

DePauw University
Scholarly and Creative Work from DePauw University

Student research

Student Work

2016

The Worst Place in the World to be a Woman?: Women's Conflict Experiences in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Megan Bailey
DePauw University

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarship.depauw.edu/studentresearch>



Part of the [Peace and Conflict Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Bailey, Megan, "The Worst Place in the World to be a Woman?: Women's Conflict Experiences in the Democratic Republic of the Congo" (2016). *Student research*. Paper 43.

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Work at Scholarly and Creative Work from DePauw University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Student research by an authorized administrator of Scholarly and Creative Work from DePauw University. For more information, please contact bcox@depauw.edu.

The Worst Place in the World to be a Woman?:
Women's Conflict Experiences in the
Democratic Republic of the Congo

Megan Bailey
Spring 2016
Prof. Brett O'Bannon (sponsor)
Prof. Tamara Beauboeuf
Tiamo Katsonga-Phiri

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank my committee members for the constant support they have given me during the past two semesters. You've taken so much time out of your busy schedules to help me, and I couldn't be more appreciative. A special thank you to Prof. Brett O'Bannon, for telling me that it's okay to have feelings about difficult topics and that this work is most definitely important. To Prof. Tamara Beauboeuf, for always asking the hard questions and pushing this project to be the best it can be. And to Tiamo Katsonga-Phiri, for fearlessly accepting my proposition to be on my committee and being enthusiastic about this work from the very beginning. I couldn't have asked for a better committee.

Next, to Kevin Moore, Amy Welch, and Peg Lemley: you guys rock. Thank you for making the Honor Scholar experience, even the thesis process, one of my favorite things about DePauw.

To my parents: thank you for always supporting me! Even though I always choose the difficult and depressing topics, you're always there to engage with me and encourage me. I love you both.

Finally, to all of my friends who have heard me talk about the DRC non-stop this year (here's looking at you, Chabraja 1), I appreciate you more than you know. I couldn't have survived this process without your kindness and excessive amounts of cookie dough and ice cream.

Abbreviations

ADFL – Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Congo-Zaire
AMA – American Medical Association
ANC – African National Congress
AU – African Union
CEDAW – Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
DDR – Disarmament, demobilization, reintegration
DRC – Democratic Republic of the Congo
FARDC – Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo
FAS – Femmes Afriques Solidarité
FDLR – Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda
ICC – International Criminal Court
ICDs – Inter-Congolese Dialogues
ICTY – International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia
ICTR – International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda
IDP – Internally displaced person
MLC – Mouvement pour la Libération du Congo
M23 – March 23rd Armed Group
MONUC - United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
MONUSCO – United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of
the Congo
MSF – Médecins Sans Frontières
RCD – Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie
UN – United Nations
UNDP – United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNIFEM – United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNSCR 1325 – United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325
UPC – Union des Patriotes Congolais
WHO – World Health Organization

Preface

During the summer before my senior year of college, I stood in the kitchen of a Congolese refugee family while the mother made her children lunch. Her four youngest children ran around the apartment while she and I made small talk in broken French. We chatted about their new apartment, their most recent visit to the doctor, and her children's ambitions. Towards the end of our casual conversation, one of her older daughters emerged from another room. The mother turned towards me and said, "This is Grace. She is not my husband's." She explained that a soldier had forced himself on her, and that this daughter was a result of that encounter. She told me that she was lucky her husband stood by her. I later learned that she and her family had been turned away and ostracized from their community.

Later that summer, when I was filling out paperwork at a doctor's office for another refugee family, I had to ask the father of the family if he had ever had a job. He told me that he bounced around from job to job when he lived in South Kivu, but that his best job was in his refugee camp in Burundi. There, he was the camp's women's rights activist, a position appointed by the peacekeepers running the camp. I was a bit confused; I asked him, "Why was it you? Why wasn't the women's rights activist a woman?" He looked at me, chuckled a bit, and shrugged his shoulders. "I don't know Megan. That's just the way things are."

At the end of the summer, I was working with one Congolese couple that was trying to adopt one of the wife's younger sisters. Through an interpreter, we talked about their extended families back home. It came out during the conversation that the wife had another sister still in the Congo, or at least they presumed so. Before they left the country, this sister was approached by a rebel group and taken away. I was immediately concerned, wondering if they could be

reunited with this lost sister, but they told me that this was common and that I shouldn't worry for them.

For the most part, I sat silently during these stories. Everything my clients said was so nonchalant, so off-handed; I could not believe they would trust me with this information. I never knew what to say afterwards, so I mostly said nothing, but the stories stayed in my mind. My heart sank throughout the summer as I continued to hear stories from both women and men about the atrocities and human rights abuses endured in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Most of the stories were told casually, with an almost blasé attitude. I was shocked that stories so horrible were so normalized.

Ultimately, I wanted to live up to the trust my clients had conferred upon me and be a genuinely good listener. After the repeated personal stories, and my repeated inability to say anything productive afterwards, I began researching the Congo's history, the contours of the most recent conflict and the current situation. I hoped that an understanding of the conflict would help me understand their stories – it didn't. Still, I wanted to make as much of an effort at understanding where they came from as they had given to coming to the United States. I knew I had to dig further, and thus my Honor Scholar thesis came to be.

I never would have gotten to this topic without the experiences of my junior year. During the fall of my junior year, I spent a semester abroad in Geneva, Switzerland. I took classes on international security and visited the plethora of international organizations headquartered there. I found numerous individuals and organizations that were sensitive to the connection between politics and the human condition, something I had not yet found at DePauw. I became interested in human security, generally regarded as a “softer” side of political science, and individual narratives of what happens in international politics. Upon my return to DePauw in the spring, I

took Gender and World Politics, a class in which I flourished. Each time the class met, I saw my research and career interests come further into focus. I loved learning about how gender plays a significant role in every part of world politics, especially the parts I had discussed in other classes where gender had never been mentioned. The change this class caused was not just academic, but personal; by the end of the semester I felt confident calling myself a feminist. With such a new interest, I knew I wanted my Honor Scholar thesis to incorporate gender, but I had no idea what direction it might take.

The final idea materialized with my previously mentioned summer internship, a remarkable experience guiding refugees through their first ninety days in the United States. The organization I interned with resettled mostly Burmese and Congolese refugees; because I speak some French, I was most often paired with our Congolese clients. I worked closely with these men, women, and children, meeting them at the airport upon their arrival in Indianapolis, teaching them the basics of American culture, transporting them to and from medical appointments, and helping them apply for Social Security numbers. I helped troubleshoot any misunderstanding and spent a significant amount of time with many families. Communication with some was easier than others – my French is really not superb – but as soon as I gained a little trust, my clients were open and honest with me. I heard many heartfelt stories, like the ones I recounted above. It feels necessary that I address where my project came from and how their stories have guided me to where I am today.

Many of the clients I worked with experienced unspeakable things. Often, the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo remains ignored by a Western audience. I believe that needs to change. Further, the stories made it clear that women were experiencing war in the Congo in unexpected ways. I had a basic understanding of gender in conflict from my Gender and World

Politics course, but I had almost no knowledge of the Congo and how gender or feminist theory could be applied there. Thus, I am using my Honor Scholar thesis to connect these two very personal interests: to examine women's experiences of conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

By completing this project, I hope to give these women I met a voice. They should know that someone heard them and that someone cares. These gendered stories of conflict are not unique to the Democratic Republic of Congo, but they ground us in one specific example of women in war. Ultimately, my goal is to make sure these stories are heard and that women's experiences become an important part of the world's conversations.

Introduction

On October 31st 2000, the United Nations Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325), a landmark resolution on women, peace, and security. UNSCR 1325 first acknowledged that women had important roles to play, from prevention to peacebuilding, and urged international actors to increase women's participation in all sectors and levels of peace, security, and international relations.¹ Next, and perhaps more importantly, UNSCR 1325 finally recognized that “women [are] inordinately affected by war,” and, therefore, there is a need for specific programs and protections for women in conflict situations.² With UNSCR 1325, the United Nations also sought to implement gender mainstreaming in their organizational policies. Gender mainstreaming is a broad term with a two-fold goal: first, to recognize how policies may affect men and women differently, and second, to incorporate the goal of gender equality into all United Nations work. Before, gender equality was relegated to a few UN agencies, namely UNIFEM, rather than tasked to all.

The adoption of UNSCR 1325 and gender mainstreaming was a great success for civil society organizations, feminist activists, and a small number of UN agencies. The push for gender sensitive policies and programming started long before UNSCR 1325, with historical roots in the UN's Decade for Women (1975-1985), Beijing's Fourth World Conference on Women (1995), and other “internal action plans” for gender equality.³ All of these attempts were in response to widespread criticisms of the United Nations' gender blindness. With the resolution's passage, the spearheading groups felt as though their voices had finally been heard;

¹ U.N. Security Council, 4312th meeting, "Resolution 1325, Women, Peace and Security," 31 October 2000, official

² Chantal de Jonge Oudraat, “UNSCR 1325 – Conundrums and Opportunities.” *International Interactions* 39 (2013): 617.

³ Nicola Pratt and Sophie Richter-Devroe, “Critically Examining UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security,” *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 13, no. 4 (2011): 490-491.

the Security Council, the most powerful entity of the United Nations, recognized that something had to be done. The international community was finally going to do something about the gendered experience of both peace and security.

Effective implementation of UNSCR 1325 required great political interest, activism, and resources from able international players. At first, it appeared that the required political will was there: UNSCR 1325 was translated into hundreds of languages, and upwards of 20 countries drafted National Action Plans to help with more localized implementation.⁴ However, as often occurs, other global happenings quickly shifted international attention elsewhere and women, peace, and security efforts were left under resourced and without proper interest. Some renewed interest came on the resolution's ten-year anniversary when Hillary Rodham Clinton (then Secretary of State) announced that the United States would create a National Action Plan.⁵ Still, even that interest did not last long enough. At all levels, the resolution has lacked political commitment, and thus the outcomes of UNSCR 1325 have left something to be desired.

The gap between UNSCR 1325's intentions and outcomes is visible in the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Throughout, women have been adversely and distinctively affected by the armed conflict. These effects are so prominent that the DRC has been repeatedly named the worst place in the world to be a woman. The United Nations recognizes that women are affected differently by war, and yet the conflict in the Congo has continued to disproportionately affect women even with United Nations intervention – why?

This paper endeavors to trace women's experiences throughout the most recent conflict in the Democratic Republic in the Congo, a timeframe that I will define as 1996 through 2016. Though gendered experiences have occurred in many facets of the conflict, I will focus on four

⁴ Pratt and Richter-Devroe, 490-491.

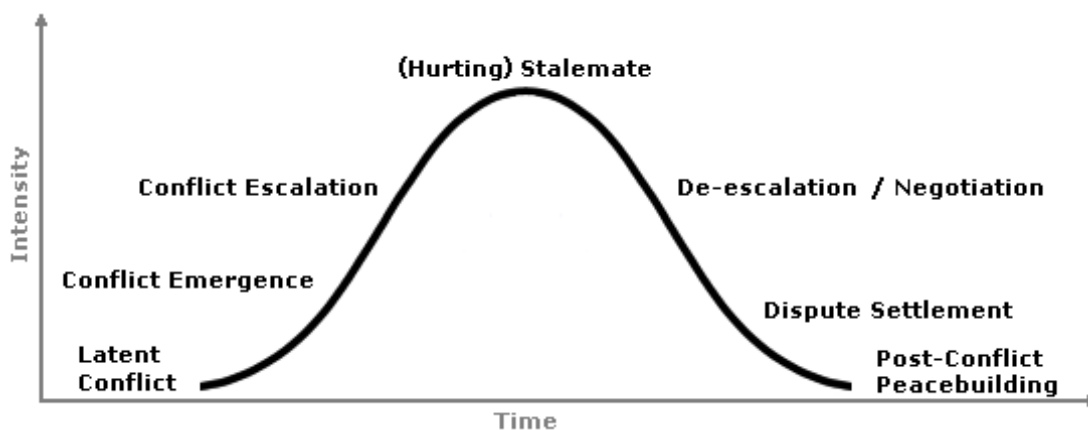
⁵ Oudraat, 614.

specific roles women play throughout the conflict: actors in early warning, victims of rape and sexual violence, participants in armed groups, and post-conflict peacebuilding agents. These four roles are in no way an exhaustive list of the positions women can hold during conflict. Quite the contrary, women can hold any number of roles that can change as conflict morphs and progresses. Instead, these four roles were chosen strategically based on a few criteria.

First, there had to be significant literature or information available from which I could analyze gender specifically. This meant that feminist scholars had already addressed this role in conflict to some degree and that there were sources specific to women in the DRC. Second, I wanted my choices to offer a sampling of women's roles at various conflict stages. Additionally, each role had to introduce a new way in which gender interacted with the conflict situation in the DRC. In particular, I wanted to move most of the roles beyond sexual violence, thus both broadening and deepening the gendered experience as UNSCR 1325 recognizes. Sexual violence is important in this conflict, but it is not the only important situation where women play a role. I also wanted to focus on roles organic to the Congo. Women from the international community have also played a role in this conflict, but they fall outside the bounds of my research. Again, these four roles are by no means a comprehensive list of gender in conflict; gender is very real even beyond conflict and often plays a role even when we do not see it.

To help situate these roles at various times in the conflict, I will utilize a simplified model of conflict stages. There are numerous models of conflict, but most include at least: no conflict, latent conflict, emergence, escalation, stalemate, settlement, and post-conflict efforts at

peacebuilding and reconciliation.⁶ These stages can be placed along a simple bell curve, like the one here.⁷



This model is not perfect. Most conflicts do not follow a perfect curve of stages; rather, they go through some, repeat others, or end up in a cycle of continuous ups and downs in intensity. Some completely skip post-conflict peace and continue onto a new conflict altogether. However, conceptualizing conflict in this way helps illustrate both the basics of how conflict progresses, and when each of my four identified roles comes into play. Having a visual, like a curve, makes the progression in the DRC more understandable.

By exploring women's roles throughout these stages of conflict, I hope to illuminate a more refined understanding of what happened in the Democratic Republic of the Congo while also demonstrating how the gendered experience of conflict takes many forms. Much of the conversation about the DRC has focused on sexual violence and, while this is one very significant portion of the conflict, it is not the only way that gender has played a role in the experience of the conflict. Women's experiences in the DRC raise questions about UNSCR 1325 and the international community. Though this was a landmark resolution, the situation in the

⁶ Eric Brahm, "Conflict Stages," *Beyond Intractability*, published September 2003: <http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/conflict-stages>.

⁷ Ibid.

Congo impels us to ask: did the resolution and its implementation do enough? Ultimately, there is much more work to be done in the field of women, peace, and security.

Women in Conflict

Since the beginning of conflict, study of war, international relations, etc. has been “dominated” by men.⁸ Interstate war, or traditional war, controlled the conversation with a focus on state security and military strength. The analysis of traditional war focused on men and their armies, implying that men’s experiences were the only significant experiences. Men were soldiers, politicians, peacebuilders, and everything in between; women were unimportant bystanders. In short, the entire field of international relations was androcentric. In the post-Cold War era, a new international paradigm appeared: new war. New war was not just a new way to analyze war, but instead a label for a different kind of warfare. Unlike old war, new war is fought by both state and non-state actors, and does not take place on a battlefield. Instead, the various groups attempt to attain their goals through political manipulation and terrorization of the general population.⁹ New war conflicts often include tension between identities rather than ideology, whether ethnic, religious, or any other derivation. The shift towards new war brought about a change in the international security discourse, particularly considerations of non-state actors in security. This change included ideas of human security and “a focus on the individual and relations between individuals and groups within society.”¹⁰ A growing recognition of human security provided the space for a gendered analysis of international relations, thus the end of the Cold War also signaled an entry point for feminism in the study of war and conflict. By examining women in conflict, we gain a more nuanced understanding of what is happening and how conflict might affect groups differently.

⁸ Kathleen Kuehnast, Chantal de Jonge Oudraat, and Helga Hernes, *Women and War: Power and Protection in the 21st Century*, Washington DC: United States Institute for Peace, 2011: 1.

⁹ Mary Kaldor, “In Defence of New Wars,” *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development* 2, no. 1 (2013): 4.

¹⁰ Ibid.

The literature on women in conflict is now extensive, encompassing many viewpoints and issues. A key part of this field is combining women's experiences of conflict with the international security agenda. On one level, this is the recognition of the basic human rights of women, like fair access to food, water, education, and resources and reasonable protection from violence.¹¹ Further, the scholarship recognizes that the access to these basic human rights may differ based on gender even in the same conflict situations. Significant progress has been made in this recognition, particularly concerning sexual violence and rape during conflict. Before the late 20th century, rape was regarded as a side effect of war, the result of sexually unfulfilled and lusty soldiers, or as an honor crime against men, implying that rape defiled women as property.¹² Offenders were not prosecuted for these crimes, and victims were largely ignored and kept silent.

However, the civil war and breakup of the former Yugoslavia changed the conversation. Inger Skjelsbæk, a psychologist specializing in sexual violence during war, suggests that the Yugoslavian war was not the first to utilize mass sexual violence, but was the first to have such extensive evidence that the international community had to become involved. In this conflict, there was evidence of ethnically based rape on all sides: Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian.¹³ The violence was widespread; it took place in the streets and in specific rape camps that included forced impregnation. Here, rape was clearly utilized as a tool of ethnic cleansing; it damaged the morale of the community and, if a woman did become pregnant, the child would be of a mixed ethnicity. It is important to note that both women and men were subjected to this atrocity. As the evidence built, the idea of rape as a strategic tool of war caught on in the international conversation: various NGOs began documenting the event and the United Nations set up its own

¹¹ Kuehnast, Oudraat, and Hernes, *Women and War*, 2-3.

¹² *Ibid*, 38-39.

¹³ *Ibid*, 66-67.

commission to investigate the conflict.¹⁴ The Yugoslavian war also coincided with the 1994 Rwandan genocide, in which there was also a gross amount of ethnically based sexual violence. Each of these events resulted in International Criminal Tribunals.

Many NGOs and international organizations, especially Amnesty International, pushed the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) to recognize rape and sexual violence as a war crime and crime against humanity. There was similar pressure on the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). Both the ICTY and ICTR's statutes specifically defined rape as an international war crime.¹⁵ The ICTY's statute also had rule 34, creating a sexual violence survivors' support group with specifically trained female staff facilitators provided by the court. Both the ICTY and ICTR also adopted rule 96, stating that sexual assault cases did not need witness corroboration and that the victim's prior sexual history was not admissible in court.¹⁶ Each of these tribunals led to the Rome Statute, the treaty that formed the International Criminal Court (ICC) and recognizes rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, pregnancy, sterilization, and all other forms of sexual violence as crimes against humanity and war crimes. UNSCR 1325 drew from the experience and findings of the ICTY and the ICTR.

While much of the women and conflict literature focuses on the progress and shortcomings of the international community on sexual violence, as mentioned above, there are many more ways that women may experience conflict. By focusing too much on aspects of sexual violence, women are incorrectly portrayed solely as victims of war. This assumption is certainly not the case. As part of a research project at the Netherlands Institute of International

¹⁴ Kuehnast, Oudraat, and Hernes, *Women and War*, 72-74.

¹⁵ Inger Skjelsbaek, "Sexual Violence and War: Mapping Out a Complex Relationship," *European Journal of International Relations* 7, no. 2 (2001): 219.

¹⁶ Sanam Anderlini, *Women and War: Power and Protection in the 21st Century*, Washington DC: United States Institute for Peace, 2011, 22.

Relations, Tsjeard Bouta and Georg Frerks identified and explicitly defined seven separate roles that women hold before, during, and after conflict. These included women as: victims (mostly to sexual violence, but also to other atrocities that occur during war), combatants, informal peace activists, formal peace activists, “coping and surviving actors” (meaning they adapt rapidly to the unfolding situation), heads of household, and agents in the informal sector.¹⁷ These roles are not mutually exclusive, as women may hold one or many roles throughout the conflict; their roles may also change as time goes on. Most importantly, such research shows that women occupy conflicting and often counterintuitive roles during conflict, which is quite the opposite of what some people expect. Women are not just victims, as they are often portrayed, but have opportunities to gain more agency and influence in their own lives during conflict.

The statement above seems paradoxical – how does conflict afford women more agency? Multiple scholars argue that conflict is accompanied by a breakdown of socio-cultural structures, including traditional patriarchies and gender norms.¹⁸ As men leave to become combatants, social structures that normally provide the necessities of life begin to disintegrate. If there is any hope for survival, women must become heads of household and take on more economic responsibilities. Conflict necessitates women enter both informal and formal economies with little resistance.¹⁹ Without the pre-conflict patriarchal forces keeping women in traditional gender roles, women are able to work together with other women, organizing or entering informal politics at a local level and performing other tasks that help increase the chances of their families’ survival.²⁰ Women are, therefore, adaptable and capable of successfully holding these

¹⁷ Tsjeard Bouta and Georg Frerks, “Women’s Roles in Conflict Prevention, Conflict Resolution, and Post-Conflict Reconstruction: Literature Review and Institutional Analysis,” report from Netherlands Institute of International Relations, published 2002, 8.

¹⁸ Julie Arostegui, “Gender, conflict, and peace-building: how conflict can catalyse positive change for women,” *Gender and Development* 21, no. 3 (2013): 535.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 546-47.

²⁰ *Ibid*.

roles when given the chance. Further, women do not occupy these positions only for survival, though this is sometimes the case. Instead, women specifically take advantage of the opportunities afforded to them during conflict. Julie Arostegui explains that by doing so, women can become self-sufficient entities, purposefully using their new agency to gain further economic or political power once the conflict has ended.²¹

The literature clearly recognizes that women hold many complex positions during war – and not just as victims – but does a poor job of incorporating these insights into policy. First, many interventions that target women begin after the conflict has ended. This approach is inefficient as women navigate these difficult situations from the very beginning of the conflict.²² When help comes only at the end of the conflict, the effort is too little and too late. The research recognizes that some women encounter economic and peacebuilding opportunities during the conflict, so policy could dictate certain interventions that help women maintain those gains in the long run, even before the conflict has ended. Current international policies are often shortsighted, but Bouta and Frerks emphasize that success requires both short and long-term goals of supporting local women.²³ Progress could be made by increasing the number of women on the “professional” side of these policies, meaning individuals from international organizations, and by actively maintaining spaces where women can come together and express what would be most helpful in their own words. These forums should take place from the very beginning of conflict instead of waiting until the very end to build women’s communities.

Second, women who hold the same positions as men are often ignored in terms of policy. This difference is most obvious when considering disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR). DDR includes removing weapons from civilians, separating military and

²¹ Arostegui, “Gender, conflict, and peacebuilding,” 547.

²² Bouta and Frerks, “Women’s Roles in Conflict Prevention,” 42.

²³ Ibid.

rebel groups, providing counseling, and training former combatants to be functioning members of society. As mentioned, both men and women hold combat positions, but DDR largely focuses on accommodating men when they return from war, not women. For example, some DDR programs require participants to hand in a gun to be eligible for registration.²⁴ However, female combatants may not have their own guns or may participate in other parts of violence that do not require a firearm. In this way, women can be actively, though unintentionally, excluded from the formal reintegration process and the economic benefits it provides. These processes often do not provide childcare during DDR training, so women may not physically be able to complete the program while also taking care of their families.²⁵ Finally, women face additional social stigmas when returning from war because of the perceived nonviolence of women. By joining the fight, women break traditional gender roles and may find it exceptionally difficult to find jobs, reintegrate with family, etc. because of these traditions.²⁶ DDR programs do not typically address these gendered difficulties. DDR is just one example of a policy that does not follow the example set by research. Research is valuable, but policies often fail to incorporate the results successfully.

Another significant portion of the literature grapples with women in the post-conflict rebuilding process, primarily peacebuilding. Some have hypothesized that women are inherently peaceful, thus they should be good actors for promoting peace after conflict. While we know this is not true, as some women both directly and indirectly support war, many scholars herald the importance of including women in peacebuilding. Sanam Anderlini, a prominent scholar on conflict resolution, suggests that most peace negotiations are modeled on those from interstate

²⁴ Helen Basini, "Gender Mainstreaming Unraveled: The Case of DDR in Liberia," *International Interactions: Empirical and Theoretical Research in International Relations* 39, no. 4 (2013): 539.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

war; however, intrastate war is the new reality.²⁷ Instead, peace negotiations need to, “have broader goals: to end war and bring peace.”²⁸ If the goal is to bring long-lasting, sustainable peace, representatives of every party affected by war must be brought to the negotiation table, including women. However, that is not to say that including women automatically makes the process easy. But, it does allow an additional fifty percent of the population to offer their opinions and perspective in the pursuit of peace.

There are numerous reasons that women and gender issues are excluded from peace processes. First, there is a “prevailing belief that peace accords are gender neutral.”²⁹ When gender neutrality is presumed, the peace process actually becomes androcentric because the overwhelmingly male discussants fail to consider the reconstruction process from a female perspective. Women have different needs and priorities in the post-conflict setting, thus it makes sense that their specific issues should be addressed during peace accords. Next, though women are often participants in the informal advocacy sphere, their grassroots efforts and groups are not given much legitimacy. This reaction is partially due to preconceived notions of gender roles, but also because women’s groups frequently shy away from entering formal political discussions.³⁰ When they finally do gain access to these conversations, women’s groups often do not have adequate training or strategies to effectively converse and advocate for their causes. Further, even on the side of international interveners, very few experts and peacebuilders are women. However, when women are successfully integrated into peacebuilding activities, whether formal or informal, they are more likely to engage with their communities and promote solutions that

²⁷ Sanam Anderlini, *Women Building Peace: What They Do, Why It Matters*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2007, 58.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 60.

²⁹ *Ibid*, 62.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 59.

are more community oriented.³¹ UNSCR 1325 encourages the idea that women should be involved in every level of peace and security, and incorporating more women into peacebuilding is an essential part of this policy.

Finally, it is important to recognize that the conversation surrounding women, peace, and security also includes men. As mentioned previously, women and femininity are associated with peacefulness while men and masculinity are associated with violence. The warrior/soldier image continues to be “a key symbol of masculinity.”³² This association is problematic, as it suggests that key traits essential in masculinity can be attained through conflict. Certain actors utilize this connection to perpetuate characteristics necessary for war, like a proclivity towards violence, toughness, and other overly aggressive behavior. Feminist scholars refer to this phenomenon as the militarized masculinity, the connection between military behaviors and the ideal masculinity.³³ Most of these behaviors are reinforced through military training, which promotes an us versus them mentality, the military hierarchy, and the importance of the group rather than the individual. Military training often includes the use of gendered insults, like “whore,” “faggot,” “cunt,” “you woman,” and motivations that include becoming a “real” man.³⁴ These insults suggest that the worst thing a soldier could be is a woman. The construction of the militarized masculinity takes place on individual, group, and national levels, and can even be seen in United Nations peacekeeping forces. Though this paper will focus on women’s experiences, it is important to recognize how problematic this construction of masculinity can be for women

³¹ Anderlini, “Women Building Peace,” 130-31.

³² Maya Eichler, “Militarized Masculinities in International Relations,” *The Brown Journal of World Affairs* 21, no.1 (2014): 82.

³³ *Ibid*, 81.

³⁴ Sandra Whitworth, *Men, Militarism, and UN Peacekeeping: A Gendered Analysis*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2004, 156.

during conflict. When soldiers are trained to fulfill these behaviors, there are serious repercussions for the women around them.

The path to including gender issues and women in the international political process has been and will continue to be difficult. As Anderlini explains, the international community is a complex network of organizations, bureaucracies and other players.³⁵ Women, not traditionally incorporated into this realm, must learn to navigate its complexities while also making significant contributions to their cause. On one hand, the community seems to have the political will to recognize women's issues, but has an inability to be truly effective in addressing them. On the other hand, there is the belief that women in politics are a panacea, a "solution to all evils" in the political realm.³⁶ This is a naïve belief that, with women as an addition to leadership or programs, all problems will surely be solved. Here, there is gap between what women are doing and what the international community is doing. Each side must engage with the other to overcome "bureaucratic inertia," and women must find "a permanent home" to help influence policy.³⁷ There is still work to do in recognizing how gender and women may be considered in the field, but progress has certainly been made. This literature review highlights how academics have addressed these issues and what progress has been made in policy. This topic is ripe for analysis, thus I intend my thesis to expand on the literature in the context of the Democratic Republic of Congo, a state in need of great attention.

³⁵ Anderlini, *Women Building Peace*, 2.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid, 15.

A Brief History of Conflict in the Congo



The Democratic Republic of the Congo is one of the largest African states (second only to Algeria), nestled in Africa's center in the Great Lakes region. The country is home to almost 80 million residents, 250 or more different ethnic groups, and a wide variety of languages and dialects.³⁸ The DRC's land is rich in natural resources: powerful rivers and lakes, copper, cobalt, diamonds, gold, petroleum and more.³⁹ Based on the wealth of its resources and sheer size, the DRC should be regarded with much potential for economic and social development in central Africa. This potential has not been recognized, namely because of the Congo's unstable history tarnished by near constant conflict and violence.

Established as a Belgian colony in 1908, the Congo did not gain its independence from Belgium until 1960.⁴⁰ The independent Congo was modeled on the Belgian style of government, with Belgian politicians approving the Congo's new constitution and setting its first election date.

³⁸ "Democratic Republic of Congo," The World Factbook of the Central Intelligence Agency, published March 2016, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-worldfactbook/geos/cg.html>.

³⁹ Jermaine McCalpin, In *The African Stakes of the Congo War*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, 33.

⁴⁰ "Democratic Republic of Congo," CIA Factbook

Patrice Lumumba won this election, though the transition to independence was not at all successful. After interference from various Western nations, Lumumba was assassinated in 1961, at which point the Congo fragmented.⁴¹ A new constitution was eventually created, the name of the country changed to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and a new leader installed. This government was also short-lived, as military leader Joseph Mobutu led a coup d'état, seizing power and declaring himself president in November of 1965.⁴² Mobutu renamed the country Zaire and attempted to gain some political stability and legitimacy. As historian Jermaine McCalpin suggests, this period in the DRC's history can be described as "ordered chaos."⁴³

During his leadership, Mobutu exploited Zaire's natural resources and gave his supporters political clout. Though problems persisted throughout his presidency, my focus on the current conflict begins in 1994 with the Rwandan genocide. During 1994, Hutu extremists in Rwanda killed over 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus.⁴⁴ Close to two million Rwandan refugees flooded into the already unstable Zaire and were followed by the Hutu militants who had perpetrated the massacre. These groups congregated in eastern Zaire in the North and South Kivu regions. Mobutu's power faltered, and a new Tutsi government emerged in Rwanda.

In an attempt to maintain their power, the Tutsi-led Rwandan government began an anti-Mobutu coalition that fueled local Congolese rebel groups and militias.⁴⁵ This coalition, eventually titled the Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Congo-Zaire (ADFL), gained support from the governments of Uganda, Angola, and Burundi, and rebels from South Sudan. The Rwandan Hutu extremists, the Forces Démocratiques de Libération du

⁴¹ McCalpin, *African Stakes of the Congo War*, 40.

⁴² Kelly Behr, "A Dangerous Euphemism: The Dark Side of Peacekeeping Missions, A Case Study of the United Nations Missions to the Democratic Republic of Congo," graduate thesis at University of Michigan, published 2011, 50.

⁴³ McCalpin, *African Stakes of the Congo War*, 41.

⁴⁴ Séverine Autesserre, *The Trouble with Congo: Local Violence and the Failure of International Peacebuilding*, Cambridge University Press, 2010, 47.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

Rwanda (FDLR), formed an alliance with Joseph Mobutu in response to pressure from the new Rwandan government. The entire country dissolved in chaos in 1996 as the Hutus and Congolese government fought against Congolese rebels backed by a number of other states. In 1997, the ADFL succeeded in overthrowing Mobutu and named Laurent-Désiré Kabila as his successor; Kabila quickly returned the country's name to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.⁴⁶ This period from the beginnings of war in late 1995 and early 1996 to the downfall of Mobutu in 1997 is referred to as the First Congo War.

Kabila undertook a short-lived leadership of a severely deficient country. The war destroyed the economy, deepened ethnic divides and tensions, and ended in no real peace accord.⁴⁷ The Hutu extremists of the FDLR continued killing in the DRC, and Kabila unsuccessfully attempted to break ties with his Rwandan backers. In short, violence continued even after the end of the war. As the DRC fell to chaos once again, Kabila reached out to allies in Angola, Namibia, and Zimbabwe for support. On the other side, the Rwandan, Ugandan, and Burundian governments instigated the Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie (RCD), a new anti-Kabila rebel group.⁴⁸ These groups began to clash and in August 1998, the RCD began the Second Congo War. Here, it is important to make note of a few things. First, though named separately, the wars occurred contiguously and may be classified as a single conflict. Second, despite the fact that these wars are named for the DRC, the Congo Wars included many other actors beyond the Congo. Some have even called this conflict the African World War. It may be more accurate to say these conflicts were regional in nature rather than intrastate.

⁴⁶ Behr, "A Dangerous Euphemisms," 53.

⁴⁷ Jason Stearns, *Dancing in the Glory of Monsters: The Collapse of the Congo and Great War of Africa*, United States: PublicAffairs, 2011, 171.

⁴⁸ Auteserre, *The Trouble with Congo*, 28.

Fighting between the various allied groups continued into 1999 while new rebel groups continually appeared on the scene. The RCD and the Mouvement pour la Libération du Congo (MLC), a rebel group launched by Uganda after a dispute with Rwanda, advanced across the Congo.⁴⁹ The Congolese government only managed to slow these groups' advances in mid-1999, at which point a stalemate developed and the international community began to organize a peace process. In July 1999, the Congo, Angola, Namibia, Rwanda, and Zimbabwe signed the Lusaka Peace Agreement. The agreement established a ceasefire, provided for a small UN peacekeeping force (MONUC), and created a timeline for each foreign country's withdrawal from the Congo.⁵⁰ Unfortunately, the peace accord did little to help the situation in the Congo. A limited number of troops did withdraw accordingly, but the ceasefire was ignored almost entirely.

The continued fighting came to a head in 2001 when President Laurent-Désiré Kabila was assassinated.⁵¹ His son, Joseph Kabila, immediately succeeded him as president and remains the leader of the DRC today. Laurent Kabila's assassination acted as a catalyst towards completing the peace accord. By the beginning of 2002, the Angolan, Namibian, and Zambian troops in the Congo withdrew. After another round of peace talks hosted in South Africa and the resulting Pretoria and Luanda Accords, both Rwanda and Uganda withdrew as well.⁵² The Transitional Government was installed on June 30, 2003, featuring leaders from the various armed groups and militias. Despite the official end of the war, an enormous amount of violence continued through the "transition." MONUC continued to expand and is now the largest peacekeeping mission ever. In 2010, the United Nations voted to rename the mission to

⁴⁹ Auteserre, *The Trouble with Congo*, 49.

⁵⁰ Behr, "A Dangerous Euphemism," 53.

⁵¹ Auteserre, *The Trouble with Congo*, 51.

⁵² Behr, "A Dangerous Euphemism," 53.

MONUSCO, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to “reflect the new phase reached in the country.”⁵³

Violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo persists today. Amnesty International reports around twenty different armed groups operating in the DRC, though the real number may be significantly higher.⁵⁴ Since the installation of the Transitional Government, the new national army, the Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (FARDC) have become a strong force behind the violence. The FARDC continually clashes with local armed groups that have attacked both government forces and civilians. Numerous other rebel groups have played a role in the recent conflict, including the M23, Mai Mai, Lord’s Resistance Army, and others.⁵⁵ Another attempt at peace came in 2008 when various rebel groups met in Goma to discuss a new agreement; this attempt was unsuccessful as well.

Since the official start of the conflict in 1996, there have been an estimated 5.5 million deaths either directly or indirectly related to the conflict.⁵⁶ Further, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reports over half a million Congolese refugees outside of the DRC and close to 1.5 million internally displaced persons (IDPs).⁵⁷ The conflict has been rife with human rights abuses, sexual violence, resource exploitation, and other atrocities perpetrated by all parties of the conflict. Violence continues to this day, and the Congo stands in a strange limbo: not officially at war, but certainly not at peace.

⁵³ “MONUSCO Background,” *United Nations Peacekeeping*,
<http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/monusco/background.shtml>.

⁵⁴ “Annual Report: Democratic Republic of Congo 2013,” Report from Amnesty International, published May 2013.

⁵⁵ “Democratic Republic of Congo profile – timeline,” 4 August 2015, *BBC News*, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13286306>.

⁵⁶ “2015 UNHCR country operations profile - Democratic Republic of Congo,” *UNHCR*, published 2015,
<http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e45c366.html>.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

Women Before the Conflict

“We lost our dignity. We lost our status in society.” –Mafiki Yav Marie

With a tumultuous history like that of the DRC, it is difficult to pinpoint a period of time as strictly “pre-conflict.” While there was violence and unrest before the 1994 overflow of the Rwandan genocide, it is helpful to bound my research so I can be as precise in my analysis as possible. For all intents and purposes of this project, my use of pre-conflict Democratic Republic of the Congo denotes the relevant time period before the official war in 1996, when the country was actually called Zaire. On the conflict curve mentioned in my introduction, pre-conflict is both the no conflict and latent conflict period. As detailed in the previous section, Mobutu Sese Seko held power during this time, though there was relative instability throughout the country.

During Mobutu’s presidency, women existed at a curious legal crossroads. The Constitution of Zaire guaranteed that,

“All Zairians are equal before the law and have a right to the equal protection of the laws. In education, in access to public office, and in all other matters, no Zairian may be subject to discriminatory measures...by reason of his religion, racial or ethnic origin, sex, place of birth or residence.”⁵⁸

This clause grants women equal legal protection in all matters, at least establishing an important precedent in comparison to women under colonial rule. Though the gains were small, women procured some legal clout under Mobutu. In the 1980s, his government established the Ministry for the Advancement of Women, ratified the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (which prominently notes the equality between men and women), and adopted the Convention on the

⁵⁸ Zairian Constitution, accessed from https://africatoamericablog.files.wordpress.com/2013/11/drc_family_code.pdf and <http://www.ambardeparis.com/pdf/Droit%20Civil%20et%20Judiciaire.pdf>, Article 12.

Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).⁵⁹ Each of these actions seems to suggest progress for women, though the mechanisms in place for reporting and upholding these standards continue to be lacking.

During the pre-conflict period (and still today), the Zairian government recognized both constitutional law and private law. There is no clarifying text that places one in precedence over the other, though for the average Congolese person, the Civil Code is more familiar and thus trumps the constitution. The distinction between the two was established during the post-colonial period as the new government tried to incorporate both pre-existing tribal law into the creation of a new constitution. Private law refers to the interactions and legal issues arising between two private parties and is covered by the three books of the Civil Code. The Family Code, the first book of the Civil Code, is the most problematic for women, though the second and third books, which detail property law and other obligations, are restrictive as well.⁶⁰ In sum, the document organizes family life into a strictly patriarchal structure, placing husbands as the heads of household with absolute authority over both wives and children. For example, Article 712 states, “domestic authority over people living in a common household belongs to the one who is chief in virtue of the law. This authority extends over all who are part of the household,” and then later refers to the family chief as an unambiguous “he.”⁶¹ Though Zairian/Congolese society was traditionally patriarchal before and during colonialism, the additional step of codification is troublesome. The Civil Code also appears to be at odds with the Constitution of Zaire, which clearly states there can be no discriminatory measures based on sex.

⁵⁹ Annie Matunda Mbambi and Marie-Claire Faray Kele, “Gender Inequality and Social Institutions in the DR Congo,” report for Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, published 2010, 1.

⁶⁰ Dunia Zongwe, Francois Butedi, and Clement Phebe, “The Legal System and Research of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC): An Overview,” *GlobaLex*, Published December 2007.

⁶¹ Zairian Constitution, Article 787.

The Family Code goes far beyond simply establishing men as the unequivocal heads of household. From the beginning of the marriage, men are given the upper hand. Article 325 of the Family Code sets different minimum ages for marriage based on sex: men are not eligible to marry until age 18 under any circumstances, whereas women's minimum age is 15 and may be amended to 13 in special cases.⁶² After the marriage occurs, women are immediately subservient to their husbands, as they must move in with the husband who has the sole authority to choose the family's residence. All property in said residence is entrusted to the husband, regardless of whether it previously belonged to the wife or not.⁶³ These unequal rules continue throughout the marriage. Articles 444 through 448 hint towards women's seclusion from society, as they must be fully subservient to their husbands, who chose when and if they may leave the house. In any legal or economic matters where the woman must appear in public to represent herself, she must first obtain permission from her husband to represent herself and then to leave their residence.⁶⁴ If a woman is unfaithful to her husband, she must be punished in every case; if a man is unfaithful to his wife, he is only punishable in some cases. Finally, if a marriage is "dissolved," a husband may take all property and assets and leave the woman without any support.⁶⁵ Each of these policies is blatantly sexist and contrary to CEDAW, which Zaire ratified in 1986.

The Civil Code had existed since the end of colonization, but Mobutu revised and imposed the rules of the Family Code mentioned above in 1987 when his power was slipping further and further away. His endeavors into private life, especially with such great intensity, may be seen as a last ditch effort to maintain control. The preamble of the Family Code supports

⁶² "Africa for Women's Rights: Ratify and Respect!" press kit for a campaign to end discrimination and violence against women in Africa, published March 2009.

⁶³ Zairian Constitution, Article 490.2.

⁶⁴ Zairian Constitution Articles 444-448.

⁶⁵ Chris McGreal, "Women seek abolition of 'family code' as most hated legacy of regime," 15 April 1997, *The Irish Times*, <http://www.irishtimes.com/news/women-seek-abolition-of-family-code-as-most-hated-legacy-of-regime-1.62342>.

this hypothesis, as it explains, “family constitutes the natural base of human community...and must be structured to maintain and ensure its unity.”⁶⁶ Later, the document explains that family is integral to “the authentic Zairian conception of life,” thus the government has the right to maintain these relationships as deemed necessary.⁶⁷ Women did not respond well to the Family Code, with members of women’s groups lamenting, “We lost our dignity. We lost our status in society.”⁶⁸ To maintain his status quo and the traditional society of Zaire, Mobutu found it necessary to restrict women. These actions were probably amplified by the growing instability in the region, thus propelling Zaire’s leader to the aggressive, sexist code.

Since the end of the Cold War, Western states and international organizations have sought tools to predict political crises before they happen. If organizations could predict conflicts during the latent conflict stage, then they could enact preemptive plans to curb violence, limit destruction, and ultimately lessen their role in the post-conflict arena. Numerous scholars have researched and written on conflict early warning in recent years, and O’Brien suggests that most of this research has been completed to appease the needs of international organizations.⁶⁹ Researchers have taken different approaches to predict crises. For example, the United States’ State Failure Task Force (SFTF) has utilized measurements of a country’s level of democracy, trade openness, and infant mortality rate to predict historical conflicts with 66 percent accuracy.⁷⁰ These numbers are not perfect, but help distinguish threshold numbers for each of these measurements that are useful in examining potential conflicts today.

⁶⁶ Zairian Constitution, Family Code Preamble.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ McGreal, “Women seek abolition of ‘family code.’”

⁶⁹ Sean O’Brien, “Crisis Early Warning and Decision Support: Contemporary Approaches and Thoughts on Future Research,” *International Studies Review* 12, no. 1 (2010): 792.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 793.

At a basic level, conflict early warning uses systematic data collection of any number of variables, analysis of said variables to report on the possibility of impending conflict, and, in theory, these results are turned into early response when the situation warrants it.⁷¹ Essentially, these mechanisms seek to mitigate the time between latent conflict and conflict emergence. Conflict early warning is used to predict a wide range of events: “state failure, genocide and politicide, human rights violations, and humanitarian emergencies.”⁷² As it turns out, significant political changes, like those legal changes in the DRC, are not uncommon before conflict. These changes signify growing tension that, with the right catalyst, might ignite into a full-blown conflict. To utilize conflict early warning effectively, the indicators and reaction thresholds must be context specific. Understanding the underlying cultural, social, and political makeup of a region or country is essential to success. Furthermore, there must be an established group to which the results can be reported who will then take action; without a pre-established responsible entity, the results are an exercise in research without a relevant reaction.

Gendered conflict early warning is a helpful subset of these indicators. Incorporating gender and women’s experiences into these early warning systems is significant for many reasons. First, as experts Susanne Schmeidl and Eugenia Piza-Lopez explain, incorporating gender-sensitive indicators into the collection and analysis of early warning makes existing models more comprehensive, and therefore a more helpful tool in predicting conflict.⁷³ Second, UNSCR 1325 acknowledges that women have important roles to play throughout conflict, including prevention from the earliest stages of conflict. With gendered early warning, women’s experiences can be employed to help stop the spread of conflict, thus enriching our conflict-

⁷¹ Herbet Wulf and Tobias Debiel, “Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanisms: Tools for Enhancing the Effectiveness of Regional Organisations?” working paper for Crisis States Research Center, published May 2009, 3.

⁷² Ibid, 4.

⁷³ Susanne Schmeidl and Eugenia Piza-Lopez, “Gender and Conflict Early Warning: A Framework for Action,” report for International Alert and the Swiss Peace Foundation, Published June 2002, 7.

predicting abilities and giving policy makers every relevant piece of information. Finally, if women are not considered in the data, then their specific issues will not be addressed and the post-conflict situation will not better the position of women. There are many gendered early warning indicators, though Schmeidl and Piza-Lopez break them into four categories: root/systemic causes, proximate causes, gender-specific human rights violations, and abrupt changes in the status of women.⁷⁴ I will consider both root/systemic causes and abrupt/immediate changes in my exploration of the situation in the DRC.

Gender-sensitive root causes of conflict tend to focus on the pre-existing, structural situation of women in a country. Research shows that the levels of political, economic, and social equality for women are paramount for determining when violence may or may not occur. For example, Mary Caprioli tested a number of these variables to see if there was any correlation between them and states who had experienced conflict. She found that states with higher numbers of women in the legislature were significantly less likely to “resolve international disputes using military violence.”⁷⁵ As far as political equality goes, the pre-conflict DRC left much to be desired. First and foremost, the Family Code detailed previously left women in entirely unequal legal, political, and social playing fields. As gender early warning theory suggests, the existence of the Family Code was a very strong structural indicator for conflict, meaning that its existence alone suggests that the society was more susceptible to violence.

However, the Civil Code is not the only example of structural inequality. In 1979, nineteen years after the DRC’s independence from Belgium, there remained absolutely no women in government.⁷⁶ I could not find the specific numbers of women participating in government from 1979 to 1996, though I found numerous sources that stated women made little

⁷⁴ Schmeidl and Piza-Lopez, “Gender and Conflict Early Warning,” 10-14.

⁷⁵ Mary Caprioli, “Gendered Conflict,” *Journal of Peace Research* 37, no. 1 (2000): 61.

⁷⁶ Sandra Meditz and Tim Merrill, *Zaire: A Country Study*, Washington DC: Library of Congress, 1994, 109.

to no strides in gaining access to the political arena. As urbanization occurred and women moved from rural areas to the city, they did not have the necessary connections or wealth to enter into formal politics, as the government was incredibly corrupted under Mobutu. Even if a few women did break into the political sphere, there would be nowhere near the critical mass needed to see a significant difference in policy.

The pre-existing social and economic conditions appear similar. One of the biggest goals of the post-colonial period was the improvement of the DRC's educational system.⁷⁷ Both Mobutu's government and the United Nations allocated resources to meet this goal, though the system remained severely underfunded and understaffed. For the most part, education was not free, thus families would often dedicate resources to the education of their sons over their daughters.⁷⁸ This allocation led to a premium on males' educations, severely reducing the number of females in the classroom. Several researchers note the corruption of the school system, especially in the 1990s; even when girls did make it to school, they might be forced into sexual acts or bribes to receive academic attention or advancement.⁷⁹ Equal access to education is a cornerstone of social equality; the limited access for women is problematic.

The Family Code also severely limited women's opportunities to leave the home, affecting both their social and economic prospects. In the few years before the conflict, urbanization in the DRC quickened. As women made their way to the cities, they increasingly worked outside the home. Though economic strides were made, women remained extremely underrepresented in the formal sector.⁸⁰ This economic inequality also stems from social inequality. Without an education, there is little hope for advancement in the formal sector. With

⁷⁷ Meditz and Merrill, *Zaire*, 109.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 110.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 111.

unofficial legal barriers to entry, finding a job is very difficult. For example, when women were able to get a formal job, the Family Code dictated that they must have permission from their husbands to work, open a bank account, etc. In other words, men would mostly control the money made in the formal sector, so it was more advantageous for women to work unofficially in informal fields.⁸¹ In both rural and urban areas, women completely dominated market trade, making up 70 percent or more of vendors.⁸² For political, social, and economic opportunities, most of the information available details urban rather than rural life. From the little information available, it appears that patriarchal tribal traditions continued in rural Congo, resulting in even worse situations for women.

Beyond the pre-existing structural limitations for women, there were also several immediate changes in the lead up to the 1996 conflict. Gender-sensitive immediate causes are indicators that, in the words of Schmeidl and Piza-Lopez, “link to human rights abuses and help gauge the level of tolerance in society.”⁸³ Combined with structural inequalities like those discussed above, immediate changes in the status or lives of women often lead to violence and the breakdown of human security. As implied in Schmeidl and Piza-Lopez’s definition, some abrupt changes may overlap with gender-based human rights violations, particularly if they show a growing trend towards more gender-based violence. In the DRC, there is no shortage of either immediate changes or gender-based human rights violations.

The pre-conflict situation in the DRC is particularly interesting because of its proximity and relation to the Rwandan genocide. In some ways, the events occurring in Rwanda were early warning indicators for the DRC. The invasion of Rwandan Hutu extremists that perpetrated mass rape, genocide, and other atrocities was one of the significant sparks for the conflict in the DRC,

⁸¹ Meditz and Merrill, *Zaire*, 110.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ Schmeidl and Piza-Lopez, “Gender and Conflict Early Warning,” 12.

so the group's actions elsewhere predicted the coming instability. For example, the Rwandan Hutus utilized the media to spread ethnic and gender-discriminatory propaganda. The group published the Interahamwe Ten Commandments, all of which define Tutsis as the enemy.⁸⁴ Further, the first commandment states, "Hutus must know that the Tutsi wife, wherever she may be, is serving the Tutsi ethnic group," making Tutsi women surrogates for the entire ethnic group.⁸⁵ Similar messages were spread through sexist comics published in Hutu propaganda newspapers. These publications created immediate changes in the status of women and, though they occurred in Rwanda rather than the DRC, they became indicators as soon as the Hutu rebels crossed the border.

The mindset portrayed in the Hutu propaganda encouraged mass rapes and endless sexual violence because damage done to individual women was seen as damage done to the entire ethnic group. As the group moved throughout Rwanda, they also had a "scorch the earth" policy in which they would engage with various military groups and then leave a trail of violent destruction – usually including sexual violence.⁸⁶ These policies immediately put women in danger, especially once they group entered the DRC. These policies are also another gender-sensitive abrupt change that signaled the coming violence. Rather than attending markets and selling goods, women in the Congo self-imposed curfews and geographic limits that they could travel.⁸⁷ These changes in women's daily schedules and patterns stemmed from the risk of rape and other violence. Congolese women were, therefore, perceptive to their own plight and attempted to adjust accordingly.

⁸⁴ "Matrix: Early Warning Indicators of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence," report from Secretary General's Policy Committee, published December 2010.

⁸⁵ Hutu Ten Commandments, accessed online at http://www.uwosh.edu/faculty_staff/henson/188/rwanda_kangura_ten.html.

⁸⁶ "Matrix: Early Warning Indicators of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence."

⁸⁷ Meditz and Merrill, *Zaire*, 112.

Furthermore, multiple sources report increased rates of domestic violence, sexual violence committed by and against Congolese citizens, and homophobic violence in the six months leading up to official start of the conflict.⁸⁸ It is very difficult to quantify these kinds of statements – there were very few reporting mechanisms accessible to victims during this time. The largest increase in the rates of domestic violence occurred in rural areas, particularly those in the eastern part of the country (the area closest to the border with Rwanda).⁸⁹ Schmeidl and Piza-Lopez specifically mention this kind of increase in violence as an immediate indicator of coming violence.⁹⁰ An increase in violent civilian activity can signal a demographic shift towards violence becoming the accepted norm. Similarly, the increase in sexual violence in the DRC could be associated with the emphasis on hyper-masculinity that conflict situations bring.

Throughout this pre-conflict period, women are agents whose experiences are often early warning indicators. The pre-conflict experience of women can be used to help prepare for and limit coming violence, but often goes ignored and underutilized. This was certainly so in the Congo, where numerous gendered indicators, relating to both underlying structural issues and immediate changes in the status of women, were present. However, no party recognized these indicators as they were happening, thus no one acted upon them. UNSCR 1325 reaffirms “the important role of women in the prevention...of conflict,” and yet the DRC is merely one example of the ignorance of women’s role in the pre-conflict situation.⁹¹ It would be naïve to suggest that recognizing gendered early warning indicators would have completely stopped the conflict. Still, if some observing party had first acknowledged the warning signs and, second,

⁸⁸ “Matrix: Early Warning Indicators of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence.”

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Schmeidl and Piza-Lopez, “Gender and Conflict Early Warning,” 14.

⁹¹ U.N. Security Council, “Resolution 1325, Women, Peace and Security.”

passed the information on to a pre-established responsible actor, I contend that, at the very least, the conflict's effects on women could have been mitigated.

Sexual Violence in the DRC

“The use of rape in conflict reflects the inequalities women face in their everyday lives in peacetime. Until governments live up to their obligations to ensure equality, and end discrimination against women, rape will continue to be a favorite weapon of the aggressor.”

--Amnesty International

If you are following along with the model of the conflict curve, the previous section focused on the latent conflict stage. Now, as I move onto women’s experiences with sexual violence, we shift into the later stages of conflict emergence, escalation, stalemate, and de-escalation. As you can see, sexual violence has pervaded the conflict, making it difficult to tie to one specific point on the conflict curve. However, though sexual violence has lasted throughout the conflict and into the “post-conflict” period, it is helpful to discuss here because the experience of sexual violence has some effects on women’s roles as soldiers and peacebuilders. Though I am focusing on women, it is also important to note that sexual violence in the Congo, as it is everywhere, happens to women *and* men. While all sexual violence is important and deserves discussion, men’s experiences in the DRC fall outside the bounds of my research.

I also want to be very specific in defining both sexual violence and rape, two terms I use numerous times throughout this paper. Sexual violence, as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO), is

“any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic or otherwise directed against a person’s sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work.”⁹²

⁹² Claudia Garcia-Moreno, Alessandra Guedes, and Wendy Knerr, “Understanding and addressing violence against women,” report for the World Health Organization, published 2012.

This definition is quite broad, but necessarily so because sexual violence takes numerous forms. Rape is a more specific form of sexual violence: “the insertion, under conditions of force, coercion, or duress of any object, including but not limited to a penis, into a victim’s vagina or anus; or the insertion under conditions of force, coercion, or duress, or a penis into the mouth of the victim.”⁹³ There is also much discussion about the use of the words victim and survivor in regards to sexual violence. Though I recognize the importance of the discussion, I will use these words interchangeably. I also want to offer a warning here. In this section, I utilize numerous stories from women in the Congo, and they are graphic. These stories are difficult to read, but I think it is important to highlight women’s experiences as they themselves articulate them and not just through statistics.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo is a country of almost 80 million. Of these 80 million, approximately 2 million Congolese women report being raped in their lifetimes.⁹⁴ Between 2003 and 2006, more than 40,000 women reported rapes to the International Rescue Committee, and this period was after the official end of the war.⁹⁵ In 2010, the UN noted that it had 16,000 new rape cases reported that year, with 65 percent of the victims being under the age of 18 and 10 percent under the age of 10.⁹⁶ The statistics on sexual violence are demonstrably worse when comparing the eastern part of the Congo (the North and South Kivu regions) to the rest of the country. In a recent poll, approximately 40 percent of women living in the two aforementioned regions stated they had dealt with sexual violence in their lifetime.⁹⁷ If you take

⁹³ U.N. Economic and Social Council, written by Gay McDougall, "Contemporary Forms of Slavery: Systematic rape, sexual slavery and slavery like practices during armed conflict," 22 June 1988, official Record, New York, 7.

⁹⁴ Ganzamunga Zihindula and Pranitha Maharaj, "Risk Of Sexual Violence: Perspectives And Experiences Of Women In A Hospital In The Democratic Republic Of Congo," *Journal Of Community Health* 40, no. 4 (2015): 736.

⁹⁵ Dallman, 6.

⁹⁶ Amber Peterman, Tia Palermo, and Caryn Bredenkamp, "Estimates and Determinants of Sexual Violence Against Women in the Democratic Republic of Congo," *American Journal of Public Health* 101, no. 6 (2011): 1060.

⁹⁷ Anjalee Kohli, Maphie Tosha, Paul Ramazani, Octave Safari, Richard Bachunguye, Isaya Zahiga, Aline Iragi, and Nancy Glass, "Family and Community Rejection and a Congolese Led Mediation Intervention to Reintegrate

these various reports and do the math, they average to about one woman being raped per minute in the DRC. These statistics are why the eastern Congo is considered the rape capital of the world and why the Congo has been called the worst place in the world to be a woman.

When considering these statistics, it is important to remember that they are based on sexual violence that is reported, and often it is difficult for victims to access reporting mechanisms. Even if they do have access, many will choose not to use them so as to avoid reliving the experience or facing judgment from their communities. The legal system is also difficult to access, and that's assuming the women can even identify their attackers. The costs are exorbitant to hire a lawyer to argue the case, and the legal system in the DRC is quite corrupt.⁹⁸ Women or their families often have to bribe judges just to get their cases heard at all. Similarly, army commanders will bribe judges and other court officials to drop cases. One survivor interviewed by Zihindula and Maharaj responded to the impunity in this way: "We have reported this matter to the local chief who told us that this was beyond his control and he may also be killed if trying to protect us, so now you see, when the leaders fail to protect us, how can we be saved? Maybe they are also part of the deal."⁹⁹ Considering these complications, the number of rapes committed could be, and probably is, much higher than those I mentioned.

There have been extreme levels of violence perpetrated by all parties of the Congolese conflict, and the sexual violence has been some of the most gruesome. While rape in itself is reprehensible, many of the soldiers and rebels have gone far beyond it to humiliate women. Statistics gathered by Peterman, Palermo, and Brendenkamp identify that the largest number of

Rejected Survivors of Sexual Violence in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo," *Health Care For Women International* 34, no. 9 (2013): 736.

⁹⁸ Carlsen, Erika, "Ra/pe and War in the Democratic Republic of the Congo," *Peace Review: A Journal of Social Justice* 21, no. 4 (2009): 476.

⁹⁹ Zihindula and Maharaj, "Risk Of Sexual Violence," 739.

rapes occurred in public with witnesses.¹⁰⁰ These witnesses often include family members of the victims who may be forced to watch or participate in the rape. Many of these rapes are gang rapes, most of which are incredibly violent and cause extensive bodily harm. As one woman told interviewers, she was stripped naked and tied between two trees and “after the first one finished raping me, he called the next one to carry on. They all did the same thing until all of them were satisfied, while I was terrified and very exhausted after being raped by more than 10 men in less than an hour.”¹⁰¹ Those traveling in groups perpetrate most rapes, whether they are rebels or Congolese soldiers, and some statistics report up to 79 percent of rapes during the conflict as gang rapes.¹⁰² Various sources also conclude that with such high rates of gang rape, most of the attacks in the Congo are pre-meditated with a specific goal in mind.

In addition to the horrific circumstances of the sexual violence, many women experience torture by their attackers after the initial rape. Sometimes this torture is so extreme that it results in serious bodily damage or death.¹⁰³ One woman told the story of her daughters attack where soldiers “ordered her to choose between rape and death. She chose death. So they started to torture her, cutting off her breasts one at a time with a knife, then her ears and then they completely cut open her belly...after a time, my daughter breathed her last.”¹⁰⁴ The torture endured includes being beaten, genitals being mutilated or burnt, and having foreign objects inserted into the vagina. Objects recounted include water bottles, cans of oil, sticks, pestles coated in chili peppers, and barrels of guns, all of which cause serious, permanent physical

¹⁰⁰ Amber Peterman, Tia Palermo, and Caryn Bredenkamp, “Estimates and Determinants of Sexual Violence,” 1061.

¹⁰¹ Zihindula and Maharaj, “Risk Of Sexual Violence, 738-739.

¹⁰² Marie Ohambe, Marie Claire Omanyondo, Jean Muhigwa, and Barnabé Mambe, “Women’s Bodies as Battleground: Sexual Violence Against Women and Girls During the War in Democratic Republic of Congo,” report for Réseau des Femmes pour un Développement Associatif, Réseau des Femmes pour la Défense des Droits et la Paix, and International Alert, published 2004, 33.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 35.

damage to women.¹⁰⁵ Unfortunately, torture often goes hand in hand with sexual violence, with over 70 percent of those who are raped also reporting torture after the fact. It is clear to me that the intention is not just to take advantage of women and rape them. The purpose of this horrific type of sexual violence is to harm women in the most degrading, humiliating way possible.

The result of these experiences is immensely damaging to women. Because of the premium placed on female virginity and the patriarchal culture present in the DRC, rape largely changes women's relationships with their communities. Women are frequently rejected by their communities and experience social exclusion.¹⁰⁶ When their families and communities know they have been raped, women can be stigmatized as unclean, worthless, or as "asking for it," as if the rape was their own fault. The community response is especially problematic, as the trauma of the initial sexual assault can be amplified by rejection from preexisting social groups.¹⁰⁷ Further, women who are married are sometimes rejected by their husbands. The spouse may think it is the woman's fault she was raped or believe that it is inappropriate for women to have sex with another man, even if it is forced.¹⁰⁸ The situation is even worse for women who are not yet married, as men are less willing to marry someone who is not a virgin and may be afraid to have sexual relations. The emotional toll of the rape itself and the aftermath is incalculable.

The physical damage done to women is, potentially, even worse. Because of the violent and excessively aggressive nature of the sexual violence in the DRC, survivors are more often than not left with permanent physical damage. In some cases, this physical damage is purposeful to further humiliate women. Ohambe's interview results showed that close to 90 percent of rape victims had some form of physical or reproductive health consequence because of conflict-

¹⁰⁵ Zihindula and Maharaj, "Risk Of Sexual Violence," 739.

¹⁰⁶ Anjalee Kohli et al., "Family and Community Rejection 728.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Zihindula and Maharaj, "Risk Of Sexual Violence," 40.

related rape.¹⁰⁹ Some of the most common physical issues are sexually transmitted diseases, infections (that can lead to infertility), vaginal fistulas, becoming HIV positive, and pregnancy.¹¹⁰ Because the infrastructure of the DRC has been so damaged by the conflict, it is difficult for women to access medical care. They must travel a great distance to hospitals and clinics, and even then there are few experts in women's reproductive health.¹¹¹ Instead, women go without treatment and struggle with health problems for the rest of their lives.

The physical problems also have social consequences. As one victim who suffered from a vaginal fistula explained,

“Since I was raped, I’ve had water permanently running down between my legs. I have to wear a piece of cloth that I must wash five to seven times a day and this means having water and soap available. Sometimes when I am in company, I see the others get up one after the other, or else their mood changes suddenly, they cut short the conversation and leave as fast as they can. Then I realise that I’ve begun to give off... and I go home to wash myself and to shut myself up in my hut, to hide my shame.”¹¹²

Women already suffer from being ostracized, but the effects are multiplied when survivors have a serious health issue that the community cannot handle. UNSCR 1325 recognizes that women are specifically targeted in conflict and “calls on” member states to end sexual violence. However, the evidence above shows there is an important piece missing: providing adequate medical and psychological help for women when they do become victims. Though this is difficult to mandate, the United Nations should take a role in encouraging medical training for

¹⁰⁹ Ohambe et al., “Women’s Bodies as Battleground,” 39.

¹¹⁰ Ahuka Ona Longombe, Kasereka Masumbuko Claude, and Joseph Ruminjo, “Fistula And Traumatic Genital Injury From Sexual Violence In A Conflict Setting In Eastern Congo: Case Studies,” *Reproductive Health Matters* 16, no. 31 (2008): 133.

¹¹¹ Jessica Keralis, “Beyond the silence: sexual violence in eastern DRC,” *Forced Migration Review* 36 (2010): 13.

¹¹² Ohambe et al., “Women’s Bodies as Battleground,” 40.

women's issues and the opening of specific wards or hospitals for survivors of this type of violence.

The stories and experiences of women in the DRC force us to ask why sexual violence has been so pervasive during and beyond this conflict. I will briefly describe a few explanations based on research by Stacy Banwell. She posits that the extreme sexual violence in the DRC is the result of power struggles taking place on macro, meso, and micro levels.¹¹³ The macro level considers the overall state of the DRC, which, during the heart of the conflict, was absolute chaos. This allowed multiple actors, including rebel groups, government officials, and corporations, to exploit the DRC's many natural resources like gold, tin, and coltan.¹¹⁴ Local groups harvest the resources and then sell them to middlemen who pass them onto corporations in the West. There is, therefore, an economic incentive for all actors to perpetuate the disarray caused by conflict. Rape and sexual violence are particularly effective ways to maintain this disorder because rape "terrorizes" communities, causing them to leave their houses and land open for economic exploitation.¹¹⁵ Banwell suggests that the global hegemonic masculinity, which can be described as "aggressive, ruthless, and competitive," is at play in the DRC, because actors will go to any lengths, including sexual violence, to make a profit.¹¹⁶

The meso level is more constrained to actors in the DRC, specifically the FARDC and the various rebel groups. This level recognizes the many strategic aims of individual rebel groups in perpetuating rape as part of their larger end goals, but takes the issue further in recognizing that the socialization process of militaries helps shape this behavior. Banwell describes this phenomenon well: "men and boys learn to be masculine and violent in the military through

¹¹³ Stacy Banwell, "Rape and sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo: a case study of gender-based violence," *Journal of Gender Studies* 23, no. 1 (2014): 47.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 50.

¹¹⁵ Carlsen, "Ra/pe," 479.

¹¹⁶ Banwell, "Rape and sexual violence in the DRC," 50.

methods specifically designed to create soldiers who are able (and willing) to fight and kill.”¹¹⁷ This training creates a standard of masculinity, the soldier ideal, in which men must be able to protect themselves and effectively harm or kill others. The men are not supposed to feel guilt or any other emotion about these violent acts.

Maria Baaz and Maria Stern completed extensive research on this topic in the DRC between 2006 and 2010. In their interviews, Baaz and Stern found that many of the male soldiers discussed the ultra-masculine ideal in the specific context of the DRC: the “provider” who is wealthy and has his choice of women.¹¹⁸ The men who join the FARDC or the rebel groups are typically rural, uneducated, and poor. By joining the military, they hope to gain necessary social and economic power. The men interviewed, therefore, viewed rape in two particular ways. The first was as a result of lust and frustration at their situation; this belief exemplifies the untrue stereotype that men cannot control their sexual urges.¹¹⁹ The second was as an act of the “emasculated man” who has not had success in other parts of the military to fulfill the masculine ideal. Instead, they rape or participate in rapes to help prove that they are willing to commit violent acts and can have control, thus fulfilling the militarized masculinity. Though this explanation is brief, it is important to note that the militarized masculinity is an international phenomenon that can lead male soldiers to extreme levels of violence to prove themselves.

The second component of the meso level worth mentioning is the strategic aims for which rape is used to complete. As in the Rwandan conflict, rape in the DRC is a tool used to enact genocide. This conflict is a convoluted result of ethnic, political, and regional tensions, thus groups have tried to accomplish genocide against opposing groups. Rape is one way to do

¹¹⁷ Banwell, “Rape and sexual violence in the DRC,” 51.

¹¹⁸ Maria Erickson Baaz and Maria Stern, “Beyond Militarised Masculinity: The case of the Democratic Republic of Congo,” in *Beyond 'Gender and Stir': Reflections on Gender and SSR in the Aftermath of African Conflicts*, published 2012: 40.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

this, as women's bodies are seen as representations of the entire community.¹²⁰ If women are violated, communities and ethnic groups are subsequently violated. Further, if the woman becomes pregnant from the rape, the child is not part of the community, but instead a mixture of the ethnicities who can never be accepted to either group. Evidence from Amnesty International supports these claims, as women in areas with especially great ethnic tension were targeted for their ethnicities.¹²¹ When women are raped, the act also targets the males of the group because masculinity is so caught up in men's ability to protect their families; when they cannot do so, they also fail to live up to the masculine ideal. Ultimately, rape is used to terrorize men, women, communities, and ethnic groups – and it is quite successful at doing so. Even the perceived risk of such humiliation limits Congolese women's mobility.¹²² Tasks like collecting firewood or water and going to the market become infinitely more difficult and require strategic planning. When women cannot complete these simple tasks, the effects flow over into their economic and social well being.

The micro level of sexual violence is more localized and may or may not be directly related to the conflict. This sexual violence is what soldiers often called “lust rapes,” or those that are just opportunistic.¹²³ In the Congo, the perpetual conflict and intense poverty have created “conditions where rape and sexual violence become permissible and justified within the conflict zone.”¹²⁴ Even for non-combatants, the occurrences of gender-based violence and domestic violence have increased dramatically. When combatants are demobilized, they are not given sufficient help with reintegration; frustration with their conditions and the continued conflict can lead to sexual violence separate from the conflict's strategic aims. The micro level

¹²⁰ Carlsen, “Ra/pe,” 479.

¹²¹ Ibid, 480.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Baaz and Stern, “Beyond Militarised Masculinity,” 40.

¹²⁴ Banwell, “Rape and sexual violence in the DRC,” 53.

can be seen through the increases in the rates of domestic violence and violence in general. Furthermore, when a conflict lasts for such a long period of time, this continual state of gender-based violence becomes an unfortunate fact of life. Essentially, the micro level takes advantage of the chaos of the conflict to perpetuate a gendered hierarchy that results in even more sexual violence separate from the conflict itself. The gender-based violence in the DRC now occurs from the top down and the bottom up.

Whatever the combination of causes, sexual violence in the DRC is pervasive, perhaps more so than any other conflict, and women overwhelmingly occupy the role of victims. The international community has taken strides to combat wartime sexual abuses, but the situation in the DRC blatantly shows that the existing policies are not sufficient. Yes, the ICC defines rape as a war crime and yes, rapists can technically be prosecuted. However, successful prosecution is rare and is not a significant enough deterrent. Not only is sexual violence effective, but it is also practically risk free as it is largely met with impunity in the DRC. UNSCR 1325 “emphasizes the responsibility of all States to put an end to impunity and to prosecute those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes including those relating to sexual and other violence against women and girls.”¹²⁵ This recognition is important, but it is not enough. States cannot prosecute offenders if there is not sufficient infrastructure for fair trials, reporting mechanisms, help for victims to actually get to court, compensation for time lost, etc. The UN should do more to help establish this infrastructure so each victim has a clear way to prosecute her attacker, if she so pleases.

Any further resolutions should also recognize the potential issues with the military chain of command – who all is responsible for sexual violence? Is it just the men who directly participate, or also those who knew about it or the condoning officers? This decision should be

¹²⁵ U.N. Security Council, "Resolution 1325, Women, Peace and Security."

clearly established. Moreover, the United Nations and other international organization must do more to combat the militarized masculinity. The construction of masculinity is incredibly important to soldiers and how they perpetrate violence, and not just in the DRC. The militarized masculinity is a problem for soldiers across the globe. Such a large phenomenon is difficult to target with a resolution, but even recognition of how the militarized masculinity affects conflicts would be a step in the right direction. As before, the international community has much to do in terms of sexual violence, especially in the DRC.

Still, I want to end my discussion of sexual violence on a somewhat positive note. On New Year's Day 2011, one group of soldiers from the FARDC entered the town of Fizi in South Kivu and raped at least fifty women, most likely more.¹²⁶ Women were gang raped, raped in front of their children, and tortured. The youngest victim was only six months old. Médecins Sans Frontières sent a medical group to the area and reported serving over 200 people who had been injured in the attack. This bout of sexual violence did not go ignored. Instead, multiple women who were raped banded together and identified their attackers in an attempt to bring them to court. After the correct battalion was found, other witnesses from MSF reported that the leader, Lieutenant Colonel Mutuare Daniel Kibibi, ordered the attack. With this evidence, the national leader of the FARDC admitted that Congolese soldiers were responsible for this attack and "promised swift legal action."¹²⁷

Swift legal action is exactly what happened: just over a month later, Kibibi was found guilty and sentenced to twenty years in prison. Three other officers also received twenty years,

¹²⁶ "DR Congo Army Commander 'Led Mass Rape' In Fizi," 19 January 2011, *BBC News*.
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-12205969>.

¹²⁷ *Ibid*.

and five soldiers were found guilty but given lesser sentences.¹²⁸ In addition, the government paid each of the women who testified against the soldiers 10,000 USD and also required Kibibi to pay them for other damages. Some protestors at the funeral thought that twenty years was too short a sentence, and I agree. However, this example is a step in the right direction. In the DRC, impunity does not have to be the default. Women's roles as victims of sexual violence can be mitigated, but it will take intentional effort on the part of the international community and various local actors in the DRC. Until then, women's bodies will continue to be a battlefield of the conflict.

¹²⁸ "Congo Army Colonel Guilty Of Mass Rape On New Year's Day," 21 February 2011, *The Guardian*, <http://www.theguardian.com/society/2011/feb/21/congo-rape-trial>.

Women in Armed Groups

“Our commander told us, ‘Do you see the old men over there? Shoot them to get rid of your fear.’ What should I do? I had never killed anyone before. But if you don’t obey orders they’ll kill you. I said a prayer ‘God, this is the work I have, the work as a soldier.’ We started to shoot them, shot and shot. From then on my spirit changed. The fear of killing went away.” – Female soldier of the FARDC

In a war fraught with sexual violence, it is easy to imagine the perpetrator of all violence as a “man in uniform” and the victims as helpless women. Nonetheless, this idea is far from true for the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Female soldiers have been a part of the army in the DRC since Mobutu began his reign in 1965, and continue to make up a substantial minority, potentially up to 30 percent, of armed groups in the conflict today.¹²⁹ Rather than being passive bystanders, women actively participate in the conflict, even the most violent aspects. Further, the evidence suggests that most women actively and intentionally choose roles in armed groups, although for a variety of different reasons. When women do join armed forces, they also occupy a variety of positions within the group’s hierarchy.

For this section, I draw my information primarily from original research conducted by Maria Baaz, Maria Stern, Beth Verhey, and International Alert. Baaz and Stern have worked together on multiple projects in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and I am utilizing a series of interviews conducted by them between 2006 and 2011. During this time frame, they talked to around 250 current and ex-FARDC combatants, both men and women.¹³⁰ From these interviews, they attempted to explain how female soldiers construct their identities as both

¹²⁹ Christ Coulter, Mariam Persson, and Mats Utas, “Young Female Fighters in African Wars: Conflict and Its Consequences.” *Nordiska Afrikainstitutet Policy Dialogue* (2008): 19.

¹³⁰ Maria Erickson Baaz and Maria Stern, “Fearless Fighters and Submissive Wives: Negotiating Identity among Women Soldiers in the Congo (DRC),” *Armed Forces and Society* 39, no.4 (2013): 714.

women and soldiers in comparison to traditionally male soldiers. My second source, Beth Verhey, worked under four different NGOs to conduct field research in the eastern Congo.¹³¹ She visited care centers, community centers, women's associations, and other groups to discuss both women and children's roles in the conflict. Though her visit was short, lasting only two weeks, she conducted twenty focus groups with over 200 interviewees. Finally, International Alert is an NGO that has worked with Congolese groups to help work towards a sustainable peace. In September 2012, the group published a report detailing its works on the ground in the eastern DRC.¹³² Their observations from direct work with armed groups is helpful as an addendum to the interviews conducted by Baaz, Stern, and Verhey.

I take the time to detail my sources on the subject because they are limited. A number of other academic articles and books refer to the presence of women in armed groups in the Congo, but have no statistics on their presence and very little other information. I searched extensively on the topic, mostly looking through reports from NGOs working on the ground, and found mentions of women combatants or women in armed groups performing other tasks, but no interviews or concrete data. Also, some of the literature is contradictory in its focus and conclusions about the role women play during conflict.¹³³ I will point out the times when my sources seem to contradict each other. Most of these conclusions seem to be drawn from generalities, as most have never examined or interviewed Congolese women, particularly Congolese women soldiers. The few articles and reports detailed above are some of the only original research on the topic; Baaz and Stern themselves admit that the topic is grossly

¹³¹ Beth Verhey, "Reaching the Girls: Study on Girls Associated with Armed Forces and Groups in the Democratic Republic of Congo," report for Save the Children UK, CARE, IFESH, and IRC, published November 2004, 7.

¹³² "Ending the deadlock: Towards a new vision of peace in eastern DRC," report from International Alert, published September 2012, 2.

¹³³ Emilie Combaz, "Gender dimensions of conflict drivers and stabilisation in eastern DRC," research findings for GSDRC, (2013): 13.

“underreported” and under researched.¹³⁴ I, therefore, am utilizing the best sources available, but recognize their limited scope and the fact that significantly more attention needs to be paid to this topic.

Women have been part of the Congolese national army, now the FARDC, for a long time. Mobutu, inspired by an all-female brigade of soldiers in Muammar Gaddafi’s Libya, began actively recruiting women in the 1980s.¹³⁵ The number of women in the army grew quickly, but they mostly held support roles, such as intelligence work and medical assistance. After Mobutu’s downfall in 1997, Laurent Kabila intensified recruitment attempts for women, allowing them to work in direct combat roles.¹³⁶ Though most statistics about women’s participation are severely limited and difficult to verify, one source reports that in 1998 about five percent of the national army consisted of women.¹³⁷ For comparison, the United States had a fourteen percent women’s participation rate during the same time period.¹³⁸ Since the “official” end of the conflict in 2002, the number of women in military roles has steadily decreased, now hovering around two percent in the FARDC. There are also significant numbers of women in the numerous armed groups in the DRC, though there is almost no qualitative data examining how many and in which groups.

Though women are ultimately a small minority of soldiers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, there must be some significant reasons that thousands of women choose this role. Baaz and Stern asked this question of both the male and female FARDC soldiers they interviewed; the results were somewhat disparate between the sexes. First and foremost, a majority of the women they interviewed referred to their position in the FARDC as some

¹³⁴ Baaz and Stern, “Fearless Fighters,” 1.

¹³⁵ Baaz and Stern, “Fearless Fighters,” 717.

¹³⁶ Coulter, “Young Female Fighters,” 16.

¹³⁷ Baaz and Stern, “Fearless Fighters,” 717.

¹³⁸ David Segal and Mady Wechsler Segal, “America’s Military Population,” *Population Bulletin* 59, no. 4 (2004): 26-27.

semblance of a “first choice.”¹³⁹ Many in this majority mentioned being attracted to the armed forces since a young age, wanting the “dignity, order, and discipline” of the army.¹⁴⁰ This description of the FARDC is in contrast to the perceived chaos of civilian life, where women might rely totally on their husbands or families and have few opportunities. Instead, they viewed the army as a way to escape this life, to regain their own agency and have a purpose. The army life is, to them, significantly better than their previous civilian one. Other women in the interview groups also noted their desires to be soldiers based on their love for their country or other nationalist agendas. Some knew from a young age that this was their goal in life. As one woman told Baaz and Stern, “I have always wanted to be a soldier. I wanted to be in combat—to fight and to defend my country. I liked it when I saw the parades and when I watched films of war. I also wanted to do that.”¹⁴¹ For the most part, there was a lack of victimhood in most women’s stories; joining the FARDC was a premeditated, purposeful choice. This feeling was quite opposite of the men, as most felt that they had been forced by their communities or families to join the FARDC.

Still, there were a few women who felt they had no other option but to join an armed group. This group ranged from being kidnapped and forced into military service to having no other perceivable, viable options in civilian life. One such woman was Sergeant Madot Dagbinza, on whom the New York Times published a striking photo essay in 2015.¹⁴² Though Dagbinza successfully served in one of the FARDC’s elite units for a number of years, she initially had no intention of joining the armed forces. When she was 16, army recruiters came to her town, where

¹³⁹ Baaz and Stern, “Fearless Fighters,” 720.

¹⁴⁰ Baaz and Stern, “Fearless Fighters,” 721.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Both photos below from Dagbinza’s own photo album.

she was living alone with no economic means.¹⁴³ She hoped that the recruiters would take her to Kinshasa, where her father was supposedly living, but instead she ended up in the eastern Congo in an active war zone. For Dagbinza, joining the FARDC, even if under false pretenses, was a last resort to escape poverty. Other women felt similar ways, as if they had no other economic prospects, thus an armed group became the only option for survival.



A few women interviewed by Baaz and Stern also regarded the armed forces as their only option because of their “failed femininity.”¹⁴⁴ To these women it meant that, in civilian life, they could not fulfill what was expected or required of them as women. These requirements could refer to those as a wife or mother in any kind of capacity. To escape their own failures, they infiltrated one of the most masculine of worlds, the armed forces. One woman embodies this feeling of “failed femininity” perfectly:

¹⁴³ Michael Christopher Brown, ““Why not us women?”” 18 February 2015, *The New York Times*, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/22/magazine/why-not-us-women.html?_r=0#.

¹⁴⁴ Baaz and Stern, “Fearless Fighters,” 10.

“Me, I joined because I could not bear children. I was married first and we lived for five years and we didn’t conceive. My husband’s family told him to get another wife so he did. Then I met another man. We didn’t marry but stayed together, but also we didn’t get a child and he left me too. I met a third man but still didn’t have any babies so when he left me, I thought I might as well just join the Army.”¹⁴⁵

Because this woman was unable to have babies, she believed she had no purpose to serve in non-military life. At least in the FARDC she could find a community that does not require childbearing to be successful. Again, at least for women in the Congolese national army, joining the conflict as part of an armed group is largely a preferred choice. Women who felt that the FARDC was their last resort were in the minority.

However, Beth Verhey’s findings from her interviews with rebel soldiers directly contradict Baaz and Stern’s findings for the FARDC. First, many of the females associated with the armed groups in the DRC are not actually adult women, but girls under the age of 18. The FARDC’s minimum age is 18, though these rules are easily flouted, as shown by Madot Dagbinza’s enlistment at age 16.¹⁴⁶ Verhey found that a majority of these young women in armed groups are “forcibly recruited,” and that this behavior was particularly pronounced in the eastern provinces of the DRC.¹⁴⁷ Furthermore, the forced recruitment for women and girls appeared consistent across rebel groups, which is notable considering the sheer number of groups operating in the Congo. Verhey found that when women were not forcibly recruited, they still felt that joining an armed group was a “last resort” type choice. For example, Maria, a twelve-year-old girl in the Eastern provinces, was not forced to join the Mai Mai, but chose to because

¹⁴⁵ Baaz and Stern, “Fearless Fighters,” 720.

¹⁴⁶ Brown, ““Why not us women?””

¹⁴⁷ Verhey, “Reaching the girls,” 10.

her father had died and her mother could no longer support the family.¹⁴⁸ When considering her own survival, there were no other options. Beyond being forced to enlist, girls and women were also forced to stay; a majority of women interviewed stated they had been threatened with violence or death if they tried to leave.¹⁴⁹

Just as women's reasons for joining an armed group occupy a wide range, so do the roles women play once they have been recruited. Baaz and Stern, Verhey, and International Alert all note the rhetoric of women in armed groups being used solely as sexual slaves. While sexual slavery does happen in some cases, most women serve in roles far more integral to the survival of the group. I do not mean to diminish the atrocity that is sexual slavery, it certainly does happen in the DRC. However, I want to focus more on the other roles women play. In the armed rebel groups, women's conflict related roles largely mirror and amplify their pre-existing peacetime activities. In the eastern Congo, women are responsible for up to 75 percent of all agricultural and food production needs during peacetime.¹⁵⁰ In rebel groups, then, women make up a substantial portion of the group's labor force and are responsible for growing and distributing food to frontline soldiers. This labor force is also assigned jobs like laundry, cleaning, and any other household-type chore.¹⁵¹ These roles are actually quite significant, as the many armed movements in the DRC could not survive without these simple tasks being completed. As Coulter suggests, women are "are essential to the functioning and maintenance of the war system itself."¹⁵²

In many of the DRC's armed groups, women simultaneously serve in support and active combat roles. Maria and Salima, two girls interviewed by Beth Verhey, stated that they were

¹⁴⁸ Verhey, "Reaching the girls," 11.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, 13.

¹⁵⁰ "Ending the deadlock," 21.

¹⁵¹ Coulter, "Young Female Fighters," 17.

¹⁵² Ibid.

married off to male combatants and were required to maintain the household.¹⁵³ However, both Maria and Salima were also required to participate on the front lines, sometimes carrying weapons and standing beside their male counterparts. When in active combat zones, women also provide male fighters with “essential logistics”; though women may not always be carrying guns, they are just as active and in just as much danger as men.¹⁵⁴ The very limited quantitative data shows that almost all armed rebel groups utilize women in multiple roles, though the Mai Mai are most often cited as giving women weapons and putting them on the front lines. With this kind of evidence, we must recognize that the prevailing notions that women are inherently nonviolent and only participate in passive roles are completely untrue.

Women in the Congolese national army serve in a slightly different situation: the group is more formalized and many more women are given weapons. This difference is highlighted well by Madot Dagbinza, who was immediately sent to the front lines and “rarely left” during her first four years in the FARDC.¹⁵⁵ Throughout their interviews with male FARDC soldiers, Baaz and Stern noted that women were often pigeonholed into intelligence or medical work, those being the jobs for which men believed women were best suited. Men also suggested that combat was a purely masculine activity and that women were intruding in their domain.¹⁵⁶ It is true that many women in the FARDC work in intelligence, medical services, and administration, but the largest number are active combatants.

For the most part, women scoffed at the perceived difference between the sexes, as underscored by the following conversation.

¹⁵³ Verhey, “Reaching the girls,” 11.

¹⁵⁴ “Ending the deadlock,” 25.

¹⁵⁵ Brown, ““Why not us women?””

¹⁵⁶ Baaz and Stern, “Fearless Fighters,” 8.

“Woman 1: In the Army there’s not ‘men’s’ or ‘women’s’ work. Giving punishments is the same. And taking punishments is the same.

Woman 2: Carrying a gun is the same. Shooting is the same.

Interviewer: If one talks to your male colleagues, many explain that women are not suited for fighting in the front lines.

Woman 1: They are lying. Where did I come from? I just came from the front. Look at this wound (points at a bullet wound in the leg). I got it in an ambush. A bullet doesn’t care. It didn’t say, ‘you are a woman, so I will not hit you.’ It doesn’t care if you’re a man or a woman. A bullet doesn’t choose.”¹⁵⁷

Furthermore, some of the women interviewed thought that women were actually *better* soldiers than men when put on the front lines. As one woman put it, “My experience is that women are less afraid and thereby better, more daring and more accountable in combat. They don’t panic and they don’t desert you.”¹⁵⁸ In contrast to the stereotypes surrounding women in conflict, the FARDC’s female soldiers do not see themselves as less violent than men, but at least as successful (if not more) in what they do.

Recognizing women’s very active roles in the Congolese conflict is important, but it also raises difficult questions in regards to sexual violence. The conflict in the DRC has been rife with sexual violence, and it is conceptually easier to imagine that women are the clear victims of said violence and that men are the perpetrators. This narrative is easy to understand, straightforward – but it is not correct. Both qualitative and quantitative evidence shows that women perpetrate sexual violence against men and other women. The most prominent source on the topic, research conducted by members of the American Medical Association (AMA),

¹⁵⁷ Baaz and Stern, “Fearless Fighters,” 723.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

concludes that women perpetrate 41.1 percent of the sexual violence committed against other women and 10 percent of the sexual violence committed against men.¹⁵⁹ Curiously, very few men or women reported that their attackers were males and females working together. From this, I gather that men and women combatants must work separately, even for gang rapes, but commit the same kinds of sexualized violence.

These numbers are specific to the eastern Congo, where a majority of the conflict and sexual violence has taken place. I will also note that there are some problems with these statistics. First, all of the information was self-reported by people living in North Kivu, South Kivu, and Ituri. The authors generalize this information to be representative of the entire eastern DRC, but self-reporting is not the most accurate way to gather data. Second, there were a total of 1005 households surveyed, and they were identified from voter registrations from the year 2006.¹⁶⁰ Those surveyed might not be the best representation of an area that now has over 2 million residents as not every section of the population has access to voter registration materials. Still, despite these problems, this is the best information available.

To help clarify the data, the AMA researchers asked which armed groups each person's male or female attacker aligned with. The "most frequent perpetrators" of female on female violence were the Mai Mai, accounting for about 27 percent of this kind of violence.¹⁶¹ The FDLR, UPC, and Interahamwe fighters were the other most reported groups. In addition, the AMA's research also pinpoints the most common kinds of sexual violence (results being rape, gang rapes, and molestation) and the physical damage that accompanied these attacks.¹⁶² The

¹⁵⁹ Kirsten Johnson, Kirsten, Jennifer Scott, Bigy Rughita, Michael Kisielewski, Jana Asher, Ricardo Ong, and Lynn Lawry, "Association of Sexual Violence and Human Rights Violations With Physical and Mental Health in Territories of the Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo," *The Journal of the American Medical Association* 304, no. 5 (2010): 553.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid, 557.

¹⁶² Ibid.

researchers themselves did not ask questions about the physical and emotional trauma specific to women attackers, but I must conclude that women are committing similarly aggressive, violent sexual assaults, just like those discussed in the previous section. This information further complicates the situation in the Congo, and we must consider why women commit sexual offenses.

Baaz and Stern note that some female soldiers mentioned participating in sexual violence, but most of their comments seemed off-handed. Soldiers commit rape, these women were soldiers, and thus participating was just another facet of their soldier identity.¹⁶³ Baaz and Stern do not press the women on this issue, but I think there is more here. Though the women interviewed contended that they are just as capable of violence as men, the structure of armed groups and the FARDC makes life for women difficult. As many women hinted, “men always want women to be behind.”¹⁶⁴ It makes sense, then, that women feel the need to prove themselves in the overtly masculine world of armed conflict. I posit that some sexual violence committed by women is an attempt to mitigate their femininity, proving that they are worthy to occupy a masculine sphere. Rape is, in some ways, the ultimate crime against women, and by doing so female soldiers give up their own feminine identity in exchange for the identity of a soldier. The strategic reasons why men rape are also probably at play with women – regardless of who is perpetrating the crime, sexual violence is very effective at terrorization. Overall, our understanding of sexual violence during conflict is messy as is, but becomes even more complicated when we consider women as perpetrators.

We have a very limited understanding of women as soldiers. However, their presence in the Congolese conflict proves that they must be part of the international conversation on conflict,

¹⁶³ Baaz and Stern, “Fearless Fighters,” 725.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 718.

how we construct the soldier identity, and how combatants are treated before and after conflict. UNSCR 1325 is actually fairly clear about female combatants: the Security Council “encourages all those involved in the planning for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration to consider the different needs of female and male ex-combatants and to take into account the needs of their dependents.”¹⁶⁵ First, I think the recognition of the existence of female combatants is to be applauded. Though the resolution needs work, it does recognize that women have a role to play in every single portion of conflict. This recognition is helpful for all people approaching conflict, whether they are academics or policy makers.

Second, UNSCR 1325 specifically mentions that female combatants may have different needs than males during the DDR process. Once again, this acknowledgment is huge, as some of the biggest dysfunctions regarding female combatants happen during the DDR process. In 2007, the DRC’s internal affairs minister Mbusa Nyamwisi reported that about 130,000 combatants had been demobilized; about 2600 of those were women.¹⁶⁶ We know that women make up more than 2 percent of the armed forces, but only 2 percent of demobilized combatants were women. Even in the early stages, the Congo’s DDR process excludes women. This exclusion could be the result of problematic “one man = one weapon” rules, where combatants may only sign up for DDR programs if they have a weapon to trade for entry.¹⁶⁷ This rule automatically excludes any women who are part of armed groups, but participate mainly in support roles. Even though they might not be on the front lines, they are in gross need of help reintegrating to civilian life. Coulter also reports that some Congolese women specifically avoid the DDR process because of

¹⁶⁵ U.N. Security Council, "Resolution 1325, Women, Peace and Security."

¹⁶⁶ "Integration Of Ex-Combatants 'Still A Challenge'" 18 June 2007, *IRIN News*, <http://www.irinnews.org/report/72779/africa-integration-ex-combatants-still-challenge>.

¹⁶⁷ "Ending the deadlock," 25.

the possible stigmatization associated with female combatants.¹⁶⁸ When women return from armed groups, there is an assumption that they have been defiled and have dishonored their families. By participating in a DDR program, women fear that their roles in an armed group become more prominent. There is both intentional and unintentional exclusion of women from DDR in the DRC.

On this occasion, UNSCR 1325 does a good job recognizing how gender must be considered for DDR to be successful. The resolution could benefit from more specificity in regards to women's different needs, though it is certainly a good start. Most of all, UNSCR 1325 might mention how damaging one man = one weapon rules are, as they are one of the biggest culprits of women's exclusion. However, I find one problem with UNSCR 1325 that the consideration of female combatants highlights. Throughout the resolution, the inclusion of women every step of conflict is encouraged. It is implied that women's inclusion will make the process better in some way, though how exactly is never specified. In some cases, like when discussing women in peacekeeping and peacebuilding, the resolution seems to assume the including women will make the process more peaceful. If women are standing by men in combat, fighting on the front lines, and committing egregious acts of sexual violence, there is no way we can assume that women are inherently peaceful. To be more accurate, UNSCR 1325 should specify why women should be included: because they have an important and different, though not necessarily more peaceful, perspective to offer. The roles of women soldiers in the DRC prove at least that much.

¹⁶⁸ Coulter, "Young Female Fighters," 27.

Women as Peacebuilding Agents

“As mothers of the nation, you have a duty and the right to take a much stronger stand in pushing for the resumption of the talks. The women of Africa are behind you ...do not let us down.” –Madame Ruth Perry

We are now in the final three stages of the conflict curve: negotiation, dispute settlement, and post-conflict peacebuilding. Despite the DRC’s “post-conflict” designation, there has never been any real peace in the country. A variety of actors have attempted to negotiate long-lasting peace agreements since the conflict’s first cooling in 1999, but none have been successful. Fighting has continued between rebel groups and the national army, particularly in the eastern Congo. In 2013, the UN created the Intervention Brigade as part of MONUSCO, the first peacekeeping mission ever to have military offensive authorization. The group’s offensive was completed by late 2013, but I question how the international community can continue to call the DRC “post-conflict” when peacekeepers were tasked with military aims. As it stands now, at the beginning of 2016, the Congo still remains in limbo, a curious state with no official war, but no peace either.

To briefly recount, the official peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo began in July 1999 with the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement. The DRC, Angola, Namibia, Rwanda, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe were all party to the accord, though it did not include any of the rebel groups operating within the DRC.¹⁶⁹ The Lusaka Agreement stipulated a complete ceasefire, a joint UN/AU observer group to monitor the ceasefire, and the creation of the Inter-Congolese Dialogues (ICDs). In response to the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement, the Security Council mobilized 90 military observers and began preparations to deploy a full peacekeeping

¹⁶⁹ Luke Obala, “The Search for Elusive Peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo,” report from Aljazeera Center for Studies, published December 2015, 4.

force.¹⁷⁰ The first Inter-Congolese Dialogue took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in 2001 and quickly fell apart.¹⁷¹ The second, and much more successful, ICD took place a year later in Sun City, South Africa. In conjunction with these negotiations, various countries involved in the conflict brokered individual peace accords with the DRC. These include the Pretoria Agreement, signed by Rwanda and the DRC in 2002, and the Luanda Agreement between the DRC and Uganda.¹⁷² By the end of 2002, the parties of the conflict signed the Global and Inclusive Agreement, which officially ended the conflict. The agreement also set up the transitional government, which would be headed by President Joseph Kabila and four vice presidents chosen from the conflict's armed groups.

As part of the country's reunification, belligerent groups were forced to integrate with the FARDC. This effort caused tension between the groups, and some rebel movement refused to join. Violence resurfaced, especially in the eastern DRC.¹⁷³ Despite the fact that none of the peace agreements had worked, the transitional government ended in 2006 when Joseph Kabila was elected president of the new DRC. These were the first multi-party elections ever held in the Congo. In January 2008, the Congolese government and 22 armed groups operating in the east signed the Goma Peace Agreements. This agreement set in place another immediate ceasefire and the Amani project that would help monitor human rights law in the east.¹⁷⁴ The ceasefire was ignored, and the Amani project never received adequate funding. In 2011, under very controversial circumstance, Kabila was once again elected president. The next national election

¹⁷⁰ Obala, "The Search for Elusive Peace," 5.

¹⁷¹ Maureen Mayne, "The Inter-Congolese Dialogues," report from Democratic Dialogue Network, published 2005, 4.

¹⁷² Brittany Bokzam, "Timeline," *DRC Crisis Guide*, <https://drccrisisguide.wordpress.com/3timeline/>.

¹⁷³ John Ahere, "The peace process in the DRC: A transformation quagmire," *Policy and Practice Brief* 20 (2012): 2.

¹⁷⁴ "DR Congo: Peace Accord Fails to End Killing of Civilians," 17 July 2006, *Human Rights Watch*. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2008/07/17/dr-congo-peace-accord-fails-end-killingcivilians>.

will take place late in 2016.¹⁷⁵ Since Kabila's re-election, there has been one more peace agreement: the Framework Agreement for Peace, Security and Cooperation in the DRC and the Region. This accord, like many of the others, has resulted in very little real change.

UNSCR 1325 is adamant about the need to include women in the resolution of conflict and in peacebuilding. The Security Council resolution mentions women's roles in peacebuilding at least six times; their inclusion in the post-conflict process is clearly a priority. Beyond descriptive representation, UNSCR 1325 also says that the gender perspective should be a part of every peace process, regardless of who the involved parties are. The common narrative of the failed Congolese peace process does not include gender, either descriptively or substantively – so, where were the women?

In fact, women were quite involved in the Congolese peace process, though their roles are often ignored. Women across all ethnic identities and armed group affiliations were actually some of the first Congolese people to band together in hopes of ending the conflict. In 1998, an entire year before representatives of the government and armed groups began meeting, Femmes Afrique Solidarité (FAS) and Synergy Africa began to bring together women from all of the countries involved in the conflict.¹⁷⁶ Congolese, Burundian, Rwandan, and Ugandan female delegates all attended a symposium hosted by FAS and Synergy Africa with the hopes of creating a network of women with different backgrounds, but a common interest. It is also noteworthy that this was before UNSCR 1325 existed, thus on some level there was political will for women's inclusion even before the Security Council signaled its intent. Almost immediately after UNSCR 1325 passed, numerous women's groups in the Congo collaborated with the

¹⁷⁵ Bokzam, "Timeline."

¹⁷⁶ Doris Mpoumou, "Women's Participation in Peace Negotiations: Discourse in the Democratic Republic of the Congo," report from International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, published in 2004, 2.

MONUC's gender affairs coordinators to translate and print the resolution in four of the DRC's national languages.¹⁷⁷ The women's groups' hope was that women would read the resolution and understand that anyone could and should contribute to the Congolese peace process.

When it came time for the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement in 1999, no women were present for the discussions or the signing. In the document itself, which stipulated significantly more than just the ceasefire, women, violence against women, and the need to stop it were never mentioned.¹⁷⁸ Women's roles as combatants were ignored completely. This exclusion, while frustrating, is not uncommon. When women are not included in government before war, as was the situation in the DRC, they are similarly excluded when it comes to the post-war situation. The "tense" environment of peace negotiations also tends to exclude women by adhering to gendered stereotypes.¹⁷⁹ Women are not considered inherently aggressive, and the peace process requires aggressive negotiators who must, therefore, be men. Specifically in the Congo, leaders of government and other armed forces argued against women's inclusion because they were not fighters in the conflict, which we know is incorrect, and therefore were not qualified to participate.¹⁸⁰ I have always found this reasoning confounding. Peacebuilding is a complicated process that includes formal peace negotiations, but also the complete rebuilding of legal, economic, and social structures. I do not think that those who are qualified to wage war, men in this case, are the same people who are best fit to cultivate peace. Whitman put it best: "How do we expect to attain peace at a negotiation table surrounded by only those involved in the destructive, violent process of war?"¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁷ Mpoumou, "Women's Participation." 120.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, 122.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Shelly Whitman, "Women and Peacebuilding in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: An assessment of their role in the Inter-Congolese Dialogue," *African Journal on Conflict Resolution* 6, no. 1 (2006): 31.

Despite being excluded from the first agreement, women were almost immediately mobilized in preparation for the Inter-Congolese Dialogues, the national reconciliation conferences mandated by the Lusaka Agreement. The ICDs were supposed to bring together voices from the Congolese government, the largest armed rebel groups, political opposition, and “forces vives,” civil society groups. Though the Lusaka Agreement was signed in 1999, the ICDs faced both political and economic difficulties that delayed the first attempt until 2001.¹⁸² The committee for the ICDs, headed by Sir Ketumile Masire, met once in Gaborone to prepare; only six women were included during this meeting. Because there was little economic support and still active violence between groups, the Addis Ababa ICD failed quickly. The committee decided to try again the next year.

During these intermediary years, Congolese women became very active. The African Women’s Committee on Peace and Development and FAS conducted fieldwork throughout the two years, organizing meetings with local women in both Kinshasa and Goma.¹⁸³ They wanted to hear about women’s conflict experiences to better represent them during the peace process. Women also became more engaged in civil society; by the Sun City Inter-Congolese Dialogue, there were over 150 new women’s groups formed in the DRC.¹⁸⁴ After the failure of Addis Ababa, several of these women’s groups decided to lobby for a quota of women at the upcoming Sun City ICD. The Southern African Development Community had already stipulated that new peace processes should have at least 30 percent of the delegates be women, so Congolese women argued that this number should be met.¹⁸⁵ In addition, UNIFEM, FAS, and Women as Partners for Peace in Africa held a large convention in Nairobi, Kenya to prepare Congolese women for

¹⁸² Whitman, “Women and Peacebuilding,” 36.

¹⁸³ “Women unite in advance of inter-Congolese dialogue,” 9 February 2002, *IRIN News*, <http://www.irinnews.org/fr/node/199188>.

¹⁸⁴ Mpoumou, “Women’s Participation,” 122.

¹⁸⁵ Whitman, “Women and Peacebuilding,” 37.

the ICD.¹⁸⁶ There, women learned negotiating skills and established common goals for the ICD: an immediate ceasefire, women's continued inclusion in the peace process, and recognition of the violence against women. These concerns were formalized in the Nairobi declaration, which all of the women signed.¹⁸⁷ Just days before the Sun City dialogue, UNIFEM and ANC held another training session about negotiating and UNSCR 1325 for the women who would attend.

The Sun City dialogue, which took place in April 2002, had 340 delegates divided among the specified groups. Only 40 of these 340 were women, making up about 10 percent of the total delegates – nowhere near the 30 percent quota stipulated by the Southern African Development Community.¹⁸⁸ Both UNIFEM and UNDP tried to get at least 40 more female attendees, but the RCD began sending threats to local women's groups contingent upon their participation in the ICD.¹⁸⁹ For the 40 female participants, UNIFEM provided the funds for the entire ICD and hired 14 consultants to assist the women throughout the negotiations. Other women's groups, including UNIFEM and women from the ANC, were also able to attend the Sun City ICD, but were only there as silent observers.

The dialogue itself was facilitated by Sir Ketumile Masire and had five overarching discussion points: defense and security, political and legal affairs, economic and financial affairs, peace and reconciliation, and human rights, social, and cultural issues.¹⁹⁰ Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, now the President of Liberia, was the only woman on the leadership team, heading the conversation on human rights, social, and cultural issues. Overall, the Sun City dialogue was successful – the delegates signed 34 separate resolutions and each commission determined focus

¹⁸⁶ “UNIFEM calls for women to be heard in the inter-Congolese dialogue,” 5 March 2002, *Relief Web Press Release*, <http://reliefweb.int/report/democratic-republic-congo/unifem-calls-women-be-heard-inter-congolese-dialogue>.

¹⁸⁷ Mpoumou, “Women's Participation,” 121.

¹⁸⁸ “UNIFEM calls for women.”

¹⁸⁹ Mpoumou, “Women's Participation,” 122.

¹⁹⁰ Whitman, “Women and Peacebuilding,” 39.

points for the coming years. The Peace and Reconciliation Commission did recognize much of what UNSCR 1325 said, especially that sustainable, positive peace could not be achieved without women.¹⁹¹ The Human Rights, Social, and Cultural Commission also recognized women's roles in conflict, suggesting to the entire group that there should be significant funds allocated to survivors of sexual violence, specific trauma and DDR centers for female victims and participants of war, and that there should be a 30 percent quota for women in the new Congolese government. The other three commissions did not discuss women or women's issues. At the very end of the ICD, when all of the delegates were supposed to sign the final agreement establishing the transitional government, many of the groups began getting cold feet. Instead of letting Sun City fall apart as Addis Ababa had, all 40 of the female delegates stood around the outside of the room and linked arms, thus blocking all of the exits.¹⁹² The women demanded that the men in the room sign the resolution – and they did.

Women made significant contributions to the Sun City ICD, especially at the end, though the results could have been much better. It was difficult for women's voices to be heard as there was not a critical mass of women, usually considered 30 percent, and the women who did attend were repeatedly told that women's issues had no place in the peace process. It is not enough to have a few women attend negotiations; there must be people, women or men, willing to promote women's issues. In this situation, Congolese women did not have enough male allies. Further, all of the female delegates were assigned to the Human Rights, Social and Cultural or Peace and Reconciliation commissions.¹⁹³ The other three groups had a difficult time reaching consensus and having productive conversations; I posit that women could have ameliorated this environment. Though women are not inherently peaceful, research does show that women tend

¹⁹¹ Whitman, "Women and Peacebuilding," 41.

¹⁹² Ibid, 42.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

to be more collaborative and focus on outcomes for the community rather than themselves.¹⁹⁴ Most of all, the participants in the Sun City dialogue did not understand one very important point: when peace processes are perceived as gender neutral, they almost always uphold the status quo, disadvantaging women, even if unintentionally. Gender-neutral peace accords are actually androcentric peace accords. When we ignore gender issues, there cannot be real peace.

One of the final agreements signed, the Global and Inclusive Agreement, officially established the new government beginning in 2003. The transitional government had five goals: to reunify, pacify, reconstruct, restore territory, and reestablish state authority.¹⁹⁵ Kabila was to remain the president, but he would also be assisted by four vice presidents drawn from the RDC, MLC, political opposition, and the current government. No women were included in this upper echelon of leadership, though they held 7 percent of the other national positions.¹⁹⁶ In 2005, just before the first national election, women held 9 of the 61 possible minister positions (about 14 percent), and 60 of 620 positions in parliament (9 percent). There has never been a national quota as suggested by the Sun City ICD.

Since the beginning of the transitional government, women's groups have transitioned to using bottom-up processes instead of integrating themselves into the convoluted top-down one. The top-down process is the one implemented by the government and outside forces. The new bottom-up process works at a grassroots levels to mobilize local people who then lobby for change on larger levels. Though there have been other, smaller peace negotiations, like Goma in 2008, women have not been included in the conversations or the resolutions.¹⁹⁷ Instead, they have flocked to civil society on regional, national, and local levels. FAS, one of the most active

¹⁹⁴ Anderlini, "Women Building Peace," 130-31.

¹⁹⁵ Whitman, "Women and Peacebuilding," 38.

¹⁹⁶ Marithér Kapinga, "Africa: Women in Congo Form Common Front for Peace," *Ms* (2003): 25.

¹⁹⁷ "DR Congo: Peace Accord Fails."

women's groups in the Congo, has created an impressive network across the country to monitor the implementation of UNSCR 1325. This group has also gone into difficult situations in the eastern DRC to engage with rebel leaders, explain UNSCR 1325, and promote small changes to help the situation of women.¹⁹⁸ Other groups hold special workshops for female combatants and their families in hopes of easing the transition back to civilian life. Some focus on women's economic setbacks, providing microloans to help women start businesses and therefore benefit the overall economy.¹⁹⁹ There are more women's groups than is possible to count, each operating with different goals. The UN has been quite supportive of these local women's groups, providing them some funding and support from larger NGOs. These small groups are very effective on a local scale.

While the international NGOs present in the DRC are helpful, it is imperative to get local women engaged with the process. Local civil society provides women with a community and an entry point into the national political process. This kind of engagement also helps unite women across ethnic group or any other allegiance, thus helping with reconciliation and creating a united front for women.²⁰⁰ Local civil society is also potentially more helpful than international NGOs because it is organic, true to the Congo. International groups are Western, and the civil society in the DRC will not and should not mirror civil society in the West. The next step is to truly allow the very grassroots civil society access to the official peace process. While civil society groups have been included in the past, they are mostly "elite groups" who may not fully represent the reality of communities.²⁰¹ Grassroots civil society would also include many women's groups that

¹⁹⁸ Sarah Nagadya and Michael Pierson, "Voices From The Field: The Implementation Of UNSCR1325 In the Democratic Republic Of The Congo," report from PeaceWomen, published January 2010.

¹⁹⁹ Julia Karlysheva, "No peace without bread," *New African* 48, no. 539 (2014): 35.

²⁰⁰ Arnila Santoso, "Civil society and peace processes in Kivu," *Forced Migration Review* 36 (2010): 35-36.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*

have a firm grasp on women's day-to-day experiences and what could be done to make the situation better.

Despite the long and arduous peace process, the DRC remains more or less in an unstable state. UNSCR 1325 is recognized in the DRC and women have played an important role in some of the negotiations; however, more can be done. Overall, UNSCR 1325 does a fair job of advocating for women's inclusion in the peace process. The text itself mentions women's post-conflict roles time and time again and even "stresses the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts."²⁰² It is not enough to have one token woman in the peace process; women should have as much access to these negotiations as men. To be more specific, UNSCR 1325 could specify a goal quota, like 30 percent, for peace negotiations. A follow-up resolution could also emphasize the importance of including local women's groups in equal capacity to armed groups. Lastly, in an ideal world, the UN would emphatically state that gender-neutral peace negotiations simply do not exist. We should instead strive for negotiations where women's issues are deemed essential to resolving conflict.

Still, even with these few suggestions, UNSCR 1325 gets this topic right. However, the issue here is not UNSCR 1325's will, but how it played out in reality. Both international and local observers attempted to apply the resolution to the situation in the DRC and promote women within the process. UNSCR 1325 was not the problem: its reception by actors in the DRC was. The bottom line is that Congolese government and armed groups lacked the political will to acknowledge or include women in the conversation. This is a huge problem, but one that cannot be fixed by the United Nations or a Security Council resolution. The international community can make as many suggestions as possible, but it will take a change from within the Congo itself to fairly include women. As it is now, the power structure in the Congo does not recognize the

²⁰² U.N. Security Council, "Resolution 1325, Women, Peace and Security."

advantages of women's inclusion. The local women's groups working on the ground are hoping to change that, and they are on the right track. I want to tread lightly here and reiterate that women are not a panacea for conflict. However, even if they cannot singlehandedly end violence, women have an important role to play in the DRC's peacebuilding efforts.

Final Thoughts

At the beginning of the school year, I told the other students in my thesis workshop class about this project and the kinds of sources I was reading to do my initial research. I was excited about my prospects for the project, but all of my classmates looked at me with concern. One put her hand on my shoulder and said, “Megan, are you doing enough self care with this project? That’s going to be really important for you.” I stared at her, laughed a little internally, and then told my class that I would be fine and that I read things like this every day. Little did I know, that was actually very good advice.

Reading and writing about war is difficult, and there were a number of times throughout the year that that truth hit me hard. I am normally a fairly logical person with reserved emotions, but this research resonated with me in a way I had never experienced before. Sometimes I had to quit reading sources because I could not handle the stories that women were sharing. Once, I read a story about sexual violence, realized that it happened in the same city where some of my Congolese clients were from, and then promptly began crying in the middle of the library. Other times, I got so frustrated with the blatant disregard for women’s experiences that I had to go on walks to calm down.

The advice of self-care was more valid than I initially thought, but these moments of unintended emotional reaction highlight an important point. Conflict is complex and difficult to fully understand, but we must make an honest effort to do so. And, if we want to have the most nuanced, comprehensive view possible, our considerations *must* include the various roles of women. I have used the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo as a case study that proves this point. In the DRC, women hold many different roles, including early warning agents, victims of sexual violence, combatants and members of armed groups, and peacebuilders. I did

not explore every role that women hold in the DRC, but my sampling is enough to show that first, women's roles are intricate and move far beyond just being victims of conflict, and second, an understanding of these roles allows us to a new level of understanding conflict.

Throughout this paper, I have also considered United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and whether it did enough in the DRC. The bottom line is that UNSCR 1325 is a flawed document. The resolution does note many ways in which women can be involved in conflict, like conflict prevention and conflict resolution; however, merely mentioning these roles is not enough. To be effective, the resolution cannot only recognize the importance of women; it must provide a path for implementation during conflict situations. Implementation was a significant problem in the Congo. Before the conflict, there were changes happening to women that, if they had been noticed and acted on, could have helped slow the conflict. Women were victims of egregious amounts of sexual violence. UNSCR 1325 recognized how problematic this was, but there was not sufficient infrastructure for holding perpetrators accountable. Women also attempted to be included in the peacebuilding process. The international community in particular advocated for women's inclusion, but the actors in the Congo did not take the necessary strides to get women to the negotiation table. Yes, UNSCR 1325 could use some fine-tuning. However, most importantly, the international community must determine how to translate these political sentiments from words on a page to actual results. I do not know the best way to effect this change, but I do know it is necessary to fully act upon women's conflict experiences.

The good news is that the international community is starting to take notice of women's experiences. Research on this topic is beginning in earnest, many international organizations have the political will to make changes happen, and local women are becoming involved in activism. I can see these efforts in the DRC, and I hope that they continue to grow and that one

day I can genuinely contribute to them. This work is slow, but it is wildly important because women and their experiences are important. As this case study of the DRC has shown, considering women in the analysis of conflict results in a richer, more comprehensive, and somewhat more complex understanding of the conflict situation. By operating on this deeper level of analysis, we can plan better programs from conflict prevention to conflict resolution and understand the effects they may have on women. I am hopeful that one day this depth of analysis will help move the Congo from its current “no war, no peace” limbo into sustainable peace – and I recognize this is a lofty goal. As I have said before, I know women are not a magical cure-all for conflict, but understanding their experiences is a very good place to start.

Bibliography

- “2015 UNHCR country operations profile - Democratic Republic of Congo.” *UNHCR*.
Published 2015. <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e45c366.html>.
- “Africa for Women’s Rights: Ratify and Respect!” Press kit for a campaign to end discrimination and violence against women in Africa. Published Marsh 2009.
- Ahere, John. “The peace process in the DRC: A transformation quagmire.” *Policy and Practice Brief* 20 (2012): 1-7.
- Anderlini, Sanam. *Women and War: Power and Protection in the 21st Century*. Washington DC: United States Institute for Peace, 2011.
- Anderlini, Sanam. *Women Building Peace: What They Do, Why It Matters*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2007.
- “Annual Report: Democratic Republic of Congo 2013.” Report from Amnesty International. Published May 2013.
- Arostegui, Julie. “Gender, conflict, and peace-building: how conflict can catalyse positive change for women.” *Gender and Development* 21, no. 3 (2013): 533-549.
- Autesserre, Séverine. *The Trouble with Congo: Local Violence and the Failure of International Peacebuilding*. Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Baaz, Maria Erickson, and Maria Stern. “Beyond Militarised Masculinity: The case of the Democratic Republic of Congo.” In *Beyond 'Gender and Stir': Reflections on Gender and SSR in the Aftermath of African Conflicts*. Published 2012: 38-46.
- Baaz, Maria Erickson, and Maria Stern. “Fearless Fighters and Submissive Wives: Negotiating Identity among Women Soldiers in the Congo (DRC).” *Armed Forces and Society* 39, no.4 (2013): 711-739.
- Baaz, Maria Erickson, and Maria Stern. “Why Do Soldiers Rape? Masculinity, Violence, and Sexuality in the Armed Forces in the Congo (DRC).” *International Studies Quarterly* 53, no. 2 (2009): 495-518.
- Banwell, Stacy. “Rape and sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo: a case study of gender-based violence.” *Journal of Gender Studies* 23, no. 1 (2014): 45-58.

- Basini, Helen. "Gender Mainstreaming Unraveled: The Case of DDRR in Liberia." *International Interactions: Empirical and Theoretical Research in International Relations* 39, no. 4 (2013): 535-557.
- Behr, Kelly. "A Dangerous Euphemism: The Dark Side of Peacekeeping Missions A Case Study of the United Nations Missions to the Democratic Republic of Congo." Graduate thesis at University of Michigan. Published 2011.
- Bokzam, Brittany. "Timeline." *DRC Crisis Guide*. <https://drccrisisguide.wordpress.com/3/timeline/>.
- Brahm, Eric. "Conflict Stages." *Beyond Intractability*. Published September 2003. <http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/conflict-stages>.
- Brown, Michael Christopher. "'Why not us women?'" 18 February 2015. *The New York Times*. http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/22/magazine/why-not-us-women.html?_r=0#.
- Bouta, Tsjard and Georg Frerks. "Women's Roles in Conflict Prevention, Conflict Resolution, and Post-Conflict Reconstruction: Literature Review and Institutional Analysis." Report from Netherlands Institute of International Relations. Published 2002.
- Caprioli, Mary. "Gendered Conflict." *Journal of Peace Research* 37, no. 1 (2000): 51-68
- Carlsen, Erika. "Ra/pe and War in the Democratic Republic of the Congo." *Peace Review: A Journal of Social Justice* 21, no. 4 (2009): 474-483.
- Combaz, Emilie. "Gender dimensions of conflict drivers and stabilisation in eastern DRC." Research findings for GSDRC, (2013): 1-15.
- "Congo Army Colonel Guilty Of Mass Rape On New Year's Day." 21 February 2011. *The Guardian*. <http://www.theguardian.com/society/2011/feb/21/congo-rape-trial>.
- "Congo: No Peace Without Women." *Journal Of International Affairs* 67, no. 1 (2013): 205-209.
- Coulter, Chris, Mariam Persson, and Mats Utas. "Young Female Fighters in African Wars: Conflict and Its Consequences." *Nordiska Afrikainstitutet Policy Dialogue* (2008): 1-51.
- Dallman, Ashley. "Prosecuting Conflict-Related Sexual Violence at the International Criminal Court." *SIPRI Insights on Peace and Security* 1 (2009):
- "Democratic Republic of Congo." The World Factbook of the Central Intelligence Agency. Published March 2016. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/cg.html>.

- “Democratic Republic of Congo profile – timeline.” 4 August 2015. *BBC News*.
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13286306>.
- Denov, Myriam. “Girls in Fighting Forces: Moving Beyond Victimhood.” Research findings for CIDA’s Child Protection Fund: 1-41.
- “DR Congo Army Commander 'Led Mass Rape' In Fizi." 19 January 2011. *BBC News*.
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-12205969>.
- “DR Congo: Peace Accord Fails to End Killing of Civilians.” 17 July 2006. *Human Rights Watch*. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2008/07/17/dr-congo-peace-accord-fails-end-killing-civilians>.
- Eichler, Maya. “Militarized Masculinities in International Relations.” *The Brown Journal of World Affairs* 21, no.1 (2014): 81-94.
- “Ending the deadlock: Towards a new vision of peace in eastern DRC.” Report from International Alert. Published September 2012.
- Garcia-Moreno, Claudia, Alessandra Guedes, and Wendy Knerr. “Understanding and addressing violence against women.” Report for the World Health Organization. Published 2012.
- Hutu Ten Commandments. Accessed online at http://www.uwosh.edu/faculty_staff/henson/188/rwanda_kangura_ten.html.
- “Integration Of Ex-Combatants 'Still A Challenge'". 18 June 2007. *IRIN News*.
<http://www.irinnews.org/report/72779/africa-integration-ex-combatants-still-challenge>.
- Johnson, Kirsten, Jennifer Scott, Bigy Rughita, Michael Kisielewski, Jana Asher, Ricardo Ong, and Lynn Lawry. “Association of Sexual Violence and Human Rights Violations With Physical and Mental Health in Territories of the Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.” *The Journal of the American Medical Association* 304, no. 5 (2010): 553-562.
- Kaldor, Mary. (2013). “In Defence of New Wars.” *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development* 2, no. 1 (2013): 4.
- Kapinga, Marithe. "Africa: Women in Congo Form Common Front for Peace." *Ms* (2003): 25.
- Karlysheva, Julia. "No peace without bread." *New African* 48, no. 539 (2014): 34-37.
- Keralis, Jessica. “Beyond the silence: sexual violence in eastern DRC.” *Forced Migration Review* 36 (2010): 13-14.

- Kippenberg, Juliane. "Soldiers Who Rape, Commanders Who Condone: Sexual Violence and Military Reform in the Democratic Republic of the Congo." A report from Human Rights Watch. Published 2009.
- Kohli, Anjalee, Maphie Tosha, Paul Ramazani, Octave Safari, Richard Bachunguye, Isaya Zahiga, Aline Iragi, and Nancy Glass. "Family and Community Rejection and a Congolese Led Mediation Intervention to Reintegrate Rejected Survivors of Sexual Violence in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo." *Health Care For Women International* 34, no. 9 (2013): 736-756.
- Kuehnast, Kathleen, Chantal de Jonge Oudraat, and Helga Hernes. *Women and War: Power and Protection in the 21st Century*. Washington DC: United States Institute for Peace, 2011.
- Longombe, Ahuka Ona, Kasereka Masumbuko Claude, and Joseph Ruminjo. "Fistula And Traumatic Genital Injury From Sexual Violence In A Conflict Setting In Eastern Congo: Case Studies". *Reproductive Health Matters* 16, no. 31 (2008): 132-141.
- "Matrix: Early Warning Indicators of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence." Report from Secretary General's Policy Committee. Published December 2010.
- Matundu Mmabi, Annie and Marie-Claire Faray Kele. "Gender Inequality and Social Institutions in the DR Congo." Report for Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. Published 2010.
- Mayne, Maureen. "The Inter-Congolese Dialogues." Report from Democratic Dialogue Network. Published 2005.
- McCalpin, Jermaine. In *The African Stakes of the Congo War*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.
- McGreal, Chris. "Women seek abolition of "family code" as most hated legacy of regime." 15 April 1997. *The Irish Times*. <http://www.irishtimes.com/news/women-seek-abolition-of-family-code-as-most-hated-legacy-of-regime-1.62342>.
- Meditz, Sandra and Tim Merrill. *Zaire: A Country Study*. Washington DC: Library of Congress, 1994.
- "MONUSCO Background." *United Nations Peacekeeping*. <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/monusco/background.shtml>.

- Mpoumou, Doris. "Women's Participation in Peace Negotiations: Discourse in the Democratic Republic of the Congo." Report from International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. Published in 2004.
- Nagadya, Sarah and Michael Pierson. "Voices From The Field: The Implementation Of UNSCR 1325 In The Democratic Republic Of The Congo." Report from PeaceWomen. Published January 2010.
- Obala, Luke. "The Search for Elusive Peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo." Report from Aljazeera Center for Studies. Published December 2015.
- O'Brien, Sean. "Crisis Early Warning and Decision Support: Contemporary Approaches and Thoughts on Future Research." *International Studies Review* 12, no. 1 (2010): 790-807.
- Ohambe, Marie Claire Omanyondo, Jean Muhigwa, and Barnabé Mambe. "Women's Bodies as Battleground: Sexual Violence Against Women and Girls During the War in Democratic Republic of Congo." Report for Réseau des Femmes pour un Développement Associatif, Réseau des Femmes pour la Défense des Droits et la Paix, and International Alert. Published 2004.
- Oudraat, Chantal de Jonge. "UNSCR 1325 – Conundrums and Opportunities." *International Interactions* 39 (2013): 614-621.
- Peterman, Amber, Tia Palermo, and Caryn Bredenkamp. "Estimates and Determinants of Sexual Violence Against Women in the Democratic Republic of Congo." *American Journal of Public Health* 101, no. 6 (2011): 1060–1067.
- Pratt, Nicola and Sophie Richter-Devroe. "Critically Examining UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 13, no. 4 (2011): 489-503
- Reilly, Niamh and Roslyn Warren. "Women's Leadership and Participation in the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes Region: Achievements, Challenges, and Opportunities." Report for Peace Women.
- Santoso, Arnila. "Civil society and peace processes in Kivu." *Forced Migration Review* 36 (2010): 35-36.
- Schmeidl, Susanne and Eugenia Piza-Lopez. "Gender and Conflict Early Warning: A Framework for Action." Report for International Alert and the Swiss Peace Foundation. Published June 2002.

- Segal, David and Mady Wechsler Segal. "America's Military Population." *Population Bulletin* 59, no. 4 (2004): 1-44.
- Skjelsbaek, Inger. "Sexual Violence and War: Mapping Out a Complex Relationship." *European Journal of International Relations* 7, no. 2 (2001): 211-237.
- Stearns, Jason. *Dancing in the Glory of Monsters: The Collapse of the Congo and Great War of Africa*. United States: PublicAffairs, 2011.
- Stern, Maria, and Marysia Zalewski. 2009. "Feminist Fatigue(s): Reflections on Feminism and Familiar Fables of Militarisation". *Review of International Studies* 35, no. 3 (2009): 611-30.
- U.N. Economic and Social Council, written by Gay McDougall. "Contemporary Forms of Slavery: Systematic rape, sexual slavery and slavery like practices during armed conflict." 22 June 1988. Official Record. New York.
- U.N. Security Council, 4312th meeting. "Resolution 1325, Women, Peace and Security". 31 October 2000. Official Record. New York.
- "UNIFEM calls for women to be heard in the inter-Congolese dialogue." 5 March 2002. *Relief Web Press Release*. <http://reliefweb.int/report/democratic-republic-congo/unifem-calls-women-be-heard-inter-congolese-dialogue>.
- Verhey, Beth. "Reaching the Girls: Study on Girls Associated with Armed Forces and Groups in the Democratic Republic of Congo" Report for Save the Children UK, CARE, IFESH, and IRC. Published November 2004.
- Whitman, Shelly. "Women and Peacebuilding in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: An assessment of their role in the Inter-Congolese Dialogue." *African Journal on Conflict Resolution* 6, no. 1 (2006): 29-48.
- Whitworth, Sandra. *Men, Militarism, and UN Peacekeeping: A Gendered Analysis*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2004.
- "Women unite in advance of inter-Congolese dialogue." 9 February 2002. *IRIN News*. <http://www.irinnews.org/fr/node/199188>.
- Wulf, Herbert and Tobias Debiel. "Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanisms: Tools for Enhancing the Effectiveness of Regional Organisations?" Working paper for Crisis States Research Center. Published May 2009.

Zairian Constitution. Accessed from

https://africatoamericablog.files.wordpress.com/2013/11/drc_family_code.pdf and

<http://www.ambardeparis.com/pdf/Droit%20Civil%20et%20Judiciaire.pdf>.

Zihindula, Ganzamungu, and Pranitha Maharaj. "Risk Of Sexual Violence: Perspectives And Experiences Of Women In A Hospital In The Democratic Republic Of Congo." *Journal Of Community Health* 40, no. 4 (2015): 736-743.

Zongwe, Dunia, Francois Butedi, and Clement Phebe. "The Legal System and Research of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC): An Overview." *GlobaLex*. Published December 2007.