleague Ilija Radulovic, when questioned: `Would you prefer your son gay or dead, answered - dead.` The defendant said: `I think the Parade should not be held in our country and I have the right to it. As a follower of the Serbian Orthodox Church, I believe that homosexuality is a sin and I am entitled to my opinion. I do not hate them, but rather as an Orthodox Christian, I pity them and ask them to repent and get back to track. All common sense and patriotic members of the Serbian people are against it. We, as nationalists of Saint Sava`s provenance, love our people and God, as the greatest Serb after Saint Sava, Bishop Nikolaj Velimirovic would say. The only real way for us is a healthy nationalism and the Gospel and I am proud of my attitude. We, as Orthodox Serbian patriots, do stand for faith, nation and family.` He added that the petition on not to ban his organization had been signed by Canadian bishop George, many priests

and monks, Vasilije Krestic, Gojko Djogo, Rajko Petrov Nogo, Costa Cavoski, Matija Beckovic, Brana Crncević, Momo Kapor, Bora Djordjevic, Dobrica Eric, Ljubivoje Rsumović, Miroslav Toholj, Mira Alceckovic, Smilja Avramov, Sinisa Kovacevic.

The trial was monitored by representatives of numerous human rights organizations.

Milos Urosevic

Prosecutor left speechless

Women in Black is one of 19 human rights organizations which on 21st of March strongly protested against the alteration of Obradovic's indictment. The initial indictment charged Obradovic and activities of his organization 'Honor' of having contributed to the ban of the Parade in 2009. Obradovic was accused of painting hate graffiti ('Belgrade will shed blood, but there will be no Pride parade', 'We are waiting for you', 'Death to gays'), in newspaper articles were spreading speech of hate and advocating violence, discrimination based on sexual orientation. The indictment was amended for a third time, in February of 2012, at the very end of the trial, concludes that they did not contribute to preventing the members of the LGBT population from exercising their right to freedom of assembly, guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia. Although this trial caused much public attention, such a drastic change in the indictment at the end of the proceedings against Obradovic was not explained, it is said. Parties require of the prosecution to explain the sudden change in the indictment, which further encourages organizations such as 'Honor' and whose goals are similar violence and discrimination against the citizens of Serbia. At the same time, since the Serbian Constitutional Court declared unconstitutional the ban of Pride Parade in 2009 and the prosecution does not consider that the activities of 'Honor' contributed to the ban, the public needs to know why the Pride Parade of 2009 and 2011 was actually banned.

Pistol loaded with hatred

Before the trial Misa Vacić, spokesman of the '1389', accused of hate talk against LGBT people and illegal possession of guns, on 7th March, his brother and the friend of the defendant pushed a human rights activists and wanted to sit where he was sitting. Judicial security them moved away. Court Guard moved them away. The defendant addressed the Judge: 'Move me, condemn me immediately. Give me back my brother in the courtroom'. Lawyer Aleksandar Djordjevic commented: 'Throw him out, too', referring to human rights activists. A former girlfriend of the accused, Milica Đosevic, confirmed that police found a gun in Vacić's apartment. Đosevic testified quietly and unconvincingly: 'We were together for about a year and we lived in the apartment with Misa's mother. He studied law and was a good student. Actively involved in '1389' movement. He went to meetings and protests. '1389' reacted to the words 'judge and witness.' Lawyers tried again to prolong the trial- one of them by saying that his birthday is on 20th March and the other one, lawyer Bozilovic by saying it is too early for her to start at 9 o'clock, so she wanted the trial to start at 9.30.

Milos Urosevic

III Experiences from the world



Configurations of post-Conflict:

Impacts of Representations of Conflict and Post-Conflict upon the (Political) Translations of Gender Security within UNSCR 1325

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UNSCR 1325 is a Security Council Resolution designed to operate in post-conflict contexts. I contrast configurations of 'post-conflict' within three different initiatives in Serbia that have drawn upon UNSCR 1325. Making explicit antagonisms at the heart of 'post-conflict' demonstrates how the logic of gender security as it relates to UNSCR 1325 is shaped by the specific problematization of 'post-conflict.' This article outlines new empirical researches on the utilization of UNSCR 1325 within three different political contexts in Serbia to assert the importance of realizing the contestability of 'post-conflict' contexts in shaping how we might respond to UNSCR 1325, and indeed, any international policy or ambition intended as a response to post-conflict situations.

Sites claiming political authority over UNSCR 1325

This section investigates three different initiatives responding in some way to UNSCR 1325, highlighting how the resolution is framed within various measures designed as responses to post-conflict gender security concerns in Serbia. The analysis pivots upon appreciating the representations of 'post-conflict' within each programme. By drawing upon the dominant discursive representations of gender security and post-conflict, I make explicit how the political interpretation of 'gender security' within UNSCR 1325 depends upon how 'post-conflict' is thought about.

The UN System

The first site of claimed political authority over UNSCR 1325 examined in this article relates to the UN system in Serbia. The primary 'intervention' that UNSCR 1325 calls for is the place of women's rights, gender concerns and gender mainstreaming within post-conflict processes (Cohn 2008:189). The stated aim is to develop 'effective institutional arrangements' that guarantee female participation in peace processes to improve the ability of the UN in achieving its primary aim of maintaining international peace and security (Hudson 2010:44-7).

With the existence of UNSCR 1325, the UN system in post-conflict zones claimed to include gender security considerations. For instance, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) has been successful in increasing women's participation and representation within DPKO efforts in a number of post-conflict zones since 2000 (Hudson 2010:54-60). The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has also been proactive in utilizing the gender security framework of UNSCR 1325 within its Crisis Prevention and Recovery programme (BCPR). Echoing much of the gender security language within UNSCR 1325, the BCPR issued an 'Eight Point Agenda' (8PA) for 'practical, posi-

tive outcomes for girls and women in crisis` (BCPR 2006) Central to the achievement of the 8PA is `full implementation` of UNSCR 1325 (BCPR 2006) The 8PA was issued to all UNDP agencies in early 2007, along with the recommendation that 10-15 per cent of the budget was dedicated to gender issues. It can be said that UNSCR 1325 (re)produced a framework of concerns about women and security that is beginning to trickle across parts of the UN system.

One agency partially supported and mandated by the UNDP is SEESAC. The primary mission of SEESAC is to develop the capacity to `control and reduce the proliferation and misuse of SALWs, and thus contribute to enhances stability, security and development in South Eastern and Eastern Europe` (SEESAC n.d.). The agency was established as a response to perceived post-conflict problem in South-Eastern Europe: that of the proliferation of small arms during and after the wars. In 2007, following the recommendations made in the 8PA, funds were made available to carry out work connecting gender and small arms. A gender strategy was publicized in June 2007, reasserting SEESAC`s commitment to engaging with UNSCR 1325 (SEESAC 2007). Following the development of a gender strategy, a report titled *Firearms Possessions and Domestic Violence in the Western Balkans: A Comparative Study of Legislation and Implementation Mechanisms was commissioned* (Dokmanović 2008). While this action is not a direct response to UNSCR 1325 per se, it is a response to the gender and security frameworks articulated in the resolution. That is, UNSCR 1325 is a critical part of the discursive terrain encouraging the mainstreaming of gender security concerns within the UN system in post-conflict zones.

The SEESAC report made a connection between the (ab)use of SALW in domestic violence and the easy access to SALW in the post-conflict era. The representation of conflict and post-conflict within the report stresses an image of violence and disorder continuing long after the conflict has ended. This depiction is highlighted in the opening paragraph of the report, which states that: the countries of the Western Balkans face high levels of violence, crime and human insecurity as a legacy of recent conflicts, political turbulence and economic crises. The war in the former Yugoslavia increased the proliferation and easy availability of small arms and light weapons...contributing to a rise in violent behaviour not only in the public space, but also within the family. (Dokmanović 2008:i)

Within the SEESAC initiative, UNSCR 1325 is politically translated as a resolution designed to protect women, producing a useful interpretation of `gender security` for some actors. For some feminist civil society actors in Serbia, the opportunities offered by SEESAC during 2008 opened the way for a bigger campaign on the connections between domestic violence and SALW. Since the publication of the report, feminist civil society actors have sought to raise awareness of the connections between SALW (ab)use and domestic violence, campaigning for legislative changes to the Criminal Code of Serbia to tighten gun ownership laws.

Women`s and Feminist organizations

The second site of claimed political authority over UNSCR 1325 in Serbia investigated in this article places the spotlight upon Women in Black, one Serbian feminist antiwar initiative. The Women in Black Serbian Network, is part of a transnational complex of pacifist organizations sharing values about feminism, antimilitarism, peace and peaceful protest (Cockburn 2007:51-3, 79-105). Each Women in the Black group highlights localized concerns, and the Serbian group is no exception: one of its core values remains an insistence upon responsibility.

The issue of political responsibility remains a sensitive and controversial social and political topic in Serbia (Duhaček 2006, Fridman 2006, Obradović-Wochnik 2009). Within the Serbian context, the central question in relation to political responsibility for the war crimes committed during the 1990s. These war crimes include the massacre at Srebrenica, where at least 8.000 Bosnian Muslim men and boys were executed after the Srebrenica enclave, in northern Bosnia, fell to Bosnian Serb forces in July 1995. For Women in Black, political responsibility refers to the perspective that in the post-war, post-Milošević era, Serbian institutions and society needs to resist the denial of war crimes committed in the name of Serbia during the 1990s and deal with militarized violence that remains embedded in society (Zajovic 2007). For women in Black, lasting and meaningful peace and security can only be achieved by giving `special attention to social justice and the protection of victims of the previous period marked by war and war profiteers` (Women in Black 2007:188). The Draft Resolution lists specific and localized recommendations that would establish the principle of political responsibility in Serbia. These recommendations include revoking a law providing for financial assistance to war criminals indicted by The Hague and criminalizing the denial of war crimes committed during the 1990s, including the genocide in Srebrenica. Women in Black insist that to fully implement UNSCR 1325 in Serbia, issues surrounding the political responsibility project need to be addressed. `For many feminists-pacifists, UNSCR 1325 is problematic as the resolution itself does not challenge the existing structures and assumptions of the war system` (Cockburn 2007: 147-52, Cohn 2008:194-200). For Women in Black, militarism, and associated processes, fosters insecurity (Zajovic 2007.) The evasion of the post-conflict political responsibility agenda in Serbia is viewed as a manifestation of militarism, and there are `security risks (in) not confronting the criminal pat` (Women in Black 2010:3). The group uses UNSCR 1325 as a means of promoting their `new kind of security,` which challenges the dominance of militarism. The co-ordinator of Women in Black, Stasa Zajovic, believes that UNSCR 1325 is useful because the resolution is a language accepted by formal political institutions.

State institutions

A NAP was accepted by the Serbian Parliament in December 2010. Prior to this, a series of consultations took place. The analysis in the article is based upon a report produced by working groups co-ordinated by the BFPE and the Ministry of Defence in Serbia to formulate recommendations for a draft NAP (Belgrade Fund for Political Excellence (BFPE) 2010). The recommendations presented embody multiple visions of post-conflict, in part because the draft was made available to several voices in the public consultation. However, very little of the document focuses upon `Serbia as a post-conflict country undergoing transition` (BFPE 2010:7), although issues related to refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) are highlighted as post-conflict problems. Rather, the dominant representation of Serbia`s relationship to conflict and post-conflict emphasizes Serbia`s future participation as part of external peacekeeping forces. Hence, the post-conflict problem relates to Serbia`s external operations. This is a positioning of Serbia as a country with a part to play on the world stage and it is revealing that a document designed to promote gender equality uses the opportunity to do this. Passing a NAP is viewed as a way of confirming `that Serbia, as a UN member country, wants to contribute actively to the processes of peace-building, stability and security` (BFPE 2010:6.) Within the recommendations, the need for international legitimacy is inscribed, sug-

gesting a desire to escape connotations with a post-conflict past. UNSCR 1325 is used as a way to 'show' the world that a Serbia is a progressive and forward-thinking state that has dealt with the bulk of problems caused by the conflicts of the 1990s.

The perception that formulating a NAP to implement UNSCR 1325 is a progressive move is reinforced by Ministry of Defence press releases, which reassert with pride that Serbia is 'the first country in the region which is on the verge of adopting the resolution' (Ministry of Defence 2010). The notion that enthusiasm for UNSCR 1325 is partly a public relations exercise to demonstrate that Serbia is undergoing a successful democratic transition was expressed by some involved in the NAP process. However, some actors are concerned that in the rush to represent Serbia as a modernized, liberal-democratic state which has moved on from the problems arising from the conflicts of the 1990s, there is little questioning about what it means to achieve gender security, and whether it is necessary to push for a deeper transformation.

Co-operation with the Ministry of Defence requires compromises about how gender security is thought about: security means quantitative equality rather than a new definition of security. The dominant perception of gender security within the draft NAP stresses the importance of 'the protection of fundamental human rights of women' and their inclusion in state security with state security processes: 'security entails security of the state, and thus, the involvement of all its citizens, including women, in articulation of policies, strategies and directions for actions' (BFPE 2010:9). Equating gender security with state security processes stresses that instead of shifting the meaning and the subject of security, gender security is about inclusion of groups currently not involved in security processes.

The NAP positions itself as necessary for Serbia's future position on the world stage. To craft this position on the world stage, it is necessary to shed the image of Serbia as a post-conflict country. As a consequence, Serbia's post-conflict problematization is the state's future participation in peace support operations. This particular representation of post-conflict is secured through the achievement of a gender security logic stresses instrumental equality. The document, drafted with the involvement of the Ministry of Defence, stresses the importance of numerical gender equality, and so its reinterpretation of UNSCR 1325 highlights ways of improving the representation of women within the Serbian defence and military structures. The dominant logic of gender security that arises from the configuration of post-conflict as an external issue suggests that women can be secured through equalizing opportunities, suggesting that if women are formal political actors they will be secured. UNSCR 1325 is politically translated as a document designed to reinforce a liberal notion of gender equality.

Gloria Steinem on Rape in War, Its Causes, and How to Stop It

By Lauren Wolfe

Lauren Wolfe - Lauren Wolfe is the director of Women Under Siege, a Women's Media Center initiative on sexualized violence in conflict. She is the former senior editor of the Committee to Protect Journalists, and blogs at laurenmwolfe.com.

What the world can do about sexual violence in conflict

Can we end rape as tool of war?

By Gloria Steinem and Lauren Wolfe, Special to CNN

Editor's note: Gloria Steinem is a writer, lecturer, editor, and feminist activist. She co-founded Ms. Magazine and the Women's Media Center, and is the author of four best-selling books. She is an organizer and lecturer and a frequent media spokeswoman on issues of equality. Lauren Wolfe is an award-winning journalist and the director of Women Under Siege, a Women's Media Center initiative on sexualized violence in conflict. She is the former senior editor of the Committee to Protect Journalists, and blogs at laurenmwolfe.com.

(CNN) -- We first thought about starting this piece with the story of Saleha Begum, a survivor of Bangladesh's 1971 war in which, some reports say, as many as 400,000 women were raped. Begum had been tied to a banana tree and repeatedly gang raped and burned with cigarettes for months until she was shot and left for dead in a pile of women. She didn't die, though, and was able to return home, ravaged and five months pregnant. When she got home she was branded a "slut."

We also thought of starting with the story of Ester Abeja, a woman in Uganda who was forcibly held as a "bush wife" by the Lord's Resistance Army. Repeated rape with objects destroyed her insides. Her captors also made her kill her 1-year-old daughter by smashing the baby's head into a tree.

We ran through a dozen other stories of women like Begum and Abeja, and finally realized that it would be too difficult to find the right one -- the tale that would express exactly how and in what ways sexualized violence is being used as a weapon of war to devastate women and tear apart communities around the world, conflict by conflict, from Libya to the Democratic Republic of Congo.

It is because of this complexity that we must understand how sexualized violence is being used. We must understand in order to stop it -- just as, when seeking to defuse a bomb, it is crucial to know its components. Both the World Health Organization and the U.N. Security Council have recognized that there is a lack of research on the nature and extent of sexualized violence in conflict, even as there is increasing demand from U.N. bodies, donors, and others for better analysis to work toward prevention and healing.

All of this is why we have begun a new project at the Women's Media Center that breaks down the specifics of sexualized violence into areas such as its motives and patterns, its fallout, and the gender and cultural attitudes that may have led to it. We're calling our project Women Under Siege, because with four women being raped every five minutes in Congo alone, we can say it is nothing less than that -- an ongoing siege. And it's time we began to put an end to it.

Sexualized violence may be the only form of violence in which the victim is blamed or is even said to have invited it. In war, rape shames women, men, children, entire societies. The stigma imposed on all who are touched by this violence makes this weapon incredibly effective as a means of destroying the enemy.

But it is crucial to remember that it wasn't always like this, nor does it have to be. Sexualized violence isn't a "natural" part of conflict. For the first 90% or more of human history, females and males had roles that were balanced and porous. Our societal positions weren't based on the

domination of females by males. Humans and nature, women and men, were linked rather than ranked. The circle, not the hierarchy, was the organizing principle of our thinking.

By analyzing how sexualized violence was used to ethnically cleanse, as it was in Bosnia; to force pregnancies that would literally change the face of the next generation; or, as in Egypt, to stop dissent, we can look to future wars and possibly prevent a reoccurrence.

For generations, we have ignored or been denied knowledge of the mass sexualized violence inflicted on Jewish women in the Holocaust. Women who survived brutal attacks have even been accused of collaborating in order to survive, just as, say, a raped woman in the Congo may never be accepted back into her village or family because she is considered culpable.

Last year, a book called "Sexual Violence Against Jewish Women During the Holocaust" brought to light how the Nazis perpetrated rape and sexual humiliation on a tremendous scale. Yet none of this had been revealed or tried at Nuremberg. If we'd known about this earlier, might it have helped prevent rape camps in the former Yugoslavia? Or rape as a weapon of genocide in the Congo?

Naming sexualized violence as a weapon of war makes it visible -- and once visible, prosecutable. What happened to men in the past was political, but what happened to women was cultural. The political was public and could be changed; the other was private -- even sacred -- and could not or even should not be changed.

Making clear that sexualized violence is political and public breaks down that wall. It acknowledges that sexualized violence does not need to happen. When masculinity is no longer defined by the possession and domination of women, when femininity is no longer about the absence of sexual experience or being owned, then we will have begun.

But first, we have to stop saying sexualized violence is inevitable, or allowing its victims to be blamed. We have to imagine change before we can create it.

Impresum

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