LIBERAL PEACE ON CONFLICT, GENDER, AND PEACEBUILDING

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO CASE STUDY

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Liberal Peace:
On Conflict, Gender, and Peacebuilding

Democratic Republic of Congo
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Acronyms

AFEDE	*Action des Femmes pour le Développement*
AIC	*Association internationale du Congo*
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AMF	American Machine and Foundry
AMV	Africa Mining Vision
AU	African Union
BPFA	Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa
CAR	Central African Republic
CBC	Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
CEDAW	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CFS	Congo Free State
CGLR	Council of the Great Lakes Region
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CGLR	Council of the Great Lakes Region
CMR	Crude Mortality Rate
CONAKAT	*Confédération des Associations Tribales du* Katanga
CoNgo	United Nations Conference of the NGOs
CoJ	City of Joy
DAC	Disaster Assessment and Coordination
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
EAC	East African Community
EBE	Economic-based Exploitation
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreement
EPGV	Economic Programmed Gender Violence
ERC	United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
EPVG	Economically Programmed Gender Violence
EU	European Union

FGM	Female genital mutilation
FIREFEC	*Forum Interrégional des Femmes* Congolaises
GBD	Gender-based Discrimination
GBI	Gender-based injustices
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GID	Gender identity discrimination
GLR	Great Lake Region
GWOT	Global War on Terror
HDI	Human Development Index
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HSPH	Harvard School of Public Health
IASC	United Nations Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICD	Inter-Congolese Dialogue
ICGLR	International Conference on the Great Lakes Region
ICTR	International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda
IBE	Identity-based exploitation
ICU	Intensive Care Unit
ID	Identity document
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IFA	International African Association
IGP	Inspector General of Police
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IOM	United Nations International Organisation for Migration
IRC	International Rescue Committee
IRIN	Integrated Regional Information Network Organisation
JKK	Joseph Kabila Kabange

LDK	Laurent-Désiré Mobutu Kabila
MDDZ	Mines d'or du Zaïre
MONUC	*Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies en République démocratique du* Congo
MONUSCO	*Mission de l'Organisation des Nations unies pour la stabilisation en république démocratique du Congo*
MP	Member of Parliament
MPR	*Mouvement Populaire de la Revolution*
NBC	National Broadcasting Company
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NPF	Nations Peacekeeping Force
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PEV	Post-Election Violence
PPE	Patriarchal political exclusion
R2P	Responsibility to protect
RRG	Resources Russel Group
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAR	South Atlantic Resources
SDT	Self-determination theory
SEA	Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
SG	Secretary General
SGBV	Sexual gender-based violence
STIs	Sexual Transmitted Infections
TMC	Techno Muscular Capitalism
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNDW	UN's Decade for Women
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Fund
UNPOL	United Police

UNSC   United Nations Security Council
UNSCR   United Nations Security Council Resolution
US   United States
USAID   United State Agency for International
            Development
USSR   Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WB   World Bank
WLM   Women's Liberation Movement
WW   World War

Figure 1:   Congolese soldier carrying a propeller close to UN
            truck (Photo: greatlakesdemocracy.blogspot.com)

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prominent figure whose name I cannot mention since it has not been released yet.

Series Foreword

Sven Botha
University of Pretoria
Co-Series Editor: African Political Science and
International Relations in Focus

The *African Political Science and International Relations In Focus* book series was established to give a platform to African and Afro-centric[1] voices to offer a diversity of perspectives on Africa's domestic and international politics. Essential to our objective in creating this platform was the facilitation of opportunities for reflection. Nkwazi. N. Mhango and Evelyn Namakula B. Mayanja's volume titled 'Liberal Peace, Conflict, Gender, and Peacebuilding: The Democratic Republic of the Congo as a Case Study' makes progress towards the fulfilment of this brief. It addresses two of the key subject areas that this series prioritises, namely conflict management in Africa and gender issues.

The conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has been ongoing for almost three decades. Nkwazi. N. Mhango and Evelyn Namakula B. Mayanja advance the discourse on the discourse on conflict in the DRC by arguing that the liberal peace approach to conflict management in the DRC has not yielded the desired results. This, they argue, is largely due to the 'one-size-fits-all' approach that liberal peace adopted to conflict management. Additionally, the authors note that international actors intent on conflict management should seek to understand the views and perspectives of local actors on international inventions whilst also incorporating them into the intervention. Material support for the work of local actors, as well as hegemonic power politics, are further cited as reasons why the present-

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1   Within the context of this series, the term 'Afro-centric' is used to refer to scholars and practitioners working on issues relating to Africa's domestic and international politics who are located outside of Africa and may not be of African origin.

day approach to liberal peace is slow in producing long-lasting peace.

The authors also place a strong emphasis on the need to adopt gender-sensitive and gender-responsive approaches to the conflict management process. To this end, a call to action is made to incorporate local female voices into the conflict management processes, while greater political will to undertake and sustain meaningful change is required of political leaders at both a national and international level.

The authors give readers much to reflect on. As co-series editors, we hope that readers, whatever their designation, will think critically about the future of international conflict management interventions in Africa.

Preface

In this book, authors analyse and offer some insights into the history of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The story is told within the context of its conflicts, with an exploration of the complex and multi-layered conflict causes and the attempts to resolve the conflict based on liberal peacebuilding. The book delves into an examination of gender relations in the country with insight into the gendered dimensions of conflict in the DRC and how liberal peace failed to resolve the conflict because of hidden agendas and interests by the West and other emerging powers as a typical replica of what has been ongoing in many conflict-laden countries / societies. The book is divided into two major parts. The first part, as noted above, delves into and dwells on the historicity and ontology of the conflict. The second part focuses on the various attempts at peacemaking that have taken place in the country, with emphasis on how liberal peace has failed to resolve the conflict. The book analyses various peacemaking strategies that have been employed and the role of women (or lack thereof) in peacemaking and peacebuilding processes; and finally, the failures, strengths, and weaknesses of international intervention strategies.

Using a gender lens and filters, the book sheds light on the challenges and problems that women face in conflict zones, and the way they affect them, economically, politically, mentally, and socially because of their gender. Carver et al. (2003: 289-90) defines gender, noting that "gender, according to feminist theory, is a social construction which affects how both sexes think and act" not to mention how they are viewed; and thereby mal/treated" (Gilliard, 2012: 28). This definition fits in the conflict in the DRC vis-à-vis (in relation to) the insecurities and the lack of agency that women face, since it covers genders and their social construction based on performativity, as prescribed by patriarchal systems prevalent in the country and internationally. Such insecurities and

denied agency are palpably far beyond the DRC if we examine its genes and genesis.

Further, the book shows how women in Eastern DRC, are a typical case of gender-based violence (GBV) prevalent almost in all armed conflicts in Africa and beyond. Yet, they are left out as players and protagonists in peacemaking. Contrary to national, regional, and international instruments fronted as reinforcers of women's rights and wellbeing, GBV is the norm. The book starts with defining gender violence. It touches on the genesis of the conflict in the DRC that can be tied and traced to the Berlin Conference of 1884. In concluding, the book proposes some solutions to address the problems resulting from endemic and systemic GBV that women face in the Eastern DRC, which since 1996, is ridden with armed conflicts and the DRC in general, which acts as the catalysts of the gendered ramifications of the conflict.

So, too, the book examines the conflict in the Eastern DRC as a case study to illustrate the dangers and dilemmas that countries suffering from wars resulting from resource control face while the international community offers lip service to conflict mitigation (Lamb, 2007; Mhango, 2017a, 2018c; Mayanja, 2018). The book cites an example of the United Nations (UN) peacekeeping, which in the DRC's case has proved to be a failure (Mayanja, 2022). Peacekeepers have been in the DRC since 1999 and peace remains elusive and unpredictable.

More so, the book highlights performativity as a gender role socially created and ascribed to both sexes under patriarchal hegemony and toxicity. However, it should be noted that gender and sex are two different things. Sex is biological while gender is socially constructed by the patriarchy to, amongst other things, subjugate, intimidate, exploit, commodify, objectify, and own women. It is a form of commodification or *thingification* (Lederach, 2005; Mbembe, 2017; Mhango, 2019) then objectification and commercialisation of females for an opposite gender to

exploit, own, and mis/use. This leads to the violation of women and their rights simply because of their gender.

The violations of women's rights are rooted in the capitalist liberal order that values only profit and power and not people and the environment on which our lives depend. Since 1996 – when wars and armed conflicts began in the DRC – liberal attempts and approaches have been deployed with the aim of creating peace, but to no avail. Liberal peacebuilding / peacemaking has failed totally since the peace it sought to build and maintain is not for the Congolese, but for technocrats, mineral exploiters, weapon industries, local and regional political elites, and Western capitalist markets under the ruse of free markets. More crucially, liberal peacemaking has provided leeway and opportunity for the free market to use violence and convoluted international norms to exploit resources in the DRC (Mhango, 2017b, 2018a) as it has been in other African countries. In other words, violence, and resource extraction benefit core nations in the Global North at the expense of peripheral nations in the Global South.

Richmond (2012) notes that there is an increase in durable negotiations on the one hand, while there is also dissatisfaction with what liberal peace represents and has achieved based on its subjects in post–violence environments on the other hand. Once more, whether liberal peace has succeeded based on the increase of durable negotiations, depends on how one looks at it, where, and how one applies it. It also depends on whose interests are addressed or ignored, considering that, sometimes, the failures of the process[es] are blamed on the societies intervened upon due to their lack of capacity and political elites' interferences (Chandler, 2010).

On the contrary, when such intervention succeeds, it is equally shared by both the interveners or foreign players / stakeholders and local stakeholders, as it is supposed to be in a judicious relationship. This illustrates that foreign interveners are not blamed, even where they are supposed or truly to share the blame or err in the process because they often ignore local dynamics, cultures, agency, processes, and structures of

peacebuilding. If we underscore the fact that many societies that depend on foreign interveners were colonised and they are sidelined in international policies, including those involving their peace and security, we can link foreign interveners with the failures that the two are supposed to equally share. Doing this is not only doing justice to both protagonists but also decolonising the process.

The book is divided into eighteen chapters:

Chapter one examines the history of the DRC, starting with colonisation as the liberal and capitalist initiatives to perpetually exploit people and their resources. The chapter highlights how women in particular are least represented in male-dominated government. As it was during the colonial era, as natural resources are raped, so are women's bodies. This does not mean that males were not colonised and exploited under the two strategies. They generally were both exploited, even though unequally.

Chapter two explores how, different from the conceptualisation of rape as a weapon of war in the DRC, we argue that rape is a crime against humanity, driven by the extraction of mineral resources needed for technological advancement. The chapter focuses on how capitalist exploitation of Congo's natural resources drives rape. As resources are exploited and wars are waged, women are raped. Thus, resource extraction cannot be disassociated from the impasse of rape. The chapter also proposes that the African Union and individual states must address colonial residues that reinforce women oppression and instead reinforce their self-determination, empowerment, and inclusion in constructing the African state and addressing issues around natural resource governance.

Chapter three examines how gender issues in DRC have been addressed domestically and internationally. However, their effectiveness remains wanting, which highlights the importance of this book.

Chapter four highlights how women's exclusion and exploitation are rooted in the colonial-capitalist hangover that exploited women and never involved them in decision-making.

Chapter five explores how powerful nations that appear to be interested in the DRC's peace and women's emancipation are motivated only by national interests – access to the DRC's resources even when it entails maintaining autocrats in power. They pay lip service, for example, to women's rights and emancipation, without changing loops that reinforce GBV and women's exclusion in decision-making.

Chapter six focuses on how GBV is engraved in the psyche of the DRC's political institutions. National institutions that were inherited from colonial administrators continue to reinforce masculine politics that not only fails to engage women in decision-making, but it also reinforces their exploitation. Since the DRC gained independence, no president has ever been a female. Like the international structures, national institutions pay lip service to women's inclusion and participation in State governance. The reality of many women is characterised by GBV, human rights violations and impoverishment.

Chapter seven notes how gender violence is socially entrenched, legitimised, and systemised. In a patriarchal society where women are not part of decision-making structures, males perpetuate their interests. While women are the most affected by conflicts and resource exploitation, their voices are not engaged in peacemaking and security. How can we expect men who orchestrate and benefit from war be protagonists of peace?

Chapter eight examines the political-economic factors engendering GBV.

Chapter nine highlights how international conspiracies have facilitated resource looting, and consequently, sexual abuses / exploitation of women.

Chapter ten explores how rape remains a weapon of war that is used to engender natural resource looting.

Chapter eleven examines how rape is an internalised phenomenon to which sustainable peace is the durable solution. In other words, sustainable and emancipatory peace are key to curbing sexual violence.

Chapter twelve notes how insecurity affects some girls and women, even partly boys and men in the DRC, forcing them into prostitution as a survival means, while others endure domestic violence and sex trafficking. Violence becomes a phenomenon that permeates all life spheres.

Chapter thirteen examines what is required to engender peace and security.

Chapter fourteen reconnoitres internal and external conflict drivers.

Chapter fifteen notes how liberal peace invention is the sole approach to human security, yet women are not involved in such inventions.

Finally, in chapters sixteen, seventeen, and eighteen, the book questions who benefits from human rights.

Chapter I

Democratic Republic of Congo's Conflict and Gendered Nature

Figure 2:   Map of the Democratic Republic of the Congo highlighting areas beset by armed conflicts (Source: codinginthecongo.blogsopot.com)

Introduction

The DRC has faced significant instability since its colonisation by the King Leopold II of Belgium in the 1870's. King Leopold II's barbarism and occupation were characterised with massive abuses and exploitation of its population and natural resources, two violent civil wars, social and political upheavals, deterioration, and sexual violence on an enormous scale. Therefore, the ongoing violence in the east, which escalates concomitant to the global demand for Congo's minerals traces its origin to King Leopold II's barbarism and brutalities

(Mhango, 2018c, 2023a). The DRC is rich with human capital, the total is estimated at 85,281,024, out of whom 62.71% are between 1 and 24 years – 26,564,328 female and 26,920,568 male (CIA, 2024). The country is also rich in minerals – zinc, uranium, silver, gold, diamonds, cadmium, manganese, and cobalt, estimated at US$24 trillion (Kors, 2012), which, in 2010, equalled the GDP of Europe and the United States (US) combined (ModernGhana.com, 2010).

Besides its vast mineral reserves, the country exports coffee, cotton, timber, rubber, tea, fish, and palm oil. It is also wealthy with fertile soil (Mhango, 2023b), hydroelectric potential from the gigantic Inga Dams, and the Congo Basin. The DRC also boasts of being home to the second largest tropical forest in the world after the Amazon Rainforest. Instead of these resources enriching the DRC's own people, they have helped the international community and its elites to prosper, and in some cases, served as a source of incessant wars and armed conflict. Thus, instead of being a blessing, the DRC's resources have largely been a curse to the country.

Unending Conflict and Its Ramifications for DRC and Region

As noted above, the history of the DRC conflict can be traced back to the tragic era of slave trade, the tyrannical rule of King Leopold II, whose agents infiltrated the DRC in the 1870s. All started at the Berlin Conference of 1884-85, where European nations scrambled and partitioned Africa for their political and economic interests. These countries divided, partitioned, and demarcated the Africa we know today by drawing the modern-time borders. While colonial boundaries were not established at the time, the Conference made two brutal and fatal decisions that would adversely and perpetually affect the DRC and Africa in general. First, the Conference recognised and authorised the International African Association (IFA), which was led by Leopold II as the sole legitimate authority over the Congo Basin, subsequently called the Congo Free State (CFS) (Graham, 2014). Prior to the colonisation of the CFS,

King Leopold II had declared that the exploration of Africa in general was for philanthropic reasons.

So, too, this assumption was the major reason other European countries seemed to have had no concern in recognising his authority over the CFS, apart from themselves being involved in a colonial project, since they both shared the same colonial hidden face. At the inaugural address of the IFA, King Leopold II founded an organisation called the *Association Internationale du Congo* (AIC), and of which he became first chair, King Leopold II opined that:

> The subject which brings us together today is one of the most important facing humanity. To open up to civilisation the only part of the world which has not been discovered.... Do I need to remind you that in the bringing you all to Brussels, I have not been guided by an egoistic purpose? No, Gentlemen, if Belgium is small, she is happy and satisfied with her lot. I have no other ambition other than to serve her well. But I will insist on the pride it brings me to think that a progress essential to our age has begun in Brussels. I hope that in this way Brussels may become the headquarters of a civilising mission. (Jules Marchal cited in Zeilig et al., 2006: 22).

Nevertheless, contrary to his declared 'humanitarian' motives, which he explicitly declared as he further elucidated, the association's objective to 'civilise' Congo was nothing but "to regenerate materially and morally, races whose degeneration and misfortune it is hard to realise" (Glendenning, 1973: 35); also see Mhango (2015a). Although, partially masked with good intentions, the CFS became a brutal regime based on the premises of military rule, resource exploitation, and pervasive abuses of the indigenous population. The Congolese were brutally forced, inter alia, to collect wild rubber and ivory, were overworked, underfed, and faced flogging, mutilations, torture, rape, murder, and the severing of limbs (Hochschild, 1998; Graham, 2014). Starvation and diseases were also rampant in the CFS, and as a result, an estimated 10 million individuals died, and entire regions of the DRC became

depopulated (Kisangani, 2012). King Leopold II barbarically ruled the CFS with an absolute disregard for the nationals' human rights and plundered its resources for a long time as the so-called international community watched. Also, he set a model of kleptocratic leadership for the subsequent leaders in the post-colonial CFS, a style of leadership that would become one of the main causes and drivers of conflict in the country.

Internal and external pressures led to King Leopold II's ceding power over the CFS to Belgium in 1908, and the CFS was ruled by Belgium from 1908 to 1960. Thereafter, the CFS became known as the Belgian Congo. Although it was less brutal than the CFS under king Leopold II, the Belgian Congo remained an authoritarian state with a harsh colonial institutions, practices, and systems based on racism, paternalism, and resource exploitation (Kisangani, 2012). Throughout that period, though, the Congolese people engaged in rebellions and revolts that, over time, led to a growing nationalist movement. Eventually, there occurred political reforms that allowed for the formation of political parties and the emergence of political leaders like Patrice Lumumba (Kisangani, 2012; Mhango, 2015a, 2016a). On 30 June 1960, after a protracted revolution and resistance, Congo finally attained independence from Belgium with Patrice Lumumba of the *Mouvement National Congolais* (MNC) elected the first Prime Minister of the Republic.

Unapologetically, Lumumba quickly made his radical vision of building a society that built on non-racial, non-ethnic values, and equality of all citizens; known to his detriment thereafter, since he was killed because of it. Lumumba's revolutionary vision was anchored on his party's objectives, which included commitment "to unitary national politics, multi-ethnic state, and policies of the redistribution to the rural and urban poor" (Zeilig et al., 2006: 83). Unsurprisingly, Lumumba's revolutionary political and economic vision was extremely unpopular with his erstwhile comrades, colonisers, and concessionary companies. Concessionary companies stood to lose vast stretches of land and minerals to exploit, and former African comrades from Katanga, a province with

vast reserves of minerals, stoutly opposed his leadership that was based on Pan-Africanism and nationalism in favour of federalism (Turner, 2007).

Basically, those involved in the conflict saw it as the only way of affording them freedom to exploit their own provincial resources. Driven by a motive to retain the locus of political and economic power in the Western world, Belgium, working closely with the US, and surrogate African acolytes and allies, most of them from the Katanga province, instigated the assassination of Lumumba. He was shot with two of his ardent supporters and colleagues Joseph Okito and Maurice Mpolo in 1961, barely a year into his premiership. The assassination of Lumumba came as no surprise to observers, who were cognisant with the realpolitik of the time, because events that led to his death were ominous and known.

Immediately after independence, the military mutinied. Subsequently, the two regions, which were the richest in resources, Katanga and South Kasai ceded (Kisangani, 2012) and openly declared war against Lumumba. This era of political and military uproar and upheavals that became known as the Congo Crisis led to the deployment of Belgian troops to protect the European population and economic interests. They were followed by the deployment of UN peacekeeping forces to oust them.

The DRC's crisis and the subsequent decades of turmoil occurred within the context of the polarisation and toxicity of the Cold War so that the military conflict in the DRC, just as it was in other African countries, became understood as a proxy war. When Patrice Lumumba requested the UN to assist in stopping Katanga from seceding to no avail, he turned to the Soviet Union from whom he received military aid. This led the US to justify its gambit and perception of Lumumba as a communist sympathiser (Kisangani, 2012). They, in turn, used pressure to have Lumumba dismissed from his position (Kisangani, 2012), to no avail.

What followed was a period of political turmoil and a *coup d'état,* led by Joseph Mobutu (later Mobutu Sese Seko),

then Colonel and Chief of Staff of the new Congolese National Army, who sought to neutralise Lumumba and his power base (Kisangani, 2012; Mhango, 2015a, 2016a). In January 1961, less than a year after independence, Mobutu's soldiers arrested Lumumba and was assassinated soon after, along with the two other government representatives mentioned above. Many reasons have been advanced for the killing of Lumumba, but the most prominent one is that it resulted from Western intervention to ostensibly end the communist threat to the resource-rich Congo (Kisangani, 2012), which the West did not want to lose.

By 1963, the cessations of Katanga and South Kasai had been defeated. In 1964, the UN withdrew its substantial mission, and by November 1965, after more political turmoil, Mobutu seized power of a largely centralised, albeit otherwise divided Congo that he later dubbed Zaïre (Kisangani, 2012) and turned it into his private estate as the East turned a blind eye. From 1965 to 1997, Mobutu remained the virtually uncontested President of Zaïre, and was heavily emboldened and supported by the US and the West in general (Mhango, 2015a, 2016b) as a protector of its interests who ensured that Zaïre remained a "bastion against communism in Africa" (Turner, 2007: 11).

Initially, Mobutu's presidency seemed to have temporarily brought stability to Zaïre, and he enjoyed broad Western support (Turner, 2007). However, Mobutu transformed Zaïre into a single-party dictatorship under his *Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution* (MPR) and began to exploit the country's resources for his personal gains (Berwouts, 2017). Mobutu's presidency became well known for its institutionalised kleptocracy in which the powerful few (who did not have the competency to manage these resources sustainably) exploited the resource-rich soils of the country, while Zaïre's physical, political, economic, and social infrastructure eroded (Mhango, 2016c, 2023a; Berwouts, 2017). Over time, the state, under Mobutu, lost its ability to exert control over society and many began to see it as a typical replica of a failed state (Berwouts, 2017). Even after the

toppling of Mobutu, the then Zaïre, now the DRC, remained unstable because of its coloniality and historicity.

From Mobutu to the Kabila

The end of the Cold War distinctly marked the collapse of Mobutu's reign. The "old world order", which had maintained some facets of fake regional stability, gave way to the "new world order", resulting in the "implosion" of states, including neighbouring Rwanda in 1994 (Berwouts, 2017), after a genocide that saw over a million people dead. When the genocide ended following the military victory of the Rwanda Patriotic Force (RPF), roughly 2 million Hutus, militias, and civilians, fled to Zaïre, where most ended up in refugee camps in North and South Kivu. There, militias reorganised and began to use the camps as bases for "hit and run" operations against the RPF regime in Kigali (Berwouts, 2017: 15). To eliminate the Hutu threat[s], Rwanda, using Congolese rebel leader Laurent-Désiré Mobutu Kabila (LDK), and with the assistance of Uganda, invaded Zaïre. Thereafter, LDK dubbed the country the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), although without a trace of democracy. At that time, massacres of approximately two million people took place (Kisangani, 2012), and the regional aspect of the conflict also coincided with local ethnic tensions in Zaïre (Reyntjens, 2009). In 1997, Kabila, with the support of the Rwandan RPF and the Uganda's People Defence Force (UPDF), ended Mobutu's despotic reign and took overpower (Mhango, 2016c).

Within a year after coming to power, LDK 's presidency faced challenges from his former supporters in the governments of Rwanda and Uganda when, in August 1998, he ordered all foreign troops out of the country (Eriksen, 2009; Stearns, 2012). This created and sparked the Second Congo War when Rwanda and Uganda then turned against Kabila, and with Congolese supporters, established ragtag rebel movements in Eastern DRC to destabilise LDK's regime (Eriksen, 2009). The intervention of Angola, Zimbabwe, and Namibia on Kabila's behalf kept Kabila's regime from falling but did not prevent the divisions amongst his own local

alliance base (Eriksen, 2009). The country became divided into three, with the western portion of the country under the control of Kabila's central government, and the eastern portion divided between Rwanda and Uganda and their respective Congolese allies, as the two countries split over the fight to control mineral resources in the east (Eriksen, 2009).

In 1999, a ceasefire agreement was signed in Lusaka, Zambia, that provided for the creation of a UN peacekeeping force, *Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies en République démocratique du Congo* (MONUC) to help implement a ceasefire and oversee the withdrawal of foreign forces as well as the disarmament and demobilisation of Congolese and foreign rebels (Tull, 2009). The Lusaka Accord also called for a national negotiation and dialogue, and the organisation of elections (Tull, 2009). Unpredictably, in 2001, one of LDK's security guards shot him dead. LDK's son Joseph Kabila Kabange (JKK) succeeded him after the resumption of the negotiations with the Inter-Congolese Dialogue (ICD), and, in 2002, the Pretoria meetings that culminated in the Pretoria Accord, which eventually led to the exit of Rwandan and Ugandan troops. The exit of two armies led to the establishment of a transitional government followed by the organisation of the 2006 elections (Tull, 2009). JKK became the President of the DRC, marking one of the neoliberal 'successful' elements of the peace processes - democratic political elections (Mhango, 2017a).

Although the Lusaka and Pretoria agreements were steps forward in the peace process at the continental level, they did not bring an end to the violence in the DRC. This is particularly true in Eastern DRC, where violence has continued to rage between multiple parties, including the national army and rebel groups, leaving civilians plagued by pervasive insecurity, violence, and sexual violence (Berwouts, 2017). From 1999 onwards, there has been a heavy international presence in the DRC under the premise of peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding. The most visible international presence is undoubtedly the *Mission de l'Organisation des Nations unies pour la stabilisation en république démocratique du Congo* (MONUSCO) (2010 to date), but other regional and national groups (like the

European Union (EU) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) are in the country in addition to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and various other groups, all turning the Eastern DRC into a cemetery of international organisations without engendering sustainable peace and security. There is also a heavy international presence in the mining sector, extracting, and exploiting the mineral wealth without respect for the DRC's people's and environmental rights.

Various social, economic, security, and political challenges remained for the DRC. Parts of the country remain in protracted violence, deep-set humanitarian crisis, and politically and economically, the country is not faring much better. While JKK secured a second term in 2011, highly contested election results which erupted in violent protests as opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi also claimed the presidency (Yahaya and Bello, 2020). In 2012, the *Mouvement du 23 mars* (M23 movement) threatened national and regional stability with an insurgency that took control of Goma and displaced half a million people before eventually surrendering in 2013 (Klosterboer and Hartmann-Mahmud, 2013). In 2016, Kabila refused to give up power at the end of his second (contested) presidential term, which led to more demonstrations, resulting in several deaths (*Al Jazeera*, 2016).

Elections were finally held on 30 December 2018, but the election results of the ruling President Felix Tshisekedi were contested by the opposition candidate Martin Fayulu. In 2023, the election, won by Felix Tshisekedi, has once again been contested by Fayulu and other opposition leaders.

In summary, the story of the DRC is a colourful demonstration of a country whose troubled colonial past continued beyond Independence Day. The search for peace by local, regional, and international actors continues to the present day. Mostly, the dominant framework within which all these attempts have been made, has been the Western liberal approach, an ideology that posits that elections and consociationalism can maximise prosperity and reduce the

chances of conflict. Liberalism is predicated on individual freedoms and advocates for government that leads with the consent of its citizenry and protects against despotism. In Africa, liberalism, however, expresses itself in its extreme form of neoliberalism. Here, the words liberalism and neoliberalism are used interchangeably to mean a one-size-fits-all model, in this case of peacebuilding, and the West has used them to intervene and destabilise non-western countries with little or totally no regard for available indigenous peacebuilding processes.

However, supportive scholars argue that liberalism and neoliberalism are relational, thereby encouraging the participation of the community in decision-making, and therefore, are more likely to strengthen community unity and bring more lasting peace (Mac Ginty, 2008a; Werner, 2010).

In his attempt to define liberal peace as a current dominant universal phenomenon in dealing with peacebuilding and development in countries and communities facing conflicts, Richmond (2006) maintains that it is mainly associated with top-down approaches. Richmond (2006) adds that liberal peace revolves around coercive mechanisms that are often seen as alien expressions of hegemony and domination over others or colonialism. This is especially true for countries in the Global South in which colonialism has been extended through liberal and neoliberal policies (Paris, 2010; Mhango, 2018b). Under the liberal and neoliberal policies, the situation in former colonies has seldom changed, and if it did, it was likely for the worse. The DRC provides an ideal example of how liberal and neoliberal policies have authored calamities to top up to the miseries of colonialism and neocolonialism that supported venal regimes in the country for over a half of a decade (Mhango, 2016a, Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2013).

We will address this in the case study to show how the DRC has never been free due to having immense natural resources that the West and other emerging powers such as Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS) covertly, overtly, and for some players violently, and unlawfully, seek

to exploit. So, too, we will show a link between and amongst wars and armed conflicts, systems, structure, and policies engineered by liberalism, and neoliberalism.

Roberts (2011) notes that "global structures favour or neglect popular priorities in peacebuilding interventions" (p. 11) due to its selective nature and having too much discretion. Being discretional and selective, liberal peace has benefited rich countries at the expense of poor countries (Mhango, 2016b, 2023a), Gonzales-Vicente, 2020). Despite this anomaly, liberal peace is universalised to sound as if it equally benefits all countries just like the rosy garden does to insects. Are the DRC and Africa in general a part of this rosy pacific union of liberal democracies?

Are African countries and other dictators a mismanaged part of this utopian equation? The danger facing many countries affected by liberal policies, structures, and systems is that they receive full-loaded definitions without questioning or redefining them to suit their aims, policies, cultures, and perspectives. The argument of this book is that every definition propounded needs to be contextually deconstructed and redefined to ensure cultural propriety (Mhango, 2017c). These, inter alia, are the issues and questions this book seeks to address and partly answer.

Remarkably, from the outset, the definition of liberal peacebuilding makes liberal peace not only foreign to those facing conflict, but also a form of colonialism-perpetrated imposition under the ruse of peacemaking and ushering development in affected countries. Further, such a definition makes liberal peace more of a superimposition than a solution to the problems it intends to resolve, resulting from violent conflicts.

Conclusion

The chapter has shown the double, even triple, standard some players in the conflict have shown. It has been difficult, even impossible, to resolve the conflict because of the role these standards play in material supply. Also, the gendered

nature of the global superstructure has a lot to do with the impossibility of resolving the conflict. under various ruses such as liberalism, liberal peace, free markets, and others, as they revolve around the significant role that coloniality has played in this conflict.

Essentially, amongst those who make others believe that they intend to build and make peace, some of them are the same funders and sponsors of the same conflict, especially those revolving around resource extraction and the arms trade, as is the case in the DRC and Africa in general (Mhango, 2017a; Mayanja, 2018). Buzzwords and catch phrases such as 'development,' 'peacemaking', 'peacekeeping', and 'peacebuilding' are used as a strategic and tactic ruse to lull victimised countries into the trap the West set during the colonial era. Interestingly, despite knowing the dangers and the snares, affected countries such as the DRC (and other African countries) face from liberal peacebuilding, they do not oppose it, provided that local elites who run these countries enjoy their privileges at the expense of most of the citizenry caught up in this imbroglio. Like an African proverb says, "only a fool tests waters with both feet." This is where the assumptions that liberal peacebuilding is coloniality wrapped in sweet words such as development, peacekeeping and peacebuilding hold water.

Discussion Questions

1. Is it doable and fair to propose the redress of the DRC and Africa in general, based on their historicity? If yes, how, and if no, why?
2. What are your suggestions / views regarding prosecuting the culprits who fuel and fund the conflict *nunc pro tunc* ("now for then")?
3. Do you think liberal peace still has a place to play in addressing and arresting the conflict in question? If yes, how, and if no, why?

Chapter II

Interventionism and the Responsibility to Protect

Introduction

The ongoing conflict in Eastern DRC, which is the case study of this book, provides an example of what has been ongoing in Africa under liberal peace and neoliberal policies of interventionism. One of the concepts of liberal peace is the Responsibility to Protect (R2P), typified by the economics of bullying, control, and exploitation. It is popularly believed that almost all conflicts in Africa (for example, Algeria, Angola, the DRC, Sierra Leone, Darfur, South Sudan, Abiyei, Mali, and the Central African Republic), in which liberal peace has sought to intervene, revolve around the struggle for controlling and extracting resources (Dufresne, 2007; Grant et al., 2022). Organically, liberal peace has its own different and contradictory mechanisms and culture of making and building peace compared to the indigenous mechanisms (Mac Ginty, 2008b; Autesserre, 2010) in the areas where it intervenes.

The major questions needed to be asked are: Whose peace is it, when those impacted by violence are not consulted and their cultures not engaged? How viable, if at all, are the root causes of conflict strategically and purposely addressed other than being ignored or overlooked? This does not necessarily mean that liberal peace is not needed. No, it is needed, save that it needs to be complemented by local mechanisms, cultures, and practices of peacemaking and development. Here is where the need to deconstruct and overhaul liberal peace to benefit all players emanates.

Local Peacebuilding Mechanisms Are Key

Due to its failure, liberal peace needs to appreciate and incorporate other local mechanisms of peacemaking, and locally oriented and culturally sensitive plans and programmes for development. Greener (2011) argues that liberal peacebuilding produces an opportunity for liberals, who in this case are Western countries, but not for the rest. This can be seen in the fact that Western corporates operating in affected countries seek peace so that they can conduct business, but not so that citizens or victims in affected countries can live their lives peacefully and build their countries. If anything, this sort of peace is nothing but capitalist peace, as opposed to positive peace that needs to address the needs and interests of affected communities.

Arguably, liberal peacebuilding is foreign and for foreign multinational companies and their home countries to make money, but not for the development of affected countries. As argued above, the DRC proves this point simply because, since liberal peacebuilding was applied, the Congolese have never enjoyed or experienced any reprieve from their manufactured miseries. Their conditions have become poorer and poorer and beset by constant violence, which increases concomitant with the global demand for minerals and other natural resources that are abundant in the DRC.

However, when it comes to partnering with local mechanisms and cultures, liberal peace prefers superimposition over partnership based on equality, equity, and symmetrical relationships in running peacebuilding and development projects and in generating inputs. And wherever any partnership occurs, when projects fail, the blame goes to local players while the credit goes to the interveners whenever the projects succeed. Either way, interveners benefit, and their hosts lose. What is clearly *stricto sensu* ("in the strict sense."), as argued above, who enacts the liberal peace? Who does liberal peace aim at benefiting or serving between the local and the interveners? Given that liberal peace is an offshoot of neoliberalism, whatever is intended, peace ends up being

built to enable liberal policies to function in conflict and post-conflict nations. Richmond (2009) concurs with the assertion above that liberalism inspires liberal peace that is framed by the state and the market, as it is regulated and directed by the West that uses it to pull strings wherever it is applied or introduced to meet its hidden goals.

Demonstrably, liberal peace has historically been conditional and paternalistic, aimed at promoting and safeguarding the interests of the West as opposed to the interests of the host countries. That is why liberal peacebuilding was used in the DRC but not in Somalia. The logic here is simple, that the DRC has resources that the West needs, while Somalia does not. Although liberal peace purportedly seeks to solve the problem of the so-called poor or developing nations and create sustainable peace, there must be "local solutions to local problems" (Waldorf, 2013: 715). Sustainable peace and security cannot be solely exogenously constructed. Mac Ginty (2010) prescribes hybridisation or intermarriage of local and foreign mechanisms of peacebuilding and development in tackling such problems. This is because many conflicts, principally in Africa, have foreign and local underlying causes, drivers, and actors that need to be tackled synchronously, if not jointly, for liberal peacebuilding to make sense and bring about desired changes for both sides.

Liberal Peace as Anathema Maranatha

Nevertheless, the contradictions and differences in the liberal peace and local mechanisms of peacebuilding can be seen in the fact that the former seeks to establish institutions (Lee, 2011) through Western-tailored democratisation, while the latter seeks to build interpersonal relationships (Lederach, 1997; Mac Ginty, 2010; Mayanja and Mubangizi, 2021). Even when it comes to democratisation, liberal peace leaves a lot to be desired due to the double standards the West applies in its intervention in peacebuilding. Once again, the DRC provides an ideal example. Ever since it gained nominal independence, the DRC's democratically elected government in the 2006, 2011, and 2018 elections are influenced by Western powers'

interests. The government that was democratically elected soon before Independence Day was toppled even before starting to run the country because the late Patrice Lumumba demanded both political and economic independence (Hochschild, 1998; Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2014).

Due to the above reasons, Western mechanisms, amongst others, use force through conditionality attached to whatever intervention they make aimed at creating dependency and reinforcing paternalism for the recipients or victims of the conflict or underdevelopment in which liberal peace intervenes. Where conditions are not met, forces, such as overthrowing noncompliant governments, are applied, as it was in the case of Lumumba.

In essence, the style that liberal peace has employed is messiah-versus-sinner rationale or *anathema* (something or someone that one vehemently dislikes) *Maranatha* (Webber, 2013) or sticks and carrots (Hofmann and Schneckener, 2011). By its circumstantial nature, liberal peace's goal is to keep the West on the top of the game to protect its interests and leverage wherever liberal peace is applied.

Further, the West has always defined liberal peace. Richmond (2012) argues that the West has become a model through which Western-led agency, epistemology, and institutions have attempted to unite the world under a hegemonic system that replicates liberal institutions, norms, political, social, and economic systems, which is exploitation and colonial in nature. Are all interventions based on liberal peace *pro bono* (for the public good) or *cui bono?* (to whom is it a benefit?) Any superimposition on others is, by nature, colonial, and does not serve the interests of those upon whom it is superimposed. If liberal peace remains purely Western, superimposed on others, and unreconstructed, will be viewed and treated as an extension of colonialism and neocolonialism or liberal imperialism (Sabaratnam, 2011). Due to its nature, the major question that needs to be asked and answered here is: For whose interests does liberal peace intervene? Richmond 2009 answers this question that liberal peace essentially:

> Draws heavily on the Western philosophical and political debates that emerged from the writings of Hobbes, Machiavelli, Abbe St Pierre, Kant, Rousseau, Locke, Paine, Penn, Cobden, Mill, Bentham, and Grotius, among others, in the context of cycles of war, diplomacy, state-building, imperialism, and colonialism (p. 559).

Understandably, like any so-called modern concept propounded by the West, liberal peace lacks inputs from non-Western countries or communities, which makes an anomaly itself apart from being a superimposition on others. Sabaratnam (2013) argues that liberal peace, basically, hinges and latches on Eurocentrism and defines it based on the sensibility that is historically, economically, culturally, and politically distinctive in ways that significantly determine the overall character of world politics. In perfecting liberal peace, Africa has, for a long time, been a guinea pig vis-à-vis interventionism (De Oliveira and Verhoeven, 2018) intended to create unnecessary dependency, failures, and the lack of inclusivity in many peacemaking and peacebuilding processes.

Arguably, Africa has always been neglected, even when it comes to addressing its own issues. Instead, foreign solutions are always superimposed on it, and they have rarely worked and likely never will, if liberal peace is not to be overhauled or deconstructed to meet the needs of both players instead of meeting imperialistic interests (Iñiguez de Heredia, 2017). Even where it is involved, Africa either assumes a backseat role or is many a time under the guidance and tutelage of the West. Africa has been treated like a child who has refused to grow up. Knowing that, Africa has kept on repeating the same mistakes simply because of selecting few benefits from the conflict revolving around the control of resources to supply the insatiable wants of Western countries and other emerging powers.

Exclusion of Local Peacebuilders

Practically, liberal peace has often excluded poor countries and local peacemakers in its interventional mechanisms,

which creates an assumption that this is a loss of resources that would help in addressing the problem. When we were conducting research for this book, we faced many hurdles in trying to obtain articles and books about local peacebuilding mechanisms. Why? Perhaps, it is simply because academia, just like other fields, seems to have ignored this rich area for the fear of contradicting liberal peace. Also, this made us assume that ignoring local peacebuilders is what we call peacebuilding colonialism, and it is performed purposely and strategically for the benefits of the West. After all, many academics hardly research on mechanisms that would impinge on their countries' drive to exploit resources and perpetuate wars in Africa.

Further, chances of obtaining funds to conduct such research are paltry. Who today is asking about the billions of dollars from former DRC dictator, Mobutu Sese Seko, robbed and stashed in Western capitals after his death? Nobody wants to know this, provided that such loots help the countries where it is stashed to create jobs and contribute to their economies. As argued above, one of the requirements of liberal peacebuilding is the *democratisation* and *development* of affected countries, two essentials that Africa has never actualised. Can there be any meaningful democracy or democracy without meaningful human rights, amongst which is justice? Can there be democracy and development without integrating local cultures and systems of governance and the management of the processes of peacebuilding, peacemaking, and peacekeeping? These questions are key and need to be addressed collectively and correctly.

So, too, liberal peace has been accused of perpetually exploiting countries and communities facing conflict, especially those revolving around controlling resources (Richmond, 2008a; Krampe, et al., 2021). Due to the nature of liberal peace and its attachment to liberal and the neoliberal diktat (an order or decree imposed by someone in power without popular consent), as noted above, we consider the deconstruction of liberal peace as *sine qua non* (an indispensable and essential action, condition, or ingredient)

to help in peacebuilding and development meritoriously, functionally, and practically by incorporating local peacebuilding / peacemaking / peacekeeping mechanisms through the creation of hybridity for complementing these initiatives. By proposing the deconstruction of liberal peace, we do not condemn, belittle, or deem it as something undesirable or useless.

Our assertion is that liberal peace requires some adjustments and transformations to make it functional. Equally, we do not intend to glorify and romanticise local mechanisms for peacebuilding. Instead, we would like to see peacebuilding reconstructed after being deconstructed to accommodate various peacebuilding and peacemaking mechanisms that have been sidelined for a long time. Such mechanisms need to be given a try to verify if they can effect positive changes or bring desired goals for both interveners and local communities.

We invoke the truth that whoever is involved in peacebuilding in any country or community, must appreciate the contributions of other stakeholders involved, mainly the locals, since they know the history and historicity of a particular conflict more practically than interveners. The same applies to gender, which we shall define in detail in the DRC's case study later. For, when it comes to gender, clearly, the same is the case. Females along with local players are excluded in many peacemaking settings (Furnari et al., 2015; Mayanja, 2018), even though they tend to face disproportionate sufferings compared to other members of society, simply because of their gendered roles.

For example, Wais (2016) cites Somalia, where women were excluded in the peacemaking processes after their country cascaded into turmoil resulting from the long-term lack of a functioning government. Essentially, due to the patriarchal nature of the world superstructure, the exclusion of women in Somalia is the reflection, if not a typical replica, of many African countries, including the DRC as a case study

reflecting on how gender is dealt with in Africa in general. All this happens because of the *tenderisation* of the stakeholders.

Exclusionism and Genderism

Moreover, liberal peace has not fully accommodated gender or feminist theories that seek the change and decolonisation of the architecture of superstructure (Hennessy, 2012), simply because it is basically dominated by patriarchal diktats and theories whose results yield disasters and inequalities that the world has always faced. The exclusion of women is based on socially constructed-gender differentials, necessitated by, inter alia, authority (Holmes and Meyerhoff, 2008), identity (Winterich et al., 2009), and performativity (Butler, 2009) that can be linked to authoritarianism, as it is related to holding negative attitudes towards feminism and feminists, devaluing women's problem-solving skills, and holding misogynist attitudes (van Rees, 2014). Strategically, liberal peace seems to lack "engendered agency" (Richmond, 2010: 684), in that it is militarised and patriarchal in its approaches and settings that are engrained in its superstructure, which seeks to superimpose its diktats on non-Western countries. For example, liberal peace interventionism, policymaking, and peace processes are headed by men in many countries because of the above-mentioned world patriarchal hegemony. This leaves women out and marginalises them altogether, something that denies liberal peace a very vital impetus of dealing with conflict by incorporating all stakeholders.

We postulate, therefore, that if feminist theories and views form a part of liberal peace processes in dealing with conflict and peacebuilding, there are chances of plugging the existing gap that liberal peace created and suffers from. And so doing will likely enrich liberal peace and thereby do away with its generality and superimposed mechanisms and processes wherever it is deployed in resolving conflict or bringing development. Sjoberg (2013) notes that feminist theories fit in with the desire for peacebuilding and bringing development, simply because they theoretically provide not only a missing piece to the war puzzle, but insights in practically and

normatively addressing the war problem in global politics; see also Sturgeon (1997).

In conclusion, since male-dominated governments make many important decisions on human lives, there must be an equilibrium based on gender composition. In striking a balance, therefore, we tend to doubt the politically-hyped-special seats for women, that have recently become a fashion in many so-called third world countries as a means of achieving political equity, equality, and parity that have since remained elusive and unattainable. Interestingly, despite huge gaps in many high positions of power in the West, this requirement has never been applied with the same measure, style, and zeal as it has in the so-called developing nations. The biggest lesson to be learned here is that, if anything, we may argue that this highlight the fact that there is absolute outright inequality in the world's superstructures, led by the UN, and other powerful entities that have an upper hand over the international issues.

As we will prove later, even the UN lags when it comes to gender parity in its upper echelon of power. There is more to it. Tadjbakhsh (2011) recommends that liberal peace needs to be "developed in feminist literature in International Relations and post-structural literature to underline the hypocrisies of power, policies, inequalities (also beyond gender), and material interests, as opposed to rational interests" (p. 7). If liberal peace aims to decisively address power inequalities and power dynamics, as regulated by patriarchal superstructures of the world, it must accommodate and work with other schools of thought. This is what the deconstruction and reconstruction of liberal peace is all about, since almost all violent conflicts the world has seen recently are the results of power struggles, either amongst nations or groups, as they revolve around, inter alia, resources and power.

On the one hand, the conflict in Eastern DRC falls in this category whereby the government seeks to maintain its monopoly on governing the country, which is the legal right for any government shall the citizenry elect and empower it

through acceptable and credible modalities and means. On the other hand, there are warlords who conspire with foreign powers, who also sponsor or want them to rule the country to extract abundant and precious resources with which the country is endowed (Mhango, 2016b, 2018a; Mayanja, 2018). However, when it comes to the patriarchal setting of Congolese politics, many former governments did not come to power through a ballot box and when they vote, electoral fraud has been the norm. Since the colonial era, the Congo's governments are managed by men. Perpetuated misogyny has enabled only men to assume the governance of the state, not only in the DRC, but also in Africa in general.

Conclusion

This chapter has exhaustively the role of the militants and warlords who seek to unseat the government so that they can run the country and control resources. More importantly, we have examined how foreign countries that have turned the DRC into their stomping ground, if not El Dorado or Shangri-La in plundering its resources (Hadani and Schuler, 2013; Arieff, 2014; Ogbuka, 2015). In so doing, all parties to the conflict invite their allies to turn the conflict into an international one. We will address this aspect later by naming and shaming countries that invaded the DRC to plunder its resources without sparing those behind, buying the stolen resources and inciting proxy wars as well. Therefore, the chapter has laid bare everything to allow others to delve deeper into the issues it has unearthed.

Discussion Questions

1. Who practically benefits from liberal peace?
2. How does liberal peace differ from other colonial and neocolonial impositions of core over peripheral states?
3. How can liberal peace create sustainable peace when communities affected by violence are not consulted and their cultures not engaged?

4. Is it not imperative to involve local mechanisms of peacebuilding and players in peacebuilding through the creation of hybridity? What are your suggestions on this?
5. Why are women who are affected by violence often excluded from state governance and peace making?
6. Why are the international actors implicated in plundering the DRC, human rights violations, and for perpetuating violence never called to account?

Chapter III

Ontological Underpinnings of the Conflict

Figure 3:   The UN as the one of the oppressors of the DR the
            Congo (Source: farrelworldcultures.karncity.wikis)

Introduction

The conflict in the DRC, as an extension of underhanded
colonial strategy to perpetually exploit it as a replica of the
entire Africa, traces its roots to two eras, namely right from
the day the colonial powers created it in 1884, and then after
dividing and partitioning Africa. It acts as a typical replica
of what has been ongoing in other African countries though
not with the same magnitude. It was exacerbated on the day
the DRC acquired its independence from Belgium in 1960
(Bragard, 2011; Cole, 2012; Weissman, 2014). Arguably, when
the DRC acquired its independence, it did not enjoy it just like
other African countries did, however, theoretically. The DRC
is one of the African countries that has never enjoyed their

independence, not even for a single year. That is why we can say that it started off on the wrong foot.

Congo Was Destined to Become Chaotic

Right from the beginning, the country had all hallmarks of chaos, especially from the drives by some regions to break away, championed by mineral-rich Katanga, as it was used by the colonisers. As it was for the Tutsis in Rwanda during colonial times, the people of Katanga thought they were exceptional from other Congolese (Bamfo, 2012). Katanga was not alone in harbouring such feelings of superiority.

Azawad in Mali, Biafra in Nigeria, and Casamance in Senegal provide compelling examples in which people of the same countries feel that they are 'special', even though this speciality is artificial, toxic, and colonially cloned. Nevertheless, we cannot solely blame them if we entertain the fact that many African countries were piled together at the Berlin Conference with the intentions of creating perpetual conflict and identity chaos and crises that make such people strange bedfellows in the same country. As for the DRC, such a fragmentation was purposely created and backed by Belgium and the West to destabilise the new government (USAID, 2012). For this strategy to succeed, local elites were set against each other and against the masses wherein the elite's personal interests superseded the common good. Such settings have perpetually made the country ungovernable and underdeveloped. Because of their greed for power, local elites implemented them by or through the divide and rule policy.

The above strategy worked very well after eliminating those opposed to it, as was the case of the assassination of Patrice Lumumba, the first Prime Minister of Congo as he was then known. In this fashion, Belgium offered the independence with one hand and snatched it away with the other, something that made the DRC a colony *encore une fois* (once again). However, there was no direct control by the colonial masters as it was before the country acquired its tragic and short-lived independence (Mhango, 2016d). Belgium made sure that it

destabilised the DRC to keep on enjoying the power it had over the country, even by using proxy means through installing its stooge to run the country, the most notorious being Mobutu.

Basically, this is where the root cause of the conflict lies. Lumumba demanded both political and economic independence and refused to receive orders from the West, including the UN, which in the end, betrayed him (Hintjens and Cruz, 2014). Specifically, Lumumba wanted to become free and be his own man so that he could chaperone his country to the future just like other African countries did at the time. The capitalist imperial West feared that Lumumba would go to the East and therefrom lose their source of precious resources. Due to the immensity of resources, Lumumba as well as the DRC, were caught in the eyes of capitalist and Cold War storms. Lumumba did not live to see or fulfil what he planned for himself and his country altogether after imperialists cleared the way for Mobutu to mismanage the country for over three decades intermittently (Mhango, 2016b). While this happened, none of the liberal peace, neoliberalism or human rights Western advocates surfaced to defend democracy or peace. The country started to cascade down even further than where King Leopold II and the Belgian colonial regime had left it.

Due to installing stooges who mismanaged and plundered the country, the DRC, right from the first day of its independence, became a failed state, and since then, it has gone on cascading down even further and deeper. The promises of goodies democracy have always offered to non-democratic countries evaporated, and tyranny and corruption took over from then, and that is why the DRC has been exploited and robbed ever since. Due to this drive, enhanced by pitting local elites against each other or using them to eliminate each other, as it was in the case of Lumumba, Congo was set to fail. The aura, expectations, euphoria, and hopes that the Congolese had during Independence Day evaporated then. For, there occurred some power struggles amongst local elites that resulted in the mess the DRC has since been in, faced, and suffered from.

Following the instability that ensued and led to the assassination of Lumumba, the country has never enjoyed any peace or meaningful development ever since. Further, Lumumba, who championed socialism, which Belgium, and the US, amongst other Western powers, disliked and regarded as the move that would seriously put their interests at great jeopardy in the DRC (Moore, 2007; see also Powers, 2008). Therefore, Lumumba had to be quickly eliminated to enable the above-mentioned countries and others to keep on reaping the spoils from the DRC. So, the assassination of Lumumba acted as the trigger that saw the DRC falling into chaos and violent conflicts, whose major victims are the Congolese. However, females and children suffer more than any of the rest, as we will indicate herein, under the patriarchal nature of the systems that snatched power from the masses in the DRC and everywhere.

Based on a feminist lens, in this analysis, the West is viewed as superior, and thus, masculine (Ruby and Heine, 2011), while the DRC is viewed as inferior, and thus, feminine. Typically, masculinity goes with power, while femininity goes with powerlessness, according to the socially created and inculcated rationale, however controversial it is. That said, it is possible and logical to link liberal peace and patriarchist drive and diktat.

How Local Elites Fought over Congo

As aforementioned herein, the West decided to use greedy, myopic, and self-seeking local elites to run its show in the DRC. It easily engulfed, destroyed, and vitiated some. There were three major players, namely Lumumba who was democratically elected Prime Minister, Joseph Kasa-Vubu who became President and Moise Tshombe, the founder of *Confédération des Associations Tribales du Katang*a (CONAKAT), who waged the war against Lumumba, throwing him out of the bandwagon-cum-gravy train thereafter (Mhango, 2016b). Tshombe made the situation worse as the author of the demise of Lumumba and the DRC altogether.

Only ten days after independence, backed by his *Gendarmérie Katangaise*, Tshombe declared Katanga's secession (Tshombe, 2013) while Kasa-Vubu played an important role in demanding for independence despite being a tribal chief (Covington-Ward, 2012). The two thought that they would get away with murder, not knowing that the West was propping up Mobutu, who would later outsmart and destroy them once and for all.

Basically, the trio, namely Lumumba, Tshombe and Kasa-Vubu, were the ones who fought for the independence of the DRC. The fourth protagonist, Joseph Mobutu (later Mobutu Sese Seko), was brought in by Lumumba, after appointing him his chief of staff, the opportunity the West used to brainwash him to betray, overthrow, and ultimately kill his boss. Since that tragic death of the first Prime Minister, the DRC has not found any meaningful and all-encompassing peace, let alone prosperity from its immense reserves of minerals and other natural resources. It is from this backdrop that the country has become an attraction to various players, local and foreign. Instead of becoming a blessing, the resources with which the DRC is endowed became a curse, if not a deathtrap, that has haunted this nation since 1885, without counting the impasse of slave trade that robbed it of millions of hard-working people.

King Leopold II

If there is a criminal whose head will never be forgotten for the crimes and sins committed against Africa, is none other than King Leopold II, born Louis Philippe Marie Victor. King Leopold was a blatant, brutal, corrupt, and greedy Belgian King. During the division and partition of Africa in Berlin in 1884, Leopold II outsmarted other colonisers and ended up receiving the then Kongo Kingdom, one of the largest territories in Africa as his private estate, which he later named the Congo Free State (Twain, 2021). Leopold II exploited Congo up until he handed it to Belgium, which colonised it until 1960, when it gained its independence. The Congolese people never enjoyed their

independence due to the complicity and conspiracy against it, as we have already elucidated above.

After the above-mentioned rule and plunder by Leopold II, Western nations in conjunction with local elites, toppled and assassinated Lumumba, and installed a malignant dictator, Mobutu, as the president of the DRC. For over three decades, just like King Leopold II, Mobutu corruptly and venally ran the DRC as his private estate (Okumu and Ikelegbe, 2010), with the backing and protection of the West, as he enabled them to access and plunder Congo's resources. In return, the West provided finances, weapons, other favours, and protection by even flouting or ignoring democratic requirements the West imposes on recalcitrant leaders to force them to comply with its hidden agendas and interests. That is why Mobutu survived in power (1965 to 1997) without being toppled, as it was in the case of his colleagues in many African countries. Mobutu's rule is one of the most clearly known kleptocratic regimes Africa has ever had (Bach, 2011) that fed on the double standards, duplicity, and hypocrisy of liberal policies. President Ronald Reagan praised him as "a voice of good sense and good will", while George H.W. Bush considered him "one of our most valued friends" on the African continent (Hochschild, 1998: 303).

On the contrary, Bechtolsheimer (2012) notes that former US president "Carter was outspoken in his criticism of Mobutu regime's human right transgressions. [But] When the Kinshasa despot appeared threatened, Washington responded in familiar style and rushed to secure the recalcitrant dictator's survival" (p. 23). While shielding Mobutu, Washington was at the same time intimidating other non-compliant rulers or leaders whom it coercively wanted to democratise their countries to *develop.* Although many African countries were exploited, robbed, and ruined, there is perhaps no country that can match the apocalyptic, the economic, political, and social destruction that the DRC suffered since it was established as a nation.

As aforementioned, the conflict at hand goes far back to colonial times, when King Leopold II of Belgium acquired Congo as his personal colony. Prince (2013) maintains that the DRC's troubles started from its birth at the 1885 Berlin Congress that offered it to King Leopold II as a personal fiefdom to exploit and mismanage as he deemed fit. Essentially, the DRC has been under exploitation through various epochs presided over by foreigners and local elites, as it still is up until now. Interestingly, since it was created, the DRC has always been ruled by males because of the international patriarchal superstructure, and the situation has been almost the same all over Africa.

Since Congo gained its independence, as Spiegel et al. (2007) observe, "the DRC has not been at peace since independence from Belgium in 1960" (p. 2188). However, as argued above, gaining independence did not change anything or bring any reprieve to the DRC. Lumumba, who seemed of great promise to the country, was assassinated on 17 January 1961 after refusing to become a straight partner of the West, whom they would use to supervise the plundering of his country as it thereafter happened under Mobutu and the two Kabila.

A few days after independence, "Belgian army officers provoked a mutiny amongst the 24,000 African soldiers in the *Force Publique* and the Belgian government sent troop reinforcements to the Congo" (Adi and Sherwood, 2003: 115). Principally, this was the beginning of a post-colonial-era conflict that has dragged on up until now, since the DRC has a good source of resources that end up in the West. Therefore, there is no need whatsoever to resolve this conflict for the West and the international community at large, given that the West would still acquire supplies from plundering the country. Colonel Mobutu, as he was then, the commander of the *Force Publique,* announced the change of the force, which he renamed the *Armée Nationale Congolaise* (Mhango, 2016d) without any consultation with his boss.

By renaming the national army, Mobutu was asserting his power over the DRC, which he menacingly and fully controlled for 32 years. Essentially, by changing and renaming the *Force Publique*, Mobutu was revolting against his boss, Lumumba, whom he later brutalised and killed. The change of the name of the Army was nothing but a *coup d'état* that alerted Lumumba, who sought external intervention and help, to no avail.

After toppling and carrying out the plot of assassinating Lumumba, Mobutu went ahead appointing himself president in 1965, which officially brought him into the big picture as far as the ruining of the DRC is concerned. This can be regarded as the trust betrayed, in that Lumumba appointed Mobutu, only to end up overthrowing and killing him, not to mention the perfidy by the West and the UN, which failed to interfere to serve him. Ever since, up until Mobutu was dislodged from power in 1997, he enjoyed full support from the West in exchange for minerals and resources stolen from the DRC. Plainly speaking, Mobutu left the DRC completely in the politico-economic intensive care unit (ICU). Sadly, the regimes that took over after him did the same in vandalising the country.

Additionally, these governments were so brittle that they did not maintain peace and order in the country. It is often argued that liberal peace cares only about the interests of the West, the DRC has gone on to cascade down into an unending vicious circle of protracted violent conflict and wars ever since. Ever since, the DRC has been one of the African countries whose resources have never benefited the citizens. And one of the forces behind this criminality is liberal peace, which has totally failed to resolve the conflict.

There is evidence that implicated the US in the assassination of Lumumba. Mwakikagile (2009) notes that President Dwight D. Eisenhower regarded Lumumba as a mad dog that had to be killed. Because of his dislike of Lumumba, Eisenhower ordered the Head of the CIA, Allen Dulles and the CIA Deputy Director of Plans, Richard Bissell, to use poison

to kill Lumumba. This attempted murder failed. That is when Mobutu came to the fore and succeeded to topple and kill Lumumba under the instructions of the US and other Western powers. Another culprit is the then USSR, to which Lumumba turned for aid. Despite knowing Lumumba's fate, the USSR did not help him when he asked it to intervene.

As argued above, since then, up to 1997, the DRC, like how it was a private estate under King Leopold II's oppressive reign, changed hands to become Mobutu's private estate. Thence, Mobutu fleeced and plundered the country under his 34-year misrule supported by the US and other Western powers (Hochschild,1998, Mhango, 2016d; Rodney, 2018). Mobutu created a kleptocratic and clientele regime that prevailed and pushed the then Zaïre, now the DRC, into more poverty, failures, misrule, and tyranny under Mobutu's alliance with the West. If history can be told accurately, the DRC is one of the ignominies from which the West will never disentangle itself or avert any culpability for destroying the country.

Therefore, we can see why the international community, through the application of its liberal peace, has failed to decisively intervene and thereby resolve the conflicts in the DRC. Given the so-called international community is necessarily the West, no one has yet to engage in serious interventions to resolve the conflict in the DRC either, for fear of the West or loss of its interests for the West. It is precisely because of the interests of powerful countries like the US and its allies, which benefit them twofold by supplying weapons to armed groups, in exchange for receiving cheap resources stolen from the DRC (Mhango, 2017a). In fact, the DRC, like the rest of Africa, has long suffered because of its immense resources.

Primarily, the major cause of the conflict is typically the desire and drive to control and extract resources (Perks, 2011) at all costs, even if doing so will incur many sufferings for the people of the DRC. Linnecke (2016) maintains that the desire for mine control and mineral profits have also been

shown to fuel a culture of rape and sexual violence in the DRC. Since the beginning of the armed conflicts in Congo, females have paid dearly in the conflict. Once something becomes a culture, it becomes difficult to destroy, especially when and if we consider the fact that the driving force of the conflict in the DRC hinges on money, resources, greed, and power, without considering the miseries and suffering that they have caused to the general population.

Fallout and Elimination of Laurent Kabila

As noted above, instead of the DRC's resources becoming a blessing, they became a curse that has consumed the country due to conflicts resulting from fighting over the control and extraction of natural resources. After Laurent Kabila overthrew Mobutu, who fled the country in 1997, he named the country the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The country changed hands for the third time in its history. Like King Leopold II and Mobutu, Kabila turned the DRC into his private estate that he exploited as he deemed fit before his regime was cut short after his assassination on 16 January 2001. Marshall (2008) observes that the overthrow of Mobutu led to Kabila, a staunch US ally, becoming the new iron-fisted leader.

The Kabila regime did not bring any reprieve to the country and its people at all. Hopes of beating the odds faded a few days after Kabila took over from Mobutu and proved to be as corrupt as his predecessor was. Kabila was sponsored and supported by foreign countries and troops to invade and take over the DRC, which put him in a bad position, since he had to return the favour. Running the country for Kabila became hard after his backers become a burden to him and the country. Congolese started to voice their opposition, since they thought they were ruled by foreigners who plundered their country.

Kabila's marriage of convenience with his backers did not live long before cracks appeared and forced them to part ways. In 1998, Kabila ordered Burundian, Rwandan, and Ugandan troops to leave the DRC, which was viewed as a betrayal. Such an edict did not augur well with Kabila's war

sponsors. Nevertheless, Kabila stood his ground as he secured alliances with other countries such as Angola and Zimbabwe, amongst others.

After being removed from the DRC, Burundi, Rwanda, and Uganda did not give up on the mission that they envisaged would make them carve up and indulge in the riches the DRC has always offered to the world. As time went by, Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda seized an opportunity of returning to the DRC in another setting for the same hidden motives. Burundi, Rwanda, and Uganda once again retaliated and invaded the DRC. They claimed that they needed to pursue the Hutus and other rebel groups in the DRC that they alleged threatened their security (Reyntjens, 2009; Lay, 2011) without underscoring how they threatened the security of the DRC. Rwanda wanted to hunt down the Hutus, who fled to the DRC when the Hutu-led government in Kigali fell a few days before the commencement of the 1994 genocide that saw a Tutsi-led government assume power (Davenport and Stam, 2009), and therefrom claimed to have stopped the genocide (Schuberth, 2013). However, there is a dispute as to whether the Tutsi-led government ended or started the genocide that occurred after the downing of the presidential jet that killed the two presidents of Burundi and Rwanda, Cyprien Ntaryamira and Juvénal Habyarimana respectively.

Herman and Peterson (2010) maintain that:

> We point out that the investigation into the assassination that was carried out by Michael Hourigan under the auspices of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda found Paul Kagame and the RPF responsible for it, but that this investigation was quashed by ICTR Chief Prosecutor Louise Arbour, on fraudulent grounds, after consulting with U.S. officials (para. 9).

Once again, Kabila's expulsion of Burundi, Rwanda, and Uganda did not bring any reprieve to the country, nor did it transform the status quo. As noted above, after a short time in office, Kabila fell out with his backers, seeking and wanting

to be independent as the head of the state. Just like Lumumba, Kabila was assassinated in office on 16 January 2001.

Kabila's death brought in another ruler, his son, Joseph Kabange Kabila, or Kabila Jr. As far as plundering the DRC is concerned, Kabila Jr.'s rule did not change anything. Due to the US's good ties with Burundi, Rwanda, and Uganda, which are alleged to be behind the assassination of Kabila Sr., chances are, it too, was part of the assassination plan. Antoine Vumilia, who was an intelligence officer in Kabila Sr.'s government, testifies that the US had a hand in his assassination. Vumilia was quoted by *Al Jazeera*, in its documentary Witness (*Al Jazeera*, 2014), saying that the military attaché to the US embassy in Kinshasa fled from of the country the night of Kabila's assassination, by his bodyguard, Rashid Muzele, formerly identified as Rashidi Kasereka (Kahozi, 2016).

Burundi, Rwanda, and Uganda are not only countries alleged to have been behind the toppling of Mobutu or sponsoring warlords in the Eastern DRC, which is endowed with vast resources of value. Equally, the two are also implicated in plundering resources from the DRC. The first UN (2002a) report of experts on the illicit exploitation of resources in the DRC implicates Burundi, Rwanda, and Uganda as key plunderers, and questioned the motive of their involvement in the DRC. The trio has always recanted the allegations.

The DRC not only faces plundering resulting from international conspiracy but also a holocaust (Licata and Klein, 2010; Cooper, 2013; Roth, 2015; Turner, 2007). There are allegations that the trio has been plundering the DRC in its mission to supply the West with the resources. The US, the world leader in fleecing the DRC, does things expressly and legally within and without its jurisdiction. For example, in 1939, it passed the law known as the Strategic and Critical Materials Stock Piling Act, Chapter 190, Enacted June 7 1939, 53 Stat. 811 (hereafter referred to as the Strategic and Critical Materials Stock Piling Act) (United States Government, 1939) that essentially legalises the plundering of Africa, mainly the DRC amongst others (Achzet and Helbig, 2013;

Goe and Gaustad, 2014). Such a move legally allowed the US government to fund some operations that would enhance it to stockpile critical materials without bothering with how they are procured.

Ironically, since the findings above surfaced and circulated, the international community has done little or even nothing to bring the culprits to justice for their crimes allegedly committed in the DRC. Surprisingly, despite being squarely implicated in plundering and creating mayhem in the DRC, Burundi, Rwanda, and Uganda are at the forefront in contributing peacekeeping forces to Somalia and Sudan (Williams, 2009). One may wonder how such countries care about peace in the above-mentioned countries while they are behind the destabilisation of the DRC. Is it a ploy to create plundering avenues in the said countries, to find employment for their militaries or for the plundering nations to appear as contributors to peace across the continent?

Charity begins at home. Why do countries alleged to invade and rob the DRC care about Darfur and Somalia but not about their neighbouring DRC? Practically, the stability / instability of the said countries is intrinsically interconnected to the DRC and other countries in the region. Even the East African Community (EAC) to which the DRC and alleged invaders belong, has never pragmatically and realistically addressed the issue due to the hypocrisy existent in the EAC and for fear of disturbing the West, which would endanger their security.

As noted above, the decision to sponsor warlords was reached after the trio that supported and backed Kabila to topple Mobutu fell out with him. Ray (2000) points out that "by July, 1998, Kabila realised that the Congolese people would not support the excesses of the Rwandan 'foreigners' throughout their government. Kabila also recognised the extent to which he had become a puppet of his Tutsi 'allies'" (p. 1).

The Tutsis' intention of wanting to use Kabila to rob his country shows their gender nature. That is, the Tutsi, as we

will indicate later, regard non-Tutsi to be inferior (Heijden, 2010; Mhango, 2016b), however wrong this perception might be (Banyanga and Björkqvist, 2017; Zadi, 2021). So too, gender elements can be seen in the business involving the resources plundered from the Eastern DRC.

Time and again, the international community seems to be oblivious of this factor it truly knows but does not address and arrest altogether. We argue that the DRC does not pose any danger to the interests of the powerful countries that backed Burundi, Rwanda, and Uganda into the DRC. An ideal example can be drawn from piracy in the Indian Ocean that Somali pirates used to commit after illegal foreign fishers started robbing their country (Etzioni, 2010; Hutchins, 2011), and dumping toxic water in Somali waters (Marchal, 2011). Given that most of the victims were either powerful countries or companies from these countries, piracy was fought tooth and nail up until it became history, even though this phenomenon started more recently than the conflict in the DRC.

Geopolitically, Somalia seems to be more important than the DRC, and that is why the US and its allies have always been busy ensuring that the conflict in Somalia does not destabilise the Horn of Africa. That is because its proximity to seafaring routes to Africa and the Americas is the economic lifeline for many powerful countries. As argued above, Somalia has no resources, even though it has geographical significance. That is why, before piracy started, the West did not care about its plight.

Who Is Arming the Militias?

Thus far, the major question we need to ask, and correctly answer is: Who is arming the militants in the DRC? The report by the HRW (2003) cited in Bourne and Berkol (2006) answers the question, disclosing that Uganda is one of those arming the militants in the DRC. Further, the report notes that Uganda paid the Croatian state agency responsible for arms transfers, Agencija Alan, a little more than US$1 million, for manufacturing the technology of 40 mm RBG-6 grenades.

Paradoxically, the same Uganda was involved indirectly in the conflict in the DRC by supporting non-state armed groups. Again, despite such vivid evidence, the international community has maintained silence and turned a blind eye to this criminality.

Moreover, (Amnesty International, 2012) implicated China, Egypt, France, South Africa, Ukraine, and the US as the major suppliers of weapons to the groups and parties fighting in the DRC. Obviously, weapon industries and resource exploitation businesses are more important for the international community than human rights and the well-being of the Congolese. However, Jimmy Carter, former US president, warned that there was no way America could be both the world's leading champion of peace and the world's leading supplier of the weapons of war (American Foreign Relations, 2001).

Basically, if we accentuate the fact that the West developed human rights to serve emerging modern markets and the modern state, both of which threaten human dignity, there is no way the same can contradict themselves. Nevertheless, the conflict in the DRC serves the same purposes and produces the same results, namely ignoring and threatening human dignity. This exposes and explains how liberal policies in Africa lack the liberality it applies in the West vis-à-vis human rights. We strongly maintain that there must be a level ground in applying and protecting human dignity and human rights globally.

After all, those suffering from the conflicts are Africans, and mainly women and girls who have no equal rights with men under a world patriarchal-cum-capitalist system. That is why human rights have not taken shape in the DRC and Africa in general as they have been in the West. Does the failure of liberal peace in the DRC concerning the enjoyment and protection of human rights buy into the assertion that human rights are nonsense on stilts? (Langley, 2020) That is why women have suffered more consequences than men in the conflict in the DRC. Therefore, a failure to recognise, protect,

and uphold human rights means that liberal peace is often equated by its recipients with the colonialism, imperialism, or hegemony (Richmond, 2008b). This seems to be practically true in the DRC and as far as a gender lens is concerned.

Importantly, owing to the capitalist and patriarchal system that created and runs the human rights structure, when the threatened human is a woman or a person from what the West derogatively refer to as the developing nations. Above all, for a black person, especially a female, it becomes even worse than any person can imagine. In 2003, the US lifted a national embargo on Rwanda, despite continuing evidence of arms trafficking to rebel groups in the DRC (Cooper, 2006). There are allegations that Rwanda does the bidding and supply of the resources stolen from the DRC, thus remaining in the good books of the West.

In April of 2001, congresswoman Cynthia McKinney, held a hearing on Western covert involvement in the plundering of Africa. McKinney stated that "at the heart of Africa's suffering is the West's, and most notably the United States' desire to access Africa's diamonds, oil, natural gas, and other precious resources" (The Final Call, 2001: 3). The US authorities did not dispute or recant this truth, told by one of their own. So, from here we can start looking at how the international community - led by the West - interfered in the DRC. Essentially, the situation in the DRC vis-à-vis the West can be summed up in the words of Gegout (2009), who notes that "since its independence in 1960, the principal external actors in the history of the DRC were the 'troika' of Belgium, France, and the United States" (p. 232), which have been ongoing up until now.

Discussion Questions

1. Why peacemaking, peacebuilding, and peacekeeping in the DRC do not address colonialism, coloniality, and the mess it created?

2. Do you agree or disagree with the conclusion that the failure to solve the conflict in the DRC is the failure of liberal peace?
3. Can the DRC practically and truly attain sustainable peace when western powers, along with China and Russia are violently competing to control Congo's natural resource wealth?
4. Why do Western nations tout democracy as the best form of government, yet they do not hesitate in massacring leaders who threaten their imperialist and capitalist interests? Can the world have peace without addressing the hypocrisy of western powers?

Chapter IV

Addressing Gender Issues Locally and Internationally

Introduction

Because of colonialism and globalism, the major forces driving liberal peace, no country is independent of another or others anymore. This means that, intentionally or unintentionally, all countries in the world are interconnected and interdependent either by choice or by necessity. So, whatever happens in one part of the world is likely to affect the whole world in different and varying magnitudes, manners, and ways. Due to this situation, the West has employed liberal peace to navigate this interconnectedness-cum-interdependency for its benefits even if doing so endangers the rights of others, as it is in the case of the DRC.

Violence and Economic Interests

Many of those who plunder the DRC seek to control and extract resources needed for global technological advancement. This brings the entire world into the conflict, since much of the materials extracted from the DRC play a very crucial role in consumer items such as the cell phones and other modern technological items. Due to global interdependence, the exploitation of women in particular, is connected to resource extraction, climate change, economic growth and development in core states, and underdevelopment, poverty, and violence in periphery nations such as the DRC. For example, a mobile or cell phone factory owner in the US, Japan or China outsources for raw materials from the DRC, while the cell phone customer in remote Togo purchases a cell phone from China, Singapore, or South Korea. Equally, the Internet subscriber in Tasmania depends on Google or Yahoo to obtain services. This is how the

globe is interconnected and interdependent although the West still monopolises the market.

Global Conspiracy against the DRC

Apart from materials and services, one of the things that connects the world is liberal peace, as the West espouses it to fasten its hegemonic drive on others in its search for resources and leverage. One of the features on liberal peace's world interconnection revolves around extractivism. Here is where the DRC's minerals, which liberal peace also uses, connect the world. It is from this milieu, therefore, that the case in point interweaves four elements, namely, liberal peace, conflict, gender, and peacemaking in one discourse. Additionally, alongside elements, there are other elements, namely, coloniality, tenderisations, and resources.

Nonetheless, this *quadrifidi* (split into four parts) does not mean that other elements such as corruption, coloniality, greed, money, politics power, and resources are excluded. When it comes to liberal peace, to suitably address gender issues, conflict, peacemaking, and even development, it requires incorporating gender almost in everything that has to do with power and money for the struggle for greater gender equality. And *postulationem* (requirement) must apply at all levels of peacekeeping, peacemaking, peacebuilding, and post-conflict reconstruction to practically be achieved in the world (Willet, 2010). This equality is naturally organic for all human beings.

Significantly, therefore, gender discrimination is nothing females in the DRC and Africa *at large* can continue enduring while the international community keeps on conspiring against them, simply because doing so helps it to secure a resource supply. Instead, the international community needs to seriously fight gender discrimination and exploitation. The international community needs to effectively bring about parity and do justice that allows their inputs to be accommodated in the making and the running of the affairs of the state.

It is unacceptable for the bigger chunk of the worldwide population to be excluded from the process of governing the affairs of the states. As for the DRC, the situation is dire, as we will see later. Men, who are the planners of war, monopolise peacemaking processes (Whitman, 2006). Yet, women are the majority amongst the victims of wars and armed conflicts in the DRC.

How can men who orchestrate wars and armed conflicts be trusted with peacemaking and peacebuilding processes? As Enloe (2000) questions, "to what extent is the status of a local woman, any woman, in the postwar setting, defined by influential decision-makers chiefly in terms of what they were during the recent wars?" (p. 29). Effective and sustainable peacebuilding and reconstruction processes cannot continue to be a men's club without the contribution of women. Practically, women are the major victims and survivors of war, compared to men, who are in this equation, a part of the force behind the destruction of the country. And, indeed, this is the very same situation in many African countries, where women are confined to the private space, while men unimpededly occupy both private and public spaces.

However, women remain robust, keep protesting, and have refused to be silenced when it comes to peace. According to Armstrong (2013), "over the long sweep of history, women have been and will be a pacifying force" (p. 7). Women are a serious force to reckon with because they are a part of the world that lags in the decline of violence, which, as well, lags in the empowerment of women. This highlights the agency and centrality of empowering women so that they can equally contribute to peacemaking and peacebuilding, resolving conflict, participating, and planning for development. Every strategy applied should be based on gender balance and gender mainstreaming in their countries, particularly in the DRC and the world in general.

For example, in 2003, women in Liberia were protagonists in ending the Second Liberian Civil War. They courageously and unwaveringly surrounded the building in

which men were endlessly bickeringly negotiating for peace. By so doing, they prevented all men from leaving the venue until there was a peace accord, which they actualised (Ouellet, 2013). It is counterproductive and does not make sense for a large section of the world population to be left out in the peacebuilding, peacemaking, and development processes, while, in some countries like the DRC, it suffers more from the conflict.

Apart from being the very victims and survivors of violent conflict, women have capabilities and inputs in dealing with peace, security, and development problems whether they are affected directly or indirectly. Their experiences, particularly when it comes to what they are worth, are very important. They have a unique female understanding and experience of peace and violence. This is an important matter to incorporate and address, principally where there is GBV, including human trafficking, prostitution, rape, sexual violence, poverty, illiteracy, and exclusion, which are rife, as with the DRC case.

This chapter has explored international discourses on gender. It has exposed the weakness of liberal peace in peacebuilding, peacekeeping, and peacemaking, with specificity in the DRC as Africa's typical replica. One of the weaknesses is that global instruments on gender equality, inclusion, and mainstreaming continue to remain rhetoric, especially for women in natural resources-based war and armed conflict zones like the DRC. The liberal peace approach and the entire international community need to drastically and practically change and thereby incorporate women's inputs as was in Liberia above.

Contemporary capitalist political and economic structures focused on profit and not on the dignity and well-being of people, wherein the planet has exacerbated the commodification of the female body. The chapter has successfully examined and exhausted gender issues in the DRC, where resource exploitation and wars brutalise the female body. Even children as young as six months are not

spared. In the DRC, sexual violence is not only a weapon of war (Eriksson Baaz and Stern, 2013) but a tool and a weapon of capitalism.

The West needs to come forth and address these quandaries resulting from gender exploitation, gender objectification, and gender degradation. Women in the DRC and Africa deserve to be treated like their counterparts in the West and elsewhere. More importantly, peace in the DRC means peace in the entire region and the continent of Africa.

The Gendered Global Frontiers and Testimonies

I (Evelyn) grew up listening to my mother's complaints about how women were treated unjustly in her work environment. Although gentle and kind, she was always disgruntled by how women were never promoted in her various works and in the local government, positions she held in view of changing the systems of oppression. Talking to her male colleagues, she discovered that they were oblivious about the structural and cultural injustices against women. She always thought that such glaring injustices existed only in Africa, until she went for an international conference in 1974 and discovered that even fellow educators from the so-called "first world" or "developed nations" were confronted with similar challenges.

In 2015, as I was going through her books. I discovered the notes she wrote during that conference. I was struck by two quotes in her notes. The first is Eleanor Roosevelt's quote: "Too often the great decisions originated and given form in bodies made up wholly of men, or so completely dominated by them that whatever of special value women have to offer is shunted aside without expression" (Rimmer, 2017, p. 142).

The second quote is from Simone de Beauvoir (2016), who notes that "representation of the world, like the world itself, is the work of men; they describe it from their own point of view, which they confuse with absolute truth" (p. 143). As we write this book, what has changed around women's predicament from 1974 when my mother attended the conference? We still live in a world that pays lip service

to a genuine liberation of women. It is a patriarchy world monopolised by males such as diplomats, heads of state, army commanders, CEOS, and peacebuilders.

As of August 2024, out of the 195 countries in the world, only 24 have female heads of state (Presidents or Prime Ministers), out of which only two Presidents and three Prime Ministers are in Africa, namely Presidents Samia Suluhu Hassan (Tanzania) and Sahle-Work Zewde (Ethiopia). Prime ministers include Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila (Namibia), Victoire Sidémého Dzidudu Dogbé Tomegah (Togo), and Robinah Nabbanja (Uganda). Masculine underpinnings of politics, economics, peace, and security have contributed to conventional discourses that privilege men's power, experiences, knowledge, and perspectives on issues around global peace. There is a disturbing silence and invisibility around gendered injustices. Peterson (1997) writes that:

> Gender is conventionally invisible because the longue durée of masculinism obscures the power required to institutionalise, internalize, and reproduce gender hierarchy and its associated oppressions. In this sense, gender is hard to see because it is so taken for granted. But gender also resists visibility and critique due to its pervasiveness and our personal investments: it is not only 'out there' structuring activities and institutions, and 'in our heads' structuring discourse and ideologies; itis also 'in here'—in our hearts and bodies—structuring our intimate desires, our sexuality, our self-esteem, and our dreams. As a consequence, our investments in gendered selves fuel heroic and self-sacrificing as well as despotic and self-serving actions. In this sense, gender is hard to see and critique because it orders 'everything' and disrupting that order feels threatening- not only at the 'level' of institutions and global relations but also in relation to the most intimate and deeply etched beliefs/experiences of personal (but relentlessly gendered) identity. Yet much we are uncomfortable with challenges to gender ordering; we are in the midst of them. Failure to acknowledge and

address these challenges both impairs our understanding of the world(s) we live in and sustains relations of domination (p. 199).

Women's experiences, knowledge, and contributions have been relegated to the margins because politics, economics, and power are simply men's clubs. The UN, that touts the rhetoric of women's emancipation and equality, has never been led by a woman. Tickner (1993) argues that:

> Not until international politics is an arena that values the lived experiences of us all can we truly envisage a more comprehensive and egalitarian approach that, it is to be hoped, could lead to a more peaceful world. Because gender hierarchies have contributed to the perpetuation of global insecurities, all those concerned with international affairs-- men and women alike-- should also be concerned with understanding and overcoming their effects (p. 2).

Contemporary ideologies of women's rights, women's struggle for peace and equality, and more recently, the 'Me Too' movement were preceded by the 1960s women's liberation movement (WLM). Feminists questioned the validity of cultural, political, economic, and legal patriarchy that relegates women to the kitchen and the bedroom. Although the UN's Commission on the Status of Women was founded in 1947, women's predicament has changed little. During the UN's Decade for Women (UNDW, 1975 to 1985) United Nations, 1977), three UN conferences were held in Mexico City, Copenhagen, and Nairobi to promote equality of rights and opportunities for women. During the UNDW, women's issues became central to global politics and economics. The key themes were equality, development, and peace, and the subthemes included education, health, violence against women, land ownership, and employment.

The conferences on women were aimed at promoting dialogue amongst women to understand women's issues. Tension characterised the UNDW (Morgan, 1996). Women from the capitalist US considered themselves advanced above

those from the socialist Soviet Union, while women from the Eastern Bloc noted the need to address the systemic causes of women's marginalisation (Ghodsee, 2010). Women from the Soviet Union asserted that women's issues were inextricably linked to their political and economic daily realities. Ghodsee (2010) notes that "not only from patriarchy or systemic inequalities between men and women, but from exploitation, imperialism, colonialism, violence and warfare waged for the sake of private or national wealth accumulation" (p. 4).

Women from the Eastern Bloc underscored the impasse of the capitalist scramble for resources and free market capitalism as catalysts for poverty and injustice. More than three decades after the UNDW, the issues facing women remain unchanged. Politics remains a man's world, and important national and global decisions are made by men.

The UN has a slew of resolutions on gender equality and on women's involvement in peace and security, believed to guide governments and global policies, but as we will discover in this book, the reality remains disappointing. The resolutions include: 1). The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) adopted on 18 December 1979 and entered into force in September 1981 (United Nations, 1979). In the preamble, the convention recognises that "extensive discrimination against women continues to exist" (Rehof, 2021: 16). 2) The 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing led to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (United Nations, 1995) on 12 critical issues around the girl-child, women, and poverty. It also centred on the economy, health, education and training, violence against women, women in armed conflicts, women in power, and decision-making, institutional mechanisms to build women's capacity, women's human rights, women and the media and women and the environment and, 3) Every year since 1996, the UN Commission on the Status of Women develops priority themes and recommendations for

implementation at the international, regional, national, and local levels.[1]

The UN Security Council Resolution 1325 of 2002 (United Nations, 2002b) acknowledges how women and girls are impacted by wars and armed conflicts and the critical role women can play in peacebuilding and security to achieve sustainable peace. The acknowledgement results from women's efforts for peace and security in families, communities, national governments, civil society, and international organisations. Yet, for many women, nothing has changed. They are continuously excluded from participating in peace processes. UNSC Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 is the first UN Security Council (UNSC) document that recognises the impact of armed conflicts on women and obliges warring parties to respect the international laws (such as the 1949 Geneva Convention, and the 1977 Additional Protocols international law).

Also included is the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (United Nations, 1951), the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees (United Nations, 1967), and the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women United Nations, 1979). By preventing the violations of women's rights and to protect girls and women from sexual and gender-based violence, including rape, other forms of sexual abuse and violence in armed conflicts (Article #10). The UNSCR invites governments to support women's participation in peace negotiations and in post-conflict reconstruction. Based on the DRC's case, sexual violence, particularly rape, remains prevalent in armed conflicts. The UNSC (2018) notes how sexual armed conflicts and military operations intensified, leading to increased sexual violence. Peacekeepers in the DRC, Mali, the Central African Republic (CAR) and South Sudan are implicated in the spike in rape cases, yet the UN has failed to stem rape from peacekeeping in Africa.

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1   See UN women https://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/outcomes

Like the UN, Africa has instruments for promoting women's rights. The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' rights on the rights of women in Africa (AU, 2003), the African Union (AU) Gender Policy (AU, 2009), and the AU Strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: 2018-2028 (AU, 2019). African leaders dedicated the 24th African Union summit to the theme "Year of women's empowerment and development towards Africa's Agenda 2063." Leaders also committed themselves to the Convention on the CEDAW (UN, 1979); the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPFA) (UN, 1995); and to regional instruments, including the protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women, and the African Union Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality. Women know that they are excluded and are demanding their political and civil rights to stop all forms of violence against them, to participate in decision-making and nation-building. Why do those in power not listen?

Who is More Peaceful – Women or Men?

Whether women are a pacifying force all depends on how one looks at the issue. This section explores gender peaceability and violence. Francis Fukuyama (1998) published a provocative paper 'Women and the evolution of world politics' in the famous US journal, *Foreign Affairs.* Given Fukuyama (1998)'s magnum opus (literature that is regarded as the most important or best work that an artist, composer, or writer has produced) in political theory and political economy, the article was widely read across the globe. He used a sociobiological lens to argue that if developed nations were ruled by women, they would be more peaceful, which is very hard to prove, given that not many women have been entrusted with leadership positions as heads of state. Fukuyama (1998) analyses the violent behaviours of groups of chimpanzees, one in a Dutch zoo and the other in Tanzania, to claim that a "feminised world" ruled by women would be more peaceful than one ruled by men.

Nevertheless, Fukuyama (1998) argues that women are "incapable" of entering politics, which has always been "male friendly." Tickner (1999) critiques Fukuyama (1998)'s argument as "deeply conservative" with the repercussion of isolating women from politics, given that "preferred futures are ones in which both women and men work together to reduce unequal social structures, including hierarchical gender structures, which prevents the achievement of real security and social justice" (p. 3).

Charlesworth (2008) maintains that we need to be more cautious about invoking the argument that women have a particular ''affinity'' with peace. Doing so will obviate the generalisation and gender condemnation. Similarly, it will forfend ignoring the underlying factors that force a person in place of power to reach a certain decision that can be construed or misconstrued as peaceful or otherwise. We argue that the peaceability or otherwise of a person mostly depends on the problem at hand and the policies such a person is charged with and the environment and times such a person is operating in. For example, we do not expect a female President of the US to just act outside of the laid-down policies of the country. However, one can influence the policies the same way that the policies can influence them, since the duo depend on each other as far as making decisions is concerned.

Regarding the question of the peacefulness between females and males, it is not easy to decide. Kouvo and Levine (2008) share the same insights with Charlesworth (2008), since they do not think women are naturally more peaceful than men and vice versa. The argument is that they must circumstantially learn to be peaceful, just like men do. However, women are in situations where they develop their peaceable capabilities, such as childbearing. This is different from the essentialist feminists (Weber, 2006), who maintain the peacefulness of women simply because war affects feminine nonviolent ideals; see also Ostrowska (2015).

We argue that women are likely to be more peaceful due to their nature as life-bearers, the role they are assigned

by the patriarchal system, not to mention how they cope with systems that have exploited them for centuries, without starting violent armed conflicts as the means of emancipating themselves and other victims.

Often, women fight for their rights peacefully vis-à-vis patriarchal control of almost all societal processes. Sundaresan et al. (2007) argue that females have adapted diverse behavioural strategies in reducing their exposure to male aggression and dominance. Whether women are more peaceful than men or not is subject to dialogue. Again, without empowering women so that they can assume power and show their perspicacity as far as peace and peacefulness are concerned, how will we know?

Due to the longue durée (long period of time) of the lack of gender balance, parity, and women empowerment in the world superstructure, this book uses the conflict in the DRC as a case study and a replica of what has been ongoing in Africa and elsewhere for a long time. The aim is to address some essentialised anomalies and other underlying gender issues found in liberal peace. More importantly, the book interrogates liberal peace and its ways of working apropos intervening in conflict in non-Western countries. However, despite its patriarchal hegemony, we cannot accurately say that liberal peace has totally failed as an experiment, which humans in the West invented and defined. Although some benefits exist, such as feminist debates and the UN resolutions to address gender parities, they are not satisfactory. We cannot dismiss the power that countries espousing liberal peace have in fermenting, fuelling, or stopping conflict, should they put their interests aside.

Regarding gender behaviour towards how to deal with conflict, wargame theory applies. The findings therefrom are stunning, since they show that males are more overconfident when it comes to starting a conflict than females are. Johnson et al. (2006) posit that overconfidence and attacks are more pronounced and settled amongst males than females. A simple example can be drawn from family violence. Males are likely

to dominate due to the patriarchal system that they live in as a motivator.

Even a simple assumption that males own females can show us how peacefulness in females and males differ in many issues and manners. Again, do females not own males at the very crucial stages of their lives, namely, prenatal, and postnatal when babies need the mother's attention and sustenance? Are there any precarious situations and times when a person is completely dependent and defenceless like these? Why are such building blocks and roles that females create and proved are ignored? This sends us to how to deal with the conflict realistically. So, too, the ways and manners of dealing with conflict are different between females and males, all depending on the nature of the environment, nature, and size of the problem.

In many African societies and cultures, it is a common practice for a man to beat his wife, while the truth is the opposite when the roles are reversed, or when a wife becomes a perpetrator. Whenever a woman beats her husband, it becomes a big and sensational story of spinelessness. A man beaten by his wife is considered weak, and he is like a woman, which some would say is based on this performative role. Ironically, the wife who beats her husband is not viewed as strong as man. Instead, she is cursed for breaking the norms. She is seen as a danger and is unfit to society.

Brutalising and demonising women is not limited to Africa. Archer (2006) notes that historical records show that in Britain and northern Europe, there existed husband beating. Whenever husband beating occurred, society ritually ridiculed and shamed the victims. However, there were no such rituals designed to shame and ridicule husbands who beat their wives, simply because it was considered a normal and noble thing to do for any husband. Hines et al. (2007) argue that men misuse the power they have in their relationships because they have been socialised to believe they have the right to control women, even though violent means without necessarily feeling any guilt or shame.

Additionally, one can see the culture of violence and the tendency of dominance amongst girls and boys across the board. When I (Nkwazi) was in primary school, whenever it happened that a girl beat a boy, it was viewed as a lack of discipline for the girl; also a shameful thing to do since the females are supposed to be inactive and subordinate before males in this culture of violence, and this was a general assumption in our society because "while boys are disciplined to promote working class masculinity, girls are disciplined to promote normative femininity and contained heterosexuality" (Henriksen, 2018: 440). The victim would be laughed at and scoffed at, whereas when a boy beat a girl, it was taken as a normal practice that revolves around the assertion and exercise of his natural power.

On the contrary, when a boy beat a girl, they said he disciplined her, and it was a good thing to do. One can see this on the streets, where winners are called cockerels but not hens. This shows us who might be more peaceful or violent than another.

Although the above practices tend to occur consciously or unconsciously in our daily lives, they are the stumbling blocks for gender emancipation. They reinforce brutality, discrimination, and gender exploitation that are endemic and systemic even in so-called modern societies, mainly the Western, as the case in Britain shows, even though it was many years ago. Naturally, all societies have good and bad things and that is what humanity is all about. The same applies to gender regarding peaceability and violent nature.

The difference between female and males applies also to peacebuilding and agency in decision-making. Richmond (2012) notes that "there has been a long-standing discussion of other dynamics of agency, including class, inequality, neopatrimonialism, gender, and socio-economic issues which form the basis of local agency for peacebuilding, in both African and Central or South American settings" (p. 3).

In the DRC, gender exclusion and the culture of violence results from patriarchal hegemony which has remained

unchanged ever since the country gained its independence in 1960. Although patriarchy has existed since time immemorial, at independence, there was an assumption that gaining independence would change women's predicament for the better. Other African countries have reinforced gender parity in decision-making. Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda have substantial legal quotas of female inclusion in decision-making bodies such as parliament and the judiciary.

If the DRC would not have been engrossed in conflict, maybe the situation would have been different regarding gender parity and other injustices that women and citizens face in the country for many years since gaining their independence. The DRC has one of the best laws, including the constitution that underscores women inclusion and protection (Freedman, 2016a). However, their implementation is wanting and poor. Casimiro et al. (2009), cited by Htun and Weldon (2010), note that "in Africa, policies promoting women's equality in the public sphere of state and market have been easier to achieve than those concerning women's rights in the private sphere of home and family" (Htun and Weldon (2010: 213). Essentially, such a shift needs to be incorporated in public and private spheres to allow non-politician women to come forth and address their concerns on how to address GBV and rape, which top up the general gender exploitation, especially in countries facing violent conflicts like the DRC.

Discussion Questions

1. How is greed and selfishness reinforcing women exploitation?
2. Does granting political position to a few women transform women's predicament?
3. Why have global, regional, and international instruments and norms on empowering women and stopping GBV not succeeded in the DRC? For example, the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was adopted in 1979 and Congo is a signatory. At the African Union level, the Maputo Protocol

was adopted in 2003 when the DRC was grappling with
GBV after the second Congo war.

4. We know that soldiers and humanitarian workers from
the Global North have also sexually violated women. What
is your opinion on making positive masculinity education
mandatory in the DRC and the world over?

Chapter V

Rape, Women's Bodies
versus Resources

Introduction

Rape is a big threat and problem to women and children in the DRC and elsewhere, especially in conflict-laden areas. Nevertheless, the conflict in the DRC shows that for liberal peace, resources are better than humans, particularly girls and women. This does not mean that the DRC is alone in this gender quagmire. Many brutalities and violence have taken place in the DRC unabatedly as the world watch. In the interview one of the authors of this book conducted, Nambuso Mwenga, one of the victims, had this to say:

> When they rape us, the soldiers say that it is because we are women. Our vaginas are tortured and mutilated with sticks, knives, broken bottles, and gun barrels. I have friends whose breasts, clitorises, and vaginal lips were cut off and others were raped and died. ...Our suffering is not limited to war situations. Many women are beaten in the homes, work very hard and have no treatment when they are sick. When the husband beats you, you have nowhere to report .... The man is always superior to the woman.... Girls are denied education because marriage does not require a woman with a diploma: see also Carlsen (2009).

Further, Nambuso says:

> When I was raped in front of my husband and children, he left the home and I remained alone with five children. To feed them, I work as a porter in the mine. I work hard and at times I am not paid.... Paying a woman for her work is conditioned by sleeping with the man who pays you. ...We

are treated worse than animals. There is no place where a woman has peace. [2]

The anecdote above explicates some of the deplorable conditions and violence that women in Eastern DRC experience, considering the persistent abuses and stereotypes with respect to women's dignity, rights and roles in society and the idea of unchallenged male superiority. Prevalent global storylines about the plight of women in the DRC underscore war sexual violence and neglect other forms of violence and human rights violations that women endure daily. Violence against women is prevalent in the post-colonial Congo and is part of the colonial legacy. There is a phallic relationship between violence, rape and power that started in the colonial regime and is continued to the present day (Chiwengo, 2014). If there was respect for women in the colonial state, it would be passed on to the post-colonial government.

If there was respect for women's dignity prior to the DRC's wars, abuses during the wars and prevalent armed conflicts would not have occurred. If they occurred, a pro-women state would bring the culprits to justice. Instead, women's bodies are the battle grounds and inscriptions of male state domination. Further, Chiwengo (2014) notes that:

> "Nowhere else is the colonial violence that "traumatises, disorients and demoralizes the Congolese nation" that is "continuously devised to cover the looting, the massacres, and the depopulation of territories and to promote economic, political and ethical interests of certain multinational corporations and /or nation states... is more forcefully inscribed than on the body of the female" who also represents the Congo state (p. 92).

This section continues to explore women's conditions in the colonial, pre- and post-colonial periods to elucidate the interconnection and differences of governments towards women.

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2   Author's interview with Nambuso, Mwenga, November 2015

Colonialism and Women in the DRC

Women's subjugation and disempowerment prevalent in the 'modern'[3] DRC state dates to colonialism. In the DRC, as it is elsewhere in the world, Western education "provides cognitive skills and indoctrination" (Yates, 2019: 127) necessary for participating in the modern political and economic systems. However, when the then Congo gained 'nominal' independence in 1960, women were neither amongst university or postsecondary students, nor amongst the few graduates who were engaged in state administration. The first Congolese woman to receive a high school diploma was Sophie Kanza, the daughter of the then mayor of Leopoldville, when she graduated from *Lycee du Sacre Cour* in June 1961. The Belgian colonial system introduced education and Christianity that stratified gender differences and roles. The missionaries taught that "all authority comes from God through the father" (Yates, 2019: 130).

Female missionaries taught girls how to become moral, obedient, gentle, passive, and humble Christian wives and not politicians or businesspeople. Essentially, the education that Congolese women received conditioned them and thereby confined them to the private sphere, which needs to change. The Christian wife and mother model emulated the European nuclear family, which is totally different from the African large families and kinships (Bouwer, 2010). The mother was the pillar of her Christian family, who practiced agriculture, cooked, produced, and reared many children, since birth control was against the biblical teaching in Genesis (2: 28) that commands that "be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth" (Pardee, 2013: 2). In line with Western conservatism, European women taught in elementary schools, while secondary and university education as well as decision-making in the church and the state was a boys' club.

The education curriculum for girls "was more meager than the boys" (Yates, 2019: 134). While Catholic boys converts

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3   Modern is used to differentiate the DRC state from the pre-colonial states.

learnt the three Rs, namely, reading, writing, and arithmetic, similar education was considered dangerous for girls. The colonisers asserted that "to learn to read and write is usual for all our boys. But the majority of our female savages have none of it and it reported even that certain ones, who have learned to read, neglect the care of their homes" (Yates, 2019: 134). For the Protestants, literacy for girls was for enabling them to read the Bible and not a preparation for employment or gaining literary skills for their well-being. The assumption and cardinal practice were that the man is the head of the family or paterfamilias (Keown, 2016), therefore, he would cater for it in everything including knowledge and well-being, which is false and purely sexual discrimination.

Another differentiating education feature for boys and girls in the DRC was the Education Act of 1890, which emphasised French as the mode of instruction (Yates, 2019). Catholic schools for boys observed the Act, while in girls' schools French was not taught (Yates, 2019). Girls' education was limited to religion, domestic science, and teacher training, while for boys, in addition to the three Rs, they were prepared for artisan, military, nursing, clerical, teaching, and religious careers because:

> Men belonged in fields, the shop, the pulpit, and the marketplace, while women belonged in the home as good Christian wives and mothers. Men in limited numbers were schooled to enter the army, the colonial administration, trading firms, the railway, and the missionary enterprise; women who venture outside the home were limited to the elementary school and the convent (Yates, 2019: 135).

When Congo's colonial administration transferred from the brutal King Leopold II to the Belgian Parliament, girls' education did not improve. The education code indicated that "the domestic education of women is a factor of first importance in the elevation of a race and in the development of its needs" (Yates, 2019: 136). In grades one and two, girls learnt gardening, while boys engaged in animal husbandry. In grade three, boys' and girls' schools were strictly separated.

Time spent on the three Rs was reduced for girls. They were instructed in Congolese languages and the emphasis was exerted on needlework, sewing, and childcare, while boys learnt more French, which, to the present day, is the medium of communication in state institutions. In this way, women's opportunities and participation in state matters were deliberately curtailed and sabotaged.

Vocational schools, clerical schools, vocational schools, and normal schools that prepared boys to become office workers, customs officers, teachers, tax collectors, railway conductors, mechanics, agriculturalists, wood, and metal workers, were conducted in French. The few post-primary vocational schools for girls taught home economics, agriculture, elementary school teachers, and being aides for European social workers in government-subsidised Catholic schools for adult women's education (Bouwer, 2010). Emphasis was laid on household chores and subsistence farming to feed the family, while for boys it was on "export and plantation crops, soils, irrigation, horticulture, animal husbandry and agricultural machinery" (Yates, 2019: 136), thus preparing them for commercial agriculture.

The lack of good education opportunities for girls and women during the colonial period meant that, at independence, women were not qualified for political and economic engagement, other than the home-confined traditional roles, which also denied wives identity. To view its adverse effects, all legal identifications such as identity documents (IDs) and passports only bear the of the head of the person but not the body. This is nothing but gender identity discrimination (Baumle et al., 2020). At independence in 1960, there were no females amongst the 800 graduates in Congo (Yates, 2019). The division of labour imposed by the Belgians limited women's access to resources, particularly land, which they traditionally cultivated and traded their produce without men's control (Freedman, 2016b), and as Bouwer (2010) illustrates that "when men started controlling the money, women's rights and access to land and their management responsibilities were eroded…Expanding cash crop production

meant that men's supervisory rights over land ere increasingly transformed into ownership rights" (p. 43).

Women also lost the right to land inheritance, despite being the major cultivators of the same land. With the introduction of the written laws, which many are unable to read and understand until today, women were obliged to seek the authorisation of their husbands before they were employed, or they signed legal documents. Moreover, the education that women received confined them mostly to home duties, limiting their skills and engagement. Freedman (2016a) observes that:

> The increased deterioration of women's economic independence, the rural isolation, and the absence of a meaningful education for women caused a loss of status in the traditional sector. Zairian men and women began to view women's roles in rural areas as noneconomic because they did not produce cash income (p. 155).

In addition, women were also conditioned to hate themselves because of being black, like many, to feel inferior, and to aspire to become 'white', to behave like the Europeans as a sign of being civilised. It also led to the renunciation of their customs and religions and follow Christianity, to change their names, mode of dressing, language, and standards of beauty (Roy, 2010). These conditions and the prevalent subjugation were tantamount to loss of identity and self-worth, necessitating emancipation that includes the decolonisation of the mind to neutralise the venom of colonialism and to raise awareness on the subtlety of neocolonialism.

Women's Political Exclusion in Post-colonial DRC

Although Mobutu Sese Seko and his predecessors had made a few legislative and political changes towards women's emancipation, women's conditions remain subpar, subjected to various forms of violence during armed conflicts, abject poverty, and consistent human rights violations. Where women seek justice in the courts of law, impunity prevails,

and due to sickening corruption, justice belongs to the highest bidders, the rich, and those with political influence. The laws that are expected to protect women include: the DR Congo Constitution (2011), Article 11 states that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and in rights." Article 12 adds that "all Congolese are equal before the law and have the right to equal protection of the laws." This includes women, but the reality is different. Article 13 mentions that "no Congolese person may, in matters of education or of access to public functions or any other matter, be subject to a discriminatory measure …" (DRC Government, 2005 cited in Romanini and Franco, 2021).

The DR Congo Constitution (2011) Article 14 states that:

> The public authorities see to the elimination of any form of discrimination concerning women and assure the protection and the promotion of their rights. They take, in all the domains, notably in the civil, political, economic, social, and cultural domains, all the measures appropriate to assure the total realisation and full participation of women in the development of the Nation.[4]

Women take measures to struggle against all forms of injustice and violence made against them in public and in private life. Basically, women have the right to an equitable representation within the national, provincial, and local institutions. The State guarantees the implementation of man-woman parity in these said institutions. The law establishes the modalities of application of these rights.

The DR Congo Constitution (2011) Article 15 states that:

> The public authorities are responsible for the elimination of sexual violence. Without prejudice to international treaties and agreements, any sexual violence made against any person, with the intention to destabilize, [or] to dislocate a

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4   The DR Congo Constitution (2011) is accessible online. See: https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/ Democratic_Republic_of_the_Congo_2011

> family and to make a whole people disappear is established as a crime against humanity punishable by the law.

Additionally, the DRC has specific laws on women's rights, including the Family Code and the 2006 legislation on the prevention of sexual violence. However, the magnitude of sexual violence is sickening. Margot Wallstrom, the UN's special representative on sexual violence in conflicts, dubbed the DRC 'the rape capital of the world and worst place for a woman' (Eriksson Baaz and Stern, 2013: 5). The Constitution and the Codes are not adequately reinforced, falling short of emancipating women, and since they are made mostly by men, they favour men. For example, Article 146 of the Family Code specifies that if a woman is caught in adultery, the imprisonment sentence is between six months and a year.

However, men are imprisoned only if 'the adultery is surrounded by circumstances that are '*injurieux*' (abusive or injure a woman). This is a clear example of legalised inequality and discrimination. The law does not legally define what *injurieux* is. And even if it did, with rampant impunity, only the poor and those without a political voice even at a level of a tiny tintinnabulation are imprisoned. In the constitution, the legal age of marriage for women is 15, while for men it is 18 or over. With prevalent rape and poverty, girls / women are forced into marriage.

If the rapist is known, the woman is forced to marry him. Girls are also forced to marry rich old men who pay a substantial dowry to the girl's family even without considering or entertaining or seeking their choice or consent. More strikingly, there are gender-based biases even in the application of the laws of the land. For example, it is the old women only who are accused of witchcraft and are burnt in their homes or are imprisoned indefinitely for years since witchcraft cannot be empirically proven and the Congolese constitution does not include any legislation on witchcraft.

The Family Code Articles 44 to 48 establish that men have the power to establish a family residence wherever and whenever they deem it suitable. The Code does not indicate

that they consult their wives in that decision. Instead, it compels wives to follow their husbands' decisions and diktats even if they are false and detrimental. Men are the heads of the family, with power over all members of the family, including the wives who must obey their husbands unquestioningly. Such a code has not only blessed gender exploitation but also internalised gender inequality and gender-based injustices.

Besides the Constitution and Codes, customary laws continue to discriminate against, enslave and exploit women simply because they are women. For example, at the village level, the *Bami*, (Chiefs and Kings) are all men. They are the community decision-makers (Hoffman et al., 2020). The question raised by Enloe (2004) remains relevant "where are the women?" (p. 83). Ironically, as the three epigraphs at the beginning of this section and the contradictions in the Constitution and Codes demonstrate, women's emancipation in the DRC remains an uphill task.

Despite having these instruments and legal quotas of gender parity in the DRC and Africa in general, much remains to be seen. For, just like the AU and other African countries, due to patriarchal hegemony, the DRC has never had a female president or Prime Minister since it gained independence in 1960. The country has been misruled under men's watch, something that would encourage those seeking gender equity and parity to give women the chance to stir the country in a different direction from chaos and conflicts to peace and development.

Apart from the DRC, to adequately address the genesis of gender discrepancies and imbalances, this book touches on the UN, chiefly regarding its leadership since it was established in 1948 (Jenne, 2023). This aims at proving the point that women are not represented globally, despite their being members of society with equal political and economic rights. And, if women are not equally and well-represented, it becomes impossible for men in such organisations and settings to understand and arrest hidden problems that women face, as it is the case in the DRC. In the DRC, women continue to

be excluded and to be sexually violated and raped during the raging wars. This symmetrical-binary nature seems to have exacerbated the problem in the world. Eriksson Baaz and Stern (2009) comment on Resolution1325 that:

> Most research and reports on gender and war—specifically, in Africa and the DRC— focus on women as victims of war and sexual violence from the view of the women victims themselves. Little attention, however, has been paid to understanding the ways in which the perpetrators, themselves, understand their violent crimes, (p. 496).

Clearly, the way women perceive gender violence is completely different to the way men do. This is obviously relevant due to biological, cultural, and sociological natures, practices, and roles. An ideal example revolves around the herein above-mentioned self-worth and the value women put on their bodies, humanness, and the likes, but also care and love for their children, who are often brutalised by war. As argued above, it is not easy for males to understand such internal circumstances, feelings, and matters clearly and deeply. Apart from the value they put on their being, due to being unequally represented, women's inputs are missing in national and international policies that deal with the problem. Arguably, as it is for the DRC that has never had a female president or a Prime Minister, the UN has never been led by a female General Secretary, despite being operational for close to eight decades.

Gender Inequality in the Global Superstructure

For liberal peace to do justice decisively and equally for all and for justice to be seen done vis-à-vis the repercussions of gender imbalances, it needs to practically consider and address this anomaly in its upper echelons of power without forgetting African countries. Also, liberal peace must fairly address the emancipation and empowerment of women. Under socially constructed gender performativity, women are treated femininely, that is, excluded from policymaking when it comes to running the UN, as it is often the case in nation

governments. We have proved this point by pointing at the number of female African Presidents and Prime Ministers, which is comparably meagre. There is no way the world can say it is judiciously *ex debito justiciae* (from or as a debt of justice) or the fountain of justice (Maitra, 1970) without addressing gender inequalities in the organisation and thereafter globally, including the DRC. Once this has been achieved, it will be easier and more possible to address the same in the countries of the world. The UN must lead by actions but not otherwise.

The 13 October 2016 election of the UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, substantiates the point above that the UN is still colonially patriarchal. In said election of the new UN Secretary-General, many thought that this time around, the UN would have embarked on radical gender changes by having a female Secretary-General. By chance, there were massive numbers of women who ran for the post. A few months before the said election, Lazar and Brunker (2016) asked if the UN is ready for a female Secretary-General. There was a strong push underway to appoint a woman to replace the then -outgoing Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon. The proponents for having a female SG argued that selecting the UN's first female Secretary-General would send a message of equality that would be heard around the globe.

Again, the idea that there must be a female SG did not come to any realisation because of the patriarchal nature of the very institution. Nevertheless, *The Guardian's* poll found that 96% of respondents believed it was time to have a female secretary general (The Guardian, 2015). Despite such a big percentage, the UN did not listen to the voice of those who wanted changes in its upper echelons of power. How could it have happened whereas almost all the UN's appointing members in the UN General Assembly (UNGA) were men, with only one woman? Samantha Power, who was the US permanent representative to the UN, the only woman who participated in the process to elect the UN Secretary-General.

Leopold (2016) underscores the reason why a woman would not have been elected for the post. Susana Malcorra,

Argentinian Foreign Minister, who was a candidate, notes that "there is still a biased vote against women" at the UN... given equal abilities, there is always a small negative margin against women" (*AFP*, 2016). Moreover, Malcorra noted that US Ambassador Samantha Power was the only woman on the Security Council that is charged with appointing the UN Secretary-General, and that ended up appointing Former Portuguese Prime Minister António Guterres. The appointment of Guterres dashed all hopes that there would have been a female UN Secretary-General for the first time in the history of the UN. This means that there is a bumpy and long road ahead for women. The UN's stance against women shows complete negation and neglect vis-à-vis curbing systemic global gender bias. As it is in the DRC, where women are not fully involved in running the government since independence, who will defend their rights in the UN if the UN's superstructure has no border whatsoever with the systems in their country?

The international exclusion of women is visible in the UN's employment of policepersons to carry on its business wherever it is needed. Mr. Ban Ki-moon, former UN Secretary-General cogently says that he was especially pleased that almost ten per cent of today's UN police are female, and that the organisation's "top cop" is a woman, Ms. Ann-Marie Orler (Anderholt, 2012: 11-12). Ki-moon said the UN was working hard to ensure that women make up 20 per cent of UN police by the end of 2014. Why only 20 per cent, not 50 per cent, just like at the proposed national level? This being the dire and real situation, without introducing gender parity in the UN, the victims of GBV and other gender related evils will still face a very bleak future. How can women, who are more than a quarter of world population[5], end up having just less than 20 per cent in the United Nations Police (UNPOL) if, indeed, the

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5   According to Statista "Total World Population Worldwide 2022" Out of 7.95 billion people living on the Earth in 2022, four billion were men and 3.95 billion were women. (https://www.statista.com/statistics/1328107/global-population-gender/)

UN and the international community are serious about gender equality and parity?

Joanne Sandler, cited in Sandler et al. (2012) narrates her experience at one of the UN conferences. She recounts how, in 2010, she uttered the phrase gender architecture for the first time. She recounts that she had attended a UN inter-agency meeting to hear a colleague from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)-Disaster Assessment and Coordination (DAC) brief them about aid effectiveness. In her opinion, her colleague's briefing carried a strong warning to the UN: either get on this train or get left behind. She kept referring, 'messianically' to the critical necessity of recognising that the 'aid architecture' was irrevocably changing. This illustrates how gender issues are given an undeserving priority or none at all in the UN.

However, there have been some gains. Many women organisations including the 2010 UN Women have been formed. Despite that, it is not enough. For the UN to be credible, effective, and just, it needs to embark on gender parity at all levels. Once this is accomplished, the UN will have moral authority to take countries on that are lagging in enforcing gender parity at national levels.

Even if one considers the composition of the permanent members of the UN, namely China, France, the US, the UK, and Russia, up to 2023, only the UK and France once had female Prime Ministers, namely Margaret Thatcher, Theresa May, and Liz Truss (the UK) and Édith Cresson, and Elisabeth Borne (France) respectively. Thatcher was ironically baptised 'iron lady', simply because she was as tough as iron, the symbol of masculinity. May and Truss were ousted just within three years and a year of their premiership respectively. How does the world hope and trust such countries to resolve the conflict and related gender issues in the DRC while many of them are the ones behind liberal peace that is patriarchal? Countries that are left out from the UNGA were supposed to agitate for the total overhaul of the UN to effect changes that would usher in equity, justice, and parity in the organisation.

Unfortunately, though, it was imminently important to back females either by securing agreements and arrangements that would see the UN overhauled, since it lacked action, justice, and gender parity. For, women share the same predicaments and plights globally. It is equally ironic that small countries by population, such as Britain and France have permanent seats and veto power in the UNGA, while countries like India, with such a huge population, let alone the countries in the entire African continent, have no permanent seats in the UNGA. One does not need to be a guru in rocket science to see the rationale that, at least, one African country, or the AU, deserves to have a permanent seat as a representative of others. Africa's immense resources act as the engine of world economy. Yet, Africa has no voice in international economic policymaking.

It baffles, for example, why Africa should have a permanent seat while it is fragmented into over fifty-four countries. It is simply doable and possible. Africa's permanent seat in the UN can be handed to the AU or under whatever arrangement African countries choose to utilise this position of power globally. Under liberal peace, it seems, numbers do not matter. Instead, colonial arrangements, interests, and legacies do. This shows and explains how bumpy and long the road is for the world to go, as far as gender equity is concerned.

What transpired at the UN is the same as what happened in the US during its 2016 general elections, when it comes to gender and power dynamics and gender exclusion that are still rife in developed capitalist nations such as the US, with prevalent misogynism. The candidacy of Hilary Clinton, who lost to Donald Trump speaks volumes regarding gender discrimination and gender exploitation. According to an international survey of November 2018, only 45 per cent of US men said that they would feel comfortable with a female commander in chief (Relman, 2018). When Clinton picked up forms to run for presidency, the world was excited, hoping that, for the first time in its history, the US would have a female president. Again, it did not happen as the world

expected. This shows how patriarchal the world is vis-à-vis power and decision-making.

Even when the first black US President, Barack Obama, took the reins of power, some racist Americans and countries looked down at him based on their patriarchal myopia and racism. Cooper (2008) notes that "a number of people (half-jokingly) refer to Obama as our first female president" (p. 634) to mean / show how blackness and femininity are sometimes seen as one thing vis-à-vis machoism based on intersectionality.

What would have happened if Clinton were a black woman running for the President? Obviously, gender hatred, misogynistic, racism, and toxic tendencies would have been higher. What Clinton did was against the norm, and even worse than Obama, since she is a woman. Even President Donald Trump used gender-loaded discriminatory language during the campaigns, referring to Clinton as someone lacking stamina to become commander in chief even though he lacked the same stamina. Trump and other misogynists saw masculinity as the only causal qualification for one to become the President of the US. Why did racists treat Clinton thus? Because she is a female, not because she was not competent for the position despite comparably having more education and experience than Trump.

When Trump used such callous language and terminologies, no institution reprimanded him, simply because it is assumed to be a normal practice for a man to behave against a woman. And this is what manhood is all about in a macho society. This shows how dreadful and discriminatory the world is, particularly when sexual discrimination is practised by leaders of the so-called developed countries and societies. If a white woman like Hilary Clinton was excluded and openly shunned based on her gender from becoming President simply because she is a woman, what of a woman in the DRC? Again, these are the leaders whose countries are expected to resolve the conflict in the DRC while,

under the patriarchal hegemony and lens, every right belongs to the males, majorly white ones.

Another example that backs and solidifies the point is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (United Nations, 1948). Whose rights count under the UNDHR? Mhango addresses this matter in his 2017 book *Global War on Terror (GWOT) 'Is It Global War on Terror' or Global War over Terra Africana: The Ruse Imperial Powers Use To Occupy Africa Militarily for Economic Gains.* Mhango (2017a) sheds light on the phenomenon when he tackles how terrorism is used as a ruse of militarily colonising and occupying Africa in a new scramble for Africa. Evidentially, Mhango (2017a) uses terrorism to show how it has been feminised and used by macho countries to exploit the countries they deem feminine, which also shows that liberal peace has never built sustainable peace as far as the conflict in the DRC is concerned (Eriksen, 2009), and if it did, it is not at the expected level[s] based on the aspirations, interests, and needs of the victims (Mhango, 2016b; Mayanja, 2018;). This is what has been ongoing in the DRC since the colonial era.

There were some hopes that things would change for the better after the DRC gained its independence. As noted above, sadly though, the situation became worse and worse and rendered the independence aspirations fruitless and meaningless for Congolese even though it was different for colonisers who maintained the status quo under western stooges like Mobutu, who robbed and ruined their countries to supply resources to liberalism under its free the market mantra. Primarily, liberal peace seeks to create a peaceful environment that enables liberal policies based on free market, foreign direct investment, and economic partnership agreements (EPAs) to operate for the interests of Western countries, as opposed to the interests of the victims. That is why liberal peace has always offered lip service whenever and wherever such interests can be achieved or be safeguarded, without resolving the conflict as it has always been in the DRC, which has seen its resources being plundered despite the presence of the largest UN peacekeeping forces. Richmond and

Franks (2007) argue that liberal peace "combines democracy, free markets, development and the rule of law" (p. 29), foreign aid, and loans as recipes and prerequisites of peace and development.

However, practically, the targets of peace that liberal peace has always sought to meet, have never achieved, especially in the DRC and other conflict-laden countries in Africa since everything is conducted selectively depending on who toe[s] the line and who does not, all based on what the West seeks or wants. That is why many despotic regimes have never been coerced to embark on the democratisation of their countries or the protection of human rights. Mobutu committed gross violations of human rights for over three decades as the West blatantly watched. Angola, the DRC, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and Uganda, inter alia, provide an ideal example of how Western democracy, like terrorism (Mhango, 2017a) is the ruse the West uses under liberal peace to deal with conflict and development, all aimed at securing its interests. We will show how the DRC has never been democratic and independent, neither has it developed, despite receiving aid since it gained its independence, mainly regarding the period after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, that signified the end of the Cold War (Kalyvas and Balcells, 2010). Despite the fall of the Berlin Wall, the situation did not improve in the DRC and other countries endowed with resources of value. If anything, the fall of the Berlin Wall benefited and helped Berlin, the city wherein Africa was divided. Because of the fall of its Wall, two Germanys were reunited, something from which Africa failed to learn.

Discussion Questions

1. Why global instruments on gender equality, inclusion, and mainstreaming continue to remain rhetoric and buzzwords, especially for women in natural resources-based war and armed conflict zones like the DRC?
2. Conflicts in the DRC have affected women more than men, yet they are often not at the table of peacemaking

and peacebuilding decisions. What is required to reinforce gender mainstreaming in all peacebuilding processes?

3. As the DRC's natural resources are raped, so are the women, which illustrates the masculinity of capitalism. Can there be peace for women without overhauling capitalism?

Chapter VI

Gender Exclusion and Exploitation as Capitalist and Colonial Hangovers

Introduction

This chapter aims to highlight liberal peace as a colonial capitalist project and as one of the reasons for applying the gender lens to show how gender inequality is a global phenomenon embedded in the culture of violence. Krook and True (2012) argue that for liberal peace to succeed "gender equality: gender-balanced decision-making and gender mainstreaming" (Krook and True, 2012: 105) in the peacebuilding and peacemaking must be on menu. Without gender balance in decision-making, liberal peace will always be criticised and viewed as a mere superimposition that aims at safeguarding and addressing the interests of the West at the detriment of the rest. Essentially, this being the case, this book seeks to add to the existing discourse to be better constructively deconstructed to realise the much-needed peace in the DRC and in the world in general. Regarding what liberal peace seeks to achieve, apart from the above-mentioned, Zaum (2012) sums it up that liberal peace is conducted by Western technocrats and governments motivated by liberal objectives, economic liberalisation, and promoting Western liberal institutions in other countries, which is seen as an extension of colonialism. The same proponents of liberal peace, liberal and neoliberal policies are the beneficiaries, even if it is at the detriment of affected countries / societies, as it has always been in the DRC.

Gender and Cultural Violence in the DRC

Gender inequality is a product of culture, religion (Raday, 2003), and colonialism (Adams, 2006). Sometimes, it becomes convoluted and difficult to know who uses whom in this game of deceit and duplicity that dates to the Atlantic slave trade era between local cons, greedy, and myopic elites during the colonial period and foreign powers. For, if the above-mentioned foreign powers are critically examined, we find that democratic recipes are amiss; and the rulers of these countries are not coerced to introduce them into their political menu. Is the aim of Western countries to introduce democracy in *nondemocratic* countries so that citizens in these countries can enjoy their rights, or is it just a ruse used to access and exploit resources, as it has always been in the DRC amongst others? Whose democracy, development, and peace are in this chimerical arrangement? Why has the West always been selective and vindictive in preaching and promoting democracy, development, and peace, if, indeed, they are the goals it seeks to achieve, and for whose benefits, interests, and ethics in their application and protection?

Interestingly, instead of resolving conflicts and bringing peace and development to countries facing violent conflicts, because of its neoliberal policies, liberal peace has become chimeral and an illusion since liberal policies have always fuelled and funded wars (Le Billon, 2013). Since the post-colonial era, kleptocratic Mobutu Sese Seko, for example, enjoyed and relied on the support from the government of the US as a bribe aimed to access the DRC's precious minerals easily and unlimitedly for US mining companies (Hochschild, 1998). Apart from the US, Canadian mining companies have "benefitted from aggressive government lobbying and a slew of 'aid' initiatives to advance their interests. [Yet] Nowhere have Canadian extractive companies been lined to more rights violations than in eastern Congo" (Engler, 2015: 8). Similarly, Hintjens and Pavan (2011) observe that appropriate aid can fuel peace, while inappropriate aid can fuel war. In the DRC's case, the latter is more of the case than the former. Given that liberal peace has a top-down approach in dealing with

conflict to bring peace and development or obtain a supply of resources, this book proves how the DRC, despite liberal peace, and long-time interventions, has never experienced any meaningful peace.

As the title of Hintjens and Pavan's (2011) work states, liberal peace's intervention has ended up becoming what they call *illusion of peace, illusion of war,* if we borrow their words, and this is true because, regarding gender empowerment, much remains to be desired, as far as the DRC is concerned. There is no way that meaningful and sustainable peace can be reached under current biassed gendered power dynamics. Björkdahl (2012) argues that the gendered hierarchies built in liberal peace and the exclusion of women in peace processes created a ''peace gap'' since gender empowerment has become a standard tool in international peacebuilding. Again, is it practical a standard or just rhetoric and a spiced buzzword if we remind ourselves of what has been ongoing in the DRC for over six decades of lost independence? Is there any way peace can be realised under liberal peace without sealing this peace gap it has created or without decolonising, deconstructing, and reconstructing it?

To do away with the impasses above, Richmond (2010) argues that there is a genuine need for venturing out and beyond liberalism or think out of the box without the box, especially in state-building and liberal peacebuilding; see also Pratt and Richter-Devroe (2011). To achieve the desired goals, Richmond (2013) suggests that the needs of locals must be addressed based on "engender contact, reform and modification of both local and international processes so as not to compromise each other's standards" (p. 31). In so doing, we need to fully and practically incorporate local and feminist peacebuilding and peacemaking mechanisms that, for a long time, have been excluded because of patriarchal hegemony. In other words, we need to degenderise peace and the superstructure to achieve desired and intended goals, especially for the victims of colonisation and neoliberalism.

Liberal Peace as a Colonial Capitalist Project

Like any superimposed mechanism of development and peacebuilding, liberal peace has not succeeded in bringing stable and sustainable peace in many areas / countries where it was applied. Liberal peace failed because, apart from being arbitrary and top-down, carries some hidden agendas with it. Its priority is always the safeguard of the benefits of Western interveners (NGOs) and nations at the detriment of their hosts. Refer to how many peacebuilding personnel are from the West. Local solutions for engendering peace, security, and overcoming gender barriers to peace and economic growth are neglected. Why do the UN Security Council peacekeeping missions since 1999, the humanitarian agencies that have turned the DRC into a cemetery of NGOs (Trefon, 2011) where billions from the World Bank (WB), the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) grants, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) grants for Poverty Reduction and Growth, all disappear into the sand, for the most part?

All the above programmes are designed primarily to reflect the interests of Western nations that own war industries, which create employment and profits for their population. Ironically, Western governments and technocrats have the perception that they always know what is best for the DRC and other African nations. Equally, due to colonial brainwashing, most Africans think that the West always knows the best for itself and for them since it is irreplaceable (Paris, 2010). One of the liberal perspectives is that the West has solutions to DRC's impasse and the Congolese thinking is that they need the US and Europe to bring peace. Both sides maintain an essentialised paralysis of perspectives.

As its name goes, liberal peace is a politico-economic drive by the West that aims at liberalising everything for the benefits of its creators, the West. Arguably, liberal peace seeks peace and embarks on peacebuilding for the benefit of Western countries, in that peace should prevail so that their liberal policies are embedded in the concepts of free market, poverty

reduction, foreign direct investments, and peacekeeping. The above polces can be exercised and superimposed even at the detriment of those in conflict as we will indicate herein under.

Tadjbakhsh (2011) traces the genesis of liberal peace to the end of the Cold War, which was introduced in war-torn states as it was aimed at legitimising the concept based on assumptions of the pacifying effects of open and integrated societies and markets. Liberal peace was framed by a liberal state and international institutions, laws, and norms without the inputs of those it is superimposed upon. So, regarding defining liberal peace, especially if we consider that those behind its formulation and execution are the same who are fuelling and funding conflicts in many war-torn countries, it lacks inclusivity and sincerity. More importantly, liberal peace is an extension of colonialism, and hegemony. The West have always maintained and used to safeguard its interests in those countries at the detriment of the recipients / victims.

It goes without saying that whenever war breaks out in any area, many people, even animals, and property, are affected in various magnitudes and ways. However, because of the patriarchal society, females suffer more than males do. All this has to do with power undercurrents and nuances in which females are less empowered compared to their counterpart males, who wage immense power, economically, politically, and socially. Without having gender congeniality all over the world, it will always be difficult for countries like the DRC, engrossed and ensnared in conflict to get out of the imbroglio and impasse they have been in for many years of their existence. No doubt, war resulting from the struggle for the control of resources has caused many more deaths than any war since World War II (WWII), wherein women and girls have suffered a great deal more. It is often described as being driven by competition for mineral wealth.

However, when the war is clinically examined, it turns out to have multiple and interwoven factors (Spittaels and Hilgert, 2008; Beardsley, 2011; Seay, 2012), which buttress and reinforce each other. Some of the factors are internal,

while others are external, all hinged on power crescendos in the country and in the world in general since the world is interconnected in a web of life. Whatever way one examines the conflict in the DRC and other related conflicts, power is the major issue, which is, however, gendered in this case. Barnett (2007) argues that "power is arbitrary therefore, when the interfering agent fails to consider the views of those potentially affected by its decisions" (p. 9), achieving what is desired becomes impossible not to mention the resistance such a move encounters in the process. For, there is no way one can control resources without controlling the reins of power in the country where the resources are, since power, and resources are economically interconnected and interdependent. The government needs resources to run its business and the business needs the government to enact good policies or protect it.

In discussing the causes and the ramifications of contemporary conflicts in the Eastern DRC, this book, as noted in the introduction of the chapter, uses gender as the primary lens of analysis. Mackay et al. (2010) maintain that a gender lens, once applied, provides fresh insights into the core preoccupations of the field, and it is distinctive in its systematic engagement with new institutionalism and its ambition for two-way dialogue and exchange. This approach adds up to the already-applied tools of analysis that have been used in the conflict in question. The uniqueness of the gender lens is that it is not widely used, as gender has always not been appreciated in the running of society or in the decision-making bodies. Wherever it used, typically, is for academic purposes but not as a practical political resource that needs to be fully integrated in process, structures, and systems that deal with peacebuilding or peacemaking, and political calibration, chiefly because politics has always been dominated by patriarchal hegemony, which is devoid of gender equality and gender sensitivity. Despite being partially integrated in some areas such as politics, like special seats and resolutions about attaining gender parity, "the integration of a

gender lens has yet to receive the resourcing a more systematic approach would demand" (Holmes and Jones, 2010: 34).

We tend to suspect special seats used by many undemocratic governments as a ruse to keep on discriminating and exploiting females by treating them preferentially. Do females need such a favour in the first place in this century of human advancement in science and technology but not in humanity? Has it practically worked as expected and planned somewhere? Experience shows that special seats have caused fracas and the wastage of opportunity and time amongst women.

The proponents of this internalised and unnecessary dependency-accepted sexual discrimination say it will create gender parity in decision-making bodies without telling how and why. Can special seats work without competitive and level ground enhanced by the rules of the game? Yoon (2008) argues that the process of nominating candidates for special seats is susceptible to corruption even in peaceable and politically stable countries; see also Britwum et al. (2012). Nonetheless, applying a gender lens may sound like the way of assuming its place in political sciences, all aimed at trying alternative ways of resolving the conflict, particularly when we consider that most of the victims of these conflicts are females, as they are socially defined based on gender.

Why Using a Gender Lens as a Tool of Analysis?

By using a gender lens, we will be able to take the players on, internal and external, based on patriarchal internationalism, interventionism, and institutionalism, as the obstacles and catalysts, all depending on how such concepts are specifically used to address the problem in the Eastern DRC. If the patriarchal system can be deconstructed and thereby reconstructed to practically apply and pragmatically enforce gender parity, it can be a catalyst for peace and development, the same way it has been a hitch to the same people by fanatically maintaining militaristic and patriarchal hegemony. We have chosen a gender lens because many authors have

already addressed the issue from many different angles and fields. So, too, under a gender lens, the conflict at hand hinges on gender injustices and violence whereby those with powers lord it over those they perceive to be weak and use their power, though differently and negatively (Chowdhury and Lanier, 2012; Brownmiller, 2013). Power dynamics plays an important role in addressing and adversely enforcing the imbalance that has been going on in the global superstructure.

In tackling gender anomalies by using a gender lens in analysing the conflict in the Eastern DRC, this book addresses four major areas of the conflict. These areas revolve around the historical context of the conflict, the role internal and external factors have played, their contribution[s] in fuelling and funding the war, and the critique that comes as the conclusion. In this section, the book proposes what should be done to decisively address the conflict in the Eastern DRC. We decided to tackle this complex and protracted conflict based on a gendered lens, power dynamic forces, and performativity to show how the so-called developed world – weaponises poor countries or militants (Sullivan et al., 2011) – has underdeveloped many poor countries through fuelling and funding wars, all aimed at extracting resources at the cost of human rights and peoples' lives in the affected countries. Therefore, it should be noted from the outset that conflicts resulting from the struggle for controlling resources is not prevalent only in the DRC; it is a challenging global phenomenon.

There are other pertinent examples such as Angola, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Mali, South Sudan, the CAR, and many more where human rights violations are demonstrable, rife, and systematic. As noted above, we use the DRC as a typical replica of how conflict engenders and endears gross violations of human rights, atrocities, crimes against humanity, gender exploitation, war crimes, and sufferings, especially at the time of conflict and the way it affects females more palpably than males. Thus, the DRC is the case study that seeks to unearth endemic and systemic gender injustices as it seeks

to recommend what should be done to do away with this phenomenon.

The application of a gender lens to analyse how the conflict affects males and females differently, we will explore legal, historical, and pertinent systemic issues. However, the focal point is the DRC. This book addresses, inter alia, issues such as the concepts of human rights, human security, as well as the contributions, reactions, and the roles the international community positively or negatively plays in exacerbating or resolving the conflict in question. So, too, we dig deeper into the conflict to see how the international superstructure has hugely contributed to fuelling and funding the conflict in the DRC, which, as already noted, revolves around the struggle for power for controlling resources (Poncian and Kigodi, 2015).

Fundamentally, we interrogate and investigate structural violence as is ingrained in the systems, mindsets, organisations, and the processes that are involved in dealing with the conflict. As aforementioned, power nuances will not only cover gendered humans but also gender generality and entirety in that even things are gendered socially according to their roles based on gender performativity and its materialisation, mainly 'bodies that matter' driven largely by the desire for recognition of the gendered self as a viable, intelligible subject (Tyler and Cohen, 2010). This is evident in the categorisation and the cross-examination of cultures and mores and the roles they play, especially high power and low power between individualistic and collectivistic cultures (Oyserman, 2006) and modern and traditional societies (Weimann et al., 2007). For example, Western rich countries are viewed as masculine, because of their "maleness" or "techno muscular capitalism" (Robinson, 2011: 138) or financial and military muscles. On the contrary, poor countries of the East are categorised and conceptualised as feminine, because of financial and military capabilities of the former as opposed to the conditional and conditioned dependency and the incapability of the latter. The latter is always on the tether of the former to be dictated by the former, which is wrong and detrimental for the latter.

Further, Chang and Ling (2000), cited by Robinson (2011), argue that the "integrated world of global finance, production, trade and telecommunications…valorizes all those norms and practices usually associated with western capitalist masculinity–deregulation, privatization, strategic alliances … –but masked as global or universal" (pp. 1015–1016).

The above quotation signifies how gendered the world is. Once again, this argument forces us to challenge, doubt, and interrogate the whole concepts of globalisation, globalism, and the likes that the West has always espoused under the pretext of addressing world problems, while it, seeks to safeguard its interests covertly and overtly, as shown in the DRC.

Conclusion

The chapter has exhaustively delved into liberal peace as colonial extension because of its imposition on the local and failure to incorporate or cooperate with local stakeholders in peacebuilding. By using a gender lens the chapter has highlighted some crucial aspects of the genderisation of the world. Also, the chapter has clearly shown how liberal peace seeks peace for the interests of its creators, the West to allow neoliberal policies such as free markets to function. More importantly, the chapter looks at systemic anomalies whereby the world–gendered and machoistic system relegates women to the favoured one. For example, it faults the special seats set aside for women in various countries and the failure to treat the conflict in the DRC as an international one. For example, the chapter laments about turning the DRC into a multibillion project for the international NGOs to mint and print money while girls, women, and Congolese are suffering.

Discussion Questions

1. What are the forms of resistance emanating from Congolese and other women in Africa's natural resource–rich nations where they are confronted by GBV?

2. Do feminist theories that have been developed in the West have any practical implication for Congolese and other African women?
3. What is the connection between capitalist and gendered exploitation?

Chapter VII

No Permanent Allies but Permanent Interests

Introduction

Regarding dealing with the West, especially the US, there are no permanent friends, except permanent interests (Rice, 2008). The US has never concealed this notorious foreign policy. The US's foreign policy has been known for many years, save that those dealing with it have never paid much attention to it, and if they did, they did not want to confront it for fear of the US's response and its ramifications.

For example, those who know how the US uses stooges to exploit their countries, as was the case of the DRC, where Mobutu was cloned, used, and dumped understand this. They also know this notorious long-time policy too well and the abandonment of Mobutu was not something tantalising because whenever any used person becomes unusable or non-fecund, those using them either abandon or get rid of them as they enter new marriage with new partners.

DRC Africa's Typical Replica

The case in the DRC evidentially acts as a wake-up call for those who are still in bed with Western countries plundering and ruining their countries. Such a rationale was evident not only in the DRC when Mobutu was brought down in 1997, but also in many countries with their despots being overthrown to give room for new ones. Despite protecting him for over three decades, the West abandoned Mobutu in the hour of need to prove how their complicity, duplicity, and sodality were not permanently built on Mobutu, but resources that would still be exploited under another person, as it later happened under Joseph Kabila.

Evidently, the same were the cases in Iran with the Shah in February 1979 (Lebovic, 2010), Idi Amin (Uganda) in April 1979 (Mkutu, 2008), and the Taliban (Afghanistan) in 2001 (Van Linschoten and Kuehn, 2012). Others were Saddam Hussein (Iraq) in April 2003, Hosni Mubarak (Egypt) on 11 February 2011 (Nagarajan, 2013), and Muamar Gaddafi (Libya) in October 2011 (Mokhefi, 2011), amongst others. Despite abandoning them, all such dictators either were created by the West, or it covertly or overtly acquired, maintained, and supported them to intimidate their countries so that they could extract resources and supply them to their cloners. Overall, all abandoned rulers and organisations were dictatorial, and most deposed rulers fled their countries, except two, namely Gaddafi and Hussein, who were killed as they attempted to flee. However, some dictators have clung onto power insofar as they can toe the line or due to the lack of a replacement in some cases, like in Equatorial Guinea and Uganda, amongst others. Interestingly all above-mentioned dictators were males, to show how the West uses males but not females since it believes they have more power in the countries than females.

Circumstantially, Mobutu's marriage of convenience with the West would one day come to an end, something that would force Mobutu to either face the wrath of his victims or flee the country, as it later happened when he was expelled. Due to the ever-changing *realpolitik* ("realistic, practical, actual politics") of the world coupled with delicate geopolitics, Mobutu started to lose support from the West just on the day the Berlin Wall came down. The Cold War that abruptly came to an end in 1991 (Masco, 2013) authored the beginning of the end of Mobutu and others that followed subsequently. After the US became the sole polarising superpower, it changed some of its foreign policies, amongst which was reducing or stopping supporting dictators who proved to be expensive or useless to maintain.

Toppling stable governments and installing dictatorial regimes were the strategies that the West used to destabilise and exploit African countries endowed with natural resources of value such as the DRC, however political it may wrongly be

viewed. Therefore, the end of the Cold War sealed Mobutu's fate just as it was for other African dictators such as Hastings Kamuzu Banda (Malawi), Daniel arap Moi (Kenya), Juvénal Habyarimana (Rwanda), and others. For, the West had to abandon Mobutu and let him fend for himself for his survival, which became impossible. After the US abandoned Mobutu and entered a new marriage with his neighbours, especially Rwanda and Uganda (Barrett et al., 2013), Mobutu's days were numbered. These neighbouring countries, in conjunction with Burundi, seized the opportunity to topple Mobutu, who was then ailing physically and politically. They, henceforward, backed his arch-enemy, Laurent Kabila as Mobutu's replacement, whom they intended to use to exploit resources from the DRC.

After standing his ground for a while against Laurent Kabila's ragtag forces, Mobutu was at last toppled on 16 May 1997 after hanging onto power for a while. Thereafter, Mobutu fled the country, and later died in Morocco on 7 September 1997. Mobutu's fall aggravated and culminated in the fall of his friend, Habyarimana, in the neighbouring Rwanda.

One year after Mobutu's fall from power, the war in the Eastern DRC broke out. Weinstein (2000) notes that the war in the DRC, which began in August 1998, was unprecedented; at times involving armies from eight African states, namely Angola, Burundi, Namibia, Rwanda, Uganda, Zimbabwe (Atzili, 2007), Chad, and Sudan, which took advantage of the volatility of the DRC after Mobutu's ouster. Although the DRC was invaded, the Eastern area suffered more war-adverse effects than other regions. First, the Eastern part shares borders with most countries that invaded the DRC. Second, the Eastern DRC is endowed with immense reserves of resources of various types, which have made it bear the brunt since the fall of Mobutu. It is more affected than any other area of the DRC, simply because it possesses such immense reserves of resources, especially precious minerals, and timber, amongst others. Essentially, the fall of Mobutu was the tipping point that triggered the conflict that has been going on in the Eastern DRC ever since.

Practically, Mobutu left an economically and politically turbulent and vile country economically and politically. White (2005) points out that "long before Mobutu passed away, the Zairian state had already been diagnosed as chronically ill" (p. 66), just like Mobutu himself, who was in his last days of life and power. Due to his clumsiness and voraciousness, Mobutu has been one big, obnoxious relic, as one of biggest thieves Africa has ever had and seen (Mhango, 2016c). So, too, Mobutu's fall and thereby exit proved that what mattered for the Western powers in the DRC, just like anywhere else, was not Mobutu, but their interests revolving around plundering resources (Dizolele, 2010; Mhango, 2016c). That is why, after the fall of Mobutu, the same Western powers backed the Kabila simply because they were ready to keep on supplying them with what they wanted even if it were at the expense of his people, as it was under Mobutu.

Evidentially, there was no difference between Mobutu's regime and the two after him. The new regimes in the DRC did not address causal and core ills such as prevalent chronic insecurity, poorly performing economy, bad governance, and mismanagement of the country, because they did not even resolve the conflict. Instead, the Kabila went on with business as usual as Lemarchand (2009) argues that "opportunism is a prevailing characteristic of Kabila's modus operandi" (p. 126). Even though the country had already gone over a precipice, the West pressed on with its agenda by getting into bed with another corrupt regime (Mhango, 2023b). After Mobutu was toppled, the regimes that succeeded him did not do anything to prevent the plundering of the country that has occurred up until now.

The DRC's long-time dictatorship left it without any system that could fill in the vacuity after Mobutu's kleptocratic government was toppled. Such a situation made it easy for opportunistic politicians and warlords to start the conflict, as they aimed to control and corruptly benefit from the vast resources with which the DRC is endowed. Corruption and opportunism are some of the engrained hallmarks of dictatorship in many countries. When former long-standing

Somalian despot Mohamed Siad Barre was toppled, the country descended into chaos that has been going on ever since (Sabala, 2011), even though the deterioration of Somalia started soon after Siad Barre took over in 1969; see also Ingiriis (2012); Carter and Guard (2015). Sudan, too, and recently, Libya, have suffered the same fate (Mhango, forthcoming) since the fall of its long-time dictator, Muammar Gaddafi, not to forget Iraq after the fall of Saddam Hussein.

After Mobutu's exit from power, the war that started due to the vacuity of leadership leading to resource-looting in the DRC even though it was a trend under Mobutu, the onslaught on the Eastern DRC took a chaotic and different turn. While Mobutu was organised under the kleptocratic system, presided over the thievery of the DRC under the backing of the West, n*ew kids on the block* were a wee bit unexperienced and unorganised altogether. Although the primary intention of foreign power to support Kabila was masqueraded as the war of toppling Mobutu, its covert aim was to plunder the country. This became evident, especially since the three countries, Burundi, Rwanda, and Uganda, that were fighting on the ground in the DRC, sponsored some warlords, who displaced people to occupy areas and extract resources that they sold to the world market through their sponsored countries.

Essentially, at that moment, Western powers were using African countries to rob another African country, thinking that they would benefit from this self-betrayal enhanced and geared by greed and myopia on African countries that conspired with the West to harm their sister country. It is an indirect way of robbing Africa that seems to have replaced the direct colonial rule. Ironically, African countries practically conspired to entrench and perpetrate colonial strategies.

Gender-Based Violence and the Conflict

As already noted, although the war in the Eastern DRC, resulting from the ongoing conflict, adversely affects many people, females suffer more negatively than males, especially from GBV. GBV has no agreed-upon definition. For lucidity,

some academics have tried to define it. For example, the United Nations (UN, 1995) defines GBV as "any act that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life" (Russo and Pirlott, 2006: 181).

The above definition explains GBV ingrained in biological sex but not in general feminist approaches that treat gender as a social phenomenon socially constructed to define almost everything based not only on sex and gendered performativity but also based on race, economic status, geography (sometimes) and history, amongst others. On the contrary, the UN (1979) defines GBV as "violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately" (Graaff, 2021: 2). This definition is general and precisely to the point since it nails down the victim with specificity.

For this book, GBV and other related gender-based injustices (GBI) can be defined as all acts, utterances, practices, feelings, and all the likes that are violent in nature and are violently aimed at a person or persons due to the handed-down performative roles one plays in the society, based on the feelings or assumptions of the superiority of masculinity against gendered inferiority as sanctioned or tolerated by the patriarchal society.

As indicated above, the conflict at hand revolves around, inter alia, identity and identity-based exploitation (IBE) between females and males and the economic-based exploitation (EBE) between rich and poor countries and ethnicity. Essentially, the conflict started from the colonial era that created negative and toxic ethnicity in the Eastern DRC, where people of Rwandan ancestry, even though they are part of the conflict and their country is still maltreated, which turned the conflict into an international one since Rwanda claims it seeks to protect people of its ancestry. If we consider the fact that there is a belief almost all over the world that a woman, especially a married one, belongs to her husband while

an unmarried one belongs to her father, violating or attacking her, however patriarchal it sounds, is attacking the man or men who own her by trespassing upon someone's *property* under this misguided rationale. This is because patriarchal oppression has reduced women to objects that men can own and use, which is wrong. During conflict, such a rationale makes women more vulnerable. Blaikie et al. (2003) note that "women are sometimes upheld as the symbolic bearers of caste, ethnic or national identity in conflict situations which can lead to them being singled out for attack" (p. 27). This is how vulnerable females are because they are females, or they are gendered.

Therefore, wherever females go, even after fleeing the conflict, they will still face many encumbrances simply because they are female (Freedman, 2016a). For, even when they escape conflict at home, some females end up suffering from the same in refugee camps outside of the country. Reed et al. (2012) posit that refugees who resettle in low- and middle-income countries might be exposed to ongoing threats to their security and welfare, whereas those in high-income settings must cope with a different social milieu and often complex asylum processes.

The ordeal for females does not end with only the above ramifications. Researchers show that women living in various refugee camps and the Internally displaced people (IDP) camps, report rape incidents, sexual assaults, insecurity, and exploitation. Ward and Marsh (2006) note that studies in camps in Dadaab, Kenya, undertaken almost 10 years ago, found that more than 90 per cent of women reported rapes that occurred when they went out of the camps to collect either firewood or water. As the findings above show, despite being hugely vulnerable, women are traditionally assigned to the roles of collecting firewood and water even in such precarious environments and times. Those who come home safe still have the roles of preparing food for the families and taking care of children.

Gender disparities and gender exploitation do not apply only at home, but also outside of the home. Even where there are some educational services, girls are either likely to miss out or perform poorly due to being assigned many more chores than boys are at home. Primarily, the above-mentioned chores and roles are the domains of girls and women. For example, in the DRC, even before the war broke, in practice, females were more illiterate than males as is the norm in many African countries.

Despite all, under the definitions of GBV, which are diverse and numerous, we can argue that women in the Eastern DRC - just like anywhere else, especially in Africa - are victimised based on gender exploitation perpetrated systematically by the archaic and brutal patriarchal society. The above definitions seem to concentrate on humans instead of expanding to cover non-human things that are gendered such as countries in the Global South, in which the DRC is situated. So, too, the definition shies away from incorporating other things categorised or viewed as weaker or non-militaristic as they are socially constructed. Just like in any other patriarchal society, women in the DRC are treated like objects for men to use to gratify themselves wantonly. Eriksson Baaz and Stern (2013) maintain that the *genderisation*, and thus, the categorisation, exploitation and treatment of women and girls as second-class citizens, started a long time before war broke out. For, the law, as well as social norms, defines the role of women and girls as subordinate to men, which is wrong under a gender lens, and even common sense, if it is allowed to work properly. Such practices of inequity seem to have encouraged atrocities committed in war against females and vulnerable people in the country.

Perpetrators of GBV, like any other criminals, do not perceive girls and women as human beings, but instead, they view them as objects that they can use as they wish. In his book, *The Moral Imagination: The art and soul of building peace*, Lederach (2005) calls such practices the *thingification* of humans, which ties in with what rapists do to their victims of rape and other GBV-related brutality and criminality

against females. All this thingification is geared by power discriminations. In this regard, geared by patriarchate, Allison Reid-Cunningham (2008) maintains that "the rapist's sexuality is not an end in itself but merely an instrument to inflict damage through sexual means: rapists speak of the experience as an aggressive act of dominance, associated with power, rather than as a particularly sexual act" (p. 280).

Once a human is categorised, confined, and relegated to the second being status (Leatherman, 2011) or thingified, their chances of being abused are high. That is what has been ongoing in the Eastern DRC, where girls and women are raped, tortured, maimed, and killed licentiously. As noted above, by starting the war, warlords sought to displace people so that they could easily access resources ready to extract and sell to the free market of the world, as espoused by the neoliberal policies. Oft-attacking communities and surrounding areas with minerals became the order of the day. Many lost their lives, others were injured, displaced, and above all, girls, and women - amongst others - were raped massively. Roth (2015) puts the figure of the deaths resulting from this plunder, which other scholars call a holocaust, at about 6.9 million (p. 33).

The conflict in the DRC is claimed to have caused some of the highest figures of death in modern times. Coghlan et al. (2006) note that the International Rescue Committee (IRC) documented that between 1998 and 2002, an estimated 3.3 million people died as a consequence of the war. This shows how the Congolese conflict has been the world's most deadly since the end of World War II. That is because the death toll far exceeds those of other recent crises, including those in Bosnia (estimated 250,000 dead), Rwanda (800,000), Kosovo (12,000), and Darfur in Sudan (70,000) (p. 44).

Despite claiming many more lives than any other recent conflict, the international community treats such deaths as statistics. The situation is still worse as the international community watch by. The deaths that occurred in the DRC because of the conflict are many more than the deaths resulting globally from the HIV/AIDS epidemic at the same

time. Glenn et al. (2009) expounds that in 2004 more than 3.1 million people died of HIV/AIDS globally (p. 3).

Conclusion

In trying to imagine what the world would have done had those victims been Westerners, not Africans, we conclude this chapter arguing the international community to do justice to the people of the DRC and other victims. There is no difference between people who have openly displayed indifference and the rapists or warlords. Again, since the resources plundered from the DRC end up in Western markets, all noises about human rights, war crimes, atrocities against humanity, and many more sweet terminologies do not apply to them. For how long will this go on as people keep on suffering, simply because they were created in a country endowed with resources of value? It confounds to evidence and try to understand how the so-called civilised world can easily ignore such a calamity whose magnitude is almost seven times bigger than the Rwandan genocide, which was recognised internationally simply because the West did not judiciously take any actions to stop it decisively and timeously because of its carelessness and neglect of Africa.

Ironically, the same international community seems to have learned nothing from Rwanda. Is it waiting for the DRC to have a functional and sound government to accuse it to recognise such a holocaust committed on the DRC? Is this the reason why nobody wants to see to it that the DRC receives a functioning government? How long will this double standard go on untamed? The international community needs to answer these questions accurately and timeously for it to do justice based on equality.

The lack of a census also shows how failing the country has become. For example, due to various bottlenecks, economical, geographical, and political, the country has not conducted a population census, which enables a country to know its population and how to attend it. Without knowing the population of the citizens, the country is unable to plan how

to cater for its people. This will be reflected in the provision of health services for rape victims in the DRC. The situation becomes even worse when there is no stable government to preside over the affairs of country, and thereby be able to protect such vulnerable people, or where the government participates in plundering the country.

So, too, the situation becomes worse when the government acts as a stooge for foreign countries or entities, which use it to plunder the country in exchange for clinging to power for a kit and caboodle of corrupt rulers, as has been the norm in the DRC. This has been the experience of the DRC from the day the country gained its chimeric independence. Essentially, gender exploitation can squarely be seen in economic, political, and social settings almost in every patriarchal society just like the DRC.

Discussion Questions

1. How do the greed and selfishness of Global North nations perpetuate GBV in the DRC and in Africa in general?
2. How is GBV part of the colonial and neocolonial exploitation of the DRC and the reset of sub-Saharan Africa?
3. Why have global, regional, and international instruments, and norms on empowering women and stopping GBV not succeeded in the DRC? For example, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was adopted in 1979 and the DRC is a signatory. At the African Union level, the Maputo Protocol was adopted in 2003 when the DRC was grappling with GBV after the second Congo war. Assess such efforts and add or propose what they lack.
4. We know that soldiers and humanitarian workers from the Global North have also sexually violated women. What is your opinion on making positive masculinity education mandatory in the DRC and the world over?

Chapter VIII

The Institutionalisation of GBV

Figure 4:   Mobutu meeting with the US president Richard Nixon in 1973(Source: wipokuli.wordpess.com)

Introduction

In addressing gender-based violence and injustices, sometimes, those doing so can apply it constructively and creatively to agitate for the change and thereby the overhaul of the system, especially its formulation of the private and public sphere. Merry (2009) claims that the distinction between the private and public sphere was politically important for feminists, for it confined women and excluded them from participating in politics, power and authority, something that geared them to fight this inequality based on gender violence. Arguably, the claim Merry (2009) makes is relevantly evident in the DRC, whereby, as noted above, out of six Presidents

and over twenty Prime Ministers (PMs) there has never been a woman serving in such capacities, and this is the replica of many African countries. Notably, what is going on in the DRC is patriarchal-political exclusion (PPE) whereby females are systematically left out. So, too, this exclusionary setting is a typical replica of what has been going all over the world except for a few Nordic countries.

Women and Private-Public Space Confinement

Historically, when women were confined to the private sphere – which essentially, is in their homes – it created a false image that women are not competent to lead others. This is true in the DRC, the entire Great Lakes region, and Africa in general, where women are still confined in homes and are still in the minority in decision-making bodies. For example, as noted above, governments in the above area have the policy of setting aside some special seats for women (Bauer, 2012), which is ridiculously not a solution to systemic gender exclusion and violence. For, despite participating in decision-making, the number of women is still relatively small because women still depend on the will of male politicians who choose whomever they deem fit to join them in the boys' club. There are many influential male politicians who put forward the names of their wives or girlfriends to end up being appointed Members of Parliament (MPs) through special seats. Ironically, we do not know of any influential females who did the same for their husbands or boyfriends, which is corruption that maintains and undermines the integrity of women candidates (Strachan, 2015).

Although the situation is the same in Africa, we can still say that, when we consider the fact that males endanger their positions by corruptly sponsoring their girlfriends and relatives, they do not help them as females, but instead, they sabotage them systematically. Yes, if we consider who gets what and who can lose what, the chances are that such males cause greater danger and harm than those they sponsor because they are playing with the powers they have already achieved compared to their victims, who have no powers up

until they receive them. Rivas (2013) notes that women are less tolerant towards dishonest behaviours, and that there exists a negative relation between women's participation rate in politics and corruption levels. Some empirical research shows that women are less likely to commit almost all kinds of criminal offences and are less likely to be involved in and approve of corruption, tax evasion, and other illicit activities (Torgler and Valev, 2010; Merkle and Wong, 2020; Ngouhouo and Njoya, 2020). However, in the case of special seats, it becomes harder to gauge the magnitude of the vice. We think all this is caused by political exclusion, which leads to corruption as a survival tactic (Corrêa and Olivar, 2010) and politics as a business for personal enrichment; see also Farvid and Glass (2014).

Arguably, political exclusion-cum-patronage has been accused of involving sexual bribes for most of the appointed women who are not related to prominent politicians in their parties or governments, and when this happens, women are the only ones deemed to be prostitutes or bribers, but not the men who use their influence to lure them into this patriarchal ruse. Accusing females of prostitution alone, apart from being gender-based criminalisation and gender discrimination, is systematic and taciturn GBV, and this is a pernicious strategy of connecting women with immorality, based on gender exploitation that has been going on for many years, especially in the societies in which prostitution is a crime. It is as if women are doing it alone. Even where prostitution is legally allowed, it is the woman who becomes an object that men can purchase or rent to provide services to them and keep them regaled, but not otherwise.

There are no men who are for purchase by women who seek the same services that men seek from prostitutes. The popular understanding of prostitution is where a man becomes a prostitute if he engages in such prostitution, especially in homosexual practices that have recently been legalised in some countries. However, there are some developments in redefining the term. For example, according to ModernGhana. com (2015), Ghanaian authorities in the Greater Accra Region

arrested about 33 suspected prostitutes, together with 42 of their male *counterparts* and *clients*, in some brothels at Nungua, an Accra suburb. In this action, the words used speak volumes. The implication here is that counterparts may be homosexuals while clients were straight men who purchased services from females.

The assumption that females are prostitutes is the reason why the word 'clients' would not have been used if in this case the culprits were only females. Even the reportage shows some gender discrimination and performativity. It goes way beyond equality of the suspects, wherein females were condemned before appearing before the court.

Objectification / Thingification of Women's Bodies

Although prostitution, just like beauty pageants, is legalised in some countries, it still objectifies and commercialises a woman as something that one can enjoy or purchase like any other items in the store. This does not help women, even though it is called business and civilisation. Otherwise, both genders should be treated equally. Again, why are women objectified and purchased for men's gratification? We can get the answer from Yen (2008), who notes that there is an assumption, especially in the sex trafficking industry, that purchasing commercial sex acts from females should be tolerated, accepted, and legitimised as a "necessary evil" because the biological male need for sexual intercourse is potent and uncontainable. Is this assumption scientific, and if it is, was there not any way that patriarchal mindsets could have affected the scientific results of such an assumption? It if it a myth, does it not have something to do with the systematised and institutionalised GBV and gender exploitation?

Moreover, by excluding females from equally and equitably participating in politics, mainly decision-making, society loses their potential and inputs based on experiential richness of living under the sexually discriminative system. So, too, leaving females out of decision-making bodies turns them into the favoured ones, dependent, and recipients of decisions

affecting their lives without accommodating their inputs. This is especially true almost everywhere in the world. However, there are differentials currently whereby some countries have more women representatives in decision-making bodies than others. The UN World Conference on Women (1975 cited in Krook and True, 2012) discloses that statistically, women constitute half the population of the world; however, in many countries, it is only a small percentage of them that are in positions of leadership in the various branches of government.

Arguably, by excluding females from decision-making bodies, the current setting not only commits gender violence, but it also denies humankind of females' inputs that, maybe, would have transformed the current militarised society and systems. Militarism, militarisation, and war systems are maintained by a patriarchal system. Zanotti (1979) cited by Merry (2009), defines such a system as a dominant world "system of dualism" based on winner, males, and losers, females (Merry, 2009: 37). Such a system has made sure that gender violence goes on unabated in many places. Merry (2009) argues that patriarchy has nourished its central belief system that empowers males to make laws, wage wars, and mediate between humankind and the divine. This shows the origin of gender violence based on religious beliefs such as honour killings, exclusion, and dehumanising females in some religious books of authorities such as the Bible and the Quran.

If we consider how most religions of the world dehumanise females (Ging and Canning, 2012) as the originators of patriarchal systems, essentially, gender-based discrimination (GBD), and gender exploitation have their roots in Biblical and Qur'anic narratives, which have adverse impacts on the world in general as far as gender inequality is concerned (Maseno et al., 2019; Syed, 2010). The World Bank (2009: 55–57) notes that empirical studies from 61 countries indicate that the gender wage gap is still large, amounting to 23 per cent in developed countries and 27 per cent in developing economies (World Bank, 2009: 141). The findings provided show that there is a slight difference between the so-called developed world and the developing countries. You can see this in many

political configurations nationally and internationally, such as high positions in the UN, as noted above, political parties, Presidents, Prime Ministers, Ministers, Ambassadors, District and Regional or Provincial commissioners in Africa, chiefs, and village leaders. Basically, the system is so patriarchal that it needs to be totally overhauled for women to be accepted and accommodated in it.

Is God a Misogynist?

One of the sources of misogynism can be traced to religions of the world. Most of their literature have embedded and preached the theology of gender discrimination. Again, where did it start? The Bible, Gen. 2:18–25 notes that:

> Then the LORD God said that "it is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him." Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name (Foster, 2022: 1).

Genesis, quoted above, shows how gender inequality and *inferiorisation* started in the biblical myth of creation whereby Eve is created from the rib of Adam while Adam and other beasts were made from soil. Apart from being the last one to be created, so, too, Eve was created to be a helper but not a human (huwoman) that a man can use as he deems fit. For us, this is where gender and sexual exploitation started. What makes this slightly provocative is the fact that such an ungodly relationship is referred to as godly, simply because God cannot come and recant this controversial narrative.

There are a few questions which can help in interrogating the myth of the first creation:

First, is it true that this narrative is God's? Second, can God be biased, vindictive, and ignorant of reality while whatever God does, God does so equally? If God were biassed, ignorant, and vindictive, why did God give every creature the

means of survival such as a brain, hands, and adaptation in various environments? Also, we can ask why did God create female and male animals, birds, and insects, and everything without necessarily getting parts from males' ribs to create females?

Also, Eve is the last creature that God created after creating all. Why and what is the rationale of this apart from the so-called God's creation to look like man's creation? Ironically, why did God create birds, animals, and insects' females and males in the first place? Why using a rib of a male to create a female as if God had run out of soil to use to create? Why did God not create the two together and give them authority to procreate thereafter as it happened? Is the idea of using Adam's rib the fear of creating a female first for fear that it would be understood that God had her carnal knowledge and bred Adam?

Consider the fact that God does allow people the freedom of choice by allowing them to decide how to use their capabilities. Does it mean God did not know that the inequality God is alleged to have enacted would cost many their dignity, lives, and rights? There is an assumption that God is all knower (Dawkins, 2016). Nevertheless, God's failure to know that, by creating Adam and pulling Eve out of his rib, was creating an unequal and unfair relationship. Also, God thingified Eve.

Again, why did God not underscore the calamity of creating females and males unequally if indeed, God is omnipotent, as religions make people to believe? Did God not know the injustice God was creating and blessing that turned to be a curse for females? We do not want to use "he" or "him" for the fear of reinforcing and supporting gender discrimination and exploitation. Can this be the true God who we are told to be the Almighty to mean the one with all faculties and powers? Looking at how a patriarchal system refers to God as "he" but not "she" or even "it", one can see the impartiality of this very God or god. Who saw God's gender to know for sure that God is "he" but not "she" or even "it"? Kugle and Hunt (2012) answer this question that

"God is imagined as a male being or a supernatural force with masculine qualities" whereby "the masculinized cultural body is condensed into the erect phallus, perceived to represent the idealized male" (p. 257).

Is God masculinised simply because the patriarchal rationale and system socially created and defined God? As noted above, we are trying as fairly and vehemently as we can to avoid using "he" or "him" to refer to God as a way of reinforcing and blessing such fallacious, misogynistic, and patriarchal approach, definition, and setting. The patriarchal system calls God king but not queen. Again, by going on subscribing to such glaring concoction, fallacy, and injustices, we are reinforcing gender discrimination, thus exploitation.

Further, Gen. (3:20) provides how gender exploitation is morally endemic and systemic that "now the man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all the living" (Biblia.com, 2024, n.p.). This is where the roles based on performativity that have always defined women such as caring and baby-making started. Interestingly, Adam received his name from God, but Eve did not. Now, it is over two thousand years since this inequality was enacted as per foreign and invasive theological epistemology and philosophy, and nothing has been done to deconstruct it. By given power to name a woman, the man (Adam) was given carte blanche ("complete freedom to use one's discretion") as a warrant to own, use, and treat her as a property just like a car, pet, even a toy. This is where the commodification or *thingification* of females started. It means, by naming her, Adam, as a typical replica of males, turned Eve into his property.

What provokes is the fact that Adam named Eve just like other beasts to signify that, before his eyes, Eve was just like other ignorant and *tabula rasa* creatures that he was given to name and thereby own, exploit, name, use, and rule. Such cannot be the thinking and work of God, the true God.

Regarding the Quran, just like its ancestor, the Bible, the narrative is the same. The Quran (4:1) notes: "and God said: 'O Mankind! Be dutiful to your Lord, Who created you from

a single person (Adam) and from Him (Adam) He created his wife (Eve), and from them both He created many men and women'" (Ramli et al. 2013: 42).

Here, one can see how subservience and submission are ordered from the beginning. Inversely from the Bible, the Quran is perfected by what is known as sahih hadiths or the narratives of the aṣ-ṣaḥābah or the companions of Muhammad, the prophet of Islam (Pieri, 2021). Prophet Muhammad says that:

> Speak nicely to women since a woman is created from the rib and the rib, which is the most curved, is upper part. If you straighten it, you will break it up. But if you leave it, it still will be curved (Hasyim, 2006: 45).

The hadith cited above means that a woman is naturally and religiously defective however you treat her. This makes her an infinitely disabled person whom Allah willed so. Also, it means that women are religiously becoming "objects to be controlled as men struggle to retain or to gain control of their environment" (O'Toole et al., 2020: 86). Another implication is that women are puny and must tolerate their God-given disability, and men are strong and, therefore capable of defending their subservient women. Essentially, this was when and where modern patriarchal institutions wrapped in godly and religious wraps started.

To inject more fear, the Quran 15:30-35 notes that:

> The Angels prostrated themselves all of them together. Except Satan, he refused to be among the prostrators. God said: 'O Satan! What is your reason for not being among the prostrators? 'Satan said: 'I am not the one to prostrate myself to a human being, whom You created from sounding clay of altered black smooth mud.' God said: 'Then get out from Here for verily you are an outcast or cursed one. Verily the curse shall be upon you till the Day of Resurrection (Guiley and Imbrogno, 2011: 52).

The story of prostration before Adam gives man a justification over a woman as the creature who is supposed to be subservient and who must obey orders from her master, a man, for fear of not enjoying the *Day of Resurrection,* which is also suspicious. Primarily, religion made females miserable and underprivileged creatures by contrariwise giving all privileges to the males simply because all such literatures were enacted by males to help them exploit females and maintain power over them. That is why, in many neo-religions, females are forced to toe the line even under injustices and tortures. It is because males want to keep and safeguard their interests and privileges. We think females need to rebel the same way Western Enlightenment thinkers did against such discriminatory and exploitative theologies to force some religions to change for the fear of losing followership.

Through the objectification of women, which means construing an individual as an object (Heflick and Goldenberg, 2009) or *propertisation* of a woman, religions blessed GBV straightaway from the creation. This is totally contrary and different from other schools of thought such as traditional African beliefs that treated men and women equally under *Ubuntu* ("you are because I am") (Mhango, 2017b), and it is from this foreign and hegemonic rationale that the patriarchal system was born and took over everything. What is sure is the fact that all such myths were created and documented by men for their perpetual benefit as opposed to those of females or gendered people. That is why everything powerful and mighty seems to be masculine as an antithesis to feminine, or two opposing faces in which the former is better and stronger than the latter that is inferior and weaker. To see how this dehumanisation of females is taking a new turn, there was recently a female sex robot created that is expected to be on the market anytime soon.

According to Waugh (2016), "sex robots 'will make men more sexist.'" Where is a male robot to make women sexist? The answer is simple; that misogynists use politics and culture to dehumanise and exploit females. Now, they are using technology to take such criminality to the next level of gender

discrimination and gender exploitation, and because of the patriarchal international superstructure, there is not even one single law that can stop such madness hidden in technology done consciously or unconsciously.

If one seeks to put a stop on such criminality, a person will be told that doing so will infringe on the freedom of others. Again, this is capitalism. It cares less about humanity or morality. Before capitalism, whatever makes profit is legit.

We need to debunk all myths and perils, be they religious, political (Fitzgerald, 2011) or economic, that belittle women for the purpose of subjugating and exploiting them. We are in the 21st century. It does not make any sense to be governed by archaic things of many past centuries when human understanding of a person's environment was narrow and poor. We strongly think that, if those who are said to have presided over such controversial things could come today, would surely wonder at, and deem miracles some of our achievements as humankind. Regarding Africa, some societies were ahead of time, since they did not have gender inequality, and therefore, no GBV as we see it in the DRC.

White et al. (1997), cited in Suarez and Gadalla (2010) maintain that there are some rape-free societies. These include the African Twas (Burundi and Rwanda) and Mbuti (DRC) (D'Errico et al., 2013). The two societies above achieved this status mostly because they have an egalitarian view of men's and women's contributions to society and thus, have an absence of male-dominance ideology. Even when we underscore the centrality of *Ubuntu* in which you are because I am, there was no way such sexual discrimination would be sanctioned systematically. One sometimes wonders to find that such egalitarianism, apart from being referred to as primitive and uncivilised, were violated through the introduction of exploitative religions.

Basically, it is easy to tie these inequitable and unequal religions with rape that has been going on in the DRC because some societies did not traditionally have this behaviour. For example, the epicentre of the conflict, Eastern DRC, has

suffered rape, while such a phenomenon was traditionally non-existent, for example, amongst the Mbuti people of Ituri (Sanday, 2020). Other rape-free societies, according to Watson-Franke (2002) cited in Fowler (2011) are Mosuo (China), Ashanti (West Africa), and Apache, Iroquois Trobriander peoples (North America). Ironically, despite such an advanced level of equality and human rights, almost all rape-free societies, as noted above, are regarded as the most primitive and uncouth people in the modern world.

If a gendered lens is critically applied here, there comes a bigger picture that shows how and why many societies have excluded women from decision-making bodies. One of the detriments of exclusion can be seen in how, for example, parliaments in some countries, set aside millions of dollars for remuneration of government officials who already have big salaries. Remember that many of those enjoying such perks are men whose number is high since all African countries gained their independence. When such male-dominated governments do that, they ignore simple and affordable - but important - aspects such as providing hygiene tissues to girls in schools. By excluding women in decision-making, girls, children, and other commonly excluded citizens, are negatively affected.

Africa, for example, has had only ten female Presidents, namely Samia Suluhu Hassan, from March, 2021 to present (Tanzania, after the death of President John Magufuli); Sahle-Work Zewde (Ethiopia) from October 2018 to present); and Ameenah Gurib-Fakim (Mauritius), from June 2015 to March 2018. Others are Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (Liberia) from January 2006 to January, 2018; Catherine Samba-Panza, acting (CAR) from January 2014 to March 2016; Joyce Hilda Banda (Malawi, after the death of President Bingu wa Mutharika) from April 2012 to May 2014; and Agnes Monique Ohsan Bellepeau, acting (Mauritius) from March to July 2012 and May to June, 2015. Other female Presidents are Rose Francine Rogombé, interim (Gabon) from June 2009 to October 2009; Ivy Matsepe-Cassaburri, acting (South Africa) 25 September 2008 for just 14 hours; and Slyvie Kinigi, acting (Burundi) from 27 October 1993 to 5 February 1994.

While the continent of Africa has had only nine female Presidents, none of them ever assumed power either through *coups d'état* or vote rigging, as has been the case for many male Presidents. Ironically, one country of Nigeria has up to now had more Presidents, all 14 being male, than all African female Presidents since gaining its independence.

Singling out how effective African Presidents can be; after male politicians in the CAR fought amongst themselves for power and thereby broke the country in two along sectarian lines, Christianity, and Islam. Nevertheless, the situation relatively calmed down when Catherine Samba-Panza took over (2014 to 2016). Since all 54 African countries gained their independence in the early 60s and 70s and thereafter for those who gained independence lately, there have only been nine Presidents of whom only three were elected. Only one of them, Banda, served just one term. Considering how the exploitation, degradation, and objectification of females started, we can sum up this discourse in this chapter with one simple question resulting from thinking out of the gender trap: Is God unjust and a misogynist? Professor Dawkins answers this question, maintaining that God is a "petty, unjust, unforgiving and a control freak and a misogynist, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, megalomaniac and a malevolent bully" (Odoyo, 2007: 2); see also Greed (2011).

Regarding whether God is a misogynist, and thus unjust, some Islamic scholars have tried to distance God from it to no avail. However, they still refer to God as "him". Why "him", not "she" or "it"? Similarly, the whole institution of Islam is purely presided over by men, just like it is for some Christian sects. Amina Wadud (1999) and Asma Barlas (2002) cited in Siddiqui and Sarhandi (2015) attempt to distance God from misogynies by throwing blames on Qur'anic interpreters. They maintain that it is not the Quran that is misogynist, patriarchal, and oppressive, but rather its interpretations and its interpreters.

However, if the issue truly is misinterpretation or even misconception, why has Islam harboured the same patriarchal

nature in its functionality and existentiality? Why do Muslim husbands and men, just like other misogynists, control the bodies of their wives and daughters, but not those of their sons? Why do they do so apart from the fear of committing sexual acts out of the control of men? The answer is simple. For example, such a misogynistic setting shows "Eve, who symbolizes the 'Animal Personal Soul' (*al- ruh al-hayawani al bashari*), with Adam, who symbolizes the 'Higher Human Soul' (*al-ruh al-insani al-'uluwi*)" (Cornell, 2007: 267). Moreover, Islam has thingified females more than other religions.

For example, Prophet Muhammad says that 'the smallest reward for the people of Paradise is an abode where there are 80,000 servants and 72 wives" (Dzikansky et al., 2011: xvi). This promise is totally sexually discriminatory, since it is silent about what women who will inhabit the 'Paradise' will receive or what they will be or what they would like to receive. This warns females about being part of such a religion.

Conclusion

The DRC, the international community, and the UN precisely are patriarchal. Therefore, they need to be decolonised, deconstructed, and reconstructed. Thereafter, the major agenda must be the empowerment and the involvement of females in all decision-making bodies locally and internationally. Regarding the causals, reasons, and root as to why Western institutions have frequently seemed to be patriarchal, it is because "monotheism has been integral to western patriarchal culture" (Jacobs, 2007: 242), which also needs to be decolonised, and if possible, to force religions behind it to redress the societies that they have been misleading for decades. The failure to even reprimand the theologies of gender discrimination shows how patriarchate is enshrined and institutionalised. Daly (1968), cited in Modise and Wood (2016) argues that patriarchy, with its misogynistic schemata, works through theology, metaphysics, and language to degrade, discriminate, exploit, and victimise women in every sphere of their lives in almost every society, and this has been ongoing for a very long time in many

countries, including the DRC. How long will it go on? Nobody can tell, especially under liberal peace, its hidden agenda, failures, and influences globally.

Discussion Questions

1. How can politics in the DRC and globally change from being an exclusively male club only, to an all-encompassing level field?
2. Can the DRC transform GBV without mainstreaming gender in politics?
3. Why do female elites in politics fail to advocate for the rights of their sisters at grassroots level?
4. How do politics and religion complement each other in internalising and reinforcing GBV, instead of deploying state laws to mitigate discriminatory and exploitative religious practices that reinforce the exploitation and dehumanisation of women?
5. Does an increase of women in politics imply prevention and stopping GBV? If yes or no how?

Chapter IX

Socially Entrenched Culture of Violence: Authors' Testimonies and Congolese Women's Peacebuilding Initiatives

Introduction

Using a gendered lens, one can see a lot of violence that females face in all spheres of life, in almost all cultures. Violence is not only gendered and socialised, but it is also culturally internalised, institutionalised, legitimised, and systematised, whereby humans are socially constructed and conditioned to behave based on performativity (Reardon, 1996; Gruber, 2011; Springer, 2012; Hodgetts et al., 2014). We can see this in this example: I (Nkwazi) once shared in the class vis-à-vis our neighbour under wife-beating masculinity (Ringrose and Renold, 2020), who used to batter his wife when I was young. Despite our neighbour openly and repeatedly battering his wife, nobody took the issue on or reprimanded or even punished him. Why? It is because battering a wife was perceived as an accepted practice in society as a culture, means and sign of manhood that bestows powers upon a husband to assert and exercise his control over his wife without any reciprocity or consideration of her human rights and human nature. This is where the culture of violence hinges and thrives.

In the process of writing this book, on 30 September 2015 at 5:30, *Al Jazeera* TV aired a programme known as "*People and Power*", which showed how, in Jamaica, incest and child sexual abuses are referred to as small sex that should not bother anybody; see also Smith et. al. (2020). In the same vein, in the US, a judge in Montana, sparked outrage for failing to hand down prison time to an incest convict for raping his

12-year-old daughter (Billings Gazette, 2016). If a judge from such a country that prides itself on being developed and tutoring others about human rights, can do this, what of failed states such as the DRC? While such a paedophile was enjoying his freedom due to the leniency of the judge, according to the BBC (24 June 2015), in Britain, Anne Lakey was serving her nine-year term in jail after being found guilty and thereby convicted of having sex with two under-age boys in her care (BBC, 2015). However, Grady (2016) notes that one survey that was conducted in the 1990s reported that 45 per cent of the Dutch navy's and marines' personnel deployed in the UN's Cambodian mission had sexual contact with sex workers or other members of the local population during a five-month tour of duty, and nothing has been reported to have happened to these self-inculpatory UN personnel, simply because they were UN workers and male. Here, a culture of violence and gender exploitation are evident.

Importantly, we are not trying or intending to be devil's advocate. As noted above in the case of arrests in Ghana, you can see this in prostitution, where females are more accused and persecuted than males. This is exactly where you see a female struggling against the whole of society from family members to strangers. Although this is an off-the-cuff topic, it still ties in with the DRC, where such situations exist, as we will show later. For, such gender favouritism, systemic ignorance, and palpable prejudice have caused a lot of suffering to the victims, not only in Jamaica but also many places including the DRC. This shows how victims were traumatised, especially when they remembered how society abandoned them when they were children at the time, they needed it the most.

The above examples point to structural and social violence theory in which some human needs are not met amidst a thriving culture of violence. Watts and Bohle (1993), cited by Rhodes et al. (2012), term such an exclusion in what they call the governmentality, as violence itself (Rhodes et al., 2012) because it embeds and encompasses many areas vis-à-vis gender and power distribution locally and internationally.

Grappling with Gender and Cultural Violence

I (Nkwazi) took a class about gender, which was all females except myself. I may argue that since I started this class, I personally started to critically and open-mindedly question many things that I used to take for granted in my own home, just like any man, either because of ignorance or just their internalisation and normalisation amongst the members of society. From class discussions, lectures, and academic sources, I can admit that I see things differently now, especially the rampancy of the culture of violence. I can now tell why wives are battered, controlled, make beds, prepare food for husbands, look after children, and come home earlier than their husbands in my community without any reciprocity.

So, too, I can understand and tell why women in my community – which, is a typical replica of many African societies – are subordinate to their husbands. In a sense, with respect to gender violence that society commits, cultural and social aspects take a lion's share compared to other aspects across the globe. Being the creatures of social construction, many areas wherein women are violated and face gender violence, which seems to be socially accepted in the culture of violence, internalised, and legalised as we have indicated above vis-à-vis some laws in the DRC.

However, the arguments above do not include matrilineal and many traditional religions that did more justice than foreign ones. This phenomenon can be seen in many socio-cultural aspects and practices such as forcing women to cover their bodies according to certain religious or traditional stipulations, either under cultural or religious edicts, and forcing females to wear veils. Other elements of the culture of violence against women can be seen in human trafficking, salary differences between females and males around the world. Another element revolves around female genital mutilation (FGM), however, even males are circumcised; selling females through dowry; assigning roles to play; how to dress; and prohibiting females from serving in certain religious capacities or battering them are evident.

For example, a veil has been and is a symbol that reconstructs the "'otherness" of Islam to the West' (Duits and van Zoonen, 2006: 109) or to males, which is rooted in a long tradition of Orientalism that has constructed Islam as contra-European and misogynistic. That is why there has been cultural antagonism of which it is females who bear the brunt due to the patriarchal nature of the two cultures in conflict.

Although proposing that females need to be protected or enjoy protection by the law - the same way it protects males - can be misconstrued by some feminists as belittling them, we think the law must protect females against GBV, precisely the culture of violence, just the same as it protects everybody against crimes. This can be achieved by addressing the underlying root causes of the problem such as the culture of violence, patriarchal systems, and social and structural violence by deconstructing them to serve all humans equally and equitably. So, every society needs to learn about what it is made of based on an individual as an agent of change and transformation. Reardon (1996) proposes the "head changing" (p. 5), which looks at human psychological realities, arguing that humans need to learn who they actually are and work on structural and social transformation.

Economically Programmed Gender Violence (EPGV)

There is lots of research that shows how various societies, under the culture of violence, have exploited women since time immemorial. For example, Stainback et al. (2011) address discrimination in the workplace, pointing out that much literature shows that "women in positions of authority are likely to be singled out as targets for harassment" (p. 1179). Toutkoushian et al. (2007) address salary differentials based on gender, race / ethnicity, and marital status. Even though the current world (society) regards itself as advanced and civilised, salary gaps still exist even in the so-called developed countries, notwithstanding some gains enhanced by the feminist movement. As Cohen and Huffman (2007) disclose, the wage gap is smaller under female managers, and its adverse effects are much stronger when those female

managers are of relatively high status, which is supposed to be doubled and maintained to achieve income parity between men and women. This informs us of the existing salary inequality based on and geared by gender exploitation.

The above argument is about the so-called developed countries. With respect to the conflict in question, salary parity has never been an issue to bother anybody. How can it be a problem while many females are not as competent as men after the culture of violence denied them equal education opportunities? We think therefore, that the international community needs to address the conflict so that there can be a competent and fully functioning government in the DRC that will investigate income inequalities after resuming peace. Reardon (1996) cites the International Labour Organization (ILO) arguing that "wage differentials between men and women have been the most clear and universal indicators of discrimination against women are widely documented" (p. 28). This is not only discrimination, but also exploitation, since wage differentials create human-induced dependence and poverty for affected women and girls.

So, too, the whole setting of the division of labour under capitalism - since its inception - shows that there has never been fair division and distribution of labour between two sexes, which is itself sexism.

Essentially, sexism goes far deeper and wider to affect the whole concepts of nation and production, whereby the war system invests heavily in militarism. Reardon (1996) notes that one of the indicators of militarisation can be seen in the percentage of expenditures by the state. So, too, the whole concept of national security revolves around militarisation, machoism, and male chauvinism in themselves as the anchors of the culture of violence. To cap it all, the modern notion of a nation-state has institutionalised, and legalised violence as a means of controlling the majority and maintaining law and social order wherein the culture of violence is legalised. Arguably, there are a few females in the military industry. For example, in Tanzania, where Nkwazi comes from, no woman

has ever attained the ranks of Army General or has become the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces or the Inspector General of Police (IGP). The situation is the same in Uganda from where Evelyn originates.

Further, using a gendered lens, we can see how a gendered economic relationship not only ends with female-male struggles, but also plays into the relationship between North- and South-developed countries and underdeveloped, rural, and urban communities. There is a core-periphery in almost all settings, including gender, wherein the core-periphery structural configuration can be viewed as male-female respectively, where males are the core and females the periphery and the core controls everything that the periphery does and what it should look like.

Conclusion

Regarding the above realities, it is evident that a female, as an agent of change and transformation in any society, is not only struggling against the patriarchal system, but also against the whole society she finds herself in. This is the same situation that females in the DRC and elsewhere found themselves since women's problems are generally and relatively the same globally. One example we offer here regarding culture and gender violence is that females have always been on the cross, despite some religions claiming that all people who accepted them have been saved by a male Jesus. Importantly, the current societal social and structural systems – full of injustices and violence – need to be transformed by seeing to it that all human beings are treated equally and equitably. Human treatments should be based on their humanity, but not on sexes or gendered qualifications or definitions. It is supposed that women have the right – just like men

Treating all genders and people equally will automatically enable them to participate in decision-making bodies equally and fully to enable them to add their inputs, which can help to reshape, and possibly, transform the current setting based on the diktat of the patriarchal system.

If anything, this is what gender decolonisation is all about for this book. The conflict in the DRC and elsewhere needs to be decolonised and degendered.

Essentially, if the current superstructural setting is an experiment – that has been in place for centuries – has failed miserably then it needs to be replaced by one which is free of gender violence. Removing all obstacles, norms, myths, and structures that have left females out of decision-making bodies is very crucial because females are not claiming to take over; and thereby do everything alone, as males have done since time immemorial. Also, it should be noted that females are not looking for an opportunity to take revenge or lord it over their perpetrators. Instead, they seek to emancipate everybody, including perpetrators and victims equally so that they can equally stand and move forward together.

We tend to agree with those who say that an individual is a good agent of change if their potentials are fully utilised. For us, positive transformation starts with doing things differently in our families and communities.

We wish all males would learn about GBV and its impacts on society in its entirety. Given that societies need both women and men, there is not a winner-takes-it-all result or methodology between females and males. They both depend on and need each other to functionally survive as a species. However, this has always been ignored. So, too, I (Nkwazi) wish all males would ask themselves: How would I like to be deservedly treated if I were a female?

Referring to the case in question, we think males in the DRC have the keys and wherewithal, they will, and can play a key role to resolving the conflict instead of reclining towards patriarchal and archaic superstructure that has never worked equally and with justice for all human beings, for the detriment and jeopardy of both.

More importantly, the international community – is archaic and patriarchal by nature – needs to be reformed to equally and equitably accommodate the interests of all human beings. We all need the resources we are endowed with without

any form of discrimination or *holier than thou* mentality, as it currently is in the DRC and other areas facing resource-based conflict (Mehlum et al., 2006). Gender exploitation and inequality have totally failed, and they will never work without being decolonised, deconstructed, and reconstructed. We need to turn things around to see to it that the world achieves true peace and justice equally. Principally, if gender discrimination, inter alia, in the world superstructure would change radically and dramatically within a short time, the world would become a good place for females as well as males to live harmoniously and productively. The major question we may ask is: How much has the world lost to abusing and misusing females' potential, talents, and opportunities? It is indeed immense.

Since 1996, the goings-on in the DRC tell us that it has been experiencing a prolonged conflict simply because the world is not ready to change and does not care. This conflict has been characterised by extreme violence, mass population displacements, widespread rape, deaths, suffering, and a collapse of public health services (Steiner et al., 2009). However, under the DRC's long-time dictator, Mobutu, rape has been going on, but not at an alarming rate that would attract international condemnation, simply because there was a government however corrupt and inept it was. Also, Mobutu enjoyed the backing of the West and brutally minimised the chances and magnitude of the occurrence of violent conflict as it currently is in the DRC. However, this absence of war should not be misconstrued as the prevalence of peace and stability in the country. There could not have been any meaningful peace without justice.

Discussion Questions

1. What is the link between colonialism, neocolonialism, capitalism, and the prevalent GBV in the DRC?
2. Can gender be decolonised, deconstructed, reconstructed? If so, how, and if not, how, and why?
3. How is the rape of women in the DRC connected to patriarchy and the rape of the country's natural resource wealth?

4. Can GBV be transformed without addressing political violence in the DRC and the world over? If yes, or not, explain.

Chapter X

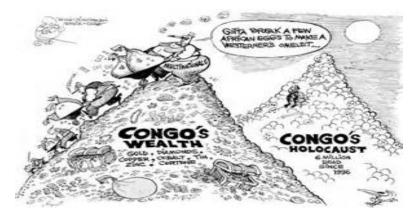# National and Global Politico–Economic Factors

Figure 5:   Congo's Wealth, forgotten neglected holocaust and sacrificies (Source: ecstatictruthpdx.blogspot.com)

Introduction

No discourse can deal with the DRC (then the Congo) without touching on its first Prime Minister, Patrice Lumumba, who championed social justice and total emancipation, which Belgium, the US, and the West in general abhorred (Moore, 2007). Lumumba, a politician, found himself in the middle of economic wars of the two opposing superpowers of the world at the time, and when the politics of the Cold War was highly polarising.

Therefore, when the then Congo received its independence in 1960, the West did not like to see such a huge country with immense resources turning to the East. Consequently, the West decided to assassinate Lumumba as a way of averting the DRC's gravitation towards socialism.

The DRC provides a good example in which the US's Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) – under the instructions of the White House and Belgium government – decided to eliminate Lumumba after opposing the extension of colonialism in his country at the time that it gained its short–lived independence.

When Liberal Peace Started to Fail in the DRC

We argue that liberal peace started to fail in the DRC right after the country gained its independence. That is because when Lumumba asked the UN to intervene, it responded positively, although at heart, it knew it was selling him to his enemies who later finished him. Basically, Lumumba and the DRC suffered from what we can call international complicity and criminality geared by the greed to plunder its resources. These international conspirators in conjunction with locals were succeeded to eliminate Lumumba. After assassinating Lumumba, as argued above, the West installed Mobutu, who ruined the country for 32 years from 1965 to 1997 (Pogge, 2011). Due to the anarchical and archaic nature of the international system under Cold War politics, neither the CIA nor Belgium have ever been forced to redress the DRC for the sufferings they authored or even to face criminal charges resulting from toppling the government, and thereby assassinating Lumumba.

Using a gender lens, we argue that the DRC is gendered as inferior to superior Belgium and the US, particularly when we consider the whole concept of socially gendered performativity attached to many things and actions under a patriarchal system of militarisation. How would the international community have reacted if such a crime were vice versa? After toppling and killing Lumumba, the US installed Mobutu, whose kleptocratic *extraordinaire* ("outstanding in a particular capacity") rule ruined and plundered the DRC for such a long time without being brought to book. Again, there was no way the powers of the world would have brought their stooge to book while he fully toed the line by supplying and providing them with the resources they badly needed and still need to the present day.

Interestingly, under Mobutu, the DRC was artificially calm, however, no human rights existed in the country. Brutality, fearmongering, intimidations, and manipulations were the mechanisms Mobutu used to cling to power for such a long time. Gowda (2012) notes that Mobutu was reckless in eliminating his enemies, and like other rulers, he kept his accumulated money in Swiss banks and other Western capitals, where he bought properties and spent much of his money and time. After his toppling and death, Western banks have never returned the loot to the DRC, and nobody in the international community is even bothering to remind them to do so.

Ex-Colonies and Their Coloniality and Hypocrisy

The West, the home of Africa's ex-colonies, has identified it globally as the champion of human rights and rule of law. Despite being a self-appointed guru of human rights (Mhango, 2016a, 2018c, 2023b), the West has exhibited stinking and unprecedented double standards and hypocrisy. Through such ills, the West backed Joseph-Désiré Mobutu, later Mobutu Sese Seko, who exploited, robbed, and vandalised the DRC for 32 years, backed by the West, he supplied with cheap resources looted from the country. Ironically, the champions of human rights, the West, did not bother to remind him to observe human rights as the prerequisite of good governance or the rule of law, as it has always preached and ordered other noncompliant countries to do. Powers (2008) discloses that the US provided military assistance to Mobutu throughout his tenure as one of the most infamous African dictators, without underscoring the truth that he was a looter and an abuser of human rights. The same was repeated in Zimbabwe. At the time, Robert Mugabe, Zimbabwe's long-time despot, was the darling of the West.

Mugabe committed genocide in Matabeleland, and the West pretended that nothing happened (Mhango, 2018a). It is only recently, after Mugabe fell out with the West, that the same started to open his closets. For example, Doran (2015) reported that from January 1983, a campaign of terror was

waged against the Ndebele people in Matabeleland in western Zimbabwe and this genocide was known as Gukurahundi.

The so-called Gukurahundi or "sweep away the chaff" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012) massacres or genocide, remains the darkest period in the country's post-independence history. Gukurahundi claimed the lives of more than 20,000 committed by Robert Mugabe's feared Fifth Brigade (Ladzekpo, 2016). This number is not negligible by any standard. Neither is it statics, but the lives of innocent people that their government killed.

In another recent incident, due to hidden agendas and motives, the West went after long-time Libyan tyrant, Muammar Gaddafi, even before he fired a shot. Due to Western masculinity, the West helped Libyans to destroy their own country in the quest of destroying their dictator. In Kiswahili, this is frying a fish with its oil. Why did the West and its *political customers* not use the same rationale in neighbouring Egypt, where the issues were similar, namely brutality, corruption, and dictatorship? As argued above, the conflict rests more on the struggles for controlling natural resources. Libya has crude petroleum, while Egypt does not have as much precious resources.

As it was in Zimbabwe, to save their faces, the West that betrayed the innocent people of Matabeleland, is now coming with a new narrative of asking for the documents from Zimbabwe on the matter. Due to the international gendered systems, Mugabe was demonised by those who conspired with him or kept mum when he was accused of committing crimes against his citizens. The right thing to do here is for both accomplices and perpetrators to accept their culpability. The major question we ask here is: Where were these documents? And who made them available if it is not the West that documented everything to use it against Mugabe whenever he stopped toeing the line?

Ironically, since falling out with Mugabe, the West is currently using the same information it was aware of to try to either shame or unmake Mugabe again, even if he died

long time ago. Again, *Verba volant, scripta manent*, "(spoken) words fly away, written ones remain." Who knows how such information can be used in future and against whom in this conspiracy against Africa?

As already noted above, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the West found that it no longer needed Mobutu and other dictators anymore. Therefore, it purposely left him to fend for himself up until he was toppled on 16 May 1997 (Ylänkö, 2016). The DRC took a new turn and became an international war, which began in August 1998, to end up involving armies from eight African states (Atzili, 2007). Basically, the fall of Mobutu triggered the conflict that has been going on in the Eastern DRC ever since. The Eastern DRC is endowed with vast reserves of natural resources, mainly minerals, metals, gas, and timbers. For that reason and others, after the fall of Mobutu, and the fact that the governments that succeeded his regime were weak, the Eastern DRC has always been in constant war between the government and warlords, all struggling to control and manage resources.

By and large, plundered resources of value end up in the markets of the West and those of whomever can bid for them. Of all areas in the DRC, the Eastern DRC region is more adversely affected than others simply because it is endowed with rich resources on which Western economies and markets depend and need. Sadly, though, the conflict has seen the lives of women and others being disrupted and negatively affected simply because they were born in the country that is the source of the resources. Although the conflict has negatively affected all Congolese, as indicated above, women have borne the brunt more adversely than men simply because they were born females.

During Cold War politics, Western powers had unbridled power to do whatever they wanted in poor countries. It would unbridled do anything from abusing to exploiting them even if doing so required killing innocent people or toppling their democratically elected leaders who posed or presumed to pose any danger to or refused to serve their interests. Sadly, even

after the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), the situation did not change or improve, especially for poor countries. Ever since, the West – led by the US – has retained and maintained unchecked and purely discretionary powers in dealing with them (Boswell, 2015). The situation worsened because, as indicated above, the West decided to phase out some dictators and install others.

However, the situation was totally different when the West toppled Lumumba. Since Lumumba was neither a dictator nor a person who had already led his country, by using their unchecked discretionary powers, toppling him, and killing were the only options available. They preferred the elimination of Lumumba as the only available possibility and solution that would guarantee safety to their economic as well as military interests, which they got under Mobutu's kleptocratic regime of over three decades. On the contrary, Lumumba was replaced with a dictator, since, by all means, Lumumba had to die to avert the DRC falling into the hands of the West's then arch-enemy, the then USSR, which would exploit whatever the Western countries got from the DRC. Such a change of hand would endanger the West and their interests, given that the DRC is a major producer of uranium (Fleckner and Avery, 2011), which is used in making nuclear weapons amongst which are the ones the US used to bomb Hiroshima and Nagasaki (Mhango, 2018c).

However, the death of Lumumba created another problem. Mobutu, who took over from Lumumba, dashed all hope of independence that the Congolese then had (Dizolele, 2010). Mobutu catered to Western interests up until the collapse of the USSR in the early 90s. Nonetheless, the collapse of the USSR occurred at the time that nuclear competition was high amongst the two powers and their allies. So, to put a tab on the danger and avert it, the West had to clinch the DRC under another arrangement that secured its supply of resources and kept uranium in *safe* but dirty hands dripping with the blood of Congolese.

Apart from assuring the West of its control of uranium and other resources of great value, the assassination of Lumumba prevented the confrontation of superpowers in the DRC. To some extent, such a move deterred this confrontation whereby the USSR did not purposely offer to save Lumumba, despite knowing that he was inclined to their camp and the results would be death. Moreover, it shows the unreliability of hegemonic allies, especially if we consider the fact that the USSR just stood and looked on as Lumumba was killed as if he had nothing to do with it. Bechtolsheimer (2012) notes that "on the 25 November, 1965 Colonel Joseph-Désiré Mobutu staged a bloodless *coup* to take charge of the political turmoil in recently independent Congo and established one of the most brutal and corrupt dictatorships in the modern African history" (p. 3); see also De Rezende (2012). Ironically, for all 32 years that Mobutu was in power abusing and mismanaging his country with impunity, he was backed and protected by the West that he supplied with resources plundered from the DRC.

Post-Cold War and Prolongation of Plunder

The DRC suffered greatly during colonial, Cold War, and post-Cold War times. After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 many wrongly thought that the global polarisation that the Cold War caused, would end. Thus, countries that suffered under the Cold War would find reprieve. It did not happen. Even after the Cold War ended, the same criminal partners have never been brought to book, which seems to be the international complicity and duplicity against the DRC and Africa in general. Therefore, there was no way - under international laws – that such criminals would be held accountable for the crimes they committed in the DRC, amongst others.

Apart from the DRC, the West committed atrocities in various countries that were under the leaders who opposed its interests, which aimed to benefit and safeguard its constituency and economies. In similar fashion, in dealing with Mobutu, the West shamelessly sacrificed and crucified the very human rights, rule of law, and democracy that it has preached to recalcitrant countries. Once again, this shows the

double standards and criminality that the West applies and commits to other non-Western countries. All sorts of crimes, from plundering to manipulating democratic institutions and suppressing recalcitrant voices, were committed under the West's watch.

Similarly, Mobutu's criminality was purposely ignored and tolerated, simply because the two were in the same bed committing the same sacrilege against innocent Congolese. Mobutu was often welcomed to the White House and other European capitals, where he used to stash and shell out the money that he looted from the Congolese for over three decades. Weinstein (2000) notes that:

> During the Cold War, the United States encouraged Mobutu's suppression of dissent and autocratic rule in order to combat the spread (or perceived threat) of communism in the region. In retrospect, Mobutu's reign was very nearly an extension of the Belgian occupation of the Congo (p. 12).

The situation went on up until now, many years after Mobutu. Nobody is tasking the current regime to introduce or observe the prerequisites of the rule of law and good governance in the DRC, which would stabilise the DRC. Again, if the DRC becomes stable, how will the West easily plunder it? Marshall (2008) argues that the conflict in the DRC from 1998 until 2003, was a tragedy of enormous magnitude.

From the interests of the Western powers, there come the interests of other African nations, which wanted to loot Congolese riches. It is as if the DRC does not belong to any people. Tshitereke (2003) argues that war has been the largest single economic factor in sub-Saharan Africa, which the dominant development paradigm of neoliberalism whose ramifications it has refused to acknowledge. The war that has been ongoing in the DRC makes the statement above to be very true. The DRC is robbed to supply materials to Western countries at the detriment of Congolese people, especially children, the elderly, and women, who practically are not local

beneficiaries of the conflict. Such an economic war essentially is productive to beneficiaries of the conflict, who would like to prolong it to make money (Yazigi, 2014). That is largely why the West, which is one of the beneficiaries after emerging powers came to the fray of the resources plundered in the DRC, conspires with, and incentivises some African countries to invade others, as it was in the case of Burundi, Rwanda, and Uganda, when they invaded the DRC.

Eriksson Baaz and Stern (2009) point out that "from the time of the Congo Free State, the Congolese population has derived little – if any – benefit from its vast natural resources" (p. 500). Instead, Congolese have ever since borne the brunt simply because their country is endowed with huge reserves of resources of value that the West needs to develop its economies, not for the benefits of Congolese but instead for the benefits of its citizens. That is why it makes more sense to say that the DRC, just like other African countries, developed Europe, which in turn, underdeveloped Africa (Mhango, 2018c; Rodney, 2018).

Due to the exploitative nature between muscular rich and feminine poor countries, namely the West and poor countries, the conflict in the DRC has, since it began, revolved around controlling resources, which likewise, involve controlling humans, especially during the war in which they suffer greatly based on the diktat of a gendered world. Due to the nature of gendered experiences, females pay more dearly than males because of GBV and systemic gender discrimination and exclusion that they have since been facing as the international community sits by and watches. With respect to the DRC, in the eyes of the international community, which is patriarchal by nature, it has always either paid lip service or deliberately turned a blind eye. That is why the CIA installed Mobutu, who controlled the Congolese with an iron fist for over three decades without being brought to book or being reprimanded up until he was pulled down. Moreover, many conflicts that the DRC has faced in its entire history culminated in underdevelopment, instability, and above all, abject poverty that have gone on even after the toppling of Mobutu. Dizolele

(2010) notes that the fall of Mobutu did not change anything since the Kabila regimes that took over thereafter perfected and replicated the same whereby a clique of the inner sanctum became richer and richer by robbing and vending the country.

Things did not change after Mobutu and the regime thereafter considering that the state of a warring country makes it difficult for its citizens to produce or know what is ongoing around them. Naturally, victims are always busy either seeking shelter or running from the war to save their lives instead of producing. Similarly, such a country produces refugees who end up in other countries and the IDPs. Mhango (2016a) maintains that Mobutu did not invest in the DRC, particularly in infrastructure and other vital social services. Instead, he left the country fragmented in patches, devoid of connective infrastructure such as railways, roads, and waterways, which still make the DRC a unique country when it comes to cohesion and connection of its people. For the entire period that Mobutu was in power, he neither invested in nor developed the country.

Reyntjens (2004) argues that "conflicts have been compounded by the export of war to neighbouring countries, and the extreme weakness of the Congolese state has led to the 'satellisation' of large parts of its territory" (p. 587).

In fact, the trend in the DRC is here to stay as long as local political opportunists, their foreign backers, and warlords persist in looting the country, seeking opportunities to grab and supply resources to the world markets under neoliberal policies that condone such criminality. Apart from that, instability and insecurity have denied the country of investments. Such lack of investment in the DRC has created a dichotomous reality in which a country endowed with immense resources of value has never benefited from them. The DRC has very chronic levels of poverty, which reflects the same situation of almost all African countries that have become endemically poor despite sitting on humungous resources of value. The economies of victimised countries perform the role of supplying raw materials to and consuming

processed materials from their former colonies and other emerging powers. The conflict in the DRC not only negatively affected the country economically, but it also affected it socially and politically, as indicated above.

To make sure that resources in the DRC benefit them perpetually, Western countries, either directly or through their kaleidoscopic multinational companies, have fuelled and funded conflict in the DRC. Funding and fuelling conflict are not only enabled to acquire resources but also acquiring them cheaply in nourishing 'war economy' (Titeca et al., 2011) or combatant economy (Battersby and Siracusa, 2009). Such economies basically depend on illegal extraction of resources in warring countries to supply those who finance the war by supplying weapons in exchange for either resources or money made from selling resources cheaply, as is the case in the DRC, where warlords extract resources and sell to buy weapons from Western companies.

One facet of the war in the DRC is money just made illegally and quickly. Kaplan (2007) argues that the DRC has a wealth of mineral deposits, including uranium, diamonds, copper, cobalt, and coltan (columbite-tantalite), but instead of acting as the country's economic engine, this natural resource base is fuelling today's conflict. Even the names of some of the multinational corporations plundering the DRC are openly known. Kuditshini (2008) names multinational companies that have been involved in the DRC for a long time to include Swipco (Swiss); Lundin Group (Canadian); Cluff Mining (British), a subsidiary of Anglo-American Corporation; Barrick Gold (Canadian); and South Atlantic Resources. Others are SAR (Canadian); Union Minière (Belgian); Anvil Mining (Australian); Gencor, and Broken Hill (South African); Anvil Mining; and Mindev (Indian). Others include Banro Resources Corporation; Ivanhoe Mines; Freeport-MCMoRan; Metorex; Glencore Xstrata Plc; Tenke Fungurume Mine; Belgian company Mines d'or du Zaïre (MDDZ); Ridgepointe Overseas Development (Australian); Resources Russel Group (RRG); and American Diamond Buyers, a subsidiary of the AMF.

All the above companies implicated in this criminality in the DRC did not start yesterday. Neither will they leave this *El Dorado* soon (Hadani and Schuler, 2013). The above-mentioned companies have been in the country from the 60s, doing the same business of plundering the country. When clinically examining the countries of origin for the above countries, one will find that most of them are the ones that are on the frontline in tutoring poor countries about human rights and development. So, too, most of these countries are Western, and thus, the creators and sponsors of liberal peace, which is defined by colonialism, exploitation, and superimposition.

Further, we have touched on combat or war economy, which shows how militarised the economy of the DRC is as well as how it affects girls and women in the Eastern DRC and in the country in general. They are the ones bearing the brunt, simply because they are females born in the country endowed with resources of value and are socially constructed as thus to serve and suit the interests of those who define and exploit them. Under combat economy, resources are extracted at the expense of girls and women, simply because the economy including themselves are gendered, too. Comparably, females are the ones without education who end up selling themselves in the centres where resources are extracted (Trenholm et al., 2011). While males may be recruited as fighters, criminals, and whatever, girls and women have only one resource that they can offer or be robbed, namely their bodies and humanness under the system of commodifying and thingifying them.

Fundamentally, since 1884, during the scramble, division, and partition of Africa, the DRC witnessed one crisis after another, largely resulting from the colonial drive to use whatever strategy to extract and exploit resources that the country is hugely endowed with. As stated above, it started with King Leopold II of Belgium, to whom the DRC was criminally awarded at the Berlin Conference. Thereafter, the country became hypothetically independent. Since then, local elites have struggled to get into power so that they could control and exploit the resources the country is endowed with. Due to the patriarchal nature of the conflict in the

DRC under colonial and exploitative international systems, controlling resources involves controlling girls and women, especially during the war, in which they are used as sexual slaves, labourers, and sometimes combatants. The struggle for control metamorphosed into a violent conflict that saw many atrocities and GBV committed against women. Rodriguez (2007) notes that, according to statistics provided by local health centres, an average of 40 women are raped every day in the province of South Kivu. Of these, 13% are under 14 years of age, 3% die as a result of rape and 10 to 12% contract HIV/AIDS (p. 45).

The statistics above is evidently undisputable and unignorable, mainly when we consider the fact that this trend has been ongoing for a long time without anything being done to stem it. For victims, there can be an assumption that the international community has conspired against them. Autesserre (2012) concurs that many of the victims contend that their country is a victim of a global conspiracy in which Western powers collude and support neighbouring states and foreign armed groups and fuel conflict to ease their access to Congolese natural resources. By neighbouring states, they refer to Burundi, Rwanda, and Uganda that invaded and occupied the DRC twice (Reyntjens, 2011).

Another facet of the conflict in the Eastern DRC is the complicity and duplicity of the international community, led by the UN. Arguably, the extraction of resources that Western economies need and depend on, hampers the very international community from intervening decisively to address the conflict and problems in the DRC. When the UN intervened in the 60s, it failed Lumumba and the country in general. This ties geopolitics and the *realpolitik* of the world to the situation in which the international community biasedly tends to ignore the role that Western countries have always played in the conflict in the DRC. The international community under the UN – that has failed the DRC since its independence not once or twice – has become a toothless dog (Anning 2015) that must not be entertained or trusted. There is no way that the UN can play a decisive role in the DRC while the same

depends financially on countries that receive stolen resources from the DRC to contribute to its administration costs.

With the ineffectual role the UN has played in the DRC, the conflict seems to have been pushed under the carpet not only by the UN, but also by the Western media. Currently, the conflict in the Eastern DRC is not heard in the big media of the world. Instead, the news of terrorist attacks in various places, the conflict in the Middle East and Ukraine have taken over and eclipsed it, and this has often been a chronic culture of Western media. Whenever they cover Africa, it is about negativities but not anything meaningful. Even when they do so, Africa's news is usually put purposely either at the end of the items / programmes or on the receiving end.

Practically, terrorist attacks occurred rarely and once, and kill fewer people comparably (Mhango, 2017a). Despite its destruction and magnitude, the conflict in the DRC has been going on unabated for many years, despite negatively affecting the lives of many innocent people, particularly children, girls, and women. Sometimes, we wonder to note that the deaths of a few people resulting from terrorist attacks are given high coverage / priority while the deaths of thousands in the DRC are ignored and treated like just a normal occurrence that should not bother the media in question. We do not mean that terrorist-related deaths should not be covered or ignored. Our argument is simple that there seems to be either a double standard or discrimination in dealing with the conflict in question. Is it because such deaths occur in Africa and thus, are not that important?

Is it because Africa is gendered, thus, viewed as inferior, and has nothing new to offer based on the *genderisation* of the world (Letranchant et al., 2016)? Isn't this international racism against Africa? What would be the reaction of the West (world) if what has been ongoing in the DRC were in any European country? What if the colour and smell of the victims were the same as those of the West?

Again, once something is gendered, and thereby viewed as inferior, those perceiving themselves to be superior tend to

ignore or treat it with disdain as is the case in the DRC, which is sexist by nature under the feminist lenses. This tendency of ignoring the conflicts that cause much suffering for many people shows how gendered people and places are. Yes, what has been going on in the DRC is surreal by all standards. Had it been going on in the West, it is likely that the international community would not ignore it. This was evident when the Rwanda genocide took place at the same time as the Kosovo War. The West hurriedly went into the former Yugoslavia and stopped the war, while they ignored the one in Rwanda.

Discussion Questions

1. Why have the countries that colonised, plundered the DRC, and assassinated Lumumba never been brought to justice? What do you suggest / think should be done to address such historical ills and injustices?
2. How do GBV and the looting of the DRC form a part of global anti-black racism?
3. We have argued that the extraction of resources that Western economies need and depend on has hampered the very international community from intervening decisively to address the conflict and problems in the DRC. If this is the case, should the Congolese, Africans in general, and peace lovers believe in the UN and international norms such as the responsibility to protect or devise their own way of addressing such conflict and problems?
4. How have international and national militarism reinforced GBV in the DRC?

Chapter XI

International Conspiracy against the DRC Africa's Typical Replica

Figure 6:   International domination over and the plunder of the DR the Congo (Source: pinstopin.com)

Introduction

As noted in the foregoing chapters, there has been an international conspiracy against the DRC. This is reflected in the fact that some minerals and resources extracted from the Eastern DRC are sold to the world markets. Generally, nothing is done due to discriminative and exploitative neoliberal policies that tend to favour the West, even to the detriment of and killing in non-Western countries, particularly in Africa. Regarding conflicts like the one in the DRC, the UN has always offered lip service. Moran et al. (2015) note that the UN issued a series of reports (UNSC, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2008; UN, 2010) identify coltan mining that is used to fund armed conflict in the DRC and called international companies illegally buying coltan, which is amongst "the engines of the conflict in the DRC" (UN, 2010, IV.215: 357). Every year since 1999, the UN mandates an international team of experts to research and report on the human rights violations and violence in the DRC. Identifying the problem without dealing with it is not a viable

solution. What actions were taken against the culprits who, ever since, still go on with business as usual?

UN's Betrayal and Failure

For many African victims and others, when the UN is mentioned, it gives them hope. They were made to believe that the UN and other Western organisations are competent in intervening and addressing and arresting their problems, especially conflict and underdevelopment. Such overconfidence on such organisations is the result of colonialism and coloniality that Africa did not do away with, even after gaining its chimeric independence. Nonetheless, this is nothing but a hype and ploy that have cost many Africans and all those who pin their hopes on them. When the conflict broke out in the DRC, the UN intervened, but to no avail.

As an international body charged with the running of the business of the world, many thought the UN would play a great role in resolving the conflict. We do not solely blame the UN for its failure in the DRC. We underscore and understand who funds and owns it. Sometimes, it can be seen as complicity and the indifference of the international superstructure. What the UN failed to address is the whole issue of stopping the countries from which such companies come and how they are registered alongside the roles they play in contributing to the economies of their countries by exploiting and destabilising others, as is the case in the DRC.

Had it been serious about what its intentions were, the UN would, at least, have named and shamed such companies and countries as it devises the methods of dealing with them to see to it that they stop their criminality in the DRC. Does the UN not want to name and shame companies from countries, which are its major financiers or simply is it also the tool of the West? As noted above, the UN has always been like a sitting duck or a toothless dog if not a white elephant, which heavily depends on contributions from rich Western countries to run its business. By pointing blankly at companies, the UN

deliberately spared nations that sabotage of Africa since the inception of colonialism, and this was not done accidentally.

Due to the gendered nature of the UN regarding who funds it, there was no way it could anger the countries that fund its operations by naming and shaming their companies. As indicated above, the CIA overthrew Lumumba to keep on raping and robbing the DRC (Mhango, 2016a). Despite the availability of watertight evidence implicating it, the CIA has never even been reprimanded, let alone having legal actions taken against it. Before the eyes of the UN and beneficiary countries, resources are better than victims.

Does issuance of reports bring solutions to the conflict in the DRC? This shows how the international community and its organisations, which are parasitic in nature, do not care about the plight and fate of the Congolese suffering from the conflicts in their country. To show this complicity between the UN and Western countries, "the United States, Germany, and China are home to major refiners" (Moran et al., 2015: 359). This gives an indication of why the UN has always offered lip service to the conflict in the DRC, amongst others.

Additionally, Mac Ginty and Williams (2009) argue that "vast sums of money of dubious origin lubricate the international financial markets" (p. 35). Yes, there is money to be minted and printed in the conflict in the DRC. Apart from resources, supplying weapons in exchange for resources is a booming business (Keen, 2012; see also Koyame, 2005). The conflict in the DRC becomes protracted since some of the minerals extracted are on high demand on the world markets because of liberalism and its mantra of free market. In its approach, the free markets do not distinguish between legally and illegally obtained goods that are brought to the said free markets.

Similarly, minerals that the multinational corporations and warlords rob the DRC of are an integral part of the industries in rich countries whose absence or shortage would adversely and badly affect them economically and thus, militarily. Consequently, the role of the international

community becomes disingenuous and iniquitous major players, namely industrialised countries – the same recipients of these resources extracted from the DRC. Before China took over from them, they were the big exporters of processed goods from the same minerals. Thus, it becomes harder for major international players in the conflict in the Eastern DRC to resolve it due to the nature of the free market liberal policies, compounded and coupled with their interests in extracting resources. Under liberal peace, there is a collective myth that the West is the one that has all it takes to deal with conflicts all over the world.

Anthony Oberschall, cited in Mac Ginty and Williams (2009) makes a good point that such collective myths are arguably the enemies of truth and justice, which, sometimes, end up hampering conflict management and peacebuilding, especially how they are framed, mainly in the DRC where individual interests surpass the interests of Congolese. That is why corrupt local elites like Mobutu were able to get away with murder. The rationale behind this is simple: those powerful countries using such corrupt local elites did not want to have a big group of people to do their dirty laundry, which means sharing everything with it. On the contrary, having a few greedy individuals makes it easy to fix and share the loots profitably, and, indeed, this has been a colonial strategy of dealing with the minorities against the majorities under its divide and rule strategy (Michalopoulos and Papaioannou, 2011).

Why Did Liberal Peace Fail?

Those who raped women in any conflict seek to break their hearts, their families, societies, and humanity. They seek to impose a life sentence or even death on the victims, especially those who bow before them and take their lives or die of stigma and other related causes. In the DRC, women refused to bow before such criminality and intimidations. Instead, they turned their death or life sentence into freedom.

More precisely, one of the processes of peacebuilding, in addressing SGBV and other sexual related injustices is the City of Joy (CoJ) (City of Joy, 2024), which local women started in 2011 to cater for the victims of rape. In starting the CoJ, Congolese women sought to end dependence on the external solutions by inventing local solutions that revolve around reimagined joy, justice, and peace, based on their experiences, and needs. According to the website of the CoJ, it is "serving 90 survivors of gender violence aged 18 to 30 at a time, City of Joy has graduated 2,069 women leaders since it opened in 2011 (City of Joy, 2024). One of major aims of the CoJ as a process of healing and learning, is to turn pain to power (Quattrochi et al., 2019) or "counter feelings of inadequacy and self-blame" and "retain dignity in the face of loss" (Senehi, 2015: 19) abandonment, divorce, trauma, and victimhood amongst others. Women in various places have creatively applied on various local peacebuilding and surviving methods such as a tree of life (Senehi, 2015), *Ihangane* ("be strong") in post-genocide Rwanda (Zraly et al., 2013), *timo kica* ("do mercy") or *bedo gonya* ("set free) (Porter, 2013: 59) in northern Uganda, and others, especially when they suffered rape. It is obvious that liberal peace failed and failed the DRC altogether.

There are many reasons why liberal peace failed to arrest and resolve the conflict in the DRC. Apart from being a Western tool of seeking peace for its creators, liberal peace superimposes its diktat wherever it intervenes. It goes in with its solutions without even knowing the causes or roots of the problems it seeks to solve.

Based on its nature of superimposing and being above or excluding or ignoring other peacebuilding mechanisms, especially local ones, liberal peace, as the tool for Western liberal and neoliberal strategies and policies, has not worked fully and well in bringing peace and development to affected countries.

For example, Dr Denis Mukwege of Panzi hospital in the DRC came up with ingenious way of addressing the post-conflict effects on females. Mukwege operated on the

victims, even when he faced threats from the perpetrators of the crime. Had his ideas been accommodated and supported from the outset, it is obvious that Mukwege would have made more impact on the victims than he did. However, he is now internationally accepted and celebrated, due to liberal peace; his ideas were not exhaustively employed in dealing with the conflict in the DRC. As a local peacebuilder, Mukwege resisted death threats. Instead, he decided to turn destruction into something constructive by repairing the bodies and souls of rape survivors.

How many local peacebuilders are out there without being recognised? These, indeed, are unsung heroes and heroines. Other unsung heroines are the CoJ. The CoJ (Moorhead, 2011) is a symbol of resistance. It is an organisation of purely local women made of survivors but not victims of rape, that deals with the problems of rape in the Eastern DRC. It is another ideal example of how local mechanisms of peacebuilding are either purposely ignored, excluded, or not utilised in resolving the conflict. Attractive and enticing as the name of the CoJ is, it is irony to liberal peace after creating the country of sorrow by concentrating on the interests of the West and neglecting the dignity and humanity of Congolese. We are purposely using the term "survivor" instead of "victims" to resist and show how their resistance not only brought joy to them, but also to enable them to become bold and recant the tag of victimhood. Although women have tended to be regarded as subservient, things seem to have changed recently.

By establishing the CoJ, Congolese women slowly started to rebel against their violent patriarchal society, however passively and peacefully, which cloned the ongoing conflict. The CoJ has given a voice to voiceless victims of GBV that revolves around the conflict in question. It has also given the courage and power to the discouraged and powerless. Arguably, through resisting against the culture of violence, Congolese women turned their loss to a gain, since the sexual violence that women encounter and wither in the DRC has become an important trigger for their activism (Godin and Chideka, 2010).

Apart from emancipating themselves from the shackles of the culture of violence, the Congolese women created an inspiring precedent that will inspire other victims waiting to transform themselves to survivors in other areas facing the same situation. The CoJ is but one example that Congolese women's activism has yielded fruits. Women in the Eastern DRC decided to organise themselves into organisations to address their problems after the world betrayed and ignored them. This is a good beginning of independence in dealing with conflict and its ramifications.

Moreover, Godin and Chideka (2010) note that other organisations that Congolese women have formed are AMUKA ("wake up" in Swahili) and AFEDE1 (*Action des femmes pour le développement*), and FIREFEC2 (*Forum Interrégional des femmes Congolaises*), amongst others. AMUKA, as its name suggests, aimed to awaken others to stand on their feet and resist GBV and other evils revolving around the culture of violence. If liberal peace would team up with such groups by accommodating and providing them with the desired support in the process, the chances of resolving the conflict in the DRC would have been higher. Again, are they fully supported and recognised compared to the government and the militants? Does the DRC need international NGOs? Ntambue et al. (2012) answer such a question, disclosing that in the research they conducted between January and December 2009 involving a total of 1762 women in Lubumbashi and found that:

> Among those that delivered at home (6.5%), almost six out of every ten (57.8%) had no reasons for choosing a home birth; while 37.6% had done so due to a lack of financial means, 1.8% due to long distance and lack of transport means to facility. About 0.9% found the healthcare facility staff unfriendly and 1.8% considered it unnecessary to deliver at a healthcare facility as they themselves are more experienced in delivery (para. 18).

If pregnant women in an unaffected area such as Lubumbashi are facing acute shortage as it is indicated above, how is the situation of women in war-affected areas?

Additional research points at the same grim situation, especially in the Eastern DRC. Coghlan et al. (2006) note that from January 2003 to April 2004, the crude mortality rate (CMR) was 60% greater in the east and 20% greater in the west than the reported baseline for sub-Saharan Africa (1.5 deaths per 1,000 per month; 13 table 1). Over this period, the CMR for Eastern Congo was significantly higher than for Western Congo (rate ratio=1.3, 95%; CI 1.2 to 1.5), whereas there was limited evidence that the under-five mortality rate was higher in Eastern Congo than in the Western Congo (p. 47). The figures above show how dire the situation is in the DRC as far as gender-based mortality is concerned. Without the spirit of resistance, such figures are intimidating. This is what women the Eastern DRC have faced for many years since the conflict broke out, and this is very likely due to the lack of functioning government and economic growth resulting from the rampancy of conflict and corruption in the country.

Liberal peace has exacerbated the problem by heavily investing in superimposed mechanisms in its undertakings as its means of resolving conflicts revolving around resources and gendered power inequities in the DRC. We postulate it without any fear or reservation as our way of resistance. As academics, we are resisting the application of liberal peace without cooperating and incorporating local peacebuilding mechanisms. Without consultation, incorporating and supporting the local population and local mechanisms, resolving the conflict in the DRC remains elusive and tenuous. So, too, without helping locals to make their own peace, much money and time will be wasted as long as liberal peace keeps repeating the same mistakes. White (2010) maintains that:

> As long as the international community continues to become involved, their approach needs to change. Communities need to be seen as important. Cultural identities need to be considered while creating peace. The UN needs both mandates and actions to promote peace that have the capability of providing security for its citizens (p. 22).

Liberal peace intervention needs to build confidence based on addressing the problems the local communities face, and in so doing, locals should be allowed to identify their problems, propose solutions, and priorities to avoid feelings of superimposition and wrongheaded decisions in this matter. Lederach (1997) cited in Ramsbotham et al. (2011) makes a good observation on how everyday local or indigenous peacemaking systems in the rebuilding of relationships and structures in societies work, citing an example from Central America. Lederach (1997) maintains that Central Americans think about conflict resolution in everyday settings, according to three key elements: *confianza, cuello,* and *coyuntura* or trust or confidence, the connection and juncture and timing.

Arguably, without winning the trust and hearts and minds of the local population by accommodating and incorporating their conflict resolution mechanisms and infrastructure in the process, whoever intervenes in dealing with the conflict is viewed as an intruder who imposes their diktat on the parties. Therefore, as is the case of the CoJ, people will resist in different ways depending on their approaches, circumstances, and understanding. Such a perception denies the process the opportunity to apply and employ local infrastructures, which, if well utilised, makes the local population feel that they own the process and form part of it. Thus, they honestly contribute to it knowing that they are the beneficiaries of it. By using local mechanisms of peacebuilding, external players create a link with the locals. As a local mechanism, the CoJ helps to break the silence, which is evident when it comes to liberal peace's menu. The neglect of local peacebuilding mechanisms, peacebuilders, and organisations faults liberal peace. All places where the culture of violence has normalised rape and general GBV need many Cities of Joy as a form of resistance emanating from the DRC.

Although liberal peace has at times acted as an all-knowing creature, the reality is that it often does not understand the societies it deals with because there are multiple and multi-layered causes of conflict and multiple ways to resolve it as well. For example, there is no way

normalcy can practically return to any society coming out of violent conflict without having a functioning government, which conditionally should be gender-balanced and gender-sensitive. Locals know this too well and how to start and permeate it to the affected society successfully. Therefore, another important intervention mechanism is making sure that people are enabled to exercise their rights to elect the government that is going to run the country. Here is where the roles of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) become vital in providing civic education, assessing the needs of a particular society, educating the people, and linking local and external players based on multipronged approaches and methodologies. This means that the way the conflict has been addressed in the DRC needs to change, to see to it that liberal peace accommodates local mechanisms of peacebuilding and conflict resolution.

Without changing the way that the international interveners approach the conflict, the chances high are that the same will exacerbate the conflict and the chances of causing many more harms are high. For example, the money that is burnt in shuttle diplomacy - which is expensive, especially for groups involved and those funding them (Rinfret and Cook, 2014) that, for many years, has never resolved the conflict. Such money needs to be directed to peacebuilding to enable international interveners to team up with local players and stakeholders such as NGOs and other civil society organisations such as elders, youths, women, and others. Such cooperation and inclusivity can be done based on the needs and the views of the victims. One can see how such money sometimes ends up benefiting those engaged in shuttle diplomacy. For example, Hendricks (2015) maintains that:

> The South African representatives engaged in peacemaking and peacebuilding in the DRC, clearly failed the women of the DRC, both at the level of ensuring their representation in the negotiations and in the institutions that were to be formed to govern their lives (pp. 23-24).

We strongly argue that, after a long war in the DRC, one of the peacebuilding approaches would have been directed to addressing the underlying problems resulting from systemic and structural failure as espoused by liberal peace. The difference, however, is that, since the conflict in question was unattended for many years, the international community needs to have a "plan B" to avoid replicating the failure that happened when Mobutu was removed from power. Although Mobutu was corrupt and violent, under his watch, the conflict was not as big and violent as it is today. Had there been a mechanism to chip in after his removal, maybe, the conflict the DRC grapples with today would not be as catastrophic as it has been. Had peacebuilding approaches been applied earlier, the chances of avoiding bloodbath and mayhem in the DRC would have been high. Lederach (1997) views the conflict in a "conflict progression matrix", in which confrontation and negotiations that break now and then "produce human crises of monumental proportions" (p. 73).

Arguably, what has been going on in the DRC does not show any signs of building a relationship amongst or between the parties to the conflict because of the unrepresentativeness of liberal peace. What seems to bring about more failures in the DRC is the fact that international interveners are using only "liberal peace" (Mac Ginty and Williams, 2009: 33) by ignoring other mechanisms and systems of peacebuilding to build the relationship amongst or between the parties to the conflict.

Also, local stakeholders are not well utilised or involved in dealing with the conflict in question. Rebuilding relationships and structures in societies facing or coming out of violent conflicts is very crucial for the victims and societies to forge ahead together peacefully, and possibly, transform or resolve the conflict itself, given that dealing with conflict is a continuum that takes a long time to realise. This is where the essence and needs to build trust amongst or between the participants lie. Again, this opportunity is squandered in the conflict in question. Further, Lederach (1997) argues that "the conflicts are characterized by deep-rooted, intense, animosity, fear and severe stereotyping" (p. 23), mistrust, and

misunderstandings. Such a situation begs for international intervention since, in most cases, parties to the conflict are entrapped in conflict circles that counter-intuitively use the enemy image or othering lens to view the conflict instead of viewing their shared relationship and needs.

Christie (1997) observes that "human needs theory offers insights into a range of peacebuilding processes that are involved in reduction of both direct and indirect structural violence" (p. 315). Instead of addressing structural violence that the warlords and their backers have committed in the DRC, the international interveners seem to support them through siding with opposing sides in the conflict. This is not only divisive but also destructive. Interveners need to be neutral, and this must be seen by anybody involved or not involved in the conflict.

The impasse in the DRC requires a neutral third party to intervene to help the parties in the conflict that are always entrapped in the conflict due to having different interests and lenses of looking at the conflict. Again, such a neutral third party needs to be seen to be practically neutral. However, sometimes, it becomes difficult, mainly where the interveners have their own interests in the conflict, as is the case in the DRC, in which Western countries get a cheap supply of resources that they use to benefit their economies at the detriment of Congolese.

Also, experience shows that neutrality is very hard to achieve and define. This is something that is missing in the conflict in the DRC. Those who are supposed to broker and bring peace have their hidden interests that they protect through proxy agents and wars, which do not harm any of their people, except innocent citizens of victim countries. Due to the international nature based on interconnectedness and interdependency, especially in commerce, the whole world, in the long run, has its interests at stake in the region. Instead of addressing human needs in the DRC, liberal peace is helping Western countries to protect their interests that revolve around extracting and robbing resources at the detriment of

the Congolese. By failing to underscore this anomaly, liberal peace is indirectly helping warlords to assert that they are fighting for the security of the citizens because of government failures resulting from being unable to provide for and protect its citizens.

Mukwege (2010), cited by Laudati and Mertens (2019), notes that "rape serves as a tool to tear the bonds of a community apart and facilitate access to mineral wealth" (Laudati and Mertens, 2019: 1). Mukwege (2010) in Laudati and Mertens (2019) ties minerals, especially coltan that is used in many electronic gadgets, to rape in the DRC. By tying coltan and other minerals supplied to the international market, Mukwege creates an impression that the entire world is collectively and unconscionably responsible. More importantly, such a collective failure and guilt typifies the failure of liberal peace, not only in the DRC, but also globally.

Such failures create animosities amongst the people who feel defenceless and excluded from the business of running their country, hence the lack of peace, and development. Mac Ginty and Williams (2009) argue that "there is a good understanding of the outlines of the relationship between conflict and development, but there is less clarity on the precise nature of this relationship, particularly in terms of how it changes according to the circumstances and context" (p. 3). This is exactly true vis-à-vis the conflict in the DRC.

Although key players may have varied understandings of how the wars started, they seem to have either ignored or refused to face the reality. That is, the current conflict results from colonialism, the Cold War, and neoliberal policies superimposed on other countries, all geared by greed and needs for resources. Motivated by depravity, greed, and self-interests, major players tend to avoid peaceful means of resolving the conflict simply because, for them, it creates a conducive environment for hijacking, displacing, hanging around, and plundering resources.

Thus, resolving the conflict means the infringing on their hidden agendas and interests. To succeed in their coveted

strategies, they offer lip service that ends up exacerbating the conflict, and the sufferings of innocent citizens in the affected countries. In such a game of deceit, resources become more important than humans, especially females who are the most affected creatures on the receiving end.

Regarding how to decisively resolve the conflict in question, Lederach (1997) makes a good recommendation that "resources available must be seen as including people and cultural modalities in the setting" and that "the most critical factor is making resources available in the socioeconomic and sociocultural configuration of the approach" (p. 97). If we consider the amount of money already burnt out on war, how much poverty would this money alleviate in the DRC if it were spent on peaceful means of positively and practically dealing with the conflict based on making resources available? How many jobs would this money have created, or how many people would this money have helped to stop joining warlords? How many would such enormous amounts of money pull out of poverty that forces victims to join warlords? Peaceful means based on peacebuilding approaches and systems are required to counter conflict in failed states, especially by helping to create a conducive environment for forming competent and functional governments so that they can provide social services and run the country.

Again, regarding individualistic and neoliberal society, one's enjoyment is more important than another's life. That is why it has been easier for the so-called international community to conspire against GBV victims in the DRC because it is none of their business. We emphasise that, for such greedy self-seekers, resources stolen from the DRC at the expense of the lives of innocent citizens are more important than the citizens themselves.

Evidently, the exclusion or ignoring of local players and their mechanisms, systems of peacebuilding, and needs in the DRC and elsewhere, exacerbates the conflict and fuels warlords to propagate their counteractive ideologies. Mac Ginty (2006) argues that development and conflict revolve

around people, though at different levels, manners, and magnitudes. For liberal peace, the development of Western countries comes first before the people, the victims. Therefore, people, locals, and outsiders, are crucially needed in dealing with the conflict at hand due to the interconnectivity they have in the world. That is why the international community cannot shy away from dealing with the conflict in the DRC without superimposing liberal peace onto the Congolese. Instead, it needs to interweave peacebuilding mechanisms for it to succeed.

Again, when it comes to intervening, these interventions need to strike a balance between their interests and the interests of the parties to conflict, local and foreign methods. However, interests differ in meaning and legality. For example, there is no way that the international community can accommodate the interests of the warlords who seek to become corruptly and quickly rich by controlling the country to extract resources for their personal gains.

Importantly, instead of concentrating a lot on safeguarding individual interests, the international community needs to consider the victims who are, in this case, local people, by making sure that they are becoming part and parcel of the process. By doing so, local people will be free and confident in offering their inputs freely and genuinely underscoring that they are beneficiaries in the end. Similarly, by involving local people in the process, as noted above, they will feel that they own the process, and thus, it is not superimposed. The process will be theirs collectively, as opposed to severally between "us and them", which may create mistrusts and suspicions. resulting from their exclusion in the process due to its top-down nature. We need to understand their approaches, choices, feelings, and takes on how to resolve the conflict and the way that they think the conflict can be handled based on cooperation, rather than exclusion, as it currently is in the DRC.

Lederach (1997) cites an example of Mohawks, members of the First Nations in the Americas, who think "in terms

of seven generations" (p. 27). Under this school of thought, whatever decisions are made today will affect the population upon which it is made for seven generations. We do not think that the Western conflict resolution mechanisms have such provisions or understanding other than being driven by arrogance, coloniality, greed, and myopia.

Strictly, external conflict resolution players must strive to resolve the conflict at hand aimed at addressing all aspects of the conflict based on the root causes and application of integrative approaches. Also, they should know that what they get under conflict, the supply of minerals and other resource, can still be achieved in peaceful times. More so, external, as well as internal players, must aim at tackling the root causes of the conflict, which essentially are failed, faux, and hegemonic liberal policies towards other countries. Importantly, peacebuilding that is aimed at resolving a conflict at hand must aim at creating an ideal environment for peaceful life for all. Therefore, we must think about negotiating our differences and interests, particularly as far as gender is concerned, be it between females and males, or between rich and poor countries. We know how bitter and hard such a suggestion is. But if we face it, especially the consequences that the conflict in the DRC have on the country and the region, we find that negotiating gendered power imbalances is inevitable and possible.

Conclusion

There are a couple of things that liberal peace needs to underscore and undertake in resolving the conflict in the DRC. First, it must study the perception of its move amongst local communities to know and underscore their responses, sensibilities, understanding of the intervention, and the terms of doing so. Second, it must incorporate local mechanisms and infrastructures of peacebuilding to make the locals feel that they control and own the process. This averts the assumptions of the superimposition of the methods of dealing with the conflict. Further, the incorporation of the local offers an ideal

opportunity for not only cooperation, but also opening for each other to face the problem together as equals and partners.

Third, many resources should be directed to addressing human needs such as supporting local initiatives like Panzi Hospital, the CoJ, and other already-established mechanisms rooted in society itself. These local initiatives have helped to uncover local efforts towards addressing the problem.

If supported, we hope many more mechanisms and efforts can come to the fore and be utilised to resolve the problems originating from the conflict, peace being one of them.

Last, but not least, the superpowers, regional and international players involved in the conflict in the DRC, must stop their bias, double standards, and using tunnel vision in addressing issues, believing they know everything while they do not. Also, they must avoid playing a double role so that they can accommodate other views and peacebuilding systems with the first major aim of stopping the war.

Discussion Questions

1. Should we believe in the credibility of liberal peace when it ignores and negates local actors and cultures?
2. How is international peacebuilding or liberal peace part of international systemic racism, oppression, and control of DRC's and other sub-Saharan nations' natural resources?
3. Why does the African Union's Africa Mining Vision (AMV) (African Union, 2010) action plan include actions to address gender but does not commit itself to addressing GBV?

Chapter XII

Rape as the Weapon of Capitalism

"Testicles are a national symbol, a trademark of the race; other peoples have luck, tradition, erudition, history, reason – but we alone have balls" Kis cited in Bracewell (2000: 57) in Diken and Laustsen (2005: 111).

Introduction

Before all else, we strongly argue and refute the idea that rape is a weapon of war. For us, and this is how it should be, rape is a crime against humanity. One of the driving forces associated with rape is the extraction of mineral resources in the DRC. Coltan and other related minerals of value such as tin, tantalum, tungsten, and gold (Schütte and Näher, 2020) play a crucial role in modern technology industries. The extraction of such minerals has been a force to reckon with vis-à-vis the persistence of the conflict in question.

Extractivism in the DRC and other places has resulted in inexplicable poverty and suffering that forced women to indulge themselves in prostitution – apart from facing gender violence, especially rape. Despite long-time atrocities committed in the DRC, when it comes to the inability for the international community to manage the conflict in the DRC, resource extraction is a key driver of conflict. Amongst others, coltan is pointed out as one of the resources that rich countries violently obtain from the Eastern DRC. Many cultures ostracise rape victims. After they are raped, married women are divorced, and girls are traumatised, wherein some escape or are expelled from home. To survive after being either widowed or abandoned by their families or divorced by their husbands after being raped, girls and women resort to prostitution as a source of income.

According to the *CBC News* (2010), Coltan, inter alia, is a heat-resistant material that can hold a strong electrical charge. Coltan is used to make capacitors in a wide variety of electronic devices, from cell phones to nuclear reactors. It is also used in high-heat-resistant steel alloys for applications such as aircraft engines. Due to the role coltan plays in machinery and its high demand, many beneficiaries turn a blind eye to the conflict in the DRC, provided that the conflict does not hamper the supply of resources. Nathan and Sarkar (2011) refer to cell phones as blood mobile phones, and they want the international community to declare mobile phones illegal, just like it did with the blood diamond, which used to fuel wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

This chapter starts by examining how capitalist exploitation of Congo's natural resources is the key contributor to sexual violence. Women are raped in the measure that Congo's minerals are demanded on the global market. Thus, rape is a weapon of resource based armed conflicts, wars, and capitalism. This is because resources and weapons benefit the general capitalist machinery and the warlord it sports and uses. As resources are exploited and wars are waged, women are raped. The chapter concludes suggesting policy implications.

Capitalism and Its True Face in the DRC

To end the conflict in the DRC, the international community must truthfully but not hypocritically, as has been the case, declare all resources plundered illegal. For example, after illegalising and declaring blood diamonds, the conflicts in the above-mentioned countries were reduced because there was no motivation, which was the world market criminal rackets and warlords that were able to easily access and supply. Sierra Leone, the victim of blood diamonds provides an ideal example. After illegitimising its diamonds, peace returned, and the country has ever since been stable and predictable. The failure to illegalise and declare coltan as 'blood coltan' and cell phones as 'blood cell phones' shows how much of the world is complicit in fuelling and benefiting from the conflict in the DRC. Minerals from the DRC: tantalum (Coltan), tin, tungsten (the three Ts) gold, copper, cobalt, as well as others were once dubbed 'conflict minerals and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) due diligence guidelines for responsible mineral supply chains obliged nations to declare the source of their minerals.

However, the minerals from the DRC easily entered the supply chain given that once they were smuggled into Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, and other neighbouring nations, they were considered conflict-free. Thus, they were legit for business. Nonetheless, the fact remains that whoever uses electronic devices (cell phones, computers, video games, electronic cars, drones, and many more) helps to fuel and fund the war in the DRC. Lehmann (2012) takes it further, maintaining that those enjoying the products of the resources stolen from the DRC are all raping and robbing the country and its people. We, too, think that they, by extension, rape Congolese women or they are, circumstantially and legally accomplices to the crime of rape in the DRC. Ironically, while people in the so-called developed world and other parts of the world use products containing Congo's minerals, women from the place where the minerals are (and other minerals) extracted, and people in the DRC in particular, are suffering immensely. One of the areas associated with the extraction

of coltan is the massive displacement of people to give room for warlords to extract resources. Many innocent Congolese either are in exile or are internally displaced. Similarly, they live in abject and deplorable conditions while their country is endowed with resources of value that have never benefited them.

Apart from the minerals, the DRC is a good source of other natural resources such as timber, hides, ivory, oil, petroleum, gas, and many more. Thus, due to this abundance of resources, the DRC becomes an attraction to many foreign companies seeking cheap access to resources, turning them into a curse instead of being a blessing (Autessere, 2012; Veit et al., 2011) for the country, which acts as a typical replica for many African countries. What has been going on in the DRC is almost the same as in nearly all African countries. What differentiates the magnitude of this gendered exploitation depends on how many resources the country is endowed with.

Rape as a Weapon of Capitalism

Girls and women are regarded as objects or subhuman. Apart from being regarded as subhuman, girls and women in the Eastern DRC suffer from GBV simply because rape is categorised as a weapon. This weapon can be used and is extensively and hugely used in this conflict amongst other weapons, notoriously and specifically targeting females amongst others. For, combatants raping girls and women, and using rape as a weapon of war aimed at self-gratification, asserting power, and above all, destroying the victims, just like, other kinds of property men own, which is dangerously wrong. Also, rape is used as a weapon of dispersion of people to give room for mineral extraction.

Apart from being defined as a weapon of war, rape, according to Donat and D'Emilio (1992) cited by McPhail (2016) was perceived to be "not as an end in itself, but as a means of enforcing gender roles in society and maintaining the hierarchy in which men retained control'' (p. 2). The difference, however, is that when somebody destroys another

person's property such as a car or a house, such property can be reclaimed, insured, repaired, and above all, life can go on as usual thereafter.

On the contrary, destroying and violating the bodies of females has neither practical repair, insurance, nor reclaim legally and morally under liberal peace. Once one is violated, the dent traumatically lives on with her forever, with consequences on her posterity. What makes this weapon so dangerous and deadly is the fact that that it not only destroys its victims, but it also destroys their societies due discrimination, traumatisation, and trans-traumatisation of the victim's face and their suffering. Due to the enormity and encumbrances of the phenomenon, Notar (2006) observes that the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) issued General Recommendation Number 19, noting that said discrimination includes GBV that either is directed at women because they are women, or affects them disproportionately (UN, 1979).

Ironically, even with the UN's recommendation, nothing viable was done to address or arrest the problem in the DRC. This being the case, the UN has always treated the conflict lightly to end up issuing recommendations without implementing them. This calls the competence and intentions of the UN into question.

Arguably, due to liberal peace's discriminatory nature, when the same situation was reported in Kosovo, the UN did not drag its feet. Instead, it acted aggressively, simply because the victims were white and European. Bill Clinton, former US President, notes that measures were to promptly be taken simply "because our children need and deserve a peaceful, stable, free Europe" (Mertus, 1999: 1476). Ask yourself what the same Clinton did during the commission of genocide in Rwanda in 1994, just a year thereafter, or to the DRC's conflict when he was in power. At the time that Clinton uttered these words he was the President of the US who had immense power of altering or addressing the situation. Again, if his country is one of the beneficiaries of the plundering of the DRC, Clinton

would not abandon his country's policies of illegally profiting from the conflict in the DRC.

As argued by Falcón (2001), who defines rape as a weapon of war, it is categorised as that in almost all disciplines due to the fact of militarisation, which is evident in almost everything from the border to the interior of the country. Such generalisation in almost all disciplines exacerbates the problem, and sometimes, can make it harder to find a solution. Ontologically, this did not occur accidentally. It was, although with malice, purposely created for the aim of exploiting the DRC, possibly perpetually, as it has been for the whole of Africa. Sadly, though, the impacts of such creation and conditioning have affected all human beings consciously and otherwise to hoodwink even the victims to become part and parcel of the trap.

Again, where did this line of thinking come from? You can pin it down to colonial *holier than thou* mentality. For example, in colonial Australia, rape would only be committed on a white woman but not an Aborigine woman. Philadelphoff-Puren (2010) maintains that the practice, which was next to law in Australia, is silent when it comes to raping an Aboriginal woman. For example, *the Tramp, a bulletin,* and cultural criticism "depict the rape of an aboriginal woman by a white pastoral worker on the frontier, a very common and widespread form of sexual violence about which the Bulletin was silent" (Philadelphoff-Puren, 2010: 7) to show how prejudiced laws can be.

In the US, history shows that unlike slave men, slave women became victims of rape precisely because of their gender, which was both constructed and fragmented by race, simply because, with animate chattel (Rugemer, 2013). Slaves constituted property as well as a social class. Thus, they were exploited under a system that sanctioned white ownership of black bodies and black labour. Historically, the ancient law, and even the current one, has defined women as the property of men (Weitz, 2010). The survivors in the DRC are examples illustrating how the situation becomes worse when the victim

of rape is a black woman. This has been the case in Darfur, South Sudan, Somalia, Mali, the Central Africa Republic, and other war-ravaged areas, where rape is rife, and nobody internationally is bothered.

Even in the so-called developed countries, women and black people are still legally discriminated under the law, whereby some pieces of law deal with rape as a crime against honour, but not otherwise, meaning that the man is the one whose honour has been violated, but not the body of the woman. Copelon (1994) argues that:

> The conceptualization of rape as an attack against honor, as opposed to a crime of violence, is a core problem. Formal sanctions against rape range from minimal to extreme. Where rape has been treated as a grave crime in domestic laws, it has often been because it violates the honor of the man and his exclusive right to sexual possession of his woman as property. Thus, in the United States the death penalty for rape was prevalent in southern states and was used against African–American men convicted of raping white women or, more precisely, white man's property (p. 249).

Interestingly, this law that was supposed to protect women is not implemented effectively in situations where a white man rapes a black woman. Some would argue that such law existed then without underscoring that they are still in place in the so-called developed countries. This means that comparably, a black man or black woman had no dignity or value whatsoever in the eyes of racist laws and systems. However, Copelon (1994) argues that under the Geneva Convention, the concept has been turned on its head to provide that rape is the crime against the honour and dignity of the woman. There are some very striking cases in which gender, and partly colour and race, seem to be issues. Franke (1995) revisits the situation in the US noting that:

> In 1994, the Supreme Court held that 'gender, like race, is an unconstitutional proxy for juror competence and

impartiality,' thereby extending <u>Batson v. Kentucky</u> to forbid gender-based peremptory challenges in criminal trials. 'The message it sends to all those in the courtroom, and all those who may later learn of the discriminatory act, is that certain individuals, for no reason other than gender are presumed unqualified by state actors to decide important questions upon which reasonable persons could disagree' (p. 9).

As for the case in point, such a rationale is still amiss. If the rights, dignity, and honour of all women all over the world were the same, women in the DRC would have already enjoyed this protection under the international law, at least through the seriousness that the international community would have shown in addressing the problem. It also appears that there is a problem with African countries when it comes to some newly introduced concepts such as human rights, human security, and other Western concepts that we will discuss later, and equality that the West superimposes on Africa. Clinton's quote above speaks volume as far as racial and sexual discrimination is concerned; and how international and systemic it is. That is why we have argued that African countries have never been independent. If the country that prides itself as the champion of human rights of the world can do that, what should we expect from a feeble and fickle government in the DRC? Clinton was regarded as a progressive president.

However, this does not exonerate the US from gender and racial bias in the DRC besides its hidden agenda. The world has witnessed the behaviours of known misogynist and racist Donald Trump (Pruessen, 2016) as the President of the United States, which highlights how racial and sexual discrimination is still rife in the US, despite its braggadocios of championing human rights in the world. If such a powerful country that prides itself on being the champion of human rights in the world can allow such a sacrilege to preside over its national affairs and policies, what should we expect to happen in the DRC and other African countries where misogyny and gender exploitation are rife? See also Dorf (2016).

Here rape is evident; not to touch on poverty, exploitation of all kinds, brutalities, and the second-class status women in Africa face and are designated to. Has this changed when it comes to systemic exploitation of a woman based on gender and race? It is important to revisit and explore all historical realities to prove a point that we need to decolonise ourselves, especially on how we understand gender nationally and internationally. The case from the colonial US may show us how racism is entrenched in our psyche, simply because of living in the era of colonial extension through neoliberal polices and liberal peace. Wells (2011) notes that:

> The Texarkana man, Ed Coy, was charged with assaulting a white woman. A mob pronounced him guilty, strapped him to a tree, chipped the flesh from his body, poured coal oil over him and the woman in the case set fire to him. The country looked on and in many cases applauded, because it was published that this man had violated the honor of the white woman, although he protested his innocence to the last. Judge Tourgee in the Chicago Inter-Ocean of recent date says investigation has shown that Ed Coy had supported this woman, (who was known to be of bad character,) and her drunken husband for over a year previous to the burning (p. 8).

If this is the way the international community looks at some crimes, what should we expect as far as rape in the DRC is concerned, especially at this time when the colonial system is still part of the practices and the jurisprudence of the world's legal superstructure?

Mallman (1978), cited by Reardon (1996) notes that "in patriarchal society persons are bred to violence and authoritarianism" (p. 38), which essentially, bears no difference from patriarchal militarism that has been going on in many places. Here is where a woman is belittled almost everywhere in the world, however, experiences vary depending on the pigment of her class and the colour of skin. The suffering that white women face is different from those that black women face. However, under a gender lens, rape as

a crime against females is not a weapon of war. The Merriam Webster online dictionary defines weapons as "something (such as a gun, knife, club, or bomb) that is used for fighting or attacking someone or for defending yourself when someone is attacking you or something (such as a skill, idea, or tool) that is used to win a contest or achieve something" (para. 2) (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2024).

Ironically, when rape is used as a weapon of war, it is not used as a means of self-defence. Instead, it is purposely used as means of destruction that is aimed at punishing innocent people simply because they were created female. Looking at the meaning and use of any weapon, categorising rape as a weapon of war is problematic. Rape not only destroys females, but also destroys their male partners, who, in such circumstances and occurrences, abandon their partners or live with the indignity thereof.

Further, USLegal.com (2024) defines a "dangerous weapon" as means and includes, but is not limited to:

> Any knife having a blade three inches or more in length, or any snap-blade or spring-blade knife regardless of the length of the blade; Any ice pick or similar sharp stabbing tool; Any straight edge razor or any razor blade fitted to a handle; Any cutting, stabbing or bludgeoning weapon or device capable of inflicting grievous bodily harm; Any dirk or dagger or bludgeon; any "taser public defender" or other similar electronic immobilizer which causes, by means of an electrical current, a person to experience muscle spasms and extreme pain, followed by unconsciousness. (Ord. 4814-NS § 1, 1975: Ord. 2881-NS § 1, 1947) (para, 1).

Interestingly, once again, the term "male genitalia" is not included. Why? It is simply that "male genitalia" is not a weapon, even though it is perceived so because it is a thing that one can use to attack another. This shows how the word "weapon" is misconstrued in referring to rape as a weapon of war. We argue that treating male genitalia like a fist or a kick is so problematic that when we consider the good use of such

body parts in self-defence, male genitalia is not supposed to be put in the same category with other body parts that can be legally used in the case of being attacked to need self-defence. If we could follow the rationale used in terming rape as a weapon, therefore, we can say that the brain is the deadliest weapon.

Because whatever one does originates from one's brain, in law, this is called *mens rea* or "the intention or culpable mental states" (Ginther et al., 2014) or knowledge of wrongdoing or malice aforethought that constitutes a major element of a crime, as opposed to the action, or conduct of the accused. This is the major component amongst two components of the crime, namely, *actus reus* or "an evil act" (Beecher-Monas and Garcia-Rill, 2017). As war is constructed starting from the mind, so is rape. The *mens rea* of war is to fight and win, and its *actus reus* are all evil acts thereof. Again, it depends on who views these two legal concepts. For a soldier or country against whom the war is fought, the two might be legal based on the rationale of the said war.

Moreover, the UN sees widespread rape as a "weapon of warfare" and describes it as a "tactic of war to humiliate, dominate, instil fear in, disperse and / or forcibly relocate civilian members of a community or ethnic group" (Maedl, 2011: 130). Such a misconstruction offers room for warlords to extract resources from the areas where people are displaced. It also offers room for the UN to treat the crime in the wrong manner and weight. This has been a practice in the Eastern DRC during the many years it has been facing violent conflict.

Daring to Invent a Different Future for Women

How can the African woman attain a condition that will enable her to escape abuses, misery, inequality, violence, voicelessness, and oppression? How can the shackles that bind women globally be broken and destroyed once and for all? For any state that seeks development, prosperity, and breaking the chains of neocolonialism, the emancipation of women must be considered an urgent human insecurity that must be urgently

addressed. It should be clear that constructing an African state is not simply observing the colonial borders and embodying Western templates of governance with African men and a few women embezzling national funds, living luxuriously, and designing policies with rhetoric about women's liberation and inclusion. Yet, women continue to live in inhumane conditions. The crucial challenge is for the AU and individual states to interface with Western heritage and oppressive traditions and reinvent a new style of the nation-state different from Western-inspired patterns that respect and include women.

Without pragmatically and realistically facing this challenge, the African state and its practices remain alien to women. It is no wonder many Africans are at home in their ethnic groups, to which they owe allegiance more than to the state. Women should not remain captives of unequal power relationships, intolerable greed for power and control, the oppressive state structures, and institutions. Africanising or indigenising the state must include the struggle for another society, humanity, new systems, structures, and institutions that emancipate and include women. Women's irreplaceable contribution to the day-to-day running of the family and society must be recognised. They must be accorded their rights to self-determination (Deci and Ryan, 2011) and empowered, particularly through education necessary for their economic security and to participate in constructing the African states.

We must name and struggle against the forces that alienate, abuse, and oppress women, while at the same time, we empower them to challenge the powers, institutions, and structures that deny them chances for prosperity and destiny.

Former Burkina Faso President Thomas Sankara was renowned for trying to stop the violations and the neglected contribution of women through recognising them and advocating for their emancipation. In the same vein, former Secretary General of the UN, Kofi Annan observes that:

> While women's roles in protecting and sustaining children and families are well recognized, their participation in economic, political and security arenas is less well

acknowledged and supported.... Governments, agencies, and other civil society actors must utilize the ideas, knowledge and experience women have gained from protecting their children and sustaining communities, often in perilous or insecure circumstances (UN, 1996, Para 309).

Policy Implications

No fundamental changes can be carried out without having a certain amount of madness, positive madness for whomever attempted to tackle them. In this case, it comes from nonconformity, the courage to turn your back on the old formulas, and the courage to invent the future and new formulas and possibilities. It took the madmen of yesterday for us to be able to act with extreme clarity today. We want to be one of those mad people, men, and women. We must dare to invent the future. Persistent gender discrimination and violence from the home to national governance persist in the DRC and other countries, although the international instruments, the DRC's constitution, and legislations highlight issues of equality and women's emancipation. Even though discrimination, injustices, and GBV have persisted in the DRC, it is a signatory on international and African charters for women's emancipation. These legislations are not adequately reinforced.

The question then, is how to move beyond rhetoric and embark on positive actions and change. The drivers of gender inequality and GBV in the DRC are complex and engraved in political systems, customs, and the international laws and superstructure. There are no simple solutions to this protracted problem whose ramifications are endemic and systemic altogether. Liberal peace's one-size-fits-all gender mainstreaming approaches, devised by the UN and other international NGOs, are inadequate in ameliorating women's predicaments and sufferings. Women's emancipation and inclusion require a comprehensive political strategy, commitment, and agency.

Perhaps, the first step, which is often overlooked, is the interrogation of women who experience the pain of inequality and violence in their skins, and concerned men who dream of a better society for their wives and daughters. Congolese women and concerned men know what they want for women's emancipation and security, in line with their circumstances and cultures. Instead of the politicians who are interested in maintaining the status quo, Cook (2009) maintains that women must participate in discussions about their security, instead of allowing only men with their guns and agendas to protect them without seeking their inputs and thoughts about what to be done. One of the complaints in Eastern Congo revolves around the fact that the UN and its peacekeeping mission, international NGOs, donors, and the DRC's government do not consult the people and ignore their initiatives. Without people's involvement, all initiatives are destined to fail. The voices of the women who endure violence and discrimination must be heard to guarantee their inclusion in decision-making.

In addition, patriarchal, racist, and hypocritical systems at the national and international levels must be revised and decolonised to suit the needs of everybody, including GBV and other related injustices. For example, why do women continue to be raped in the presence of UN peacekeepers and the Congo army; even some of alleged perpetrators are UN peacekeepers? Why is it that peacekeepers who rape women and girls are not punished and instead are taken back to their respective nations, while local perpetrators such as Laurent Nkunda Batware and Bosco Ntaganda live luxuriously under house arrest in Rwanda or The Hague? If the atrocities committed against Congolese women were committed against European or American women, would they be met with such indifference and inaction? Since the colonial era, the atrocities committed against women in the former Belgian colony have never been revisited or punished, nor have women been compensated.

To passably address the problem, leadership and governance in the DRC must be transformed. The leadership and commitment, like that of Sankara to implement the

legislations, is wanting in the DRC (and the whole of Africa). The massacres, violations, and rapes since 1996 require understanding. They are an embarrassment to the patriarchal state and its leadership. Unfortunately, a sense of shame and ethics are the first victims of poor leaders.

Emancipatory policies that aim to tackle impunity and GBV, amongst others that women face, must be enforced. Congolese policymakers must design some of the best laws regarding women's rights (for example, the right to inherit, to own property, and to participate in political and economic processes) and heavily penalising the violators of women and women's rights. Political and judicial pressure on implementing these laws is very minimal. Justice is accorded to the highest bidders and those with political influence, yet most women live in abject poverty with no influence or any attempt to pull them out it. Most women are illiterate and poor, with no knowledge of their rights and with no assistance to pursue legal processes when violated.

In 2006, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in DRC pushed for the state to ensure that post-conflict transition processes prioritise gender equality and the elimination of discrimination against women. Also included are the promotion of their rights, and the improvement of women's representation in leadership and their equal participation in decision-making. All must be done pursuant with UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UN, 2006). The DRC's government needs to implement the constitution, follow the international deliberations on women, strengthen judicial systems, and remove the impediments that women face in accessing justice. Justice must be equally and practically accessible to all. Basic and civic education for women to know their rights and freedom to demand for their observance is required.

More importantly, men who violate women and their rights, especially through domestic and sexual violence, must be prosecuted accordingly. To achieve the goals, education is needed to tackle abusive customs that propagate men's

superiority over women. Similarly, men must be educated to know that GBV not only affects females, but also the country. They need to know how gendered things are so that they can feel for females and become partners in thwarting GBV and the rape of their country.

The UN and international donors need to renew their commitment and shun hypocritical political engagements. The manner of policymaking and implementation in the DRC is complex. Competing and self-interested politicians make laws to protect their selfish and trivial rights and to please donors who line their pockets. With the protracted armed conflicts and the narrative of the DRC as 'the rape capital of the world' (Bosmans, 2007), the DRC has a large UN peacekeeping mission, *Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour la stabilisation en République démocratique du Congo* (MONUSCO), of more than 18,000 troops. Additionally, the MONUSCO receives significant amounts of foreign aid, has a repertoire of international experts and consultants, a multitude of NGOs working for women's liberation, and politicians designing the best laws on the African continent. Yet, inhumane conditions and violence against women remain rampant. The UN peacekeeping mission shows little progress, and there are numerous stories of engaging in sexual abuses, even with minors. None of the suspects are prosecuted for their crimes. Alleged perpetrators are sent home, which end the case because of the existence of unclear rules concerning peacekeepers' immunity.

Visits around Eastern DRC reveal a number of children with mixed parents (African and non-African) languishing in poverty. Equally, Congo's donors with "disconnected, uncoordinated and fragmented initiatives" (Trefon, 2011: 1) channel money to state and non-state actors without an overarching strategy for state reform and women's emancipation.

On the one hand, Congolese leadership clandestinely sabotage reforms and women's liberation to maintain their power, while on the other hand manipulating international

donors and systems to guarantee the continued flow of funds. Prunier (2009) labels this strategy as "personally fruitful stagnation" (p. 315). All because, if authentic reforms occur, Congolese leadership, UN peacekeepers, NGOs, international experts, and consultants would lose their presumed indispensability, and become unemployed with no source of income. They all play their cards well, showing that they are committed to reform women's status and the Congo state while ensuring that real reform does not occur.

The conflict has been benefiting and feeding the expatriates, whose approach is rooted in the colonial strategy that ensures that Africa does not develop. Therefore, if women are liberated, given their natural capacity for mobilisation and networking, they will be catalysts of change and oust them. For the Congolese, this attitude is attributed to the colonial history that taught them to "devise pragmatic modes of manipulation, communication, negotiation and accommodation to guarantee perpetually shifting patterns of domination" (Trefon, 2011: 10). This verily begs and highlights the need for decolonising the mind as a prerequisite for ensuring reforms.

Women must be empowered through education and economic opportunities and support. For women to play their roles, they need to be empowered economically, and trained in peacebuilding and education. Gizelis, (2009) observes that societies where women are socially, politically, and economically empowered least experience conflicts. Gender mainstreaming, Resolution 1325 and other instruments that advocate for women's inclusion need to be reinforced. Male obsession with power that suppresses and restrains women from playing their roles requires engaging binding legislation, further research, and education altogether. Women alone cannot surmount the enormity, politics, and complexity around the struggle for their emancipation.

Peacebuilding is at the heart of *realpolitik,* necessitating integrative approaches. It is "a set of processes and tools used by civil society and governmental actors to transform the relationships, cultures, and institutions of society to prevent,

end, and transform conflicts" (Zelizer and Oliphant, 2013: 8). It involves national, regional, and international actors, and a combination of liberal and indigenous. Nevertheless, "women's efforts tend to be opportunistic and ad hoc, without thorough conflict analysis and planning, which is "irresponsible and potentially dangerous" (p. 12). Such a penchant could exacerbate conflicts. The more skills women have, the better the opportunities for engagement.

Discussion Questions

1. Why and how is GBV in the DRC inextricably linked to global capitalist exploitation and militarism?
2. How do capitalism and patriarchy combine to reinforced historical / colonial and conventional GBV?
3. How is the pandemic of GBV in the DRC part of global racial capitalism?
4. What is your opinion on gender equality as part of reinforcing the thingification and commodification of black bodies in the DRC and across Africa's natural resources-rich nations?
5. What is needed to end gendered capitalism?

Chapter XIII

The Internalisation of Rape

Introduction

Rape is an international phenomenon majorly used in war and other crimes. It is aimed at females and other vulnerable people such as boys and children. Rape has been institutionalised and internalised in war studies, wherein it is defined as a weapon of war, while it actually is nothing but a crime against vulnerable people and things, as we have seen in the case in point. Rape is not only about raping a person, but also a country, especially endowed with resources of value.

Radhakrishnan (2014) maintains that the media is a powerful tool that can help in fighting rape and GBV by pointing out the use of rape as a weapon of war wherever and whenever it occurs. Legally speaking, laws are not supposed to be enacted or interpreted by the media, but by the legislature and the court of law. This is a rule all over the world. Again, Radhakrishnan (2014) shows how the mainstream media, international law, and academia, amongst others, have pointlessly accepted these media perceptions despite their ambiguities.

Rape Is Not only a Weapon but also A Crime

As indicated above, rape has been defined as a weapon of war, instead of a crime against humanity, specifically, gendered, and vulnerable ones. Arguably, by accepting to define rape as a weapon of war, we are intentionally or otherwise offering a gendered meaning, and sometimes, popularising a crime of rape as war instead of calling it by its name, a crime against dignity and humanity. This is wrong, given that a weapon is a gadget or tool designed purposely for protecting, even when it can be used illegally and maliciously to cause harm. Countries

and individuals buy and own weapons for the aim of self-protection and self-preservation whenever needs arise. In other words, male genitalia is declared as a weapon while it is supposed to be conservatively treated as a reproductive organ, and that is all. By misconstruing the meanings of the weapon and male genitalia, we are legitimising the crime despite condemning it.

Diken and Laustsen (2005) note that in war, a soldier attacks a civilian who is none other than a woman, but not a man, as he aims at only indirectly with the aim of holding or taking a territory. However, there have been incidents in which males, especially boys, were molested for the same purpose of destroying them and their societies (Omona, 2014; Mayanja, 2020). More practically, Kasangye et al. (2014) note that, in the DRC, their study found that 39.7% (224 out of 586) of women and 23.6% (107 out of 399) of men experienced sexual violence, including being stripped of clothing, molestation and rape (p. 15), to denote that even males are sometimes not spared in this violent conflict.

It is sad to note that the discourse of rape has been hijacked by the wrong meaning and actors with attributes to rape as a weapon of war. This means that we unconsciously or consciously subscribe to the ascribed meaning of rape, which, in essence, those who formulated it sought to get away with or legalise, misconstrue, and internalise the crime of rape. Woodhull (1998 cited in Falcón, 2001) elucidates on the issue, arguing that rape is a war crime or a form of torture with links to genocide that is not supposed to be about sex but rather about power and how to dehumanise, destroy, and desecrate women, their dignity, and their bodies. Such cannot be a weapon, but a crime that is supposed to be called a serious war crime against humanity.

If anything, rape, be it at war or at home, is supposed to be treated and termed as the crime of high order. Therefore, it is not supposed to be considered as a weapon war, since it does not protect anybody if we bear in mind that victims of this crime present no danger or harm to the bearer of

male genitalia, who in this scenario is an aggressor. When a soldier shoots and kills an enemy, this is legal under the rule of engagement and the principle of self-defence legality that allows a person to defend I whenever facing a danger or illegal acts (Hessbruegge, 2016; Ryan, 2017). When warplanes bomb an enemy's position, this is normal under the rules of engagement. To whom are the victims of rape in any circumstance enemies?

Whom Can Rape Self-Defend?

We will answer the above question by observing what the term "weapon" means, when, and why it is used. Weapon is a tool one uses to defend I when facing a danger or dangers wherein life can be lost. Bombs, guns, knives, and the likes are weapons, which humans use every day individually and nationally to defend themselves or fight their enemies. Lane (2018) defines weapons as "a whole host of offensive and defensive items used during human conflict" (p. 1055). This definition is narrow, since research has shown that animals too use weapons when facing dangers. Also, not all conflicts involve weapons.

Is there any sense in self-defence or self-preservation when committing rape? As a rule, self-defence legally allows the victim to sacrifice the life of the aggressor to save them, which is one cardinal duty and right (Ryan, 2017). Therefore, legally speaking, the weapon is supposed to be a tool or means that a person is entitled to own and use for the purpose of self-defence but not committing a crime[s]. Arguably, calling rape the weapon of war results from subscribing to the definition and rationale that war criminals use to define this criminality. Also, calling rape a weapon of war is the genderisation of war to denote that the participants are males. This leads us to the question as to who is legally supposed to define the weapon between the criminals and innocent people. We do not think victims call rape just a weapon of war but a crime of cruelty and degradation.

If allowed to define the crime, a criminal will define their crime; they will produce a definition that favours, protects them, and justifies their action[s]. That is why, under criminal law, the crime is defined based on the law enacted by the legislature, but not on the assumption of criminals or suspects. We think we need to be careful about with the definitions we make or accept without questioning their ambiguities and, sometimes, fallacies, as it is in the definition of rape as a weapon of war, which it is not.

Essentially, when a soldier or a militia rapes a woman, it is not supposed to be misconstrued as a normal attack, which it is actually not. Soldiers attack their enemies' positions or shoot and kill their enemies under the assumption that if they do not do so, their lives will be in danger or rather lost. This is obvious. However, the question we can pose as far as rape as a weapon of war is concerned, can be: Is there any danger a woman (or a boy or a man (unmilitant), who are also raped) causes or poses against soldiers simply because of being female or a civilian who is socially gendered? Pratt et al. (2004) make a good observation that durable peace is one of the solutions to this crime. Durable peace cannot be attained without redefining rape to avoid the anomaly and illegality of just subscribing to or falling in the trap of criminals or patriarchy.

Again, how can we achieve durable peace while even the definitions we use to seek such peace are problematic? Mhango (2017b) and Mhango (2018a) note that, as academics and actors, we need to reinterrogate and redefine the definitions we use, to avoid having conspirative definitions like rape as a weapon of war. We equally think that the reinterpretation of the term is very important to avoid treating the crime as a crime-cum-weapon. Rape should be categorised as a crime, but not as a weapon. By categorising rape as a weapon of war, we are giving it a face and, sometimes, legality. Just like cluster bombs, poison, and other deadly weapons have been banned, rape, too, must be banned if we subscribe and go by the definition of the weapon of war.

We need to systematically attack the psyche that allows us to wrongly define rape as a weapon. We know that this may be viewed and misconstrued as problematic. However, we need to agree that there is an unconscious performativity surrounding the roles of what we do as males and females. Thus, maybe, just maybe, this has some effects in defining rape as a weapon of war. If we step in the shoes of the perpetrators and victims, maybe we will be able to grasp how it feels to commit or suffer from such a crime.

While rapists may take pride in their atrocities, the victims are often left with the feelings of shame and contemptibility. This is thematically and substantially very important for us as academics. Therefore, the redefinition of rape is crucial, especially if it accommodates the views of the victims. We do not know how it would be defined had victims been allowed to contribute sentiments and views to define rape. How would women and rape victims like rape to be defined and treated legally?

Arguably, due to the archaicity, brutality, and dominance of patriarchy, rapists do not see the importance of having equal rights such as dignity, equality, equity, safety, and respect, which are human rights that both females and males are supposed to equally enjoy all over the world. So, too, for the rapists, women are seen as creatures or things, if not objects that have no feelings, needs, and above all, rights, or voices. Females have voices. Mhango, 2015b), in the book *Born with Voice*, tries to give females and other victims of the genderisation of human or things the voice that they lost or which they are denied. Eriksson Baaz and Stern (2009) note that:

> Rape (...) there are different types of rape. They are all forbidden. There is the rape when a soldier is away, when he has not seen his women for a while and has needs and no money. This is the lust / need rape [*viol ya posa*]. But there are also the bad rapes, as a result of the spirit of war (...) to humiliate the dignity of people. This is an evil rape (Male, Lt.) (p. 495).

Considering the quotation above, there is something terribly wrong. Arguing that there are bad rapes means that there are also good or acceptable rapes. This is a lewd assertion and a perpetuation of gender violence. We think rape is bad and illegal despite such beliefs and misinformed understandings. There is no way something illegal can be good or something bad can be good or vice versa in any sense and meaning. Such categorisation of good and bad rapes has all hallmarks of machoism and patriarchist connotations since it does not accommodate the feelings and wishes of the victims.

If we buy into such an assertion that there are good and bad rapes, we need to remind ourselves how the victims would like such rapes defined based on their experiences, losses, sufferings, and so much else. Maybe, the good rapes in the eyes of the perpetrators are like those of raping a country through rip-off and plundering, as has been the case in the DRC and other African countries endowed with resources of value. Otherwise, rape is bad, illegal, and unacceptable even for animals, and stopping it is the only good thing we can do as civilised people.

Again, we cannot entertain distortive and lewd definitions under the law. Instead, we let the law define. If we consider the fact that many laws pertaining to rape were enacted by parliaments, societies, and organs dominated by males, any mis-definitions and miscarriages of justice can happen simply because those enacting the law do not have first-hand experience or feelings of how the victims and females in general perceive rape (crime). Intentionally or otherwise, such people could easily overlook some important elements or issues that victims are up against. We think the way a woman and man perceive rape is naturally different due to the self-worthiness one puts on their body and the qualities of being who that person is and feels.

Circumstantially, we would argue that for many men, rape becomes a bad thing when the victims are those that they are related to. Likewise, it seems that the international community cares about rape when it is committed against its

people, as was the case of genocide in Kosovo and Rwanda. Otherwise, the international community would not make do with rape to erroneously define it as a weapon of war while it is not. Researchers show how females and males perceive rape differently (Anderson, 2007) based on the self-worthiness a person puts on their body. However, Grubb and Harrower (2008) argue that there is a similarity between victims and perpetrators when it comes to perceiving rape under defensive attribution theory, which is a little bit strange, if not an exception to the general rule. Grubb and Harrower (2008) simulated how victims and perpetrators feel about rape.

Again, such research was based on simulations and a controlled environment whereby those participating depict a situation that is not truly experienced. Thus, there is no way we can pin down the difference or similarity of perception between females and males about rape, without conducting real interviews in as many societies as possible, based on how they understand rape. Logically and naturally, there is no way the person whose body is *vandalised* and violated can similarly perceive the results of this crime against humanity that permanently hurts the victim the same way a perpetrator does. It is indifferent and wrong to think that the victims of rape and perpetrators can equally perceive the crime.

Statistics show that the situation is dire and escalates daily in the DRC. In 2011, in South-Kivu, 396 research participants reported sexual violations at 15.8% of men and women. Rapes registered to the Malteser International medico-social support programme (specialised health centres and community-based organisations) via document extraction included 20,517 women and girls who reported rape; and 66% of patients in 2005 were treated for sexually transmitted infections; 218 reports involving 500 abused individuals; 210 patients (96%) were female, and 62 (30%) were female minors; of 44 reports involving the police, 50% occurred in custody (Peterman et al., 2011: 1062).

In 2020, the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the DR Congo (MONUSCO) reported 1,053 cases of conflict-

related sexual violence, 675 of whom were women, 370 were girls, 3 were men and 5 were boys (United Nations, 2020). Between 2021 and 2022 cases of GBV doubled from 40,000 to 80,000. In the first three months of 2023, there were over 31,000 cases of GBV (United Nations, 2023). Such figures are staggering, especially if we consider the fact that many rape cases in the case in point go unreported either for fear of being ostracised or because of ignorance.

Moreover, five survey sites in an Equateur Katanga, Bas-Congo, and Bandundu Household survey involving two-stage random cluster sample design sexual abuse, 188 cases from 3,620 households (approximately 5%) were recorded, (Peterman et al., 2011). No sane person can ignore or push such statistics under the carpet, especially because it is about humans, innocent humans.

In 2011, approximately 1.69 to 1.80 million Congolese women aged 15 to 49 years had a history of being raped; the absolute number of such occurrences was highest in the Orientale province, followed by North Kivu and Equateur, (Peterman et al., 2011). However, it is not easy to tell how big the problem is, since not all rape cases are reported due to fear of being abandoned, traumatised, and ostracised. Besides, the DRC is a huge country with places that are not easily accessible to collect data.

Colonial legacy and coloniality thereof destroyed true Africans and thereby invented faux and novo ones who became stooges. They embrace materiality and individuality for self-destruction. Therefore, it is not bad to assert that Africa needs to reinvent new Africans who can stop such atrocities committed in the name of power and resources. More so, Fanon (1963) argued that transforming Africa requires inventing new people and a new history.

In the DRC, GBV's survivors' ages range between 23 months and 84 years (Bosmans, 2007; United Nations, 2022). What can a sane man seek from a 23-month baby? We think there is more to what we think as the causes and drivers behind this criminality, which needs more research. The fact

that survivors are publicly raped is traumatising, especially to those who cannot run away from the same community because of poverty or having nowhere to go. Rape kills emotionally and physically, not to forget causing health and social problems such as deaths, long-time illnesses, and traumas. Bosmans (2007) notes that sorrow and physical damage are likely to increase susceptibility to sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS. In particular, if we underscore the fact that the interviews with several local non-governmental organisations in Kinshasa and the Eastern DRC revealed that the population was convinced that the rape raids were organised with the aim of infecting the population with HIV/AIDS purposely as a means of eliminating them so that they can give room for resource extraction. Essentially, the *mens rea,* or the intention to commit a crime, was to kill or cause grievous bodily harm (Ginther et al., 2014).

If we consider how males participate in defending their society or escape arrests and persecution, leaving behind children, elderly, and females, it holds water to assert that rape is a strategy of not only killing, but also displacing this vulnerable population, as has been a practice in the DRC. Although rape is wrongly defined as a weapon of war, practically, it is a criminal strategy of displacement and intimidation. Rhodes and Simic (2005) argue that such a strategy was used as a weapon against the population in Serbia. When it comes to rape in Africa, Scully (1995) asserts that it was purposely introduced by the colonial government either to traumatise society or to help male colonialists who went to Africa without espouses, and this is not a far-fetched assertion, since there are many half-casts fathered by white people in Africa and left behind.

In the Colonial Congo, mixed-race children (*mulatres*)[6] were stolen from their mothers and taken to Belgium, where they were placed in Catholic institutions and were never recognised as citizens. In 2019, Belgium's Prime Minster

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6   *Mulatres* is derived from Latin *mule* which refers to a cross between a mare and a donkey.

Charles Michel apologised for Belgium's sins of abduction (Paravicini, 2019)

So, too, rape was the violence that colonial rule used to punish the colonised indirectly, since once women were raped, they lost their esteem in society. Maybe that is why rape was legally interpreted in a gendered way, lightly, and wrongly against the victims. In Australia, for example, rape, real rape, was legally considered when a stranger raped a white woman. The same was applied in the US, where Brownmiller (2013) notes that the rape of black women by white masters was the most prevalent form of inter-racial rape in American history, but white racists always exaggerated the tendency of black men to revenge themselves by raping white women.

Philadelphoff-Puren (2010) discloses that "certain kinds of women lied about rape; the law conspired with lewd, deceitful women to strangle the life out of young Australian men; and rape – real rape – was rare as hen's teeth in the colony" (p. 4). This is exactly what has been going on in the DRC, where UN Peacekeeping forces rape girls and women to end up being left to escape from the place where the crime was committed. When they are fished out of the country, they are legally entertained in the countries without any legal jurisdiction. Do we know if they are truly jailed or just let free simply because of those whom many racist countries and societies discriminate against? Such racists would care less, since the people they raped were Africans who are seen to be inferior before other races.

Based on racist caste history, psyche, and apparent racism, what should we expect when an Indian man rapes an African woman, or a Dalit woman, whereby Africans are openly discriminated against in India (Vahed and Desai, 2010). Based on the caste system, such a person is likely to get away with murder easily based on the social stratification and system of Indian society, since what such a person committed is not illegal under racist systems such as caste. Ramaiah (2011) notes that:

From the 2009 data, it may be understood that in India on an average every day 2 Dalits are murdered, and 4 Dalit women are raped by the non-Dalits. The data for the 1981 to 2009 period for India as a whole indicate that not only the overall number of incidences of caste discrimination and violence but also the brutal crimes such as 'rape and murder' are on the increase (p. 154).

Suffice it to conclude that when we discuss rape in this book, we are underlining the cruelty that females face in the DRC and elsewhere where resource-based conflicts are going on in Africa. Bosmans (2007) discloses that the acts of rape are often combined with various types of tortures such as beating, stabbing, cutting and severe genital mutilation of the victims with sticks, knives, and guns, not to forget the fact that the victims are often raped in front of the members of their families and the whole community, which is cultural, physiological, and psychological femicide. Looking at the ages of the victims and the nature of this cruelty, one fails to understand why or how humans can behave more inhumanly than animals.

Discussion Questions

1. Can we de-masculinise politics, peacemaking, and peacebuilding in the DRC? If yes or not, how and why?
2. What do you think the international community must do to address legal anomalies and convolution vis-à-vis the definition of rape as a weapon of war but not just a crime against females and humanity?

Chapter XIV

Prostitution

Figure 8: Women Protest against Rape as it is tied to extractivism (Source: africanagenda.net)

Introduction

The conflict in the DRC poses more perils for girls and women than it does for men. The conflict has created many dangers and problems that are gendered when it comes to their adverse ramification. For example, the crime of rape has forced most of its victims into prostitution, either after being divorced or abandoned after being raped. Due to the lack of peace, some girls and women in the DRC are wantonly forced into prostitution as a means of earning their daily bread, while others endure domestic violence and sex trafficking (Manjoo and McRaith, 2011), which have become common and endemic phenomena in the DRC. Vandepitte et al. (2007) note that victims in the Eastern DRC are categorised as *Phaseures*, who in this case, are homeless girls or women selling sex as the only available means to survive, despite how despicable it is, especially in collectivistic societies such as African ones. Looking at human nature, every human would like to be

somebody dignified but not violated. If selling their bodies would occur in individualistic societies, it would not be such a big deal, since an individual is a point of reference. On the contrary, in collectivistic societies, everybody is connected to everybody.

Rape and Prostitution

Even under normal circumstances, those partaking of or participating in prostitution have some hidden or unknown reasons that force them into this gender degradation. Further, the group of *phaseures* consists of street children, orphans, and girls who were abandoned by their families, and abandoned women either after being raped or losing family breadwinners. So, too, there are the so-called *Masquees,* or women involved in clandestine or occasional prostitution or sex work, to be courteous, to survive hardships they face after war deprived them of an environment conducive to production and living normally. Girls and women in the DRC have been facing this crime either from the militants or some UN peacekeeping forces, amongst others.

There are chances that justice for rape victims in the DRC will never be served due to coloniality or gendering mentality. Caplan (2012) reports that, in 2008, human rights observers found that a child prostitution ring had been formed and some 100 UN troops from India were accused of paying for sex with young Congolese girls and an investigation by the Indian army chose to blame the messenger. The real culprit was the UN for bringing charges against their soldiers, all of whom were found innocent. Can such a country or institution do justice for the victims of this gendered culpability?

Underscoring how prostitution is rampant in the Eastern DRC, the chances are high for abandoned women to involve themselves in prostitution to spread HIV/AIDS intentionally or out of ignorance and necessity, since they know their statuses. Again, they have no other alternatives or programmes put in place to cater for their needs. Kapinga (2010: 1), cited by Kondemo (2011), claims that "Congolese society believes that

through marriage, women are safe as they are protected from prostitution and other forms of sex trade" (p. 11). However, this is not always the case, and this sounds to be true. Gilliard (2012) notes that it is not surprising that the issue of sexual abuse and the specific needs of women in the DRC have been marginalised to categorise rape and prostitution as another aspect of war, which it is.

Under such presumptions or "cultural relativism" (Merry, 2009: 81), it is obvious that most, if not all, abandoned women will involve themselves in prostitution to survive. First, they are unprotected from prostitution according to the Congolese beliefs, cultures, and practices. Second, they can involve themselves in prostitution since they have nothing to lose besides the fact that it is the only available means to cater for their needs. Brittain (2002) maintains that "many women describe how prostitution had become the only way to feed their families. Young women described how sex with teachers became the only way to stay in school when the family could not pay school fees" (p. 600).

The involvement in prostitution for girls and women in the Eastern DRC is circumstantially geared by necessity (Lihemo, 2012). Moreover, prostitution is not a choice as it is in rich countries, where some university students use sex as a means of their choice of soliciting money for upkeep during schooling years. Fairbanks (2011) disclosed that in the US, some college students and recent graduates sell their bodies either to pursue a diploma or pay back their loans. Again, the students in rich countries are choosing to sell their bodies either driven by greed or choice, while in the DRC it is the results of necessity. If this is the practice and the real situation, what is there for a person who has already been either abandoned, divorced, ostracised, or infected with HIV/AIDS, to prevent and undercut them from spreading the epidemic intentionally? This is a belief that is not only prevalent in the Eastern DRC, but almost in the entire Great Lakes Region, from where the authors of this book originate.

Interestingly, here it shows that when it comes to prostitution, every man can be an enemy to a girl, especially where ignorance and poverty levels are high, as is in the Eastern DRC. Similarly, this shows how conflicts corrupt people or offer them pretexts to commit certain crimes. More importantly, the situation in the DRC typifies how extractivism, apart from causing resource extirpation, creates many problems including exploitation, human degradation, poverty, and prostitution, amongst others (Jacka, 2018).

We can evidentially see corruption and exploitation since the teachers who are having sex with their students are supposed to protect them, and if there were a competent and stable government, it would deal with the culprits and the phenomenon in general. One can vividly see gender exploitation here. For, there are no literatures that report the incidents in which female teachers sexually exploited their students in the DRC, even though it recently came to light that in some Western countries, this phenomenon is emerging (Zack et al., 2018; Christensen and Darling, 2020). In addition to sexual exploitation and prostitution is the fact that HIV/AIDS is spread with intentionality as a weapon of war to top up rape (Frickmann et al., 2013), which is a crime of genocide, a crime against humanity, and a war crime under the international law under Articles 6 to 8 of the Rome Statute. Despite being contrary to the law, the above-mentioned crimes have gone on in the DRC without the international community stopping them.

Capitalist Systemic Machoism and Sexism

Due to systemic exploitation, machoism, and sexism under capitalism and bad governance under the current anarchic international system, which the DRC has witnessed since independence, it is obvious that liberal peace cannot, and has failed to, provide human security for women during the war. Coupled with colonial legacy – which forced poor countries such as the DRC to depend on aid from Western countries – the chances are high of the escalation of the conflict in which gender violence is prevalent. Since the scramble for

resources started in the early 60s, soon after the DRC acquired independence, war has never stopped, and the situation worsens day by day. Instead of being deemed and treated as a conflict, war in the DRC has become an enterprise for those who benefit from plundering resources. Evidence shows that women suffer gender violence, especially rape and torture in the DRC. Wakabi (2008) notes that the lack of security in affected areas in the DRC caused the rise of multiple forms of sexual violence, ranging from abduction, gang rape, and shooting women through the vagina, to coercing family members to participate, seen increasingly in practice amongst military and militia groups, not to mention traditionally normal family violence and the exploitation of females based on patriarchal superstructure.

The atrocities and brutalities against women above are not the end of the ordeal. Women who are shot through the vagina, gang raped, abducted, and who experience sexual violence, cannot enjoy healthy, normal, and peaceful lives. Many of them face health issues, and there are no stable services in the DRC to support such people in need. Equally, such women face physical and psychological problems that make their lives doomed and harder, especially since such numerous health issues are not the only problems the victims of gender face. Eriksson Baaz and Stern (2013) maintain that there is the fear for the victims of rape of being stigmatised, which keeps them from seeking needed medical services, since such services are not in place in the DRC. The fear of being victimised makes the victims lose their voices.

Thus, because of the above circumstances, the victims of prostitution and rape suffer in silence instead of breaking it as the means of confronting the problems and recovering from the horrors and traumas of being subjected to gender violence, especially rape, which is normalised in the army. Eriksson Baaz and Stern (2009) report that, whenever a man is suffering or deprived of sex the normal way, in some sense ''has the right to rape'' is arguably constructed within the armed forces through the ways in which power and the lack thereof become uniquely entwined" (p. 510). In such a situation, being a male

is a privilege, if not a weapon, as opposed to being a woman, which is a disadvantage, and she is vulnerable. While such a belief is prevalent in the militants' mindsets, there is no notion of human equality or human rights. This is the way rape has become a weapon of war, which defines power relationships and gender roles based on performativity. Gender violence, especially rape, adds more power to militants, who already command power because of possessing guns and because they are men.

Circumstantially, the brutalities indicated above signify and typify the power of destruction that revolves around gender domination, gender exploitation, and the rampancy of lack of human rights and equity in the DRC, as it is in other African countries. Such brutalities are committed by men who make up a big number of militias fighting over resources and control of power in the country. Bosmans (2007) notes that "Margot Wallström, the UN Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, has dubbed the eastern DRC the 'rape capital of the world' and the 'most dangerous place on earth to be a woman'" (p. 214). To be precise, Musambayi (2015) maintains that the atrocities accompanying the conflict have also resulted in the city of Goma being referred to as the world's rape capital. Rape in Goma has been used systematically as a weapon of war. Such a qualification is not a good one.

However, the situation above shows how dire and dangerous the situation is in the Eastern DRC. Basically, victims of the acts of gender violence experience trauma and long-time economic inability because there is no stable peace that would enable them to enjoy their rights and to produce for their sustenance and national building.

In the Eastern DRC, the situation is worse, given that culturally, victims of GBV, especially rape, are discriminated against, and are often subjected to social stigma and rejection by their communities (Bosmans, 2007). Raped wives are divorced, and the children conceived and born out of rapes suffer, too, from the society by being shunned

and discriminated against for a crime they did not commit. When such disruptions in life happen, women become more vulnerable while men generally retain the role of sole breadwinners in their families.

Practically, victims end up in what Bosmans (2007) refers to as the 'ultimate violation of self,' resulting from the maltreatment by the very society that is supposed to protect, help, and understand them and their plights. With such maltreatment and the lack of care, the web of enemies for the victims expands. The entire society becomes a part and parcel of blemishes and a problem. The victims feel betrayed by their own society, especially their relatives and other members of society whose druthers are to shun and look down on them. Such a situation leads to relative deprivation that makes their basic human needs unmet, and, when it comes to human needs, there are some more pressing matters or needs than others.

For example, Jain et al. (2013) argue that it is important to tailor service responses to address women's changing needs and preferences. In so doing, we need to consider different natural needs such as contraceptives, tampons, health, and psychological amenities for pregnant women and divorced or abandoned victims of rape who find themselves in hard situations. The hardship and neglect in which victims find themselves force them to involve themselves in activities such as prostitution and slavery, as noted above, as one's of potential means of survival. Such people do not enjoy any human rights or security whatsoever. For them, human rights are a myth if not a hoax or nonsense on stilts (Goodhart, 2016; Langley, 2020). Once again, men are the ones who prey on such women, and sometimes, children, especially girls, who are used as sex slaves at such a time of war, even thereafter.

The numbers of victims of sexual related offences in the DRC are alarming. Peterman et al. (2011) note that the report by the DRC Minister for Gender, Family, and Children puts a figure of the country's women and girls affected by sexual violence at more than 1 million (p. 1060). Further, Peterman

et al. (2011) observe that the report by the United Nations Population Fund noted that 15,996 new cases of sexual violence were reported in the DRC in 2008, and that 65% of the victims were children and adolescents younger than 18 years. While the figures are alarming, there are other consequences of GBV in the DRC that are not easy to quantify.

Additionally, Bartels et al. (2010) note that the other commonly reported social consequence was spousal abandonment, which was noted by 6% of women in this dataset. Other women may have suffered spousal abandonment for the same reasons, whereby the victims did not volunteer to give the information for fear of being ostracised by society. Overall, almost 17% of women reported their marital status as divorced, abandoned or separated. This means that after such victims are either abandoned or divorced, their lives become even harder because they have already been violated and now, they are shunned, and they have lost breadwinners and partners. To make matters worse, some such victims are jobless, illiterates or used to be housewives who naturally depended on their husbands as breadwinners.

Once such desperate people are divorced or shunned, their lives are likely to be hugely and negatively affected. The chances for such people to use whatever means to survive are higher. Some women still depend on their husbands as their sole breadwinners, due to the patriarchal system that is prevalent in the DRC, just like it is in other African countries where women still depend on their husbands who "own" them.

Discussion Questions

1. Why is prostitution considered women's and not men's responsibility? For example, in all the world's holy books, only women are considered sinful but not the men they sin with. What do you suggest about decolonising and deconstructing sexual anomalies and injustices embedded in Abrahamic religions, which condemn females without providing a space to defend themselves or being heard?

2. What is the connection between prostitution, capitalist exploitation, violence, and resource looting in the DRC?
3. Why should prostitution be regarded as an economic survival mechanism for women in the DRC?
4. How are GBV, sex trafficking, and prostitution linked to the insecurity of GBV, wars, armed conflicts, and natural resource exploitation in the DRC?

Chapter XV

When Liberal Peace Fails

Introduction

The DRC has suffered a great deal because of its resources. Various attempts have been undertaken to address the problem. Liberal peace is one of the tools that the West applied to no avail. Because the conflict has never been resolved, we, as academics and partly expert in the area, think we have some solutions to the conflict. In this chapter, we are proposing some solutions to the conflict.

One of the major steps that will help to bring stability and security in the DRC, is having a responsible and competent government. A competent government will not only restore peace and security in the DRC but will also contribute to the Great Lakes Region's peace and security. This requires investing heavily in building institutional capacities and structures in which gender parity and justice are mainstreamed. Structural reforms need to address the role and place of women within Congolese society (Rodriguez, 2007). In other words, the macho system, dominant in the DRC, must be deconstructed and reconstructed to legally and practically accommodate equal female participation in the running of the country.

DRC's Conflict Needs A Local Solution

Although external players and stakeholders have been in the DRC to help solve the problem in various capacity as this book indicates, there have been UN peacekeepers, international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), states and others all aiming to help for various reasons, good and bad. We therefore strongly argue that external stakeholder should transfer knowledge and whatever is considered necessary to

resolve the conflict responsible and for patriotic Congolese to manage their country, even in resolving the conflict in question. International actors do not remain in the country for a long time. As expatriates and international technocrats, they serve for a given period. As such, international initiatives must aim at empowering the Congolese, principally those who are excluded based on gender, so that they can build their country equally and together.

Brittain (2002) notes that because of the years of social and economic collapse of the former Zaïre, the eastern part of the country was left out, and has long been accustomed to being bowdlerised from power and resources. Due to weak governance and long-time violent conflict, the Congolese, particularly the victims of gender violence, face another problem. There is no legal mechanism that can hold perpetrators accountable due to the dysfunctionality and incapability of the country's judicial system. Rodrigues (2007) notes that the judicial system in the DRC remains too weak to establish precedents that might serve as a deterrent against further violence.

With such a weak system, women – as a part of the population and humans claiming a big chunk of the population – are likely to be left out vis-à-vis contributing, empowerment, and enjoying human rights, just like any other citizens in their country. Merry (2011) argues that defining gender violence as a violation of human rights is a relatively new approach to the problem, especially to the anarchical and patriarchal world system, which seems, as indicated above, to apply a double standard in this conflict. For example, the failure to define gender violence as a gross violation of human rights adds more hardships to the victims in seeking justice. Due to the terror and trauma that GBV massively and systemically causes to the victims, we would go a mile further, to propose that it should be categorised as terrorism.

Respectfully, here we are addressing the trauma and shunning that victims face. There is another aspect that adds more pangs to the victims of GBV that is compounded by war

economy as defined above. Females and other victims in the areas affected by civil war in the DRC are not redressed. As well, due to a feeble legal system in the country, the chances are high that most of perpetrators are not brought to book. Perpetrators commit crimes with impunity to create what Rodriquez (2007) refers to as the vicious circle of impunity. Apart from exacerbating the problem, especially the fear of being raped again, such lack, laxity, and silence prove how complicated and delicate the situation is in the DRC.

We strongly argue that, without charging the rapists and other perpetrators of gender violence, the system allows them to keep on violating the rights and lives of girls and women in the Eastern DRC. One atrocity leads to other complications, especially long-time ones as far as the rights of the victims are concerned. As argued above, having a functioning government in the DRC is *sine qua non* ("a thing that is absolutely necessary") so that, to begin with, it can competently manage the country and protect the rights of the victims. Also, it can plan for all citizens by introducing and incorporating gender parity in decision-making bodies in the country.

Correspondingly, the said government can liaison with well-wishers and those who are ready to help. Further, the government can put in place some mechanisms that can help in prosecuting the perpetrators of gender violence and other war-related crimes that the country has experienced for many years. While we ponder on the situation, major questions we need to ask and answer are: Can a country that is facing civil war guarantee security to women while they actually are constantly subjected to rapes, just as it is in the current civil war in the DRC? Have these victims of rape – which is categorised and used as a weapon of war – guaranteed any security? The answer is apparent that the victims of rape in the DRC are left to fend for themselves and remain vulnerable as long as the conflict drags on in the name of fulfilling the role of meeting and safeguarding the interests and needs of those to whom it supplies resources.

Women's Proactive Responses to the Conflict

Despite suffering for a long time, females in the DRC did not sit idly by. Some women initiated some efforts and moves to bring peace to the country. Whitman (2006) testifies that "the women helped to set the tone that, above all, peace in the DRC was paramount to any ethnic, regional or political division that existed" (p. 40). Here, the question is: How much did the international community build or expand on such a move? Have the women been incorporated into the existing efforts and mechanisms of resolving the conflict? Are their voices heard? Are their contributions welcomed to the round table, or, as it has always been, are they invisible just like other players are?

Those who are truly aiming at and interested in resolving the conflict in the DRC can learn a great lesson from such women. They put their differences aside even when they were threatened not to touch on gender issues. Whitman (2006) notes that "they demanded that men not leave until they signed the agreements before them. The women succeeded and the agreements were signed" (p. 42). Equally, mediators and all parts seeking to help in resolving the conflict in question must put their differences, interests, and whatnots aside and address the root causes of the problem.

Moreover, apart from agitating for the signing of the agreements, many women in the DRC formed groups to help each other, thereby addressing external and internal challenges they faced and still face. However, despite taking such proactive initiatives, women in the DRC felt that they were not fully supported and valued. The words of Chouchou Namegabe before the US Senate (May 13, 2009) suffice to show how resilient and active women are in the DRC, despite the lack of support. She says that:

> When she is pushed down, the whole community follows.
> We also ask: Why the silence of the developed countries?
> When a gorilla is killed in the mountains, there is an outcry,
> and people mobilize great resources to protect the animals.

> Yet more than five hundred thousand women have been raped, and there is silence. After all of this you will make memorials and say, "Never Again" (Victoor, 2011: 55).

The words above are strikingly provocative and indicative of the disillusionment and anger that the victims have against the international community. They think the international community abandoned them in their hour of need when they needed it the most. What provocative words! What a voice in the dark! To such a victim, animals are better and are treated better than humans simply because they are not part and parcel of gender discrimination and gender exploitation.

Further, Roeder (2011) notes that some international organisations such as the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the UN, the United Nations Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), the United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC), the United Nations International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Red Cross, the United Nations Conference of NGOs (CoNgo), and many more are so much more involved in protecting animals than humans in the DRC when they propose the integration of animal protection and humanitarian relief operations under the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) resolution. To such a victim, human rights and international organisations are all a useless part and parcel of a conspiracy against her country.

It is sad to note that such a situation exists in the 21st century, many decades after the UDHR and the touted civilisation and development of the world in general. When it was established, one would think that the UDHR would act normatively based on the assumption that, by the nature and function, it would involve and be enjoyed by all human beings globally, as its name implies. However, this did not happen. African countries were left out and are still left out up to the present day. Truly, the situation that the quotation above presents is similar in many African countries that are facing conflict. This can be seen in South Sudan, where women and girls are gang raped, and the international community is still

offering lip service as if those suffering are not humans. It pains beyond understanding, especially when we consider that the victims are not only humans but innocent and defenceless.

As indicated above, a few academics have dealt with the plight of women and girls in Darfur (Hale, 2010), and South Sudan. Apart from a few segments in big international media, the urgency and vitality with which the conflict is dealt is relatively negligible compared to other conflicts such as the ones in Syria and the Ukraine. We can argue that due to the gender nature of the conflict and the system that is supposed to manage or resolve it, females are treated as no different from other merchandises that warlords and their sponsors purchase and vend in this war economy. Ironically, everything is regulated and sanctified by neoliberal policies based on the free market. This being the case, we can comfortably argue that neoliberal policies are patriarchal and gendered. That is why, whenever crimes resulting from the struggle for controlling resources are committed, affected countries or societies that are socially constructed as inferior, thus female, are ignored.

The vulnerability of women in the DRC does not end with international trade only. It goes further to touch on the UN Peacekeeping forces that are alleged to have committed GBV and other crimes against women. Regarding these crimes, Notar (2006) states that in 2004, there were some emerging stories of the alleged involvement in rape. This crime involves "survival sex" with women and children that involved the UN personnel. For example, the UN investigated one case in which a French logistics employee videotaped himself torturing and abusing naked girls. However disgraceful they are, such acts of violating females are treated as if they did occur even though they are documented.

Further, Notar (2006) argues that some peacekeepers allegedly lured girls as young as ten years old to have sex in exchange for a cup of milk, a few eggs, peanut butter, or a dollar. *The Telegraph* (13 February 2005) reported that a Frenchman, Didier Bourguet, 41, gave a detailed account to

French prosecutors of how he had intercourse with Congolese girls, aged between 12 and 16, about 20 times, in exchange for a few dollars on each occasion; see also Bwiza (2012). Ironically, Bourguet was an international worker who was in the Eastern DRC to intervene to protect the victims that he ended up preying on. The situation becomes even more dangerous and more complicated since some of those entrusted with the responsibility to protect (R2P) such vulnerable children and women are the ones violating them. Samuels et al. (2010) argue that many women are circumstantially forced to use transactional sex (sex in exchange for basic necessities) both during and after a crisis to survive, which shows that their ordeal does not end even when the conflict has ended. In other words, gender-related sufferings are continuous down the line, not static.

For example, Al-Hussein (2009) argues that the young women of Bunia had survived the most gruesome wartime experiences - massacres, multiple rapes, diseases, and hunger - to end up finding themselves tormented by the very people who were sent in to save and protect them. What a betrayal of trust! Arguably, being unarmed, harmed, vulnerable or unsecured in the hands of a guardian or somebody one believes to be her protector can have more adverse psychological effects than when the act is committed by the person the victim is not related or expected to provide security for her.

Further, Al-Hussein (2009) claims that girls and women, in particular in the DRC, are more vulnerable than men due to how gender constructs depict them as less human compared to men. Leatherman (2011) concurs with Al-Hussein (2009) that "armed conflicts redound early and comprehensively in gendered ways that impact on women and men often in different ways" (p. 170). What makes the situation perilous, and, of course, unique, is the fact that in the war-torn Eastern DRC, girls and women are preyed on by various players, namely militias and, sometimes, peacekeepers. This exacerbates the problem. Gilliard (2012) upholds that amidst this environment, the UN presence is supposed to function as a beacon of peace and hope. However, sexual exploitation and

abuse (SEA) of civilians, most frequently women and girls, has proliferated in the Congo amidst UN peacekeepers.

So, too, SEA complicates the situation and adds more suffering, vulnerability, insecurity, fear, and trauma for the victims of gender violence in the Eastern DRC. Reardon (1996) argues that "men are conditioned to play winners and women losers" (p. 37). Due to the implication of UN personnel in rape, being a man does not discriminate against who the man is. Under militaristic-sexist symbiosis, every man is regarded as a winner and every woman a loser. However, based on class and race, not all men are winners.

Nevertheless, some steps have been taken by the UN and other countries by prosecuting the culprits such as Bourguet, mentioned above. *France24.com* (September 11, 2008) notes that "Didier Bourguet, a former UN employee, was sentenced to nine years in jail for the rapes of two girls, aged between 12 and 18, while he was posted in Africa." (France24.com, 2008). If many countries will follow the French example, at least, to begin with, a message will be sent to perpetrators of acts of SEA in the Eastern DRC and elsewhere where conflict and intervention are ongoing. Again, the sentence Bourguet received was so lenient if we underscore the fact that in countries like Tanzania, the offence Bourguet committed receives life imprisonment without parole (Bakar et al., 2021). Moreover, Wakabi (2008) notes that "medical workers are concerned about rising incidents of sexual brutality against women in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), which are resulting in mounting rates of trauma, fistula, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs)" (p. 15).

Women face many threats such as female genital mutilation (FGM), rape, killing and sexual slavery. Some UN male personnel are exacerbating the situation by involving themselves in perpetrating gender violence, especially rape and forced prostitution, as noted above. If courts like the one in France that convicted Bourguet would have issued redress to such victims, the sufferings for girls and women in the Eastern DRC would lessen (Mayanja, 2018).

Given the gendered nature of international relationships whereby wealthy Western countries are viewed as being superior to poor countries that are viewed as inferior, such a gendered nature motivated some of the DRC's neighbouring countries to be involved the plunder of Eastern DRC and export resources without any restrictions, as it has come to pass. This can be seen on separate terms used to describe such countries as advanced and developed as opposed to the third world and developing countries. This is nothing but the *genderisation* of such countries based on their economic muscles that create masculinity and femininity. When it comes to who benefits from plundering the DRC, Prendergast and Lezhnev (2009) argue that there are shops in unmarked houses in Uganda and Burundi, that are used to sell minerals extracted illegally from the DRC. Similarly, in Rwanda, buying companies mix Congolese minerals with those produced by Rwandan mines and in all three countries implicated, the companies' proprietors rarely ask questions about where the minerals come from.

To whom do the above implicated countries sell? Of course, they sell to the free market of the West and others who need them such as China and India. What is obvious is the fact that this heinous business is not conducted under any secrecy. This illegal business is transnational and international by nature. For example, there are countries which allow their harbours to export the loot without question of fear of rich and powerful countries. This creates the world of the three wise monkeys: see no evil, hear no evil, and speak no evil (Shichor, 2015). Due to the gendered nature of the world, such countries are aware but do nothing about it.

Everybody in the international circles knows what is going on, save that, due to the gendered nature of the international system, victims have no voice, and if, and when they voice their concerns, nobody listens; if anybody listens, nothing is done, and the victims end up getting lip service, as it has always been since the conflict broke many years ago. The international community needs to take on such illegal

businesses in the above-mentioned countries on as one of the strategies of practically resolving the conflict in the DRC.

With that, the plundered resources wound up in Western markets, which are guided and defended by neoliberal polices. Therefore, invasive countries were not and are not held accountable or forced to abandon their project. Mac Ginty and Williams (2009) argue that "vast sums of money of dubious origin lubricate the international financial markets" (p. 35). Here, it is possible to see how gender performativity works in the way that these African countries perform the role of supplying the West with raw materials under the so-called world markets as spearheaded by neoliberalism. As mentioned above, to gain access to resources, the warlords had to displace people by attacking them quite often. In so doing, all those presumed to be weak, especially women and girls, suffered a lot from rape, torture, sexual slavery and death.

How Grievous is the Situation?

As indicated above, the DRC's situation has worsened since the first contact. Nevertheless, it became worse soon after gaining independence when the West pushed the country to a perpetual vicious circle of miseries to easily exploit its vast resources of value with which it is endowed. Therefore, the statics about the phenomenon are stunningly alarming and provocative. According to Peterman et al. (2011), in a survey in 2007, approximately 1.69 to 1.80 million women were reported having been raped in their lifetime (with 407,397 to 433,785 women reporting having been raped in the preceding 12 months), and approximately 3.07 to 3.37 million women reported experiencing intimate partner sexual violence (p. 1060). The figures noted above are high, although it is not easy to know the actual number of rape victims in the Eastern DRC compared to the general population of the area and the country. Moreover, Peterman et al. (2011) note that "the most recent DRC census was conducted in 1984. Thus, no current population estimates; and whatever is there is likely to be imprecise; and is likely to suffer from several limitations" (p. 1062).

The war in the DRC affects the whole country in various ways. Nackoney et al. (2014) observe that "between 1996 and 2003, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) experienced two devastating wars that collapsed its formal economy and caused increased social unrest and poverty" (p. 2). Even though the wars affected the whole country, the Eastern region of the country has suffered more consequences than the rest of the country, as argued above, since it possesses huge reserves of minerals, particularly coltan that many electronic and avionic industries in the West and other advanced countries need for their factories. Likewise, although the war affects all people in the Eastern DRC, the gendered nature of all militaristic societies at war creates conditions in which women and girls suffer even more cruelty due to sociocultural nature of Congolese society, which is patriarchal by setting, just like many other African societies.

Over and over, the situation in question depends on how one looks at the violent conflict. For example, when it comes to GBV, females are more vulnerable than males. On the contrary, when it comes to deaths, men are more vulnerable to being killed (Carpenter, 2006) than women. Nonetheless, if we consider women who die during childbirth, rape, wars, and other natural causes, the chances are high that the females are more vulnerable than the males.

Using a gender lens as a primary tool of analysis, as herein aforementioned, we argue, inter alia, that this conflict revolves around identity between females and males, the West and former colonies, and local and international players. Women are vulnerable in the Eastern DRC, particularly from combatants, civilians, and the UN male personnel, simply because they are females. The number of cases involving rape, sexual exploitation and poverty rates are higher in females than males. Mukwege and Nangini (2009) observe that:

> Rape with extreme violence, as evidenced in the DRC today, is implemented in three ways: (i) gang rape, usually by three or more men, leading to a high risk of injury; (ii) genital mutilation; and (iii) intentional transmission of

sexually transmitted diseases such as chlamydia and HIV. Extremely violent rape has been documented in the report of 492 REV survivors in South Kivu: 57.3% of the women were convinced that the extreme violence and cruelty inflicted on them by armed forces was "proof that there was a plan to destroy and exterminate the Congolese people or in any case the communities that these women belonged to." Seventy-two percent of women reported that they were tortured during the rape itself (beaten, wounded with machetes, genitally mutilated/burned by drops of plastic melted by flame), and 12.4% had had objects inserted into their vaginas (sticks, bottles, green bananas, pestles coated in chili pepper, rifle barrels); some women, after being raped, were killed by shots fired into their vaginas (pp. 48-49).

The figures above are disturbingly alarming, particularly how atrocities, brutalities, and the manners in which are committed. The brutalities with which such gender violence is committed are deplorable and would be viewed as such, had the international community applied a feminist view that pragmatically views all humans equally and equitably. Time and again, materialism blinds and deceives, since the beneficiaries and perpetrators of atrocities and crimes against humanity committed in the DRC do not have any gist of moral ability to look at the menace openly and practically due to greed, power struggle, and resources (Clarke, 2013).

When the people sent to protect the victims become perpetrators themselves, it shows how the war in the Eastern DRC is complicated and gendered by its nature and effects. Also, the war in the Eastern DRC has affected all spheres of life for the Congolese. However, when it comes to females, the burden and effects of the war are bigger than males. Considering the definition of gender, we strongly argue that what is ongoing in the Eastern DRC, the war is gendered whereby one sex regards itself as superior as opposed to another that is viewed and treated as inferior. Males are exploiting females simply because they view them as their

tools while the West is fuelling and supporting this conflict due to viewing itself as better-positioned than the DRC. Like men view women as their tools, the West, too, views Africa as their *terra nullius* or a No Man's land (Mhango, 2017b) when it comes to plundering it. Even the phrase "No Man's Land" speaks volumes that there is No "Woman's Land".

Moreover, gender appears almost in every aspect and juncture of the war in the Eastern DRC. Even the warlords are exploiting citizens simply because they think they are the ones who can run the country since they are males. That is why there are no war ladies (Bendel, 2016). That is because women did not participate in fuelling conflict in the DRC the same way that men, thus warlords, did. So, if one fits the definition into what is going on in the DRC, one finds that the socially constructed means of gender in acquiring power does apply well in the conflict due to the types and magnitude each sex suffers from the conflict. Gender not only surfaces in conflict, but it is also in the management or mismanagement of the DRC.

The number of females represented in the government, just like in other African countries, is still relatively small. As aforementioned, gender roles are more about performativity on top of sexual ones. For example, under any militarised society like the DRC, even things carry gendered roles. As another example, guns and male genitalia are the symbols of power while a dove or flower is the symbol of peace, which is regarded as weak or soft compared to the gun. If male genitalia is a symbol of power, then the vagina is the symbol of powerlessness and servility, and an object men can abuse, buy, and play with.

Although she created a fictional work, Johnson (1985) maintains that the vagina is a symbol of underworld under the concept of vagina *dentanta* or a fear of entering woman's space (Kauth, 2010), which intones to "the representation and expression of female subjectivity" (Harrington, 2014, vii) and wickedness. Bulkachuwa (1996) cited by Ngide (2013), sums it up nicely maintaining that:

> In many areas women are still regarded as chattels to be inherited, they are given no formal education...given out in marriage at an early age. They are forever under the control of either their husbands or male relatives...they cannot inherit or own property, nor can they participate fully in public life and the decision-making process within their immediate community (p. 89).

You can say so many things about the female genitalia from fearful to gravitational. It is your choice depending on how you want to use it. However, in the end, it ends with gender-constructed subjectivity, evilness, and weakness. To prove how a vagina is misconstrued as the cursed, Dewan Redaksi et al. (2015) notes that female genitalia is sold in the pornography industry, functioned as a cash-cow, while at the same time, being cursed for tainting morality, due to the community double standard placing such a multi-burden on femaleness. Again, where did it start?

As already noted, religions are amongst good sources of the belittling and demonising of females. For example, Leviticus 15: 19-24 provides that "if a woman has a discharge, and the discharge from her body is blood, she shall be set apart seven days" (Sigvartesn, 2017: 58).

There are numerous religious verses that portray a woman as dirty, weak, and wicked. Even in the Quran, Islam's holy book, the woman is not spared. The Quran 2:222 stipulates that:

> They will ask you about menstruation. Say 'it is harmful, so keep away from women during it do not approach them until they are purified of it, when they are purified you may approach them as Allah has ordained" (Bajirova, 2018: 52).

This depicts a woman as a dirty creature due to religious teachings that depicts a woman as the man's tempter. This shows the ignorance of a high degree. Religions failed to understand that if there were no menstruation cycles that many women undergo, procreating would have been

impossible. If this is where society comes from, do you expect women will be protected in the conflict in hand? Again, how have we come to believe in such ignorance as gold things?

Due to role performativity anything or anyone plays, we can simply say that gender, apart covering and essentialised human position based on sex and social construction, as already noted, covers nonhuman things. That is why patriarchate categorises the DRC as something weaker or anything that is non-militaristic as opposed to the stronger West. Even if you look at who militarises and weaponises the conflict in question, it is the very same West due to its militaristic nature of exploiting poor countries. Once again, the one supplying weapons is likely to enjoy masculinity while the one receiving them performs the feminine role if we examine the centrality resources play globally between the supplier and the recipient. Arguably, causes of the war in the Eastern DRC can be put into two categories, namely internal factors, and external factors.

Discussion questions

1. Every aspect of the wars and armed conflicts in the DRC are gendered, with power associated with masculinity and weakness with femininity. How can societies rediscover the power that is looted in being human and caring about the wellbeing of people or in *Ubuntu* philosophy as Mandela did?
2. What are the internal and the external factors maintaining the armed conflicts in the DRC?
3. Explain how GBV affects and traumatises women, with consequences that impact the whole of society.
4. Comment on the statement: Without charging the rapists and other perpetrators of gender violence, the system allows them to keep on violating the rights and lives of girls and women in the Eastern DRC.
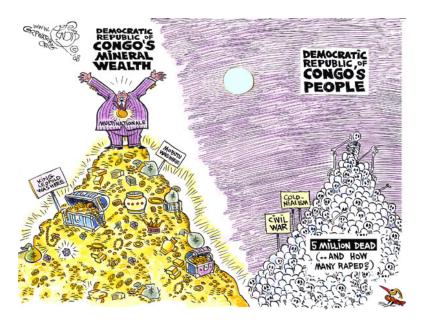
Chapter XVI

Forces Behind the Conflict

Figure 9:   Congo's wealth and historical exploitation and killings in the DRC (Source: drmsmediacenter. weebly.com)

Introduction

There are two major forces that have intensified the conflict at hand, namely internal and external forces. Many conflicts with large-scale impacts tend to reflect this nature. The conflict in the DRC resulted not exclusively from either of these two forces alone. So, in analysing the conflict in point, we will address the roles that these two forces played to fuel and sustain it so that they can both be addressed in devising interventions. Normally in conflict, there are multiple parties

involved based on multi-layered causes and reasons. That is why conflict commonly takes place between two or more parties, for example over privileges or scarce resources (Tjosvold, 2006). This conflict is no exception to this general rule of conflict.

Internal Factors

As indicated above, Mobutu's capture of power resulted in the absence of a function and of a stable government in the DRC, notwithstanding that Mobutu's overthrowing the government was for his interests and those of his backers in the West. Therefore, the fall of Mobutu created a sort of a vacuum that needed to be filled promptly. Although the DRC has never formally been categorised as a failed state, since Mobutu left, it has been heading for such a status. However, without reinforcing the colonial categorisation of many African states as failed, the DRC has been failing to function as a state that governs its territorial integrity and provides for the needs of the citizens. save that it has never collapsed.

Physically, the DRC is the second biggest country in Africa with the poorest infrastructure. Therefore, governing it was not easy for the new regime, which was also inexperienced and weak due to its composition of loosely militant groups. Such wobbliness became an impetus for warlords and their funders to take advantage of the situation.

In describing the DRC, Van Herp et al. (2003) argue that "many Congolese and foreign-groups are reluctant to give up of this resource-rich country and insecurity still reins" (p. 143). As alluded to in the quotation above, sometimes it becomes difficult to separate in the discourse on these two factors because of the intricate interaction between players. Therefore, we will try as much as we can to separate them. However, their interplay[s] will keep on surfacing in this discourse.

Conceivably, it is crystal clear that the fall of Mobutu can be pinpointed as one of the reasons that led to the current war in the Eastern DRC. That is so because Mobutu's reign backed

by the West silenced, suppressed, or bought out its enemies. Despite the country being calm, the rooting of the DRC went on unabated simply because the government in power was supervising it to meet the aims and goals of the buttress of Mobutu in power after the assassination of Lumumba.

Second, as argued in Van Herp et al. (2003), the DRC is a resource-rich country, and for this reason, amongst others, resources attracted opportunists from within and without the country to take advantage of the shaky government that took over after Mobutu fell, thereby leading to insecurity and delicateness of the situation then. As argued above, Burundi, Rwanda, and Uganda helped Kabila, and later fell out and thereby invaded the DRC to plunder the resources. Griggs (1996) argues that the geostrategic interests of Zaïrean Tutsis in Rwanda, Burundi, and Uganda were laid bare in October 1996 with the creation of a pro-Tutsi controlled 300km strip of Eastern Zaïre. This strip is from Uvira to south Goma in the North. Therefore, local Congolese Tutsis invited their colleagues from neighbouring countries, renowned for having rapidly expanding populations with scarce land and resources.

The above Tutsi strip is the result of the demarcation of the country the colonial powers made in 1884 during the scramble, division, and partition of Africa, whose internal effects is the division of some societies in more than one country. Check (2011) argues that the DRC needs to maintain a healthy relationship with Burundi and Rwanda in light of the likelihood that Rwanda and Burundi would not hesitate to intervene should their Tutsi population in its borders be threatened. If we consider the relationship between Tutsis and non-Tutsis in the region, the chances are high that gender has a great role to play in this setting. Jackson (2006) argues that the "Secret Council" of Tutsi elders is obsessed with the "purity of their race" (p. 109). History shows that these Tutsis or Banyarwanda (Bøås, 2009) started in 1885 after, as noted above, the partition of Africa, in which some communities were forced to belong to new countries they did not traditionally belong to.

Due to the gendered nature of the world, countries that carelessly and dubiously chopped Africa into pieces have never been held accountable for the crimes they committed against their victims. That is why it is exceedingly difficult to detach the conflict in question from colonialism and coloniality. In time, the gendering of humans and man's (male) invention of gender to perpetuate exploitation based on superiority (for the exploiters) and inferiority (for exploited), we can see how gender applies here. Vlassenroot and Huggins (2005) argue that the Eastern DRC makes a good target for local opportunists since "there are natural resources of much greater value, and much more 'lootable' character, than agricultural or pastoral land" (p. 119). This provides motivation for warlords to put their hands on whatever brings money quickly. Such a conflict takes a gendered turn, especially when militants use rape as a "weapon of war" (Maedl, 2011: 129), and when UN peacekeeping forces are also alleged to have committed violent crimes such as sexual exploitation.

As Kofi Annan, former UN Secretary General admits, "sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian staff cannot be tolerated. It violates everything the United Nations stands for" (Ndulo, 2009: 130). Displaced women, girls, and children by the conflict or other disasters are amongst the most vulnerable people in the Eastern DRC. They look to the UN and its humanitarian partners for shelter and protection. Autesserre (2016) provides the picture of what has exactly been going on in the DRC that, for the past years, massacre, and an egregious series of rapes and killings took place close to UN peacekeeping bases – such as in Kisangani in 2002, Bukavu in 2004, Kiwanja and Dungu in 2008, Luvungi in 2010, and Beni in 2014 (p. 29).

Third, Horowitz (1985) cited by Byrne and Irvin (2000: ix) observes that "ethnic conflict is at the center of politics in divided societies." The conflict in the Eastern DRC also has this factor that can be seen as a gendered one because Tutsis famously known as Banyamulenge have been playing an important role supported by Rwanda and Uganda. Also important is the fact that after Kabila easily toppled Mobutu,

there was an assumption created that anybody with a good backing can topple the government and control the reins of power, which directly gives them control over resources.

External Factors

Despite African conflicts having their internal factors, Africa has largely suffered from external factors. Collier (2008) traces five traps that contribute heavily, not only by way of underdevelopment but also problems in many poor countries, especially due to conflicts that, inter alia, result from the "resource curse" (Mantz, 2008: 37). This leads to one of the traps that Collier addresses, namely civil wars and bad neighbours that use conflict in their neighbouring country – especially if that country has resources as a trap (Collier, 2008) – which can be used as an opportunity to invade and rob it, as was the case in the Eastern DRC. That is why Burundi, Rwanda, and Uganda invaded the DRC, as indicated above. Because the regimes in Rwanda and Uganda ascended to power through waging long-time wars in their countries, which is different from Kabila's regime that they supported, apart from fighting for a short period of time, such countries regard themselves to be more militaristic than the DRC.

Under gender performativity, the above countries are more muscular than the DRC. Bad neighbours become even more nasty when they use instability as a *carte blanche* to plunder the country that has resources.

Collier (2008) essentially addresses bad neighbours who do not cooperate in business, particularly when a country is landlocked, but when neighbours exacerbate the already existing conflict, they become worse than what Collier (2008) admonishes countries embroiled in the five traps about. Due to the nastiness of such neighbours, sovereignty becomes weakened, if not ineffectual on military muscles, depending on who is backing whom or who is backed by whom. That is why the neighbours implicated above did not respect their neighbour's sovereignty, nor did colonial powers when they invaded and colonised Africa. Their assumption was that they

were better and more militaristic than their victims whom they deemed to be inferior or feminine, and we think that is why Western countries did not interfere, amongst other reasons such as being the beneficiaries of the plundering of the DRC.

As argued above, neighbouring countries that invaded the DRC and their sponsored warlords have been plundering the DRC, principally the Eastern DRC, as evidenced by the resources ending up in the Western markets. Considering this, the international community has long seemed to have been offering lip service to the conflict in the DRC. Montague (2002) maintains that "the international community has distanced itself from the war in the DRC. Despite the mounting death toll, the country receives only a trickle of aid and even less media attention" (p. 103). So, too, the Eastern DRC is vulnerable due to being situated on the borders with the countries that do not have as many resources as it does. Proximity makes it easier for neighbouring armies to sneak in and smuggle resources out of the country, as it was with Burundi's, Rwanda's, and Uganda's invasions.

Reyntjens (2004) notes that the "UN panel set up to examine the illegal exploitation of Congolese resources, the real long-term purpose of the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA)'s presence in the Congo was to 'secure property', and not to establish security" (p. 205); see also Mhango (2016a). Based on superiority and inferiority assumptions of the nature of the neighbouring countries backed by the free market, which use international institutions of hegemonic masculinity, invaders have been plundering the DRC with impunity because they are supplying looted resources to rich countries.

Under a feminist lens, invaders and their backers are more militaristic compared to those countries they invade that are in the feminine side in this equation here, thus muscular or masculine. Herbst (2004) discloses the culprits in this conflict observing that there "have also been repeated reports – almost all unconfirmed – that Uganda and other countries operating in DRC have been able to recoup some of their

expenses through theft of natural resources" (p. 26). Despite such allegations, the international community stood by and watched as if it had no business to do with the conflict. The major question we need to ask is: Where do these countries sell the resources they plunder from the Eastern DRC? Evidence points towards the reality that, due to not being banned, these countries sell the loot on the international market.

Ironically, the economies of countries suspected of invading and robbing the DRC are doing better than that of the DRC, and the same international community does not raise the red flag. Under gender construction, since this has been the fate of Africa, which is the superpower when it comes to natural resources, while on the contrary, the same giant in natural resources is the poorest continent on earth. Due to benefiting from the plundering of the Eastern DRC, the international community cares much about its interests, even if doing so means trampling and trivialising the rights of victims in the Eastern DRC. As Montague (2002) argues, after the international community began distancing itself, the invaders and the warlords seized the opportunity of militarising even the economy of the Eastern DRC to become a combat economy. Ballentine and Nitzschke (2005) argue that, in such a military or combat economy, the security apparatus of the state (military, paramilitary groups, police) and rebel groups, as well as domestic and foreign allows "conflict entrepreneurs" (p. 7) tend to support and fuel the conflict to benefit from it, much like what has transpired since the conflict broke out in the Eastern DRC.

If we consider the fact that such institutions mentioned above are run by men as it has been in a patriarchal society almost in all countries of the world and in everything important up until recently. Thus, for them, gender exploitation, as evidenced above, becomes higher, especially when rape and sexual exploitation are committed with impunity in the wake of the international community largely turning a blind eye. Once indifference becomes the order of the day, the chances of gender-related violence being committed are high. Defeis (2008) notes that "nothing discredits the United Nations

more than the continuing sexual abuse of women and girls by soldiers belonging to its international peacekeeping missions" (p. 189). The international community needs to do justice equally and equitably; otherwise, such indifference and complicity can be misconstrued as international conspiracy and racism against Africa.

When Iraq invaded Kuwait, the US and its allies did not allow the Kuwaiti people to suffer the same way innocent people are suffering in the DRC. The same was repeated in Afghanistan, when the Taliban started to abuse women by infringing on their freedoms based on its fundamentalist interpretation of Islam (Azerbaijani-Moghddam, 2009) before the West recoiled to safeguard its interest.

Even though the conflict in Afghanistan and Iraq has never been resolved, at least there are some structures in place whereby trillions of dollars have already been spent in the two conflicts even if they did not help any of the victims. For example, the UN approved peacekeepers' budget for 2022 is US$1,123,346,000 (Statista, 2024). Again, why have the two countries become more important to the international community than the DRC? Maybe, just maybe, it is because of racism against Africa that the DRC is left out. As per critical race theory, we live in a racist society. Thus, we obligatorily need to do something about the situation (Dixey, 2014).

If the driving force in these countries revolves around geopolitical significance or resources, the DRC, too, has resources, some of which cannot be found anywhere else in the world. Yet, because of being black, nobody bothers with the plight of the people in the DRC due to the gendering of the people based on their geography and race (Price, 2010). The same applies even today, when Syria receives more coverage and international concern than South Sudan, despite the latter having more natural resources than the former.

The Ramifications of the Conflict in the DRC

After addressing the causes of the conflict, let us address its negative consequences in the Eastern DRC. First, due to the

nature of conflict, and based on evidence already provided above, gender violence is high, and females are more negatively affected than men. Amowitz et al. (2002, cited in Spiegel, 2004) argue that in conflict and displacement, women are at high risk of facing sexual exploitation and abuses because of food insecurity and hunger, such as in the case of the Eastern DRC. Pratt et al. (2004) disclose the incident in which, in North Kivu, a young girl was raped by the owner of a mango tree, simply because she took a green fruit without asking. The size of the problem based on statistics obtained from Panzi Hospital, the only one dealing with rape victims in the Eastern DRC, paints a grim picture. Pratt et al. (2004) note:

> The following statistics give an idea of the seriousness of the issue: based on statistics from a recent report submitted by Panzi Hospital, from 1999 (290 cases) to 2003 (1289 cases), the number of victims of sexual attacks treated at the hospital rose by almost 3000 percent (30-fold). The largest increase in cases in a one-year span—444 percent--occurred from 2002 (290) to 2003, which may be a result of previously attacked survivors gaining access to services at the hospital (p. 11).

The statistics above speak volumes as to how enormous the problem in the DRC is. Yet, despite the enormity of the problem, the international community still treats the conflict in the DRC as a normal thing. That is why they have not resolved it as they did in Kosovo. Looking at the causes and consequences of the conflict in question, based on a gender lens, we can comfortably argue that the conflict in the Eastern DRC, apart from being violent, it is gender-based, and because the conflict is gendered females and weak people suffer at the hands of the powerful. Girls and women, as already indicated above, suffer at the hands of warlords, UN peacekeeping forces, males, and the international community that have decided to abscond themselves from the conflict despite sending some implicated UN peacekeeping forces that seem - although not all - to fit into the expression UN peace-breaking forces (Gilliard, 2012).

Inasmuch as the causes of the conflict in the Eastern DRC and consequences have been known for a long time, it is high time that the international community addresses it. As indicated above, brutalities and gross violations of human rights, mainly based on gender, have been going on in the DRC for a long time. It is the right time to tell the international community, especially the neighbours who collude with the West to rob resources and get them at cheap prices, to stop such complicity, double standards, and racism that for a long time have caused gender violence. We need to collectively stand and aim "at exposing the hypocrisy and double standards of Euro-American policies on Africa" (Makombe, 2014: 92). For example, all implicated parties, namely invasive countries, and their shenanigans, need to be banned from participating in international business so that they can have nowhere to sell the loot. So, too, the international community must support the Congolese to elect a competent government that can competently run the country.

Despite being implicated in the Eastern DRC, Rwanda provides an ideal example. After facing and suffering from genocide in 1994 – under the support from the international community – established a competent government that ended genocide and presided over emblematic changes. Rwanda is now one of the success stories of countries coming out of violent conflict, whose economic successes, and model have astounded many (Friedman, 2012). Why can't the international community not use the same modus operandi and zeal that saw Rwanda rising from ashes to prosperity and stability? Is it because their economic interests are viewed to be more important than women and children suffering in the Eastern DRC? Is it because the DRC is not complaining like Rwanda did after the West neglected to stop genocide in Rwanda?

One of the measures that can put a stop to the plundering of the Eastern DRC and bring the conflict to an end is for the international community to force implicated countries to redress the victims or imposing sanctions on them. Such measures, if indeed are enforced diligently, will not only discourage future countries from invading another country,

but will also send a strong signal to warlords that things have changed. When the International Criminal Court (ICC) indicted former Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta and his Deputy President for the post-election violence (PEV) that occurred from 30 December 2007 to 28 February 2007 (Pyne-Mercier et al., 2011), it brought stability to the elections that followed, in which chaos was averted for fear of the ICC's indictment. Mhango (2015a) tackles this aspect of conflict prevention deeply and widely.

Conclusion

The chapter has exhaustively shown how the conflict in the DRC has all hallmarks of gender violence perpetrated by multiplayers from local to international ones, as shown above. To address this anomaly, disadvantaged groups based on gender setting such as women, girls, children, and others must be protected and redressed. One of the ways by which to protect the victims of gender violence resulting from the conflict in the Eastern DRC is for the UN to increase the number of female peacekeeping soldiers. This will not only reduce the incidents in which male peacekeeping forces involve themselves in sexual abuses and exploitation but will also create fear for the perpetrators of such crimes involving gender violence in the Eastern DRC. However, Karim and Beardsley (2013) observe that despite an increase in the number of female peacekeepers globally, their numbers remain low. Thus, doubling the number of UN female police should go hand-in-hand with making sure that it achieves parity between female and male police. Also, the international community must strive to create a conducive environment for having a functional and able government in the DRC so that it can run the country effectively and put a stop to the current conflict and plundering in the Eastern DRC.

Practically, by increasing the number of women in UN peacekeeping missions, the chances are high of addressing the problem of the lack of human security in the DRC. Such an approach makes sense since women are likely to understand the effects of crimes resulting from war, especially rape, more

vividly and more practically than men, since they share the same feelings and nature with the victims. Women are likely to have a deeper understanding of the phenomenon because rape is used as a weapon and "an expression of dominance" (Brownmiller, 2013: 72).

Women understand rape differently and more meaningfully than men. Farwell (2004) argues that "war-related gender violence builds on pre-existing gender relations and sociocultural dynamics; it is the very concept of honor situated in women's bodies that makes wartime rape such an effective tool of terror" (p. 394). We think women know the value of their bodies more deeply and practically than men do. Therefore, being the victims of the same patriarchal system themselves for a long time, women are likely to have what it takes in UN peacekeeping missions to take on the vices by reporting the incidents. Comparably, their presence is likely to deter men or create an unconducive environment for them to commit rape.

Fundamentally, the international law should be used to deal with crimes committed by UN peacekeeping soldiers the same way the law deals with warlords and other suspects of war-related crimes. Currently, international law seems to be silent when it comes to how to deal with UN personnel suspected of committing crimes during the UN's intervention, as it has been going on in the Eastern DRC as indicated above.

Discussion Questions

1. Since violence began in the DRC, peacebuilding measures are focusing on internal actors, causes, and drivers, why international interventions, including the UN peacekeeping mission, have not engaged the external actors, causes, and drivers of the phenomenon in the DRC? Can peace ensue in the DRC when external elements are excluded or ignored?
2. In 2009, the then UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan remarked: "sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian staff cannot be tolerated. It violates everything the United

Nations stands for." Why have humanitarian sex predators not been brought to justice or why were foreigners who were implicated sent back to their countries to be dealt with, but not in the jurisdiction they allegedly committed the offences?

3. Why are UN peacekeepers who engage in GBV not prosecuted in the DRC, where they committed the offences alleged to have been committed?

Chapter XVII

Human Rights Vs Security

Introduction

One important invention of liberal peace is the whole concept of human security as a right for every human being even though practically it is not the case vis-à-vis the DRC. Again, borrowing from the history of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), we argue that the concept of human security as a human right does not practically apply to the victims, especially those victims of GBV in the DRC as a representative of Africa. Human security exists only hypothetically, and possibly hypocritically as it is for the UDHR, whose existence did not spare African countries from being colonised up until the 1960s and thereafter after fighting a long hard battle for their right to freedom and equality, only to never be fully realised. Interestingly, those who invented and proclaimed said rights were the ones who colonised and kept colonising Africa even after they declared the UDHR the same way they are plundering the DRC.

Ironically, some of the major rights the UDHR stipulates are the right to freedom and equality, which has never been attained in Africa and other colonised countries. Although human security as a human right, as espoused by liberal peace, seeks to provide security for all people globally, it seems that children and women in the DRC have no such guarantee, as a mock-up of Africa and other most forgotten and vulnerable groups have no such guarantee, particularly in the Global South. The DRC is used as an example to show how vulnerable children and women are, far from enjoying the human security in question. We decided to categorise children and women in the same group since when women or the mothers are affected, the children are affected as well. That is why our major proposition is based on the deconstruction of

the patriarchal system and the current world *realpolitik* and system of commerce, which have contributed a lot to this denial of human security for women in the DRC.

Gendered Human Security

Although, the international community came with the concept of human security, this book discussed detailly, not all humans have enjoyed it. The DRC is one of them wherein females suffer more than anybody when it comes to human security and what it entails of promises. To get the true picture of how females are excluded from enjoying human security, we need to delve into the definition of the concept. The *Commission on Human Security* (2003) defines human security as "safety for people from both violent and non-violent threats" (MacFarlane and Khong, 2006: 11) wherever they are in the world. This definition, however, is narrow and does not include another vital element of human security, which is freedom from want. Even if the definition includes both elements, the DRC and Africa, inter alia, will still be absent or lag because of their small economies based on exporting raw materials instead of processed materials, which have added value.

Freedom from want depends particularly on a country's economic ability to provide such required materials that cause wants amongst people but is subject to dialogue. How can African countries become free of want while their economies have always been colonised by their ex-colonial masters and other emerging powers? Apart from the Commission on Human Security's definition, Glasius (2008) maintains that it is not only the Commission on Human Security (2003) that created a lacuna. For, even the Human Development Report 1994 (UNDP, 1994) does not give a single definition of human security. Instead, it enumerates seven elements of human security, namely economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security, and political security. If we go by the definition of the Commission on Human Security (2003), which summarises the concept of human security to cover both violent and non-violent threats, the DRC and Africa

in general will still suffer because they are relatively poor. Traditionally, African economies are poor and vulnerable. They have always been used to service the economies of rich countries that disregard human security without abandoning their exploitative behaviours that have been ongoing for many decades since they introduced slavery and colonialism. Human security is about freedom from fear, and freedom from want.

Nevertheless, Floyd (2007) argues that human security is supposed to be about freedom from fear not about freedom from want. Such a rationale makes more sense if we address the brutalities, deaths, diseases, discrimination, exploitation, poverty, and uncertainties that females are facing in the DRC. They suffer more from want of the mechanisms to resolve their problems. However, sometimes, we can say that what creates confusion are the semantics and the way we choose and interpret the terms we use in our discourses.

For this book, if a victim of rape is fearful of her future and wellbeing, thus needs or wants protection or getting away from the situation she is facing and its entrapment and predicaments. Maybe, we should use the term *need* instead of the *want*. Again, if we consider the countries that sponsored human security, namely Canada and Japan, they have already passed the line of basic human needs. For them, the needs are automatically met to think about the wants. Sometimes, one may argue that such countries were reflecting to their secondary needs that they wanted to make universal. For, it does not make sense that such countries did not know how many people in the world still suffer even from their own activities that culminate in the exploitation those they pretend not to know exist.

There is no way that the language of want can make sense to the person whose needs have never been adequately addressed or even partially met. We argue that those who used the term want instead of needs elected to use those whose needs have never met to score a credit, which has often been the hypocritical behaviour of the so-called international community. Is the concept of human security hypocritical, as

was the case of the UDHR, whose target were the West and rich white males when it was enacted? Once again, the definition above does not state how such protracted sufferings, threats, and GBV are going to be addressed to enhance human security. They remain rampant like civil war resulting from competition and fighting over resources that have left many women raped and killed in the Kivu areas in Southeastern DRC where their lives have been disrupted and affected negatively.

To accommodate the victims in the DRC, Newman (2010) maintains that the "definition of human security should not be preoccupied with broad and narrow models; instead, the definition should be based upon a threshold" (p. 83) of how excluded countries and people can be practically covered instead of being covered theoretically only. Women need to receive more attention without necessarily entertaining the litanies of sexual favouritism or faux speciality. Simple logic dictates that when a doctor receives patients, although it is the right of everybody to receive treatments, the doctor first prioritises seriously sick people, children, and the elderly. The same should apply to the drive for human security. Therefore, the definition must accommodate those who need security most.

Brittain (2003) cited in Barnett and Adger (2007) argues that women are the first to suffer from the direct and indirect depredations wrought by violent conflict, which culminate in insecurity and great needs of almost everything. This shows the complexity and duplicity of human security regarding gender. Again, no special mechanism seems to be covered by a human security definition in dealing with such a group due to the fear of being regarded as favouring one group over others. If it is possible to disfavour as has been in the north–south / male / female gendered relationships, why not favouring the victims?

Basically, when any conflict occurs, affected people or countries can address human security or not depending on their economic and political ability and capabilities. In doing so, females were supposed to be given priority due

to their vulnerability that makes them the first in the front line of violent conflict. Due to the above-mentioned dire conditions, the DRC is not able to offer human security in such circumstances. In addition, from systemic exploitation under capitalism and bad governance that the DRC has witnessed since independence, it appears that it has struggled to provide human security during times of calamity to all its people, let alone give priority to vulnerable females that are the first to be affected, even more than males. Coupled with the colonial legacies, which forced the countries in the Global South to depend on aid from the Global North, the chances of realising human security in the DRC are not only slim, but next to never.

Since the postcolonial scramble for resources started in the early 60s soon after the DRC acquired its independence, war has not stopped, and the situation worsens day by day. Importantly, when we argue that human security in the DRC cannot be guaranteed, it is to this end that children and women suffer more than men under a patriarchal system in many countries, including the DRC. In this sense, human security cannot flourish without deconstructing the patriarchal system in the world.

The victims of atrocities in the conflict in question experience trauma and long-time economic, physical, and psychological sufferings. For, there is neither strong nor responsible government to guarantee them human security and champion for their human needs. Due to the nature of war and violent conflict, women are likely to suffer not only presently, but also in the future. Rapes in the camps are also reported. For example, Grabska (2011) notes that due to joblessness and lack of activities to busy them, men in Kakuma, Kenya, refugee camps, resorted to domestic violence, including rape. One of the triggers was the dependence on aid from humanitarian organisations, which is an antithesis of self-reliant lives they used to have before becoming refugees when men were the sole breadwinners. If refugees in a stable country like Kenya can suffer this way, what about the victims in the wobbly DRC?

Therefore, depending on aid and humanitarian services may make victims, who are the products of a patriarchal system, feel that their powers have either been undermined or taken away. Such a take creates anger, inferiority, confrontation, and the conflicts that simmer in many refugee families. It largely makes them look as desperate, dependent, and dominated like women, and sometimes gives relief and power to women whom they used to dominate and even exploit. Further, Grabska (2011) cites a married man who says that "before we could control the woman through the access to food, but now, since she can go to the UN directly, the woman has more power in the family, and you might feel that you are not a man" (p. 89). For men from a purely patriarchal society, empowering women means threatening their powers and privileges they take for granted as the patriarchal system granted them such power to keep and enjoy unabatedly.

Likewise, women are likely to be raped when they go out of camps to collect firewood and water. As a result, this shows how the ordeal of women not only ends up once the conflict has been resolved or after securing refuge somewhere. Even when it comes to the opportunities available in the refugee camps such as education, females are negatively affected due to the roles assigned to them such as looking after the young ones, preparing food for the family, and fetching firewood and water. Gaye (2007) notes that, traditionally, women and girls in the so-called developing nations are responsible for food processing, fetching water, and firewood collection, which occupy much of their time and energy. While females spend their energy and time collecting firewood and water and preparing food for the family, boys spend time either studying or playing.

The above-mentioned chores force females to trek many kilometres almost every day. In so doing, some end up being raped, and once this happens, their families and society often do not sympathise with them as heroines who were violated fending for them. In the DRC, the situation is worse, given that culturally, the victims of rape are discriminated against. Even when girls come home, their ordeal is not over. McElroy et al.

(2010) quotes a mother in Palenga Camp in Uganda, saying that the girls are becoming difficult to protect and handle because there are some adults in the camp who entice them with money and things to eat like sweets, biscuits, and sodas. The situation is the same in many camps in Africa. Girls who do not have enough to eat, have little or no access to sanitation services and other amenities, create many temptations.

As for married women who are raped as they fend for their families in a foreign land, are divorced and the children conceived and born thereof, too, suffer from society by being shunned and discriminated against. Divorces resulting from rape not only occur in the refugee camps. They occur even amongst the IDPs. Gener (2010) notes that in Kenya, Rebecca Lolosoli had to establish a village for accommodating women who had been shunned by their families or their husbands or had been forced out of their communities because they were raped. So, when such disruptions of the lives of victims happen, women become more vulnerable, especially where men are still sole breadwinners.

Therefore, after being divorced and shunned from society, women, as victims, find themselves in a hard situation to involve themselves in forced or illegal activities such as prostitution and slavery to survive. Such people do not enjoy any human security whatsoever. Once again, men are the ones who prey on such women and, sometimes, children, especially girls who are used as sex slaves.

Arguably, human security is supposed to provide and guarantee security for all people globally from both want and fear, be they violent or non-violent, natural, and unnatural. Women in the DRC who are subjected to rape, sexual violence, abductions, and shootings face another problem, which lacks a legal mechanism that can be used to hold perpetrators accountable due to the dysfunctional nature of the judicial system in the DRC. Children, women, and other victims in the areas affected by civil war in the DRC live in fear for their lives and want of security apart from other basic needs. Those already affected suffer from the want of security and dignity,

which are key, and their human rights. This proves how complicated the situation is in the DRC.

Although our analysis is based on the lack of human security for children and women in the DRC as an example for many countries in the Global South, there is another essential element that needs to be explored and incorporated in human security dialogue. This is the concept of human development, which plays an important role in providing human security in any country. MacFarlane and Khong (2006) argue that "if we accept that the choices of particular groups (e.g., women) are, especially constrained, then perhaps measurements of gender equity should be a part of the overall HDI [human development index]" (p. 145). Such a claim not only touches on development to actualising human security, but it also touches on unequal distribution of resources based on gender inequality locally and globally.

Moreover, the lack of development in the DRC shows why the country is unable to provide security to its people, be it from fear or from want. Tadjbhakhsh and Chenoy (2007) enumerate human insecurities such as the lack of food, good health, employment, personal security / safety, dignity, cultural integrity, environment, and political security, which in the context of the DRC, are amiss, especially for women and children.

Understandably, a person facing atrocities such as abduction, rape, sexual violence, and killings simply because the government does not have the means to protect them and guarantee human security is likely to suffer from other problems such as food insecurity, personal insecurity / safety, dignity, education, good health, medication, and other social amenities. Such situations add more fears and wants altogether since the person facing them has no "life of dignity" (Tadjbhakhsh and Chenoy, 2007: 48). Similarly, Battersby and Siracusa (2009) argue that, in the DRC, children are still vulnerable despite the deployment of a UN mission.

Additionally, Tadjbhaksh and Chenoy (2007) note that "in the Congolese case, child protection programs

in specialized agencies (e.g., UNICEF [United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund]) were under-resourced" (p. 210). This shows how bad the governance and the lack of a stable government affect the capability for the country to provide security for its people. Such children used in war in the DRC are suffering from fear of being killed, used, and abused if they refuse to join combatants. The situation becomes even worse when the international community plays a game of roulette and fails to provide them with human security so that they can live without fear and want, as the *Commission on Global Governance* (1995) claims that "despite the growing safety net of the world's states, people in many areas now feel more insecure than ever" (MacFarlane and Khong, 2006: 139).

The major questions we need to ask, and answer are: Can a country facing civil wars guarantee human security for children and women while they are largely subjected to rapes, just as it is in the current civil war in the DRC? Have these victims of rape, which is speciously interpreted and used as a weapon of war, and children used as soldiers in the DRC been guaranteed their human security? The answer is obvious that the victims of the above crimes in the DRC did not / do not enjoy their human security. The children used as soldiers in civil wars do not enjoy their human security either. Why?

Basically, because of the extraction of resources that Western economies seek hampers the international community from intervening decisively to at least attenuate or extenuate the situation. This ties *realpolitik* of the world to the situation. As noted above, some minerals and resources stolen from the DRC are sold to the world markets. To do away with this lack of human security, the international community needs to come up with mechanisms of illegalising such items in the world market. However, this is directly on a collision course with the current nature of the free market since it is its antithesis.

The vulnerability of and the lack of human security for children and women in the DRC do not end with international

trade only. It goes further to touch on the UN peacekeeping forces that are alleged to have committed crimes against women. Notar (2006) notes "in 2004, stories of the alleged involvement in rape and 'survival sex' with women and children began to emerge. The U.N. is investigating one case in which a French logistics employee videotaped himself torturing and abusing naked girls" (p. 417).

Apart from participating in committing sexual-related crimes, some UN peacekeepers go further than that. O'Brien (2012) notes that:

> United Nations (UN) peacekeepers have been accused of various offences (such as sexual exploitation and abuse, gun smuggling and trading, and gold or diamonds trading), which, under specific circumstances, could be even characterized either as war crimes or, more often, as crimes against humanity (p. 525).

To see which way it goes, in the same breath, Al-Hussein (2009) argues that:

> The young women of Bunia, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, had survived the most gruesome wartime experiences—massacres, multiple rapes, disease and hunger—only to then find themselves tormented by the very people who were sent in to save them (p. 654).

Understandably, being harmed, vulnerable or insecure in the hands of a guardian or somebody one believes to be their protector can have more psychological effects than when the act is committed by the person, the victim is not related or expected to provide security for them.

Al-Hussein (2009)'s claim above that the victims in the DRC have suffered horrendous ordeals, and girls and women are more vulnerable than men as far as the lack of human security is concerned. What makes the situation harder and more unique is the fact that women and children in war-

affected places are preyed on by different players, namely militias and peacekeepers, which exacerbate the problem.

However, the UN seems to have received the message, which necessitated it to adopt a mechanism that effectively and practically will have impact on peacekeeping. MacFarlane and Khong (2006) note that:

> Having established the differential impacts of conflict on women, the Secretary-General called for the Security Council to recognize and act upon the specific impacts of conflict on women and girls and in particular to ensure that these were integrated into Security Council consideration of peace operations (p. 216).

Considering economic imbalances in the world, it is possible to argue that the government in the DRC will not provide security for its people, especially children and women who do not participate in wars and struggles over resources. The DRC is poor economically despite sitting on massive sources of natural resources of value, and it has since independence depended on aid from rich or Western countries. Man-made poverty makes the DRC unable to address and provide human security for its people. More crucially, the DRC's inability to address human security is likely to persist as long as the international community does little or nothing to address it. Again, how does a country that has been in chaos and civil wars address and provide human security it has been amidst insecurity. Because of insecurity and mismanagement of the country since its inception as a free nation, the DRC has never provided its citizens with human security. To know how dire the situation has been in the DRC, Kabamba (2012) notes that:

> The Congo has been bleeding to death for five centuries, a victim of Arab slavers, King Leopold II's destructive extraction, Belgian restructuring, Mobutu's rule, and now the predation of Rwanda occupation and associated mineral companies (p. 124).

Once again, this proves how the international community is indirectly against women in the DRC amongst others. Titeca and De Herdt (2011) note that the "Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is seen as a prime example of failed state: a 'forsaken black hole characterized by calamity, chaos, confusion" (p. 2). Such a country cannot guarantee justice or protect its citizens, not to mention women. To do so, the situation needs to improve so that the country can function well and promote human security for its people, especially children and women.

MacFarlane and Khong (2006) point a finger at the world *realpolitik,* arguing that the report they cite above stressed that human security was threatened not only by conditions of deprivation, inequity, and instability within states. The argument is there is the globalisation of threats that impacts on population growth, illegal migration, economic disparities between states, the drug trafficking, pollution and environmental degradation, and terrorism. Many innocent people in the DRC have already lost their lives, and properties already destroyed and millions of either internally displaced or exiled as the results of the conflict. Cilliers (2004) maintains that "in the DRC, an estimated three million people have died during the past three years as a result of conflict" (p. 21).

Again, as already noted above, we still wonder how the international community was able to address the situation in Kosovo but did not do the same in the DRC. Is it because Kosovo is white and does not have natural resources, as opposed to the DRC that supplies cheaper minerals and resources, which are only possible to get by letting the country go on with civil war? The international conspiracy against the DRC vis-*à*-vis human security is obvious under current economic norms, whereby some countries and companies fuel and support wars to get access to the needed resources.

Conclusion

In sum, after exploring the lack of human security for children and women in the DRC, what should be done to address such

an anomaly? We suggest that the international community stop its double standards, especially in trade, so that minerals and resources obtained in the civil wars in the DRC should be categorised as illegal, as it was for the blood diamonds. So, too, true democracy must be introduced in the DRC so that there can be a competent and functioning government that will be held accountable, should there be any violations of human security.

Importantly, African countries need to underscore the fact that they are weak, since they were divided and partitioned by their colonial masters, whereby some have resources while others do not, and this forces some countries to invade others, as is the case in the problem in question. Now, it is over fifty years since the colonial masters left. Why do they not reunite and become strong economically and politically?

We also suggest that stigmatisation of the victims of rape and the laxity in dealing with the perpetrators should be dealt with nationally and internationally to see to it that they are able to access medical services and legal redress. Public education based on human rights, human security, and peace and conflict is important for the areas affected by the civil war in the DRC. Such education will create awareness and thereby help people to know the importance and necessity of equality, whereby they will be able to appreciate that women are not toys for men to play with as they like.

Also, the international patriarchal system needs to be decolonised and deconstructed through the demystification of its dominance and superiority. Apart from education on human rights, awareness campaigns on human equality and human dignity must be made a priority in the DRC. This is one of doable projects that the international community under the UN can invest in by funding projects that are aimed at protecting vulnerable groups, especially women and children, and this can be achieved through increasing the number of women in the UN's decision-making bodies. Also, local stakeholders should be empowered and involved in this process. We fully support the increase in the number of female

peacekeepers. Finally, given that an individual is a referent unit in human security, local and regional courts specially for entertaining issues that have to do with the violation of human security must be formed.

Discussion Questions

1. Why have international norms including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights failed to protect women against GBV and to guarantee the rights of all Congolese people?
2. What should Congolese women who have been brutalised by violence and insecurity do to achieve sustainable peace and security?
3. Are colonial justice and external peacebuilding approaches appropriate for the DRC or is there a need to search into Congo's cultures for appropriate modes of justice and peacebuilding?
4. What is required to have to guarantee a place for women on the peace negotiation table?

Chapter XVIII

Whose Human Rights?

Introduction

Although generically, the concept of human security is called human security, security does not apply equally for all. It proposes things such as addressing security from fear and want without necessarily to do so for all. In this case study, fear and want may top the agenda on the menu of things its victims would like to be done or given priority should they be consulted. Therefore, however best human security may sound, this concept has a lot of ambiguities and controversies. Conceivably, "there is no single definition of human security today" (Tadjbakhsh and Chenoy, 2007: 9). Various stakeholders have different definitions. For the sake of argument, this book will go with that, which is derived from the Commission on Global Governance. Also, the introduction of human security seems to draw from the UDHR (1948), which is credited to have hypotetically introduced the concept universally.

However, "the human security concept is too universal to distinguish between people, and that it undermines pluralism" (Tadjbakhsh and Chenoy, 2007: 66). Here, the argument is that there should be a threshold in delivering human security. The lack of threshold evidenced currently raises doubts about human security. We wonder if threats as component of human security applies to every human, and why security from fear for people in poor countries has ever been addressed or considered? Such an anomaly highlights exert efforts to reform neo-liberal policies, which exploit poor countries.

Human Rights and Human Security

It is easy to pin down the failure of human security based on the failure of human rights globally due to the selective nature of enjoying and promoting them. For example, looking at Canada – one of the founders and proponents of the concept of human security – we find critics of the concept right. Human security is about fear and want. Again, what has been ongoing in Canada for over one hundred years vis-à-vis gross violations of Canada's Aboriginal People or the First Nations including systemic insecurity in many areas such as food, water, and others (Batal et al., 2021). This makes the whole project wanting. Battersby and Siracusa (2009) help us to know if threats are addressed or not, arguing that "when innocent people are trapped in a life of murder and fear, the Declaration is not being upheld" (p. 23); and its effectives can be brought into question if not deemed a white elephant.

As noted above. human security failure is obvious in Canada where Aboriginal People live in fear of being incarcerated, drug addiction, being attacked by preventable diseases, and other systemic threats. They face a very a high rate of criminalisation and victimisation "than do non-Aboriginals" (Hanselmann, 2001: 7). As a founder and sponsor of the concept, why has Canada failed to provide and guarantee human security to its Aboriginal People?

Why has Canada escaped with the lack of human security for their Aboriginal population despite being one of the proponents of the same concept? MacFarlane and Khong (2006) answer the question that "the realist world is one where rules are regularly broken, and agreements last only as long as they benefit the contracting parties" (p. 63). By underscoring the nature of international instruments – and the way they work – we can, arguably, decipher the motive for Canada to champion the introduction of human security while the country knew too well how dire the situation is within its borders. The major question we can raise here is: Why did Canada think about others and the world, but failed to think about its own constituency? Canada's ability – to get away

with it – is another evidence of the failure of the realisation of human security, which is basically more rhetorical than real.

Again, Battersby and Siracusa (2009) argue that "prescriptions for human security thus differ markedly according to ideology or values" (p. 66). Such a take proves the controversy of human security, especially when we conceptualise what is ongoing in repressive countries, which have a good relationship with the West that champions human security. We therefore postulate that the concept is but hypothetical and hypocritical when it comes to its practicality and sincerity.

Further, Battersby and Siracusa (2009) give the reason why such relations and situations go on unabated even by trampling on human security that "globalization as imperialism lied down the infrastructure of new international economy" (p. 18). We can now see why, for instance, and how repressive countries are able to sacrifice human security for their people under the banner of trading with the West. Dannreuther (2010) concurs with Battersby and Siracusa (2009) that Western or other oil-dependent countries, companies, and individuals are complicit or alternatively 'turn a blind eye' to these illiberal practices of liberalism, and due to the gendering nature of the international system, which is militaristic and patriarchal by engineering, poor countries that are forced to embark on the democratisation of their countries and liberalising their economies do not have any say or urgency to do anything for fear of being denied aid. So, too, due to what happened in Iraq and Libya, where the dictators of these countries were toppled and killed, many are likely to abandon the idea of challenging rich countries for fear of being overthrown. Therefore, regarding human security, it is hypothetical and hypocritical, as it does not cover all countries and all human beings equally and realistically.

Arguably, that is why the detractors of the concept – such as Jeremy Bentham, however wrong and prejudiced they might have been – called human rights "nonsense on stilts" (Goodhart, 2016: 14). For those who have never enjoyed

those human rights, they seem more unreal than real because "human rights claims cannot in themselves be accurately seen as either enforcing or challenging the existing relations of power" (Goodhart, 2016: 108), particularly internationally whereby some countries are *holier than others*. Besides, countries that pose as harbingers of human rights are the first ones to violate them. In this book, we have given the example of how Western nations supported Mobutu for 32 years. They did so if he enabled them and their multinational corporations to exploit the DRC's natural resources, though they were aware that he was a dictator who violated the rights of the Congolese people. That is an example of the masculinised hypocrisy that dictates liberal peace, making its decolonisation along with security and human rights a *sine qua non*.

Another shortfall of human security is the fact that there are no clear mechanisms of equally applying, enhancing, and guaranteeing human security to all humans globally. Goodhart (2016) argues that the applicability of other Western ideas such as democracy, equality, justice, and human rights is open to question when the context of debate shifts outside the Western sphere. Due to this assumption, the introduction of human security – based on Western standards and definitions – may be seen as an agenda for some countries to gain some leverage and political mileage, as it is in the case of Canada. We need to explore the scope it says it covers theoretically to see its viability and possibility altogether. We need to know if the human security proposed covers everybody instead of repeating the same blunders that allowed and enabled Western countries to dominate and exploit non-Western countries by superimposing their diktats.

Based on the above arguments and realities, we therefore cast a doubt on human security applicability based on the experience obtained from the human rights regime. It is easy for the international community to declare and prescribe human security. Arguably, when it comes to exercising the concept, it leaves much to be desired. The reason is clear that the nation-state is still at liberty to guarantee or not human security to its people without necessarily been required to

do so under international law. That is why Canada has been denying the First Nations their human security, and still has the guts to propose the same it has denied its people for many years.

Despite some glitches and impasses, there have been some efforts to change this anomaly. MacFarlane and Khong (2007) observe that "conventional analyses of the concept of security emphasize the state as the referent object of security; it is the state that is to be secured" (p. 28). Such an observation speaks volumes that individual people are left out and left to the mercy of the state, which has discretionary power to uphold or trample on human security, as has been the cases we cited above. Also, there is an ambiguity on who or what is referent for human security, since both individual and state are referents, wherein the latter has more power than the former.

Although gender violence is primarily seen as the result of animosity or gender differences between males and females, it is likely to be more of a females' struggle against the whole of society globally. Gender violence in the conflict in question has proved that the major drive is the animosity amongst the international community, masculinity, and femininity that revolve around class, gender, geography, and race, amongst others. Hereunder are some proposals on what should be done as interventionist methods.

How Can the Conflict be Transformed?

In answering this question, this book addresses four major areas, namely the introduction of the conflict. Thereafter, the book surveys the factors that caused the conflict based on three major groups, namely economic, political, and social. First, dealing / managing / resolving or transforming big and protracted conflicts like the one in the DRC entails many things. Given that the conflict in the DRC has been going on for many decades, it is not easy to address it without having resources, expertise, political will, and readiness for the players to arrest and resolve it decisively.

The conflict in the DRC, as has been shown, has become protracted. It revolves around many complex issues such as capitalism, neo-colonialism, and bad neoliberal policies that have fuelled and funded wars not only in the DRC, but all over the world as far as poor countries are concerned and especially those rich with natural resources. This makes the conflict a national and an international one. For example, to deal with the conflicts decisively and rightly, we have identified, inter alia, the players, power relationship, mainly a gendered one, and the interests of the players.

Arguably, we have proved that there are two categories of parties to the conflict in the DRC, namely direct and indirect, and internal and external ones. However, the international community, apart from offering lip service (Lamb, 2007) to the conflict in the DRC, as we have proved in this discourse, avoided, or failed to address and deal with the major root causes of the conflict. Instead, the international community has tried to deal with the offshoots of the conflict by ignoring the root causes, which are, inter alia, struggle by local elites for controlling resources, extraction of resources, supplying the resources, colonial legacy, patriarchate, poverty, unregulated international free trade policies based on neoliberalism, and globalism that hitched on the concept of free markets. Therefore, without addressing these causes above, whatever efforts put in place in the DRC will never yield desirable and expected results.

Principally, dealing with the conflict in the DRC is like cleansing the boil. One dealing with this "boil" needs to follow all procedures by attacking the disease instead of dressing it up as it currently is. Again, when looking at what has been going on in the DRC vis-à-vis the intervention by the international community and regional grouping, there is a missing link in that said players have never addressed the root causes of the conflict. In tackling this conflict, we will address historical causes of the conflict based on sociopolitical reality, and the *realpolitik* and geopolitics of the world.

Intervention in the DRC

The United Nations

When there occurred army mutiny in the then Congo, later the DRC in 1960 (Othen, 2015), the then Congo's Prime minister, Patrice Lumumba sought the help of the UN (Terrie, 2009; Kent, 2010; Spooner, 2010). Nevertheless, the UN did not intervene to quash the mutiny. The UN's betrayal and inactivity, in a sense, is the straw that broke the camel's back vis-à-vis the toppling, and later, the assassination of Lumumba. It is obviously blameable that the UN's neutrality was nothing but a perfidy to Lumumba who had immense trust in this international body to which his new country was a member. Sadly, the same organisation that Lumumba trusted ended up stabbing him in the back.

Despite the UN's presence in the Congo during the crisis soon after independence, Lumumba was toppled and later brutally killed. This shows how the West has always applied a double standard in dealing with its former colonies. This betrayal and breaching of trust have gone on ever since, leading the DRC to cascade in conflicts since gaining its independence. Ontologically, the so-called international organisations and the international community have always machinated with the West in sticking up and ruining Africa, and this was not the first nor the last time for such bodies to practically sabotage Africa.

The second time the UN betrayed the DRC is when the conflict in the Eastern Congo broke out in the 1990s (Autesserre, 2010). Despite sending its peacekeeping forces, the situation has never improved, apart from many scandals implicating the UN peacekeeping forces in the DRC as we have substantiated above. Instead of helping, protecting, and keeping peace, the UN peacekeeping forces became another nightmare for war victims in the DRC. Also, the UN peacekeeping forces were implicated in selling arms to rebels that still terrorise the general population in the DRC. According to *Reuters* (2007), in 2007 human rights groups

said that Pakistani officers serving in the 17,600-strong force were involved in the illegal smuggling of up to $5 million US in gold from the trouble-plagued Northern-Eastern Ituri region. Schaefer (2009) notes that:

> Allegations were made in 2006 that UN peacekeepers had illegal dealings with Congolese militias, including gold smuggling and arms trafficking. According to the lead OIOS investigator in charge of investigating the charges against the UN peacekeepers in the Congo, he had found the allegations of abuses by Pakistani peacekeepers to be —credible, but the —the investigation was taken away from my team after we resisted what we saw as attempts to influence the outcome (p. 5).

Such evidence based on figures and facts show how the UN has failed in resolving the conflict in the DRC. Apart from being implicated in shameful scandals, the UN has never taken any decisive measures vis-à-vis the conflict and the plundering of the DRC.

The African Union (AU) Intervention

Regarding the AU, its role in the DRC has always been liminal due to the limitations it has. Since its inception in Durban, South Africa, in 2002, the AU has never intervened in the conflict in the DRC. It only intervened in Burundi, Darfur, and Somalia. Murithi (2008) argues that "the AU has not conducted extensive peacebuilding operations on the continent despite the significant need for peacebuilding" (p. 74). Therefore, because of the above evidence and observations, we can argue that the AU's contribution in resolving the conflict in the DRC is negligible. Again, if we consider the fact that the AU depends on Western countries to fund its operations, the chances are high that there is no way it would like to poke its nose into the interests of the West in the DRC to end up losing the funding and prestige of representing the continent even though it has never united it.

Had Africa been united, the AU would have the wherewithal to play a great role in the conflict. Similarly, if Africa were united, even in approaches and purposes, would not allow some of its countries to invade or rob others, as is the case in question. Therefore, Africa's unification is one of the most possible means of addressing not only the conflict in the DRC, but also on the continent where resources have always been a curse. With a united Africa, no country will exist or pursue individual interests. It will be like in the US, where states cannot attempt to rob or sabotage others.

Although the suggestion that the total unification of Africa is the only solution to many conflicts resulting from fighting for controlling resources in Africa, it has typically been unwelcomed both in Africa and abroad (Mhango, 2015a). We think that total unification of Africa is the only means that can end conflict in Africa because if Africa were united, it would become stronger to become a vital and robust player in international affairs, the same way the US does.

Again, given that colonial powers that divided Africa aiming at weakening it to exploit it are the current major world players, such a move needs support from Africans. Mhango (2015a) views the unification of Africa as the only workable way out of this impasse, poverty, and conflict for the DRC and Africa in general. A united Africa is likely to have a bigger and brasher clout and voice than African countries currently have in their unnecessary severalty. Arguably, this is a new and radical way of addressing the conflict in hand, especially after other methods failed simply because they are superimposed, not to mention harbouring hidden interests.

Since this book clearly and strongly argues for decolonising liberal peacebuilding, AU leaders must decolonise their approaches to peace and all issues that pertain to the continent. Africa must stop imitating Europe or China and invest in rediscovering solutions to the DRC and other challenges within Africa and its cultures, which will act as its launching pad to the future. No sustainable peace, security,

and human rights can be exogenously created or superimposed as it currently is.

Fanon (1963) argues that "If we want to transform Africa... (and) respond to the expectation of our peoples, ... we must make a new start, develop a new way of thinking" (p. 239). This implies that African leaders must stop being imperialist executors and neocolonial bourgeoisies who imitate and enforce Europe, America, China, or Russia's dictates. And since conflicts such as the one in the DRC occur in Africa, the AU must demand for a representation with veto power at the UN Security Council where decisions about conflicts and wars are made.

Other Regional Organisations

The DRC is a member of the Council of the Great Lakes Region (CGLR), and it recently became a member of the East African Community (EAC). However, like the AU, the CGLR has not helped in the DRC adequately because of related bottlenecks. There are not many literatures that show how the CGLR intervened in the DRC except participating in the Pretoria Accord that did not produce any good results, as Musila (2014) notes that:

> Agreement was the start of the inter-Congolese Pretoria Accord and the ICGLR, which established the geopolitical influence of the neighbouring states of Rwanda and Uganda (sponsors of the armed groups through which they controlled the DRC's economy) (p. 4).

However, there were some successes in the CGLG's initiatives whereby Tanzania and South Africa, under the auspices of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), were able to vanquish the M23, a Rwanda-backed Tutsi rebel group in Eastern DRC. According to the editorial of *the Uganda Monitor* (2013), after being defeated, it reported that "the M23 military leader, Brig Gen Sultan Emanuel Makenga, vowed to fight the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) soldiers dispatched in war torn eastern DR Congo as 'Intervention

Brigade' working under the umbrella of UN peacekeepers known as MONUSCO" (para. 1).[7]

Due to the systemic exploitation and bad governance under capitalism that the DRC has witnessed since independence, it is obvious that, if many regional groups were able to contribute like the SADC did, the chances of vanquishing warlords would be higher. As indicated above, due to colonial legacy and financial dependence, which forced poor countries such as the DRC to depend on aid from Western countries, the chances are high of the escalation of the conflict for many regional groupings. For, since the second scramble for resources started in the early 60s soon after the DRC acquired its faux independence, war has never stopped, and the situation worsens day by day for Congolese. Instead, the war changed shape from a civil war to a silent war of living under a despot for over thirty years, then back to civil war.

Time and again, the international community, under the UN, must make sure that the DRC is getting a functioning government so that it can protect its people. If the DRC gets a functional government, whenever it fails to protect the rights of its people, it will be tasked to do so. This becomes glaringly apparent when considering that the UN cannot stay in the DRC forever while there are other conflicts waiting for help. We strongly suggest that the international community stop double standards, especially in trade, so that blood natural resources extracted in the civil wars in the DRC should be categorised as illegal, as it was for the blood diamond.

Additionally, the international community needs to enact laws barring arms-producing, arms-supplying countries, their agents, and the likes, from selling arms to warlords. This can be achieved by illegalising the arms trade and strengthening the DRC's borders with neighbouring countries. To do away with this double standard or laxity by

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7   Editorial. 2013. How M23 rebels lost ground to DRC army. Daily. Monitor,5/11. https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/special-reports/how-m23-rebels-lost-ground-to-drc-army-1557556

the international community, must not only depend on or revolve around law enactment, but must also be adhered to. On the same footing, regional groupings must be held accountable when the situation worsens while they are either taking sides in the conflict or doing nothing. Strictly, regional groupings must be excluded from dealing with the conflict in the DRC if it is proven that there is conflict of interest. For, they are what Mac Ginty and Williams (2009) refer to as "empty vessels" due to their inability to interfere in the DRC, either because of their individual interests or their lack of capability to do so.

Essentially, regional groupings in Africa are more like broken vessels – if we can use the term – that cannot do anything save to stand by and look or serve the interests of select countries. The brokenness or emptiness of the vessels not only ends up with regional groupings, but also with renowned international bodies such as the UN that seem to maliciously have either neglected or trashed the conflict in question. Despite deploying peacekeeping forces that, however, have never stopped the conflict apart from tarnishing the UN's image after being implicated in many scandals from sexual exploitation to gun-selling and resources plundering, as indicated above, the UN has done little in the DRC, and the reasons are known that the UN financially depends on the same powerful beneficiaries of the war. Therefore, it has no guts to take them on (Novosad and Werker, 2014).

To avert the ongoing impasse, there must be a way that the UN can have its independent sources of income, even if it means from member states, given that there must not be any loopholes that big funders can exploit and use to bulldoze the UN as it currently is. Thus, we strongly suggest that it is only through the deconstruction and reconstruction of the UN based on abandoning veto powers, as five countries have. If this is actualised, the UN can be free and competent enough to decisively take on conflicts like the one in the DRC and others it has failed to resolve.

Conclusion

In concluding this book, as consistently as we have done above, we maintain that the conflict in the DRC has been oversimplified to be viewed as a civil war, while it is a World War, in that it involves the interests and conspiracy of many nations. We think, as Anthony Oberschall cited in Mac Ginty and William (2009) notes that crisis framing in the conflict in the DRC is wrong. That is why the international and regional organisations have failed due to their archaicity and anarchy. We argue that the US and Belgium and their allies, agents, and stooges be forced to redress the DRC for destabilising and robbing it for many years. The acts by the West have denied the DRC of development, peace, and security, apart from impoverishing and pauperising it for generations.

We propose the increase of female UN personnel in the Eastern DRC. If this is done, it may reduce the magnitude of gender violence, especially rape, sexual exploitation, and sexual slavery. Also, increasing the number female peacekeepers will indirectly cut down the spread of HIV/AIDS, not to forget increasing a sense of security for the victims, because their presence will reduce the number of perpetrators of sexual exploitation that lead to HIV/AIDS infections. Aoláin et al. (2011) argue that there must be "attention to gender" (p. 135) in the UN peacekeeping approach since female sexual predation is negligible compared to rape globally. This being the case, therefore, women can play a very crucial role in cutting down or stopping rape incidents that the UN peacekeeping forces are alleged to perpetrate against DRC's girls and children.

Increasing the female UN personnel makes sense because women understand the effects of crimes resulting from gender violence more vividly and more practically than men. Similarly, women, as the potential victims of GBV, have a deeper understanding of the phenomenon because rape is used as a weapon and "an expression of dominance" (Brownmiller, 2013: 72). To see how women understand rape differently, and more meaningfully than men, Farwell (2004) notes that:

> War-related gender violence builds on preexisting gender relations and sociocultural dynamics; it is the very concept of honor situated in women's bodies that makes wartime rape such an effective tool of terror (p. 394).

We think that girls and women, as victims, know the value of their bodies more deeply and practically than men. Therefore, being the victims or potential victims themselves of the same patriarchal system for such a long time, women are likely to have what it takes in UN peacekeeping missions regarding taking the vices on by reporting the incidents or stopping it for those in high positions. So, too, the presence of women is likely to create fear or deter potential abusers, namely men, and thereby, create an unconducive environment for the committing of rape. Equally, there must be many women in decision-making bodies in the UN, and in the DRC as well. This will help women to voice their concerns and offer their inputs and their expertise on how they should be treated like other members of the community. This will give voice to the voiceless.

Gertrude Kitemboi, the DRC's former Minister of Posts and Telecommunications cited in the *ReliefWeb* (2011) notes that:

> Having more women in politics could reduce the suffering that women endure in areas marred by conflicts. A few years ago, President [Joseph] Kabila announced a zero-tolerance policy against impunity, including crimes related to sexual violence, but it hasn't changed anything so far besides a few cases of soldiers being prosecuted for violating women in eastern Congo. When there are more women in politics, especially positioned at the top of various institutions, they will use their influence to ensure that all those who commit sexual violence against women are brought to justice (para. 2).

It is obvious that, if many women are elected to political capacities in various institutions in the DRC, they will bring about change, given that they have either witnessed gender

violence firsthand, or know many victims who are their relatives, apart from all being women of the same country. More significantly, efforts should be made to demilitarise the institutions in the DRC even in the UN. Currently, the international patriarchal system enshrines militarism as a form of masculinity. Eriksson Baaz and Stern (2009) note that "indeed, all that is associated with femininity is seen as corrosive of the required militarized masculinities" (p. 499). Because of the poor performance of the militarised international and national institutions, we think, that the time to embark on overhauling such settings and institutions has now arrived; if at all we aim at doing justice to all humans equally and equitably regardless of their sex, gender, history, and status.

We, suggest that stigmatisation of the victims of rape should be dealt with nationally and internationally to see to it that they are able to access medical services and legal redress. Public education based on human rights, human equality, peace, and conflict is important for the areas affected by the civil war in the DRC. Education will help people to know the importance and necessity of equality by appreciating the fact that women are on an equal footing with men. Moseley et al. (2010) argues that "cultural awareness and re-education are crucial to both encouraging victims to come forward and helping them to heal" (p. 14). Civic education, if well utilised, is likely to expand the understanding of human rights amongst the victims and perpetrators altogether. Experience shows that education is the most powerful tool in almost everything.

Also, patriarchal system needs to be deconstructed through the demystification of its faux superiority. Awareness campaigns on human equality and human dignity must be made a priority in the DRC. Further, the international community under the UN should fund projects that are aimed at protecting vulnerable groups, especially children, girls, and women, and this, as indicated above, can be achieved through increasing the number of women in the UN's decision-making bodies. We fully support the increase in the number of female peacekeepers.

Finally, given that an individual is a referent unit in human security, there must be special local and regional courts formed for entertaining and making their pronouncements on issues that have to do with the violations of human rights and human security. Leatherman (2011) notes that there must be innovative ways of helping the most vulnerable. Leatherman (2011) notes that "in 2009, ex-combatants in Goma, a city in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo that lies on the northern shore of Lake Kivu, were provided tents arranged for couples, single individuals, pregnant women and child soldiers" (p. 170). If such organisations and instruments are effectively supported, they are likely to start the journey to recovery easily.

Evidentially, this book has explored how liberal peace has always invested where the interests of those who espouse it are, thus, the possibilities of sustainable and community-based peacemaking remain narrow as long as resources are still in the crust under the DRC. As stated in the introduction, the conflict basically revolves around natural resources, identity, economic, gender imbalance, ethnicity, and coloniality amongst others. Sustainable peacebuilding requires addressing all issues honestly and pragmatically with the involvement of those who are affected by the violence.

Of significance, it is an irony that the liberal peace has never liberated or benefited the DRC as an example amongst many African countries that have, for a long time, suffered under the yoke of liberal peace. This being the case, we consider the liberal peacebuilding experimentation in the DRC a paradoxical highest failure and success all together. To be precise, liberal peace has benefited Western nations, China, and others. Amongst the exploited countries facing conflict, it revolves around the control of natural resources.

That is why it is logical to conclude this book arguing that the DRC is an epitome of how liberal peace has failed to address natural resource-based wars. Despite liberal peace's failure, the onus remains with the Congolese people, which necessitated them to strengthen their self-consciousness as

a nation and thereby renounce imposed peace, security, and human rights approaches. In the imitation of Lumumba, they must continue to strive for their freedom. Women in a special way must be accorded a place at the table of peace.

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