KARIN JOHANSSON
DEVELOPMENT DISSERTATION BRIEF

2022:06

CONDONING, CONDEMNING OR CONFRONTING? TRIGGERS AND RESPONSES TO CONFLICT-RELATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE

EBA

Condoning, Condemning or Confronting? Triggers and Responses to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence

Karin Johansson

Karin Johansson is a postdoctoral researcher at the Department of Peace and Conflict Research at Uppsala University. She has published in international outlets such as the Journal of Conflict Resolution, Conflict Management and Peace Science, International Peacekeeping and Global Responsibility to Protect. This report summarizes findings from the dissertation "Raising the Costs or Lowering the Bar: International Influences on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence" (Johansson, 2022). The dissertation was defended at Uppsala University on March 18, 2022. Faculty opponent was Associate Professor Jessica Stanton, Temple University, PA. Main supervisor was Professor Lisa Hultman. Assistant supervisor was Associate Professor Erika Forsberg.

Table of Contents

Abstract

This report summarizes research on conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV). As a point of departure, the report highlights an often-overlooked aspect of CRSV: that the spread and intensity of CRSV tends to fluctuate over time within one and the same conflict. This fluctuation is largely independent from overall battle intensity. Based on findings from statistical analyses, the report covers various reasons for why CRSV changes over time. The report summarizes research relating to factors that should have an impact on CRSV intensity: peacekeeping and international condemnation. The findings show that the impact of these interventions is less straightforward than policy-makers might hope. The report furthermore shares findings relating to two factors increasing the risk of CRSV escalation: military intervention and domestic protests. By way of concluding, the report offers several recommendations for policy.

Introduction

Sexual violence in the context of war and insecurity has gained increased attention over the last two decades. The policy framework for Swedish development cooperation and humanitarian assistance is an illustrative example of a policy document where sexual violence recurs repeatedly (Government of Sweden, 2016). The framework highlights sexual violence as a tangible expression of discrimination against women and girls (thematic direction 5.2). It also describes sexual violence as a factor that aggravates challenging situations prone to, or already suffering from, armed conflict (thematic direction 5.4). Sexual violence is furthermore mentioned in relation to inclusive economic development (thematic direction 5.5), migration and development (thematic direction 5.6) and equal health (thematic direction 5.7). Preventing and combating sexual violence connected to war and insecurity is thus central to Sweden's long term policy objectives.

What is sexual violence?

Sexual violence is often referred to as one category of violence within a range of various forms of sex discrimination and gender-based abuses. This report, however, has a narrower approach as it focuses on *sexual violence* only. Sexual violence differs from the broader concept of gender-based violence, in that it requires acts of a sexual nature. This includes rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, sexual torture, and sexual mutilation. The report moreover focuses on sexual violence *during, or in the aftermath of, armed conflict*. The terms "sexual violence" and "conflict-related sexual violence" (CRSV) are used interchangeably. By armed conflict, I mean armed clashes between two or more parties that result in at least 25 deaths per calendar year. While armed conflicts often contain an array of different actors – all potentially perpetrators of CRSV – I focus on violence *perpetrated by uniformed individuals who represent either a state or a rebel group*. This focus is broad

enough to include perpetrators irrespective of sex and age, but narrow enough to exclude sexual violence perpetrated by civilians, local militias, or peacekeepers. It is possible that some of the mechanisms discussed in this report are applicable to these groups of potential perpetrators too, but this is neither theorized nor empirically tested. Where the plausible targets of such violence are concerned, I refer to sexual violence that targets civilians or members of adversary groups.

In short, when using the terms sexual violence or *conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV)*, this report refers to violence that is:

- an act of sexual nature

- taking place during an armed conflict or during its aftermath

- perpetrated by representatives of states or rebel groups (irrespective of gender/sex)

- targeting civilians or members of adversary armed groups (irrespective of gender/sex)

Good to know about sexual violence

The general policy debate on conflict-related sexual violence often reflects a view of conflict-related sexual violence as similar and equally prevalent across conflicts. This approach turns a blind eye to important variations in geographical spread, form and intensity. In consequence, resources may be sub-optimally distributed and, in some cases, spread too thin (Nordås & Cohen, 2021). Empirical evidence suggests that there is a vast variation in the prevalence of conflict-related sexual violence.

Since the end of the Cold War through 2019, 62 states perpetrated CRSV. This represents 74% of all states involved in one or more civil conflict during the same time period.[1] While exact crime numbers do not exist, secondary reports suggest that more than half of these cases involved large-scale CRSV – that is, the practice was widespread or systematic in these instances. 94 rebel groups perpetrated sexual violence during the same time period. This represents 25% of all rebel groups active in civil war during that time. Nearly two thirds of this violence was reported to be widespread or systematic.

The most dominant research trend over the last decade has been to explain exactly this: why certain states and rebel groups seldomly or never perpetrate CRSV while others perpetrate sexual violence on a large scale (e.g. Wood, 2006, 2009; Cohen, 2013; Hoover Green, 2016; Sarwari, 2020). The research that I summarize in this report explores and emphasizes another, less researched, dimension: variation over time.

Analyzing how the prevalence of CRSV fluctuates over time reveals, as an example, that states rarely commit CRSV *throughout* an entire conflict, or even during *most* of it. Rather, state-perpetrated CRSV is episodic, with most incidents starting and ending within one to three years.

Variation over time can have several causes. Below, I give two examples of factors that might lead to an escalation or onset of conflict-related sexual violence: military interventions and domestic protests. Following this, I go into more depth about peacekeeping and diplomatic condemnation – two tools with the explicit expectation to de-escalate or prevent the onset of conflict-related sexual violence.


[1] This number is based on all states actively engaged as primary participants in intrastate conflicts between 1989 and 2019, as captured in SVAC 3.0 (Cohen & Nordås, 2014, 2019). The same source is used for all estimations of CRSV prevalence.

The effect of military intervention

It has become increasingly common that foreign states get involved militarily in other states' civil conflicts (Karlén, 2016). This trend is even more pronounced if we limit our view to conflicts known to feature sexual violence (see Figure 1). We know that sexual violence (and suffering of women and children in general) often is used as a justification to intervene in other states (e.g. Berry, 2003; Charli Carpenter, 2005) but beyond that, there is little knowledge about the link between intervention and CRS. For now, it suffices to note that military intervention and CRSV often coincide.

Figure 1: Foreign troop involvement in civil conflict
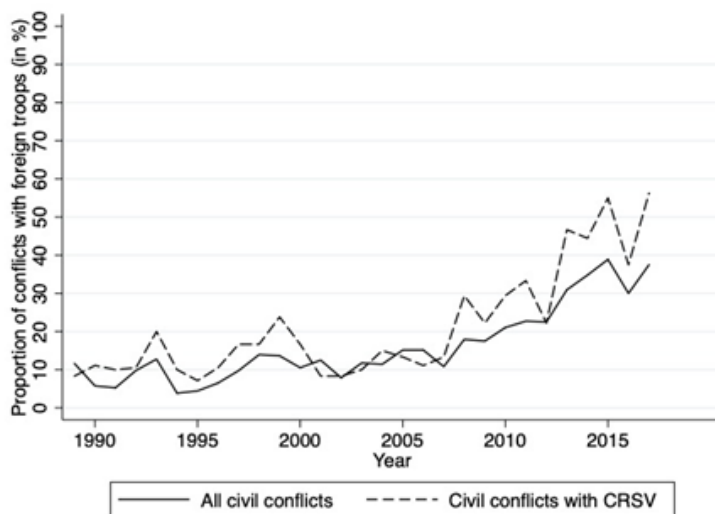
Theoretically, we have convincing reasons to expect additional troops to lead to more conflict-related sexual violence. Not necessarily out of an expectation that the intervening troops would perpetrate sexual violence, but rather because of the change in power relations between the domestic parties that the

intervention induces. Previous research has found that both states and rebel groups tend to use more violence against civilians when they find themselves in an unusually challenging situation vis-à-vis the opponent (Downes, 2006; Hultman, 2007; Metelits, 2009; Wood, Kathman & Gent, 2012). Civilian victimization is here understood as a weapon of the weak and/or desperate with the aim of pushing the adversary to the negotiation table or to demonstrate the inability of the adversary to protect the civilian population. There is also research suggesting that strained access to resources makes groups more likely to employ coercive recruitment tactics (Eck, 2014). Well-cited research on conflict-related sexual violence has found that sexual violence is particularly likely when combatants have been recruited involuntarily (Cohen, 2013, 2016). Rape and other forms of sexual violence is, in these groups, used as part of hazing procedures with the aim of creating hierarchies and loyalties within small military units. Given that foreign troops supporting one of the domestic parties by definition change the power relationship between the warring parties, it is therefore reasonable to assume that sexual violence by the party challenged by the intervention will become more common. In a nutshell, we can thus expect the following in a conflict between side A and side B.

Military intervention supporting side A ➡ *more pressing situation for side B* ➡ *more sexual violence by side B*

Research gaps that remain

Sarwari and Johansson (2017) find some statistical evidence supporting this assumption. To capture the power balance induced by the intervention, they use the amount of troop support to one warring party compared to the troop support to the other. While this measure is valid in theory, it is far from perfect empirically. Generally, we know very little about the magnitude of foreign

states' troop support. To advance our understanding in this area, we therefore would need to use different types of research methods in the future. For now, it is important to consider the strong theoretical reasons for this expectation.

The effects of domestic protests

In research as well as media and policy, there is a tendency to describe civilians in war as victims without agency. In real life, however, civilians often take to the streets to protest against the warmakers, nonviolently or violently (e.g. Bonnin, 2000; Arjona, 2016; Leventoğlu & Metternich, 2018; Dorff, 2019; Vüllers & Krtsch, 2020). Studying the efficacy of civil resistance since 1900, researchers have demonstrated the surprisingly high success rate of large civilian uprisings compared to the success rate of armed insurrections (Stephan & Chenoweth, 2008; Chenoweth & Stephan, 2011). While often successful in outcome, it is not uncommon that individuals participating in civilian protests experience sexual harassment and abuse (e.g. HRW, 2013; Johansson-Nogués, 2013).

In a statistical study of all states in conflict or its aftermath between 1989 and 2017, I find that increases in protest activity very often are associated with escalations in sexual violence. Notably, states' internal discipline plays an important part: The effect is most pronounced among states with least discipline (measured in corruption levels in the public sector). In states with stronger internal discipline, such as Israel and Turkey, protests are not equally associated with increases in sexual violence by members of the state security apparatus. A plausible interpretation of this finding is that domestic protests provide additional opportunities in corrupt states for police corps and other security personnel to perpetrate sexual violence on their own initiative. In other words, protests may provide an environment conducive to opportunistic sexual violence. It is also possible that domestic protests are perceived as an additional stressor by states in distress, making them more likely to incite or to accept

CRSV within their ranks. An example of incited escalation was seen when Tunisian security forces scaled up sexual violence as protests escalated in Tunis in early 2011, in order to deter further mobilization and activism. A similar development was observed in Egypt during the Arab Spring (Johansson-Nogués, 2013).

The effect of peacekeeping

While peacekeeping is a broad term, this section refers to peacekeeping missions mandated by the United Nations (UN) to use armed force to maintain international peace and security. The frequency of such missions (in relation to the number of ongoing civil conflicts) has been rather stable since the end of the Cold War. We can nevertheless note a time trend with regard to civil conflicts in which CRSV is prevalent. This category of conflicts has been disproportionally targeted by peacekeeping missions since the mid-2000s (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Peacekeeping involvement in civil conflict
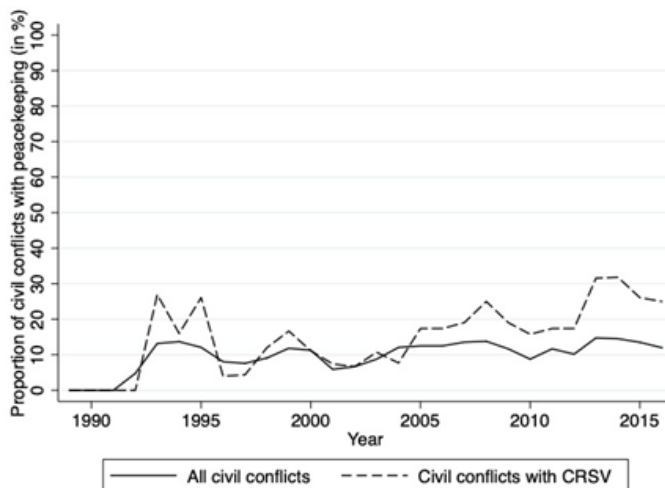
We do not know exactly why conflicts with sexual violence are overrepresented among conflicts targeted by peacekeeping. When other factors are taken into account, there is no straightforward correlation between CRSV and peacekeeping deployment (Hultman & Johansson, 2017). What is established, however, is that the Security Council is more likely to adopt resolutions targeting conflicts with CRSV than it is to agree on resolutions targeting other conflicts (Benson & Gizelis, 2019). For the purposes of this report, it suffices to note that sexual violence is a common feature in the context of peacekeeping. How well (or not) peacekeepers manage to deal with this type of crime is thus a relevant question for policy.[2]

While a robust body of research demonstrates a dampening effect of peace-keeping on killings (e.g. Fortna, 2004; Hultman, Kathman & Shannon, 2013; Ruggeri, Dorussen & Gizelis, 2017; Hegre, Hultman & Nygård, 2018), the same cannot be said about its effect on CRSV. Theoretically, we could expect some of the mechanisms that prevent killings to protect against CRSV too. But there are also reasons to expect that CRSV requires specific considerations. Unless staged for a wider audience, CRSV often takes place in the private sphere, far from military confrontations. Relatedly, military peacekeeping personnel, constituting the lion's share of the entire operation, generally has very limited experience of managing and preventing CRSV.

In a global study of all armed conflicts 1989-2009, Johansson and Hultman (2019) argue that the number of personnel is particularly important in relation to CRSV as it sometimes takes place in remote and private spaces. They also argue, and find, that a mandate focused on civilian protection is crucial for peacekeeping to be effective with regard to CRSV. A sizable police contingent mandated to protect civilians substantially lowers the risk that widespread CRSV by rebel groups will continue. Without such a protection mandate,

---

[2] The text that follows builds in part on a discussion published in International Peacekeeping (Johansson in Olsson et al., 2020)

however, the risk of continued CRSV by rebels instead increases following peacekeeping deployment. Notably, there is no average effect of peacekeeping on sexual violence by state forces, regardless of mandate.

The success of peacekeeping operations is not only a product of size and mandate. It is also a matter of the degree to which a state or rebel group exercises central command over its forces. While the international spotlight that follows from a large international operation expectedly has the power to impact warring parties' political will, this will not have much effect if the warring parties themselves lack capacity to carry out reforms at the organizational level. In an organization such as the Integrated Armed Forces in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC), where the relationship between the leadership and the rank-and-file soldiers has been characterized by disdain and broken promises (Eriksson Baaz & Stern, 2013), we cannot expect adjustments in the incentive structure at the top leadership to leave much of a footprint at lower levels of the echelons, at least not in the short term. Based on rough measures of internal control, there is statistical evidence in support of this notion: In state forces characterized by functional, internal control, there is a measurable reduction in CRSV following peacekeeping. There is a similar effect on rebel groups. The inability of peacekeepers to change the behaviour of state forces and rebel groups that lack internal control is concerning given that this group is overrepresented among perpetrators of CRSV.

Research gaps that remain

To better understand when peacekeeping operations succeed in improving the situation on the ground, we would need more detailed information on both the specific undertakings of various peacekeeping contingents at different points in time, across different territories, and periodical reports of CRSV with more precise information about location and timing than conflict-year. To strengthen

the external validity of our measurements and analyses, stronger partnerships between researchers (qualitative and quantitative), policy-makers and practitioners are needed.

The effect of human rights council condemnation

Diplomatic condemnation represents a low-cost response to CRSV in comparison to peacekeeping. In this section, I focus on diplomatic condemnation issued as resolutions by the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) and its predecessor, the Commission on Human Rights (CHR). The number of resolutions[3] mentioning CRSV has increased steadily since the Commission on Human Rights was replaced by the Human Rights Council in 2006 (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Condemnation of sexual violence through the Human Rights Council

---
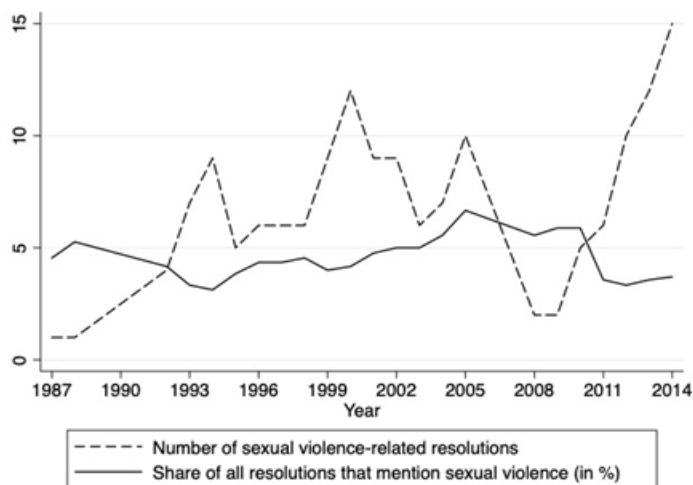
[3] By 'resolutions' I refer to resolutions targeting specific nation states, thus excluding general/thematic resolutions.

This reflects a general trend of an increasing number of resolutions rather than increased attention to cases of sexual violence. The purpose of condemnation is to add pressure on abusive governments to change their behavior (e.g. Carraro, 2019; Squatrito, Sommerer & Lundgren, 2019; Haglund & Hillebrecht, 2020). Does that really matter? To what extent do states responsible for CRSV by their armed forces or police forces care about the reputational costs incurred by condemnation by a multilateral organization such as the Human Rights Council? Studying the entire time period from 1987 to 2014, there is no discernible decline in CRSV following this type of condemnation. The analysis, however, yields a different outcome when dividing the sample by time/organization: Up until 2006, there is no difference in state-perpetrated conflict-related sexual violence before and after condemnation by the Commission on Human Rights. After 2006, on the other hand, there is a statistically significant decline in CRSV the year following condemnation by the Human Rights Council.

Because of the methods employed, I cannot identify the most influential factor determining this shift. It nevertheless remains reasonable to assume that the outcome is a result of *both* the increased attention to CRSV internationally since resolution 1820(2008) [4] *and* the transition to the reformed Human Rights Council. A notable difference within the Human Rights Council compared to its predecessor is the augmented role of domestic as well as transnational civil society organizations (e.g. Sweeney & Saito, 2009; Freedman, 2011). These types of organizations are, in the human rights literature more generally, understood as critical to the process of materializing pressure on targeted governments (e.g. Brysk, 1993; Murdie & Davis, 2012; Allendoerfer, Murdie & Welch, 2020).

---

[4] UN Security Council resolution 1820(2008) establishes, for the first time, CRSV as a matter of international peace and security.

Research gaps that remain

The study summarized above is based on originally collected data on CRSV-condemnation and represents the first analysis of its efficacy. An extended data collection effort is needed to examine whether the identified trend holds beyond 2014. There is furthermore a need for qualitative research to scrutinize the processes from condemnation to decline in detail. Considering existing research findings within the general human rights literature (e.g. Hendrix & Wong, 2013; Murdie & Peksen, 2015; Allendoerfer, Murdie & Welch, 2020), it is likely that different conditions make a reduction in repression and violence more or less probable. An additional factor to keep in mind is that research within the same field has found evidence that condemnation of one type of human rights abuse can lead to a decrease in that type of abuse – but to an increase in a different type of repression (Brysk, 1993; Hafner-Burton, 2008; DeMeritt & Conrad, 2019; Kiyani, 2021). It is therefore important that future research of CRSV does not assess the potential impact in isolation but rather takes a broad approach when examining its consequences.

Condemnation in the Universal Periodic Review

The Human Rights Council harbours a separate mechanism within which all states' human rights practices are reviewed periodically by other states. This mechanism is called the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and has been operating since 2008. Compared to the Human Rights Council or the Security Council, states do not need to negotiate or compromise in their assessment of other states. Each state decides individually which points to raise and how strongly to formulate the critique. In this section, I summarise research on the UPR which focuses on states' demonstrated willingness to criticize sexual violence perpetrated by states in armed conflict.

Since its inception, there has been a firm increase in the number of times that states voice sexual violence as a concern within the UPR (see Figure 4). This is not only a function of growing UPR engagement in general but reflects what appears to be increased attention to sexual violence specifically. That said, condemnation remains rare. On average, only one third of all possible states offer any kind of criticism when a state known to perpetrate CRSV is under review. Only 5 percent of states criticize sexual violence explicitly.

Figure 4: Condemnation of sexual violence within the UPR
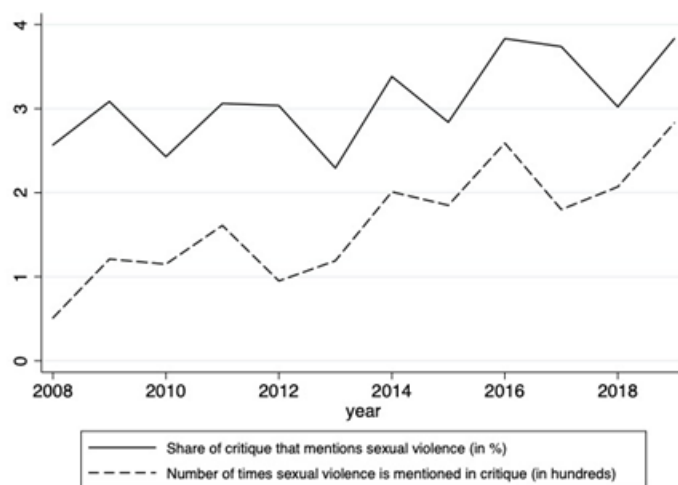
The states that most frequently criticize sexual violence explicitly are Norway and Italy, who have taken the opportunity 40% of the times that a state perpetrating CRSV has been under review. [5] This is followed by Austria, Canada, France, Netherlands, Sierra Leone, Sweden and Slovenia, who taken

---

[5] This can be contrasted to the case of capital punishment where the foremost condemning states take the opportunity 100% of the time.

this opportunity between 32% and 36% of the times that a state perpetrating CRSV has been under review. This group of states is not identical to those states that shame the most in general.

Investigating closer *when* sexual violence is criticized and *by whom*, I find that one of the most recurrent patterns in condemnation of CRSV involves the critique of aid-receiving states by Western donors. Indeed, half of all CRSV-related condemnations are issued by a donor when reviewing one of its aid recipients. I also find evidence that CRSV condemnation is particularly attractive to states with an interest in showing a high profile in relation to the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda. A plausible interpretation of the empirical evidence is that states primarily criticize CRSV when this serves their own political purposes – i.e., when they can use it to justify aid packages or to showcase their international commitment to the WPS agenda. The findings should serve as a wake-up call to any government that wants to be seen as an active, progressive and unbiased rights-defender. The study also supplies a salutary reminder to researchers on CRSV that a narrow focus on multilateral actions and commitments can result in misleading and overly optimistic conclusions regarding the global commitment to put an end to CRSV.

Research gaps that remain

This study is the first that systematically assesses states' condemnation of sexual violence in the UPR (as well as elsewhere). To my knowledge, it is generally uncommon to study condemnation patterns per violation type. Previous research has instead focused on states' general participation in the UPR. More violation-oriented research is needed in order to better understand if/how governments use the UPR to shed light on certain human rights abuses while leaving other issue areas unmentioned. In this context, it would also be valuable

with interview- or survey-based research that would improve our understanding of how different state representatives view the current and potential role of critique issued within the UPR and other international fora.

Good to know about statistical methods

The research summarized in this report is based on statistical, so-called large-n, analyses. By using large-n analyses, we can study a large number of cases across time and space systematically (for example all rebel groups active in armed conflict since the Cold War). It is an efficient method to identify patterns and correlations while taking other relevant factors into account. With this technique, we can, for example, find out whether peacekeeping *in general terms* seems to have had any effect on warring parties' behaviour – while accounting for other important influences on behaviour, such as conflict intensity and relative strength of rebel groups. It is however important to remember the crudity needed to draw general conclusions from a large number of cases. Temporally, the research presented here relies on yearly measures. This means that effects that materialise and revert within less than a year will be missed. Even when effects last long enough to be captured, we will need different research methods in order to better understand the *processes* leading up to the effect. Indeed, large-n studies can be combined with case studies in at least two ways: either they can identify a general correlation that case studies may dig deeper into, or they can investigate the generalizability of a relationship already identified by case research (Lieberman, 2005). When consuming research (regardless of method) it is thus advisable to be familiar with the research field overall as this provides clues about the robustness of the respective finding.

Reflections on data quality and availability

The research summarized in this report relies on secondary data about levels of CRSV. In other words, I do not compare individual crime numbers; rather, I study whether CRSV is 'widespread' – as opposed to 'infrequent', 'massive', or simply 'absent' from the reporting. This information comes from the Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict (SVAC) dataset (Cohen & Nordås, 2014, 2019), which is the only available source of data on CRSV levels across all conflicts in the post-Cold War period.[6] The SVAC dataset draws on information from two nongovernmental organisations: Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International – as well as on reports from the US State Department. By indirectly relying on these sources, I reduce my dependence on the inclination of individuals to make *formal* reports. That said, I remain fully dependent on these organisations' local presence and/or networks and information channels (Meernik et al., 2012). An advantage of these sources is that all three are well-established organisations for which accuracy is indispensable for their reputation and credibility (Ron, Ramos, and Rodgers, 2005; Cohen and Hoover Green, 2012). A limitation of these sources is that they are Western-based and serve mainly Western audiences. This, we can reasonably assume, shapes the way that host country authorities as well as civilians interact with them. Their Western orientation is also reflected in which abuses they prioritise in their reporting, and in the way in which they frame different situations (Cohen & Hoover Green, 2012).

An omnipresent challenge with regard to the collection of data on CRSV is the limited extent to which such violence is reported. While we will never know the exact magnitude of sexual violence in any context, a survey study on gender-based violence in 24 developing countries offers an indication: of the

---

[6] Cohen (2013, 2016) maintains an additional (but overlapping) data collection on wartime rapes by states forces and rebel groups between 1989 and 2009.

nearly 300,000 women surveyed, only 40% told *anyone* about their experience, and just 7% reported the crime to a formal agency (Palermo, Bleck & Peterman, 2014)[7]. Another study, based on list experiments in Sri Lanka, showed that sexual violence was probably ten times more prevalent during the war than previously reported (Traunmüller, Kijewski & Freitag, 2019). Regardless of its level, underreporting remains concerning for several reasons, above all for survivors who do not receive any assistance even in cases where this is technically possible. It also complicates matters for humanitarian personnel, peacekeepers, researchers, and policy-makers, who accordingly lack complete information when devising and evaluating intervention strategies and development programmes.

Why would an individual choose not to report CRSV? A universal response to sexual violence is a feeling of shame and embarrassment, which makes the exposed individual less inclined to report their experience (Thompson et al., 2007; Palermo, Bleck & Peterman, 2014; Ceelen et al., 2019). Threats to personal safety pose another obstacle to reporting (CARE, 2014). These include a risk of reprisal by the offender (or anyone related to the offender) (Davies & True, 2017) and a risk of ostracism by the family or local community. While the former is a concern in any context, the latter is specifically relevant in societies characterised by honour culture (e.g., Green and Ward, 2009; Tankink, 2013).

Furthermore, some societies lack adequate institutions to which survivors of sexual violence *can* turn to report their experience, should they be so inclined. Many different variants of this obstacle exist, and the extent to which they dictate reporting patterns differs across countries. Appropriate laws, for instance, may be lacking; or such laws may exist without being enforced. The institution to which victims might otherwise report their experience may be

---

[7] Evidence from South Sudan paints a similar picture (CARE, 2014).

corrupt; indeed, it may even represent those responsible for the crime. Both separately and together, these factors can create an environment where targeted individuals conclude there is no point in making a report (CARE, 2014).

For male victims of CRSV, formal mechanisms for reporting CRSV are often even more inaccessible than they are for women. Because of pre-existing beliefs about women being the only possible targets of CRSV, some instances can be restricted to women only. It is common, for example, for women's organisations to serve as prime entry-points for victims of CRSV, leaving men with substantially fewer options for reporting their victimisation (Dolan, 2015; Anholt, 2016; Hilhorst, Porter & Gordon, 2018; Schulz, 2018). Discrimination on other grounds can also play a role, in that opportunities to report may vary within a country along ethnic and/or socio-political lines. Ironically, this means that CRSV may be most extensive in areas and populations from which we are least likely to receive information about it (Davies & True, 2017; Smidt et al., 2021). That said, assuming the presence of CRSV without direct evidence for it carries its own challenges, including the risk that "scarce resources [will be] stretched far too thin" (Nordås & Cohen, 2021: 198).

Key points for policy-makers

1. Expect levels of conflict-related sexual violence to vary over time. Even if CRSV is absent at the outset of a conflict, it may occur later on.

2. Expect CRSV to be different in prevalence, manifestation, location and associated stigmatization across locations. Use different sources of information (not only women's groups) and think creatively about how to formulate questions of inquiry.

3. Consider characteristics of the perpetrating state/group when designing intervention strategies. Conventional peacekeeping, for example, is most effective in relation to states/groups with strong internal control – but these are not the most frequent perpetrators.

4. Be attentive to, and ready to support, civilians challenging corrupt and abusive states though protests. It is common that sexual violence by members of states' security personnel increases as protests intensify.

5. Consider events, such as military interventions, that might lead to increasingly coercive recruitment tactics. These moments might be particularly prone to CRSV.

6. Consider your government's engagement in the Universal Periodic Review. In the last year, how many times did your government abstain from explicitly confronting another government known to perpetrate sexual violence in the context of an armed conflict?

7. Promote resolutions mentioning sexual violence in the UN Human Rights Council. Their frequency does not seem to increase but there is tentative evidence that those that materialize seem to become more effectful.

8. To advance our understanding of CRSV and the efficacy of various responses to CRSV, we need more research. Fund quality research and support initiatives aiming at collecting valuable data systematically over a sustained period of time.

9. Lastly, to ensure that any advances benefit those for whom all efforts are intended: always promote creative and sharing partnerships between practitioners, policy-makers and researchers.

References

Allendoerfer, Michelle Giacobbe, Amanda Murdie & Ryan M Welch (2020) The Path of the Boomerang: Human Rights Campaigns, Third-Party Pressure, and Human Rights. *International Studies Quarterly* 64(1): 111–119.

Anholt, Rosanne Marrit (2016) Understanding sexual violence in armed conflict: cutting ourselves with Occam's razor. *Journal of International Humanitarian Action* 1(1): 6, s41018-016-0007–7.

Arjona, Ana (2016) Institutions, Civilian Resistance, and Wartime Social Order: A Process-driven Natural Experiment in the Colombian Civil War. *Latin American Politics and Society* 58(3): 99–122.

Benson, Michelle & Theodora-Ismene Gizelis (2019) A Gendered Imperative: Does Sexual Violence Attract UN Attention in Civil Wars? *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (May): 1–32.

Berry, Kim (2003) The symbolic use of Afghan women in the war on terror. *Humboldt Journal of Social Relations* 27(2): 137–160.

Bonnin, Debby (2000) Claiming Spaces, Changing Places: Political Violence and Women's Protests in KwaZulu-Natal. *Journal of Southern African Studies* 26(2): 301–316.

Brysk, Alison (1993) From Above and Below Social Movements, the International System, and Human Rights in Argentina. *Comparative Political Studies* 26(3): 259–285.

CARE (2014) *'The Girl Has No Rights': Gender-Based Violence in South Sudan* (https://insights.careinternational.org.uk/media/k2/attachments/CARE_The_Girl_Has_No_Rights_GBV_in_South_Sudan.pdf).

Carraro, Valentina (2019) Promoting Compliance with Human Rights: The Performance of the United Nations' Universal Periodic Review and Treaty Bodies. *International Studies Quarterly* 63(4): 1079–1093.

Ceelen, Manon, Tina Dorn, Flora S van Huis & Udo JL Reijnders (2019) Characteristics and Post-Decision Attitudes of Non-Reporting Sexual Violence Victims. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 34(9): 1961–1977.

Charli Carpenter, R (2005) 'Women, Children and Other Vulnerable Groups': Gender, Strategic Frames and the Protection of Civilians as a Transnational Issue. *International Studies Quarterly* 49(2): 295–334.

Chenoweth, Erica & Maria Stephan (2011) *Why Civil Resistance Works.* New York, United States: Columbia University Press.

Cohen, Dara Kay (2013) Explaining Rape during Civil War: Cross-National Evidence (1980-2009). *American Political Science Review* 107(3): 461–477.

Cohen, Dara Kay (2016) *Rape During Civil War.* Ithaca, United States: Cornell University Press.

Cohen, Dara Kay & Amelia Hoover Green (2012) Dueling incentives: Sexual violence in Liberia and the politics of human rights advocacy. *Journal of Peace Research* 49(3): 445–458.

Cohen, Dara & Ragnhild Nordås (2014) Sexual violence in armed conflict: Introducing the SVAC dataset, 1989–2009. *Journal of Peace Research* 51(3): 418–428.

Cohen, Dara & Ragnhild Nordås (2019) Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict Data Project (SVAC) 2.0, 1989-2015. Codebook and Instruction Manual.

Davies, Sara E & Jacqui True (2017) The politics of counting and reporting conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence: the case of Myanmar. *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 19(1): 4–21.

DeMeritt, Jacqueline HR & Courtenay R Conrad (2019) Repression Substitution: Shifting Human Rights Violations in Response to UN Naming and Shaming. *Civil Wars* 21(1): 128–152.

Dolan, Chris (2015) *Letting Go of the Gender Binary: Charting New Pathways for Humanitarian Interventions on Gender-Based Violence*. ICRC No. 894.

Dorff, Cassy (2019) Violent and Nonviolent Resistance in Contexts of Prolonged Crisis: The Civilian Perspective. *Journal of Global Security Studies* 4(2): 286–291.

Downes, Alexander B (2006) Desperate Times, Desperate Measures: The Causes of Civilian Victimization in War. *International Security* 30(4): 152–195.

Eck, Kristine (2014) Coercion in Rebel Recruitment. *Security Studies* 23(2): 364–398.

Eriksson Baaz, Maria & Maria Stern (2013) *Sexual Violence as a Weapon of War?: Perceptions, Prescriptions, Problems in the Congo and Beyond*. Uppsala, Sweden: Zed Books.

Fortna, Virginia Page (2004) Does Peacekeeping Keep Peace? International Intervention and the Duration of Peace after Civil War. *International Studies Quarterly* 48(2): 269–292.

Freedman, Rosa (2011) New Mechanisms of the UN Human Rights Council. *Netherlands Quarterly of Human Rights* 29(3): 289–323.

Government of Sweden (2016) *Policy Framework for Swedish Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance*. Government Communication 2016/17:60.

Green, Penny & Tony Ward (2009) The transformation of violence in Iraq. *The British Journal of Criminology* 49(5): 609–627.

Hafner-Burton, Emile M (2008) Sticks and Stones: Naming and Shaming the Human Rights Enforcement Problem. *International Organization* 62(4): 689–716.

Haglund, Jillienne & Courtney Hillebrecht (2020) Overlapping international human rights institutions: Introducing the Women's Rights Recommendations Digital Database (WR2D2). *Journal of Peace Research* 57(5): 648–657.

Hegre, Håvard, Lisa Hultman & Håvard Mokleiv Nygård (2018) Evaluating the Conflict-Reducing Effect of UN Peacekeeping Operations. *The Journal of Politics* 81(1): 215–232.

Hendrix, Cullen S & Wendy H Wong (2013) When Is the Pen Truly Mighty? Regime Type and the Efficacy of Naming and Shaming in Curbing Human Rights Abuses. *British Journal of Political Science* 43(3): 651–672.

Hilhorst, Dorothea, Holly Porter & Rachel Gordon (2018) Gender, sexuality, and violence in humanitarian crises. *Disasters* 42(S1): S3–S16.

Hoover Green, Amelia (2016) The commander's dilemma: Creating and controlling armed group violence. *Journal of Peace Research* 53(5): 619–632.

HRW (2013) Egypt: Epidemic of Sexual Violence. *Human Rights Watch* (https://www.hrw.org/news/2013/07/03/egypt-epidemic-sexual-violence).

Hultman, Lisa (2007) Battle Losses and Rebel Violence: Raising the Costs for Fighting. *Terrorism and Political Violence* 19(2): 205–222.

Hultman, Lisa & Karin Johansson (2017) Responding to Wartime Sexual Violence: UN Peacekeeping and the Protection Agenda. *Global Responsibility to Protect* 9(2): 129–146.

Hultman, Lisa, Jacob Kathman & Megan Shannon (2013) United Nations Peacekeeping and Civilian Protection in Civil War. *American Journal of Political Science* 57(4): 875–891.

Johansson, Karin & Lisa Hultman (2019) UN Peacekeeping and Protection from Sexual Violence. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 63(7): 1656–1681.

Johansson, Karin & Mehwish Sarwari (2017) Sexual violence and biased military interventions in civil conflict. *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 36(5): 469–493.

Johansson-Nogués, Elisabeth (2013) Gendering the Arab Spring? Rights and (in)security of Tunisian, Egyptian and Libyan women. *Security Dialogue* 44(5–6): 393–409.

Karlén, Niklas (2016) Historical trends in external support in civil wars. In: *SIPRI Yearbook 2016: Armaments, Disarmaments and International Security* (https://www.sipri.org/yearbook/2016/04).

Kiyani, Ghashia (2021) US aid and substitution of human rights violations. *Conflict Management and Peace Science* (October): 1–22.

Leventoğlu, Bahar & Nils W Metternich (2018) Born Weak, Growing Strong: Anti-Government Protests as a Signal of Rebel Strength in the Context of Civil Wars. *American Journal of Political Science* 62(3): 581–596.

Lieberman, Evan S (2005) Nested Analysis as a Mixed-Method Strategy for Comparative Research. *The American Political Science Review* 99(3): 435–452.

Meernik, James, Rosa Aloisi, Marsha Sowell & Angela Nichols (2012) The Impact of Human Rights Organizations on Naming and Shaming Campaigns. *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 56(2): 233–256.

Metelits, Claire (2009) The Logic of Change: Pushing the Boundaries of Insurgent Behavior Theory. *Defense & Security Analysis* 25(2): 105–118.

Murdie, Amanda M & David R Davis (2012) Shaming and Blaming: Using Events Data to Assess the Impact of Human Rights INGOs: Shaming and Blaming. *International Studies Quarterly* 56(1): 1–16.

Murdie, Amanda & Dursun Peksen (2015) Women's rights INGO shaming and the government respect for women's rights. *The Review of International Organizations; Dordrecht* 10(1): 1–22.

Nordås, Ragnhild & Dara Kay Cohen (2021) Conflict-Related Sexual Violence. *Annual Review of Political Science* 24(1): 193–211.

Olsson, Louise, Angela Muvumba Sellström, Stephen Moncrief, Elisabeth Jean Wood, Karin Johansson, Walter Lotze, Chiara Ruffa, Amelia Hoover Green, Ann Kristin Sjöberg & Roudabeh Kishi (2020) Peacekeeping Prevention: Strengthening Efforts to Preempt Conflict-related Sexual Violence. *International Peacekeeping* 27(4): 517–585.

Palermo, Tia, Jennifer Bleck & Amber Peterman (2014) Tip of the iceberg: reporting and gender-based violence in developing countries. *American Journal of Epidemiology* 179(5): 602–612.

Ron, James, Howard Ramos & Kathleen Rodgers (2005) Transnational Information Politics: NGO Human Rights Reporting, 1986-2000. *International Studies Quarterly* 49(3): 557–587.

Ruggeri, Andrea, Han Dorussen & Theodora-Ismene Gizelis (2017) Winning the Peace Locally: UN Peacekeeping and Local Conflict. *International Organization* 71(1): 163–185.

Sarwari, Mehwish (2020) Impact of Rebel Group Ideology on Wartime Sexual Violence. *Journal of Global Security Studies* 1–23.

Schulz, Philipp (2018) The 'ethical loneliness' of male sexual violence survivors in Northern Uganda. *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 20(4): 583–601.

Smidt, Hannah, Dominic Perera, Neil J Mitchell & Kristin M Bakke (2021) Silencing Their Critics: How Government Restrictions Against Civil Society Affect International 'Naming and Shaming'. *British Journal of Political Science* 51(3): 1270–1291.

Squatrito, Theresa, Thomas Sommerer & Magnus Lundgren (2019) Shaming by International Organizations: Mapping Condemnatory Speech Acts across 27 IOs, 1980-2015. *Cooperation and Conflict* 54(3): 356–377.

Stephan, Maria J & Erica Chenoweth (2008) Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict. *International Security* 33(1): 7–44.

Sweeney, Gareth & Yuri Saito (2009) An NGO Assessment of the New Mechanisms of the UN Human Rights Council. Human Rights Law Review 9(2): 203–223.

Tankink, Marian TA (2013) The silence of South-Sudanese women: social risks in talking about experiences of sexual violence. *Culture, Health & Sexuality* 15(3/4): 391–403.

Thompson, Martie, Dylan Sitterle, George Clay & Jeffrey Kingree (2007) Reasons for Not Reporting Victimizations to the Police: Do They Vary for Physical and Sexual Incidents? *Journal of American College Health* 55(5): 277–82.

Traunmüller, Richard, Sara Kijewski & Markus Freitag (2019) The Silent Victims of Sexual Violence during War: Evidence from a List Experiment in Sri Lanka. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 63(9): 2015–2042.

Vüllers, Johannes & Roman Krtsch (2020) Raise your voices! Civilian protest in civil wars. *Political Geography* 80(June): 102183.

Wood, EJ (2006) Variation in Sexual Violence during War. *Politics & Society* 34(3): 307–342.

Wood, Elisabeth Jean (2009) Armed Groups and Sexual Violence: When Is Wartime Rape Rare? *Politics and Society* 37(1): 131–161.

Wood, RM, JD Kathman & SE Gent (2012) Armed intervention and civilian victimization in intrastate conflicts. *Journal of Peace Research* 49(5): 647–660.

Conflict-related sexual violence by states has received increasing attention in international politics. This Development Dissertation Brief explores the effects of domestic protests and international condemnations on the occurrence of sexual violence during civil conflicts. The author also offers recommendations to policy-makers.

Konfliktrelaterat sexuellt våld som begås av stater uppmärksammas alltmer i internationell politik. Denna Development Dissertation Brief undersöker hur inhemska protester och internationella fördömanden påverkar graden av konfliktrelaterat sexuellt våld. Författaren ger även rekommendationer till beslutsfattare.

EBA