The Role of African Women in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding: The Case of Rwanda

by

Abdul Karim Issifu
akissifu@gmail.com
BA Integrated Community Development, UDS
MPhil Candidate, Institute for Development Studies,
University of Cape Coast, Ghana

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to explore the role of women in post-conflict peacebuilding in Africa via a look at the roles played by the Rwandese women during and in the post-genocide era. Data for the paper is from a secondary source, including articles, books, internet publications, and journals, etc. A thorough content analysis and critical document review of the secondary data, reveals that, despite a UN Security Council Resolution repeated appeals to respect the equal rights of women and their role in peacebuilding, millions of women and children in Africa continue to account for the majority of casualties in hostilities, marginalisation and discriminations. Hence, to help promote and ensure sustainable peace for women, it is-recommended that the United Nations, African Union, the European Union, large donor countries, etc. should make a greater effort to financially support a broader spectrum of local actors who work in the gender dimension, and specifically in the women's movement.

Keywords: Conflict, genocide, peacebuilding, Rwanda, women.

Introduction

Women and children are the most vulnerable people in society; they are the least prepared before, during and after civil wars, violent conflicts, genocides, conflict upheavals etc. Meanwhile, they are neither war instigators nor violence provokers, but they become the most affected. In fact, they are the most vulnerable and deeply affected by violent conflicts for which they have had no role in creating (Agbalajobi, 2012). According to Mzvondiwa (2007), women suffer the most from the consequences of conflict and social fragmentation in countries recovering from war devastations. For example, before the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, all Tutsi women were targeted and large numbers of them were killed and sexually abused by the Hutus. Conversely, some Hutu women were subjected to violence by the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) soldiers in revenge for violence perpetrated by Hutu men (Newbury, 1988). In addition, it is estimated that 250,000 Rwandese women and girls were victims of some form of sexual violence while, 66 per cent of the raped victims tested positive for HIV/AIDS after the genocide (Mutamba & Izabiliza, 2005).

Besides, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, hundreds of women were subjected to rape every week during the war and in Darfur, gruesome rape cases have been reported (Mzvondiwa, 2007). It is also on record that at least 100,000 people were killed in Burundi, which included many women, children, and elderly, who were often slaughtered in an extremely brutal fashion (Mpangala, 2004). This is the reason why it is argued that in Africa, women and children are the 'violated during the violation, the victims of the victimisation and the captured of the captives' during periods of violent conflict (Alaga, 2010).

Interestingly, research has shown that in spite of the suffering women face before, during and after times of civil war, they have played and continues to play crucial roles in post-conflict peacebuilding. For instance, after the 1991 violent conflict in (Wajir), Kenya leading to more than 1,200 deaths, *Wajir* women as a part of their peacebuilding efforts established the Wajir Peace and Development Committee (WPDC). The committee played an instrumental role to ensure some level of peace in Kenya (Tongeren, 2013). In addition, during the post-apartheid period in South Africa, local women who in the face of their devastating poverty, violence and trauma, they strived to earn menial income to develop their devastated communities and build peace (Noma, Aker & Freeman, 2012) established the Harambe Women's Forum. Furthermore, after the 1994 genocide, Rwandese women contributed as part of their peacebuilding commitment, thereby providing shelter for orphans, caring for the genocide survivors and building homes for some ex-combatants who were re-integrated back into society (Mzvondiwa, 2007).

Additionally, Liberia women as part of their peacebuilding dedications also embarked on a three-month long 'Mass Action for Peace' campaign that advocated for a ceasefire. They also held hostage parties at the Liberian Peace Talks in the Eastern Region of Ghana *(Akosombo),* by barricading the entrance to the venue of the talks. The aim of the women was to prevent parties from walking away when the talks got heated, thus delaying the attainment a negotiated settlement (Alaga, 2010). As a follow up to the above assertions, following the electoral protest in Guinea Bissau in 2004, where the national army was deployed to clamp down on protesters, local women's groups launched an advocacy campaign that led to subsequent dialogue between the stakeholders involved in the conflict to ensure peace.

However, irrespective of the various roles played by African women in the past and in contemporary times as part of their peacebuilding allegiance, they are still relegated from participating at peace talks. Thus, during post-conflict peace processes, external and internal country governments put women aside. Unfortunately, post-conflict peace processes have become a male affair in Africa. This is why Lisa and Manjrika (2005) have argued that, many societies' value men and masculinity more than women and femininity at peace talks. Indeed, women are seen merely as victims of war, but not as stakeholders (Mzvondiwa, 2007). Mzvondiwa (2007) further reiterate that the situation is unfortunate as policy-makers, external donors, local governments and development analysts neglects the efforts of women in post-conflict peacebuilding.

In a bid to appreciate the roles women have played and still play in post-conflict peacebuilding, the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security was designed in 2000. Thus, UNSCR 1325 has recognised the relevance of women's experiences in conflict to its peace and security mandate. Hence, advancing women's rights in conflict resolution and peace processes was relevant. However, as to whether the UNSCR 1325 have successfully achieved its purpose of establishment, prompts future research.

Following from this observation, the aim of this paper is to explore the role of women in post-conflict peacebuilding in Africa; taking into consideration the experiences of Rwandese women. In light of the central objective set out to be achieved, the rest of the paper is divided into four sections. Thus, the author has contextualised peacebuilding in the first section of the paper, and provided a brief history of the Rwandan genocide and its outcomes in the second section. The roles played by the Rwandese women during and in the post-genocide era is thoroughly discussed in the third section and essentially, the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women's peace participation is analysed in the fourth section. In addition, the author proposed in the final section of the paper that, international development agencies, the European Union (EU), African Union (AU), large donor countries, etc., should provide a long term financial assistance for the survival of women's peace movements and groups who are championing the cause of women's rights, including gender equality, empowerment, and political participation in Africa.

Research Methods and Approach

Data for this paper is drawn from a wide range of textbooks, journals, articles, reviewed theses, magazines, occasional papers, reports from NGOs and international development agencies. Essentially, the researcher relied largely on internet publications, which have become the easiest way of gathering data in recent times. However, shortcomings of relying heavily on the internet, is crafting searches and questions that will return the most relevant information. Yet, relevant data were gathered from this source and thus useful for exploring the roles played by Rwandese women in the post-genocide era. Data for this paper was collected from 24th April to 2nd September, 2015.

Conceptualising Peacebuilding

The concept of peacebuilding has been defined different by several departments, institutions, schools, agencies, scholars, etc. For instance, according to Call and Cousens (2007), peacebuilding refers to those actions undertaken by international or national actors to institutionalise peace, understood as the absence of armed conflict (negative peace) and a modicum of participatory politics (as a component of positive peace) that can be sustained in the absence of an international peace operation.

Peacebuilding also means, to preserve and to ensure enduring peace in the society, removing the root causes of the conflict and genuinely reconciling the conflicting parties (Nwolise, 2005). Additionally, Lederach (1997) defines peacebuilding as the term that involves a wide range of activities and functions that precede and follow formal peace accords.

Similarly, Porter (2007) defined peacebuilding to involve all processes that build positive relationships, heal wounds, reconcile antagonistic differences, restore esteem, respect rights, meet basic needs, enhance equality, instil feelings of security, empower moral agency and are democratic, inclusive and just. As a follow up, peace psychologists have described peacebuilding in terms of prevention, being proactive, problem solving, meeting human needs, and ending oppression and inequality (Christie, 1997; Wessells, 1992; Abu-Saba, 1999). It is against these diverse definitions that is why Smoljan (2003) have argued that, at present, there is no definitive definition of peacebuilding. This raises the question as to what exactly can be considered a definition for peacebuilding.

However, the definition by former UN Secretary General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali has received some level of global attention. He defined peacebuilding in his *Agenda for Peace* as "The process by which an achieved peace is placed on durable foundations and which prevents violent conflict from recurring by dealing with the underlying economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems responsible for the conflict" (UN, 1992: 57). Since then, the concept of peacebuilding and its agenda have evolved significantly with the UN playing a crucial leading role. Boutros-Ghali reiterate that, peacebuilding is the action undertaken by national or international actors to identify and support structures which tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid relapse into conflict (Call & Cousens, 2007). Adding to the above assertions, this paper is also guided by the definition from Mazurana and McKay (1999). According to them, peacebuilding refers to gender-awareness and women-empowerment in political, social, economic and human rights. They re-emphasised that, peacebuilding involves personal and group accountability and reconciliation processes which contribute to the reduction or prevention of violence (Mazurana and McKay (1999).

Basically, two main approaches to peacebuilding have been used in the past and are still in use in recent times to transform post-conflict countries, hence, western-conventional and indigenous approaches to peacebuilding. The western-conventional approaches to peacebuilding refer to the use of external bodies and systems to transform countries recovering from civil wars, violent conflicts and natural disasters. It could also be defined as the use of formal and external bodies and structures in attempting to end a conflict (Bukari, 2013). Paris, Newman and Richmond (2009) observes that, the prevailing paradigm of western-conventional approaches to peacebuilding; liberal peacebuilding and liberal internationalism refers to the transformation of war shattered states into market democratic states and the holding of immediate democratic elections. Principles of western-conventional peacebuilding include holding immediate democratic elections, promoting market liberalism, enhancing humanitarian assistance, encouraging litigation and promoting rule of law (Hoffmann, 1995).

On the contrary, indigenous approach to peacebuilding refers to the process of identifying the structural causes of conflict and using elements such as mediation and negation within African origin to promote sustainable peace. According to Udofia (2011), indigenous or traditional peacebuilding approach centres primarily on negotiation, mediation, conciliation, pacification and appeasement. Supporting the same viewpoint, Okrah (2003) opines that, traditional societies resolved conflicts through cultural, internal and external social control mechanisms. Indeed, the traditional approach to peacebuilding seek to promote a win-win or non-zero sum game approach to peacebuilding (Issifu, 2015a).

Taken all together, Zartman (2000) emphasises that, the task of the indigenous approach to peacebuilding is to re-establish contact between individuals, families and communities with the goal to rebuild social harmony. The efforts of women in conflict resolution and peacebuilding are captured under the indigenous approach to peacebuilding because, before the formalisation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325, women in Africa had already played key roles in post-conflict reconstruction. More so, the Security Council Resolution 1325 was validated based on the roles and successes of women in post-conflict peacebuilding.

A Brief History of the 1994 Rwandan Genocide

There is no unanimous agreement between historians and Rwandans on the political history of Rwanda. Ingelaere (2008) have reaffirmed that, there is no consensus on Rwandan history in pre-colonial times. However, politically the Rwandan society has commonly been considered as consisting of three groups, Hutu (84%), Tutsi (15%), and (1%) Twa (Alusala, 2005). In pre-colonial Rwanda, ethnic categories had been relatively fluid, based mostly on wealth, and number and strength. Meanwhile, the Belgian colonial administration consolidated local power in the hands of the minority Tutsi chiefs and privileged all Tutsis over the majority Hutus in land rights, education, access to power and socio-economic opportunity (Powley, 2003). This is in line with the consensus that, while historically Hutus were numerically stronger, Tutsis minority formed the governing class (Alusala, 2005). Nevertheless, independence in 1962 brought about the overthrow of the ruling Tutsi minority and the birth of a 'social revolution' that culminated in the genocide of 1994.

The actual manifestation of the genocide occurred after the airplane death of Hutu president, Juvenal Habyarimana in April 1994. Hutus were angered and went on a killing spree, massacring upwards of 900,000 Tutsis as well as moderate Hutus (who did not side with the extreme Hutus) over a hundred day affair (Graybill, 2004). Their (Hutus) hidden agenda was to thwart the power-sharing effort which Tutsi president had agreed as part of the Arusha Peace Accords in 1993. The hundred day genocide ended when the Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front defeated the interim government.

Outcomes of the 1994 Genocide

The genocide ended up with properties being destroyed, social amenities and infrastructure, including schools, hospitals, clinics, roads, markets, telecommunication, electricity, recreations all damaged as well as livestock and animals killed indiscriminately. According to Mutamba and Izabiliza (2005), thousands of women became victims of rape, trauma, and physical injuries in Rwanda. It is estimated that during the genocide, between 250,000 and 500,000 women were exposed to some form of gender-based violence, mainly rape (Mutamba & Izabiliza, 2005). As a result, 66 per cent of the raped victims tested positive for the HIV/AIDS disease after the genocide. Incidences of other infectious diseases remain high in a situation of limited health facilities. This situation has had an impact not only on the mental health of women, but also on their physical well-being. Most of the survivors of the genocide, the majority of them women, experienced serious economic deprivation. The level of mistrust between the families of those who survived the genocide and those whose relatives are suspected to have committed genocide crimes is still high and deeply rooted in the minds of people.

Again, most of those who died, those who never returned to Rwanda after fleeing, or who were imprisoned on charges of genocide crimes were men. Therefore, pressure was minted on women to play male roles. Thus, many war widows and other single women who survived were saddled with the responsibility for caring for families single-handedly, taking care of orphans, and assuming duties traditionally carried out in patriarchal Rwanda by men (Mutamba & Izabiliza, 2005). Mistrust and forceful betrayal of Hutu husbands during the genocide had a negative impact on inter-ethnic marriage and social cohesion in contemporary times. This is because; one major factor that led to the extreme violence against Tutsi women was inter-ethnic marriage. Thus, Tutsi women were betrayed by their Hutu husbands, some of them were killed by their own husbands who were under pressure from extreme Hutus. The logic was either they killed their Tutsi wives or they would be killed (Agahoza, 1998).

Rwandese Women During and After the Genocide

The roles played by the Rwandese women are remarkable and it is recorded in five key thematic areas. First, they work as activists and advocates for peace; second, they worked as peacekeepers and relief aid workers; third, they served as mediators; fourth, they worked as policymakers, and last, they became educators and leading participants in socio-economic development. The roles played by the Rwandese women during and after the post-genocide is comprehensively explained categorically in detailed in 1-5 roles:

Socio-economic Development

After the genocide, women became the engine of socio-economic growth and development. A vast network of women's groups such as NGOs, associations and cooperative societies at the grassroots level played a pivotal role in providing socio-economic empowerment initiatives.

Socio-economic development initiatives were used as an entry point for peacebuilding and reconciliation in Rwanda. According to Mutamba and Izabiliza (2005), since 1994 Rwandese women have participated in income generating activities that contributed to building their socio-economic empowerment, which in turn paved the way for sustainable community development after the genocide.

Diverse initiatives were also carried out by several women's groups such included women farmers that worked to transform Rwanda. More so, in the private and public sector, Rwandese women emerged as workers in the fields in which they had been virtually invisible prior to the genocide. Thus, women became bank tellers, cab drivers and mechanics as part of their efforts in building the economy after the genocide (Enda, 2003).

Construction and Relocation

In an effort to reconstruct the economy that was shattered by the genocide devastations, women integrally contributed in resettlement initiatives. Rwandese women participated massively in the national programme of *Imidugudu (*resettlement) where they provided labour for construction purposes. More so, they were involved in the construction of house roofs for the first time according to Rwandan history. Thus, throughout the entire territory of Rwanda, women were seen on building sites, working side by side with men or sometimes women alone trying to cope with the difficult challenges of constructing houses (Mutamba & Izabiliza, 2005). Women duties also included collecting firewood and fetching water, disarming civilian populations and ensuring reproductive health care for refugees and internally displaced persons after the genocide. In a similar vein, Mzvondiwa (2007) have noted that, Rwandese women contributed remarkably in the repatriation of refugees, working side by side with men in constructing houses for ex-combatant and other returnees in their new environments.

Moreover, Rwandese women also became heads of households, thereby building homes, repatriating thousands of displaced people and making important decisions. In fact, Rwandese women have played an integral role, particularly at the community level; they initiated and provided resettlement opportunities for returnees. Women have been equally engaged in helping to address the problem of orphans and other non-accompanied children. It is estimated that, between 400,000 and 500,000 children, were fostered or adopted by families and women headed households. Essentially, from 1997 onwards, Rwandese women have contributed tremendously, especially on the issue of repatriation, rights of refugees and in fostering orphan children (Mutamba & Izabiliza, 2005).

Food Security and National Politics

In regards to temporary Africa, Enda (2003) argued that currently in Rwanda, women hold nearly 49 per cent of the seats in the Lower House of Parliament and others serving as cabinet members. Enda re-emphasises that, this is the greatest representation worldwide. In 2003, the Geneva-based Inter-Parliamentary Union reported that Rwanda had come close to reaching parity between men and women of national politics, replacing long-time champion, Sweden (Enda, 2013).

Rwandese women also participated in drafting the new constitution in May 2003 (Mzvondiwa, 2007). In addition, the first executive secretary of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, established in March 1999 was a woman, Aloisea Inyumba (Powley, 2003).

Additionally, because of the fact that many men either killed, fled the country or imprisoned because of the genocide, affected agricultural production and food security, however, women across the country revived numerous agricultural activities in Rwanda through self-help initiatives (Mutamba & Izabiliza, 2005). Thus, women provided food for their families under either food for work programme or simply producing food from their own plots to promote food security and to prevent malnutrition. Interestingly, women combined a dual role of 'agro-information'. Thus, they decided to grow crops in forest areas where rebels were hiding with the aim of extracting information to the appropriate combatants, including state troops. A research conducted by Mutamba and Izabiliza, one respondent said, "When we returned from Zaire in 1997, some men remained in the forests with the plan of preparing an attack on Rwanda. Our mission as women was to grow crops to ensure food supplies to the combatants. We were also assigned the role of gathering all necessary information to be used by rebels" (Mutamba & Izabiliza, 2005:29).

Refurbishment and Maintenance of Law and Order

Immediately after the genocide, one of the key challenges was to restore and maintain security, law and order. Hence, women provided information to government troops, appropriate community combatants and other deployments so that infiltrators would know where and when attack the genocide perpetrators. Women also provided hideouts for infiltrators to be able to ambush the rebels. Mutamba and Izabiliza (2005) have recorded that, women also sang songs of boosting the legal fighters' morale and at times provided 'spiritual power' where they served as spiritual mobilisers (*abahubiri*). The 'spiritual power' by the women purportedly imparted 'special power' to increase the chances of the legal fighters winning battles against the rebels.

Furthermore, women after campaigning to convinced husbands and some relatives to disassociate themselves from the insurgency and returned peacefully to their families, they provided them with new homes, food and other restoration opportunities for them to live normal lives in society. Many considered what the women did as an act of heroism because; it involved risks in their lives. One method used by Rwandese women to get their husbands and relatives disassociating themselves from rebel activities was an effective collaboration with government troops. This is an obvious indication that, through active participation, collaboration and empowerment, women can end violence using their 'magical mechanisms'.

Restorative Justice and in the Traditional Gacaca Court

Importantly, in the aftermath of the genocide, Rwandese women assumed another non-traditional roles including serving as judges in the local *Gacaca* court (traditional conflict resolution court), which prior to the genocide was a male affair. In addition, in terms of representation, women were represented in all the local *Gacaca* courts. Thus, this is an important achievement, as traditionally women did not serve as *Gacaca* judges, a position that was reserved for a community's 'wise and respected old men' (*inyangamugayo*).

This is why Ingelaere (2008) have argued that, men dominated the old *Gacaca*, like society as a whole. However, women played a key role in the local *Gacaca* court after the genocide. Hence, by November 2005, 26,752 or 15.7 per cent of the judges were women (Ingelaere, 2008).
Interestingly, in areas where women served as presidents in the local *Gacaca* court, they performed better (Mutamba & Izabiliza, 2005).

UN Security Council Resolution 1325

On 31 October 2000, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) unanimously adopted Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (United Nations, 2000). The UNSCR 1325 marks the first time that the Council addressed the disproportionate and unique impact of armed conflict on women and have also, recognised the under-valued and under-utilised contributions women make to conflict prevention, peacekeeping, conflict resolution and peacebuilding. The Council stressed the importance of women in their equal and full participation as active agents in peace and security. This is the reason why the resolution contains 18 provisions to support women's participation in peace negotiation and consolidation. These provisions range from the calls to increase the representation of women at all levels of decision-making in institutions; calls to all parties in conflict and peacebuilding to respond to women's needs in post-conflict justice and governance; calls to protect women and girls from sexual violence and to end impunity for crimes against humanity affecting women, etc. (United Nations, 2000).

The UNSCR 1325 also mandates all UN member states to take steps to increase women's participation in decision-making affecting their lives, such as, gender based violence (International Crisis Group, 2006). Numerous researchers and policy analysts recognises the essence of UNSCR 1325 as a milestone as the "Magna Carta" or the "Bill of Rights" for women (Miller, Pournik & Swaine, 2014). Indeed, the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 has marked a major turning point in raising global attention to and dialogue about women civilians as disproportionately suffering during war and conflict as well as the neglected role of women in conflict prevention and resolution. Thus, it has prompted the adoption of many 'national action plans' in support of the Resolution. In addition, it has led to a phase of continued advocacy for changing practices in the United Nations itself (Cohn, 2008; Swaine, 2010).

However, many points of concerns have been raised about the shortcomings of the Council. Thus, the wider question of how quickly one can expect diffusion of a new global norm, how this global norm may be "localised" in particular contexts and what it will take to keep up the momentum to promote the norm of gender equality and institutionalise practices that support it has been raised (Miller et al, 2014). This is the reason why, according to several commentators, not enough progress has been made since 2000 in terms of country adoption of the UNSCR 1325 and implementation of its principles worldwide. Swaine (2010) has also argued in a similar vein that, 13 years since UNSCR 1325 was passed, less than one-fourth of UN member states have adopted United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325.

In addition, despite the Council's repeated appeals to respect the equal rights of women and their role in peace processes and in peacebuilding, millions of women and children continue to account for the majority of casualties in hostilities, often in flagrant violation of human rights, marginalisation and discriminations. For example, there is still no women in national armies in Senegal, Burkina Faso and Mali (Agbalajobi, 2012). More so, the women of Burundi are struggling to, be integrated into the formal setting of the peace process trapped in their traditional role that does not allow them to be visible in the public sphere (Agbalajobi, 2012). Additionally, Ghana's National Peace Council (NPC) has not taken into full account the essence of the UN Security Council Resolutions 1325; the council is not gender balanced. There is only one woman on the board, meanwhile women are the most vulnerable in the absence of peace and security and so therefore, their representation on the board could be significant (Issifu, 2015b).

The International Crisis Group (2006), add that though women contribute prominently to peacebuilding through civil society, they are largely, excluded from both the North-South and Darfur Peace Negotiations. The International Crisis Group (2006) reiterates that neither the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement nor the May 2006 Darfur Peace Agreement provide guarantees for women's participation in the implementation processes. Thus, women are under-represented at national and local levels in spite of UNSCR 1325 appeals. This is why Berewa Jommo, a feminist in Kenya have argued that, formal peacebuilding institutions have evolved as fraternities, becoming another way of keeping women out of decision-making processes (Alaga, 2010).

In a similar vein, Nicola Pratt also reports that women activist from the University of Warwick have raised the concern that women activists continues to receive threats of violence by community members and government agents who view their actions as a hindrance to post-conflict recovery. Meanwhile, the current implementation of UNSCR 1325 does not account for such differences, but focuses on maintaining a neo-liberal approach to peace-making which can often be insensitive to women's needs, and hence, marginalise them from being involved in peace talks (United Nations Women, 2012).

Essentially, countries such as Burundi, Guinea Bissau, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Liberia, Sierra Leon, Nigeria, Senegal and Cote D'Ivoire (Miller et al, 2014) where women are still vulnerable, marginalised, underrepresented and discriminated against economically, politically, socially and culturally are all UN member states with knowledge of UNSCR 1325 objectives.

This is why Chinkin and Charlesworth (2007) have argued that United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 have not lived up to expectation. In sum, the International Crisis Group (2006) has put on record that, the endemic discrimination, marginalisation and sexual violence are significant barriers to achieving Resolution 1325's goal of women inclusivity, participation and empowerment.

Conclusion

Women and children are the most vulnerable in societies; they are the most affected before, during and after the war. Meanwhile, they are not war instigators, but they become the most affected. The tactics used by terrorists against civilians is not different from what conflict entrepreneurs or rebels are using in contemporary times against women. Thus, women are targeted and use as weapons of war. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, thousands of women were raped; the same can be said of Rwanda, Liberia, Sudan, Somalia, Sudan, etc. as tactics of war. Specifically, 250,000 Rwandese women and girls were victims of some form of sexual violence while 66 per cent of the raped victims tested positive for HIV/AIDS after the 1994 genocide.

This is the reason why the UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security have recognised the relevance of women's experiences in conflict to its peace and security mandate. Advancing women's rights in conflict resolution and peace processes is among the objectives of the Council. However, the endemic discrimination, marginalisation and sexual violence against women in the face of Resolution 1325 are significant barriers to achieving its objectives. Although, there is no denying the fact that, support for local women in peacebuilding has increased over the years since the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 was approved. It is also evident that, funding for women's group and activists has reduced over the years. This is because, since 2001, international efforts for global peace have shifted from supporting women's groups and activists to the global fight against terrorism. Thus, support for the global fight on violence against women has attracted very few contributions for women's movements with respect to security.

However, it is crucial to note that, women and children also suffer from terrorisms and extremists attacks. For instance, over four million women and children have suffered in diverse forms, including rape, torture, sexual abuses, abducting/kidnaping, etc. in the hands of terrorists and extremists groups like Janjaweed, Tuareg/Azawad, Ansar Dine, Al-Shabaab, Al-Qaeda, Muslim Brotherhood, Boko Haram etc. in Africa (USAID, 2000; Turshen, 2000; WHO, 2002; Tonwe, & Eke, 2013; Cheung, 2014; Osita-Njoku & Chikere, 2015; Jon-Lee, 2015). Specifically, at least 2,053 civilians, many of them who are women and children were raped, tortured and killed by Boko Haram in the first half of 2014 (Human Rights Watch, 2014).

Hence, I recommend that the United Nations, African Union, large donor countries, European Union, the Economic Community of West African States, Spain, private actors in development and cooperation agencies, etc. should make a greater effort to finance women groups, movements and activists in a continually manner. More so, and to also establish links with a broader spectrum of local actors that work in the gender dimension, as well as adapting themselves to the organisational reality and the day-to-day lives of women. Thus, supporting this agenda will help to ensure sustainable peace for women, and will open, a sure commitment to a broader inclusive knowledge of what is really going on in conflict areas, as well as of the real needs of people who fall victim to violence.

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