Review Article

Psychological Effect of Civil Strife on Women and Girls in South Sudan

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Abstract

Over the years, the characterization of civil war in South Sudan has taken the nature of the dehumanization of women and girls, who gradually transforms from war victims into 'legitimate targets'. Since 1991, civil strife in the country brought about the wanton destruction of property and lives. The scale and brutality include rape, gang rape, forced marriages, sexual assault, mutilation, marginalization, and any other form of violence towards this vulnerable population. This invariably undermined the key roles played by women in nation-building, development, and political stability. Given this premise, the paper examines the psychological distress of women and girls in the aftermath of civil strife in South Sudan. To unravel this, the paper complements the structural and cultural violence theory, with the qualitative secondary sources of data collection. The result indicates women and girls suffer from intense psychological stigmatization, depression, and various forms of mental health challenges. The paper concludes that both the short and long-term mental health programs and strategies be put in place for the reintegration of women and girls who were victims of war.

Keywords: Civil strife, women, psychological effects, mental health, South Sudan

Introduction

At the mention of political civil strife in South Sudan, the images of women and girls immediately come to mind. Gender violence has received a spate of media attention over three decades since the second round of the 1983 civil war in Sudan. However, relatively little academic or media recognition had been given to investigate or report cases of the psychological trauma faced by women and girls due to civil strife. f. Political scientists noted over 42 wars and armed conflicts globally in 2004, a significant number took place in developing countries (Schreiber, 2005). Observers of complex emergencies (Ramsbotham & Woodhouse, 1999) or recent 'new war' (HSBA, 2012; Kaldor, 1999) remarked that the main target of the current war is civilian population, with systematic atrocities, massacres, and bombing applied strategically at women and girls. For example, never before has child combatants played such a prominent role in war history, consisting of 80 percent in the fighting forces (Schauer, & Elbert, 2010) of which 25% to 50% are estimated to be girls soldiers, ranging between 8 to 12 years, who are forced into sexual intercourse with their commanders. In Uganda, such girls are coerced into marriages with men in their units, thus indicating a qualitative change in the nature of how wars and organised violence are exerted. Given the transformation in the 'culture of violence' in South Sudan, it becomes highly imperative to investigate the psychological effect of the war on women and girls in South Sudan.

The effect of civil strife and the war on women and girls have featured extremely on media, internet, documentary films, human right reports as well as aid-related research literature, much of which has achieved the task of exposing South Sudan discreditable new precedent of using women and girls as a major battlefield for fighting and brutality. However, there is a dearth in scholarly works that focuses on the psychological effect of civil strife on these vulnerable groups. A significant number of women and girls in South Sudan are affected by civil strife and war either directly or indirectly. Civil strife may directly impact human psychology while indirectly; it may also result in economic meltdown and affect parents' capacity to cater for

the basic needs of their family. Women and girls are most vulnerable in times of *recent war* as the weapon of war is targeted against them. Globally, this has attracted much public and academic concern as the characterization of civil war has taken the nature of dehumanization of women and girls, who gradually transforms from war victims into '*legitimate targets' (*Elbert, Rockstroh, Kolassa, Schauer, & Neuner, 2006; HSBA, 2012; Kaldor, 1999). If political, cultural, and geographical factors are often cited as key reasons for war in South Sudan (Amusan, 2014), then, it begs the question of why women and girls should be war targets.

Targeting women undermine the inevitable contributing roles played by them in connection to nation-building, development, political stability as well as family building. Family building in the sense that, women engage in numerous fighting roles during war periods, so as to build and keep their cherished families. Roles such as, but not limited to: striving to protect their families; taking up odd jobs for the purpose of the provision in order to prevent family starvation; searching for abducted children; caring and treating wounded family members and caring for those with diseases and HIV contacted during the war; dealing with the consequences of rape and all other related physical abuses (Jok, 2006). On the other hand, girls in their capacity are exposed to mind-blowing roles and functions that negates humanitarian laws, roles such as: forced into child soldiering, forced marriages, sexual slavery, chefs, suicide bombers, spies and thieves as they are forced to loot from neighbouring villages and others, labour exploitation, as well as turned into domestic slaves (Dallaire, 2010).

Perhaps these struggles are closer to capturing the lived experiences of many South Sudanese women and girls during the civil war and civil conflicts. The years of prolonged war have serious implications for their mental health (Friedrich, 2016). This is not to say that men and boys are not also affected by these wars, but the scope of this paper limits our argument to women and girls, particularly because they are vulnerable groups during war times. The paper attempt to address three issues relating to gender and wars in South Sudan. Firstly, the paper contextualizes war situation in the country by describing the

genesis of gender violence in connection to war, t secondly, it deals with how women and girls became a battleground for the South Sudanese war machinery and the psychological trauma this engender. Finally, the paper will make a suggestion for addressing mental health issues connected to civil strife.

The genesis of gender violence in South Sudan:
Theoretical Discourse

Structural violence and cultural violence are going to be the twin theories to be adopted in line with Joan Galtung's (1975, 1990) theories respectively. The article adopts both Structural violence (Galtung, 1975) and cultural violence (Galtung, 1990) to explain gender violence in South Sudan. . Structural violence is explained to be the societal exploitation by the elite that is entrenched as a social order. According to Galtung (1975) amateur embark on personal violence in the form of the use of guns to sort out differences. On the other hand, while the professionals, who are the elite, employ structural violence to achieve their political and economic ends. Structural violence is conceptualised into four basic components: exploitation, penetration, fragmentation, and marginalization. Exploitation deals with the division of gender roles and asymmetrical distribution of benefits among gender. Penetration emphasises the control exercised by exploiters over the exploited. Fragmentation stresses the separation that exists among the exploited and lastly, marginalization view the exploiters as having dominance rules and form of interaction and are regarded as a more privileged class compared to the inferior exploited class (Galtung, 1975:264–65).

As a relevance to the study, Galtung's four components applies to violence against women, in that, during civil strife, women and girls are faced with diverse exploitation and male-dominance control as they are coerced into roles of which they have little or no say. Emphasizes male superiority, Galtung noted that, firstly, in exploitation, the expected gender roles results to the different outcome when it comes to the issue of personal development because women and girls tend to receive second class treatment (Amusan, Adeyeye & Oyewole, 2019). Penetration is the next component that is similar to exploitation; in his explanation, Galtung averred that it leads to the perpetuation of a structure in conscious development. As alluded by Bunch and Carrillo, (1998), structural violence is sustained through three important concepts known to continuously perceive women as inferior beings.

They identified socialisation, gender stereotyping, and the unabated threat of violence; these are evident in the civil strife that plague South Sudan. Thirdly, in fragmentation component, Galtung submits that loading women with a large amount of family chores, impact significantly on their time that would have been invested in other responsibilities such as becoming politically active, socializing with other women and enrolling for an educative program. A situation that made Pateman, (1970) argued that fragmentation results from women's inability to access enough job opportunities away from the home, which may affect their sense of participation as well as self-efficacy. Lastly, is the marginalisation that separate women and from men, which reduces women to second class and men as a superior first-class citizen in a state or community (Galtung, 1975:265). The gendered hierarchies are symptomatic are evident in ideas, beliefs, social practice, values, and perceptions that elevate men over women, a system that is common in developing areas with an emphasis on Africa (Rowbotham 1983:27; Sideris, 2001:143).

Through cultural norms, structural violence is perpetuated. This implies that structural violence institutionalise cultural violence. The study encapsulates both structural and cultural violence as

an explanation for gender violence in South Sudan because of the operating structure in the country. This is necessary because women and girls are especially vulnerable to the judiciary legal structure in the nation as well as the punitive nature in connection to gender violence. South Sudan customary laws are patriarchal (Jok, Leitch, & Vandewint, 2004). Survivor of gender violence is faced with many obstacles to justice, ranging from cultural obstacles (e.g. fragmentation of women, marginalizing them to roles within the family) to legal obstacles (discriminatory customary laws and formal legal procedures that discriminates against women assuring that they are allowed very minimal legal rights) finally to structural obstacles (inadequate amenities, governmental resources and manpower). All these put together makes it difficult for survivor of the gender violence in South Sudan to seek and obtain justice (Lowenstein, 2011).

Sequel to the above, the patriarchal society allows, legitimizes, and justifies cultural violence as part of the social environment. Thus, Galtung (1990) concludes that cultural violence brands structural violence as if it is a natural occurrence, and makes it look, feel, and even right- or not looking at all wrong (Galtung, 1990:291). Like any other theory theories, these models have their pitfalls as much as it has been criticized to focus more on economic inequality. The justification of using these theories is based on their applicability in other forms of structural violence. The structural order in the newest world country explains the negation of the fundamental human right as enshrined in international conventions (e.g. Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, 1979; Resolution 1325; Resolution 1820; Charter of the United Nations, 1945; Convention on the rights of the child, 1989); and the Inter-American Convention on the prevention, punishment, and eradication of violence against women- Convention of Belém do Pará, 1994, and Convention on genocide, 1948). South Sudan is known for its history of using women and girls as war weaponry during civil strife. And this remains after the end of the war. Females are subject to rape, reduced to sex workers due to economic hardship, they serve as cook, spy, and always subjected to unprintable responsibilities because they are the most vulnerable in times of war (Amusan, Adeyeye & Oyewole, 2019).

Historically, the Pre-South Sudan (before 1955 when war broke out in Sudan over the political marginalization of black Sudanese), as pointed out by Hutchinson and Jok (2002), the weapon used was solely spears during the infrequent and quiet short-lived scuffles over cattle raiding, grazing areas or fishing pools. Women and children were never legitimate war targets. Base on the fact that before now, a woman's ethnicity was not a *sine qua non* to have access to public goods rigid. In the past, and even now, intermarriages are a means of political socialization and political culture where women married to another ethnic group/s will automatically abide by the norms and values of "her new home". Also of import is that is it a way of social cohesion that defuses xenophobia and by implication promotes socio-economic and political developments as against furthering "tribal enemy" (Hutchinson and Jok, 2002). Women are naturally accommodative compare to men because they can risk their life for men's protection. This may be in the form of a new abode for fleeing and wounded men in time of crisis (Cohn, 2013).

The proliferation of small and light firearms was high in the South during the second civil war (1983–2005). This has become a normal life to the extent that these have become fundamental to South Sudanese culture that they use the same as bride payment in some parts of the country. The advantages of small arms and the light weapon were compared to smear weapons usage, as killing with a smear would

mean closer and specific target but firearm depersonalized the act of killing and dehumanize the target. With these advantages, targeting women, girls and children were made easy for combatants (HSBA, 2012). Norms changed as civil strife progresses concerning who is to be considered as a legitimate war target. It was however argued, although a high estimate that woman accounted for up to 7% of the Sudan People's Liberation Army's (SPLA) official force (Weber, 2011). SPLA women worked as chefs, nurses, and carriers in most events and rarely were at the battlefield. Only in 1991, was a recorded targeting of women, girls and children who were showcased. During which the pro-Khartoum breakaway SPLA-Nasir that killed about 2000 and displaced over 200,000 civilians in Bor (Amnesty International, 1995). This is accomplished by the brutality of women and girls in the form of rape, mutilation, and abduction (HSBA, 2012).

South Sudan and wars

Before Juba received its political independence from Khartoum governments in 2011, series of wars were fought, even before 1956 of Sudan's independence because of marginalisation of Sudanese blacks who are geographically located in the southern part of the country. As if political independence of 2011 would be a lasting solution to the political crises that erupted the erstwhile state of Sudan, no sooner than the South Sudanese got their freedom than another war erupted that led to millions of displaced people and thousands were killed in the process. Brutal armed conflict erupted in December 2013, the war was linked to a power struggle and ethnic divides (Amusan, 2014). These wars were all characterised by gross human rights and humanitarian laws abuses, famine, massive forced displacement, and life-threatening violence against civilians. A situation Friedrich (2016), believed had led to psychological mental distress among the civilian population. According to United States (US) (2001) committee for refugees, over 1.9 million people died during the second civil war and it was recorded that one out of every five South Sudanese was killed, about 4 million displaced. This war lasted for 22years, (1983-2005). A remarkable number of these are women and children. (UNICEF, United Nations, 2009).

Although, in 2005 a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed between the Sudanese government and the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) to grant regional independence to South Sudan, yet, the CPA failed to end internal civil strife. From 2005-2013 political fighting continued government and insurgents due to land disputes, cattle rustling and proliferation of small and light weapons that fail f to receive solution as one of the dividends of civil

war in any state (Amusan, 2014; Roessler, 2016). As a consequence of years of repeated wars, displacement, famine, destruction of properties and extreme death rate of civilians and untold psychological trauma of many occurred. The 2013 brutal internal conflict as well as the Juba civil strife clashes in 2016 deliberately killed civilians of which children, girls, women, and the elderly were special targets. These were targeted based on ethnicity and political affiliation. Girls and women were kidnapped and raped; child soldiers' recruited, humanitarian assistance such as food supplies and medical aids was obstructed from reaching displaced individuals (Onucha, 2016), thereby, increasing rate of starvation and death; Schools, hospitals and civilian properties were burnt down. Conflicts continue across South Sudan despite of yet another signing of CPA signed in August 2015, see figure 1. As graphically presented in Figure 1 below, Juba's civil strife experienced an increase in October 2016 from December 2014; a civil war that broke out as a result of ethnic crisis between the federal government and insurgent who saw the political arrangement as a tactical means of 'ethnicise' the new born state. Since then, the spread of the conflict continued to be localized to the Greater Equatorial Region (*see* Figure 1).

The trend of the 2016 civil strife was different from that of the civil war in Juba in 2013, in that, in the latter, the spread of conflicts was to states where SPLA-IO leader and former vice president Riek Machar had a following (in Unity), where earlier cases of insurgence had happened (in Jonglei), as well as to the crucial oil region of Upper Nile. The justification for this trend was that The SPLA-IO had the upper hand in Greater Equatorial and nursed the notch of overthrowing the ruling government; in addition, civilians in the region had faced an increasing attack from militias battling government forces. Finally, there have been violent counter-insurgency tactics between government's perceived supporters of the opposition within Equatorial.

Psychological consequences of civil strife

Given the backdrop of many decades of civil conflict, South Sudan presents a specific setting for the study of the epidemiology of psychological illnesses. Features of war no doubt have emotional and psychological implications for people in general and victims, in particular, suffer severe mental health consequences. The rather frequent conflicts in South Sudan posit both direct and indirect connotations with mental health, unemployment, deprivation, and economic inactivity, and poor physical health. As Ameresekere and Henderson (2012) put it, "Mental health is significantly important for South Sudan, as the majority of the population has been exposed to
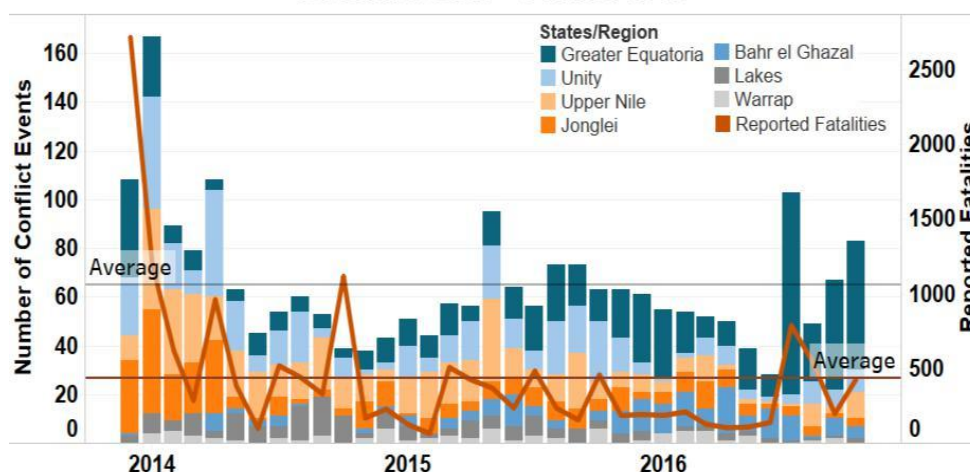

Figure 1. Number of conflict Events by state In South Sudan and Fatalities, December 2014 – October 2016

high rates of violence, displacement, and political and social insecurity" (pp: 4). There is a dearth of literature on the risk implication of civil war on the mental health of women and girls in South Sudan.

Evidence on civil strife globally has consistently linked civil strife to mental health. Recently, El-Khani, Cartwright, Redmond, and Calam (2016) acknowledged the magnitude of mental health risks involved as a result of children and family exposure to conflicts and wars like situation in Syria and they suggested that psychological first aid is urgently required for this population. Abou-Saleh and Hughes (2015) stressing that conflict situation leads to displacement and mental health of displaced Syrians revealed a rise in psychological distress particularly in conflict regions having minimal mental health and psychological support services. Cartwright, El-Khani, Subryan, and Calam, (2015) and El-Khani, (2015) examined the mental health of children and parents in Turkey and Syria, the result revealed that, immediately after the stress of displacement, parents, especially, women sought for information that would assist them in proper parenting of their children, considering the relevance of mental health care and psychological programmes for reintegration purposes. . As such, reducing psychological distress and supporting mental health is a major global concern. Besides, it is important to build resilience and improving mental health services as this is essential to long-term l psychological adjustment of affected war victims (Patel et al. 2007, 2008; UNICEF, 2004)

Therefore, drawing from the WHO mental health definition, the concept is seen as both the psychological and emotional well-being of people which allows them to cope with the environmental stresses of life (WHO, 2013). War situations have the potential for people to develop hosts of mental health issues, while few would develop new and deliberating mental problems, many others will reveal psychological illnesses. Those who were suffering from pre-existing mental illnesses would necessitate more assistant than before (WHO, 2013). World Health organization claims an estimated rise of 10% to 15-20% amongst the population suffering from mild or moderate mental illnesses during civil strife and other emergencies.

The elevated prevalence of psychological consequences of the aftermath of civil strife and the need for prioritizing mental health in South Sudan was notably acknowledged and recommended in a recent report. The report from Amnesty International (2016) titled *"Our Hearts Have Gone Dark": The Mental Health Impact of South Sudan's conflict which* documented the psychological effect of civil war on both survivors and witnesses based on the features of the war in South Sudan such as gang rape, mass killings, deliberate torture, kidnappings, forced cannibalism and even a case of disembowelling these dead bodies. The research was based on the cities that have been affected and suffered from internal armed conflicts. Participants were drawn from cities such as Juba, Malakal, and Bentiu in 2015 and 2016. It was found that respondents suffered from posttraumatic stress disorder, heart palpitations, depression, sleeping disorders, headaches, and stomach pain. The report concludes that civil war in the country leads to thousands of South Sudanese suffering from severe trauma and psychological ill-health particularly in a country that lacks mental health care services (Amnesty International, 2016). Friedrich (2016) theorizes that the rather frequent decades of civil war and conflict in South Sudan abuses many of the stated human rights laws at the same time leading to increasing mental illness among the civilian population of which women and girls are the majority. The traumatic event shown to be significantly associated with psychological consequences includes torture, forced displacement, experiencing or witnessing a rape, watching the killings of loved ones, girls forced to be suicide bombers and child soldiers - all human rights and humanitarian law abuses

which can be said to be prevalent in South Sudan brutal wars and civil strife.

In a similar vein, Mollica, Cardozo, Osofsky, Raphael, Ager, and Salama, (2004) reveal that mental health issues are higher among those individuals that have experienced several incidents of trauma during civil strife such as women and girls that are repeatedly raped, gang-raped and/or are witnesses to the killings and murder of loved ones. Also, female child soldiers face social stigma especially if they have been raped. Firstly, they face community exclusion; secondly, they are unable to get possible partners within their community to marry. This means they are essentially doomed to live in poverty for the rest

of their lives. The same applies to the returning girls and women who find it difficult to reintegrate back into post-conflict society. The Stigmatisation is connected to the various roles played during armed conflicts. Roles such as working as spies and informants, suicide bombers, combatants, stealing and looting of armed weapons, these roles are often played by these girls due to the fear of death should they disobey, many are tortured and even raped. As a consequence of this, pregnancies are rampant. Many of such pregnancies are fatherless. Due to multiple rapes, girls and women are emotionally traumatized from the inability of the knowledge of the child paternity (McKay & Mazurana, 2004). On the other hand, girls and women that had gone through these entire roles end up facing depression, anxiety, addiction (Ameresekere, Henderson, 2012: 32) they may develop psychosomatic illnesses. Many might end up committing suicide because of failure to deal with their emotional feelings of shame, grief, and guilt. While those that manage to stay alive ended up showing behavioural disorders, such that, they cannot live and maintain a normal family life or participate in the affairs of their communities. Occasionally, they transfer aggression to children or spouses and former child soldiers who cannot cope with the civilians' lifestyle voluntarily agreed to be recruited as soldiers. Scientific evidence shows that it is very difficult for girls and women who have been enlisted in the army to relate freely with other civilian women.

One post-conflict study in Juba examined the correlation between post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD), depression and displacement among a sample of 1242 adults. The result indicates that 36% of these respondents met symptom criteria for PSTD while 50% met symptom criteria for depression (Roberts, Damundu, Lomoro, & Sondorp 2009). Karunakara, Neuner, Schauer, Singh, Hill, Elbert, and Burnham (2004) investigated the link between traumatic events and post-traumatic stress disorder (PSTD) in a representative sample (n=3,323) within three population groups in northern Uganda and South Sudan. Overall, 46% of South Sudanese refugees who reported to have experienced and /or witnessed the highest civil strife in the last years indicated signs of PTSD, 48% for those that remained in the country and 18% for Ugandan nationals.

In the article '*Post-conflict mental health in South Sudan: an overview of common psychiatric disorders Part 1: Depression and post-traumatic stress disorder'* Ameresekere, and Henderson (2012) notes that mental health issues impact on people's health and the community at large across post-conflict countries. They particularly emphasize on how unattended, untreated, and unrecognised psychological illnesses can substantively contribute to poor health. On this, they concluded that prolonged South Sudanese exposure to civil strife, violence, displacement, and economic hardship results in emotional distress. Suggesting that, advocacy, training, and research urgently are required with regards not only to physical health but the mental wellbeing of the people of South Sudan. Similar conclusion was reached by researchers of Amnesty International (2016) in which their report concludes that civil war in the country lead to thousands of South Sudanese of which

women and girls as the majority are suffering from severe trauma and psychological ill-health particularly in a country that lacks mental health care services.

Other traumatic events capable to provoke significant risk to mental health amongst others in post-conflict societies are lack of adequate food, shelter, and medical assistant and services (Onucha, 2016). As Friedrich (2016) reported that towns and villages in South Sudan were destroyed during the 2016 brutal civil conflict, leaving 1.7 million people internally displaced on account of the on-going conflict. With hunger reaching its highest level, recording 4.8 million people facing stark food shortages since the conflict started. Also, loss and hardship, disruption, and adaptation to new environments all contribute to impact on individual mental health (Drury & Williams, 2012). Though, as a sign of war, the intentional destruction of civilians' sources of livelihood as well as stopping humanitarian aid by warring parties in South Sudan aggravated mental health distress of many women and girls. Conditions commonly triggered by civil strife have been found to include, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety disorders, psychosomatic issues, for example, insomnia, back and stomach aches. The associated spectrum of psychological symptoms linked to mental health problems is ~~are~~ fear, lack of trust, suicidal ideation, nightmares, fragmented memories, self-blame, flashbacks, anger, irritability, a lack of concentration, and intrusion. Above all, people suffering from this distorted mental health are more prone to risky behaviours and substance abuse, poor physical health, and risk-taking (Ameresekere, & Henderson, 2012; Eth & Pynos, 1985; Richman, 1993; Herman 1992). However, the almost total absence of mental health care services in South Sudan calls for concern as there exist only two practicing psychiatrists in a country of 11 million population. Mental health patients received routine treatment in prisons where they are housed instead of receiving the care and treatment they desperately need (Amnesty international, 2016),

Conclusion and recommendations

The primary roles of women during conflict strife could be said to be in three folds, namely: family protector, survivor, and victim. The former is seen in the various roles undertaken by them to ensure that there is no financial lack as well as the sick and wounded are catered for. While as a survivor and as the victim of war, women and girls are susceptible to diverse psychological mental ill health linked to the various roles forced on them throughout the decades of conflict strife in South Sudan. A situation that was absent during pre-war 1955 but present during the second civil war as the proliferation of firearms eroded norms of protection. Today women and girls are considered a *legitimate war targets* in protracted cycles of ethnic conflicts and retaliation, permissible by the structural and cultural social order in the country drawing from Galtung (1975, 1990) structural and cultural violence theories.

The possibility of the change for the worse in the social norms with regards to women and girls protection no doubt means there can also be a positive transformation. Women are known for their ability to act as powerful catalysts and peacebuilders. Some Educated women in Juba have been acknowledged in their effort of finding resolutions to the rather frequent communal conflicts that plague South Sudan; yet, same cannot be said for the rural women. But with necessary empowerment, training, and assistance, many South Sudanese women could capitalize on their strengths, with numbers in their favour as well as in solidarity as women, a positive transformation and peaceful change could occur. In the past, as involvement in inter-tribal marriages, women served as peacemakers, thereby transcending ethnic identity, by promoting communal peace within two communities. Today, women have a

greater potential of becoming stakeholders of developmental peace rather than mere symbols.

South Sudan government therefore ~~firstly~~ need to reform the law and address the practice in the justice system of considering rape and adultery as sub-categories of the same crime. United Nations Security Council could assist by making sure that Resolution 1325 is fully implemented. Since this resolution seeks to protect women and girls from conflict-related violence. This can be achieved by consistently monitoring happenings in the country. Also, Resolution 1820 on sexual violence in terms of conflicts needs strengthening. This could be in two-fold, (i) by closing the gaps that allow parties to circumvent accountability for condoning sexual violence, (ii) spreading the resolution's applicability beyond sexual violence to include other gender violence in conflict.

Besides, adequate training should be in place for police officers to ensure proper protection for survivors of civil strife particularly, abused women and girls. Secondly, Literature revealed that Symptoms of PTSD and other mental health illnesses among many South Sudanese can be partly linked to traumatic exposure during civil strife. This, therefore highlight the need for proper and better health care services for this population. Humanitarian agencies must consider establishing mental health services in South Sudan. Lastly, the government of the country needs to critically place mental health services as a top priority in the country as mental health programs and strategies are ~~is~~ needed for the reintegration of war victims particularly women and girls who had suffered from intense psychological stigmatization and various forms of mental health challenges. Of great significance is that, such a program should cater for both the short and long-term needs of affected people.

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