

**Is it possible to prevent sexual violence
as a weapon of war against
women, men and children,
or only to manage the after-effects?**

Samantha J. Hope



EuroISME's thesis of the year 2017

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Abstract

In 2012, the UK introduced the 'Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative'. This paper examines whether it is actually possible to prevent sexual violence being employed as a weapon of war against women, men and children. It assesses existing prevention strategies, uses Daesh as a case study – to illustrate the limitations of the current approaches – and considers additional measures. The paper concludes that it is possible to prevent sexual violence in war, provided that all appropriate measures are harnessed and adapted to the specific circumstances of each conflict. It will, though, require improvements to existing strategies, the use of additional prevention measures, more resources and long-term engagement of all actors.

*We can end sexual warfare conducted against innocent people.
We can establish new norms that respect women, girls, men, and boys ...
We can make clear to the world that we will no longer tolerate these horrific tactics ...
We can say 'not now, not ever.'*¹

Introduction

Historically, sexual violence as a weapon of war against women, men and children was a hidden crime, with victims resigned to suffer in silence and without justice. It was perpetrated against both sexes for centuries: “from the rape of Sabine women in ancient Rome ... to ... castrations as a form of conquest carried out by Chinese, Persian, Amalekite, Egyptian and Norse armies.”² Governments and humanitarian organisations, with limited resources, prioritised their assistance to support life-and-death cases. Survivors, ashamed of breaking social taboos, were uncertain where to go for help. Those seeking to negotiate peace agreements were wary of losing the trust of armed groups through broaching ‘difficult’ subjects interlaced with religious or traditional customs. Thus, at first sight, it seems that sexual violence is just one inevitable, grim feature of war that has always existed and always will.

However, this paper examines whether it is possible, in the twenty-first century, to prevent sexual violence as a weapon of war against women, men and children or only to manage the after-effects. It will begin by briefly explaining the background to the subject and discussing key terms, before reviewing the current literature. It will then analyse existing prevention approaches, examine the specific case of Daesh³ and, finally, consider possible additional preventive measures. The paper will aim to demonstrate that prevention can be achieved through improvements to existing measures, combined with an imaginative use of additional, multidisciplinary tools, which

¹ John Kerry, “Remarks at The Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict,” US Department of State, June 2014, <http://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2014/06/227553.htm> (accessed November 27, 2015).

² Sarah Solangon, and Preeti Patel, “Sexual violence against men in countries affected by armed conflict,” *Conflict, Security and Development* 12(4) (2012), doi: 10.1080/14678802.2012.724794 (accessed November 27, 2015), 418-419.

³ Spelling in accordance with Hansard: Parliament, “House of Commons Debates 29 June 2015: Tunisia, and European Council,” Parliament, (June 2015), <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmhansrd/cm150629/debtext/150629-0001.htm#1506295000001> (accessed April 7, 2016), Column 1182.

are tailored for each conflict, resourced and sustained. It will conclude that, despite immense challenges, it is possible to prevent sexual violence as a weapon of war.

By way of background, the ‘Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative’ (PSVI) was launched by the then UK Foreign Secretary, William Hague, in May 2012, who said: “Confronted by the greatest ills of our world it is all too easy to be overwhelmed and to turn away. But none of the strides we have made in human rights would ever have been possible without high ambition and resolute determination”.⁴ The following year, the UK promoted its PSVI agenda by using the G8 presidency to agree a G8 Declaration and sponsoring a United Nations’ Security Council Resolution (UNSCR 2106). The UK also led on a UN General Assembly-endorsed ‘Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict’, which has since been signed by 155 countries.⁵ In 2014, the UK hosted a global summit – the largest event of its kind. Hague’s supporters in this endeavour were Zainab Bangura, the UN Secretary General’s Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, and Angelina Jolie Pitt, a Special Envoy of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. It seemed as if Hague – the biographer of William Wilberforce, who had successfully banned the slave trade in the nineteenth century – was determined to leave his own legacy before relinquishing power.

Before reviewing the current literature on sexual violence, it is important to clarify the key terms in the paper of ‘prevent’, ‘sexual violence’ and ‘war’. The literature on sexual violence did not offer a theoretical or practical definition of ‘prevent’, including within the PSVI domain, so a dictionary definition will be followed: “to stop somebody from doing something; to stop something from happening”.⁶ By contrast, the UN Secretary General (UNSG) produces an annual report on ‘Conflict-related sexual violence’, where the term ‘sexual violence’ is formally defined as:

⁴ Foreign & Commonwealth Office, “Foreign Secretary launches new Government initiative to prevent sexual violence in conflict,” Foreign & Commonwealth Office, (May 2012), <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/foreign-secretary-launches-new-government-initiative-to-prevent-sexual-violence-in-conflict> (accessed March 21, 2016).

⁵ Paul Kirby, “Ending sexual violence in conflict: the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative and its critics,” *International Affairs*, 91(3) (2015), doi: 10.1111/1468-2346.12283 (accessed October 8, 2015), 457-458.

⁶ Oxford Learner’s Dictionary, “Prevent,” Oxford Learner’s Dictionary, <http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/prevent?q=prevent> (accessed May 15, 2016).

rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization and other forms of sexual violence of comparable gravity perpetrated against women, men, girls or boys that is linked, directly or indirectly (temporally, geographically or causally) to a conflict.⁷

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) recognises the types of activities in similar terms, and explains that: “Sexual violence can be broadly defined as acts of a sexual nature imposed by force, threat of force or coercion, or by taking advantage of a coercive environment or a person’s incapacity to give genuine consent.”⁸ Legislation on sexual violence will be addressed as part of the literature review, however, it can be seen that, in non-legalistic language, the UNSG and ICRC’s terminology slightly differs. For the purposes of this paper, the UNSG’s definition will be adhered to – given the UN’s leading role in this matter, its inclusion of ‘women, men and children’ in the definition, and its recognition that other activities could be included within the term. Regarding the use of the word ‘war’ in the title, a non-legal definition will also be adopted, taken from ‘UK Defence Doctrine’ as: “War is a state of armed conflict between different countries, or different groups within a country.”⁹ Therefore, ‘weapon of war’ in the title is a symbolic phrase and should be understood within the UK Defence Doctrine definition of ‘war’ just cited.

In terms of the paper’s parameters and given the word limit, the paper will not attempt to evaluate specific UK policies, but will examine how the issues have been addressed by academics, international organisations, governments and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). Furthermore, the paper will not conduct a comparative assessment of the merits of PSVI and the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda or focus on the role of women in post-conflict reconstruction issues. However, it will seek to demonstrate the considerable demands in managing the after-effects, for those involved in sexual violence in conflict, to emphasise the challenges involved in both prevention and remedy.

⁷ United Nations Secretary General, “Conflict-related sexual violence: Report of the Secretary General,” United Nations, S/2015/203 (March 23, 2015), <http://www.stoprapenow.org/uploads/advocacyresources/1428937312.pdf> (accessed January 6, 2016), 1/33.

⁸ International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), “Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict: E-Briefing,” ICRC, (December 2015) <https://app.icrc.org/e-briefing/sexual-violence-armed-conflict/> (accessed January 7, 2016), Part 3.

⁹ United Kingdom, Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre, *UK Defence Doctrine*, Joint Doctrine Publication 0-01. 5th ed., (Shrivenham: DCDC, 2014), 18.

Literature review

The next section reviews the current literature on the subject by examining the key findings in five areas: first, the reasons for using sexual violence in conflict; second, the evidence that men and boys can be victims and that women can be perpetrators; third, the challenges of managing the after-effects; fourth, the risks from securitisation and deflecting attention from the WPS agenda; and, finally, evidence of the non-inevitability of sexual violence in conflict.

Why sexual violence is used as a weapon of war

The first key finding from the literature review was an explanation of the reasons for sexual violence to be utilised as a weapon of war. Although Wood has conducted extensive research in this area, she wrote as recently as 2014 that: “there is much we still do not understand about conflict-related sexual violence.”¹⁰ Solangon and Patel agreed, recommending a deeper investigation of sexual violence against men.¹¹ Despite their caution, the literature proffered a number of explanations which went a considerable way in explaining the reasons for using sexual violence in conflict. Watson propounded that: “The most important predictor of sexual violence in all cases is that the victim is in an environment where the perpetrator can commit violence or abuse with a high degree of impunity.”¹² Solangon and Patel concurred: “it is clear that a culture of impunity promotes propensity for violence”,¹³ and they highlighted that: “socio-economic breakdown and poor living conditions ... may lead to impunity due to the collapse of law and order to safeguard civilians.”¹⁴ The ICRC agreed that: “Impunity for sexual violence remains at the heart of the problem in many contexts.”¹⁵

¹⁰ Elizabeth Jean Wood, “Conflict-related sexual violence and the policy implications of recent research,” *International Review of the Red Cross* 96(894) (2014), doi: 10.1017/S1816383115000077 (accessed January 7, 2016), 477.

¹¹ Solangon and Patel, “Sexual violence against men in countries affected by armed conflict,” 435-436.

¹² Callum Watson, “Preventing and Responding to Sexual and Domestic Violence against Men: A Guidance Note for Security Sector Institutions,” *Democratic Control of the Armed Forces*, (2014), <http://www.dcaf.ch/Publications/Preventing-and-Responding-to-Sexual-and-Domestic-Violence-against-Men-A-Guidance-Note-for-Security-Sector-Institutions> (accessed January 19, 2016), 14.

¹³ Solangon and Patel, “Sexual violence against men in countries affected by armed conflict,” 426.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 425-426.

¹⁵ ICRC, “Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict: E-Briefing,” Part 3.

Additionally, Solangon and Patel emphasised sexual violence's role as a: "display of power, domination and humiliation".¹⁶ This was typified in a 2016 UN report which said that Daesh was targeting Iraqi tribal and religious leaders, doctors, journalists, lawyers and police officers¹⁷ as a means of demonstrating Daesh's power over authority and respected figures. In other conflicts, human rights defenders are also targeted for similar reasons of control by those who oppose them. Watson explained that sexual violence was used to: "destroy community ties",¹⁸ to displace people forcibly from their homes and destroy future generations through a loss of societal cohesion.

Regarding the planned use of sexual violence by armed groups, Wood said it: "appears to have been a strategy in, for example, Bosnia, Guatemala and Rwanda".¹⁹ Kirby said: "Most notoriously, Serbian psychological operations units concluded that acts of rape (including against children) would have a deleterious effect on enemy morale during the Bosnian war, and adopted a rape policy accordingly."²⁰ Wood also mentioned Michele Leiby's research on its use by state forces, including in Peru, as a counter-insurgency strategy, to control communities that were supporting insurgents. Peruvian state forces also used sexual violence against captured insurgents to gain information, punish insurgents and demonstrate the government's power.²¹ Solangon and Patel described how it could be used: "as part of a military strategy to terrorise and demoralise civilians and combatants."²² Last year's annual report on conflict-related sexual violence by the UNSG noted that groups were using sexual violence to support their: "strategic objectives, ideology and funding ... [for] tactical imperatives as recruitment; terrorizing populations ... displacing communities from strategic areas ... generating revenue; ... torture to elicit intelligence ... [and] establish, alter or dissolve kinship ties that bind communities."²³

¹⁶ Solangon and Patel, "Sexual violence against men in countries affected by armed conflict," 425.

¹⁷ United Nations, "Report on the Protection of Civilians in the Armed Conflict in Iraq: 1 May – 31 October 2015," (January 2016), http://www.uniraq.org/images/humanrights/UNAMI-OHCHR_%20POC%20Report_FINAL_01%20May-31%20October%202015_FINAL_11Jan2016.pdf (accessed January 21, 2016), i.

¹⁸ Watson, "Preventing and Responding to Sexual and Domestic Violence against Men: A Guidance Note for Security Sector Institutions," 13.

¹⁹ Wood, "Conflict-related sexual violence and the policy implications of recent research," 472.

²⁰ Kirby, "Ending sexual violence in conflict: Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative and its critics," 462.

²¹ Wood, "Conflict-related sexual violence and the policy implications of recent research," 472.

²² Solangon and Patel, "Sexual violence against men in countries affected by armed conflict," 425.

²³ UN Secretary General, "Conflict-related sexual violence: Report of Secretary General," 24/33.

By contrast, Alcorn summarised Baaz and Stern's primary research of the state forces' use of sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) which led them to conclude that: "if anything, it is the dysfunction of the military hierarchy that has created a space for opportunistic sexual violence to occur."²⁴ Solangon and Patel recognised that sexual violence could be deployed as a military strategy, but also accepted that it could be: "a consequence of poor combatant selection mechanisms, poor discipline, poor living conditions, poor training and weak cohesion amongst members."²⁵ Wood referred to the results of Cohen's research, where: "she shows that nonstate armed groups that practice forced recruitment are more likely to engage in high levels of sexual violence."²⁶ Wood also assessed that sexual violence could be ordered within an armed group or tolerated as a practice.²⁷

To conclude this first key finding, the literature provided a number of explanations as to why sexual violence is still used as a weapon of war. The rationale could appear contradictory at times: for example, that it could be part of a defined military strategy or, at other times, as a consequence of the break down in military procedures. However, this is likely to reflect the different nature and phases of each conflict. Although some academics emphasised the need for more research, the literature was consistent in identifying the principal reasons for its use: a sense of impunity, a determination to exert power, and, either as a planned military strategy or as poor military practice.

Men and boys can be victims and women can be perpetrators

The second key finding from the literature review was that men and boys could be victims and women could be perpetrators. Solangon and Patel noted that: "The results of the literature review indicate that evidence and conceptual discourse on sexual violence against men in conflict-settings is quite limited."²⁸ Watson, writing a couple of years later, highlighted that progress had been made in the academic arena, but that information for practitioners was still

²⁴ Ted Alcorn, "Responding to sexual violence in armed conflict," *The Lancet* 383(9934) (2014), [http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(14\)60970-3/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(14)60970-3/fulltext) (accessed January 18, 2016), 2036.

²⁵ Solangon and Patel, "Sexual violence against men in countries affected by armed conflict," 429-430.

²⁶ Elizabeth Jean Wood, "Rape is not inevitable during war," in Kathleen Kuehnast, Chantal de Jonge Oudraat, and Helga Hernes, eds., *Women and War: Power and Protection in the Twenty-First Century*, (Washington, DC: US Institute of Peace Press, 2011), 58.

²⁷ Wood, "Conflict-related sexual violence and the policy implications of recent research," 467 & 470.

²⁸ Solangon and Patel, "Sexual violence against men in countries affected by armed conflict," 422.

under-developed.²⁹ Gathering accurate data was potentially more demanding than for women, because for men it was frequently recorded as ‘torture’.³⁰ Other obstacles in data collection resulted from the shame men experienced from the stigma, the breaking of social taboos and possibly domestic laws, as well as demoralisation from an inability to defend oneself. Historically, there had also been a lack of awareness or support from the health-care, legal and media sectors. Skjelsboek suggested that the emasculation which some men felt could make it difficult to report cases to a woman: “For better access to data, it might be necessary to involve more men in this research.”³¹ This was supported by Hague’s summary at the Global Summit in 2014: “Data-collection should not be gender-blind to men and boys.”³²

Although the research was more limited, the reasons for sexual violence against men were evident in the literature, particularly in Solangon and Patel’s work. They explained that it could take place as part of initiation to a group following conscription or abduction, or to break another group’s cohesion or as a form of: “Genocidal sexual violence ... [through] genital mutilation and beatings committed against men of certain ethnic groups, in order to render them impotent.”³³ They also identified that: “most sexual violence cases against men occur in detention settings ... for interrogation and punitive processes.”³⁴ Dr Aburabi, an ICRC doctor, explained that it was possible to identify those at risk in detention camps: “young detainees, first-time detainees, those with a certain appearance, those with learning or other disabilities, as well as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons”.³⁵

²⁹ Watson, “Preventing and Responding to Sexual and Domestic Violence against Men: A Guidance Note for Security Sector Institutions,” 3.

³⁰ Solangon and Patel, “Sexual violence against men in countries affected by armed conflict,” 422-423.

³¹ Inger Skjelsboek, “Sexual violence in the post-Yugoslav wars,” in Kuehnast et al., eds., *Women and War: Power and Protection in Twenty-First Century*, 82.

³² Foreign & Commonwealth Office, “Statement of Action - Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict,” Foreign & Commonwealth Office, (June 2014), <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statement-of-action-global-summit-to-end-sexual-violence-in-conflict> (accessed November 26, 2015).

³³ Solangon and Patel, “Sexual violence against men in countries affected by armed conflict,” 419 & 428-429.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 429-430.

³⁵ Vincent Bernard, and Elvina Pothelet, “Through the eyes of a detention doctor: Interview with Raed Aburabi,” *International Review of the Red Cross*, 96(894) (2014), doi: 10.1017/S1816383115000284 (accessed January 11, 2016), 482.

The complexities of the subject were also revealed in the literature regarding women as perpetrators. Wood stated that US female soldiers were responsible for acts of sexual violence in Iraq, Afghanistan and Guantanamo Bay.³⁶ In 2015, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) upheld its conviction of Pauline Nyiramasuhuko, the former Minister of Family and Women's Development, for helping to organise, and ordering others to undertake, rape during the Rwandan conflict in 1994.³⁷ Other literature identified female perpetrators in Sierra Leone,³⁸ Haiti and the DRC.³⁹ The literature emphasised that the reasons why women carry out sexual violence needed further investigation, but Edström et al. suggested that: "some causes may include women's adaptation to norms of militarised masculinity, the desire to redirect sexual violence, or to humiliate an enemy."⁴⁰

Regarding the extent of men and boys as victims and women as perpetrators, the difficulties in obtaining reliable figures and the lack of research into the latter were apparent in the literature. Solangon and Patel stated that in one Bosnian camp in the 1990s, 80% of the five thousand men imprisoned there had been raped and sexual violence against men had been recorded in 25 modern-day conflicts around the world.⁴¹ It might be assumed that male survivors represent extremely small proportions of the overall number of victims. However, given the nature of this 'hidden crime', more research and evidence is required, especially in the reporting of 'torture' used against men. For female perpetrators, Cohen's research had suggested that: "female combatants participated in 25 percent of the RUF's gang rapes [Revolutionary

³⁶ Wood, "Rape is not inevitable during war," in Kuehnast et al., eds., *Women and War: Power & Protection in Twenty-First Century*, 45.

³⁷ Human Rights Watch, "Rwanda: International Tribunal Closing Its Doors," HRW, (December 2015), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/12/23/rwanda-international-tribunal-closing-its-doors> (accessed January 6, 2016) &

Marianne Mollmann, "Rape in war: No more excuses," Human Rights Watch, (July 2011), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2011/07/22/rape-war-no-more-excuses> (accessed January 6, 2016).

³⁸ Wood, "Rape is not inevitable during war," in Kuehnast et al., eds., *Women and War: Power & Protection in Twenty-First Century*, 45.

³⁹ Jerker Edström, Alexa Hassink, Thea Shahrokh, and Erin Stern, eds., "Engendering Men: A Collaborative Review of Evidence of Men and Boys in Social Change and Gender Equality," EMERGE Evidence Review, Promundo-US, Sonke Gender Justice and the Institute of Development Studies. (September 2015), <http://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/bitstream/handle/123456789/7059/EMERGE.pdf?sequence=1> (accessed January 22, 2016), 142.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Solangon and Patel, "Sexual violence against men in countries affected by armed conflict," 419.

United Front in Sierra Leone]”.⁴² Nonetheless, the main outcome of the literature was that: “much more research is needed to determine the actual number of female perpetrators, as well as the causes and consequences of female perpetration of sexual violence”.⁴³

To conclude this second key finding, the literature addressed preconceptions that sexual violence is solely a gender issue, whereby men exert dominance over women with impunity, by demonstrating that men and boys can be victims and women can be perpetrators. The literature detailed the different causes and contexts for sexual violence to be employed against men and boys. By contrast, it appeared that significantly more research would be required to understand the reasons for women carrying out sexual violence. The extent of men and boys as victims and women as perpetrators – in comparison to the number of women as victims and the number of men as perpetrators – was extremely unclear from the literature. Nonetheless, the review demonstrated that this was an aspect of sexual violence in conflict which should not be ignored. Furthermore, it is suggested that this second key finding does not contradict a later key finding (that sexual violence is not inevitable), as it could be argued that greater understanding of the subject serves to highlight its complexities. As will be explained later, sexual violence is not always utilised, but when it is, it can be against men and boys, as well as against women and girls.

Managing the after-effects

The third key finding from the literature review concerned the challenges of managing the after-effects, including: providing medical and psychological help; dealing with the spread of sexually-transmitted diseases (STDs); addressing the issue of abortion; and offering tailored support to children and men. Bouvier described the requirement for medical care to be administered within 72 hours: “for the purpose of preventing sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV, and for emergency contraception.”⁴⁴ He provided an example

⁴² Wood, “Rape is not inevitable during war,” in Kuehnast et al., eds., *Women and War: Power & Protection in Twenty-First Century*, 47.

⁴³ Edström et al., eds., “Engendering Men: Collaborative Review of Evidence of Men & Boys in Social Change and Gender Equality,” 142.

⁴⁴ Paul Bouvier, “Sexual violence, health and humanitarian ethics: Towards a holistic, person-centred approach,” *International Review of the Red Cross* 96(894) (2014), doi: 10.1017/S1816383115000430 (accessed January 11, 2016), 573.

of the difficulties from a study of the DRC, where over 95% of survivors were unable to gain access to emergency medical help within that timeframe.⁴⁵ Skjelsboek noted the implications for individuals' reproductive health, as well as an additional stigma of having a STD, and suggested: "We need to know more about the extent to which sexual violence in armed conflicts contributes to the spread of HIV/Aids".⁴⁶ Solangon and Patel said there was an: "urgent need of ... psychiatric attention in the management of trauma",⁴⁷ and Bouvier highlighted the requirement for longer-term support: "Continuity of care and regular follow-up are essential over a period of time, including medical care, mental health and psychosocial support."⁴⁸ Other challenges in managing the aftermath included dealing with possible legal ramifications, where rape was illegal and where abortions were not permitted. Bouvier stressed the need to support women after an abortion, when: "They may face humiliation, exclusion or stigmatization ... violence, even lethal violence ... [or be] prosecuted and jailed."⁴⁹

The literature review revealed that children had particular needs, depending on whether they had experienced sexual violence, perpetrated it or were a result of it. Duroch and Schulte-Hillen described Médecins Sans Frontières' work: "Caring for children presents additional challenges, such as ... dealing at times with severe physical and psychological trauma", as well as the need for genuine patient consent before medical help could be provided.⁵⁰ Solangon and Patel described: "the complexities in reintegrating child soldiers, who may have been used as sexual slaves or forced to commit acts of sexual violence".⁵¹ The MenEngage Alliance and UN Population Fund (UNFPA)⁵² said there was a need to: "Identify specific strategies and techniques to work with children and adolescent boys who have experienced, witnessed or committed sexual

⁴⁵ Ibid., 574.

⁴⁶ Skjelsboek, "Sexual violence in post-Yugoslav wars," in Kuehnast et al., eds., *Women and War: Power & Protection in Twenty-First Century*, 81.

⁴⁷ Solangon and Patel, "Sexual violence against men in countries affected by armed conflict," 434.

⁴⁸ Bouvier, "Sexual violence, health and humanitarian ethics: Towards a holistic, person-centred approach," 576.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 582.

⁵⁰ Françoise Duroch, and Catrin Schulte-Hillen, "Care for victims of sexual violence, an organization pushed to its limits: The case of Médecins Sans Frontières," *International Review of the Red Cross*, 96(894) (2014), doi: 10.1017/S1816383115000107 (accessed January 11, 2016), 616 and 618-619.

⁵¹ Solangon and Patel, "Sexual violence against men in countries affected by armed conflict," 434.

⁵² Abbreviation conventionally adopted in accordance with its former name.

violence”.⁵³ Steinberg noted from his time as US Ambassador to Angola in the 1990s that there were: “young boys, who had never learned how to interact on an equal basis with girls their own age.”⁵⁴ Bouvier identified the requirement for early and long-term care for children born from sexually-violent acts: “they should be considered as vulnerable children, at high risk of negative outcomes in their health and development.”⁵⁵ A 2015 UN report which reviewed the outcomes in Bosnia and Herzegovina twenty years after the end of the war noted the lack of support to: “children born of wartime rape, who face particular risk of stigma, abandonment, rejection and low socioeconomic status.”⁵⁶

The literature also revealed that men’s needs, in dealing with the after-effects, differed from those of women and children. Solangon and Patel set out the challenges for those who had experienced sexual violence, not least where homosexuality was illegal, but also that: “Men are often socially ostracised from their communities, referred to as ‘bush wives’, emasculated, humiliated and sometimes blamed for the assault.”⁵⁷ They promoted the need for tailored education and communication campaigns, and specific psychological help.⁵⁸ They also recognised the different challenges for those who had committed sexual violence: “Reintegrating men and boys, who were forced to rape a family or community member, into society, remains hugely problematic in many societies.”⁵⁹ The MenEngage and UNFPA highlighted the needs of other men: “Understanding that witnessing violence against loved ones is a direct experience of violence and can result in the same type of deep and lasting trauma as survivors of assault experience.”⁶⁰ Another aspect was the potential increase in domestic violence, which was identified by a number of

⁵³ MenEngage Alliance and United Nations Population Fund, “Sexual Violence in Conflict and Post-Conflict: Engaging Men and Boys,” (July 2012), <http://menengage.org/resources/sexual-violence-conflict-post-conflict-engaging-men-boys/> (accessed January 12, 2016), 12.

⁵⁴ Donald Steinberg, “Women and War: an Agenda for action,” in Kuehnast et al., eds., *Women and War: Power and Protection in Twenty-First Century*, 121.

⁵⁵ Bouvier, “Sexual violence, health and humanitarian ethics: Towards a holistic, person-centred approach,” 582-583.

⁵⁶ UN Secretary General, “Conflict-related sexual violence: Report of Secretary General,” 20/33.

⁵⁷ Solangon and Patel, “Sexual violence against men in countries affected by armed conflict,” 421.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 432-433 & 435.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 421.

⁶⁰ MenEngage Alliance and UNFPA, “Sexual Violence in Conflict and Post-Conflict: Engaging Men and Boys,” 11.

writers, including Skjelsboek.⁶¹ Steinberg described men who returned from the conflict in Angola, had few skills and were then unemployed in communities where women had learned to live without them. This had led to an increase in drug-taking and alcoholism, often resulting in domestic violence: “In effect, the end of the civil war simply unleashed a new era of violence against women and girls.”⁶² Edström et al. pointed to research findings which showed the: “continuation and prevalence [of sexual violence] in post-conflict settings.”⁶³ They referred to research undertaken in Rwanda where men were: “more likely to use both physical and sexual violence against partners at home” if they had been involved in genocidal violence in that conflict.⁶⁴

To sum up the third key finding from the literature review, it was apparent that the challenges of managing the after-math were considerable in both the immediate and long-term, with requirements for medical and psychological care; dealing with the spread of STDs; helping women to have, and those who had undergone, abortions; and providing tailored support to children and men. Additionally, breaking the cycle of violence emerged from the literature review as an important element of dealing with the after-effects, as sexual violence continued post-conflict. This would be a daunting prospect for most nations to deal with, but even more demanding for countries severely damaged in conflict, and where such support may not have existed in the first place.

The risks of securitisation and detracting from the *Women, Peace and Security* agenda

The fourth key finding from the literature review concerned the risks from securitising the issue, as well as deflecting attention from the ‘Women, Peace and Security’ (WPS) agenda. Kirby said that: “a political project to foreground sexual violence ... must, if successful, have the corresponding political effect of directing material resources” and he warned that there was the potential to distort attention from the pressing needs to address both other war crimes and domestic violence.⁶⁵ He noted, for example, that: “in the eastern DRC,

⁶¹ Skjelsboek, “Sexual violence in post-Yugoslav wars,” in Kuehnast et al., eds., *Women and War: Power & Protection in Twenty-First Century*, 81.

⁶² Steinberg, “Women and War: an Agenda for action,” in Kuehnast et al., eds., *Women and War: Power and Protection in Twenty-First Century*, 121.

⁶³ Edström et al., eds., “Engendering Men: Collaborative Review of Evidence of Men & Boys in Social Change and Gender Equality,” 141.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 143.

⁶⁵ Kirby, “Ending sexual violence in conflict: Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative and its critics,” 463.

household survey data reveal extremely high levels of *intimate partner* sexual violence, despite the general fixation on atrocities by armed groups.”⁶⁶ Wood concurred: “In some conflict settings, the frequency of sexual violence by armed actors is significantly less than that by intimate partners, acquaintances or strangers”,⁶⁷ as did Alcorn:

surveys have repeatedly shown that survivors are far more likely to report a rape if it is perpetrated by a stranger than by a husband or boyfriend. In conflict and post-conflict settings, this disproportionate under-reporting of sexual violence within households can greatly inflate the share of sexual violence attributed to armed groups.⁶⁸

The results of the literature review also revealed a growing recognition that as men and boys were victims of sexual violence, as well as perpetrators, this could detract from the hard won gains of the WPS agenda. Kuehnast et al. said that UNSCR 1325, passed in 2000, “handed civil society organizations and women peace activists from around the world a major victory and an authoritative instrument for further mobilization”⁶⁹ and Alison questioned in 2007: “if feminists stop talking about rape, who will?”⁷⁰ Kirby’s critique of the PSVI, and its overt support for men and boys as survivors, included the possible implication that: “the UN and contributing states will now be less forceful in diagnosing and responding to patriarchal power relations and hierarchical gender orders ... [and] the expectation that existing programmes halve (or significantly decrease) the resources devoted to women and girls”.⁷¹ However, the ICRC seemed to welcome the new construct: “the focus has shifted from the particular plight of women in conflicts to a broader approach, based on the vulnerabilities experienced by both men and women on the basis of their gender and their sex.”⁷² This was supported by Solangon and Patel: “sexual violence against men must be brought to the fore, not as a challenge to female rights but as a partner in the fight against the war on gender-based sexual violence.”⁷³ Although some academics, policy-makers and practitioners

⁶⁶ Ibid., 462.

⁶⁷ Wood, “Conflict-related sexual violence and the policy implications of recent research,” 460.

⁶⁸ Alcorn, “Responding to sexual violence in armed conflict,” 2035.

⁶⁹ Kuehnast et al., eds., *Women and War: Power & Protection in Twenty-First Century*, 2.

⁷⁰ Solangon and Patel, “Sexual violence against men in countries affected by armed conflict,” 424.

⁷¹ Kirby, “Ending sexual violence in conflict: Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative and its critics,” 471.

⁷² ICRC, “Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict: E-Briefing,” Introduction.

⁷³ Solangon and Patel, “Sexual violence against men in countries affected by armed conflict,” 436.

might not be entirely comfortable with this development, Kirby noted that it was possible to track the changes in language from women-focussed UNSCRs 1888 and 1960 in 2008 and 2009, to ‘women and gender advisers’ in UNSCR 2106 in June 2013 to ‘gender advisers’ in UNSCR 2122 in October 2013.⁷⁴ This suggests an increasing recognition of, and acceptance from, the international community that the issue of sexual violence in conflict should be approached for its impact on men and boys, as well as women and girls.

To conclude the fourth key finding, the results of the literature review showed that it was important to keep sexual violence as a weapon of war in perspective with the potentially higher rates of *domestic* violence in conflict, post-conflict and non-conflict situations. Additionally, although this paper aims to undertake a more even-handed analysis of the subject, the importance of addressing the role of women in peace and security matters should not be underestimated – both in terms of effectively managing the after-effects and preventing future occurrences of sexual violence in conflict.

Sexual violence in conflict is not inevitable

The fifth key finding from the literature review demonstrated that sexual violence in conflict is not inevitable. From Wood’s own research and a synthesis of other academics’ findings, she identified that the extent of sexual violence, the forms it took, the timing within a conflict, its place within a repertoire of violent methods, and whether it was symmetrical or asymmetrical were different in each conflict. Furthermore, she discovered that such differences could not be accounted for by the type of conflict, nor by prevailing traditional norms, the religions practiced or the opportunities available to undertake sexual violence. Additionally, the differences could not be explained by difficulties in obtaining reliable figures.⁷⁵ Wood concluded therefore that: “The neglected fact of variation, including the relative absence of wartime sexual violence by one or more armed groups, has important policy implications: rape is not inevitable in war as is sometimes claimed.”⁷⁶ Wood provided examples of some armed groups which had not employed sexual violence in El Salvador, Israel/Palestine, Vietnam and Sri Lanka.⁷⁷ However,

⁷⁴ Kirby, “Ending sexual violence in conflict: Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative and its critics,” 470.

⁷⁵ Wood, “Rape is not inevitable during war,” in Kuehnast et al., eds., *Women and War: Power & Protection in Twenty-First Century*, 37-39 and 43-45.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 39.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 40 & 43.

she also cautioned that: “By the absence of sexual violence, I mean the (relative) absence of sexual violence: sexual violence by a group is very rare (but not completely absent).”⁷⁸

In a later work, Wood identified another element of variation: whether sexual violence was used against women only or against both genders.⁷⁹ She also provided figures from other academic research. For example, she cited from Nordås who claimed that: “59% of 177 armed actors in the civil wars between 2000 and 2009 in twenty African countries were not reported to have engaged in rape or other forms of sexual violence.”⁸⁰ She also referred to Cohen’s findings: “where one party to the war promotes sexual violence while the other does not, a pattern true of almost 40% of civil wars.”⁸¹ Additionally, she drew from Cohen and Nordås’ combined work:

The best cross-national dataset available confirms that sexual violence (including rape) varies across State militaries, insurgent organizations and pro-government militias; indeed, for all three types of armed actors, a strong majority is not reported to have perpetrated sexual violence between 1989 and 2009.⁸²

Solangon and Patel in their research on sexual violence against men recognised that: “Sexual violence is no longer primarily viewed as a biological sexual desire but increasingly seen as a display of power, dominance and humiliation”.⁸³ The ICRC concurred: “It is no longer tenable to claim that sexual violence is simply an ugly facet of our worst human inclinations and an unfortunate companion of war; today it is widely acknowledged that sexual violence is not an inevitable consequence of armed conflict.”⁸⁴ This was a key finding in the literature review, because it suggested that if sexual violence was not always used as a weapon of war, then preventive measures should be identified from these conflicts and applied to prevent future outbreaks of sexual violence in war.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 39.

⁷⁹ Wood, “Conflict-related sexual violence and the policy implications of recent research,” 461.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 458.

⁸¹ Ibid., 462.

⁸² Ibid., 459.

⁸³ Solangon and Patel, “Sexual violence against men in countries affected by armed conflict,” 425.

⁸⁴ ICRC, “Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict: E-Briefing,” Part 4.

Summary of the Literature Review's key findings

To conclude this review of the literature, analysis by academics and practitioners provided a number of reasons for using sexual violence in conflict, and evidence that men and boys could be victims and women could be perpetrators. It revealed the non-inevitability of sexual violence in conflict – given that it was not employed by all armed groups in all conflicts at all times. It also highlighted the challenges of managing the after-effects; the risk from securitisation so that other war crimes and domestic violence are insufficiently resourced; and the risk of deflecting attention from the WPS agenda.

Current prevention approaches

Understanding

Turning now to an analysis of existing prevention approaches, which will cover four areas: understanding; high-level support; training; and legislation. First, in order to prevent something happening, it is necessary to understand the issues. The previous section on the results of the literature review sought to demonstrate that comprehension of the issues concerning sexual violence as a weapon of war has increased. Although, the literature promoted the need for further research, there now appears to be a solid foundation of work, which has improved understanding of the subject. The ICRC noted that: “its prevalence and horrific toll on individuals and societies, as well as the dynamics behind it, have been progressively better understood over the last two decades.”⁸⁵ For example, although Médecins Sans Frontières was established in 1971, it was not until 1999 that it devised its first treatment package for survivors of sexual violence.⁸⁶

The literature also demonstrated an understanding of the known vulnerable locations and times when sexual violence could be perpetrated. For example, Solangon and Patel described some of the vulnerable locations, such as in displacement camps, at border crossings, in isolated areas such as in fields and, by contrast, in markets and some trade routes where a concentration of people gathered. They also suggested vulnerable times, such as when collecting water or firewood, going to school, at night time and around elections.⁸⁷ For men in particular, Dr Aburabi, an ICRC detention doctor, described known vulnerable times, such as: “during initial detention, when the detainee is most disoriented and isolated from the usual support systems. ... There is also a high prevalence in interrogation centres”.⁸⁸ Skjelsboek suggested an indicator that people could be vulnerable to sexual violence was when: “political discourses become sexualized”.⁸⁹ Watson noted that one element of prevention of sexual violence against men (although it could equally apply to women and children), was: “by reducing the number of wrong places and

⁸⁵ ICRC, “Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict: E-Briefing,” Introduction.

⁸⁶ Duroch and Schulte-Hillen, “Care for victims of sexual violence, an organization pushed to its limits: case of Médecins Sans Frontières,” 603.

⁸⁷ Solangon and Patel, “Sexual violence against men in countries affected by armed conflict,” 432.

⁸⁸ Bernard and Pothelet, “Through eyes of a detention doctor: Interview with Raed Aburabi,” 481.

⁸⁹ Skjelsboek, “Sexual violence in post-Yugoslav wars,” in Kuehnast et al., eds., *Women and War: Power & Protection in Twenty-First Century*, 81.

wrong times that exist.”⁹⁰ Therefore, despite more research being required, it is suggested that the current level of understanding of the issues provides a good basis for effective prevention strategies to be designed, implemented and evaluated.

High-level support

The second area to be examined for its contribution to current prevention approaches is the degree of high-level international support. In 2009, under UNSCR 1888, the post of ‘Special Representative of the Secretary General on Sexual Violence in Conflict’ was established. A year later, UNSCR 1960 mandated the UNSG to produce an annual report listing all the armed groups carrying out sexual violence in conflict as part of ‘naming and shaming’. The 2015 report provided details of 45 state and non-state groups, thirteen of which were listed for the first time.⁹¹ Additionally, ‘UN Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict’ undertakes: “a number of strategic initiatives to improve system-wide coordination, knowledge-building, advocacy and technical country-level support.”⁹² Since 2013, 155 countries have endorsed a UN General Assembly Declaration to end sexual violence in conflict.⁹³ Through its presidency of the G8 in 2013, the UK secured a Declaration, whereby G8 members agreed to support a range of measures. These included: financial help, training, advice on documenting evidence, recognition that sexual violence could amount to grave breaches under the Geneva Convention (and thereby be prosecuted internationally under universal jurisdiction), the need to address sexual violence in the first phase of any response, and that no amnesty should be offered, in subsequent peace agreements, for those who perpetrate sexual violence.⁹⁴ They also agreed to produce a follow-up report under

⁹⁰ Callum Watson, "Bad apples or bad apple trees? An examination of the contexts in which sexual violence against men takes place," paper presented at a workshop entitled, 'Sexual Violence Against Men during Conflicts: Bridging the Gap between Theory and Practice', *The Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies*, Geneva, (February 26-27, 2015), 9.

⁹¹ UN Secretary General, "Conflict-related sexual violence: Report of Secretary General," 1/33.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 25/33.

⁹³ G7, "G7 Report on the Implementation of the G8 Declaration on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict," G7, (November 2015), https://www.g7germany.de/Content/EN/_Anlagen/G7/2015-11-24-g7-erklarung_svc_en.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=3 (accessed January 7, 2016), 2.

⁹⁴ Foreign & Commonwealth Office, "The Foreign Secretary William Hague, Angelina Jolie and Zainab Hawa Bangura launch G8 Declaration on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict," Foreign & Commonwealth Office, (April 2013), <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/g8-declaration-on-preventing-sexual-violence-in-conflict> (accessed November 27, 2015).

Germany's G8 presidency in 2015 to report on progress, which they duly undertook (by then, acting as the G7).⁹⁵

In June 2014, the UK hosted a Global Summit, with 120 nations⁹⁶ and representation from all G7 members, including four G7 foreign ministers and the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.⁹⁷ The US' Secretary of State, John Kerry, who closed the event, outlined the US' support, which included an initiative 'Safe from the Start' announced in 2013, which by November 2015, the US had funded to the tune of \$22M. The UK Prime Minister appointed a 'Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict', Baroness Anelay, and last year's National Security Strategy made a commitment to: "expand its [the PSVI's] reach and implementation".⁹⁸ From the time the UK launched the PSVI in 2012 until the end of 2015, the UK government had allocated £29M to support it.⁹⁹ The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) established a permanent post of Special Representative for WPS in 2014. For their current mission in Afghanistan, Operation Resolute Support, NATO incorporated WPS in the planning process from the outset, demonstrating that it was: "no longer an afterthought: a gender perspective was integrated from the political decision-making level down to the drafting of the operational plan for the mission and the troop generation process."¹⁰⁰ The ICRC has revised its way of working to assume that sexual violence has taken place in a conflict, until there is evidence to suggest otherwise.¹⁰¹

It would seem, therefore, that there is a degree of high-level international support, from the UN, G7, NATO, ICRC and individual countries, for dealing with sexual violence as a weapon of war. This is an important enabler for

⁹⁵ G7, "G7 Report on the Implementation of the G8 Declaration on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict."

⁹⁶ Kirby, "Ending sexual violence in conflict: Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative and its critics," 457.

⁹⁷ G7, "G7 Report on the Implementation of the G8 Declaration on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict," 2.

⁹⁸ United Kingdom Government, *National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015: A Secure and Prosperous United Kingdom*, Cm 9161, (November 2015), 63.

⁹⁹ G7, "G7 Report on the Implementation of the G8 Declaration on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict," 5.

¹⁰⁰ Mariët Schuurman, "NATO and the Women, Peace and Security Agenda: Time to Bring It Home." *Connections: The Quarterly Journal*, XIV(3) (2015), http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_124032.htm?selectedLocale=en (accessed January 12, 2016).

¹⁰¹ ICRC, "Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict: E-Briefing," Part 2.

leading on prevention and helping others to implement preventive measures. However, given the challenges involved, more resources will be required and sustained engagement from the international community to strengthen current preventive measures and cement improvements. Also, international support needs to be seen to be coming from non-western organisations. For example, searches of the English-version websites of the African Union (AU), Commonwealth, Arab League, Gulf Cooperation Council, Association of South East Asian Nations and the Organization of American States revealed little, if any, information on their policies to prevent sexual violence as a weapon of war. Such organisations need to be proactive in voicing their condemnation of sexual violence in conflict, reinforced by concrete action. Their commitment of financial and other support would assist the rest of the international community, itself under resource pressures, as well as demonstrating non-western organisations' genuine opposition to sexual violence in conflict.

Training

The third issue to be assessed for its contribution to preventing conflict-related sexual violence concerns the current provision for training armed and civil forces. In 2010, UN Action developed: “scenario-based predeployment training ... to improve the operational readiness of military and police peacekeepers to react swiftly and appropriately”,¹⁰² which continues to be rolled out in UN training centres. In 2014, NATO members agreed a new Education and Training Plan for Gender in Military Operations: “which unifies and synchronizes gender education and training at all levels.”¹⁰³ The following year, NATO’s most senior, politico-military crisis management exercise: “was the first at that level ... [which] included indicators that conflict related sexual violence takes place as a tactic of war, and tested how these indicators might influence strategic decision-making.”¹⁰⁴ The same year, the UK announced new funding worth £700,000 to train AU peacekeepers to prevent and respond to sexual violence in conflict.¹⁰⁵ The UK also said that all

¹⁰² UN Secretary General, “Conflict-related sexual violence: Report of Secretary General,” 26/33.

¹⁰³ Schuurman, “NATO and Women, Peace and Security Agenda: Time to Bring It Home.”

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Foreign & Commonwealth Office, “Angelina Jolie Pitt joins Baroness Anelay to chart next steps on tackling sexual violence,” Foreign & Commonwealth Office, (June 2015), <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/angelina-jolie-pitt-joins-baroness-anelay-to-chart-next-steps-on-tackling-sexual-violence> (accessed January 12, 2016).

UK forces deployed overseas would be trained in WPS and the PSVI by November 2016.¹⁰⁶ Furthermore, by November 2015, the UK had trained more than 8,000 African peacekeeping and police personnel, 2,500 Malian armed forces and 800 Iraqi Peshmerga troops.¹⁰⁷ Whilst there are still cases of UN and AU peacekeepers committing sexual violence themselves, rather than preventing or halting it, the current training provisions go some way to ensuring improved behaviour. Therefore, training can be seen as an important measure in giving armed forces and police officials the skills and understanding to deal with outbreaks of sexual violence and prevent future occurrences. It also establishes them as role models to: “help shape universal notions of how armed actors should behave and what their roles and responsibilities in conflict are ... even rebel groups may emulate them in the hope that one day they will be recognised as legitimate national actors.”¹⁰⁸ This view was echoed by the then Foreign Secretary, William Hague, in 2013: “members of armed forces are often the first to come into contact with survivors, and could also have an important role to play in helping to change male attitudes.”¹⁰⁹

Thus, there is evidence to suggest that training packages have been developed by the UN, NATO and individual countries, like the UK, which are being implemented for UN and AU peacekeepers, as well as for state armed forces and police officials. It will be important that such training is regularly assessed for its effectiveness (and refined), and continued to be rolled-out to multinational and national forces, as well as providing refresher training, and taking prompt and punitive action against those who commit sexual violence when they should be protecting others from such violence.

¹⁰⁶ Baroness Sandip Verma, “The UK firmly believes that the 15th anniversary must represent the start of a new era on Women, Peace and Security,” UK Government, (October 13, 2015), <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/the-uk-firmly-believes-that-the-15th-anniversary-must-represent-the-start-of-a-new-era-on-women-peace-and-security> (accessed November 26, 2015).

¹⁰⁷ G7, “G7 Report on the Implementation of the G8 Declaration on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict,” 7.

¹⁰⁸ Watson, “Bad apples or bad apple trees? Examination of contexts in which sexual violence against men takes place,” 10.

¹⁰⁹ FCO, “Foreign Secretary William Hague, Angelina Jolie and Zainab Hawa Bangura launch G8 Declaration on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict.”

Legislation

The fourth, and final, element to be examined for its contribution to current prevention approaches concerns legislation, which will cover: the body of law, implementation and deterrence. First, on the law itself, Gaggioli, a lawyer and academic, reviewed the current legislative provisions within International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and international human rights law. She found that: “The IHL prohibition of rape and other forms of sexual violence applies to both international and non-international armed conflicts and is also part of customary law. Human rights law prohibits sexual violence at all times.”¹¹⁰ She also identified that: “Rape and other forms of sexual violence can amount to international crimes – war crimes, crimes against humanity and acts of genocide – when the conditions for such crimes ... are fulfilled. As such, they entail individual criminal responsibility.”¹¹¹ Gaggioli concluded that: “The international legal framework ... is thus extremely strong, even if imperfect ... the different international law branches (IHL, human rights law, international criminal law) echo and reinforce each other, providing for an essential complementarity.”¹¹² A G8 Declaration in 2013 noted that: “international humanitarian law maintains a long-standing prohibition ... and that ... when it is part of a widespread or systematic attack against a civilian population can constitute a crime against humanity and can be a constitutive act with respect to genocide.”¹¹³ A recent House of Lords’ Select Committee review: “examined the case for further international law ... [but] concluded that existing provisions are adequate”.¹¹⁴ Therefore, it would seem as if the legislative provisions – on paper at least – are sufficiently robust.

¹¹⁰ Gloria Gaggioli, “Sexual violence in armed conflicts: A violation of international humanitarian law and human rights law,” *International Review of the Red Cross* 96(894) (2014), doi: 10.1017/S1816383115000211 (accessed January 11, 2016), 537.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ Foreign & Commonwealth Office, “Declaration on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict,” Foreign & Commonwealth Office, (April 2013), https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/185008/G8_PSVI_Declaration_-_FINAL.pdf (accessed November 27, 2015).

¹¹⁴ House of Lords, “Select Committee on Sexual Violence in Conflict: Report of Session 2015–16: Sexual Violence in Conflict: A War Crime,” House of Lords, HL Paper 123, (April 12, 2016), <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201516/ldselect/ldsdc/123/123.pdf> (accessed April 15, 2016), 8.

Whilst there were no calls for additional legislation from the literature review, there was an emphasis on implementation. For instance, Gaggioli called for: “better implementation of existing rules at the domestic level and effective prosecutions of perpetrators of sexual crimes at the domestic and international levels.”¹¹⁵ In 2013 the G8 supported: “the deployment of international experts to help build up the judicial, investigative and legal capacity of other countries”.¹¹⁶ The ICRC recommended: “Authorities must ensure that adequate mechanisms are in place allowing victims to report the violence in a safe and confidential manner.”¹¹⁷ They also called for: “appropriate sensitization of legal personnel, specific technical arrangements regarding time and place of the hearings, and adequate legal assistance to all alleged perpetrators.”¹¹⁸

Although this would appear to be a significant undertaking, there are organisations which are helping countries to improve their legal processes. For example, a G7 report in 2015 highlighted the work of ‘Justice Rapid Response’ (JRR), an inter-governmental body that works with the UN. It explained that JRR maintains rosters of rapidly-deployable criminal justice experts (over 500 individuals) and investigative experts (nearly 150 people), the latter undertaking more detailed enquiries.¹¹⁹ JRR’s own website highlighted that the rapidly-deployable experts represent 60 professions and: “come from over 95 countries and speak over 80 languages. JRR’s roster is more than 40% from the global South and over 50% [are] women”.¹²⁰ In less than six years, JRR had undertaken nearly 70 investigations, including in Syria and Iraq.¹²¹ The UK has also established its own team of more than 70 experts, spanning a range of

¹¹⁵ Gaggioli, “Sexual violence in armed conflicts: violation of international humanitarian law and human rights law,” 533.

¹¹⁶ FCO, “Foreign Secretary William Hague, Angelina Jolie and Zainab Hawa Bangura launch G8 Declaration on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict.”

¹¹⁷ ICRC, “Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict: E-Briefing,” Part 3.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ G7, “G7 Report on the Implementation of the G8 Declaration on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict,” 7.

¹²⁰ Justice Rapid Response, “Justice Rapid Response welcomes UN Women and Draper Richards Kaplan Foundation to its Executive Board,” JRR, (November 2015), <http://www.justicerapidresponse.org/justice-rapid-response-welcomes-un-women-and-draper-richards-kaplan-foundation-to-its-executive-board/> (accessed January 7, 2016).

¹²¹ Ibid. & G7, “G7 Report on the Implementation of the G8 Declaration on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict,” 7.

fields, including police and forensic scientists,¹²² which has worked on 17 projects in 13 countries, including on the border with Syria, to, inter alia: “improve investigations, and increase prosecutions of sexual violence in conflict.”¹²³ Furthermore, G8 Foreign Ministers agreed in 2013 to produce an *International Protocol on the Documentation and Investigation of Sexual Violence in Conflict*. It was devised by UK officials, with expert input, and launched at the Global Summit in 2014 to: “help strengthen the evidence base for bringing perpetrators to justice”.¹²⁴ Since then, the UK has developed a training package and translated the Protocol into other languages, including Arabic. The UK has also helped several countries to use the Protocol, including Bosnia, Colombia and Uganda.¹²⁵ The medical profession has also recognised that it has a role to play in gathering evidence. This is not necessarily a straightforward development, as their primary role is to treat patients, not act in a policing role. However, since 2011, ‘Physicians for Human Rights’ has brought together health-care workers and legal professionals to improve their combined efforts: “[Clinicians] are the first people to come across what constitutes evidence, so they have to start labelling it and preserving it in a way that will make it court admissible down the road.”¹²⁶ Thus, it would seem as if the international community has recognised the need to help countries improve their legal practices and taken a number of steps to support change. Nonetheless, this will require sustained international and national engagement, training, mentoring and resources to embed good practices and ensure better application of the relevant legislation if it is to have any real effect as a preventive measure. This would seem to be an area which needs addressing further. Once states have been persuaded to adopt the relevant legislation, the international community needs to assist and ensure it is applied.

¹²² FCO, “Foreign Secretary William Hague, Angelina Jolie and Zainab Hawa Bangura launch G8 Declaration on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict.”

¹²³ G7, “G7 Report on the Implementation of the G8 Declaration on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict,” 7.

¹²⁴ Foreign & Commonwealth Office, “Chair’s Summary: Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict,” Foreign & Commonwealth Office, (June 2014),

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/chairs-summary-global-summit-to-end-sexual-violence-in-conflict/chairs-summary-global-summit-to-end-sexual-violence-in-conflict> (accessed November 27, 2015).

¹²⁵ G7, “G7 Report on the Implementation of the G8 Declaration on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict,” 5-6.

¹²⁶ Alcorn, “Responding to sexual violence in armed conflict,” 2037.

The final aspect of legislation which should be examined is its effectiveness as a deterrent. One of Kirby's major criticisms of the PSVI was its focus on ending impunity: "the principal impunity hypothesis – that increasing prosecution will deter future atrocity – faces considerable challenge on grounds of efficacy, cost and clarity of purpose."¹²⁷ Kirby recalled that the average cost of convicting one person in the International Criminal Tribunals for the Former Yugoslavia and Rwanda was a staggering \$35M and £39M respectively.¹²⁸ He also highlighted that the: "victors and the vanquished are not equal before the law."¹²⁹ Human Rights Watch noted that the criticisms of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) included cost, cumbersome processes, few cases tried, the time taken, allowing those convicted to speak to the media, lack of reparations for survivors, and not prosecuting the 'winners' from the Rwandan Patriotic Front.¹³⁰ It would seem that the prospect of longer-term punishment can be negated by the short-term opportunities of winning a war.

However, the ICTR did convict the former Prime Minister, Army Chief of Staff and Defence Ministry Chief of Staff,¹³¹ as well as the first woman of committing genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, Pauline Nyiramasuhuko.¹³² Other landmark cases included Duško Tadić, who was the first to be convicted of sexually violent war crimes against men in 1997.¹³³ In 2014, General Kakwavu and 'Colonel 106' were found guilty of sexual violence crimes in the DRC, which the UN noted as: "These convictions mark a milestone in efforts to hold high-ranking officers to account."¹³⁴ In March 2016, the ICC secured its first conviction for sexual violence in conflict (including against men) against Jean-Pierre Bemba. It was also the first time the ICC had successfully prosecuted an individual for their 'command responsibilities', in Bemba's role as the President and Commander-in-Chief of

¹²⁷ Kirby, "Ending sexual violence in conflict: Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative and its critics," 464.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 465.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ Human Rights Watch, "Rwanda: International Tribunal Closing Its Doors."

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² Mollmann, "Rape in war: No more excuses."

¹³³ Watson, "Bad apples or bad apple trees? Examination of contexts in which sexual violence against men takes place," 3.

¹³⁴ UN Secretary General, "Conflict-related sexual violence: Report of Secretary General," 8/33.

the ‘Mouvement de libération du Congo’.¹³⁵ The ICRC noted the symbolic importance of prosecuting individuals for the message it sent to others and providing some form of recognition to survivors.¹³⁶ The results of the literature review, described earlier, indicated that a sense of impunity was a key factor in accounting for sexual violence as a weapon of war. Therefore, the successful prosecution of politicians, senior and middle-ranking military and police officers, and members of state and non-state groups is a necessary condition to prevent sexual violence being employed as a weapon of war in future conflicts. However, it would seem that considerably more needs to be achieved in this area for it to be an effective preventive measure.

Summary of current prevention approaches

From this assessment of current preventive measures, it is suggested that there are effective measures in operation, but there is a requirement to make improvements. On the positive side, there is a high-degree of understanding of the subject, which has enabled prevention strategies to be designed and implemented, including training packages. There is also strong support from key elements of the international community, which has devoted resources to the issue and galvanised action. Training is being delivered to thousands of armed and civil forces, and action is being taken when peacekeepers disobey orders. The legislative provisions are substantial, evidence is being gathered and prosecutions are being made. On the improvements side, more research is required to deepen understanding and devise additional prevention approaches (for example, to prevent women from carrying out sexual violence). Additional resources are required and sustained engagement from the international community. International support and funding needs to be visibly coming from non-western organisations, such as the AU, Arab League and Gulf Cooperation Council. Given ongoing cases of peacekeepers and law enforcers committing sexual violence, more training needs to be delivered and refresher training provided (as well as legal action). The impact of training should be evaluated and adjustments made, as required. Training and exercises need to be based on complex scenarios, to test students’ understanding and responses. Further long-term assistance should be given to those countries that have

¹³⁵ House of Lords, “Select Committee on Sexual Violence in Conflict: Report of Session 2015–16: Sexual Violence in Conflict: A War Crime,” 22.

¹³⁶ ICRC, “Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict: E-Briefing,” Part 3.

weak legal systems and poor procedures for prosecuting cases effectively. More individuals should be brought to trial more quickly, including UN/AU peacekeepers and those on the winning side, to reduce the sense of impunity (and the cost). Thus, it is suggested that there is a solid foundation on which to build, but the current prevention approaches require further development if they are to prevent sexual violence in conflict more systematically and comprehensively.

Case Study: Daesh¹³⁷

Daesh's modus operandi

This paper will now examine the case of Daesh and its current use of sexual violence as a weapon of war in Iraq and Syria. It will consider Daesh's approach in light of the literature findings and assess the effectiveness of existing prevention methods, as just described, as a means of preventing Daesh using sexual violence in the future. The UNSG described the: "Egregious forms of conflict-related sexual violence"¹³⁸ undertaken by Daesh since 2014, and a G7 report concurred.¹³⁹ The UNSG's annual report, listing armed groups perpetrating sexual violence in conflict, described Daesh's modus operandi in Iraq: "Sexual violence has been used as part of the ISIL strategy of spreading terror, persecuting ethnic and religious minorities and suppressing communities that oppose its ideology."¹⁴⁰ In a subsequent report, the UN stated that Daesh employed sexual violence as: "a tactic of war."¹⁴¹ This was supported by Wood's view of Daesh as a group that: "has purposefully adopted ... sexual violence in pursuit of organization objectives, and it is therefore a strategy."¹⁴² Daesh's use of sexual violence has also been identified in detention and displacement camps, and at border controls.¹⁴³ Such features are consistent with the literature review's findings that sexual violence can be used to exert power, neutralise community resistance, support political-military goals and elicit information. It also appears to have occurred in known vulnerable locations.

However, there are elements of Daesh's use of sexual violence that seem to differ from the literature findings or be more exaggerated in their form. For instance, it could be argued that Daesh carries out sexual violence to destroy women's rights and their value in society. Thus, the UNSG's Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict noted that: "the notorious Mount Sinjar offensive of August 2014 has been considered as much a sexual

¹³⁷ See Footnote 3 for spelling rationale.

¹³⁸ UN Secretary General, "Conflict-related sexual violence: Report of Secretary General," 24/33.

¹³⁹ G7, "G7 Report on the Implementation of the G8 Declaration on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict," 1.

¹⁴⁰ UN Secretary General, "Conflict-related sexual violence: Report of Secretary General," 9/33.

¹⁴¹ United Nations, "Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict in Iraq: 1 May – 31 October 2015," 32.

¹⁴² Wood, "Conflict-related sexual violence and the policy implications of recent research," 472.

¹⁴³ UN Secretary General, "Conflict-related sexual violence: Report of Secretary General," 18/33.

conquest ... as it was a territorial advance.”¹⁴⁴ In towns like Raqqa, markets have been established to sell naked women, with a Daesh ‘regulation’ specifying the market-rate for women and girls based on their age.¹⁴⁵ Another element of Daesh’s approach is the capture of women and girls as hostages, which the G7 described as a: “disturbing new dimension”.¹⁴⁶ They noted this was not unique to Daesh and referred to the example of 270 school girls taken from Chibok in Nigeria in April 2014.¹⁴⁷ The UN also identified the connection: “the same ideology and objectives that motivate Boko Haram to abduct women and girls in Nigeria also spur ISIL to enslave women and girls in the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq.”¹⁴⁸ An Amnesty International report in December 2014 stated that thousands of women and girls were being held by Daesh¹⁴⁹ and a UN report in January 2016 said the phenomenon continued with around 3,500 enslaved Yezidis and other minority groups.¹⁵⁰ Additionally, sexual violence against women was: “part of the political economy ... used to generate revenue through the trafficking, trading and ransoming of women and girls ... women have become part of the currency ISIL uses to consolidate its power. They have been monetised as the ‘spoils of war’”.¹⁵¹ The UNSG also suggested it was a form of nation-building with the creation of ‘marriage bureaux’ to sell women to Daesh members to produce the next generation.¹⁵² Thus, it appears Daesh uses sexual violence to achieve its strategic political and military objectives.

¹⁴⁴ Zainab Bangura, “Faith in Islam & Faith in Women: Why Gender Justice is Key to an Islam Without Extremes,” International Crisis Group, (October 2015), <https://medium.com/the-future-of-conflict/faith-in-islam-faith-in-women-why-gender-justice-is-key-to-an-islam-without-extremes-8920277ef674#.dkje0o8jg> (accessed January 6, 2016).

¹⁴⁵ UN Secretary General, “Conflict-related sexual violence: Report of Secretary General,” 10/33.

¹⁴⁶ G7, “G7 Report on the Implementation of the G8 Declaration on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict,” 1.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ UN Secretary General, “Conflict-related sexual violence: Report of Secretary General,” 25/33.

¹⁴⁹ Amnesty International, “Escape from Hell: Torture and Sexual Slavery in Islamic State Captivity in Iraq,” Amnesty International, MDE 14/021/2014, (December 2014), http://www.amnesty.org.uk/sites/default/files/escape_from_hell_-_torture_and_sexual_slavery_in_islamic_state_captivity_in_iraq_-_english_2.pdf (accessed January 7, 2016), 5-6.

¹⁵⁰ United Nations, “Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict in Iraq: 1 May – 31 October 2015,” 18.

¹⁵¹ Bangura, “Faith in Islam & Faith in Women: Why Gender Justice is Key to Islam without Extremes”.

¹⁵² UN Secretary General, “Conflict-related sexual violence: Report of Secretary General,” 25/33.

Most of the reports reviewed on Daesh's methods focused on sexual violence against women and girls. However, a 2016 UN report identified that 800-900 boys had been abducted from around Mosul in June 2015 and those: "who refused to obey ISIL orders were flogged, tortured or raped."¹⁵³ Additionally, the same report stated that: "UNAMI/OHCHR also verified a number of reports of individuals murdered (by throwing them from buildings) by ISIL for being homosexual."¹⁵⁴ The UNSG also recorded sexual violence against: "lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex individuals ... as a form of 'moral cleansing'"¹⁵⁵ and as: "a form of social control" by Daesh in both Iraq and Syria.¹⁵⁶

Finally, a further key feature of Daesh's form of sexual violence described by the UNSG's Special Representative is that: "ISIL flagrantly publicises its [sexual] abuses".¹⁵⁷ Amnesty International noted that: "more than any other group, it has gone to great efforts to publicize gruesome details of the atrocities ... giving them ample resonance through videos and statements widely distributed on social media, often in multiple languages."¹⁵⁸ Amnesty International believed this technique had been deployed to: "instil fear in its enemies and anyone else in its path."¹⁵⁹ It is possible that this is all the more intimidating because Daesh is challenging traditional religious and cultural taboos. The UNSG suggested that: "social media has converted brutality into a form of propaganda to incite, radicalize and attract recruits."¹⁶⁰ The use of sexual violence through: "forced marriage to foreign fighters" was recorded in the same report.¹⁶¹ It appears that another reason for Daesh's policy of sexual violence is to encourage individuals from outside Iraq and Syria to join the group. Thus, Daesh has deliberately communicated its perpetration of sexual violence against women, men, children, homosexuals and others by exploiting

¹⁵³ United Nations, "Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict in Iraq: 1 May – 31 October 2015," 14.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹⁵⁵ UN Secretary General, "Conflict-related sexual violence: Report of Secretary General," 10/33.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 2/33.

¹⁵⁷ Bangura, "Faith in Islam & Faith in Women: Why Gender Justice is Key to Islam without Extremes".

¹⁵⁸ Amnesty International, "Escape from Hell: Torture and Sexual Slavery in Islamic State Captivity in Iraq," 11.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ UN Secretary General, "Conflict-related sexual violence: Report of Secretary General," 25/33.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

social media to reach a global audience, with the threefold aim of terrifying, attracting and garnering media headlines to promote its core message.

Therefore, whilst Daesh's use of sexual violence is consistent with most of the literature findings, Daesh's strategy also involves: degrading women (partly as an attack on western values), seeking to eliminate non-heterosexuals, sexual violence for fund-raising and external recruitment, and a targeted sexual violence information campaign. Daesh is not unique in its modus operandi, but the case study revealed particular aspects to its approach.

Preventive measures against Daesh's sexual violence

The paper will now assess the effectiveness of existing prevention methods, as described earlier (understanding; high-level support; training; and legislation), as a means of preventing Daesh using sexual violence in the future. First, an understanding of how and why sexual violence is used by Daesh seems to be in place with comprehensive reports by, for example, the UN, G7 and Amnesty International. This is despite the UN's reported difficulties in obtaining accurate statistics,¹⁶² but seemingly counteracted by Daesh's clear intent to publicise its use of sexual violence, rather than hide or deny it, as some other groups do. Second, high-level support exists for tackling Daesh's prevalent use of sexual violence. For instance, last year's National Security Strategy said the PSVI would be extended particularly to Syria and Iraq.¹⁶³ A G7 report in 2015 on implementation of a 2013 'G8 Declaration' on the PSVI included details of assistance to Iraq and Syria. For example, the UK had provided Peshmerga troops with training on prevention. The UK had also trained Iraqi and Syrian human rights' defenders on gathering evidence through the 'International Protocol on the Documentation and Investigation of Sexual Violence in Conflict' and the US had funded Syrian doctors in forensic documentation. The Canadians had funded investigations and help for survivors. The French were funding 'Gynaecologists without Borders' to help Syrian refugees in Jordan. The Germans had financed the 'Berlin Center for Torture Victims', to give assistance in six Iraqi provinces, and also an Iraqi radio station that addresses sexual violence in conflict.¹⁶⁴ Similarly, the UK had

¹⁶² Ibid., 18/33.

¹⁶³ United Kingdom Government, *National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015: Secure and Prosperous United Kingdom*, 63.

¹⁶⁴ G7, "G7 Report on the Implementation of the G8 Declaration on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict," 3-4, 6-7.

funded: “training Syrian media activists in the use of radio to empower women and engage men in overturning social norms around the reporting of sexual violence”.¹⁶⁵ The UNSG said: “I condemn the use of sexual violence by ISIL” and recommended: “Programmes to support the social reintegration of women and girls released from captivity”.¹⁶⁶ Thus, it would seem that high-level international support exists, as demonstrated by the range of actions taken, including training for Peshmerga forces, human rights’ defenders, doctors and media activists.

This just leaves the fourth prevention method examined in the literature review, namely the legislation, especially the aspects of deterrence and implementation. The literature review had confirmed that: “sexual violence is absolutely and adequately prohibited under international law”.¹⁶⁷ However, this has seemingly had no effect on Daesh’s strategy for using it, which supports Kirby’s criticism of the PSVI, covered earlier. Daesh’s sense of impunity appears undiminished despite the international glare of publicity and condemnation from the highest levels. Amnesty International has claimed that Daesh is responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity, partly as a result of committing sexual violence in Iraq.¹⁶⁸ It stated that International Humanitarian Law applied to Daesh and that its civilian and military leaders: “can be held criminally responsible for war crimes” including the actions of their subordinates through a commission to act or an omission to prevent such action.¹⁶⁹ A UN report published this year agreed that Daesh had committed war crimes, crimes against humanity and: “possibly genocide”.¹⁷⁰ The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein, said: “The international community ... should continue to closely follow the situation in Iraq with a view to ensuring that perpetrators of gross violations and abuses of human rights and serious violations of international

¹⁶⁵ Foreign & Commonwealth Office, “Angelina Jolie Pitt joins Baroness Anelay to chart next steps on tackling sexual violence”.

¹⁶⁶ UN Secretary General, “Conflict-related sexual violence: Report of Secretary General,” 19/33 & 10/33.

¹⁶⁷ Gaggioli, “Sexual violence in armed conflicts: violation of international humanitarian law and human rights law,” 505.

¹⁶⁸ Amnesty International, “Escape from Hell: Torture and Sexual Slavery in Islamic State Captivity in Iraq,” 4.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁷⁰ United Nations, “Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict in Iraq: 1 May – 31 October 2015,” i.

humanitarian law are held accountable.”¹⁷¹ In the same report, the UN urged the Iraqi government to amend its own legislation so that Iraqi courts could have jurisdiction for international crimes. It also urged Iraq to refer such sexual violence matters to the International Criminal Court (ICC) or become a party to the ICC¹⁷² (however, this seems unlikely as the same report also claimed the Iraqi State Force had violated international humanitarian and human rights laws).¹⁷³ Daesh also seems undeterred by G7 members’ efforts to collect and document evidence, as described above, or by the work of the International Commission of Inquiry in Syria and the Fact-Finding Commission in Iraq, which the Justice Rapid Response team of experts had supported.¹⁷⁴ Thus, despite efforts to gather evidence and credible accusations that Daesh’s sexual violence amounts to war crimes, crimes against humanity and possibly genocide, Daesh appears undeterred.

Daesh conclusions

To conclude this review of Daesh as a case study, it has revealed itself to be both typical and distinctive. Many of Daesh’s reasons for employing sexual violence as a weapon of war reflect the literature findings: a considerable sense of impunity, an objective to exert power and neutralise community resistance, and part of a planned military strategy to acquire territory. Most sexual violence appears to have been directed against women and girls, especially religious and ethnic minorities. However, sexual violence against men and boys has also been used to elicit information and suppress opposition. It has been committed in known vulnerable locations, such as displacement and detention camps, and at border checkpoints. Other elements, which reflect the literature findings, include the extent of the shame experienced by survivors, which has exacerbated challenges of accessing help and gathering reliable data. Amnesty International highlighted the number of Yezidi families who denied that their own relatives had been subjected to sexual violence, but insisted that it had been perpetrated systematically against members of their community.¹⁷⁵ Amnesty International also described the difficulties for survivors to obtain

¹⁷¹ Ibid., start of report (no page number).

¹⁷² Ibid., ii.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ G7, “G7 Report on the Implementation of the G8 Declaration on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict,” 7.

¹⁷⁵ Amnesty International, “Escape from Hell: Torture and Sexual Slavery in Islamic State Captivity in Iraq,” 13-14.

medical and psychological help, due to lack of awareness, the geographical distances involved, costs and the logistics of accessing support-services¹⁷⁶ – again the literature review had identified such problems as part of the numerous challenges in dealing with the after-effects.

The literature review emphasised that each conflict is different, which is why prevention approaches demand a deep appreciation of the context and bespoke responses. Daesh's policy to publicise its use of sexual violence through the latest communication channels serves three objectives: to terrorise people in Iraq and Syria into submitting to Daesh; to attract new recruits; and to ensure their broader message of establishing an Islamic Caliphate is transmitted around the world. Daesh seems to have an information operation at the heart of its military campaign and sexual violence as one of the main narratives to amplify their message. Other features which differed from the main findings of the literature review included an ideological and financial policy of using sexual violence to reduce women's status and transform women into a commodity to raise funds for their war efforts. They also used sexual violence to try to eliminate non-heterosexuals, which was mentioned in the literature but only to a limited extent.

Regarding current prevention methods identified in the literature, the Daesh case study reflected most of the literature findings. There appears to be a good comprehension, of why and how Daesh employs sexual violence, by the UN, G7 and Amnesty International, with academics such as Wood already researching their methods. There is also international support at the highest levels, including from the UNSG, his Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as the G7. As with the literature findings, such international support reflects a western bias, and it would be useful to see other bodies engaging in the issue, such as the Arab League and Gulf Cooperation Council. Nonetheless, the high level support has been matched with resources to support a range of measures, including training Peshmerga forces, human rights' defenders, doctors and media activists. Yet the fourth strand of existing prevention strategies – deterrence through legislation – seems woefully inadequate. This is despite attempts to gather evidence and credible accusations from the UN and Amnesty International that Daesh's sexual

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 13.

violence amounts to war crimes, crimes against humanity and possibly genocide. Daesh remains undeterred.

There are few other prevention measures in place against Daesh's use of sexual violence as a weapon of war. Journalists have made strenuous efforts to report Daesh's actions – often encouraged by community activists and sometimes by family members. Perhaps as an unintended consequence, this has introduced unwelcome pressure on survivors to speak to the press. As a result, Amnesty International has called for more responsible journalism and for local leaders and activists to be more sensitive.¹⁷⁷ Yet, it will be important for the international media to remain engaged so that Daesh's sexually violent activities do not become hidden from world leaders who will need to drive through any future prevention strategies. Another aspect is the role of the Yezidi spiritual leader, Baba Sheikh, who spoke publicly in February 2015 to urge his community to support Yezidi women who had escaped from Daesh.¹⁷⁸ Although this was primarily aimed at helping survivors to reintegrate, it also served the function of challenging Daesh's strategy of degrading women. However, such messages will need to be reiterated on a regular basis by a range of religious and community leaders if they are to counterbalance Daesh's dedicated communication efforts. Although it is too early to know whether these additional preventive measures will have any impact, it is suggested that other prevention strategies need to be introduced if Daesh is ever to desist from its sexual violence strategy. This seems all the more pressing, given the lack of impact from existing prevention methods outlined in the literature and which are in place against Daesh, but with apparently no effect to-date.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 17.

¹⁷⁸ Bangura, "Faith in Islam & Faith in Women: Why Gender Justice is Key to Islam without Extremes".

Additional Preventive Measures

The academic and practitioner literature offered few practical preventive measures, beyond those covered previously in this paper, with the limitations of these existing approaches identified in the Daesh case study just examined. This final section will, therefore, briefly consider possible additional preventive tools. It is not an exhaustive list, but focuses on: learning from groups which have desisted from using sexual violence; the role of civil society actors and soft power; the application of research in other fields to armed groups; and exploiting the capabilities of social media.

First, the ICRC advocated that it was important to learn from those groups which had not used sexual violence in conflict.¹⁷⁹ In examining individual cases, Wood noted that: “An armed group’s leadership may prohibit sexual violence for strategic, normative, or practical reasons.”¹⁸⁰ Wood identified the principal reasons for the prohibition of sexual violence as: avoiding losing control of subordinates; setting the moral high-ground; obtaining funding and resources from others; and winning the peace, as well as the war, to assume future power.¹⁸¹ It is possible that such arguments could persuade armed groups to avoid, or stop using, sexual violence by highlighting the military-strategic and operational-level benefits which other armed groups have realised. A bespoke combination of incentives and sanctions, which reflects a deep understanding of an armed group’s hierarchy, actors, culture and methods of violence, could help to prevent sexual violence being used by that group, especially if the benefits could be articulated by those who had foregone the use of sexual violence in their own armed struggles.

As well as using credible military leaders to achieve positive outcomes, the role of civil society actors could be better utilised. Focusing on positive male role models (although it could equally apply to female role models), the MenEngage Alliance and UNFPA highlighted that service-providers could: “play an important role in ... recasting social norms” – not just through their professional roles, but due to their status within that society.¹⁸² In Hague’s

¹⁷⁹ ICRC, “Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict: E-Briefing,” Part 4.

¹⁸⁰ Wood, “Rape is not inevitable during war,” in Kuehnast et al., eds., *Women and War: Power & Protection in Twenty-First Century*, 54.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 54-55.

¹⁸² MenEngage Alliance and UNFPA, “Sexual Violence in Conflict and Post-Conflict: Engaging Men and Boys,” 7.

summing up of the Global Summit in 2014, he endorsed the role of faith groups: “Through their networks, they often have access and influence with local communities that no other actor has. As such, they are uniquely placed to change hearts and minds”.¹⁸³ Women’s and men’s organisations could be given more resources to support their endeavours within their own societies. The use of ‘soft power’ by organisations such as the British Council, UN and NGOs, as well as by individual campaigners, has long been established. However, few examples were cited within the literature regarding practical measures to prevent sexual violence in conflict. Wood suggested that lessons should be identified from other campaigns, such as those to stop ‘blood diamonds’, child soldiers and land mines, and then applied to preventing sexual violence in conflict.¹⁸⁴ A recent review by the House of Lords’ on this subject concluded that: “There is a compelling case that programmes to effect behavioural and attitudinal change can assist in the prevention of sexual violence in conflict.”¹⁸⁵

Turning to other specialisms, Steffens et al. conducted research to understand how followers identify with particular leaders and the importance of shared social identities to enable group behaviour.¹⁸⁶ Other academics have investigated the factors behind military group cohesion.¹⁸⁷ By contrast, other research has examined why groups commit mass murder, such as during the Holocaust. For example, Haslam and Reicher suggested that: “groups *transform* the individuals who join them by changing the dispositions of their members”.¹⁸⁸ Additionally, Wood contemplated whether research results into rape in university campuses, youth gangs, sports clubs and prisons could be applied to sexual violence in conflict.¹⁸⁹ She also considered that: “The small-

¹⁸³ FCO, “Chair’s Summary: Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict.”

¹⁸⁴ Wood, “Conflict-related sexual violence and the policy implications of recent research,” 476.

¹⁸⁵ House of Lords, “Select Committee on Sexual Violence in Conflict: Report of Session 2015–16: Sexual Violence in Conflict: A War Crime,” 8.

¹⁸⁶ Niklas K. Steffens, S. Alexander Haslam, and Stephen D. Reicher, “Up close and personal: Evidence that shared social identity is a basis for the ‘special’ relationship that binds followers to leaders,” *The Leadership Quarterly* 25 (2015).

¹⁸⁷ Guy, L. Siebold, “The Essence of Military Group Cohesion,” *Armed Forces & Society* 33(2) (2007): 286 – 295 and

Anthony King, “The Existence of Group Cohesion in the Armed Forces: A Response to Guy Siebold,” *Armed Forces & Society* 33(4) (2007): 638 – 645.

¹⁸⁸ S. A. Haslam, and S. Reicher, “Beyond the banality of evil: three dynamics of an interactionist social psychology of terrorism,” *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 33(5) (2007): 620.

¹⁸⁹ Wood, “Conflict-related sexual violence and the policy implications of recent research,” 478.

group dynamics that lead to unit norms promoting or constraining the occurrence of sexual violence appears a promising avenue of research.”¹⁹⁰ Thus, further research into the effect of leaders and groups on behaviour could result in additional preventive measures being developed in the future. In particular, targeting leaders, who most closely resonate with their members, altering a group’s social identity and exploiting military group cohesion as ways of changing behavioural norms.

Finally, the potential of social media should be considered. By 2020, smartphone ownership is forecast to be around 70% globally, with most of the new owners living in the developing world.¹⁹¹ Analysis of open sources, such as social media sites, is already being used to detect crises and gain rapid situational awareness. For instance, citizen journalists, such as the ‘bellngcat’ team, fused social media sites to understand what was happening in the Ukrainian conflict zone.¹⁹² The introduction of smartphones to some of the most remote and conflict-prone regions of the world in the next four-five years could be transformative in helping to prevent this traditionally hidden crime. The sense of impunity, which was covered earlier in the literature review as one of the main reasons for the use of sexual violence in conflict, could be eroded, if ‘disruptive technologies’ such as social media were exploited to provide situational awareness and early warning. Where it is not possible to prevent sexual violence being perpetrated, social media could contribute to the provision of data on its extent to provide a military/policing response, to help target medical assistance, and, potentially, support the evidence-gathering process.

This concludes the review of possible additional preventive measures, covering: the application of lessons from those groups which have chosen not to use sexual violence; the role of civil society actors and soft power; leader and group influence; and social media. It has sought to highlight that there is scope for academics and practitioners on preventing sexual violence in conflict to collaborate with their counterparts in other fields to consider alternative

¹⁹⁰ Wood, “Sexual violence during war: toward an understanding of variation,” in *Order, Conflict and Violence*, eds. Stathis N. Kalyvas, Ian Shapiro and Tarek Masoud (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 347.

¹⁹¹ The Mobile Economy, (2015), <http://gsmamobileeconomy.com/global/> (accessed May 12, 2016), 2.

¹⁹² Bellngcat, “Confirming the Location of the Same Msta-S in Russia and Ukraine,” Bellngcat, (May 2015), <https://www.bellingcat.com/resources/case-studies/2015/05/29/confirming-the-location-of-the-same-msta-s-in-russia-and-ukraine/> (accessed May 12, 2016).

prevention approaches. It seems unlikely that any single measure could prevent the use of sexual violence in war, but a bespoke combination of the preventive measures could be adopted which takes into account the context and specifics of each armed conflict.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper has examined whether it is possible to prevent sexual violence as a weapon of war against women, men and children or only to manage the after-effects. The literature review analysed five aspects of the issue: the reasons why sexual violence is used in conflicts; how men and boys can be victims, and women perpetrators; the manifold challenges in managing the after-effects; the risks from securitising the issue and negating progress on women's roles in peace and security; and, the evidence that sexual violence in conflict is not inevitable. Four existing prevention approaches were assessed, concerning: understanding; high-level support; training; and legislation. This paper concluded that they provided a solid foundation on which to build, but that improvements were needed, which would require long-term financial support and sustained effort. The specific case of Daesh was examined against the literature findings. This paper suggested that Daesh's use of sexual violence reflected much of the literature research, but that there were also distinctive elements, particularly their strategy for publicising their use of sexual violence through social media. The Daesh case study illustrated the shortcomings of current prevention approaches (especially the lack of deterrence from legislation) and an urgent requirement to identify other methods. Thus, alternative preventive measures were considered, which concluded that a broader and imaginative approach to prevention, in collaboration with experts in other fields, could yield results. Ultimately, the challenges of preventing sexual violence as a weapon of war, managing the after-effects and dealing with the generational impact, require all appropriate measures to be fully harnessed.

This paper has sought to provide evidence that it is possible to prevent sexual violence as a weapon of war. However, it has emphasised that the challenges of preventing sexual violence systematically and comprehensively are considerable. The literature review findings and the Daesh example indicated that the current prevention strategies need to be improved and additional measures introduced. The findings suggested a requirement for a coordinated and streamlined approach, involving health-care, police and judiciary experts, locally-led, but with external support, and which must be sustained for the long-term. In particular, each conflict necessitates a deep understanding of the context, actors and methods to ensure a tailored, sufficiently-resourced and

multi-layered response that takes into account the different needs of women, men and children.

Additionally, the literature findings revealed that managing the after-effects effectively is an immense undertaking, which involves immediate and long-term physical and psychological care to be given to individuals. The after-effects for societies also need addressing to reduce the spread of STDs, deter retribution and re-build community cohesion. Somehow, the cycle of sexual violence has to be broken. Women and men – perpetrators, victims and witnesses – have to be reintegrated, and children, born of sexual violence, accepted into society. Survivors need recognition. Those who have committed sexual violence need to be brought to justice – fairly and expeditiously. The costs of long-term medical care, legal undertakings, education and reconstruction are incalculable and probably beyond the means of most war-torn countries to provide. However, effective management of the after-effects would contribute to the prevention of future outbreaks of sexual violence in conflict by helping to stop the cycle of violence.

If the prevention challenges seem insurmountable, the evidence of the non-inevitability of sexual violence as a weapon of war should be recalled. It is a choice, not an accident, as highlighted by the ICRC's research and experiences:

It is no longer tenable to claim that sexual violence is simply an ugly facet of our worst human inclinations and an unfortunate companion of war; today it is widely acknowledged that sexual violence is not an inevitable consequence of armed conflict. This makes prevention efforts critical, legitimate and urgently needed.¹⁹³

Gloria Steinem noted that: “the most significant characteristic of humans – the one that allows our species to survive – is that we're adaptable.”¹⁹⁴ It is also notable that our predecessors have achieved the ‘impossible’ in war previously: for example, outlawing the use of child soldiers, cluster munitions and anti-personnel land mines. Even though such weapons of war still exist, it has to be hoped that with the passage of time they, and sexual violence, will disappear as strategies of war. Kerry recognised that: “we have banned the unconscionable before ... sexual violence is a vile crime against humanity. It is not just an

¹⁹³ ICRC, “Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict: E-Briefing,” Part 4.

¹⁹⁴ Lauren Wolfe, “Gloria Steinem on Rape in War, Its Causes, and How to Stop It,” *The Atlantic*, (February 8, 2012), <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/02/gloria-steinem-on-rape-in-war-its-causes-and-how-to-stop-it/252470/> (accessed January 18, 2016).

excusable, inevitable by-product of war.”¹⁹⁵ In conclusion, preventing sexual violence as a weapon of war remains extremely demanding – and the magnitude of the undertaking should not be underestimated. However, the absence of sexual violence in many conflicts suggests that it is possible to prevent it systemically. It requires a determined effort, perhaps for generations, but it seems that with improved understanding, high-level international support and action, training and legislation, positive developments are underway:

we are determined to end the use of rape and sexual violence in conflicts around the world. ... the prevention of sexual violence in conflict is critical to peace, security and sustainable development ... Every individual has a moral responsibility to speak out ... to demand a change in how the world perceives and responds to these crimes.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁵ Kerry, “Remarks at Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict”.

¹⁹⁶ Foreign & Commonwealth Office, “Statement of Action - Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict”.

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In 2012, the UK introduced the ‘Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative’. This paper examines whether it is actually possible to prevent sexual violence being employed as a weapon of war against women, men and children. It assesses existing prevention strategies, uses Daesh as a case study – to illustrate the limitations of the current approaches – and considers additional measures. The paper concludes that it is possible to prevent sexual violence in war, provided that all appropriate measures are harnessed and adapted to the specific circumstances of each conflict. It will, though, require improvements to existing strategies, the use of additional prevention measures, more resources and long-term engagement of all actors.

This thesis has been awarded the first prize for 2017 in EuroISME’s annual competition for the best student thesis. EuroIMSE will publish annually the winning thesis, in two or more languages.

